



Selected Church Historical Sites

- Single historic sites
 - City with multiple sites
- After Mapping Mormonism (2012), courtesy Brandon Plewe*

“Come, See the Place”: Teaching Students the Value of Historic Sites

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The scriptures repeatedly speak of holy places. For example, the Old Testament frequently uses the term to refer to the tabernacle or later the temple, including designating a portion of both structures as “the holy place” and “the most holy place” (see Exodus 26:33–34; 1 Kings 6:16; Ezekiel 41:4).¹ New Testament passages generally adopt the same usage, with the book of Acts twice recording when Jewish leaders accused Stephen and later Paul of corrupting the “holy place” by their teaching about Jesus of Nazareth (see Acts 6:13; 21:28). Foretelling when “the end [would] come,” the Savior himself cautioned followers in his Olivet discourse to “stand in the holy place” (Matthew 24:14–15).

Beyond temples, examples abound in scripture of places where memorials were raised to commemorate the location of significant events. For example, after crossing the River Jordan into the promised land, the Lord instructed Joshua to take from the river “out of the place where the priests’ feet stood firm” twelve stones to create “a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever” (Joshua 4:3, 7; see also Joshua 24:26). Similarly, Samuel raised a stone to commemorate God’s help in delivering his people from the Philistines (1 Samuel

7:12). Furthermore, the Book of Mormon speaks of the Waters of Mormon and even “the place of Mormon” as “beautiful . . . to the eyes of them who there came to the knowledge of their Redeemer” (Mosiah 18:30). In our day, as a part of the gathering of Israel (Doctrine and Covenants 101:64), the Lord has repeated the injunction to “stand in holy places,” making the term “places” plural in each instance (see Doctrine and Covenants 45:32; 87:8; 101:22, 64; 124:39). Accordingly, modern prophets have clarified that our temples, our meetinghouses, our homes, and even our bodies are among the places that we should make and preserve as “holy.”²

While members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may readily think of dedicated places of worship as holy, we can benefit from expanding our vision to include sacred sites of the Restoration as holy places as well. Including historic sites alongside temples, chapels, and homes, Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander taught, “Holy places have always been essential to the proper worship of God. For Latter-day Saints, such holy places include venues of historic significance, our homes, sacrament meetings, and temples. Much of what we reverence, and what we teach our children to reverence as holy and sacred, is reflected in these places.”³ Over the years, Church historical sites have been integrated into the hierarchy of sacred places within the Church. Michael Madsen suggests that these sites have undergone what he refers to as “sanctification,”⁴ referring to the increasing interest in and importance of these sites in both Church history and collective consciousness. These locations “serve as reminders of God’s hand in guiding the Church to its present state.”⁵

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how Church historical sites can be integrated into gospel teaching. After discussing religious pilgrimage and sacred space, the paper focuses on Church practices relating to the development of historic sites and how teachers can help students learn from and appreciate historic space.

Religious Pilgrimage and Sacred Space

The act of visiting a holy place for a religious or spiritual purpose is as old as humanity itself. Every year, millions of people engage in pilgrimage travel to “journey to a distant sacred goal.”⁶ The United Nations World Tourism Organization suggests that religious sites of all faith traditions receive between 300 and 600 million visitors annually.⁷ Indeed, some of the world’s largest gatherings are religious in nature, such as the Kumbh Mela pilgrimage in India, where 120 million people participate in bathing rituals along

the Ganges River, and the Aberdeen pilgrimage in Iran, which averages 20 million participants.⁸ Pilgrimage as a formal religious ritual exists in many of the world's major religions, including Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism among others. In Islam, participation in the Hajj at least once in a lifetime is a requirement of all able-bodied Muslims, while Roman Catholics are strongly encouraged to frequent religious shrines and other sites for penance, healing, initiatory, and other religiously motivated purposes. Buddhists visit sites related to the life and teachings of the Buddha as well as other notable Buddhists, and while not formally required in Hinduism, Hindus travel along various pilgrimage circuits to sacred sites for spiritual purposes and to strengthen collective cultural and religious identities.⁹

While advances in transportation, information, and communication technologies have led to an increase in people who travel to religious sites, the idea of what types of journeys constitute a pilgrimage has also expanded to include any journey "undertaken by a person in quest of a place or a state that he or she believes to embody a valued ideal."¹⁰ As such, some might consider trips to sites of civic religion in Washington, DC, visits to war memorials, or even attending sporting events a pilgrimage if the person deems the trip as such.¹¹ However, this metaphorical expansion and watering down of the term does not take away from the fact that the etymology of pilgrimage is religious in nature, and that pilgrimage is a centuries-old act of people in search of meaning and religious and spiritual fulfillment in their lives.

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, there is no formal theology of pilgrimage where Church members are required to travel for religious purposes, with the exception of visiting temples to perform their own endowments and to help redeem the dead.¹² Members are not promised salvific rewards for pilgrimage, nor are religious visits to historic sites an expectation or pillar of belief.¹³ As Elder Bruce R. McConkie once wrote, "Neither shrines nor pilgrimages are a part of true worship as practiced by the true Saints. . . . There is no thought that some special virtue will attach to worship by performing [pilgrimage to sacred sites]."¹⁴

However, interest in and support for preserving Church history is strongly rooted in Latter-day Saint beliefs and practices. For the Church and its members, Professor Sara M. Patterson concludes that "place, material objects, and theological claims . . . [are] inextricably tied to one another."¹⁵ Indeed, "it is . . . through history-telling that Latter-day Saints often communicate their theological claims."¹⁶ As historians Douglas F. Tobler and S. George Ellsworth note, "History plays a vital role in [Latter-day Saint] thought, where it joins

with theology and practical religion to answer many of life's questions and to make daily life meaningful, intelligible, and worthwhile."¹⁷ The beliefs of the Church are entwined with the veracity of its founding historical events.¹⁸ As a result, every year thousands of Church members visit historical sites related to the Restoration, take cruises to possible Book of Mormon lands, book tours to visit the Holy Land, participate in or watch Church pageants, and perform pioneer treks. As such, Church members engage in what Daniel Olsen has called "informal pilgrimages," where they engage in religiously motivated or "pilgrimage-like" travel for educational, spiritual, and identity- and faith-building purposes.¹⁹

While some pilgrims engage in the act of pilgrimage with no predetermined endpoint, most pilgrims travel with a specific sacred endpoint or place in mind. These sacred spaces and places revolve around what is referred to as "poetic" or "substantive" sacred space as promoted by Mircea Eliade, in which it is an "ontological given"²⁰ that the "divine" or the "holy" has irrupted in that location.²¹ It is in these spaces where people can potentially encounter or enter into the presence of divinity. As such, many religious groups, both past and present, build religious edifices over these spaces to maintain their sanctity in the face of a secularizing and profane world.²²

In his book *Why Old Places Matter*, Thompson Mayes forwards several arguments for the preservation and development of historic sites. These include their abilities to facilitate continuity, create identity, engender learning, and foster community. Mayes argue that "These places spur our memory, delight us with beauty, help us understand others, give us a deep sense of belonging, and, perhaps most fundamentally, remind us who we are. . . . Old places are important for people to define who they are through memory, continuity, and identity."²³ Stephanie Meeks, former president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, suggested, "Old places . . . [bring] to life, across millennia, the long continuity of the past. . . . They give us the chance to feel a connection to the broad community of human experience, a community that exists across time. . . . Historic places connect us to the striving and struggles of earlier generations and of generations to come. They tell us who we are. And they help us understand that, though we ourselves may be mortal, our actions will echo on after we are gone, just as those of previous generations inform our world today."²⁴

As noted, there are many places such as our homes and temples where the Spirit of the Lord resides and thus are considered holy or sacred by Latter-day Saints.²⁵ Church historical sites are also holy sites in the sense that they

represent and embody examples of instances where God played either a direct (e.g., the Sacred Grove) or indirect (e.g., sites of revelation) role in the establishment and development of the Church in the last days. As such, Church historical sites are places that serve as tangible reminders of the divine nature of the Restoration. Indeed, as Steven Olsen has pointed out, even if no one came to visit these historical sites, the Church would be obligated to mark and manage these sites because of the covenants Church members make each week to serve as "witnesses" and to "remember Him."²⁶ Therefore, Latter-day Saints take the view of sacred space seriously—the idea that God does manifest himself either in person or through the Holy Ghost in particular spaces and places.²⁷

Preserving and Developing Latter-day Saint Historic Sites

Interest in and visits to sites important to Latter-day Saint history developed early in the Restoration. While there were no official memorials in a formal sense during the first generation of the Church, there was lingering awareness of the sites sacred to the Restoration story.²⁸ For example, both the believing and the curious continued to be attracted to western New York's Hill Cumorah, of which William W. Phelps wrote from Kirtland in 1835, "Cumorah . . . is well calculated to stand in this generation, as a monument of marvelous works and wonders."²⁹ Likewise, Church members, including missionaries traveling throughout the eastern United States, repeatedly stopped to visit the Kirtland Temple, where a congregation continued to meet following the Church's relocation to Missouri and later Illinois.³⁰ Similarly, after the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Carthage Jail achieved significant notoriety.³¹ For example, in 1845 a party of as many as fifty prominent leaders and members including Apostles Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, and George A. Smith visited the jail, where they listened as John Taylor and Willard Richards recounted details of the Martyrdom. Interested in historical artifacts from the tragedy, the group reported that "the blood of Hyrum still stained the floor where he fell and breathed his last; the walls were marked with bullet holes."³²

Relocation of the Church to Salt Lake City prevented many early Latter-day Saints from readily visiting historic sites across New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. Leaving the City of Joseph on May 22, 1846, Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal, "I left Nauvoo for the last time perhaps in this life. I looked upon the Temple & City of Nauvoo as I retired from it & felt to ask the Lord to preserve it as a monument of the sacrifice of

his Saints.”³³ However, like the children of Israel by the rivers of Babylon who “remembered Zion” (Psalm 137:1), Latter-day Saint memories were continually drawn to their former homes, and visitors continued to frequent historic sites across the nineteenth century as circumstances allowed. Famously, Church history missionaries Andrew Jenson, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black conducted a five-week fact-finding tour of historic sites across Missouri, Illinois, New York, Ohio, and Iowa in the fall of 1888, delighting newspaper readers in Utah with their descriptions.³⁴ Furthermore, in theological language stronger than merely the foreshadowing of family vacations, Church President John Taylor boldly predicted a dramatic repossession of the Church’s abandoned historic sites:

As a people or community, we can abide our time, but I will say to you Latter-day Saints, that there is nothing of which you have been despoiled by oppressive acts or mobocratic rule, but that you will again possess, or your children after you. Your rights in Ohio, your rights in Jackson, Clay, Caldwell and Davies [Davies] counties in Missouri, will yet be restored to you. Your possessions, of which you have been fraudulently despoiled in Missouri and Illinois, you will again possess, and that without force, or fraud or violence. The Lord has a way of His own in regulating such matters.³⁵

The twentieth century brought the fulfillment of President Taylor’s words. The end of the practice of plural marriage, coupled with decreased regional isolation, opened the door to reshape the Church’s relationship with the outside world. As historian Kathleen Flake summarized, “Desiring a better forum for the church’s message, Joseph F. Smith was committed to doing what was necessary to heal the breach between his people and the rest of America. He wanted to end Mormonism’s Rocky Mountain isolation.”³⁶ In addition, the commemoration of Church history was centered on living pioneers, not places.³⁷ However, as the original pioneer generation passed on, there was a need to replace this “living history.”³⁸ One way the Church did this was through the acquisition and development of historic sites, which “signaled the church’s intent to come out from behind its mountain barrier and claim a place in America at large.”³⁹ Through its historic sites, the Church created “a new future out of the Mormon past.”⁴⁰

The first foray into historical site acquisition was the purchase of the Mount Pisgah burial site in central Iowa in the mid-1880s, followed by the placement of an obelisk on the property in 1888.⁴¹ Fifteen years later, Church President Joseph F. Smith authorized the purchase of the first historic structure, the Carthage Jail, in 1903.⁴² Subsequent acquisitions soon followed, including a portion of the temple lot in Independence, Missouri (1904), the



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Joseph Smith birthplace in Sharon, Vermont (1905), the Smith Farm and the Sacred Grove in Palmyra, New York (1907), and the Far West, Missouri, temple site (1909).⁴³ Frequently with the assistance and mediation of generous benefactors, ensuing decades brought other sites under Church ownership, including the Hill Cumorah (1923–28), Whitmer Farm (1926), Nauvoo Temple Lot (1937–62), Liberty Jail (1939), Adam-oni-Ahman (1944), Isaac Hale and Joseph Smith lots in Harmony (1946–48), John Johnson Home (1956), Newel K. Whitney Store (1965), Grandin Print Building (1978), and Winter Quarters Cemetery (1999).⁴⁴ In Nauvoo itself, officials conducted numerous transactions to acquire historic structures across several decades, including, among others, the John Taylor Home and *Times and Seasons* building (1938), Heber C. Kimball Home (1954), Masonic Hall (1967), Wilford Woodruff Home (1970), Brigham Young Home (1973), Browning Gunsmith Shop (1973), and pioneer burial ground (1989).⁴⁵ More recently, in 2012 the Church acquired Hawn’s Mill, Far West burial ground, and Smith homes in Kirtland.⁴⁶

Purchasing these sites was one thing, but developing them and attracting visitors was another. Jennifer Lund, director of the Historic Sites Division of the Church History Department, noted that “during this initial era of historic site ownership, the Church rented the sites primarily to non–Latter-day Saint

tenants who gave occasional tours or at least tolerated visitors.”⁴⁷ Exceptions to this included the Joseph Smith Birthplace and Temple Square, where formal site programs were developed. With these sites owned by the Church, visitors steadily increased, including several prominent visits by Church leaders and groups. Eventually, site interpretation by tenants and later formally called missionaries took over most locations.⁴⁸ “While the primary rationale for these sites looked outward” to non-members, Lund observed, “there was also an imperative to teach the membership as well.”⁴⁹ Lund also noted the dual charge outlined by President John R. Winder, who in 1904 proposed a monument to Joseph and Hyrum Smith on Salt Lake’s Temple Square. Winder declared, “I would like to see something erected to these martyrs that would be an object lesson to our children and our children’s children throughout all generations, and also to the thousands of people who visit us.”⁵⁰

Members visit these historic sites for a variety of reasons. A sampling of entries from the 1940 “Register of Visitors to ‘Old’ Carthage Jail” captures this diversity: “A wonderful place,” wrote one Illinois resident; “A Dream Come True!” exclaimed a man from California; “Another Calvary,” remarked a gentleman from Minneapolis; and “Wonderfully sacred sanctuary,” commented Relief Society General President Amy Brown Lyman.⁵¹ “For Latter-day Saints,” Lund stressed, “visits to locations associated with the events of the Restoration were not solely motivated by curiosity; rather, they were religious pilgrimages wherein the faithful sought to experience firsthand the places of sacred events.” As Richard Jackson observed, “Church members commonly visit these sites as tourists and, in the process, gain greater personal understanding of the history of the Church and its beliefs.”⁵² Michael MacKay suggested that Church members “today study the history [of] and visit the Restoration sites, which enable individual members to envision their sacred history within the geography where the events took place, as if they had found the Church’s Garden of Eden.”⁵³

Helping Students Appreciate Sacred Space

With a better understanding of pilgrimage and sacred space in Latter-day Saint tradition, along with a more nuanced understanding of the history of the acquisition and development of Latter-day Saint historic sites, how can gospel teachers help students benefit from an understanding of places in Church history? This section will examine ways in which a familiarity with sacred space can help build student testimonies as well as provide practical ideas for how teachers can integrate church historic sites into their classes.

Connecting to the Past Creates Confidence in Sharing Church History

For some students, it is a challenge to recall and share the myriad of details of Church history that they learn. In the Doctrine and Covenants alone, there are more than one hundred characters named in the text as well as dozens of places. While the chronological order of the revelations generally keeps the sections geographically connected, the travels of Joseph Smith to various locations in New York, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Upper Canada also cause the revelations to occasionally jump from place to place. As such, students, especially those who are spatial or visual learners, may benefit from knowing the major events and an approximate period for each prominent historic site.⁵⁴ "Places serve as mnemonic aids," Thompson Mayes concludes. "They remind us of our memories, both individual . . . and collective. . . . They also spur people to investigate broader societal memories they don't yet fully know."⁵⁵

President Spencer W. Kimball challenged students to do the hard work of learning the places and individuals associated with Church history. He counseled, "This year should be a time of learning. At the end of the year you should be familiar with what happened in places like Palmyra, New York; Kirtland, Ohio; Independence, Missouri; Nauvoo, Illinois; Winter Quarters, Nebraska; and Salt Lake City, Utah. You should be well acquainted with the great spirit and contributions of such remarkable individuals as Joseph and Hyrum Smith. . . . Names like Emma Smith, Mary Fielding Smith, Eliza R. Snow, and others of the remarkable women of the Church should not be strange to you." Explaining why historical details regarding people and places matter, President Kimball continued, "Though facts are not important by themselves, they can bring great confidence to you as you explain and testify of the Restoration. So learn and remember as much as you can."⁵⁶ Implicit in President Kimball's statement is not just learning about what happened in these places, but also about the places themselves.

In addition to learning about the locations of specific events, the Church seeks to reinforce the authenticity of its historical sites in both its interpretation of the events that occurred therein and reconstruction of the sites themselves. At these sites, Sara Patterson argues, members "come to experience their history and theology under the umbrella of authenticity."⁵⁷ As Jennifer Lund explained, "We're interested in commemoration, but we're more interested in restoration, to taking you back to the place and time. When people can walk into a space that was the way it looked when Joseph lived there, they have a much more profound connection. They understand sometimes the

scriptures better. All of a sudden, they understand the history better when they can be in not just the place, which you see in the commemoration model, but in the place and the time, and the event that you really see most effectively in the restoration model.”⁵⁸ While it is important as teachers to try and take students back in time to understand the nuances of the Restoration, teachers must also be as authentic as possible in how they teach the scriptures and the history of the Restoration by reinforcing accurate historical truths rather than perpetuating popular myths or personal assumptions of how historical participants may have acted or how life may have been during an earlier era.

Inspiring Faith and Motivating Toward Righteousness

A second benefit accruing from the study of historic sites is the blessings that come from sacred spaces more generally. People visit religious heritage sites for obligatory, devotional, educational, and curiosity reasons, and to petition for health or otherworldly help.⁵⁹ Freeman Tilden, an early leader in heritage interpretation, opined, “To pay a personal visit to a historic shrine is to receive a concept such as no book can supply; someone has said; and surely to stand at the rim of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado is to experience a spiritual elevation that could come from no human description of the colossal chasm.”⁶⁰ At sites, and especially sacred religious sites, there is a spirit of place that impacts the visitor.

Visitors to Latter-day Saint historic sites “come for a variety of reasons,” observed former Church historian and recorder Elder Steven E. Snow, “but two of the main reasons are to remember what took place there and to reinforce faith. Parents bring their children so they feel the spirit of these sacred places. It is one thing to read about a handcart, but quite another to pull a handcart. Being in the Sacred Grove is a much more powerful experience than being taught about the Sacred Grove. Families want to feel the spirit of the places, and parents want their children to remember what others did who went before. So in my view it really is about *remembering*.”⁶¹ In this vein, Daniel Olsen has noted that Church historical sites are in part preserved and maintained to fulfill the Church’s objective to “perfect the Saints” through spiritual experiences that help Church members strengthen their individual testimonies of the restored gospel.⁶²

Characterizing the value of these historic spaces, Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander taught, “The faith and reverence associated with them and the respect we have for what transpires or has transpired in them make them holy. The importance of holy places and sacred space in our worship can hardly

be overestimated.”⁶³ Describing the impact a visit to the Sacred Grove had on him personally, he continued, “Some months ago on a beautiful late fall day, my wife and I sat in that grove. It was indeed beautiful, and we did enjoy the solitary peace we found there. However, it was significantly more than that, for we sat in the immediate vicinity where God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to the young Prophet Joseph Smith. Our faith in, and our reverence for, their visit and the personal sacrifice that ensued because of it, both in the Prophet’s life as well as in the lives of our own ancestors, transformed this beautiful spot into sacred space and a holy place.” Applying those feelings to other historic sites, Elder Neuenschwander continued, “Similar deep and reverent feelings are aroused by other sacred places across the earth relating to the history and establishment of this Church. These sacred places *inspire our faith and give us encouragement to be true to that faith and to move forward, despite the challenges that may cross our path.*”⁶⁴

Of course, not all visitors to religious heritage sites will have the same experience. While the authors have many cherished memories from visiting holy places around the world, including the Sacred Grove, an important lesson they have learned is that one cannot force spiritual experiences. Indeed, many people do not have the expected religious or spiritual experiences they seek when they go on a pilgrimage.⁶⁵ As with any revelatory experience, God promises he will answer, but “it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:68). Teachers might remind students that God sets the conditions of revelation and they must do their part.

For example, while many like Elder Neuenschwander find the Sacred Grove “simply beautiful and peaceful,” not all experiences may be as positive. On one trip to Palmyra with my (Scott Esplin’s) young family, my wife and I wanted desperately for our children to have a meaningful experience in the Sacred Grove. Hoping to capture a memory of the visit, we decided to take a family picture upon entering the grove. As our family was being arranged for a picture, one child complained about where they were asked to stand, wondering why they always had to be next to a particular sibling. Another stood on their tiptoes, upsetting the others because now they were taller than the older ones. A third, tired of having to pose by what felt like every historical marker along the trip, whined about the need for a picture in the first place. Frustrated by the quickly deteriorating situation, I lost my temper. That day, the Sacred Grove was certainly far from sacred for my little family. To this day,

my children's primary memory of their trip to the Sacred Grove is of when their dad got mad about a picture.

While people long for spiritual experiences in sacred spaces, teachers might also teach their youth, as Elder Neuenschwander concluded, that sites like the Sacred Grove are "sacred because of the faith and reverence we bring to it and the depth of sacrifice it represents."⁶⁶ If visitors fail to bring the requisite faith and reverence with them as they visit or learn about these sites, they cannot expect the desired result to be achieved.

Sites Bear Witness of Historical Truths

Closely related to the above point is that Church historic sites can help students gain a witness of the truth of the events that occurred there. "Historic places have powerful [and] provocative stories to tell," a National Park Service website maintains. "As witnesses to the past, they recall the events that shaped history and the people who faced those situations and issues. Places make connections across time that give them a special ability to create an empathetic understanding of what happened and why."⁶⁷ The empathetic connections made through the power of place can lead to revelation.

President Boyd K. Packer related a story where he visited a specific location because he wanted revelation. He shared, "President Harold B. Lee told me once that inspiration comes easier when you can set foot on the site related to the need for it." Speaking to his audience at Brigham Young University, President Packer continued, "With a very sincere desire to be guided in preparing what I should say to you, early Sunday morning, before you were about, I stood in the Maeser Building [on the campus of BYU], and I found that President Lee was right!"⁶⁸

The same may be true as we encourage youth to visit historic sites. Thompson Mayes argued, "History can be understood at the real place where history actually happened in a way that it can't be understood through documents and books alone."⁶⁹ As Mark Staker, a curator with the Historic Sites Division of the Church History Department, explained, "Every time I go to the Sacred Grove—and I can't even tell you how many times I've been there—but every time I go to the Sacred Grove, I feel the Spirit. I feel a witness of the things that happened on that property and that Sacred Grove has come to represent that powerfully, that it's the symbol of that moment when God spoke again to man. And it's not a specific location in the grove, but it's the fact that that grove is that symbol, and it tells us in a visual way of the setting where those events took place. I think that is so powerful and bears witness in

and of itself that those events happened.”⁷⁰ Jennifer Lund further explained that her department’s hope is that visitors will have a sacred experience during their visit. “The Sacred Grove, of course, is probably our most significant historic site, and so we have given a great deal of attention to restoring that grove. We don’t usually talk about preservation, when it comes to a grove because trees die. It’s a living thing, and so we’re less [about] preserving individual trees as we are about preserving or restoring the living organism of this grove so that people today can have a similar experience to what Joseph Smith had in the 1820s.”⁷¹

Practical Ways to Incorporate Historic Sites into the Curriculum

As teachers, most of us cannot easily travel with our students to Church curated historic sites like Palmyra, Kirtland, or Nauvoo. However, there are many ways in which teachers can incorporate the Church’s historical sites into their curriculum. One simple way to do so is to take advantage of students in a class who might have visited these locations who can share their experiences and the lessons they learned from their previous visits. As they do so, the Spirit can confirm the truthfulness of the Restoration to the other students in the classroom. Pictures and videos produced by the Church or those shared by students from their own visits to the sites can also be a powerful tool for visualizing historical and sacred space.

However, even if teachers wanted to take their students to these historic sites, the present COVID-19 pandemic would make this all but impossible. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions on travel have significantly impacted religious tourism and pilgrimage, with most religious heritage sites and religious gatherings in all faith traditions being forced to close or be canceled by government and health officials. These closures have led to many religious sites suffering great economic losses, particularly those that are heavily reliant on pilgrim and tourist donations. Faith communities have also struggled to find opportunities to “gather” together and strengthen communal religious identities.⁷²

As scholars of the history of pilgrimage note, pilgrims have always found new and novel ways of performing pilgrimages in times of war and plagues.⁷³ In the same way, the closing of these sites has led these faith communities today to find new and novel ways of reaching out to the faithful and to help people maintain and increase faith during trying times. Indeed, the travel restrictions associated with the pandemic have spurred the proliferation of new forms of religious tourism and pilgrimage, including virtual visits to

religious sites. For example, there has been a strong digital response to the lack of religious mobility, where many religious sites have broadcasted their sacred rituals and ceremonies over the internet. Other religious sites have led virtual reality tours of their sites for pilgrims and tourists who could not visit.⁷⁴ Some pilgrim organizations created apps that allowed pilgrims to walk in the safety of their hometown while tracking how far along their chosen pilgrimage trail they would have walked if they had been allowed to travel.⁷⁵

As Latter-day Saint historic sites closed to the public during the pandemic, site directors and missionaries likewise explored ways to connect virtually with those interested in Church history. Directors of historic sites—from the Sacred Grove to the Mormon Battalion Historic Site in San Diego—introduced missionary-led virtual tours to family and friends on social media. These virtual tours “spread like wildfire around the world.” This led to live tours being scheduled by seminary and institute classes, ward youth and adult groups, individuals, and families.⁷⁶ The success of virtual technology led Gary Boatright, operations manager of historic sites for the Church History Department, to note, “When you think about what we were planning for 2020 to be like and what it’s turned out to be, in a real sense, we have a much more successful year this year in getting the story of these sacred places to the world.”⁷⁷

The proliferation of virtual Church history tours has expanded the reach of these sacred spaces of the Church around the globe. Estimating that less than 1 percent of the Church population might be able to visit many Church history sites, historic sites curator Benjamin C. Pykles noted, “We’re certainly hitting people that have never been able to experience these places in any way or in any fashion before. . . . There’s so much potential here. We’re just scratching the surface, and we’re excited to keep working towards those goals.”⁷⁸ Gary Boatright concurred: “The Spirit can transcend technology and space and time and testify to someone who’s sitting in the Philippines watching the missionaries give a tour just as powerfully as they can to someone who’s standing in the Sacred Grove.”⁷⁹

Another way teachers can incorporate historic sites into their curriculum is by cultivating an understanding of and appreciation for local historic sites. In 1997 President Gordon B. Hinckley told the Saints of Guatemala, “This year we are commemorating the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Mormon pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley. They came a long way in wagons and handcarts. They were pioneers. But pioneering continues to go on. All over the world we have pioneers, and you are among those pioneers.” Throughout his

ministry, he repeated a similar message. "The days of pioneering in the Church are still with us. They did not end with covered wagons and handcarts."⁸⁰

Teachers might therefore consider helping students learn about the history of the Church in their own country, region, or city. Under the heading "Historic Sites," the Church website provides extensive information about its places across the United States. Additionally, resources like "Pioneers in Every Land" or "Global Histories" provide valuable information about the Church and its history around the world.⁸¹ Furthermore, publications like the *Church News* or the "Sites Registry" of the Ensign Peak Foundation celebrate local historic sites, some of which will be in proximity of many students worldwide.⁸² By incorporating these sites into lessons and encouraging students to visit them, teachers reinforce President Hinckley's message:

It is good to look to the past to gain appreciation for the present and perspective for the future. It is good to look upon the virtues of those who have gone before, to gain strength for whatever lies ahead. It is good to reflect upon the work of those who labored so hard and gained so little in this world, but out of whose dreams and early plans, so well nurtured, has come a great harvest of which we are the beneficiaries. Their tremendous example can become a compelling motivation for us all, for each of us is a pioneer in his own life, often in his own family, and many of us pioneer daily in trying to establish a gospel foothold in distant parts of the world.

We are still pioneering. We have never ceased pioneering from the time . . . that our people left Nauvoo and came . . . eventually into the valley of the Great Salt Lake. . . . We are reaching out everywhere, and that takes pioneering.⁸³

Conclusion

Commemoration of historic sites and invitations to visit them have ancient scriptural roots. Biblically, the children of Israel were invited to remember their deliverance from Egypt with "a memorial," a Passover celebration "throughout [their] generations . . . for ever" (Exodus 12:14). Specifically, they were to use the occasion to teach their children of the "strength of [the] hand [of] the Lord" that brought them freedom (Exodus 13:14). Centuries later, the New Testament powerfully tells the story of the ultimate day of deliverance when, on the morning of Christ's resurrection, angels appeared to women who assembled at the empty tomb. Declaring, "He is not here: for he is risen," the angels invited these witnesses to history to "*come, see the place where the Lord lay*" (Matthew 28:6; emphasis added).

Today, teachers likewise invite students to "come, see the place" where miraculous events occurred. As teachers of Church history, we testify of places where the heavens were opened, where God, Christ, and angels communed with humankind, where additional scripture was revealed and

translated, and where priesthood keys were bestowed. Demonstrating the significance of these sites, President Russell M. Nelson remarked, “Of all the priesthood assignments I’ve received in my life, the opportunity to dedicate the Priesthood Restoration Site was perhaps the most important.”⁸⁴

Gospel teachers can mirror the lengths the Church takes to study and preserve historic sites. As Jennifer Lund has summarized, “More than two dozen Church-owned sites from Vermont to California and one in England celebrate the Restoration of the gospel and the commitment of Latter-day Saints to establish God’s kingdom in our day. Numerous historic markers dot the landscape, as do historic temples, tabernacles, and meetinghouses. For many people, these sites are sacred, evoking a sense of awe, reverence, and personal connection.”⁸⁵ As we help students learn about and reverence sacred spaces, we invite their power in our classrooms. Jennifer Lund continues, “Seeing the landscapes where key experiences unfolded can cultivate a deep sense of gratitude in those of us whose lives have been changed and blessed by the Restoration. . . . These sites can help open our eyes to the beauties of the principles of salvation and motivate us to embrace them with our whole hearts.”⁸⁶ Indeed, “our Heavenly Father is desirous we remember.”⁸⁷

Notes

1. See Richard Warren Johnson, “Holy Place,” in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 600; Timothy B. Cargal, “Most Holy Place,” in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, 922.
2. See James E. Faust, “Standing in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 62–68; Robert D. Hales, “Stand Strong in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, May 2013; Lance B. Wickman, “Stand Ye In Holy Places,” *Ensign*, November 1994; Gary E. Stevenson, “Sacred Homes, Sacred Temples,” *Ensign*, May 2009; Boyd K. Packer, “A Temple to Exalt,” *Ensign*, August 1993.
3. Dennis B. Neuenschwander, “Holy Space, Sacred Space,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 71–72.
4. Michael H. Madsen, “The Sanctification of Mormonism’s Historical Geography,” *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 228–55.
5. Douglas F. Tobler and S. George Ellsworth, “History, Significance to Latter-day Saints,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York City: Macmillan, 1992), 2:595–98.
6. Richard Barber, *Pilgrimages* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 1991).
7. United Nations World Tourism Organization, *Religious Tourism in Asia and the Pacific* (Madrid: World Tourism Organization, 2011).
8. Daniel H. Olsen, “Disease and Health Risks at Mass Religious Gatherings,” in *Religious Tourism and the Environment*, ed. Kiran A. Shinde and Daniel H. Olsen (Wallingford, UK: CABI, 2020), 116–32.

9. See individual chapters on pilgrimage in these faiths in Dallen J. Timothy and Daniel H. Olsen, eds., *Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys* (London and New York City: Routledge, 2006).

10. E. Alan Morinis, “Introduction: The Territory of the Anthropology of Pilgrimage,” in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Alan Morinis (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 1–28.

11. Daniel H. Olsen, “Metaphors, Typologies, Secularization, and Pilgrim as Hedonist: A Response,” *Tourism Recreation Research* 39, no. 2 (2014): 248–58.

12. In the history of the Church, and even today, some Church members have undertaken difficult voyages at great sacrifice to receive temple blessings, mirroring an act of pilgrimage.

13. Daniel H. Olsen, “Tourism and Informal Pilgrimage among the Latter-day Saints,” in *Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys*, ed. Dallen J. Timothy and Daniel H. Olsen (London and New York: Routledge), 256–70.

14. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 574.

15. Sara M. Patterson, *Pioneers in the Attic: Place and Memory along the Mormon Trail* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2020), xvi.

16. Patterson, *Pioneers in the Attic*, 25.

17. Tobler and Ellsworth, “History, Significance to Latter-day Saints,” 2:595–96.

18. President Gordon B. Hinckley emphasized the importance of history to our beliefs. Speaking of Joseph Smith’s First Vision, he stated, “Every claim that we make concerning divine authority, every truth that we offer concerning the validity of this work, all finds its root in the First Vision of the boy prophet. . . . That becomes the hinge pin on which this whole cause turns. If the First Vision was true, if it actually happened, then the Book of Mormon is true. Then we have the priesthood. Then we have the Church organization and all of the other keys and blessings of authority which we say we have. If the First Vision did not occur, then we are involved in a great sham. It is just that simple.” *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Desert Book, 1997), 226–27.

19. Olsen, “Tourism and Informal Pilgrimage Among the Latter-day Saints,” 254–70. Sara Patterson has noted that “whether or not individual Mormons take on the language of pilgrimage, their activities echo certain traits of other religious pilgrimages around the world.” *Pioneers in the Attic*, 184.

20. Veronica Della Dora, “Virtual Issue 13: Sacred Space Unbound,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, no. 13 (2015), <http://societyandspace.org/2015/06/12/virtual-issue-13-sacred-space-unbound/>.

21. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1959).

22. Many scholars, however, have contested this Eliadean view of sacred space, suggesting that while religious organizations set apart sacred places from the rest of the profane world, it is not because the divine has irrupted in that location. Rather, sacred places are considered to be sacred only because someone in a position of power and authority decrees that the site is sacred. From this “constructivist” view, the sacred, holy, or divine is not a “thing”—it is not an “ontological given.” Instead, space is just an empty signifier or container until someone or some group deems that space to be sacred, after which that space is marked, sacralized, and maintained by those individuals or groups. G. Van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (New York City: Harper and Row, 1933); Simon Coleman and Jas Elsner, *Pilgrimage Past and Present in the World Religions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

University Press, 1995); Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Wobbling Pivot," in *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religion*, Jonathan Z. Smith (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 88–103. Since this marking, sacralizing, and maintaining is done in the context of social and power relations, these sacred locations therefore are open to contestation and multiple interpretations between different religious groups, within the same religious group, and between religious and secular groups. See David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, "Introduction," in *American Sacred Space*, ed. David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 1–42. As such, sacred spaces and places are constantly being (re)negotiated within sociopolitical contexts at different scales. See Daniel H. Olsen, "The Symbolism of Sacred Space," in *Tourism, Pilgrimage and Intercultural Dialogue: Interpreting Sacred Stories*, ed. Dolores Vidal-Casellas, Silvia Aulet, and Neus Crous-Costa (Wallingford, UK: CABI, 2019), 29–42.

23. Thompson M. Mayes, *Why Old Places Matter: How Historic Places Affect Our Identity and Well-Being* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), xxii–xxiii.

24. Stephanie Meeks, in Mayes, *Why Old Places Matter*, xv, xvii.

25. Temples might on the surface seem to be constructed spaces, where Church leaders choose a mundane space to establish a holy temple. However, after dedication, Latter-day Saints believe that the Lord is truly present in the temple, and therefore constructed sacred space becomes poetic sacred space.

26. Steven L. Olsen, "The Theology of Memory: Mormon Historical Consciousness," *FARMS Review* 19, no. 2 (2007): 25–35; see Daniel H. Olsen, "Touring Sacred History: The Latter-day Saints and Their Historical Sites," in *Mormons and American Popular Culture: The Global Influence of an American Phenomenon*, vol. 2., ed. James M. Hunter (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Publishers, 2013), 225–42.

27. While beyond the scope of this paper, Latter-day Saint historic sites are also contested sacred spaces. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Community of Christ both own properties tied to the Restoration, with these properties at times being geographically beside each other. However, both faith communities differ when it comes to their devotional, historic, and first/third person interpretation of their shared heritage. Daniel H. Olsen and Dallen J. Timothy, "Contested Religious Heritage: Differing Views of Mormon Heritage," *Tourism Recreation Research* 27, no. 2 (2002): 7–15; see David J. Howlett, *Kirtland Temple: The Biography of a Shared Mormon Sacred Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); see also Scott C. Esplin, *Return to the City of Joseph: Modern Mormonism's Contest for the Soul of Nauvoo* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018).

28. David Bitton, "The Ritualization of Mormon History," *Utah State Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 67–85.

29. William W. Phelps, *Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, November 1835, 2:221. For information about visits to the Hill Cumorah, see Cameron J. Packer, "A Study of the Hill Cumorah: A Significant Latter-day Saint Landmark in Western New York" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2002).

30. David J. Howlett, *Kirtland Temple: The Biography of a Shared Mormon Sacred Space* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014); Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting of Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2009); Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983).

31. Scott C. Esplin, "Dark Tourism: Healing at Historic Carthage Jail," *Journal of Mormon History* 46, no. 1 (January 2020): 85–116.

32. Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), September 24, 1845, 1, Church History Library.

33. Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal* (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 3:49. Though Wilford Woodruff speculated he was leaving Nauvoo for the last time with the exodus of 1846, he actually returned to the City of Joseph again two years later while on a his way to a mission in the East. He reported touring the temple, "from the bottom to the top," finding it "in a much better state of preservation than I expected to find it." 3:356–57.

34. Reid L. Neilson, Justin R. Bray, and Alan D. Johnson, eds., *Rediscovering the Sites of the Restoration: The 1888 Travel Writings of Mormon Historian Andrew Jensen, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015).

35. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855–86), 23:61–62.

36. Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 27.

37. Paul L. Anderson, "Heroic Nostalgia: Enshrining the Mormon Past," *Sunstone* 5 (1980): 47–55; Eric A. Eliason, "The Cultural Dynamics of Historical Self-Fashioning: Mormon Pioneer Nostalgia, American Culture, and the International Church," *Journal of Mormon History* 28 (2002): 139–73.

38. Olsen, "Touring Sacred History," 225–42.

39. Kathleen Flake, "Re-placing Memory: Latter-day Saint Use of Historical Monuments and Narrative in the Early Twentieth Century," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 13, no. 1 (2003): 80.

40. Flake, "Re-placing Memory," 71.

41. Jennifer L. Lund, "Joseph F. Smith and the Origins of the Church Historic Sites Program," in *Joseph F. Smith: Reflections on the Man and His Times*, ed. Craig K. Manscill, Brian D. Reeves, Guy L. Dorius, and J. B. Haws (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 344–45.

42. Scott C. Esplin, "Dark Tourism: Healing at Historic Carthage Jail," *Journal of Mormon History* 46, no. 1 (January 2020): 85–116.

43. Lund, "Joseph F. Smith and the Origins of the Church Historic Sites Program," 345; Olsen, "Touring Sacred History," 228.

44. Packer, "Study of the Hill Cumorah"; Lisle G. Brown, "Nauvoo's Temple Square," *Brigham Young University Studies* 41, no. 4 (2002): 5–45; Kenneth R. Mays, "A Man of Vision and Determination: A Photographic Essay and Tribute to Wilford C. Wood," *Mormon Historical Studies* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 154–73; <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/historic-sites/new-york/palmyra/book-of-mormon-publication-site-palmyra?lang=eng>; Trent Toone, "How the Church Has Commemorated the Restoration in Previous Years," *Church News*, April 2, 2020. Several of these sites were originally purchased by Latter-day Saint collector Wilford C. Wood then subsequently transferred to the Church. Additionally the Winter Quarters cemetery, which was leased to the Church by the city of Omaha beginning in the 1930s, was formally transferred to the Church in 1999. Elaine Bylund and R. Scott Lloyd, "Winter Quarters Cemetery Now Owned by the Church," *Church News*, April 19, 1999.

45. Scott C. Esplin, *Return to the City of Joseph: Modern Mormonism's Contest for the Soul of Nauvoo* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018). Because property transactions for much of historic Nauvoo were conducted quietly in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the years listed for the Woodruff, Young, and Browning properties as well as the pioneer burial ground are the dates the structures or sites were publicly dedicated. See also James B. Allen, "Nauvoo's Masonic Hall," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 10 (1990): 39–49.
46. Jamshid Ghazi Askar, "LDS Church Buys Farmland, Haun's Mill, Far West, Kirtland Property from Community of Christ," *Deseret News*, May 5, 2012. While not frequently considered a historic site like the Sacred Grove or Carthage Jail, Salt Lake City's Temple Square was treated like a historic site with the creation of a bureau of information on the grounds in 1902. It is the home of several historically important structures, most prominently the Salt Lake Temple and the Tabernacle.
47. Lund, "Joseph F. Smith and the Origins of the Church Historic Sites Program," 354.
48. Wilford Wood proposed some of the ideas for using the sites for proselyting. Wood was responsible for acquiring many early Latter-day Saint sites.
49. Lund, "Joseph F. Smith and the Origins of the Church Historic Sites Program," 354.
50. John R. Winder, "Joseph and Hyrum Memorial," in Conference Report, April 1904, 77.
51. "Register of Visitors to 'Old' Carthage Jail," 1940, Carthage Jail Memorial Visitors Center, Visitors' Registers: 1919–1934, 1940–1958, Church History Library.
52. Richard H. Jackson, "Historical Sites," 592.
53. Michael Hubbard MacKay, *Sacred Space: Exploring the Birthplace of Mormonism* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2016), 5.
54. For more on the importance of geography as a pedagogical tool see Yu-Hsiu Liao, Wei-Chieh Kung, and Hsueh-Chih Chen, "Testing the Effectiveness of Creative Map Mnemonic Strategies in a Geography Class," *Instructional Science* 47, no. 5 (2019): 589–608.
55. Mayes, *Why Old Places Matter*, 9.
56. Spencer W. Kimball, "Who Am I?," in *Church History and Doctrine Seminary Home-Study Course* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984), unit 1, p. 1.
57. Patterson, *Pioneers in the Attic*, 58.
58. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/articles/the-first-vision-podcast-episode-6-transcript>.
59. Alan Morinis, "Introduction: The Territory of the Anthropology of Pilgrimage," in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Alan Morinis (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 1–28.
60. Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 3.
61. Sarah Jane Weaver, "Church Historic Sites Reinforce Faith and Help Us Remember," *Church News*, January 27, 2016.
62. Olsen, "Touring Sacred History: The Latter-day Saints and Their Historical Sites," 228.
63. Dennis B. Neuenschwander, "Holy Space, Sacred Space," *Ensign*, May 2003.
64. Neuenschwander, "Holy Space, Sacred Space"; emphasis added.
65. Hillary Kaell, "Can Pilgrimage Fail? Intent, Efficacy, and Evangelical Trips to the Holy Land," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 31, no. 3 (2016): 393–408.
66. Neuenschwander, "Holy Space, Sacred Space."

67. “Teaching with Historic Places and the ‘Power of Place’: Using Places to Teach,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/teachingwithhistoricplaces/using-places.htm>.
68. Boyd K. Packer, “The Snow White Birds,” *BYU Speeches*, August 29, 1995.
69. Mayes, *Why Old Places Matter*, 71.
70. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/articles/the-first-vision-podcast-episode-6-transcript>.
71. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/articles/the-first-vision-podcast-episode-6-transcript>.
72. See Daniel H. Olsen and Dallen J. Timothy, “COVID-19 and Religious Travel: Present and Future Directions,” *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 8, no. 7 (2020): 170–88.
73. Susan M. Dunn-Hensley, “Virtual Pilgrimage in a Time of Pandemic: Lessons from the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham,” *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 8, no. 7 (2020): 121–29.
74. Olsen and Timothy, “COVID-19 and Religious Travel,” 172–73.
75. For example, see <https://www.theconqueror.events/camino/>.
76. See, for example, <https://nauvootours.as.me/schedule.php>; Lindsay Williams, “These Church Historic Sites Are Offering Virtual Tours,” LDSLiving.com, <https://www.ldsliving.com/These-Church-historic-sites-are-offering-virtual-tours/s/93249>. The Doctrine and Covenants Central website also offers 360° tours of Church historical sites. See <https://doctrineandcovenantscentral.org/places-of-the-doctrine-and-covenants/>.
77. Rachel Sterzer Gibson, “How the Church Historic Sites Are Fulfilling Their Purpose during the Pandemic,” *Church News*, January 6, 2021. One historic sites curator noted that an unexpected effect of the pandemic and the eventual production of virtual tours was equalized opportunity for Saints to experience Church historic sites, especially for membership outside the United States. Personal communication with authors.
78. Gibson, “Church Historic Sites.”
79. Gibson, “Church Historic Sites.”
80. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016), 82, 90.
81. See history.churchofjesuschrist.org.
82. For an example, see Kenneth Mays, “10 Notable but Not Well-Known Church History Sites in the U.S.—Plus 1 in England,” *Church News*, January 22, 2021. See also <https://ensignpeakfoundation.org/sites-registry-2/>.
83. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley*, 89; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, cited in Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 592.
84. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/articles/the-priesthood-restored-podcast-episode-6-transcript>.
85. Jennifer Lund, “Why Historic Sites,” <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/content/historic-sites/why-keep-historic-sites?lang=eng>.
86. Jennifer Lund, “Why Historic Sites.”
87. Steven E. Snow, cited in Weaver, “Church Historic Sites Reinforce Faith and Help Us Remember.”