

Nathaniel H. Felt: An Essex County Man

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A Mission to Salem

By the end of the eighteenth century, Salem, Massachusetts, was America's sixth largest city and the richest per capita.¹ This treasure city had obtained a large portion of its wealth through maritime merchants who arranged for ships to ply the seas and obtain a portion of the wealth of the Far East. In 1836, Joseph Smith and a few of his companions (Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, and Oliver Cowdery) had been lured to this Beverly Hills of the East by reports of a Brother Burgess, who had claimed that a large sum of money was hidden in a house in Salem. Burgess informed Joseph that he was the only one who knew of this treasure, located in a certain Salem cellar.²

At this time Church leaders were vulnerable to propositions to obtain money because of the heavy debt incurred by the building of the Kirtland Temple and also from the expense of Zion's Camp. The Prophet Joseph and his associates therefore decided to travel to Salem in hopes of relieving the Church of these debts by procuring the hidden treasure of which Burgess whispered. However, when they arrived in Salem, Joseph received a revelation (August 6, 1836) that informed him that the treasure hunt for hidden money was folly (see D&C 111:1). However, the Lord opened Joseph's eyes to the spiritual treasures yet unmined in the city. He informed the Prophet, "I have much treasure in this city for you, for the benefit of Zion, and many people in this city, whom I will gather out in due time for the benefit of Zion, through your instrumentality" (D&C 111:2).

Five years later this revelation began to be fulfilled when Erastus Snow and Benjamin Winchester received the assignment to go on a mission to Salem. This appointment came from two members of

the First Presidency, Hyrum Smith and William Law, who issued the assignment at a conference in Philadelphia, where Snow and Winchester had been laboring as missionaries. Smith gave Snow a copy of the revelation with the charge to fulfill it.³ The following year, Elder Snow wrote to Smith and Law from Salem, indicating that the call had been initially “repugnant to my feelings,” as he was concerned with not being able to meet the temporal needs of his family. However, Snow added in his letter, “I prayed that God would open the way before me; and [he] did it opening the hearts of my friends. . . . And they voluntarily opened their purses when they heard my intreties [*sic*].”⁴

Snow’s autobiography reveals more of the details of this mission: “In the summer of 1841, Elder Winchester and I received instructions from the First Presidency to go to Massachusettes and open up the gospel in Salem, Boston, and that region of the country. We went together and hired the Masonic Hall in Salem and commenced preaching, but Elder Winchester very soon returned to Philadelphia, leaving me to occupy the field alone.”⁵

Notwithstanding his solitude, Snow was successful in his labors and was later joined by Elder E. P. Maginn.⁶ Most success was rooted in his preaching at the Masonic Hall and in the distribution of a pamphlet titled *An Address to the Citizens of Salem (Mass.) and Vicinity*.⁷ By March 5, 1842, he had organized the first Salem Branch with a membership of fifty-three Saints whom he had gathered from Marblehead, Lynn, and Salem.⁸ Three months later the *Salem Register*, in an article titled “The Mormons in Salem,” stated, “Mormonism is advancing with a perfect rush in this city, just at present. . . . Meetings have been holden now very frequently for several days past, and crowds flock to listen to the strange doctrines of the ‘Latter-day Saints.’ How many new converts they make, we have not learned.”⁹

Before leaving the Salem region for a season (departing March 9, 1843), Snow had mined 120 converts, thus leaving behind new prospectors seeking jewels for the Lord.¹⁰ One such jewel consequently discovered was a Salem tailor named Nathaniel Henry Felt, who proved to be a sapphire of a Saint. Felt’s influence illuminated not only Salem but every location in which he dwelt.

Early Life of Nathaniel Henry Felt

Nathaniel Henry Felt was born February 6, 1816, at Salem, Essex County, Massachusetts, to Nathaniel Felt and Hanna Reeves. He was the second son born with this same first name to Nathaniel Sr. and Hannah, whose firstborn son by this name had died at sea when nineteen years old.¹¹ Nathaniel Sr. was born in Salem (as was Nathaniel Henry) but was not the first Felt to have his nativity in this early American city. In 1628, at age twenty-seven, George Felt (sixth great grandfather of Nathaniel) emigrated from England to Salem, seven years before Joseph Smith Jr.'s first ancestor (Robert Smith) came to this region.¹² Nathaniel Sr. spent much of his life as a merchant trader in the West Indies. Like Joseph Smith Jr., he had also been dealt a heavy financial blow through unfortunate business affairs, which resulted in the loss of his home. His untimely death in 1823 brought great difficulties upon his wife, who was left with these severe financial circumstances coupled with the additional responsibility of raising a large family of twelve children, of whom Nathaniel Henry, age seven, was the youngest.¹³

Concerning Nathaniel's youth and adolescence, Orson F. Whitney wrote the following:

Nathaniel attended the common schools of his native place, and before and after school hours acted as errand boy for a draper and tailor's establishment. He was . . . full of ambition to gain a collegiate education. He worked hard in that direction, but owing to the reduced circumstances of the family had to abandon his purpose just as he was about to enter the high school, and was apprenticed to a tailor at Lynn, five miles from Salem. He was then fifteen years of age. . . . Through the help of his only surviving brother, he bought out an establishment in Salem and . . . increased his means by some fortune ventures in the African and China trade.¹⁴

Through Nathaniel's musical interests he met Eliza Ann Preston, and they were wed on October 3, 1839. His young family was divided over the issue of religion, so he declined membership in any of the organizations. However, after a careful investigation of Mormonism, Felt was baptized in fall 1843.¹⁵ Shortly thereafter, he was assigned as the president of the Salem Branch.¹⁶

During this period Felt became acquainted with several Church leaders, including Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, and Brigham Young, who frequently visited his home in Salem. In fact, in 1842 Brigham's second-oldest daughter, Vilate, moved to Salem at age twelve to study music and while there lived with Nathaniel and his family.¹⁷ Two years later (June 18, 1844) Brigham visited Vilate in Salem, and soon after he returned home to Nauvoo (because of the dreadful news of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith), he wrote to her and counseled her, "Be steady to your school and practis on the Pianna. Get all you can while you have an oportunity."¹⁸ Brigham Young had encouraged Nathaniel to stay in Salem for a season, but when mobs became a more serious threat, Felt decided to gather with the Saints in Nauvoo.

Nauvoo Period

Having closed his tailor business at great expense, Nathaniel and his family left Salem for Nauvoo on June 5, 1845.¹⁹ Arriving in the "City Beautiful" by the end of the month, Felt received a patriarchal blessing under the hands of Patriarch John Smith on June 30, 1845, which provided additional purpose and direction for his life. Among other things, Nathaniel was told in the blessing, "The eye of the Lord has been upon thee from everlasting, and he has designed thee to do a great work in rolling forth his kingdom, in gathering Israel and establishing Zion in the last days."²⁰

While in Nauvoo he again entered into the tailoring business and continued his church work, laboring as one of the Presidents of the 29th Quorum of the Seventy. A ledger Felt kept in Nauvoo indicates that he made clothing for prominent Church leaders and their families. Cost of time and materials is carefully recorded. For example, the following report is recorded in Felt's ledger for a business transaction made with Brigham Young on November 17, 1845:²¹

To [For] Making F. Coat & Pants	7.50
" Trimmings	153
" Alpacca 112 - Turill Cotton 12 -	125
" Making a coat & cape	600
" Making over coat	650
" 8 1/2 yards Binding 100 - 8 8k silk 48 - Twist - 8	156
" Padding 30 = 1 1/2 yds B Linen 45 Cuff facings - 12	87

"	1 yd cambric 15 = Pockets 25 Buttons 50	90
"	Cutting Over Coat fr boy	37
	[total]	\$26.49

On this same date there are similar notations for charges made to John Taylor, who would later succeed Young as Church President. The following month, the ledger also indicates that both Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards had frocks and pants made, as well as other materials.²²

Felt also had other opportunities to provide for the inhabitants of Nauvoo during this period when the Nauvoo Temple was being completed. It was at this time that his furniture finally arrived from Salem via New Orleans. One Utah historian noted, "Some of his furniture, such as carpets, tables, chairs, sofa and mirrors, were used to furnish the sacred house preparatory to the performance of ordinances therein."²³ Soon after the completion of the Nauvoo Temple, the Saints began their exodus from Nauvoo.²⁴ Nathaniel planned to journey west with his family, but "being stricken with fever and ague on the frozen banks of the Missouri [Mississippi] he was unable to proceed."²⁵ One historian noted that this sickness was caused by Felt's overexerting himself in his efforts to help his fellow Saints across the Mississippi during the period of the Nauvoo exile. Therefore, in this weakened condition he was counseled to postpone his journey west, and he later took his wife and two sons to St. Louis.²⁶ But before his departure from Nauvoo, he and several hundred poor Saints would have to face a threatening mob during the "Battle of Nauvoo." During this time, he would be assigned to serve in Captain Gates's company to defend the temple.²⁷

Sometime during the tumultuous times of the Battle of Nauvoo in 1846, Nathaniel had just gotten onto a small ferryboat that had pushed off a few rods when a platoon of the mob arrived on the east bank and called for the ferryman to return to shore, threatening to shoot if he did not. While they were returning to shore, Nathaniel witnessed the mob manhandling a young man as he begged not to be taken into the water because he was sick. They were mocking and swearing at him; then two of them took him into the river and mockingly raised an arm and claimed to baptize him in the name of Joe Smith, the Mormons, and the Nauvoo Temple.²⁸

St. Louis Period

Nathaniel finally escaped the Nauvoo persecutions and gathered his family to St. Louis. Here, Nathaniel was again called to be a leader, as he had been in Salem. On February 8, 1847, he was called to preside over the St. Louis Conference.²⁹ The 1847–50 “Record of the St. Louis Branch” indicates that on February 14, 1847, Felt was “Unanimously Chosen President.”³⁰ Just five weeks later he “laid before the council the necessity of having the city laid out in Wards, six in number.”³¹ For the next three years Nathaniel functioned in this capacity, although he was not released from his position as a President of the 29th Quorum of the Seventy.

Church leaders, not forgetting that Felt was in St. Louis, corresponded with him regularly. For example, in fall 1847 President Brigham Young counseled Felt by letter to “forward the emigrating saints to Winter Quarters.”³² On February 7, 1848, Young again wrote to Felt from Winter Quarters and gave detailed instruction to “cooperate with the firm of Beach & Eddy, St. Louis, who intend shipping a large quantity of goods, groceries, etc., to this point in the spring, for which purpose they will have to charter boats, on which the Saints can secure passages cheaper and as convenient as on any others.”³³ The following day President Young wrote Felt a letter of introduction for William Clayton that stimulated Nathaniel’s involvement in assisting Clayton in the publication of his *Emigrant Guide*, which would have a profound impact not only on Latter-day Saints, but on westbound emigrants in general.³⁴ The following month, Brigham Young wrote to Felt in St. Louis, “We feel to bless you in the name of the Lord and say, go on and prosper and never be weary in well doing.”³⁵ On April 12, 1848, Elder Orson Hyde of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles again wrote to Nathaniel and among other things recorded, “The Council highly approve of your wisdom and firmness in managing the affairs of the Church under all circumstances.”³⁶ Felt kept the Church authorities informed of incidents in St. Louis as well as events occurring on the banks of the Mississippi. Among other things, Felt reported that on November 16, 1848, a mob had torched the Nauvoo Temple.³⁷

During these St. Louis years, President Felt also assisted many Mormon migrants, including Nauvoo exiles, European immigrants,

and Eastern Saints trying to make their way west to Utah.³⁸ In a St. Louis council meeting in 1849, President Felt spoke concerning the gathering and urged the Saints to gather because there were too many in St. Louis. He desired Church leaders to spread this message that all might gather, even if only to Council Bluffs. Just two months later he urged the Saints who had temporarily gathered to St. Louis to go to the Bluffs or as far as they could.³⁹ Felt was also influential in helping missionaries who passed through St. Louis to their various fields of labor. For example, Elder Eli B. Kelsey, who was on his way to England with Elder George P. Dykes, passed through St. Louis in 1849. In an article to the editor of the *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, Kelsey reported warmly, "We spent one week in St. Louis. Brother Felt . . . treated us with great kindness, and have given us means sufficient to bear our expenses to New York. . . . I can confidently say to all the emigrating Saints, who are *compelled* to stop in St. Louis for want of means to proceed further, that if they will hearken to the counsel of brother Felt and his counselors, it will be well with them."⁴⁰

Andrew Jenson wrote, "Upon Nathaniel H. Felt devolved almost entirely the duty of advising these immigrants, purchasing outfits and supplies for them, and chartering the necessary steamboats to take them to Kaneshville. It was always a matter of congratulation with him that no accident occurred to and no scourge of sickness prevailed on any of the vessels thus engaged by him."⁴¹ Jenson further notes that during the great cholera epidemic in St. Louis [1849], President Felt "was constantly called for by the afflicted people, and responded by visiting, administering [*sic*] to and comforting them, scarcely taking time to eat or sleep."⁴² Not only was Felt's life spared from the epidemic, but when the great St. Louis fire broke out in spring 1849,⁴³ Felt's frame home was miraculously spared as flames came right up to his dwelling but did not destroy it, though a brick building that lay just opposite it was destroyed.⁴⁴ In his patriarchal blessing given four years earlier, Felt had been told that God had "given his Angels charge over thee to preserve thee in all times of danger."⁴⁵

The following year, when Nathaniel Felt completed his priesthood assignment in St. Louis and left in the spring for Utah, the St. Louis Saints rallied to help support him and his family in their

journey. Hezekiah Mitchell, a passing Mormon emigrant, even contributed to help him get to Zion. On April 14, 1850, he recorded in his journal, "Gave half a dollar to President Felt's subscription to help him to the valley."⁴⁶ In a St. Louis Church council meeting held April 20, 1850, Felt spoke to the council of Church leaders for the last time as president, announcing he was going to resign and go to the Salt Lake Valley. "He much regretted leaving so many with whom he had been associated for the last three years. Yet he hoped it would not be long before he met them all in the Valley. . . . Elder Felt then nominated Bro. Alexander Robbins to act as his successor [*sic*] as President."⁴⁷

Nathaniel and his wife and two sons left St. Louis together and joined the Edward Woolley Company at Council Bluffs on June 25, 1850, to cross the plains. Nathaniel served as a chaplain and was frequently called on to preach. Although cholera was smiting emigrants as they crossed the plains, the only person who died of cholera in this entire company was Felt's teamster. The company arrived in Salt Lake City on October 6, 1850.⁴⁸

Early Salt Lake City Years

The Felt family lived its first winter in Salt Lake City in wagons and tents on upper Main Street, opposite Heber C. Kimball's home. They constructed a two-room adobe house the following spring.⁴⁹ By this time, Felt had already been appointed by President Brigham Young as one of four aldermen of Salt Lake City.⁵⁰ By August 1851 the first legislature of the Territory of Utah was created, and Felt was elected to serve in the House of Representatives.⁵¹ Throughout this period of his life Felt was in the public eye, and such involvement included participation in holiday events. For example, he offered the opening prayers for the 1851 Pioneer Day celebration as well as a prayer of thanksgiving for the 1851 Christmas festivities.⁵²

During the fall general conference of 1851, Brigham Young announced Nathaniel Felt's appointment to the new office of a traveling bishop, created to assist the presiding bishop. "President Young said, there would be travelling Bishops, to visit the Bishops in their respective wards, to see that they do their duty. . . . Nathaniel H. Felt was nominated as one of the travelling Presiding

Bishops, under Bishop Edward Hunter.” This assignment also included “gathering tithing, and causing it to be forwarded to the general office—in keeping correct accounts.”⁵³ The following spring (April 7, 1852), Felt was sustained as Assistant Presiding Bishop, a calling in which he labored for eighteen months.⁵⁴ Just five days later (April 12, 1852), he was appointed as one of two chaplains in the Nauvoo Legion.⁵⁵ Two months later Felt was appointed to a committee of five to make plans for the Fourth of July celebration in Utah.⁵⁶ And Latter-day Saint migrants were told to visit with Bishop Felt because he was at this time in the Public Works office.⁵⁷

In spring 1853 Felt was sustained as a member of the high council for the Salt Lake City Stake.⁵⁸ The next year, Nathaniel entered the order of plural marriage, being sealed to Sarah Strange on March 17, 1854. Less than two years later he married Mary Louisa Pile.⁵⁹

New York Church Assignment and Return to Salt Lake City

During this same period, Felt would have additional Church assignments, which included assisting John Taylor in New York with the Latter-day Saint periodical the *Mormon* and aiding emigrants who landed at Castle Garden. Apparently Felt kept President Brigham Young aware of various emigration situations. For example, Felt told Young about the first Latter-day Saint converts who had disembarked in Philadelphia.⁶⁰ Emigration service rendered by these brethren may also be evidenced by one Mormon immigrant who crossed the Atlantic on the *Thornton* in 1856: “At sun down we landed at the Castle Gardens, a large building appropriated for emigrants, where we were visited by Elder Felt who kindly welcomed us.”⁶¹ James G. Willie, who was on this same voyage, recorded, “On our arrival at Castle Gardens, New York, we received a hearty welcome from President John Taylor and Elder Felt.”⁶² During their emigration labors, the New York brethren still made time for fun. Felt and several of his companions enjoyed taking an excursion to Toms River, New Jersey.⁶³

By fall 1856, Felt had completed this assignment and returned to Salt Lake City. On his return, he was successful in obtaining a government contract to provide Camp Floyd troops with supplies.

He was also involved with David R. Allen in establishing grain and produce stores in Ephraim, Nephi, and Salt Lake City.⁶⁴ Just one week before the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln to the office of President of the United States, Nathaniel was elected to the board of directors for the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society.⁶⁵

Missions to Great Britain and Salem Region

Throughout the years 1865–67, Felt was a missionary in Great Britain and spent a portion of his time working in the office where the *Millennial Star* was published. He also served as a leader in the London District.⁶⁶ While on his mission in November 1865, he responded to an article titled “An Essex County Man,” published by the *Salem Gazette* on August 30, 1865. His article was published on December 22, 1865, under the caption “Mormonism Defended.” Among other things, Felt straightened out erroneous information about himself and defended the Church, including the doctrine of polygamy. He concluded his letter by stating, “I remain an ‘Essex County Man.’”⁶⁷

From November 1869 to May 1870, Felt labored as a New England States missionary, mostly in his native state of Massachusetts.⁶⁸ On December 4, 1869, the *Salem Observer* announced: “Elder N. H. Felt, formerly of Salem now of Salt Lake City, and a leading spirit in the ‘Church of Latterday Saints,’ is in Salem on a visit to his many old friends. The Elder is a preacher and a missionary and has indicated his willingness to do a little Mormon missionary work here if the people want to hear him. Mr. Felt went to Utah in 1846 [1845], and we have no doubt he has an interesting story to tell about his adventures.”⁶⁹

A week later, the *Observer* noted under the heading “Special Notices” a brief advertisement titled “Mormonism,” which stated, “Elder N. H. Felt of Salt Lake City, will discourse upon the views and doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints at Hubon Hall, Washington street, To-morrow. Nov. 12 commencing at 10 o’clock, A.M., 2 1-2, and 7 o’clock P.M.”⁷⁰ While he was in New England, on February 20, 1870, several of the Brethren were gathered at the home of Elias Smith in Salt Lake City to discuss the family history of Joseph Smith Jr. One of those in attendance was

Wilford Woodruff, who wrote in his journal, “N. H. Felt had searched the Ancient Records of the Smith family & sent an account of some wills & other Accounts of the family of Joseph Smith to G A Smith & they were read over during the Evening with much interest.”⁷¹ This indicates that Nathaniel was gathering treasures not only by way of converts but also by research into the Joseph Smith family genealogy.

Latter Utah Years

For many of his latter Utah years, Nathaniel Felt served on the Salt Lake Stake high council and was anxiously engaged in Church as well as state affairs, but in 1873 he was struck with a severe illness.⁷² A few years before this he was listed in the 1869 *Salt Lake City Directory* as a cashier for Jennings and Company while living in the Seventeenth Ward between East Temple and 100 North. One year after his illness struck (1874), he was listed at the same home address but without any type of employment given.⁷³ The following year, on June 19, 1875, Nathaniel’s first wife, Eliza Ann Preston, died. A tender view of his life is portrayed by his firstborn son, Joseph Henry Felt, who wrote an excerpt in his journal of the family gathering that occurred at his mother’s burial place, on the one-year anniversary of her death. Joseph wrote that his father had requested the family to meet at the burial place of his mother to commemorate her death the previous year. After making several remarks about her goodness and urging the family to be united, he asked that the family gather each year at her burial site. Joseph concludes, “We then pulled the weeds from the grave and placed roses and other flowers upon it.”⁷⁴

Although Felt continued to encourage his family, he never fully recovered from this illness. Notwithstanding the trial of poor health, he continued to serve as a home missionary and also contributed articles to the press.⁷⁵ On January 15, 1887, Felt was struck with partial paralysis, which ultimately led to his death.⁷⁶ He died twelve days later, on January 27, 1887, leaving a posterity of eight sons, five daughters, and sixteen grandchildren.⁷⁷ Felt’s patriarchal blessing noted, “Thou shalt have a numerous posterity, they shall grow up and be very healthy, they shall continue to increase so they cannot

be numbered.”⁷⁸ Now the family tree of Nathaniel Henry Felt numbers in the thousands, and many descendants have been favorably influenced by this noble servant and patriarch.

Epilogue

In the February 3, 2001, issue of the *Church News*, staff writer Shaun Stahle wrote that the location of the “stately three-story” Nathaniel H. Felt Salem home had been positively identified and that it was on the property of the Peabody Essex Museum. Since that time, local Salem resident Debbie Benvie (multiregional director for Church public affairs) and avid Felt genealogist Jonathan C. Felt have been spearheading plans to develop a museum and city family history center at the Nathaniel H. Felt home site in Salem. They are now working in cooperation with Felt family members, the Peabody Museum officials, city dignitaries, and local Church leaders to honor Nathaniel, who remained throughout his life “an Essex County man.”

NOTES

¹See National Park Service, *Salem: Maritime Salem in the Age of Sail* (Washington DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1987), 17.

²See Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed., rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1948), 2:465–66. For more information on this journey to Salem, see Richard Lloyd Anderson, “The Mature Joseph Smith and Treasure Searching,” *BYU Studies* 24, no. 4 (Fall 1984): 499–506. There is a difference of opinion as to who this Brother Burgess is. Donald Q. Cannon maintains that this is Jonathan Burgess (see Donald Q. Cannon, “Joseph Smith in Salem [D&C 111],” in *The Doctrine and Covenants*, Vol. 1 in *Studies in Scripture*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson [Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1984], 437), while Dean Jessee maintains it is William Burgess.

³See Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), 67.

⁴Erastus Snow to Hyrum Smith and William Law, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, quoted in Kenneth W. Godfrey,

"More Treasures Than One: Section 111," in *Hearken, O Ye People: Discourses on the Doctrine and Covenants* (Sandy, UT: Randall Book, 1984), 197.

⁵"Autobiography of Erastus Snow," Church Archives, quoted in David J. Whittaker, "East of Nauvoo: Benjamin Winchester and the Early Mormon Church," *Journal of Mormon History* 21, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 49.

⁶On November 14, 1841, Snow recorded, "On the 14 Elder E. P. Magin came to Salem & assisted me." See Journals of Erastus Snow, Book 3 (June 1841–February 1847), Church Archives. Two years later the Journal History notes that Elders Hanks and Rogers had been sent to Salem to labor as missionaries (see Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 9, 1843, Church Archives). These missionaries were Noah Rogers and Knowlton F. Hanks, who were on their way to preach the gospel to the islands of the sea. Thus, they probably labored in Salem a very short time. They left Nauvoo in June 1843, along with Addison Pratt and Benjamin F. Grouard, to open a mission in Tahiti. Hanks died at sea on his journey to this field of labor (see James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992], 166).

⁷Larson notes, "He never failed to preach three times each Sunday at the Masonic Hall and in private dwellings during the week" (Larson, *Erastus Snow*, 69). A copy of the pamphlet he and Winchester wrote was published in the *Times and Seasons* (see Erastus Snow and Benjamin Winchester, "An Address to the Citizens of Salem [Mass.] and Vicinity," *Times and Seasons*, November 15, 1841, 578–84). Concerning this pamphlet, David J. Whittaker states, "There were 2500 copies made of this first printing, which was dated Salem, Massachusetts, 9 September 1841. A second printing was made within the week by Freeman Nickerson, and it was dated, Boston, Massachusetts, 13 September 1841. Winchester may have provided Nickerson with a copy of this *Address* as he was returning to Pennsylvania through Boston. Winchester noted in his letter to Joseph Smith on 18 September that he was enclosing a copy of the *Address* with the letter. It was probably this copy that was used for the third printing, which was published in two parts in the *Times and Seasons* 2 (15 October 1841): 574–76 and *ibid.*, 33 (15 November 1841): 578–84" ("Early Mormon Pamphleteering" [PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1982], 214).

⁸See Godfrey, "More Treasures Than One," 199; Larson, *Erastus Snow*, 70–71.

⁹"The Mormons in Salem," *Salem Register*, June 2, 1842. I express gratitude to Donald Q. Cannon for bringing this article to my attention.

¹⁰Larson notes that Nauvoo letters influenced Snow's desire to begin his return to that location on March 9, 1843 (see Larson, *Erastus Snow*, 74). Godfrey further notes that Snow arrived in Nauvoo April 11, 1843 (see Godfrey, "More Treasures Than One," 199). Larson points out that Snow remained only a month in Nauvoo, then began his journey back to Salem on May 11, 1843 (see Larson, *Erastus Snow*, 79).

¹¹According to John E. Morris, compiler of *The Felt Genealogy: A Record of the Descendants of George Felt* (Hartford, CT: Lockwood & Brainward, 1893), 145, this son was born October 27, 1795, and died March 14, 1815.

¹²See Laura Jo Dunkley DeMordaunt, “Ancestors and Descendants of George Felt who Settled in Salem, Massachusetts in 1628 with the Puritans,” in *A Brief Lineal History of Joseph Henry Felt*, comp. Helen Bitner Wilcox (n.p., 2001). Morris adds that George Felt came to America in 1628 with John Endicott (later the first governor of Massachusetts) and gathered to Salem with a small group in September of that year (see Morris, *The Felt Genealogy*, 9). DeMordaunt indicates that Felt moved to Charlestown in 1629 and just four years later was instrumental in organizing a new change in government for Charlestown, along with thirty-two other Charlestown inhabitants.

¹³See Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1904), 4:548. Felt family records compiled by Jonathan C. Felt (a Felt family genealogist) reveal that Nathaniel Felt died at age fifty-two of “intemperance” on October 14, 1852.

¹⁴Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:548. Caroline Howard King, *When I Lived In Salem, 1822–1866* (Brattleboro, VT: Stephen Daye, 1937) is a good source for studying the period of Nathaniel’s early adult life in Salem. *The Salem Directory and City Register* (Salem, MA: Henry Whipple, 1842), 32, indicates that Felt was living at 10 Liberty Street and that his tailor business was at 217 Essex. On page 15 of the *Salem Directory*: “Nathaniel H. Felt, Draper and Tailor, No. 217 Essex Street, corner of Market Court Salem.”

¹⁵Susan Easton Black indicates that Nathaniel Henry Felt was baptized in Salem on September 17, 1843 (see Susan Easton Black, comp., *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1830–1848* [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989], 16:130). Although it is not known who performed the baptism, it is reasonable to suppose that it could have possibly been Erastus Snow. Larson points out that during the month Snow had been in Nauvoo visiting with the Prophet (having been summoned there while still serving a mission in the East), he received permission from Joseph to gather his family and return to Nauvoo (see Larson, *Erastus Snow*, 79, 86). Larson also notes that after “settling the churches in order’ in Boston, Salem, Lowell, New Bedford, Peterborough, and Northbridge” he departed with his family from Boston on September 22, 1843 (Larson, *Erastus Snow*, 80). It is certainly plausible that Snow performed the baptismal ordinance. Furthermore, while in St. Louis in 1850, Nathaniel requested that Snow give a name and a blessing to his infant daughter, Margaret Eliza Preston Felt (see the Erastus Snow Journal for January 7, 1850). This possibility was suggested to me by Jonathan C. Felt, a descendant of Nathaniel Henry Felt and an avid genealogist for the Felt Family. Jonathan has also been very generous in supplying the author with research material for this article.

¹⁶Whitney states, “In the winter of 1843–44 he [Felt] was appointed president of the Salem branch” (Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:548).

¹⁷See Shaun Stahle, “Coincidental Meeting Leads to Preservation of Historic Home,” *Church News*, February 3, 2001, 5.

¹⁸Dean C. Jessee, "Brigham Young's Family," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 3 (spring 1978): 327.

¹⁹See Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:548.

²⁰The author has a copy of this blessing, kindly given to him by Spencer Felt, a great-grandson and the heir of Nathaniel Henry Felt. According to family research compiled by Jonathan C. Felt, Nathaniel received a second patriarchal blessing on July 18, 1845, under the hands of William Smith.

²¹This ledger, kept by Nathaniel Henry Felt while he was a tailor in Nauvoo, is in the possession of Spencer Felt. I express gratitude to Spencer for allowing me to examine it.

²²Several other names of Church members are also recorded in this ledger: Amasa Lyman, George Grant, Hosea Cushing, G. [George] L. Riser, L. [Lucius] Scovil, Elias Smith, Wm Taylor, Wm H. Kimball, L. P. Richards, Pardon Webb, Andrew Baston, Orson Hyde, Armstrong, Erastus Snow, Joseph Caine, Lawrence, A. W. Babbit, G. Edmonds, Jos. W. Coolidge, Edward Tuttle, Hodgman, Becham, M. Field, R. K. Whitney, Jos. L. Heywood, Richard Ballantyne, and J. E. Johnson. Ledger notations are hidden underneath various pages of this ledger, which is covered over with early newspapers such as the LDS periodicals *The Mormon* and the *Deseret Evening News* as well as the *Salem Gazette* and *New York Herald*, which were apparently gathered and glued by Felt or a family member prior to his death in 1887.

²³Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:548.

²⁴The first group left on February 4, 1846, and various companies followed until the fall of 1846. For more information on the Nauvoo exodus, see Fred E. Woods, *Gathering to Nauvoo* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2002), 119–47.

²⁵"Elder N. H. Felt," *Deseret Evening News*, February 1887, 44.

²⁶See Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:549.

²⁷See Journal History, September 10, 1846.

²⁸See Journal History, September 30, 1846, 7.

²⁹See Journal History, February 8, 1847. See also Journal History, April 4, 1847, in which Felt is again told to "tarry and preside over the church there" (meaning St. Louis).

³⁰John T. Caine, "Record of the Saint Louis Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints from the 14th day of February 1847 To the 21st of April 1850," February 14, 1847, 1, Church Archives.

³¹"Record of the Saint Louis Branch," February 14, 1847.

³²Journal History, November 25, 1847, 1.

³³Journal History, February 7, 1848, 2.

³⁴Journal History notes, "Brigham Young wrote Brother William Clayton letters of introduction to Elder Nathaniel H. Felt, and others at St. Louis, Missouri. Bro. Clayton being about to start for that city to publish his L.D.S. Emigrant Guide" (February 8, 1848, 1). A letter from Nathaniel in St. Louis to Brigham Young indicates that Clayton had made arrangements to have five thousand

copies of the *Emigrant Guide* sold (March 7, 1848, Brigham Young Correspondence, Church Archives; see also Journal History, March 28, 1848).

³⁵Journal History, March 14, 1848, 3.

³⁶Orson Hyde from Kaneshville, Pottawattamie Co., Iowa, to Nathaniel H. Felt, April 12, 1848, Church Archives. See also Journal History, April 12, 1848, 1.

³⁷See Journal History, November 16, 1848, 2.

³⁸See Stanley B. Kimball, "The Saints and St. Louis, 1831–1857: An Oasis of Tolerance and Security," *BYU Studies* 13, no. 4 (summer 1973): 507. Kimball later notes that Felt was replaced in 1850 by his first counselor, Alexander Robbins (509).

³⁹See "Record of the St. Louis Branch," December 15, 1849, 149.

⁴⁰Eli B. Kelsey, "Letter to the editor," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 12 (January 15, 1850): 27; emphasis in original. At this time, President Felt's office was located at no. 16 Third Street in St. Louis (see Journal History, January 26, 1850).

⁴¹Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History, 1914), 2:381.

⁴²Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:382. In the ledger kept by Felt while laboring as a tailor in Nauvoo, he extracted three pages of information regarding this deadly disease and a detailed account of how to best treat the disease from a letter that was printed in the *St. Louis Republican* by a Dr. W. B. Herrek of Chicago. This ledger is in the possession of Spencer Felt.

⁴³James Neal Primm points out that this fire, which broke out on Thursday night, May 17, 1849, caused more than six million dollars of property damage (see James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764–1980*, 3rd ed. [St. Louis, MO: Historical Society, 1998], 167–68).

⁴⁴See Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:382.

⁴⁵As noted previously, Felt obtained his patriarchal blessing under the hands of Patriarch John Smith on June 30, 1845. See note 20 above.

⁴⁶Journal of Hezekiah Mitchell, April 14, 1850, Church Archives.

⁴⁷"Record of the St. Louis Branch," April 20, 1850, 199–200.

⁴⁸See Journal History, July 4, 1850. The reference to the teamster dying from cholera was pointed out to me by Melvin L. Bashore, senior librarian at the LDS Church History Library (Salt Lake City), who has compiled a database that reveals all known references to emigrant accounts from each company that crossed the plains between 1847 and 1868.

⁴⁹See Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:549. According to family research gathered by Felt genealogist Jonathan C. Felt, Heber C. Kimball made arrangements for Nathaniel's family to dwell on his land.

⁵⁰This appointment took place under the first charter incorporating the city on January 9, 1851. Nathaniel had stewardship over one of four Municipal Wards. His ward, the 3rd Ward, was "bounded on the east by East Temple Street, south of South Temple Street, west by west bank of Jordan, north by the northern limits" (Journal History, January 9, 1851).

⁵¹Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:382. Jenson also notes, “Both in the Territorial and City governments, he served on many important committees, receiving dignitaries from the East, [including] arranging for memorial services on the day of President Loncoln’s [*sic*] funeral.”

⁵²See Journal History, July 24, 1851, 1; Journal History, December 25, 1851, 1.

⁵³Journal History, September 8, 1851, 1; September 22, 1851, 6. See also Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal: 1833–1898, Typescript* (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1984), 4:65, September 8, 1851. His ability to use phonography (shorthand) would have certainly aided him in keeping accurate records of his visits with various bishops and in receiving donations. See Journal History, January 1, 1852, wherein this additional skill is noted.

⁵⁴See Journal History, April 7, 1852. See also Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, for this date. According to Felt family records compiled by Jonathan C. Felt, Nathaniel served in this calling until October 1853, when he was released.

⁵⁵See Journal History, April 12, 1852, 1.

⁵⁶See Journal History, June 19, 1852, 1. Two years later, Nathaniel is listed as an aid for the Pioneer Day order of procession (see Journal History, July 24, 1854, 1).

⁵⁷See Journal History, September 18, 1852, quoted from an article titled “The Emigrating Saints,” *Deseret News*, October 2, 1852.

⁵⁸See Journal History, April 7, 1853, 1.

⁵⁹See Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:550. According to Paul E. Felt, Pile arrived from Europe on the vessel *Gondola*, disembarking at New York on March 18, 1854 (see Paul E. Felt, “‘I Remember When,’ Personal History of Paul E. Felt,” L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT). However, the *Gondola* disembarked at New Orleans while Felt was in Salt Lake City. Apparently this information was passed down incorrectly.

⁶⁰Letter written by Nathaniel H. Felt from New York to Brigham Young on April 28, 1855 (see Brigham Young Correspondence, LDS Church Archives).

⁶¹Journal of William Woodard, June 14, 1856, quoted in Marilyn Austin Smith, “Faithful Stewards—The Life of James Gray Willie and Elizabeth Ann Pettit,” 95, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

⁶²Journal of William Woodard, June 14, 1856, quoted in Smith, “Faithful Stewards,” 95.

⁶³See Journal History, July 14, 1855, 7.

⁶⁴See Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:550.

⁶⁵See Journal History, February 25, 1861. On March 4, 1861, Wilford Woodruff notes that Felt was elected to the board of directors of the D A & M Society (see Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 5:557).

⁶⁶See Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:383.

⁶⁷Nathaniel H. Felt, “Mormonism Defended,” *Salem Gazette*, December 22, 1865, 1.

⁶⁸See Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:383.

⁶⁹Quoted from the *Deseret Evening News*, December 20, 1869, in *Journal History*, December 20, 1869.

⁷⁰“Mormonism,” *Salem Observer*, December 11, 1869.

⁷¹Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 6:529, February 20, 1870.

⁷²See Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:383.

⁷³See E. L. Sloan, ed., *The Salt Lake City Directory and Business Guide, for 1869* (Salt Lake City: E. L. Sloan, 1869), 105; *Gazeteer of Utah, and Salt Lake City Directory*, ed. Edward L. Sloan (Salt Lake City: Salt Lake Herald, 1874), 215.

⁷⁴Journal of Joseph Henry Felt, June 18, 1876, quoted in Helen Bitner Wilcox, comp., *A Brief Lineal History of Joseph Henry Felt* (n.p., 2001).

⁷⁵See Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:383.

⁷⁶See “Old Salt Lakers. Nathaniel H. Felt,” *Deseret News*, June 2, 1900. See also his obituary in “Elder N. H. Felt,” *Deseret Evening News*, January 29, 1887, 3.

⁷⁷See Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:383.

⁷⁸Blessing given to Nathaniel Henry Felt on June 30, 1845, by Patriarch John Smith; see note 20 above.