

# Missouri Historical Review

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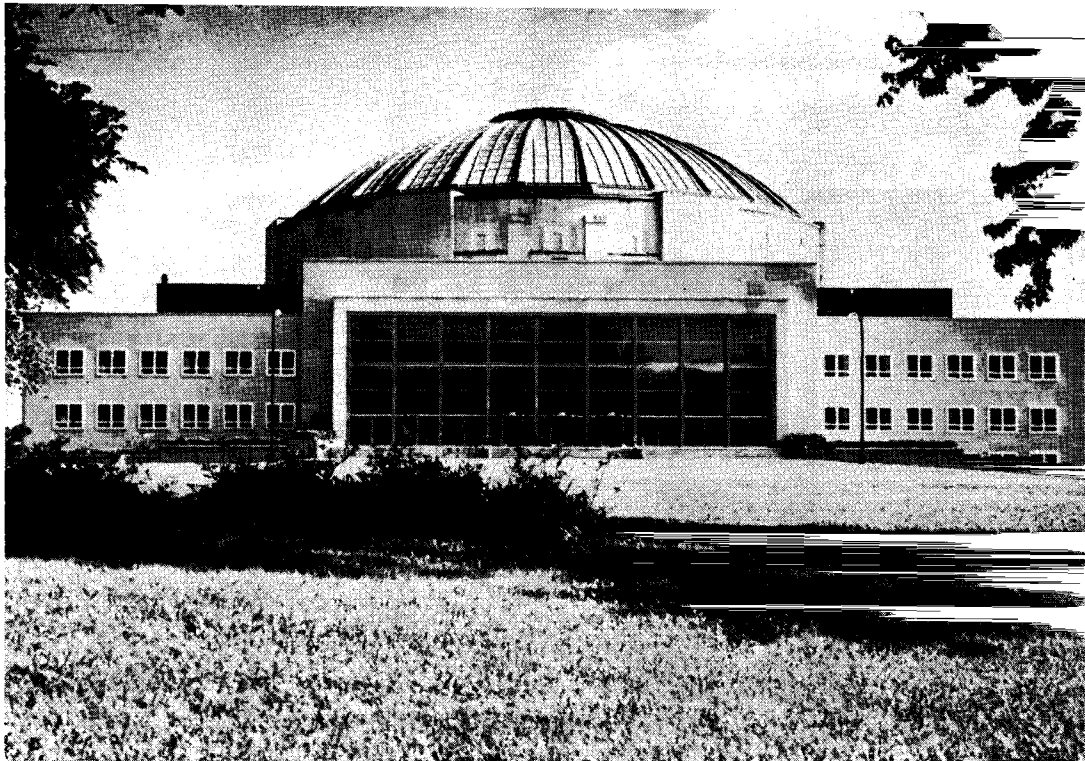
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THE COVER: This illustration portraying the building of the Columbia-Providence Plank Road was taken from a mural in the council chamber of the Columbia Municipal Building. The mural, painted by Kenneth Eugene Hudson during 1934-1935, consists of twelve 6' x 9' panels, and depicts the area's development from an early Indian settlement in all its simplicity to the advent of the industrial era. The subjects are general in nature and require no special explanation although several refer to specific incidents. Hudson explained the mural as "an attempt to sum up the surging forces that create a civilization rather than to glorify incidents in its development." For more on the Columbia-Providence Plank Road, see page 53.

The artist was born in Xenia, Ohio, December 28, 1903, attended Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio, and received a B.F.A. degree at Yale in 1927. For two years he served as assistant professor in the School of Architecture and Allied Arts at the University of Oregon. He came to the University of Missouri in 1929 where he remained until 1938 serving as professor and chairman in the School of Fine Arts. Since 1938 he has been Dean of the School of Fine Arts at Washington University, St. Louis.



The Auditorium

## THE SAINTS BUILD A TEMPLE

BY ROGER YARRINGTON\*

It is unusual for a building to be historic by the time its construction is completed, but such is the case with the Auditorium, world headquarters for The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Independence, Missouri. Although a site for the church had been selected and sanctified by the founder and pioneer leaders of the church as early as 1831, it was not until April 1, 1962, over 130 years later, that Latter Day Saints celebrated the completion of the Auditorium in special dedicatory ceremonies.

Pioneers of the church came to Independence when it was a frontier village, a beginning place for the famous trails west. In August, 1831, a little over a year after the church was organized in Fayette, New York, Joseph Smith, Jr., founder and prophet of the new church, indicated that henceforth Independence would be the center of church activities and that a temple should be built there. The site for the temple was selected and dedicated, with Joseph himself and seven other church leaders participating.

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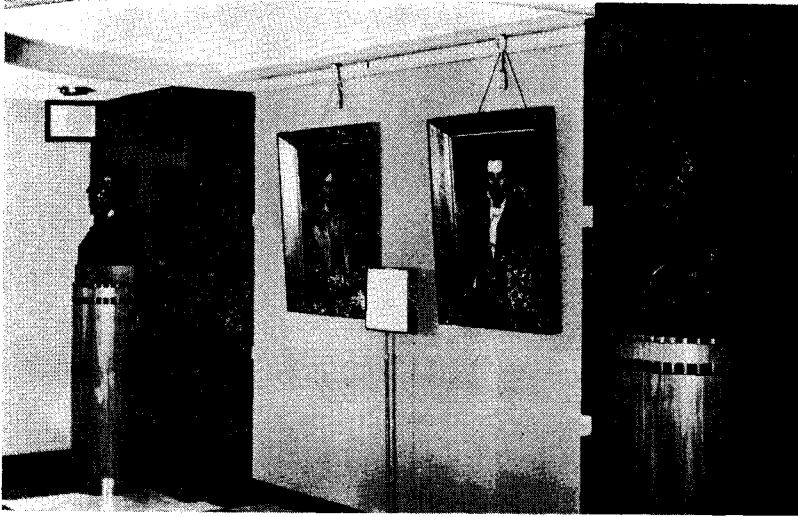
\*Roger Yarrington is editor of the *Saints' Herald*, official publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with headquarters in the Auditorium, Independence, Missouri.

At the time this section of land was dedicated for use by the church the members owned no ground in Independence. However, in months following, church members from eastern congregations began moving into Independence and gradually acquired their own land. This was accomplished through the use of their own funds and through Presiding Bishop Edward Partridge, chief financial officer of the church, who used church offerings to buy property. Lands purchased with church funds were to be "inheritances" for Latter Day Saints who immigrated to "the land of Zion."

On December 10, 1831, Partridge purchased from Jones H. Flourney and his wife for \$130 a tract of land which included the spot dedicated for the temple. The land was spoken of from that time on as "the Temple Lot." It is now bounded on the north and west by the curve of Lexington street, on the south by the Missouri Pacific railroad tracks, and on the east by Union Street. It is roughly four blocks long, north and south, and three blocks wide, east and west. Today the Auditorium, which has a frontage of 250 feet and is 270 feet deep, is located almost in the center of the land purchased.

The initial influx of "Mormons," as they were called, into Jackson County was peaceful enough in the beginning, but soon there were incidents which indicated the dislike of the new arrivals by the other residents. Roofs were torn from their houses at night, and men of the church were openly beaten. The cause of the hostility was both political and sociological. The Latter Day Saints migrating into Independence were composed primarily of New Englanders and thus had different accents and customs from their new neighbors. They called themselves Saints and refused to drink or to gamble, which set them apart from most frontiersmen and made them seem strange. They spoke of being a "chosen people" and let it be known that they believed God would give them the land as an "inheritance." Perhaps these things would have resulted in no great conflict, but there was another factor. The majority of the Saints were from the northeastern states and were therefore influenced by the attitudes of the non-slave holding North.

Alexander W. Doniphan, a prominent Missourian of the time who distinguished himself as a soldier and political leader and who was intimately involved in the situation as a friend and legal counselor to the church, stated that slavery was the chief issue that brought about the persecution of the Saints. "I think the real objections to the Mormons," Doniphan said, "were their denunciation of slavery, and the objections slaveholders had to having so



**Auditorium Art Gallery**

large a settlement of anti-slavery people in their midst, and also to their acquiring such a large amount of land, which then belonged to the Government and subject to the pre-emption.”<sup>1</sup>

An editorial, “Free People of Color,” published July 20, 1833, in the *Evening and Morning Star*, fanned the flames of persecution. The paper, begun by the Saints in Independence in June, 1832, was published by W. W. Phelps. On the day the editorial was printed, his home and printing plant were invaded by a mob and his wife and sick daughter were thrown into the street along with family possessions, papers, and type from the plant. The press was thrown into the Missouri river.<sup>2</sup>

Actually the editorial was conciliatory. However, to the people of Jackson County in 1833 it indicated the church was not with them on the slavery question and so, they reasoned, the Saints must be against them. They saw in the gathering of Saints a growing number of votes which they assumed would be cast as a bloc in favor of anti-slavery candidates and issues.<sup>3</sup>

Many Latter Day Saint merchants had their goods scattered in the street on the day the editorial appeared, and two church men, Bishop Partridge and Charles Allen, were tarred and feathered by a

<sup>1</sup>Kansas City Journal, June 5, 1881.

<sup>2</sup>The press was later salvaged and ultimately transported to Denver, Colorado, where it was used by Captain John L. Merrick in 1859 to publish the first paper in the state. See Minnie Organ, “History of the County Press,” *Missouri Historical Review*, IV (January, 1910), 122-123.

<sup>3</sup>Heman C. Smith, “Mormon Troubles in Missouri,” *Missouri Historical Review*, IV (July, 1910), 238-241.

mob. The lawless attacks upon the Saints continued until it was unsafe for church members to be in Jackson County. Harassing the Saints became a popular sport for certain elements in Independence. Doniphan believed these outrages were committed by the "more ignorant portions of the community."<sup>4</sup>

As a result of these incidents, tempers grew shorter until, on at least one occasion, shots were exchanged and men were killed on both sides. On November 4, 1833, a group of Jackson County men and a group of Saints from the Colesville Branch engaged in a bloody exchange near Independence in a corn field belonging to Christian Whitmer. Two Jackson County men, Thomas Linville and Hugh L. Brazaele, were killed, and Andrew Barker of the Saints was fatally wounded and died the next day.<sup>5</sup>

On July 23, 1833, a treaty was signed by a committee of sixteen men who said they represented the citizens of Jackson County and six Latter Day Saint leaders. The treaty, signed under pressure, committed the Saints to leave Jackson County. Half were to depart before the first of the year. The rest were to leave before the next April.<sup>6</sup>

A letter appealing to Missouri Governor Daniel Dunklin brought some encouragement when the Governor indicated he desired that the Saints receive fair treatment as legal property owners in the state. Orson Hyde and W. W. Phelps, two church leaders, went to see the Governor to lay their case before him. After seeing them, Dunklin wrote a letter dated October 19, 1833, urging citizens to maintain law and order.

The letter was printed in the *Evening and Morning Star*, but the Governor's desires were not fulfilled. Law and order were not enforced, and in early November, 1833, the Saints were herded onto the Temple Lot by horsemen and then to the Missouri river where they were forced to cross over to Clay County, leaving behind



**Frederick M. Smith, At the Auditorium Construction Site, 1926**

<sup>4</sup>Kansas City *Journal*, June 5, 1881. Quoted in Inez Smith Davis, *Story of the Church* (Independence, 1959), 176.

<sup>5</sup>Smith, "Morman Troubles in Missouri," 246.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

their lands and many possessions. It was cold, and snow was in the air. The company of Saints contained women in the last stages of pregnancy, newborn babies, and sick and elderly people, as well as the strong.

Before "The Return," to Independence, as it is spoken of, the church and its members passed through worse turmoil and suffered even greater tragedy. Joseph Smith, Jr., was assassinated in Carthage, Illinois, on June 27, 1844, and various factions developed, some of them migrating to Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Utah, where they practiced strange doctrines, among them the worship of Adam as God and polygamy. Those who claimed to be true to the teachings of the original church were "reorganized" at a conference in Beloit, Wisconsin, in 1852. At Amboy, Illinois, on April 6, 1860, they accepted as their president Joseph Smith III who, they maintained, had been designated by his father to be his successor.<sup>7</sup>

In 1877 "Young Joseph" visited Independence and wrote in the *Saints' Herald*: "of course our stay was short, we saw but little and can judge by what we saw. The city is handsomely situated and sits not like Rome on seven hills, but on hundreds of hills, surrounded by hundreds more. A constant succession of vale, hill, farm valley, villa, dell, grove, plain, meadow, spring, wood, reaches in every way from this Jerusalem of modern Israel. . . ."

Saints from the Reorganization had begun the return movement to Independence as early as 1867. The first branch was organized in July, 1873, in the Jackson County courthouse. Nine years later the first General Conference of the Reorganization took place in Independence. The cornerstone of the Stone Church, the first major house of worship built by the Latter Day Saints in Independence, was laid in 1888.<sup>8</sup>

The Reorganized Church succeeded in establishing ownership of the Temple Lot which had been purchased in 1831 by Bishop Partridge. In March, 1894, the United States Circuit Court in Kansas City heard extensive testimony from members of the Church of Christ (Hedrickites), the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Utah Mormon), and the Reorganized Church in an attempt to determine the lawful successor of the church as it was constituted when the land was purchased originally. Judge John F. Philips, speaking for the court, declared in his decision that the Reorganized Church was the true continuation of the early church on the basis of its faithfulness to early doctrines. Only a small

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<sup>7</sup>Davis, *Story of the Church*, 288, 355, 385-386, 442-443.

<sup>8</sup>The building still houses the church's largest congregation in the city.



### Excavation Begins on the Temple Lot

portion of the original Temple Lot was lost to the Reorganized Church. It was awarded to the Church of Christ by an appeal court on the technical issue of laches, or delay in filing suit.<sup>9</sup>

Little was done in the next two decades to build on the Temple Lot, and it was not until 1920 that Independence was declared the headquarters of the church. In 1917, however, the president of the church, Frederick M. Smith, the son and successor of Joseph Smith III, began to urge the Saints to build a great headquarters building in Independence. In his conference address of 1917 at Lamoni, Iowa, he called attention to the need for a large building for general conferences and for other uses, both religious and administrative, which would keep such a structure in "constant use." He proposed such a building again in an address before the 1920 Conference meeting in Independence: "If I were to say to you today that the needs of this, the Center Place, should be an auditorium the capacity of which is not one less than seven thousand, you would think the figures were large, but I will venture to guess that if an auditorium is erected here within even two years that will seat seven thousand, you will see it jammed to the doors inside of the first year after its erection. . . . This building program therefore should include not only such things as general office building and assembly mass, but it ought to include a well-defined building plan such as perhaps exists in a most beautiful form of imagery in the mind of our splendid young architect—a plan of a system of buildings which will meet every social need for us as an organization."

The young architect Frederick Smith referred to was Henry C. Smith (no relation) who grew up in Independence, attended Grace-land College in Lamoni, Iowa, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was graduated in 1914 with a bachelor's degree in architecture. At the 1920 Conference he was appointed church architect. The same conference approved the Auditorium building project, and pledges were taken for \$38,000 before the meeting was

<sup>9</sup>For decisions in the original suit and appeals see 60 Federal 937, 70 Federal 179, 71 Federal 250, and 163 U. S. 681.



over. It was six years later, however, before ground was broken. By then the pledges had reached \$850,000.

A ground breaking ceremony on February 1, 1926, marked the beginning of construction on the Auditorium, and when the first concrete was poured on May 23, a copper box containing church literature describing the doctrine and program of the church along with local newspapers recording the event was placed in the south wall.

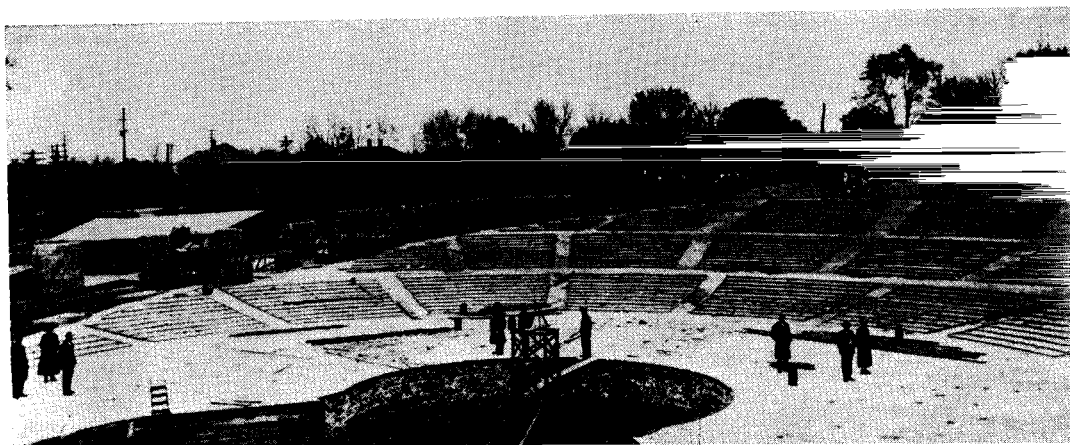
The basement was enclosed on November 6, 1926, and the following year the first World Conference met there. On that occasion President Frederick Smith expressed confidence in the building program and urged the church members to continue in their determination to complete the construction. To encourage those who were pessimistic he remarked,

Perhaps some may be saying 'It is unnecessary. It will not be finished.' But I submit, my fellow Latter Day Saints, that our record of achievement and our experiences of the past justify us in looking forward with confidence to seeing the Auditorium well and duly finished, and that its capacity, large as it may look now, ultimately taxed to its limit. The Auditorium *must* be finished! It is needed! It is opportune, and it *will* be finished! To believe otherwise is to overlook the spirit and the determination of a people with a record of eventually accomplishing its tasks.

By 1928 payments on pledges, plus interest, reached a new high of \$494,081.58. To finance the completion of the building the Bishopric was authorized to issue first mortgage 5% gold bonds totaling \$355,000.

In September, 1928, construction of the building was sufficiently completed to allow the church officers and departments to move into their new quarters. The Auditorium became the hub of the

#### **Concrete Enclosing the Auditorium Basement**





**W. Wallace Smith**

church which was rapidly expanding the number of its world missions and increasing its activities in the domestic field.

The conference of 1930 saw the Auditorium chamber filled with 11,000 Saints at the communion service, thus fulfilling President Smith's prediction. At the same conference the multiple purposes of the building were demonstrated. In addition to religious services and business meetings, the huge conference chamber was the scene of an oratorio performance and a giant pageant.

Unfortunately the Great Depression visibly affected the church. The conference appropriations committee recommended that no further expenditures be made on the building until the funds already spent were replaced. Construction stopped in January, 1931, and policies of retrenchment were initiated. Church funds were strictly segregated. No money could be allocated for Auditorium construction except that specifically donated or appropriated for that purpose. Saints caught in the difficulties of depression economy found they had to pay off a debt of \$1,876,000 which had been incurred in more prosperous days.

The response of the Saints in paying off the Auditorium debt was one of the brightest chapters of the church's history in Independence. Many felt the church would be unable to fulfill its financial obligations and would ultimately collapse. However, when the deadline for the final payment to retire the Auditorium bonds arrived on January 10, 1941, sufficient funds had been obtained to reduce the total debt to \$540,000, and appropriations were made to complete payment within three years. That the church was able to persevere in this crisis earned it a reputation for integrity and bolstered the confidence of its members. Because the church had become wary of doing business on credit, work on the Auditorium proceeded on a cash-on-hand basis.

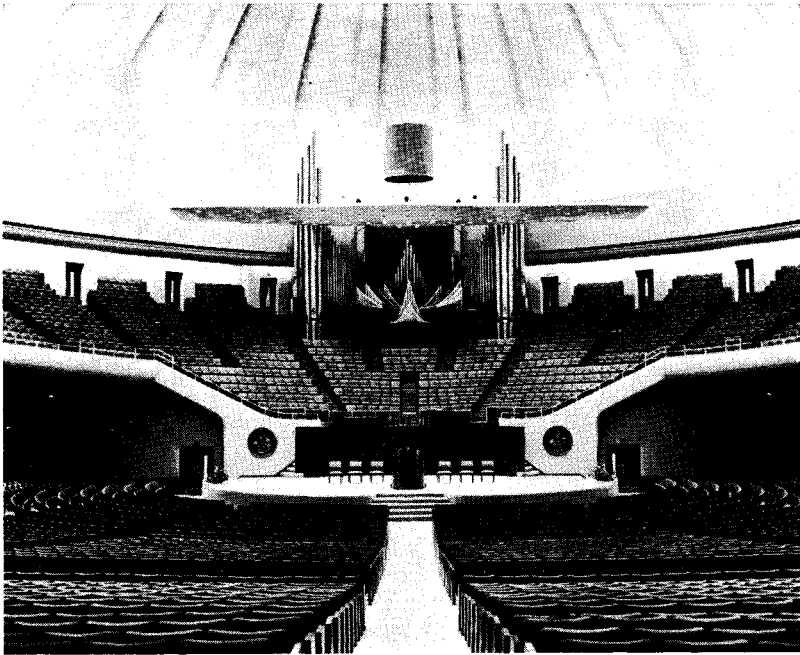
In 1946 Israel A. Smith succeeded his brother, Frederick Smith, as president following the later's death on March 20. The man

who visualized and championed the Auditorium project was not to see it fully realized.

Construction continued however, and members were called upon to “help finish the job.” In 1954 the main foyer was completed, becoming the first finished portion of the building visualizing its real beauty. Four years later the general conference chamber was finished and was the scene of the ordainment of W. Wallace Smith, a grandson of founder Joseph Smith, Jr., as president of the church.<sup>10</sup> The conference chamber is a massive and imposing room, measuring 210 by 175 feet and seating 5,754, with its dome rising 92 feet from the floor and 114 feet from the street level. The chamber houses the Auditorium organ, dedicated at the 1960 conference, which contains two consoles, 6,298 pipes and 110 ranks with 94 stops and 76 voices.

The completed building, because it has been so long in construction and because various architects have modernized the design of certain areas, differs somewhat from its original conception by Henry C. Smith, but the basic design is his and it is timeless in its

#### **Auditorium Conference Chamber**



<sup>10</sup>He succeeded I. A. Smith who had been killed in a highway accident on June 14, 1958.

beauty and function. Architect Smith died on November 13, 1961, and thus joins Frederick Smith as one who visualized the monumental building but was unable to see it completed.

On April 1, 1962, when the \$4 million structure was dedicated in an afternoon service, the building was designated as officially completed. The ceremonies mark the end of a long episode of church history in Independence and the beginning of a new era for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.



## OLD HOME REMEDIES

From *Granny Gore's Ozark Folk Medicine*, by Sherman Lee Pompey



*"To thin your blood in the Spring of the year, a good dose of sassafras tea is good. Sorghum molasses, and sulphur will help to clear yer blood out. Coal oil and sugar in the right porportions will help croup.*

*"Sweat out the flu by usin' a tablespoon full of whisky, a quarter of a spoon full of sugar, the juice of a lemon, and biling hot water to make a glass full.*

*"Another cure fer pneumonia is a hot whisky bath sponged from the waist up. That's why a lot of the ol' circuit ridin' preachers carried whisky with them. Medicinal purposes on their calls. If you use white mule, add a little water, or the kick will be too much.*

*"If youen's has a horse with the colic, bile native tobacker and get the horse to swallow it. For children with the colic, bile an onion in water until it gets mushy, then take the pulp out. This biled onion tea has been known to cure cases of colic that have been goin' on fer six months.*