

building. Blonquist said under American legal tradition anyone has the right to seek legal redress in a court of law, and that his action could hardly be called "legal harassment."

Late Thursday, March 4, work continued on removing the ceiling artwork. On Friday, March 5, heavy equipment moved in and destroyed the Coalville Tabernacle.

THE LESSON OF COALVILLE

Paul G. Salisbury

As suggested in the preceding discussions, the confrontations surrounding the destruction of the Coalville Tabernacle were so devisive and frustrating that those involved on any side of the issue must have vowed to avoid similar experiences in the future. At the same time everyone must be aware that the idea of preservation will become more rather than less important. There are many more chapels, tabernacles and tithing offices whose existence will be questioned, whose value (historic, aesthetic or economic) will be challenged, and whose future will be on trial.

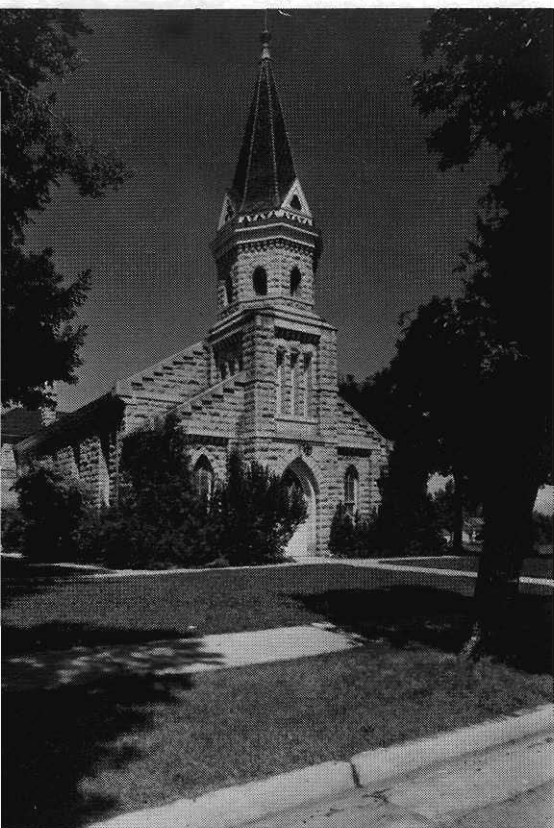
After the demolition of the Coalville Tabernacle, representatives of the Utah Heritage Foundation, the Utah Industrial Promotion Division, and other concerned groups met with Elder Mark E. Peterson, the chairman of the L.D.S. Historic Arts Committee in an effort to set guide-lines for future cases regarding buildings owned or built by the Church. Elder Peterson was most cordial and showed genuine interest in the slide presentation and the discussion, but stated that while the Historic Arts Committee was willing to work with preservation groups, the committee could not be tied down to designating any specific structures for preservation.

A brief description of those groups in Utah most conspicuously involved in preservation might be helpful.

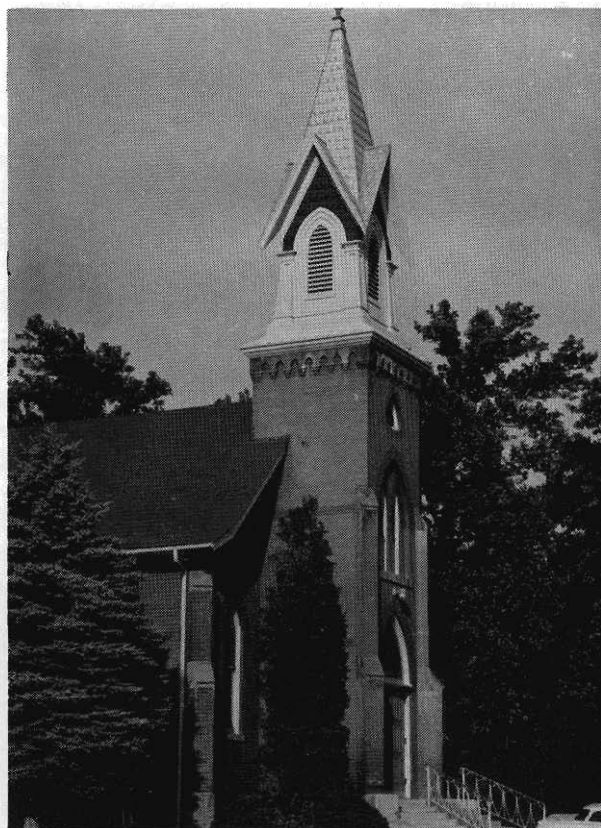
THE UTAH HERITAGE FOUNDATION (603 East South Temple, S.L.C.) is a public supported, tax-free corporation concerned with the preservation of the buildings, groups of buildings and sites of historic, archaeological or artistic value. Its members include architects, artists, businessmen and educators.

THE L.D.S. HISTORIC ARTS COMMITTEE (47 East South Temple, S.L.C.) evaluates Church buildings for their historic or artistic merit and is composed of the following members: Elders Mark E. Peterson, Richard L. Evans, Gordon B. Hinkley and Alvin R. Dyer. Also on the committee are Florence Jacobsen and John Q. Cannon, director, Church information service.

CORNERSTONE: *An Organization of Latter-day Saints for the Preservation of their Architectural Heritage* (Bevan Chipman or Frank Fergu-



Spring City

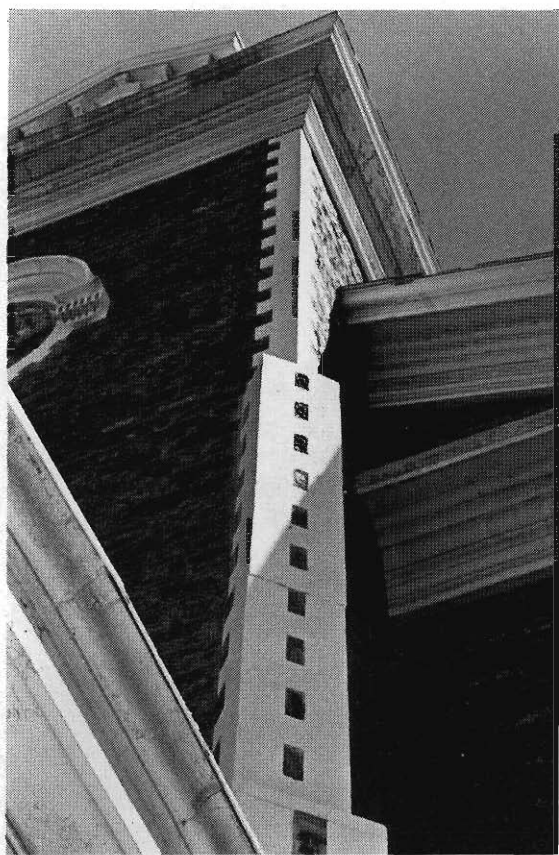
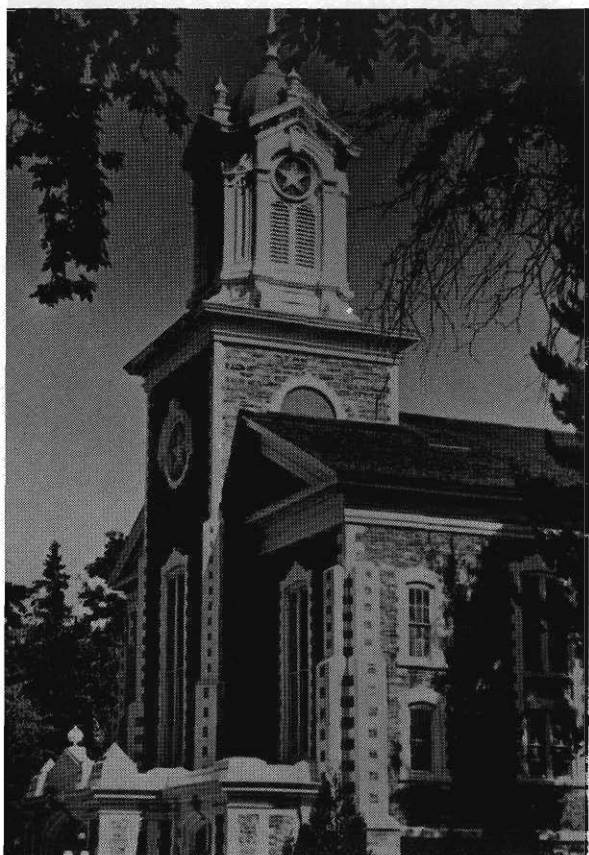


Salt Lake Twenty-First Ward (Demolished)

son, 303 Trolley Square, S.L.C.) is a group of active Church members who hope to identify and evaluate L.D.S. buildings of note and seek constructive ways to preserve our visual heritage. The group is in the process of forming, and invites membership and financial support.

The research, experience and resources of these groups can be important, but the real decision as to what to preserve and what to destroy usually lies in the hands (as with Coalville, in the *uplifted* hands) of the members of a given ward or stake, and equally important, in the regulations and decisions of the Church Building Committee.

One of the major impediments to meaningful preservation is a rule of the Church Building Committee: never add to an old building. The ramifications of this rule are ambivalent in the cause of preservation. Applied back in the 1940's, it would have kept the Coalville Tabernacle from being so poorly remodeled. Applied today, it decreed its destruction. While there are, indeed, a number of buildings which such a rule might protect if applied as an aesthetic or historic control, the rule exists simply for the sake of economy, as a means of avoiding expensive maintenance and costly mechanical or structural problems, and it therefore determines the death of any building needing major modifications. Some of the finest old buildings



The Logan Tabernacle (A parking lot has been proposed for this site.)

in the Church today continue their usefulness while remaining as handsome reminders of our heritage because they were added onto or remodeled in a sensitive manner. Examples are the Wayne Stake Tabernacle in Loa, Utah, and the tabernacle in Manti, Utah.

Coalville could have been preserved as part of a carefully designed complex to serve the needs of the Church in that stake. There are those who were willing to demonstrate such a solution. But perhaps the members just didn't care enough.

On a promontory dominating the little town of Porterville, Utah, stands a handsome brick edifice erected before the turn of the century as the Porterville L.D.S. chapel. Years ago the Church members abandoned the chapel in favor of the renovated but ugly schoolhouse in the center of town. After all, the school was more conveniently located and had more room. The old brick chapel has been converted (sans steeple) into a residence and continues life in a new role, still dominating the town as a reminder of members who didn't care enough about their heritage to walk up the hill.

Whether any congregation can care enough in the face of a decision of the Church Building Committee seems questionable. In Utah it is probably more difficult than in distant areas where missionary value can be

used effectively to gain exceptions. Some countries insist on the use of local architects for new church buildings and these and other reasons have led to the construction of some handsome new chapels in Finland, Mexico, and elsewhere. Certainly the experience and guidance of the Church Building Committee are vital to any ward or stake facing the complex problems of building or expanding, but if historic or exceptional buildings are to be preserved, Church members are going to have to care enough to make the difference.

About a year before the destruction of the Coalville Tabernacle, the Twenty-First Ward chapel at K Street and First Avenue in Salt Lake was demolished to make room for a newer chapel. Though there had been considerable discussion, its destruction was finally decreed as the only solution. In retrospect, and in light of the Coalville affair, members of the Twenty-First Ward bishopric and the Emigration stake presidency had the courage to question that decision and exhort their fellow saints in the Summit Stake in the following letter.*

Brigham Young once said, "I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are lead by God. I am fearful that they [will] settle down in a state of blind self security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God . . ."

We hope that the Latter-day Saints of the Summit Stake will have an opportunity to vote for the preservation of their "suddenly" famous Tabernacle, and that each of them will follow this admonition of Brigham Young. We also hope that an experience that we can share will help them to decide favorably on the question of preservation.

For nearly twenty years, the bishops of the Twenty-First Ward in Salt Lake City, Utah, sought a way to preserve their lovely old chapel and yet provide needed additional facilities. Under the direction of Bishop Mangan, from 1966 to 1969, recommendations were continually explored and suggested to the Church Building Committee as to how this might be done. Finally in 1969, the Committee informed us that no funds would be provided to remodel, renovate or expand the existing facilities, but that the general church would participate in an entirely new building project. We were then faced with a decision to retain our inadequate facilities or raze our chapel to make way for a new one. Because of the needs we faced, we reluctantly yielded to the recommendations of that Committee. We hope that the members of the Summit Stake are not faced with that same decision. While we now are looking forward to the completion of our new chapel, we would have preferred to preserve our old chapel, if the Church Building Committee would have allowed us to have renovated and added to it. However, the current philosophy of the "experts" on that Committee seems to be to tear down and start over, and never to preserve.

We have heard it argued that your tabernacle is obsolete, but never that it is not structurally sound, beautiful, or a lovely church. We suggest that since the primary function of a chapel is that of congregational worship, that your tabernacle is better suited to that purpose than are the current look-alike chapels which are now constructed by the Church. How can a thing of beauty be obsolete? None of these new buildings will ever come close to rivaling the majesty and beauty of your present building. Coalville is a distinctive city because of its distinctive Tabernacle, but remove it and replace it with one of the current models, and your community will become just another common town on the Western landscape. Preserve it, and Coalville will remain distinctive and the beauty of your Tabernacle can only continue to improve with years.

We say to the Church members in Coalville, as did Brigham Young in a General Conference of the Church . . . "I sincerely request the members to act freely and independently in voting — also in speaking if it be necessary. There has been no instance in this Church of a person's being in the least curtailed in the privilege of speaking his honest sentiments." We have spoken our honest sentiments to you, and hope that they will assist you in deciding what you should do. While we loved our lovely old chapel, we feel that its beauty was not nearly as majestic as your Tabernacle.

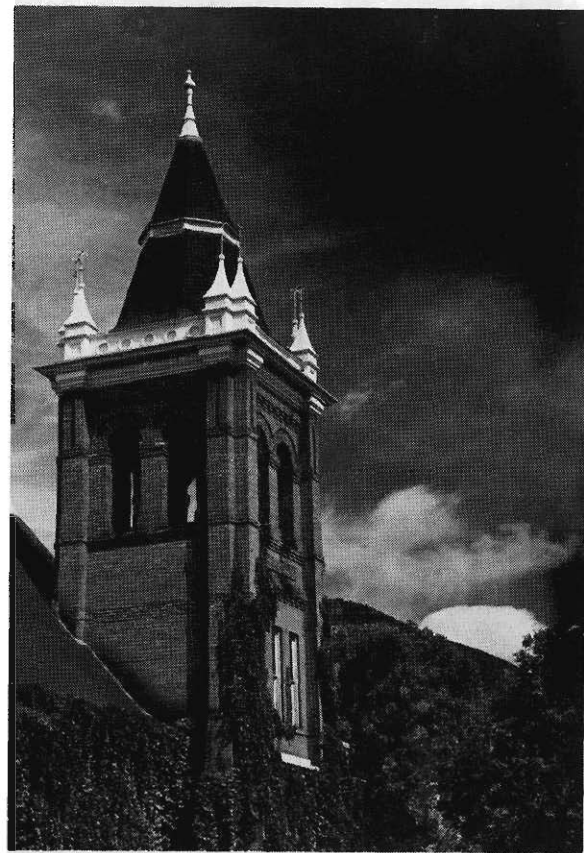
Signed: LeRay S. Howell, 1st Counselor
Emigration Stake Presidency

George E. Mangan, Bishop
Twenty-First Ward

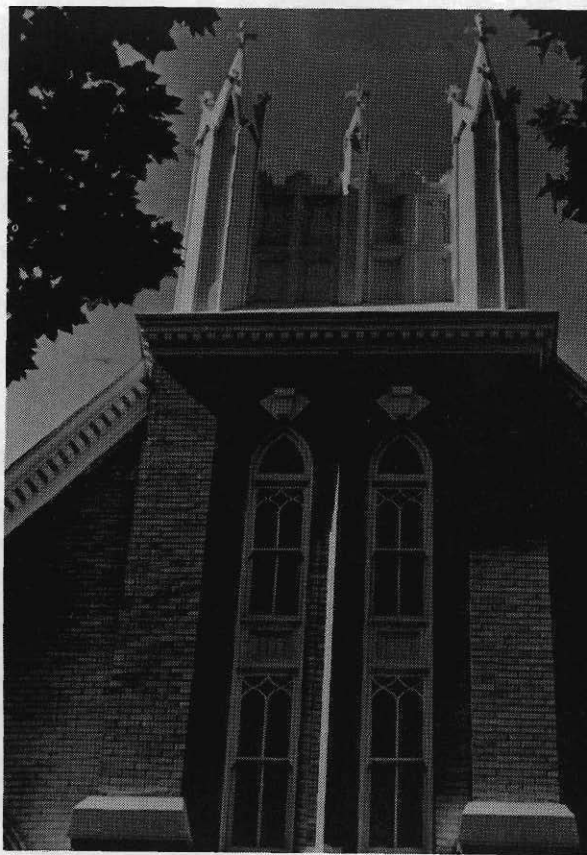
Burton R. Stringfellow, former
2nd Counselor, Twenty-First Ward
Bishopric

Recent environmental litigation shows a strong trend towards recognizing that the general populace may have a valid interest in an apparently local preservation matter. In other words, non-residents are becoming involved in issues pertaining to the disposition and use of natural resources (for ecological and even aesthetic reasons) and historic sites.

This raises the question as to whom a Church building belongs. Does it belong solely to the members who use it, or do other citizens of the community, state or nation have a valid interest in its use and disposition? The Coalville Tabernacle had been studied by various groups, both local and national, and had finally been judged significant enough to be placed on the National Registry of Historic Sites. An assistant Church historian reviewed the history of Coalville and stated repeatedly that the building had no real historic significance. Ultimately, that was considered more important than listing on the National Registry. As indicated in the previous articles, the Church assessed that, being off the freeway and so close to Salt Lake, the tabernacle would have little attraction for tourists. Must heritage be measured in terms of a place in official history? Need proselyting potential be a final determinant of a building's value? Will we then lose



Provo Third Ward



Logan Sixth Ward

the Logan Tabernacle, the Brigham City Tabernacle, and the Paris, Idaho, Tabernacle? Is it possible that with the construction of the Provo Temple, the one in Manti will become obsolete? Might not all of these structures and many less well known have a valid reason to remain with us when their original use is no longer justified? Is it possible that they have a real value as part of the historic continuum and the aesthetic inheritance of all citizens of a community regardless of their ethnic or religious ties in the same sense we all lay claim to Ft. Ross on the Pacific, though we are not Russian or the ruins of Chaco Canyon, though our ancestors were not Anasazi? Neither of these was the scene of a specific important event in history. Nor are they the most outstanding examples of their style or period. But all are important to their communities, their states, and to those who travel to see them because they are part of the heritage which belongs to us all. Until the Church Building Committee and the Historic Arts Committee are willing to accept the fact that all people have a valid interest in such structures, the work of the State and National Registry, the Utah Heritage Foundation and others will continue to be frustrating and frequently futile.

Many of the best buildings have already been destroyed, but many gems



Parowan

remain. The list — tentative and incomplete — which follows suggests buildings which should be evaluated for preservation. We must hope that the Church, the groups identified above, and Church members and citizens in general will work together in identifying and evaluating these and other buildings which are an important part of our precious but diminishing heritage.

Tabernacles:

Bountiful
Box Elder Stake
(Brigham City)
Hyrum
Logan

Manti
Nebo Stake (Payson)
Ogden Pioneer
Panguitch
Paris, Idaho

Provo
Randolph
St. George
Wayne Stake (Loa)
Wellsville

Chapels:

Alpine (Pioneer)
Annabella
Beaver Dam
Bicknell Church-School

Hyrum Second
Hyrum Third
Lake Town
Levan

Paragonah
Salt Lake Fourth
Salt Lake Eighteenth
Salt Lake Nineteenth

ROUNDTABLE: The Coalville Tabernacle /65

Cedar City	Lincoln (Salt Lake)	Santaquin
Centerfield	Logan Fourth	Spring City
Deweyville	Logan Sixth	Sterling
Echo (old)	Meadow	Toquerville
Fairview	Parowan (museum)	University (Salt Lake)
Farmington	Payson	Virgin
Fayette (vacant)	Pine Valley	Washington
Grafton (vacant)	Porterville	West Layton
Honeyville	Providence	Greenwich
Hyrum First	Provo Third	

Other L.D.S. Buildings:

Bicknell Relief Society Hall	Panguitch Bishop's Storehouse
Cedar Fort Recreation Hall	Pine Valley Tithing Office
Escalante Tithing Office	Richmond Bishop's Storehouse and Tithing Office
Fountain Green Tithing Office	Salt Lake Nineteenth Ward Relief Society Hall
Heber Amusement Hall	Spring City Endowment House
Hurricane Relief Society Hall	Teasdale Recreation Hall
Kanosh Tithing Office	Uintah Stake Tithing Office
Loa Tithing Office	Ephraim United Order Building
Mt. Carmel-Kanab Stake Bishop's Storehouse	
Ogden Relief Society Hall	



Salt Lake Eighteenth (scheduled for demolition)