

Therefore, if most orthodox Mormons may well be disposed to applaud my slaughter of poor Mr. Fitzpatrick, they should pause and reflect on the implication of their assent. Do we not feel inclined to treat Joseph Smith as gingerly as Fitzpatrick treated Strang — even granted a more “scholarly” approach? Haven’t many of us been outraged about Mrs. Brodie for the wrong reasons?

Whether we like it or not, it seems to me that Strang and Smith were very much alike. Certainly, the King of Beaver Island resembled Joseph more than any other contender for the mantle of the Prophet. I believe a strong case can be made that the two were the most creative individuals in Mormon history. Surely, Strang was Young’s greatest danger for a good reason. We cannot afford a double standard in the treatment of these men. On the one hand, Mormon historians must learn to view the golden plates of Cumorah with the same detachment and skepticism with which they are inclined to view the plates of Voree. On the other hand, though they cannot be expected to view the Book of the Law of the Lord with the eyes of faith, the way they view the Book of Mormon, they should at least attempt to read the former with a willing suspension of disbelief. Mr. Fitzpatrick has attempted at least that much. Perhaps we can learn something even from seemingly incompetent amateurs.

## Free Masonry at Nauvoo

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*Founding Minutes of the Nauvoo Lodge, U.D.* By Mervin B. Hogan, Ph.D., 33°. Des Moines, Iowa: Research Lodge Number 2, 1971. 36 pp. \$2.00, softbound. T. Edgar Lyon, historian of Nauvoo Restoration, Inc., was formerly instructor at the Institute of Religion at the University of Utah. He is the author of several books and articles on Church history.

This small publication makes available in useable form the printing of two documents which deal with the first Masonic Lodge organized at Nauvoo and the rapidity with which it grew.

At Nauvoo in 1841 there resided a number of men who had joined the Masonic Fraternity in various states before they accepted the message of the restored gospel as revealed to Joseph Smith. They petitioned the Grand Lodge of Illinois to establish a lodge at Nauvoo. Abraham Jonas, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois, who resided about forty miles from Nauvoo, had political ambitions and calculated that a lodge at Nauvoo could give him solid political support among the Mormon leaders. On 15 October 1841 he granted a dispensation for the organization of a lodge of Ancient York Masons.

On 29 December, eighteen masons met and organized in the office of Patriarch Hyrum Smith. George Miller was appointed Worshipful Master; Hyrum Smith, Senior Warden, *pro tempore*; L. N. Scovil, Junior Warden; Dr. John C. Bennett, Secretary; and Newel K. Whitney, Treasurer.

On 15 March, 1842, when Grand Master Jonas visited Nauvoo for the installation of the lodge, 55 men had made application to join. This number grew so rapidly that the minutes up to the last entry date, 6 May 1842, indicate there were apparently 105 members, of whom 73 had joined for the first time at Nauvoo. In addition there were quite a number who had been passed but not yet given the first degree, and 52 additional candidates who had applied and had been accepted for membership in the lodge, pending initiation.

When Wilford Wood purchased the Nauvoo Masonic Hall in 1954 he had the cornerstone chiseled from the place it had rested for 111 years and the contents photocopied. Shortly thereafter Wood invited local civic and political leaders and high-ranking masonic officials to Nauvoo to attend a ceremony in which the items from the cornerstone were to be sealed in a new metallic box and replaced in the original position.

On that occasion a limited number of duplicate copies of the contents of the cornerstone were presented to Masonic and civic leaders. One of these was made available to Dr. Hogan. He has now prepared the two hand-written documents from the cornerstone for publication with an introduction and an epilogue.

When the Mormons settled in Nauvoo in 1839 the infamous Dr. John Cook Bennett soon affiliated himself with this body and rapidly rose to be mayor of the city, major general of the Nauvoo Legion, Master in Chancery for Hancock County, and Assistant President of the L.D.S. Church. He was at that time under a sentence of expulsion from a lodge in Ohio but had kept the fact concealed. As one of the organizing leaders of the Masonic Lodge at Nauvoo, he was installed as secretary.

The first of these published documents consists of forty loose pages which report the lodge functions at Nauvoo from 30 December 1841 to 6 May 1842. Missing are the records of the thirteen and a half months between the last meeting recorded in this document and the laying of the cornerstone on 24 June 1843. A cursory investigation suggests that Bennett may have recorded the meetings then copied the material into the official bound minute book, which would have been preserved in the lodge room. The present publication might be his first draft from which he made the transcription into the permanent record. On the other hand, it may be a copy he made from the official record in anticipation of placing the duplicate in the cornerstone. A rather hurried investigation of a few samples of Bennett's writing indicates this manuscript could have been his work, although a positive verification was not made. It is an interesting fact that eleven days after the last entry in this manuscript Bennett was found guilty of adultery, commenced resigning his positions of trust, was excommunicated and soon left Nauvoo. This could account for the ending of this venture, since the succeeding secretary did not continue the duplicate record.

A study of the two-page name list indicates it also was not removed from the official lodge minute book. One hundred fifty-five names are listed, although some are not the signatures of the person listed. Apparently someone signed in their behalf. At the end Parley P. Pratt, aware that many members had not signed, indicated there were "about 250 others." This figure, no doubt exaggerated, probably was intended to include all those who had been