



## Archaeology in Nauvoo

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*Rediscovery of the Nauvoo Temple.* By Virginia S. Harrington and J. C. Harrington. Salt Lake City, Nauvoo Restoration publication, 1971. 54 pages, 32 illustrations.

Rarely is a report on an archaeological excavation so handsomely designed and mounted, but equally rare is a site whose history is as remarkable as that of the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo, Illinois. Built in the grand manner between 1841 and 1846, the massive structure was barely completed before its congregation had moved away, leaving the building to be gutted by fire in 1848 and to be felled by a tornado two years later. Here, then, was a monument to the industry of the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but one whose contribution to Mormon life and history ended almost before it had begun.

The ruins were first cleaned out by the French Icarians who attempted to convert the basement to their own use, but who gave up after the tornado; then, along with other settlers, they proceeded to carry away the building materials for use elsewhere. Out of this relatively unpromising site, Virginia and Jean C. Harrington have been able to fashion an engrossing and yet scholarly book. Realizing that the contents may be more interesting to members of the Mormon Church than to archaeologists (there being few artifacts and no likelihood of unearthing another Mormon Temple like it), Mrs. Harrington has very properly concentrated on telling the history of the building and describing what they found of it, leaving her husband's account of "Archaeological Procedures" and his clear but, to the layman, possibly intimidating sectional drawings to hide as appendices at the back. Mr. Harrington has also supplied a useful bibliography of their sources and a thoroughly workmanlike index.

Those of us who are concerned about the ever climbing cost of printing and who question the usefulness of publishing archaeological reports that are of little value to colleagues not concerned with that particular site contend that too many excavators print material that could just as well remain in manuscript in an appropriate archival repository. Archaeologists are taught, however, that publication is the essential end-product of any excavation — even if it only serves to cleanse the director's conscience and to expand his *vita* and thus his market value. The Harringtons, of course, need no such buttress, for Mr. Harrington is internationally recognized as the pioneer of historical archaeology in the United States, who, throughout his career, has been a vociferous