

Sidney Rigdon dedicated the spot for the Temple on August 3, 1831

Land in Jackson County, Missouri was consecrated and dedicated as an inheritance for the Saints by Sidney Rigdon on August 2, 1831. In a revelation given through Joseph Smith, Jr. Sidney Rigdon was instructed to dedicate the spot for the temple:

And let my servant Sidney consecrate and dedicate this land, and the spot of the temple, unto the Lord.¹

John Whitmer in his history says a stone laid which was the "cornerstone of the Temple." He also copied into the record an early account of events in August 1831, "I hereby give a copy of the proceedings of the laying of the first logs of the City of Zion. As written by Oliver Cowdery." In Cowdery's account of the dedication ceremony for the place where the temple was to be built he recorded:

The day following [August 3, 1831] eight Elders viz. Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Frederick G. Williams, Wm. W. Phelps, Martin Harris, and Joseph Coe. assembled together where the temple is to be erected. Sidney Rigdon dedicated the ground where the city is to Stand: and Joseph Smith Jr. laid a stone at the North east corner of the contemplated Temple in the name of the Lord Jesus of Nazareth. After all present had rendered thanks to the great ruler of the universe. Sidney Rigdon pronounced this Spot of ground wholly [wholly] dedicated unto the Lord forever: Amen.²

The Manuscript History was written by W. W. Phelps but the story in that record did not included others who were in attendance such as Peter Whitmer Jr., Frederick G. Williams, Ezra Booth. Both the Cowdery and Phelps accounts omit Ezra Booth who left the church soon after he returned from Missouri. Phelps wrote:

On the third day of August, the spot for the Temple, a little west of Independence, was dedicated in presence of eight men, among whom were myself, Sidney Rigdon, Edward Partridge, W. W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris and Joseph Coe.³

In 1844 the "History of Joseph Smith" was published as follows:

¹ H. Michael Marquardt, *Joseph Smith's 1828-1843 Revelations* (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2013), 130. See Book of Commandments, chapter 5, verse 70; LDS D&C 58:57; RLDS D&C 58:13, August 1, 1831, Jackson County, Missouri.

² Oliver Cowdery's description was copied into "The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment," chapter 9, circa 1836, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; published in *Journal of History* 1 (January 1908):59-60 and in Bruce N. Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 85-87. The land and site of the temple in 1831 was outside the Independence city boundary and the property was owned by the state of Missouri.

³ Manuscript History Book A-1:139, circa 1843. While this account mentions "eight men" only seven are listed but there were more in attendance.

On the third day of August, the spot for the Temple, a little west of Independence, was dedicated in presence of eight men, among whom were myself, Sidney Rigdon, Edward Partridge, W. W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and Joseph Coe.⁴

When the manuscript history was reviewed in 1845 there were words were added above the line, shown in angel brackets <>, and some words crossed through,

On the third day of August, <I proceeded to dedicate> the spot for the Temple, a little west of Independence, ~~was dedicated in~~ <and there were> presence<t> of ~~eight men, among whom were myself,~~ Sidney Rigdon, Edward Partridge, W. W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris and Joseph Coe.

The revised account was published by the LDS Church in 1902:

On the third day of August, I proceeded to dedicate the spot for the Temple, a little west of Independence, and there were also present Sidney Rigdon, Edward Partridge, W. W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris and Joseph Coe.⁵

Ezra Booth wrote, after returning from Missouri and leaving the church:

The next day the ground for the Temple was consecrated, and Smith claimed the honor of laying the corner-stone himself. Should the inhabitants of Independence, feel a desire to visit this place, destined at some future time to become celebrated, they will have only to walk one half of a mile out of the Town, to a rise of ground, a short distance south of the road. They will be able to ascertain the spot, by the means of a sappling [sapling], distinguished from others by the bark being taken off on the north and on the east side. -- On the south side of the sappling [sapling] will be found the letter, T, which stands for Temple; and on the east side ZOM for Zomar; which Smith says is the original word for Zion. Near the foot of the sappling [sapling], they will find a small stone, covered over with bushes, which were cut for that purpose. This is the corner-stone for the Temple.⁶

Booth mentions Joseph Smith laying the cornerstone for the temple but omits that Sidney Rigdon dedicated the spot for the temple. In August 1831 the location where Joseph Smith wanted the temple to be erected was covered with trees. This spot is currently in the city of Independence, Missouri and owned by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot).

⁴ *Times and Seasons* 5 (March 1, 1844):450, Nauvoo, Illinois. Also published in Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, eds., *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*. 4 vols. (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald House, 1897-1903), 1:209, quoting from the *Times and Seasons*.

⁵ B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1959), 1:199.

⁶ Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, November 14, 1831, *Ohio Star* 2 (November 17, 1831):3, Ravenna, Ohio.