



# The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845-1846: A Documentary History

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For the two months the Nauvoo temple was in operation (December 1845-February 1846), scribes carefully documented all activities and events taking place inside, including lectures on the endowment ceremony drama and sealing rituals. Their narratives begin with the lighting of fires and hauling of water each morning at 3:00 a.m. (many ordinance workers slept overnight in the temple) to late-night celebratory dancing (“We danced unto the Lord,” Brigham Young explained) and Sunday sermons delivered to the recently endowed.

Historians, biographers, and genealogists will find the names and dates of the initiates and documentation of sealings (including polygamous unions) to be of significance. Others will turn to the narrative portions of the records, including first-person accounts and minutes of meetings. For instance, as women cleaned the ceremonial robes for the next day’s endowment “companies” (or sessions), church officials would read from John C. Fremont’s published journal, anticipating their imminent exodus from Nauvoo for the Great Basin.

The sources extracted in this companion volume to *Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed* and *The Development of LDS Temple Worship*, include original temple ledger books and summaries of data compiled by early church scribes, including the “Book of Anointings”; “Book of Adoptions”; “Book of Proxey [sic]”; “General Record of the Seventies, Book B”; and William Clayton’s diary kept for Heber C. Kimball; as well as diary entries from Thomas Bullock, William Hyde, George Laub, Newel Knight, Franklin D. Richards, Abraham Owen Smoot, Erastus Snow, Hosea Stout, and others; and the autobiographies of Harrison Burgess, Rhoda Ann Fullmer, Joseph Holbrook, Joseph Hovey, Norton Jacob, Noah Packard, George Albert Smith, John Spiers, Nancy Ann Wilson, and others.

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