

Manti Temple
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
U. S. Route 89 at north edge of Manti
Manti
Sanpete County
Utah

HABS No. U-71

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

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MANTI TEMPLE
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Location: U.S. Route 89 at north edge of Manti, Sanpete
County, Utah.
Latitude: 39° 16' 23" N Longitude: 111° 38' 0" W

Present Owner: Corporation of the President
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Present Occupant: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Present Use: Temple

Statement of
Significance: An architecturally significant religious edifice
built in a wilderness outpost during the pioneer
era of the church.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

Corporation of the President
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

2. Date of erection: Started April 1877, completed 1888.

3. Architect: William H. Folsom

4. Original plan and construction of building: Construction
is of cream-colored coursed oolitic limestone ashlar. In
the basement is a baptismal room. The main floor is occu-
pied for the most part by instructional rooms. An assem-
bly room fills the entire upper floor. As with all Mor-
mon Temples, the building faces east.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

"The Mormon Pioneers arrived in the valley of the Great Salt
Lake in July, 1847. What is now the State of Utah was then
Mexican territory occupied only by Indians. The Mormon colo-
ny was a wilderness outpost, a thousand miles from the near-
est city to the east and seven hundred miles from the Pacific
Coast settlements.

Under such conditions it would have been natural for these religious exiles to have remained together as a compact body for protection against the natives and for mutual aid in the rigorous task of pioneering the wilderness. But Brigham Young and other leaders determined that a vast area should be colonized to afford larger opportunity for the thousands of converts who would come into the Church.

Furthermore, the Mormons had comparatively little difficulty with the natives. Their sensible policy that it was better to feed than to fight them paid rich dividends. In fact, it was at the request of Chief Walker of the Ute tribe that settlers were first sent to the Sanpete Valley through which Highway 89 now runs. In 1855, Chief Arapeen, successor to Walker, deeded the Sanpete Valley to Brigham Young as Trustee-in-Trust for the Church.

In November, 1849, a group of fifty colonists left Salt Lake City and drove their wagons and stock 125 miles to the area now occupied by the city of Manti. It was hoped that they could build temporary shelter before winter set in. But they scarcely had made camp before a heavy storm arose leaving the valley blanketed with two feet of snow. Their wagons afforded scant protection against the wind and freezing temperatures which followed, and desperately in search of better shelter, they turned to the hill where the temple now stands.

Dugouts were cut in the side of the hill and smoke vents at the rear. Though the walls and floors were of dirt, these improvised rooms kept the colonists warm through a severe winter which took the lives of most of their cattle.

Beneath the topsoil of the hill was a solid mass of cream-colored oolitic limestone. When this was discovered, the hill became a quarry. The colonists utilized its stone to provide for themselves a substantial fort in case of Indian troubles, and also used it in the construction of homes.

On April 25, 1877, four months before his death, Brigham Young visited Manti. Retiring to the hill on the outskirts of the village, he dedicated the site for the building of a house of God. Following this a call was sent out for workmen, and five days after the dedication a hundred men gathered at the quarry and knelt in prayer before commencing a task that was to continue for eleven years.

Two years of blasting and scraping were required to prepare the footings and foundation. On April 14, 1879 the cornerstones were laid, and work was begun on the walls, which were built of stone taken from the hill.

At the time of construction the people were relatively few in number. Moreover, their strength was taxed with the grim task of pioneering a harsh, strange land. There was a constant struggle against drought, grasshoppers, sickness, poverty, and Indians who could not resist the temptation of their cattle. Yet the building went steadily forward.

In planning the undertaking Brigham Young said, "Now Bishops, if any person should inquire what wages are to be paid for work on this temple, let the answer be, 'Not one cent.'"

Contributions of eggs, cheese, meat, flour or whatever the people had were donated to the cause. The old day book shows such items as two steers credited for \$38.50, 100 pounds of flour \$2.00, a bed \$1.00, \$4.00 cash. All of these contributed materials were turned into the Bishop's storehouse, and then distributed to the workmen. When completed, the cost of the structure was estimated at a million dollars."

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Church Historian's Office, 47 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103.

2. Bibliography:

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Manti Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1947.

Goeldner, Paul, Utah Catalog -- Historic American Buildings Survey, Salt Lake City, Utah, Utah Heritage Foundation, 1969.

History of Sanpete and Emery Counties, Ogden, Utah, W. H. Lever, 1898 p 81.

Lambert, Kenneth L., Manti's Mormon Castle, Utah Architect, No. 44 Spring 1967.

Luce, Willard, "How Firm a Foundation", Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, Harry D. Miller, July 1947 Vol. 9 No. 7.

Lund, William A., Story of the Manti Temple, Deseret News, June 4, 1938.

Lundwall, Nels Benjamin, Temples of the Most High, Salt Lake City, Utah, (N. B. Lundwall, compiler and publisher), 1941.

Peterson, Wm. H., The Miracle of the Mountains, Manti, Utah, 1942.

Prepared by Gary D. Forbush, AIA
December, 1969

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest: This is one of the most beautiful of the Latter Day Saints' (Mormon) temples on a dramatic hillside site.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This is a three story rectangular structure 172' 6" long, 95' wide, generally 92' high. East tower: 179' high, West tower: 169' high.
2. Foundations: Limestone
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Cream-colored coursed oolitic limestone ashlar (quarried on site). Walls are 42 inches thick at bottom, 36 inches thick at top.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry bearing wall with wood framed floors and roof.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Cut limestone steps.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Hardwood frames and doors with deeply molded panels.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Wood sash, no shutters.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Flat.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Crenellations forming a firewall.
 - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: East and west masonry towers with mansard roof forms.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Plans not available; restricted access.
2. Stairways: Hardwood of high quality construction with one self-supporting circular spiral stairway, three stories high.
3. Flooring: Hardwood, carpeted.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster painted.
5. Doorways and doors: Paneled hardwood doorways, richly molded trim.
6. Decorative features and trim: Several rooms finished with high quality mural paintings. (Some photographs of these interiors are publicly available.) Turned balusters. Rich plaster cornices.
7. Notable hardware: Some original decorative bronze of 1880 period.
8. Lighting, type of fixtures: Incandescent chandeliers in larger rooms.
9. Heating: Central steam.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation: Building faces east on a side hill of solid rock at the north end of town. Most prominent facade from town, however, is west facade, as east entrance faces into hill.
2. Outbuildings: 100' x 40' two-story heating plant building, connected to temple.
3. Landscaping: Entire site is developed with lawns, walks and drives, well maintained landscaping.

Prepared by Fred Markham, FAIA &
John Giusti, AIA
December, 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This record is part of a Utah Survey conducted in the summers of 1967 and 1968 under joint sponsorship of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation.

Field work, historic research and record drawings were done under the direction of Project Supervisor Paul Goeldner, AIA (Texas Tech University) assisted by Project Historian John L. Giusti, AIA (University of Utah). Photographs were made by P. Kent Fairbanks of Salt Lake City.

Student Assistant Architects on the 1967 team were Robert M. Swanson and Charles W. Barrow, (University of Texas) and Kenneth L. Lambert and Keith Sorenson, (University of Utah). 1968 Student Assistant Architects were Keith Sorenson, Charles D. Harker and Robert Schriever, (University of Utah) and Donald G. Prycer, (Texas A. & M. University).