

fought zealously and sincerely, and although they were buried far from home, their graves have not been forgotten. The story told that one of these men was struck in the head with an ax, which was in the hands of a boy who had hid himself behind a wood pile, and after the fight had gone down to the river to see what the results had been. LEVI E. YOUNG.

### BURNING OF NAUVOO TEMPLE.

(Ft. Madison, Ia., Democrat.)

George H. Rudsill, now of Bowling Green, Florida, but once a Ft. Madison boy, tells of the destruction of the Nauvoo Temple, which occurred fifty years ago, in the following words:

Judge Sharp of Carthage, Squire McCauley of Appanoose and J. B. Agnew of Pontoosue, Illinois, were the men that planned and carried out the destruction of the Temple.

A French colony came into possession of Nauvoo, but the temple remained the property of the Mormon stewards, the temple being dedicated prior to their departure.

At the time of the Smiths' arrest, the Prophet was having the Nauvoo mansion erected down on the flat near the river. The house was of large proportions and was of brick and it was near its completion of the second story. Many years after the Mormons had gone, the writer was inspecting the ruins of this mansion and I accidentally discovered an opening in the wall and upon investigation found it to be the end of a tunnel arch, and after clearing a way, I succeeded in gaining an entrance. I followed the tunnel for at least half a mile in the direction of the temple. The arch was made of brick laid with cement and was high enough and wide enough for two persons to walk side by side, and I am satisfied that the arch led to the basement of the temple and no doubt that arch is still in existence and intact today. I have been informed that Colonel Bidamon, the husband of Joseph Smith's widow, had a part of the mansion finished up into a residence after my visit there in 1865.

Well, to the burning of the Temple, I will give it in Mr. J. B. Agnew's own words as near as I can recollect, which was just before his death in the fall of 1870. After telling me his story he asked me as a friend not to let it be known until after the death of all parties concerned, as they had pledged themselves to secrecy in the matter. This I told him I would do, and now that those parties are all dead, it will be no harm to let it be known, and it will satisfy many an old settler's curiosity.

Mr. Agnew was in failing health at the time he came to me. He told me that he was going to die soon, which I thought was true. I asked him if he had repented of his wrong doings, and he smiled and said: "Yes, all but one thing." I asked what that was, and he said it was the burning of the Nauvoo Temple. Says I, "Did you do that?" and he said, "Yes, I did it with my own hands. Sit down and I will tell you all about it," which is as follows, as near as I can recollect it is as follows, as near as I can give it in his own words:

"The reason why I burned it was, that there was a continual report in circulation, that the Mormons were coming back to Nauvoo, and we were afraid that they might take it into their heads to do so, and as we had all the trouble with them we wanted, Judge Sharp of Carthage, Hyrum McCauley of Appanoose, and myself of Pontoosue determined the destruction of their Temple, and by so doing they would not be able ever again to try and come back. So on the afternoon of the night that the Temple was

burned, in order to make arrangements we three met on the prairie five miles south of Fort Madison, in Illinois, the judge coming from Carthage, the squire from Appanoose and I from Pontoosue, and we met about where the Mormon Church stood, five miles south of Appanoose, and there we pledged ourselves to destroy the Temple if it cost us our lives. So we journeyed toward it on horseback, and on the way tried to perfect some plan to work on. After a while we decided to get the steward to show us through the Temple, and then watch our chance to get in our work. So we hid our horses in the bushes in a secluded place a mile from town and walked in. We looked about town until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and in the meantime had prepared a bundle of kindling by taking a corn sack and cutting arm holes in the top of it, so I could put it on like a coat under my coat. I then stuck in as many tarred rags on sticks as I could carry without being noticed. I then put it on and secured some matches from a store to light my pipe and we were ready. We had but little trouble to find the steward and after laboring with him some time, he at last consented to show us through the Temple. We claimed to be strangers in the country and were going away that night and it would be our last chance perhaps of ever having an opportunity to visit the Temple. So on those conditions he would oblige us, provided we would hurry, which we agreed to do, as it was getting late and would be dark before we could get through. So after a good deal of delay the key was at last inserted, it not seeming to fit, but at last the door swung open. We went in with a rush and kept a going, the man being left behind working with the door. He called out for us to stop, but we kept on and noticed that he left the door with the key in it. I stepped in a side room, and the other two kept on. The man ran on after them and after he had passed me, I went back to the door and unlocked it, and put the key in my pocket and then ran after them. By this time the man had discovered that I was missing, but when I came up to them and explained to them that I had stopped to look at the crucifixion he seemed to be satisfied but looked suspicious at me, and from that time on he kept close at my side and would not allow us to stop, but walked us right around and out. It was getting dusk and we had no chance for me to light my fire, and I saw that it was telling on my companions—that they were bitterly disappointed when we were compelled to walk out. I told them to come on in haste, that we were late and would miss our boat that we were going away on. So they came along and we stopped behind a house, where I told them what I had done, which made them two of the happiest fellows I ever saw. We had to watch but a few minutes until we saw the steward start away on a run, and we knew he was going for a key or some one, and that this was our chance; so leaving the judge and squire on guard I ran back to the Temple. I started for the top, which I soon gained, and found a good place to start my fire where it would get a good start before it would shed any light to be seen from the outside. After seeing it start to success I began to retrace my steps with joy and a light heart, for I was sure that the Temple was as good as burned. But I now saw that there was a good chance for me to burn with it, for I had lost my way and did not know which way to turn to get out, although I had been through the Temple a number of times before. I had thought if I would succeed at last in getting out, that I would be sure to be caught by the steward, for he would soon be back and in all probability would

have help with him, for I was certain that he would lay the missing key to us. You can imagine my feeling being lost in a burning Temple and in case I did escape the fire, I was sure of an arrest. I ran first one way, then the other in hopes of gaining some passage that I would know so as to find my way out, but all to no purpose, I was getting worse lost all the time, and I could not tell one direction from another, and it was as dark as an Egyptian night. At last I came to the stairway going up and I took it with the hope that it would lead me back to where I had started the fire and I could then take a new start. After going up two pairs of stairs and through many halls I came to a square turn and a light shone way down the passage in the opposite direction from what I wanted to go, but I thought it best to go and see what it was or who it was, and I soon discovered that it was my fire which was burning at a fearful rate, sending its fiery tongue clear across the hall. I drew as near as I could and I happened to see Squire McCauley's handkerchief lying on the floor a short distance from the fire on the opposite side from me. So I knew that my way led through the fire as that room was the end of our trip. Now what was I to do? I knew no other way out but through the fire. I became horror stricken. Was I to be burned up by my own hands? O God, what shall I do? Not knowing as it were what I did, I threw my coat over my head and made a dive through that hell of fire, striking my full length on the floor and I rolled over and over until I got out of the reach of the fier. When I got to my feet I took off my coat and extinguished the fire that had caught in the lining, after which I put it on again. With difficulty I tried to run, for I seriously hurt my arm and one of my legs from my fall on the floor, but I was so excited at the time that I did not realize the pain until afterwards. With the assistance of a few matches I had, that I now thought of, I kept striking them along the way, and at last reached the door that I had been going through and found it standing open. The squire had come and thrown it open in hopes I might be able to see a star from without. They were satisfied that something had happened on account of my delay. You can imagine our feelings when I stepped through the door, I pulled the door to and locked it and ran away in an easterly direction, the judge and squire followings. I was sore, lame and burned and almost choked, not being able to speak and when I came to a well about 100 yards away, I drank and threw the key in the well. I then told the boys to scatter and go to the horses, which they did. They got there long before I did for I was almost beyond going at all. After reaching the horses I told them the job was done and for them to go in different directions and get home as soon as possible and avoid meeting anyone. They objected leaving me as they were afraid I was hurt internally, which I was fearful was the case. I had inhaled the fire and thought my time had come. I told them to go, that I would pull through all right. So the squire took the river road up the river to Appanoose, ten miles distant, the judge the road to Carthage, about sixteen miles distant to the south, while I took the prairie road in the direction of Pontoosue, twelve miles distant. After going about one-half mile, I looked toward Nauvoo and I saw a flickering light and the next minute the flames burst through the roof and lit up the country for miles as light as day. I put my horse into a dead run in the direction of the Missouri timber, which I gained in time without being seen, as the people on the road were all in bed, but I had no sooner jumped my horse over a fence into a field and secreted myself behind some