

THE TEMPLE BLOCK AND ITS BUILDINGS.

By Charles W. Penrose,
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THE pleasing views of the Temple grounds on this page of the Christmas "News," revive memories of historic incidents that glow with interest, and mark the progress of events that have occurred since the time when the pioneers of '47 first gathered upon that square, and made it the center from which should radiate the broad streets of a great and important city. Taken from the top of the Deseret News building, it shows the ten acre plat of ground with its different structures, gardens and gravelled walks, and makes a striking and attractive picture.

The most prominent feature is the Temple, grandly conspicuous and unique in its Mormon architecture, its lines of lofty and of circular windows, its solid, massive granite walls, its pointed towers representing the Presidencies of the Melchisedec and Aaronic Priesthoods, its gilded gospel messenger with extended trumpet standing aloft in graceful beauty; its mosque-like annex, and adjacent apartments, all forming a rich monument to the faith, devotion, liberality and zeal of the people who built it and their leaders who directed its erection. Its sacred portals and ceremonial rooms, invisible from the exterior, are consecrated to the ordinances of salvation for the living and the dead, and are vibrant with the spirit of love and charity, purity and peace. The Tabernacle stands forth in its peculiar form, an object of interest to all beholders, a vast structure, the immense roof of which rests upon the stone walls without a pillar for its support, arching over from side to side, a marvel to builders and ordinary spectators. The Assembly Hall presents a pleasing appearance and exhibits taste in its architecture and skill in its construction. The new quarters of the Bureau of Information harmonize with the other features of the view, and the smaller edifices help to fill up the picture in pleasing variety.

But what a contrast they form to the scene when President Brigham Young, with his associate Pioneers, stood on the bare and tenantless ground and striking it with the point of his cane declared: "Here will be the Temple of our God! * * * The city can be laid out perfectly square, north and south, east and west." That was on the 28th of July, 1847, four days after their arrival from the weary travel over plains and mountains, across rivers and sand-dunes to find a home for the persecuted people of God. There Elder Wilford Woodruff drove a stake into the ground, and there the Temple now stands in fulfillment of the prophecy.

The first attempt at building on that square was the temporary Bowery, 40 by 28 feet, on the southeast corner of the open space. Posts driven into the soil supported timbers fastened with wooden pegs and strips of rawhide, and boughs and brush were intertwined as shelter from the sun. Rude benches for seats and a platform of boards for a pulpit completed the place of assembly, which, commenced on July 26, was completed by July 31, and on Sunday, Aug. 1, religious services were held and discourses delivered thereon. There was held the great celebration of Pioneers' day, July 24, 1849, when the Declaration of Independence was read and the Constitution of the United States was presented and held up for reverence. A liberty pole was erected on the north side of the Bowery, and the Stars and Stripes floated from its summit; the flag was also conspicuous in the procession and the ceremonies. The

Bowery served for amusements and meetings until a more substantial structure could be reared.

The Old Tabernacle was next constructed, on the southwest corner of the square. It was commenced April 21, 1851, and finished and dedicated

Macaire" being the first play, with John Kay, H. B. Clawson, Phil Margetts, Miss Orum and Miss Judd in the cast.

The platform, or "stand," in the Old Tabernacle was at first placed on the west side, but was subsequently

were on that ground. The granite blocks for the Temple were hauled and placed there, and stone-cutters were set to work upon them. There were busy scenes on that part of the grounds for many years. The Temple block was consecrated and ground

struments, and the place designated by Elder Pratt with the insufficient means at his command.

The first observation with the new instruments purchased by the Church was taken Sept. 20, 1860, by the late Thomas Ellerbeck. James Jack sub-

many years by solar observations, and furnished daily by telegraph to different points in the Territory. Stellar observations were taken at night. The exact longitude of Rawlins, Laramie and Cheyenne was taken in that building by telegraph in 1872 by government survey, and W. B. Dougall acted as operator. The official land surveys in this region were made with this spot for a base. The unpretentious and somewhat shabby little structure is therefore fraught with historic interest.

The present Tabernacle was commenced in 1865 and completed so as to hold general conference therein April 6, 1867. It was then without a gallery, which was not added and finished until April, 1870. Its immense roof, self-supporting, stretching over the 250 feet length and 150 feet width, at a central height of 68 feet to ceiling and 80 feet to top, was a wonder of building art, and was more striking in appearance than even after the gallery was erected. Speakers at first found it difficult to make their voices heard in some parts of the vast building, especially if they turned to the right or left when addressing the great congregation. At that conference, which lasted three days, measures were taken to gather all the poor Saints remaining in Great Britain, and Joseph F. Smith, now President of the Church, was chosen and sustained as one of the Twelve Apostles. The addition of the gallery has improved the acoustic qualities of the Tabernacle, and experience in addressing large audiences has rendered it comparatively easy for the Church authorities to preach when the building is crowded.

The Assembly Hall was erected for smaller congregations than would convene in the Tabernacle, and specially as a meeting house for the Salt Lake Stake of Zion. The corner stones were laid Sept. 28, 1877, the first meeting in it was held April 4, 1880, and it was finished and dedicated Jan. 8, 1882. The building is 68 by 120 feet, and the height of the central spire is 130 feet. It has a fine gallery, extending on three sides, spacious stands for speakers and Church authorities, choir seats around the organ, and will accommodate nearly three thousand people. Originally the ceiling was decorated with paintings representing the restoration of the Gospel, the revelation of the plates containing the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith the Prophet; his ordination to the Aaronic and Melchisedec Priesthoods, etc. But these were subsequently obliterated. The monthly Priesthood meetings of the Salt Lake Stake are held therein, and conferences and other meetings of various Church societies assemble there. It stands on the southwest corner of the Temple block, formerly occupied by the Old Tabernacle and adjacent Bowery, but faces east and runs toward the west.

The Temple was begun by the laying of the corner stones April 6, 1853, by President Brigham Young and his counselors, Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards, with other Church officials, and with appropriate and impressive ceremonies. Work on it was continued at intervals for forty years. The great blocks of granite now in its walls were brought from the quarries in Cottonwood canyon, a distance of twenty miles, at first by ox-teams, each stone requiring four yokes of oxen to haul it. Every stone was cut, fitted and numbered for its place, on the Temple block, where hosts of workmen were employed, drawing their pay from the Church funds contributed by the tithings of the Saints. When the army came to Utah in 1857, and the people vacated the city and moved southward, work was of course



Temple Block from Top of Deseret News Building



Meridian Monument

Gate Keeper's Office

Temple Block from the Northwest

April 6, 1852. It was 126 by 66 feet, with adobe walls, and the roof arched over without a pillar for its support. It was made on the plan designed by President Young, afterwards amplified in the framing of the large Tabernacle. It seated about 2,500 people. There services were held, and all great gatherings were had, except in the heat of summer, when the people assembled in a Bowery put up on the east side of the Old Tabernacle, the first Bowery having been demolished. In this, now called the Old Bowery, dramatic entertainments were given, "Robert

moved to the north end, the building running north and south. It was the scene of many important gatherings. The general conferences were held there, and many of the grandest discourses from the leading authorities of the Church were there delivered. The school of the prophets was held therein. Missionaries were there called and appointed and sent to nations afar off, and arrangements made for the sending of teams to the Missouri river for the gathering of the poor.

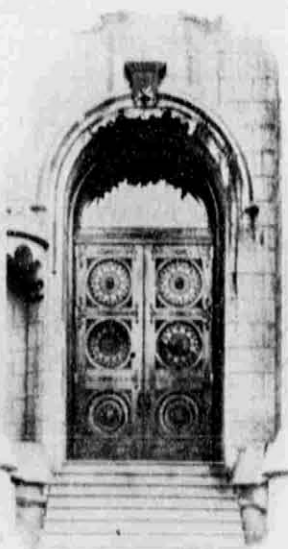
The Endowment House was erected on the northwest corner of the square. It was built of adobes, was dedicated May 5, 1855, and remained until early in 1890, when it was taken down under directions from President Wilford Woodruff. It was a sacred edifice for ordinances for the living and the dead, and was in fact a temporary Temple after the pattern revealed on high.

On the northeast part of the Temple square were built the Public Works shops of the Church, where a number of mechanics were employed in various occupations, under the su-

pervision of Bishop Newel K. Whitney. Counselor D. H. Wells was subsequently appointed superintendent of Public Works, and was succeeded by Bishop John Sharp, and their offices and those of the Church architect

broken for the Temple on Feb. 14, 1853. The walls around the block were commenced in 1852, and completed August 15, 1854.

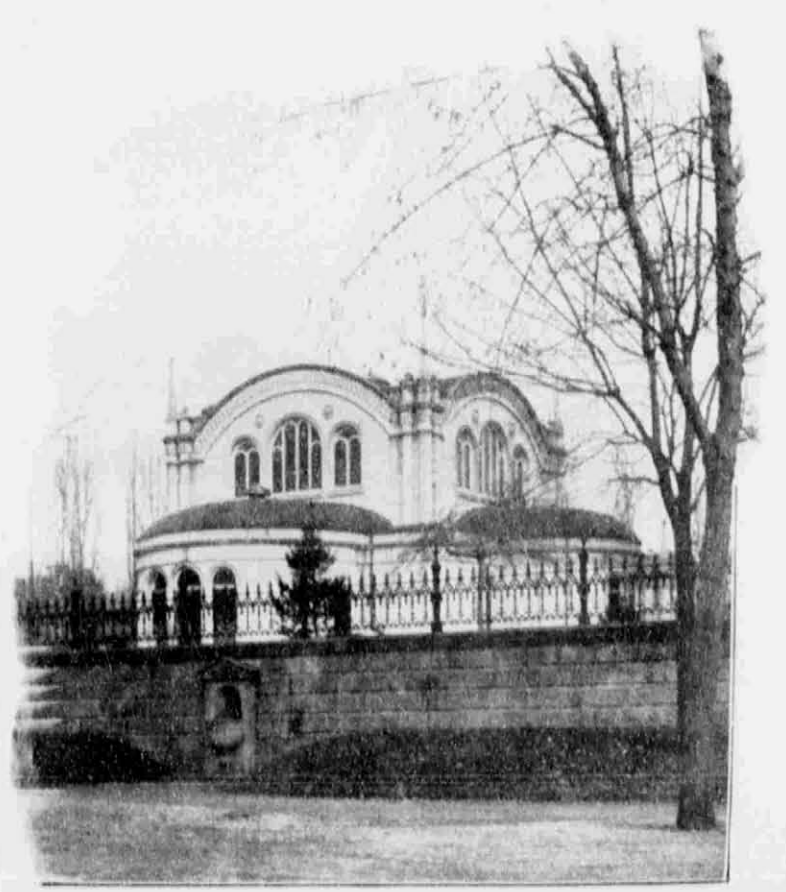
The small adobe house sketched on this page, and situated a little distance west of the east wall of the block, is the Meridian station, put up in 1869 for the purpose of housing astronomical instruments purchased by the Church under the auspices of a government official. When the Coast Survey reached this city, the experts established the Salt Lake base and meridian at a spot now marked by a stone on which is placed the transit bought by the Church. It is situated a trifle west of the centre of the station. The stone with the inscription, "Great Salt Lake Base and Meridian," on the outside of the east wall of the Temple block, indicates the spot determined as the meridian by Prof. Orson Pratt in 1847, and from which the lines for the streets of the city were measured. The men on the Coast Survey were astonished at the little distance between the exact spot fixed by their use of the finest in-



TEMPLE DOORS.



NEAR THE TABERNACLE.



THE TEMPLE ANNEX.