

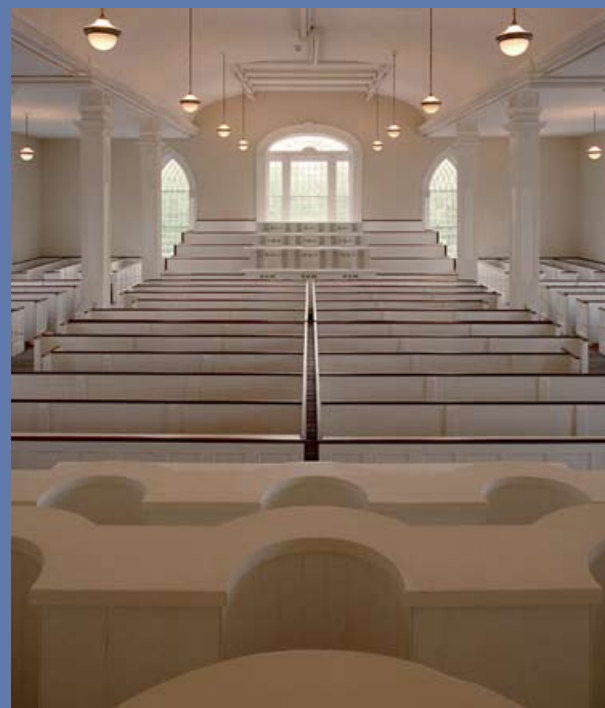


# The Pulpits



The temple contains four sets of pulpits. The pulpits in the lower court (above) are more elaborately decorated than those in the upper court (right).

ONE OF THE MOST DISTINCTIVE design features of the temple are the tiers of pulpits located at both ends of the large assembly rooms on the first and second floors. The pulpits represent the two priesthoods in Latter Day Saint tradition churches; the Melchisedec priesthood (named after Melchisedec, a high priest in the Old Testament) and the Aaronic priesthood (named after Aaron, the brother of Moses). The Melchisedec pulpits are on the west, and the Aaronic pulpits are on the east. Early sources indicate that the bottom level on the east was for the Deacons, the second for the Teachers, the third for the Priests, and the top for the Bishops. The bottom pulpit on the west was for the Elders, the second pulpit for the High Priests, the third is likely for the High Council, and the top for the First Presidency. In theory, the president of each priesthood quorum and their two counselors would occupy their respective pulpits. In practice, they often sat by age, with older members in the top row and younger ones at the bottom.



PHOTOS BY VAL BRINKERHOFF



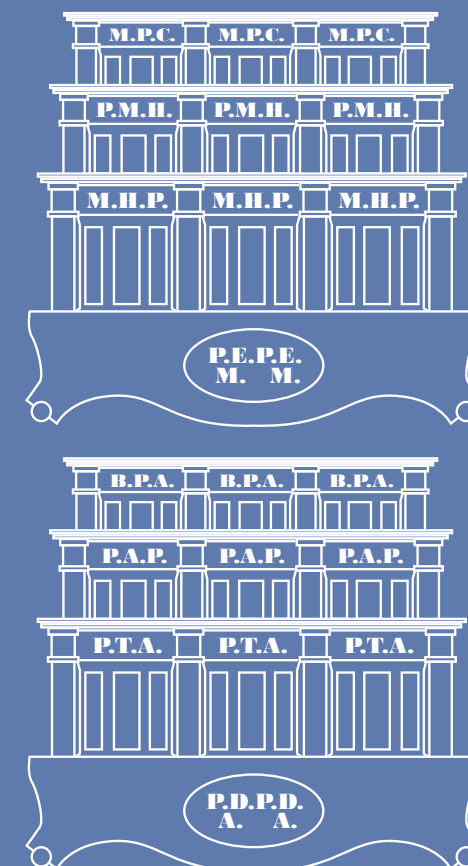
PHOTOS BY VAL BRINKERHOFF

The distinctive pulpits are a vivid illustration of the growing number of lay priesthood offices in the early church.



Unfortunately, the meaning of the pulpit letters were either not recorded by the early Kirtland Saints, or was such common knowledge that they did not feel the need to preserve the meaning of the abbreviations. Today visitors and scholars are left to speculate as to the exact meaning of the letters for the temple builders. The Melchisedec pulpits read M.P.C., P.M.H., M.H.P., and P.E.M.

The Aaronic pulpits read B.P.A, P.A.P., P.T.A, and P.D.A.





## The Lower Court

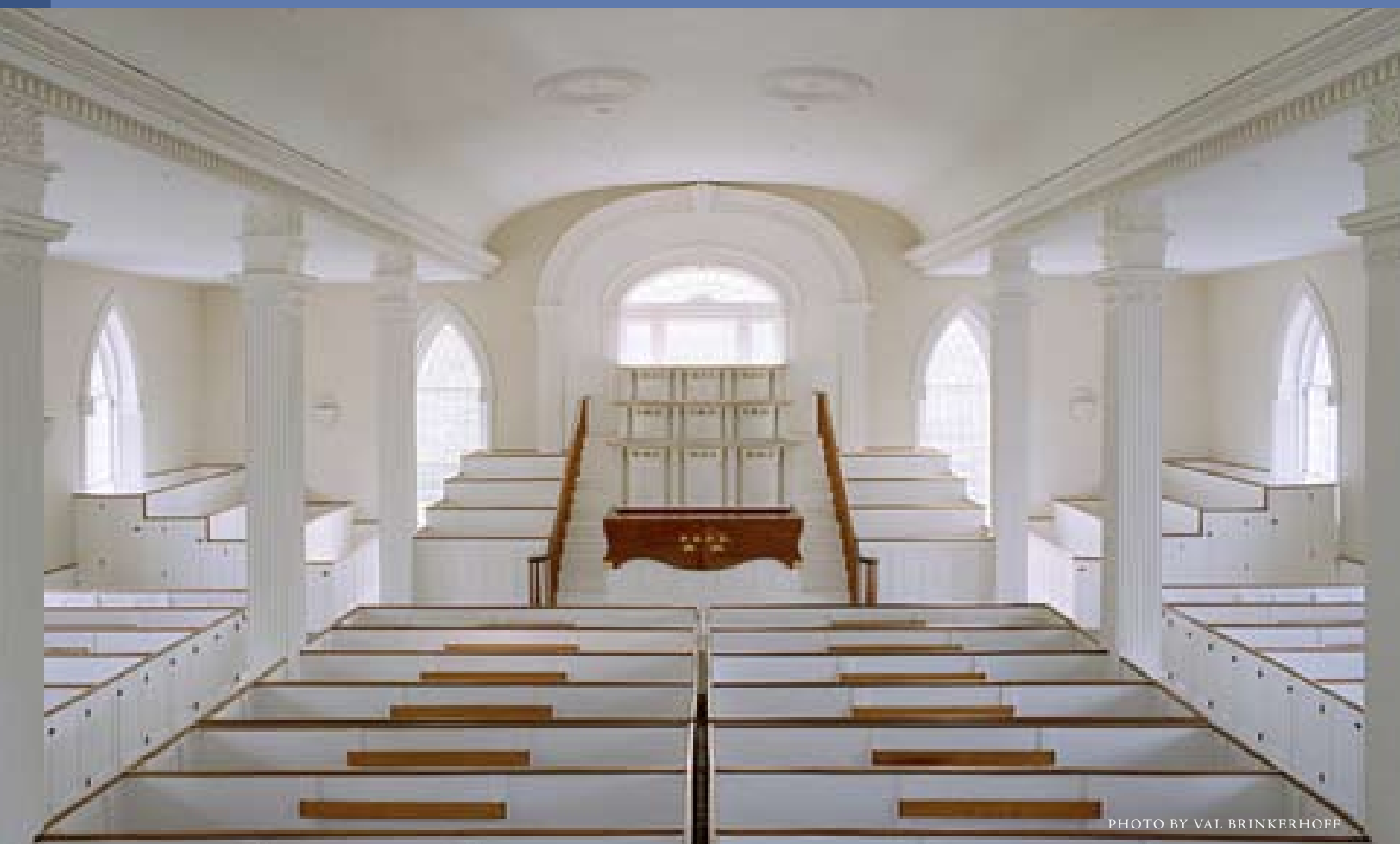


PHOTO BY VAL BRINKERHOFF

CONNECTING NOT JUST to the New Testament, but to Old Testament temples and tabernacles as well, the large assembly rooms were known as “inner courts” and were accessed by passing through the “outer court.” The gathering space on the first floor was for worship while the second floor was intended as classroom space. These rooms were also intended to feature curtains or “veils” to divide the room. The ceiling of the first floor had metal hooks, now gone, imbedded into the plaster. The canvas curtains were suspended from these hooks. They were described as “canvas, heavily painted with white

upon both sides . . . heavy as sails to a ship. They were fastened at bottom to large rollers and rigged with ropes and pulleys at top like curtains in theaters, for raising and lowering.” Worshippers in the 1830s would drop the veils, turning one room into four. An elder was assigned to each of the four corners, and the four services were held at the same time to speed up the process and to allow more people to participate. It could still be a long day, with some of the prayer meetings lasting from ten in the morning until three or four in the afternoon, but it was much shorter than it would have been without the curtain system in place.



PHOTO BY VAL BRINKERHOFF

The large Gothic windows located on the exterior walls of the temple allow natural light to fill the lower court. The 19th century worshippers would have relied heavily on this natural light to illuminate their worship services throughout the week. The windows also proved helpful in air circulation as they could be opened to create a breeze through the worship space during the warm summer days.

MEMBERS WOULD ALSO GATHER in this space on Sunday mornings for hymns, prayers, sermons, and testimonies. They would then break for about an hour to eat lunch and come back in the afternoon for more hymns, prayers, sermons, testimonies, and the serving of communion, or the Sacrament. They would go home for dinner and some would then come back for choir practice. The choir lofts can be seen in the corners. They would sing from all four corners at the same time.



COURTESY OF COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LIBRARY-ARCHIVES

Originally a series of veils or curtains hung from the ceiling of the lower court. When lowered, the veils divided the large assembly room into multiple areas of worship. The original curtains were removed sometime in the 1870s. The photograph above shows reproduction curtains installed in the 1880s to in the location where the original curtains once hung.

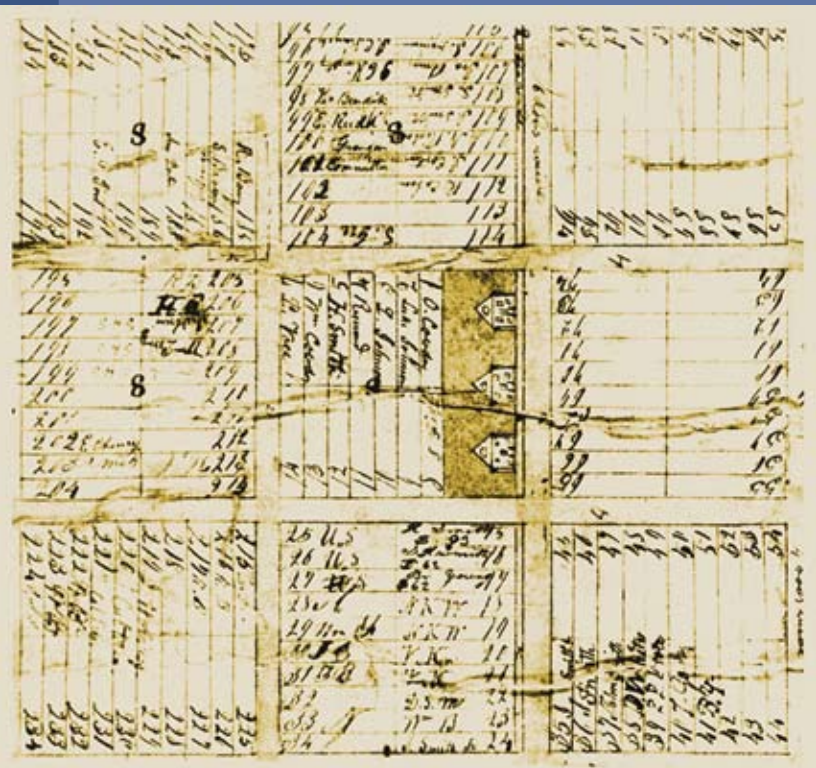


PHOTO BY VAL BRINKERHOFF



# Building the Community

WHEN JOSEPH SMITH and his wife, Emma, arrived by sleigh in 1831, they discovered nearly 1,000 people living in Kirtland Township. Over a period of seven years, the Kirtland Saints labored to construct the temple, as well as a thriving and industrious community. Saints purchased land and built homes close to one another for financial and emotional support. Multiple families living under one roof was fairly common. As missionaries travelled throughout the northeast, they encouraged converts to relocate to Kirtland to help in the construction of the temple and expansion of the Kirtland community. A large numbers of Saints felt the personal call to physically gather to Kirtland. As a result, economic and social conditions became a serious concern for church leaders by 1837.



COURTESY OF COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LIBRARY-ARCHIVES

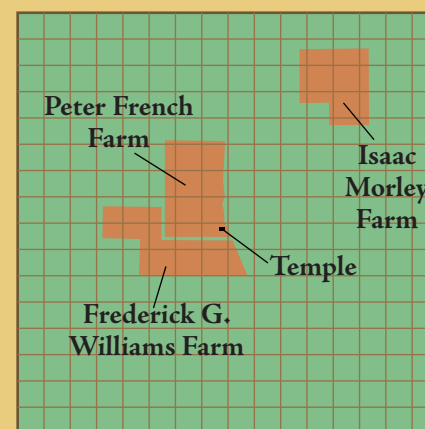
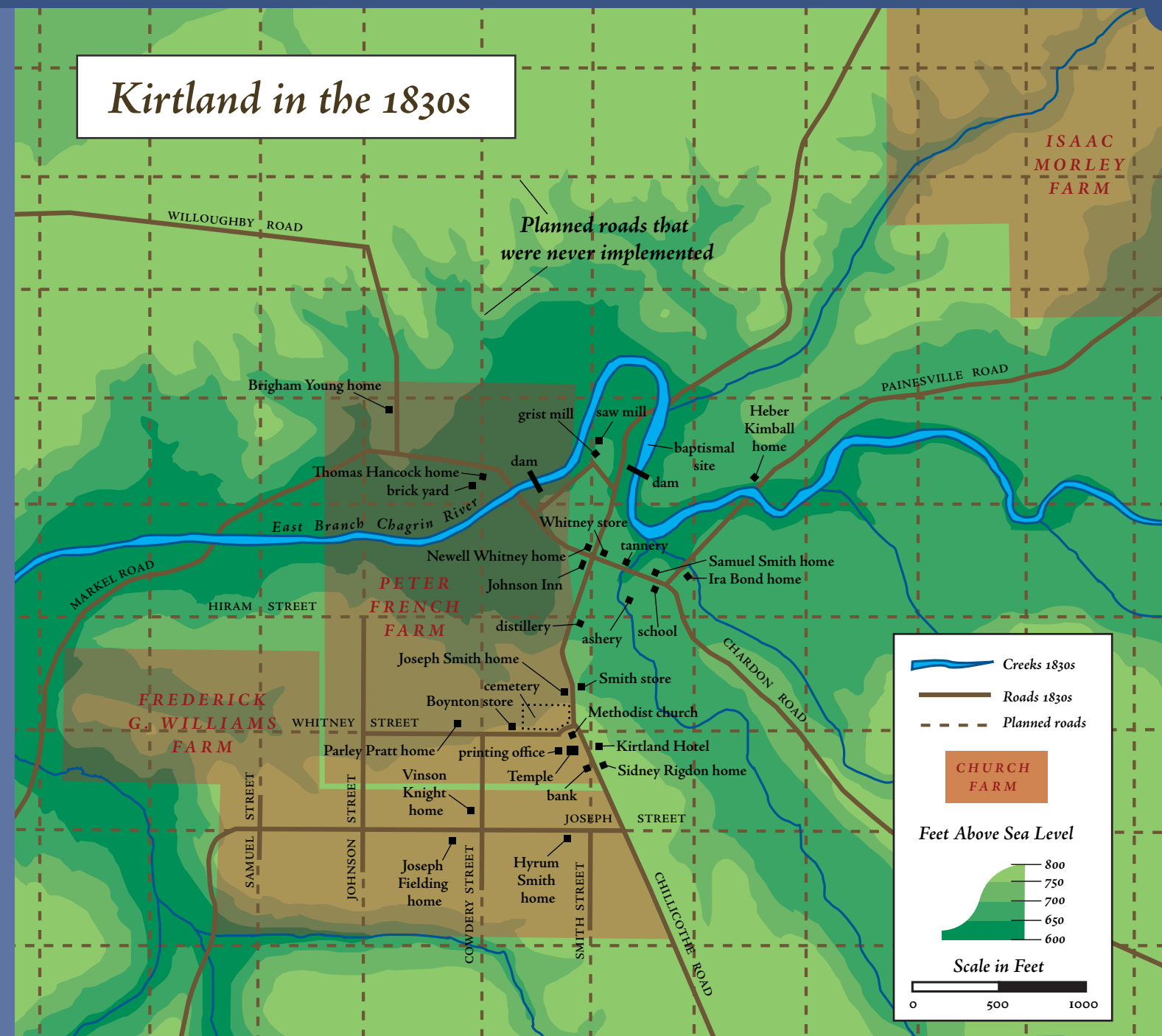
The center of the Kirtland town plat showing the three planned temples and listing the owners of lots on the blocks in their immediate vicinity.



The Newell K. Whitney's store was a gathering place and general store for residents of 1830s Kirtland. Today the store is maintained and preserved by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

If you were traveling through Kirtland in the 1830s, you may have likely rented a room at the Kirtland Hotel, located directly across the street from the temple and was maintained by George Robinson.

## Kirtland in the 1830s



Planned Town Plat

THE SAINTS HAD an expansive vision for the town of Kirtland. Early community members believed they were involved in more than just a Sunday church. They believed they were building the actual kingdom of God with mortar, bricks, and the use of a surveyor's chain. Church leaders platted streets running through 10 acre blocks with most blocks composed of 20 half-acre lots. The names of a few of their streets, like Joseph and Cowdery, survived. Others, like Whitney (now Maple) and Johnson (now Elm), did not. Homes and business rose up in the Kirtland flats and surrounding the temple. A few of the historic structures continue exist today as private residences and historic sites.