



## Zion and Martin Harris

Isaiah spoke often and eloquently about the Zion that would be established in the last days. Prophets looked forward to it and rejoiced in the knowledge. Among them, Ether prophesied that in the last days “a new Jerusalem should be built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph” (Ether 13:6)

It was April 5, 1829, when a revelation commanded young Oliver Cowdery. “seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion” (DC 6:6). That command would be echoed again and again. Joseph Smith would be charged and inspired by the Almighty “to move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good” (DC 21:7).

Among the saints excitement began to mount as understanding of what Zion was and would be grew. It was to be, as Joseph learned, both a people and a place. Enoch built the first city of Zion—a people of one heart and one mind in righteousness, with no poor among them (see Moses 7:18). In time these people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion, until that day when they were taken from the earth, with a promise that someday the City of Zion in heaven would come back to earth to greet the City of Zion—the New Jerusalem--established here.

Joseph and the saints knew this city was to be built, and that they were to do it, but where and when? Can you imagine the sense of honor and purpose that infused those first saints--to be

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charged with fulfilling that prophecy—of establishing the perfect society of Enoch once more?

They soon learned that as time marched forward, Zion would “be the only people that shall not be at war one with another” (DC 45:70). Zion had to be established as a place of refuge and safety in preparation for the Lord’s second coming. All depended on it.

Anticipation mounted when they learned that it was somewhere on the western frontier in the land of Missouri. On June 6, 1831, a number of people were called to go to Missouri and there the Lord promised he would make known the location of Zion. (see DC 52:5)

July 20, 1831, as Joseph and his friends stood near Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, the Lord revealed, “This is the land of promise, and the place for the City of Zion” (DC 57:2). And ... the place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from courthouse” (DC 57:3).

On August 2, 1831, the land of Zion was dedicated, and on August 3, 1831, the Prophet Joseph dedicated the temple site. Then came the practical command of the Almighty “Behold it is wisdom that the land should be purchased by the saints...that they might obtain it for an everlasting inheritance” (DC 57:4-5). Subsequently they began to purchase Zion with donated monies.

In that first year of 1831, Bishop Partridge expended about \$1200 in buying tracts of land to settle the saints upon and build their city of hope. And who was the first principal donor—the man who at the Lord’s command laid his monies at the feet of the Bishop--\$1200 he gave-- in 1831-- and paid for the foundations of Zion? Martin Harris—the same man who paid for the Book of Mormon.