Anthony Head and the Four Notes

A family journey from Missouri to Nauvoo and westward, reconstructed from contemporary records and later family testimony

Research narrative | Updated 3 October 2026

Four small sheets of paper bring Anthony Head into unusually sharp focus. On 19 March 1840, newly settled in Nauvoo after the Missouri expulsion, he signed four promises to pay for a town lot. Each called for $118.75. The installments stretched eight years into a future he would not live to see. His family's story, however, continued through illness, marriage, an Iowa way station, and the journey west. The four original notes have now emerged from a reported line of custody through the family of Bishop Newel K. Whitney. They add a tangible, previously unlocated part of the record to the bond long known to historians. [1, 9]

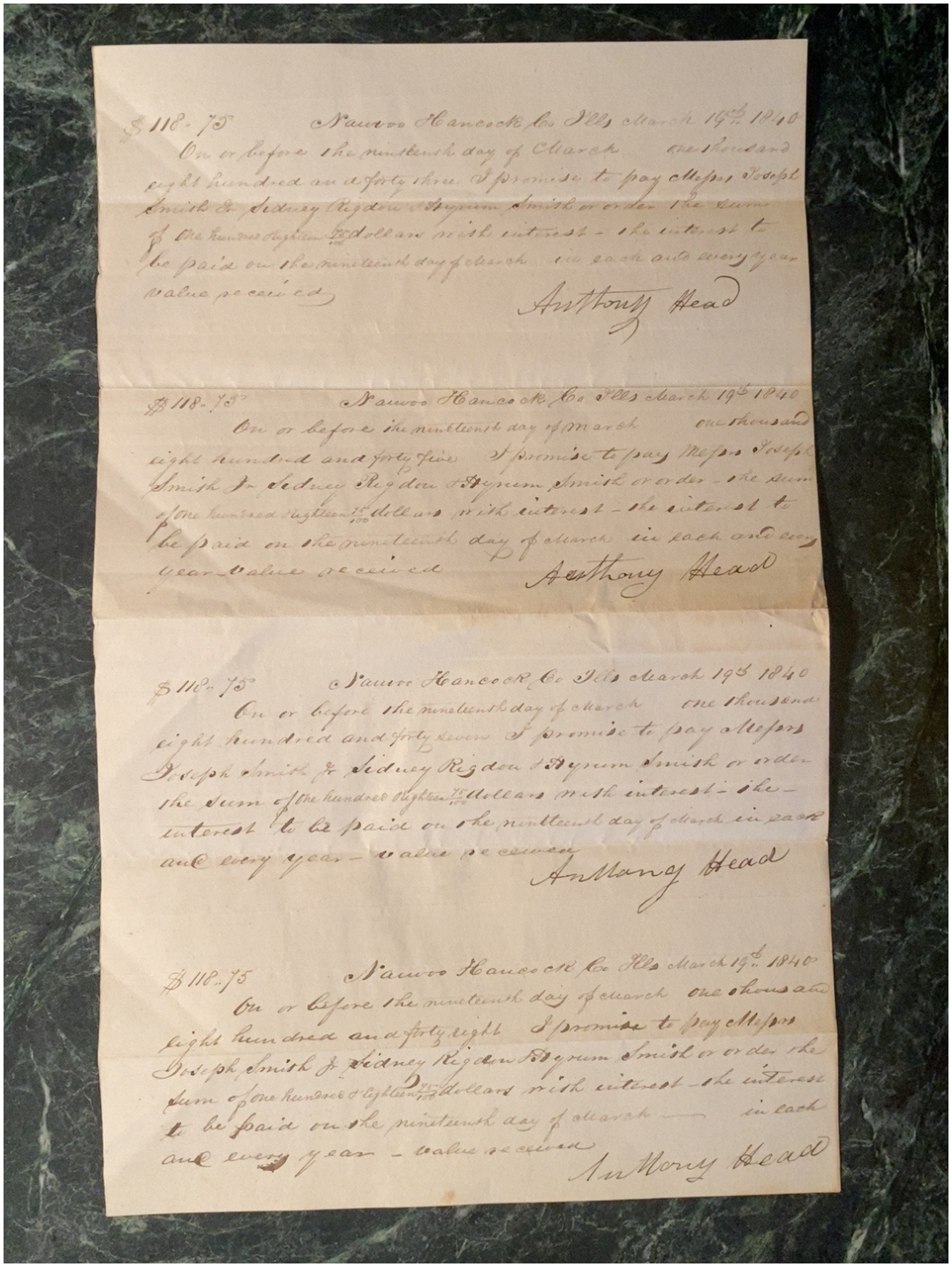
Highlights

- **24 November 1838:** Judge Austin A. King discharged Anthony in the Missouri treason inquiry for lack of evidence.
- **29 January 1839:** Anthony and Norvil joined the covenant to help fellow Saints leave Missouri.
- **19 March 1840:** He signed four $118.75 notes to Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith for a Nauvoo lot.
- **3 December 1842:** He contributed a yoke of steers valued at $24, recorded in the tithing and temple committee accounts.
- **September 1843:** Anthony died in Nauvoo, aged 56 years and 11 days; the sexton recorded the cause as "chill fever."
- **During the westward exodus:** His widow, Catherine Head Whiting, traveled into Iowa and died at Mount Pisgah; her exact death date remains disputed.
- **1852:** Daughter Sarah Head Bracken reached Salt Lake with the Thomas C. D. Howell company, which arrived on 2 September.
- **2026:** According to the present owner, the four original notes remained in the Newel K. Whitney family's possession until this year.

The offering: The four original notes appear on the next page. Other historical images are contextual reproductions from the cited archives and publications and are not included in the offering.

Sources: Court, covenant, land, tithing, and death records are cited on pp. 1B–1G and in the documentary notes. Westward journey: Church Historian's Press, Catherine Head Whiting; Church History Biographical Database, Sarah Head and Thomas C. D. Howell Company. Catherine died in Iowa; Sarah continued to Utah.

The four original notes



$118.75 Nauvoo Hancock Co Ills March 19th 1840
On or before the nineteenth day of March one thousand eight hundred and forty three I promise to pay Messrs Joseph Smith & Sidney Rigdon & Hyrum Smith or order the sum of One hundred eighteen 75/100 Dollars with interest - the interest to be paid on the nineteenth day of March in each and every year value received
Anthony Head

$118.75 Nauvoo Hancock Co Ills March 19th 1840
On or before the nineteenth day of March one thousand eight hundred and forty four I promise to pay Messrs Joseph Smith & Sidney Rigdon & Hyrum Smith or order the sum of one hundred eighteen 75/100 Dollars with interest - the interest to be paid on the nineteenth day of March in each year - value received
Anthony Head

$118.75 Nauvoo Hancock Co Ills March 19th 1840
On or before the nineteenth day of March one thousand eight hundred and forty seven I promise to pay Messrs Joseph Smith & Sidney Rigdon & Hyrum Smith or order the sum of one hundred eighteen 75/100 Dollars with interest - the interest to be paid on the nineteenth day of March in each and every year - value received
Anthony Head

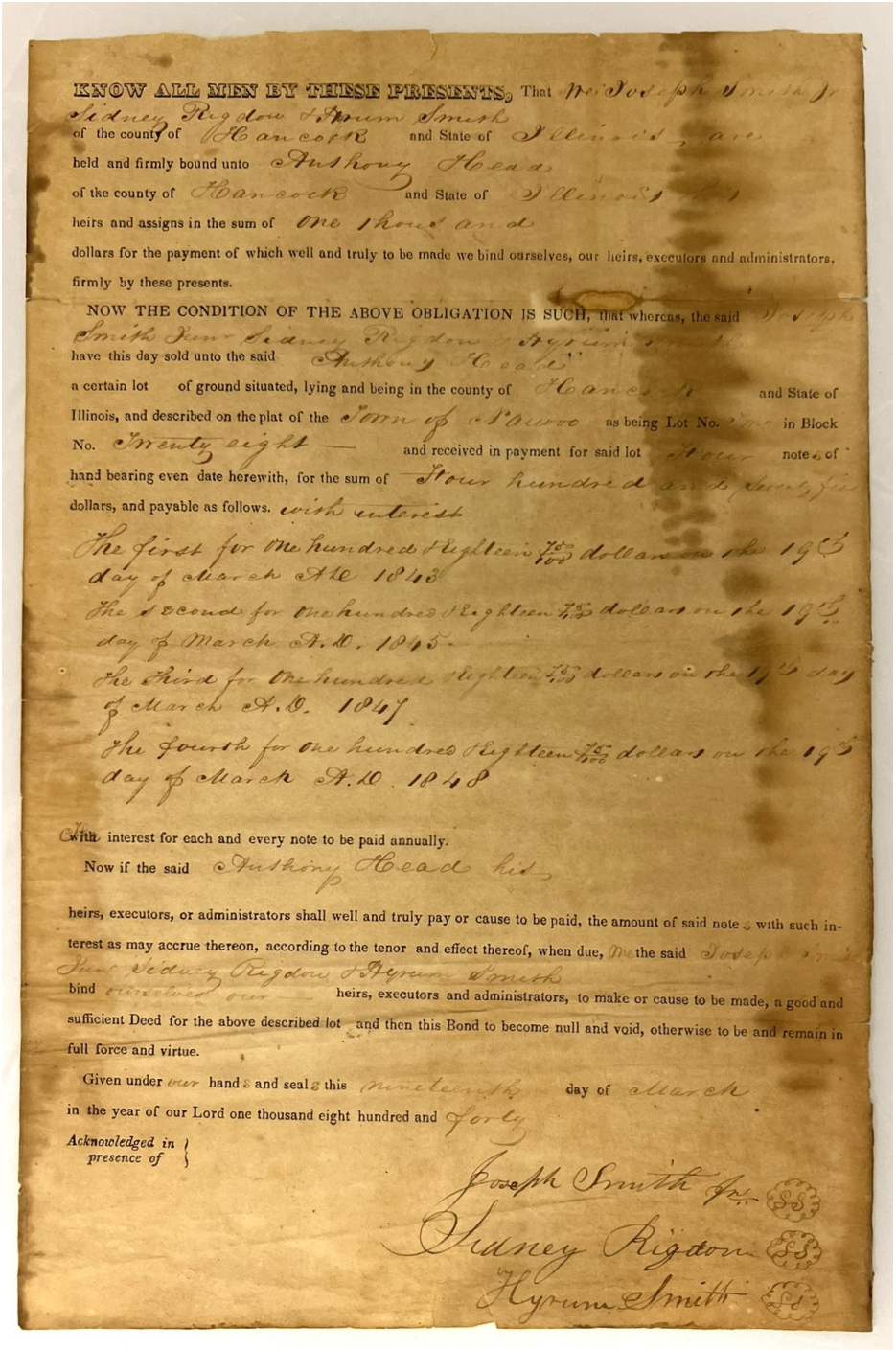
$118.75 Nauvoo Hancock Co Ills March 19th 1840
On or before the nineteenth day of March one thousand eight hundred and forty eight I promise to pay Messrs Joseph Smith & Sidney Rigdon & Hyrum Smith or order the sum of one hundred & eighteen 75/100 Dollars with interest - the interest to be paid on the nineteenth day of March — in each and every year - value received
Anthony Head

The offering consists of these four original Anthony Head promissory notes, dated 19 March 1840. Photograph supplied by the present owner.

Provenance: According to the present owner, this document remained in the possession of the Newel K. Whitney family until 2026.

About the other illustrations: The bond, map, court records, ledger, newspaper notice, and cemetery entry reproduced in this report come from the Joseph Smith Papers. They provide historical context and are not included in the offering. Their repositories are identified in the captions where known.

The bond that belongs with the four notes



KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That We Joseph Smith Jr
Sidney Rigdon & Hyrum Smith
of the county of Hancock and State of Illinois are
held and firmly bound unto Anthony Head
of the county of Hancock and State of Illinois
heirs and assigns in the sum of One thousand
dollars for the payment of which well and truly to be made we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and administrators,
firmly by these presents.

NOW THE CONDITION OF THE ABOVE OBLIGATION IS SUCH, that whereas, the said Joseph
Smith Jun Sidney Rigdon & Hyrum
have this day sold unto the said Anthony Head
a certain lot of ground situated, lying and being in the county of Hancock and State of
Illinois, and described on the plat of the Town of Nauvoo as being Lot No. Two in Block
No. Twenty eight — and received in payment for said lot Four note of
hand bearing even date herewith, for the sum of Four hundred and Seventy five
dollars, and payable as follows. with interest

The first for One hundred & Eighteen 75/100 dollars on the 19th
day of March A.D. 1843
The second for One hundred & Eighteen 75/100 dollars on the 19th
day of March A.D. 1845.
The third for One hundred & Eighteen 75/100 dollars on the 19th day
of March A.D. 1847
The fourth for One hundred & Eighteen 75/100 dollars on the 19th
day of March A.D. 1848

With interest for each and every note to be paid annually.

Now if the said Anthony Head his
heirs, executors, or administrators shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid, the amount of said notes with such in-
terest as may accrue thereon, according to the tenor and effect thereof, when due, We the said Joseph Smith
Jun Sidney Rigdon & Hyrum Smith
bind ourselves our heirs, executors and administrators, to make or cause to be made, a good and
sufficient Deed for the above described lot and then this Bond to become null and void, otherwise to be and remain in
full force and virtue.

Given under our hands and seals this nineteenth day of March
in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and Forty

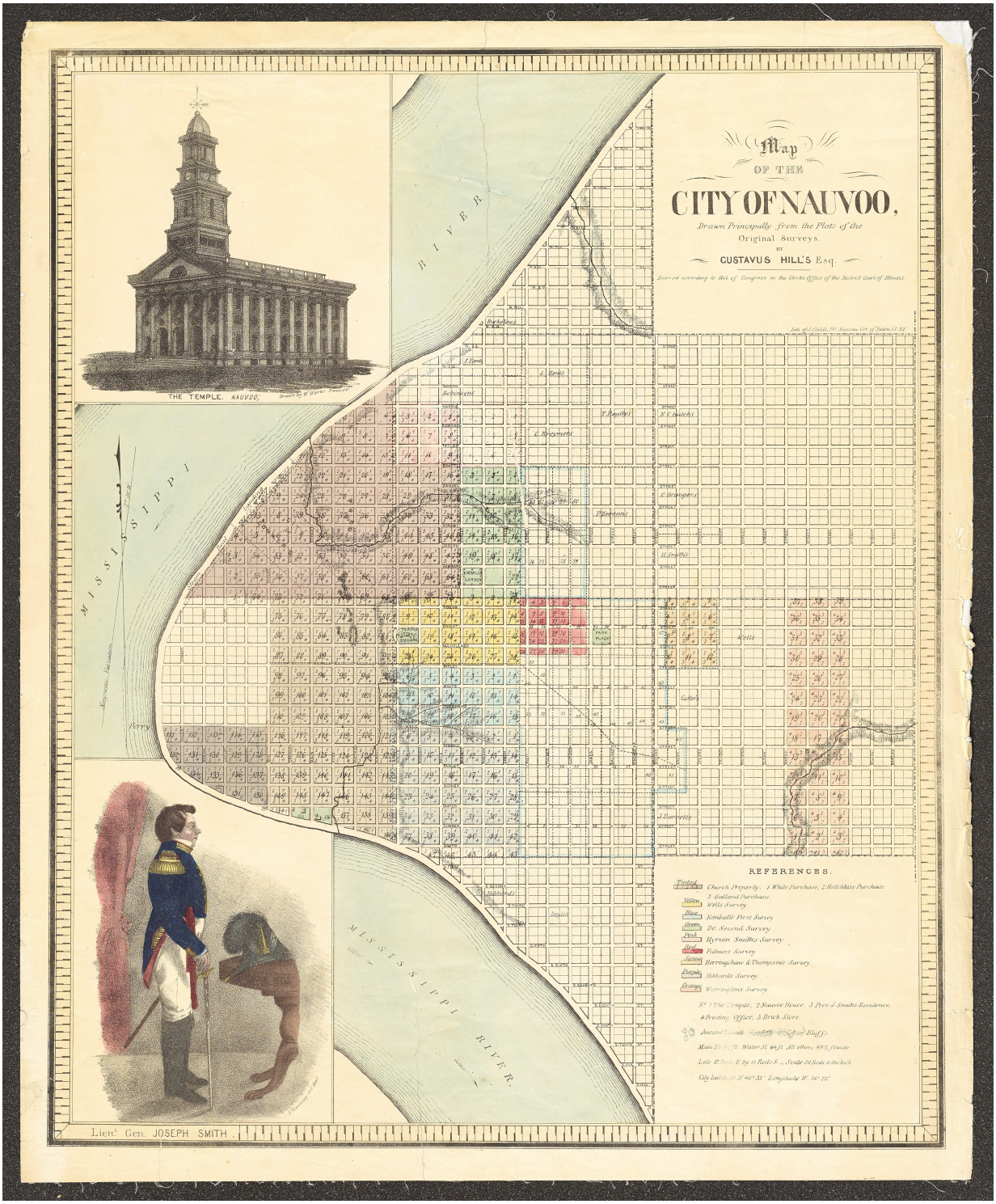
Acknowledged in presence of

Joseph Smith Jr.
Sidney Rigdon
Hyrum Smith

Joseph Smith Jr., Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith to Anthony Head, 19 March 1840. Their signed bond promises a deed to lot 2, block 28, when the agreed payments are made. It identifies four notes of $118.75, due in 1843, 1845, 1847, and 1848, matching the four originals shown on the preceding page. The purchase price was $475; the bond's $1,000 amount secured the sellers' obligation to convey title. Together, the notes and bond show the promises on both sides of the transaction.

Custody: The Joseph Smith Papers source note lists the original with the International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Weber County Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Ogden, Utah. Image and transcription: Bond to Anthony Head, 19 March 1840, p. 1.

Nauvoo on the map

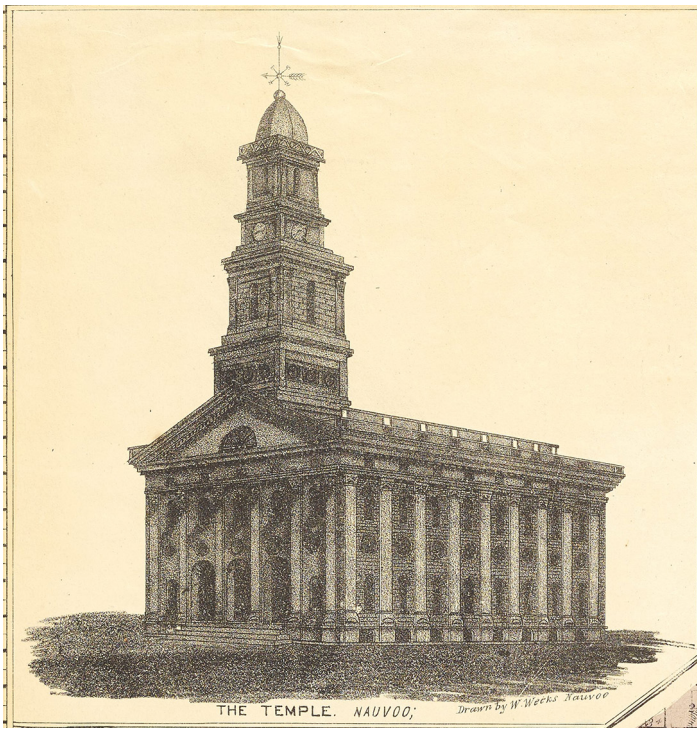


Gustavus Hills's Map of the City of Nauvoo. The city plan, Joseph Smith portrait, and temple design were prepared in 1842; finished maps were advertised for sale in May 1844. This surviving lithograph gives Anthony's land transaction a setting: a city laid out in streets and numbered blocks beside the Mississippi. Its temple vignette shows a proposed completed building, rather than the unfinished structure as it stood. The bond identifies Anthony's purchase as lot 2, block 28; the map alone does not establish a house or his residence there.

Image: Church History Library, reproduced by the Joseph Smith Papers. Map by Gustavus Hills; lithograph by J. Childs; temple design by William Weeks; Joseph Smith portrait after Sutcliffe Maudsley. Map history and source.

Contextual reproductions from the Joseph Smith Papers; not included in the offering.

A temple and the people behind the notes

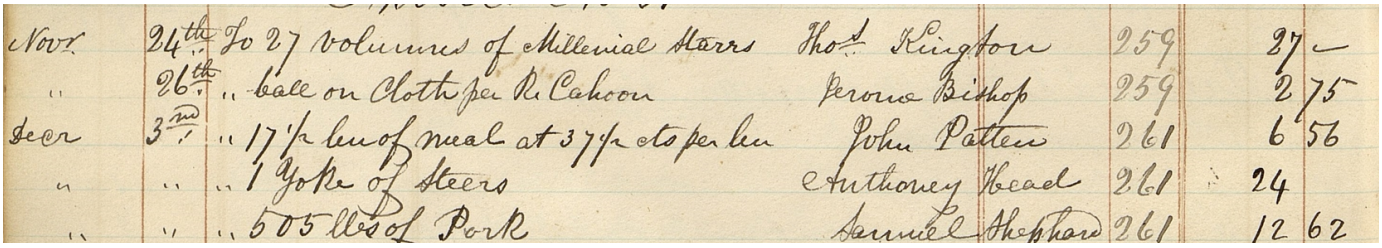


A temple still to be built. William Weeks's early design changed before the temple was completed in 1846. It conveys the ambitions of the city in which Anthony bought his lot.



One of the three payees. The map portrays Joseph Smith in Nauvoo Legion uniform. Joseph, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith are the men named on Anthony's notes.

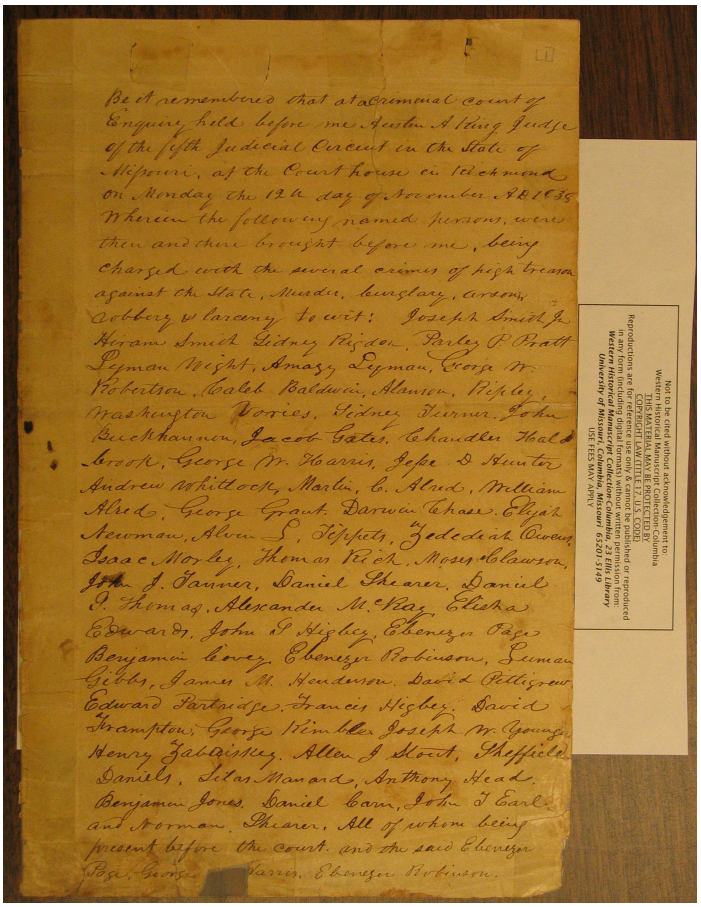
Anthony's contribution had a tangible form. On 3 December 1842, the tithing record credited him with a yoke of steers valued at $24, received through John D. Walker. The temple committee ledger also records the gift. He was contributing to the community's building effort while the obligations on his own lot still lay ahead. The entry does not tell us how the animals were used.



Ledger detail: under the 3 December entry, "1 Yoke of Steers" is paired with "Anthony Head" and $24. The reference number 261 points to the tithing record page.

Sources: Church History Museum, map description; Book of the Law of the Lord, p. 261; Trustee-in-Trust Ledger A, p. 82. Historical image details are enlarged from the cited map and ledger.

Anthony Head in the treason inquiry


Be it remembered that at a Criminal court of Enquiry, held before me Austin A King Judge of the 5th Judicial Circuit in the State of Missouri, at the Court House in Richmond on Monday the 12th day of November AD 1838 Whereon the following named persons, were then and there brought before me, being charged with the several crimes of high treason against the State, Murder, burglary, arson, Robbery & larceny to wit: Joseph Smith Jr. Hyram Smith Sidney Rigdon, Parley P Pratt Lyman Wight, Amasy Lyman, George W. Robertson, Caleb Baldwin, Alanson, Ripley, Washington Bories, Sidney Turner, John Buckhannon, Jacob Gates, Chandler Holt Brook, George W. Harris, Jesse D Hunter Andrew Whittock, Marlin, C. Alvis, William Alred, George Grant, Darwin Chase, Elijah Newman, Alvin L. Tippets, Zedediah Avery, Isaac Morley, Thomas Peck, Moses Clawson, John J. Tanner, Daniel Shearer, Daniel P. Thomas, Alexander M.c Ray, Elisha Edwards, John P Higbee, Ebenezer Page, Benjamin Covey, Ebenezer Robinson, Seeman Gibbs, James M. Henderson, David Pettigrew Edward Partridge, Francis Higbee, David Frampton, George Kimball, Joseph W. Young, Henry Zabriskey, Allen J Stout, Sheffield Daniels, Silas Maynard, Anthony Head, Benjamin Jones, Daniel Carn, John T Earl and Norman Shearer, All of whom being present before the court and the said Ebenezer Page, George Harris, Ebenezer Robinson.

Not to be cited without acknowledgement to:
Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia
THIS MATERIAL MAY BE PROTECTED BY
COPYRIGHT LAW (TITLE 17, U.S. CODE)
Reproductions are provided for research purposes only and may not be published or reproduced in any form (including digital formats) without permission from the:
Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia, 23 Ellis Library
University of Missouri-Columbia, Missouri 65201-5149
(573) 882-4021

Richmond, Missouri, November 1838

Anthony's presence in Missouri is documented in a criminal court record. The opening minutes name him among the men brought before Judge Austin A. King at Richmond, Ray County, on 12 November 1838.

The Joseph Smith Papers case introduction identifies him among 53 men initially in custody. Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and Sidney Rigdon, the later payees on his notes, were also in that group. The inquiry examined whether probable cause existed for proceedings before a grand jury.

The accusations included high treason against Missouri, murder, burglary, arson, robbery, and larceny. A treason conviction then carried a minimum of ten years in prison and a maximum penalty of death. These were grave allegations in the aftermath of the 1838 conflict.

Anthony was discharged. On 24 November, King released him and other named men for lack of evidence. The order calls them "Defendants against whom nothing is proven." His outcome was a discharge during the preliminary proceedings, not a conviction for treason.

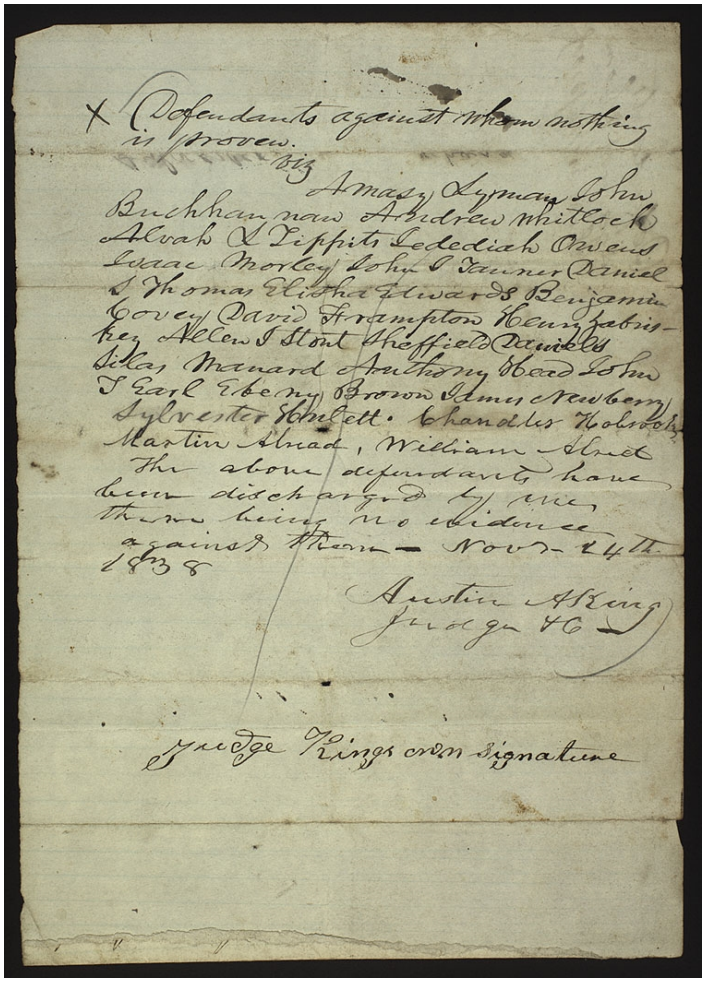
These documents establish both his presence at a critical moment in Missouri history and the court's decision to release him. A little more than a year later, his name appears on the Nauvoo land papers. The change from a prisoner facing serious accusations to a purchaser undertaking payments gives the four notes a fuller human setting.

About the original records. The Joseph Smith Papers source note places the inquiry minutes in the Eugene Morrow Violette Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia. It identifies the discharge order as a two-page record in the Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library. The order itself is reproduced on the following page.

Sources: Joseph Smith Papers, Minutes and Testimonies, 12–29 November 1838, p. 1; Introduction to State of Missouri v. Gates et al. for Treason (historical introduction and initial-defendant list); Order of Discharge, 24 November 1838, p. 1. The case background is paraphrased from the editors' introduction; the quoted wording comes from King's order.

What survives from Missouri

Before Anthony signed promises to pay for a Nauvoo lot, a Missouri judge had signed a paper ordering his release. That surviving document provides a direct glimpse of the upheaval that preceded the family's new beginning.


Defendants against whom nothing is proven.
Viz
Amasa Lyman John Buchhan now Andrew Whitlock Alvah L Tippits Jedediah Owens Isaac Morley John P Tanner Daniel S Thomas Elisha Edwards Benjamin Covey David Frampton Henry Fabishey Helen I Stout Sheffield Daniels Silas Maward Anthony Head John T Earl Ebeny Brown Elmus Newberry Sylvester Hollett Chandler Holbrook Martin Mead, William Mead
The above defendants have been discharged by me there being no evidence against them — Nov 24th 1838
Austin A King
Judge 6C
Judge Kings own signature

Discharged on 24 November 1838

Anthony Head appears near the middle of the list. Judge Austin A. King's order states that the named defendants were discharged because there was no evidence against them. This is an order of release, not a damages claim.

A promise to help others leave

The published record of the 29 January 1839 removal covenant lists both Anthony Head and Norvil M. Head among its subscribers. They joined a pledge to help one another leave Missouri and provide means for the poor. The names were attached by the secretary; this published list is not a specimen of Anthony's autograph.

A little over a year later, his four notes recorded a different commitment: paying for land in Nauvoo. The two records place his purchase within the community's effort to begin again.

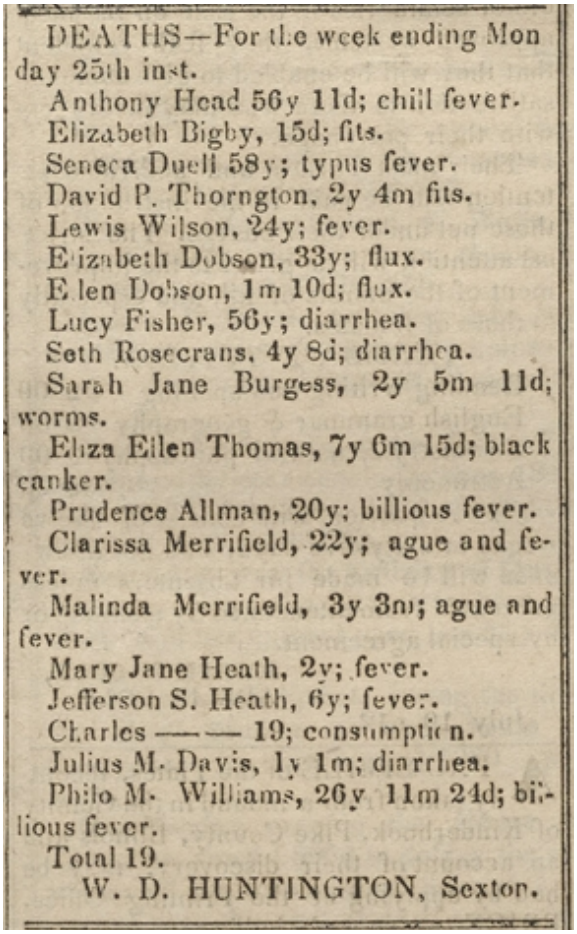
Did Anthony file a Missouri redress petition?

No personal petition or itemized claim under Anthony Head's name has been located in the searchable edition of Clark V. Johnson's *Mormon Redress Petitions*. Checks included all five individual-affidavit sections, the Scroll Petition, later and undated petitions, and related documents; Norvil and Norval Head were also checked. This does not prove that Anthony never submitted a claim. His name in the June 1838 warning letter and January 1839 covenant should not be described as his personal redress petition.

Sources: Order of Discharge, 24 November 1838, p. 1, Church History Library, via Joseph Smith Papers; History of the Church, vol. 3, pp. 250–253; Mormon Redress Petitions, edited by Clark V. Johnson (1992). Search checked 3 October 2026.

Anthony Head’s death in Nauvoo

The printed notice — 27 September 1843



DEATHS—For the week ending Monday 25th inst.
Anthony Head 56y 11d; chill fever.
Elizabeth Bigby, 15d; fits.
Seneca Duell 58y; typus fever.
David P. Thorngton, 2y 4m fits.
Lewis Wilson, 24y; fever.
Elizabeth Dobson, 33y; flux.
Ellen Dobson, 1m 10d; flux.
Lucy Fisher, 56y; diarrhea.
Seth Rosecrans, 4y 8d; diarrhea.
Sarah Jane Burgess, 2y 5m 11d; worms.
Eliza Eilen Thomas, 7y 6m 15d; black canker.
Prudence Allman, 20y; billious fever.
Clarissa Merrifield, 22y; ague and fever.
Malinda Merrifield, 3y 3m; ague and fever.
Mary Jane Heath, 2y; fever.
Jefferson S. Heath, 6y; fever.
Charles ——— 19; consumption.
Julius M. Davis, 1y 1m; diarrhea.
Philo M. Williams, 26y 11m 24d; billious fever.
Total 19.
W. D. HUNTINGTON, Sexton.

The *Nauvoo Neighbor* printed William D. Huntington’s report of deaths for the week ending Monday, 25 September 1843. Anthony appears first in a list of nineteen people:

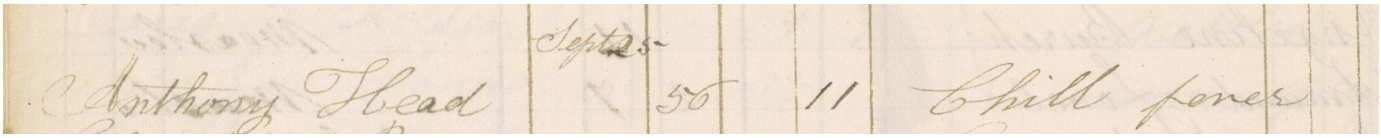
“Anthony Head 56y 11d; chill fever.”

The notice records his age as 56 years and 11 days and gives the cause as “chill fever.” That is the contemporary description; these records do not establish a modern medical diagnosis.

This notice belongs to the issue of **27 September 1843**, page [3]. The 25th is the ending date of the reporting week. Neither this report nor the corresponding manuscript establishes the precise day of Anthony’s death.

His death came after the first note’s scheduled maturity in March 1843, while the remaining three installments still lay ahead. The records do not establish which payments had been made.

The handwritten cemetery record



Enlarged manuscript detail: under the heading “Sept. 25,” Huntington entered Anthony Head, 56 years, 11 days, and “Chill fever.” The blank months column is left blank in the original.

William D. Huntington kept the city’s cemetery book and supplied weekly newspaper reports as Nauvoo’s sexton. Before January 1844, the manuscript generally grouped deaths by week. These are related records of the same city office. The cemetery book is held in the William D. Huntington Records, 1837–1884, Church History Library.

Contextual image details and transcripts: Joseph Smith Papers, William D. Huntington, Report, circa 25 September 1843, published in *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 27 September 1843, p. [3]; William D. Huntington, Cemetery Records, 1839–1846, p. [10]. Dating and recordkeeping context: Introduction to Nauvoo City Sexton Records.

The family behind the notes

A family taking shape in Missouri

Anthony’s earlier life remains less visible than his last seven years. An 1886 Boone County history names an Anthony Head among settlers of the Perche Creek Bottom in the spring of 1817. A later account places daughter Sarah’s birth in Boone County around that period, although sources disagree whether she was born in 1817 or 1818. The identification is plausible, not established by a contemporary document tying the Boone settler to the later Nauvoo purchaser. Catherine Maggard was Anthony’s wife; the family record that survives most clearly follows their children Sarah, Mary, Martha, and Norvil. The family’s precise movements before the mid-1830s await firmer records. [2, 3]

A short, much later biography of Sarah preserves the family’s closest thing to a conversion scene. It says that she joined the church in Clay County, Missouri, in 1835 and that “Elder Lyman Wright” baptized her. Lyman Wight is the likely person meant by that spelling. The biography supplies neither a contemporary baptism entry nor a witness statement; a descendant’s compilation says missionaries taught Anthony and Catherine and that they accepted the faith, but gives no dates or baptizers for them. Sarah’s reported baptism can be told as a family tradition with a named place and year. It cannot make all the Heads converts on the same day or place Anthony in Kirtland, for which no direct evidence has surfaced. [3, 4]

By October 1836 Anthony had entered forty acres in what became Kidder Township, Caldwell County: the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 26, according to the 1886 county history’s land-entry list. That history calls him an early Mormon settler near West Steer Creek. Lyman Wight appears in the adjoining neighborhood of section 28; Norvil Head entered another forty-acre tract in section 22 in February 1837. The history names some families who occupied wartime shanties, but does not place the Heads in any particular one. These land entries are strong leads to the original tract books, and a firmer setting for the household than an imagined cabin or conversion gathering. [2]

Norvil’s own church service enters the record in the Far West conference of July 1838, when he was recommended to be ordained an elder. A Nauvoo license dated 8 June 1840 records him as an elder. Anthony’s church office or mission, if any, has not been established. What we can see is a family participating in a community that was about to be driven from its Missouri homes. [4]

The rupture of 1838 and a new beginning

Anthony and Norvil appear among names on a Far West petition during the Missouri crisis. Anthony also signed a June 1838 warning or petition, and appears in the November proceedings as a defendant discharged for lack of evidence. These are traces of a tense public moment, not grounds to assign him responsibility for violence. In January 1839 Anthony and Norvil signed the covenant organized to help

remove impoverished church members from Missouri. Neither man has been identified as the maker of an individual damages affidavit in the searchable edition of the Missouri redress petitions; absence there does not measure what this household lost. [5]

The family moved to the new gathering place on the Mississippi. Sarah's later biography says she went to Nauvoo with her parents. Their individual arrival dates have not been fixed, but the March 1840 land papers put Anthony there within a year of the Missouri removal. For a family that had already made one Missouri land entry and been drawn into the upheaval, the chance to secure a Nauvoo lot would have carried practical weight. The documents show a bargain for land; what Anthony hoped to build on it remains beyond their reach. [1, 3]

Four promises and one lot

On 19 March 1840 Anthony arranged to buy lot 2 in block 28 on the Nauvoo town plat. A town lot order sets the price at $475, payable in four equal installments after three, five, seven, and eight years, with six percent annual interest. A bond signed by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith bound the sellers, subject to payment, to convey title. Anthony signed four corresponding notes for $118.75 each, payable to those same three men or their order on 19 March 1843, 1845, 1847, and 1848. Their text calls for annual interest without itself stating a rate; the matching town lot order supplies six percent. The bond's $1,000 figure is a conditional security obligation, not another purchase price. An entry in the Trustees Land Book gives $118.50 for each installment, an evident discrepancy against the $475 total and the four surviving signed notes. [1]

The three payees were the church's First Presidency in March 1840: Joseph its president, Sidney his first counselor, and Hyrum his second. Their names belong to the date the papers were executed. In January 1841 Hyrum took the patriarch's and an enlarged leadership role, while William Law became counselor. Sidney's long illness and his later disagreements with Joseph strained the Presidency in Nauvoo. Joseph questioned his loyalty in 1843; an October conference nevertheless retained him. Those later tensions cannot explain why Anthony signed the notes in 1840. Joseph and Hyrum's deaths in June 1844, and the ensuing succession dispute, further complicated the institutions through which an old account might be administered. They did not rewrite the named payees on Anthony's paper. [6]

This land bargain establishes a purchase agreement, not a completed conveyance. No verified deed, full payment entry, receipt, cancellation, or estate settlement has yet closed the account. The first principal installment fell due in March 1843, while Anthony was still alive. His death came about six months later; the remaining three due dates fell after it. The originals' backs are reported blank, with no endorsement or cancellation. That fact invites investigation but cannot show whether money changed hands. A paid note might remain in a file, just as an unpaid or abandoned one might. There is no proof of an initial cash payment, and the bond describes receipt of the four notes as the consideration. [1, 9]

Nor does a marked lot on a plat put a house on the ground. The 1842 taxable-lot list leaves the displayed entry for this lot unnamed; that blank cannot prove vacancy, forfeiture, or construction. The maps in the requested Holzapfel and Cottle guide could not be inspected in a freely accessible copy; modern historians also caution that no known contemporary Nauvoo map identifies every dwelling. A separate "block 28 lot 2" in the Wells addition is a different parcel. No source yet verifies that the Heads built or lived on the contracted town lot. [7]

A household in Nauvoo

Other records make this much more than a real estate story. Catherine and daughters Sarah, Mary, and Martha Byington appear in the Nauvoo Female Relief Society record or its compiled roster. Norvil's elder license places another family member within the church's organized work. Anthony himself joined a July 1842 civic petition asking that driftwood and stagnant water be cleared along the river. The request

speaks to the city's shared concern about its environment; it does not place his home beside the river or establish the source of the fevers that later struck the family. [4, 8]

A sexton's report for the week ending 11 November 1842 lists "Marthy Byington," age twenty-three, dead of fever. That is the family's Martha. The record is stark: a name, an age, a cause, and a week. It says nothing about her treatment or last days. Less than a month later, on 3 December, Anthony gave a yoke of steers valued at $24 toward tithing, entered in the Book of the Law of the Lord through John D. Walker and reflected in the trustee ledger as delivered to the temple committee. Even after a death in the household, the surviving account shows him contributing a substantial asset to the community's building effort. [8]

The same city record system eventually recorded Anthony. The Nauvoo Neighbor of 27 September 1843 reported deaths for the week ending Monday the 25th. It listed "Anthony Head 56y 11d; chill fever." The sexton's corresponding report agrees. The newspaper does not say which day of that week he died, so 25 September should not be given as a certain death date. Searches of the adjacent September and October 1843 issues of Times and Seasons found no Anthony Head notice; it was the Neighbor that supplied the cause. His precise burial place has not been established. [8]

Catherine and the journey that continued

After Anthony's death, Catherine remained connected with the Saints and eventually married Elisha Whiting. The sequence matters: Elisha's first wife, Sally, died in August 1846, and the marriage to Catherine followed. Catherine's new family joined the movement west through Iowa. At Mount Pisgah, one of the emigrants' stopping places, an 1888 memorial later recorded "Widow Head Whiting" alongside Elisha and Sally. It is an unusually poignant compressed biography: her first husband's name, her second husband's name, and the place where her journey ended. [10]

Her death date is more difficult than the memorial's identification. A modern scholarly biographical page assigns February 1847, but derivative descriptions of letters apparently addressed to or signed by Catherine are dated in November 1847. A retrospective Whiting account gives 15 December 1844, an impossibility within its own sequence because it puts Sally's death in August 1846 before Elisha's remarriage; a later family transcription renders the year 1847. Until the original letters and memorial evidence can be compared, the sound conclusion is that Catherine died at Mount Pisgah during the westward migration, with the precise date unresolved. Her presence there should be remembered without forcing contradictory evidence into a tidy chronology. [10]

Sarah, whose later biography places her baptism at the beginning of this family's Latter-day Saint path, married James Bennett Bracken in Nauvoo in 1843 according to family accounts. The couple later reached Utah, where Sarah died in 1901. Accounts differ on her birth year and some details of the marriage, so an exact birth date and wedding day require further verification. Mary's Relief Society membership and Martha's marriage and death are visible, but full biographies of all the children, and the fate of Norvil after the surviving license entries, need records beyond those examined here. [3, 8, 10]

Why the papers survived

The Joseph Smith Papers published Anthony's bond while observing that its four companion notes had not been located. The four originals now photographed for this project match its date, amount, payees, and distinct maturities. According to their present owner, they remained with descendants of Newel K. Whitney, among other early church papers, until approximately May 2026. A private collector acquired the group and the owner then acquired these four notes. The recent chain is an owner's account; invoices, wrappers, inventories, and the intervening family succession have not yet been independently examined. The bond itself survives in another collection. These notes are therefore newly reported primary

documents associated with a known transaction, rather than documents the published editors previously had in hand. [1, 9]

Whitney had been a bishop since 1831 and was bishop of Commerce's Middle Ward by the time Anthony made the purchase. He was a merchant and church financial officer, but the four notes name the First Presidency, not Whitney. Joseph still served as land-sales treasurer in June 1840. After Joseph and Hyrum were killed, Whitney and George Miller became church trustees in August 1844; older land papers could reasonably have passed through that office. A similar 1839 John L. Butler bond and notes eventually came into Whitney's papers. That comparison explains why Whitney custody is unsurprising; it does not establish when he received the Head notes, in what capacity, or what he did with them. [9]

These four sheets complete the documentary set described by the March 1840 bond. They prove Anthony undertook the $475 installment obligation. They do not prove the land was finally paid for, deeded, occupied, or lost. [1]

The story closes with paper and people moving on different tracks. Anthony died before most of his promises came due; Catherine's route led west and ended at Mount Pisgah; Sarah carried the family's religious memory into Utah. The notes remained together, apparently in Whitney family custody for generations. Their survival permits the purchase to be read alongside the lives it touched, while the unanswered question of payment stays where the evidence leaves it. [1, 3, 9, 10]

Documentary notes and research limits

The bracketed numbers point to the source groups below. Contemporary records anchor the transaction, civic and church activity, and deaths; later histories and family accounts supply parts of the earlier conversion and westward biography. Inferred connections and disputed dates have been identified in the narrative. These links are provided for review, not as a claim that every cited derivative account is equally reliable.

1 Land transaction and original notes

Joseph Smith Papers, "Bond to Anthony Head," "Town Lot Order to Anthony Head," and Trustees Land Book A, p. 70; four original note fronts supplied by owner, IMG_0680(1).jpeg and IMG_0681.jpeg; owner reports blank versos.

https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/bond-to-anthony-head-19-march-1840/1 ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/town-lot-order-to-anthony-head-19-march-1840/1 ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/trustees-land-book-a-11-september-1839-30-april-1842/70

2 Missouri settlement

History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties, Missouri (1886), Kidder Township, pp. 549–551; Boone County history, Perche Creek Bottom. Both are later histories and land entries need original verification.

https://genealogytrails.com/mo/caldwell/towns_two.html ; https://genealogytrails.com/mo/boone/hist_county.htm

3 Sarah and family tradition

Later Sarah Head biographical sketch; descendant Bracken account; Church History Biographical Database entry for Sarah. These differ in her birth year.

https://lifeandtimesoflorriej.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/bio-head-sarah.pdf ; https://lifeandtimesoflorriej.wordpress.com/donnajs-pioneers/james-b-bracken-1852/ ; https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/chd/individual/sarah-head-1817?lang=eng

4 Religious participation

Joseph Smith Papers, Far West Minute Book 2, p. 154; Nauvoo license for Norvil M. Head; Lyman Wight biographical entry.

https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/154 ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/license-for-norvil-m-head-8-june-1840-extract/1 ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/lyman-wight

5 Missouri crisis and removal

Missouri State Archives petition scan; Andrew Jenson, “Caldwell County, Missouri” (1889), exodus covenant; Clark V. Johnson, Mormon Redress Petitions, searchable edition.

https://www.sos.mo.gov/cmsimages/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormRecs/doc/Pages_97to109.pdf ; https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/sites/default/files/archive-files/pdf/jenson/2022-07-26/hr_8.1_caldwell_county_missouri_january_1889_685-723.pdf ; https://rsc.byu.edu/book/mormon-redress-petitions

6 First Presidency

Joseph Smith Papers, church officers in 1839–1841, Sidney Rigdon correspondence and October 1843 minutes; introduction to trustee records.

https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/back/general-church-officers-september-1839-january-1841 ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-and-discourses-6-9-october-1843/1 ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/introduction-to-the-trustee-records/1

7 Lot and building question

Joseph Smith Papers, Nauvoo First Ward taxable lots; MeLínda Evans Jeffress, “Mapping Historic Nauvoo”; BYU Studies review of Givens and Holzapfel and Cottle books. The latter map was not inspected.

https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/list-of-taxable-lots-in-nauvoo-first-ward/4 ; https://byustudies.byu.edu/article/mapping-historic-nauvoo ; https://byustudies.byu.edu/article/in-old-nauvoo-and-old-mormon-nauvoo

8 Nauvoo household, tithing, and deaths

Relief Society biographical records; city petition of 18 July 1842; sexton reports for November 1842 and September 1843; Book of the Law of the Lord; Nauvoo Neighbor, 27 September 1843.

https://www.churchhistorianspress.org/the-first-fifty-years-of-relief-society/people/catherine-maggard-head-whiting?lang=eng ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/petition-from-albert-p-rockwood-and-others-18-july-1842/2 ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/william-d-huntington-report-circa-11-november-1842/1 ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/william-d-huntington-report-circa-25-september-1843/1 ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/the-book-of-the-law-of-the-lord-book-a/158 ; https://byustudies.byu.edu/online-book/nauvoo-neighbor/september-27-1843-volume-1-number-22-144

9 Whitney and provenance

Owner’s statement, 26 September 2026; Joseph Smith Papers profiles and Butler bond; Whitney trustee records and BYU collection listing. The owner’s recent chain has not been documented independently.

https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/newel-kimball-whitney ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/bond-to-john-l-butler-1-november-1839/1 ; https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/introduction-to-the-trustee-records/1

10 Catherine and Sarah westward

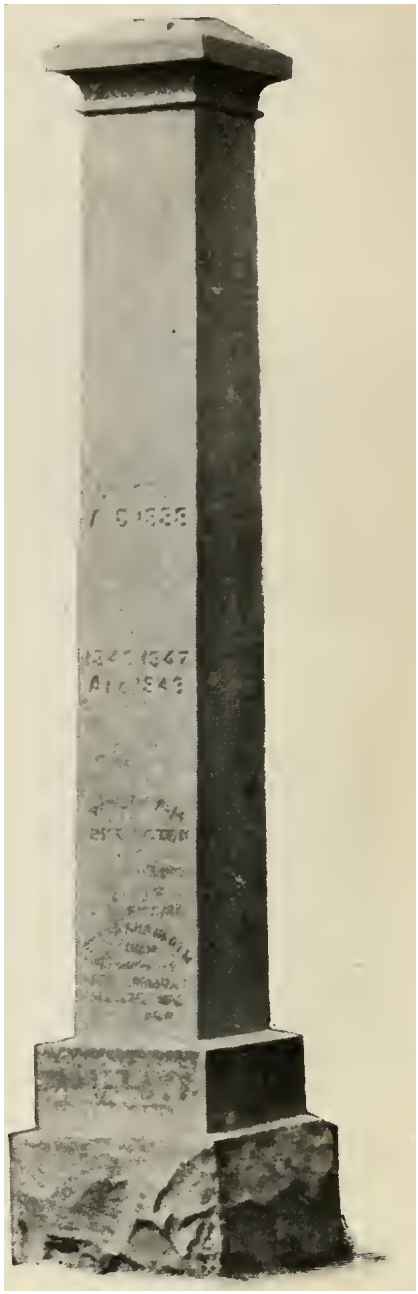
Mount Pisgah monument transcription (1916); Church Historian’s Press Catherine profile; Chauncey Whiting letter transcription and family compilation; Sarah biographical entry. Death-date accounts conflict.

https://saintsbysea.byu.edu/static/articles/MountPisgahutahgenealogicalvol71916pp157-175Pagesgene.pdf ; https://www.churchhistorianspress.org/the-first-fifty-years-of-relief-society/people/catherine-maggard-head-whiting?lang=eng ; https://www.kathysfamily.org/pages/whiting/chaunceyletter.html ; https://lifeandtimesoflorriej.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/catherine-maggard-head.pdf

Questions the surviving papers cannot yet answer

Original tract books and Nauvoo deeds might establish land title; Hancock probate and trustee accounts might reveal payments or estate treatment; parcel records or archaeology might establish whether a dwelling stood on the lot. Catherine’s original late-1847 letters and a photographed probate inventory need examination before a more definite account is possible. Freely indexed searches have not supplied those missing entries. A cataloged 1845 statement by a Sarah Head should not be attributed to Anthony’s daughter without identity evidence.

Where Catherine’s journey ended



Mount Pisgah, Iowa

Catherine Maggard Head Whiting followed the Saints west from Nauvoo, but her journey ended in Iowa. The Mount Pisgah monument, erected in 1888, preserves her memory among those who died at this temporary settlement along the emigrant trail.

The south-side inscription, transcribed in 1916, includes the name **“Widow Head Whiting”** beside Elisha and Sally Whiting. It connects the monument directly to the family of the man who signed the four notes.

A name preserved in stone

SOUTH SIDE

Betsey Garley Shipley
Nephi Shipley
David McKee
Polly Sweat
Louisa Cox
Eliza Cox
Henry Davis
Joel Campbell
Emily Whiting
Elisha Whiting
Sally Whiting
Widow Head Whiting
Elizabeth Daniels
Rebecca Adair
William P. Mangum
Lane Ann Mangum
Jemima Mangum Adair
William Jefferson Adair

Photograph published in 1914. The complete monument is shown at left. The publication does not identify its photographer; an attribution to George Edward Anderson has not been established.

The notes preserve Anthony’s promise to build a future in Nauvoo. This monument remembers Catherine among those whose westward journey ended before Utah. Their daughter Sarah carried the family’s story onward, reaching Salt Lake in 1852.

Contextual reproductions, not included in the offering. Photograph: Hannah Settle Lapish, “The ‘Mormon’ Burial Ground at Mt. Pisgah, Iowa,” *Improvement Era* 17, no. 7 (May 1914), p. 664, Internet Archive scan. Inscription detail: Andrew Jenson, “Mount Pisgah,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 7 (October 1916), p. 169, BYU Saints by Sea scan. Both reproduced illustrations were published before 1931 and are in the U.S. public domain.