Hiram Kimball and John Weld

A doctor a merchant and a county payment in Nauvoo

Illustrated narrative and expanded biographical edition • Prepared for David Larsen
Manuscript dated March 8, 1845 • Revised October 2, 2026

“Please let the bearer Hiram Kimball…”

With those few words, Dr. John F. Weld put Hiram Kimball into the story of a payment due from Hancock County. The instruction was brief. Weld named no sum, described no service, and offered no explanation of his arrangement with Kimball. He expected the county clerk to know which allowance he meant. [1]

The surviving paper gives us something more personal than an entry in an account book: one named man authorizing another to receive money on his behalf. Behind the names were a physician with a practice in Nauvoo and a merchant whose business, family, and religious ties reached across the city. Their connection opens a small but revealing window into everyday life in 1845.

Highlights

Person	Place in the story
Hiram S. Kimball	An early Commerce settler, merchant, land developer, and husband of Sarah Granger Kimball. Weld named him as bearer of the authorization.
Dr. John Fuller Weld	An early Hancock County physician and Nauvoo Legion surgeon. The county allowance belonged to him; his signature authorized Kimball to receive it.
Geo. W. Thatcher	The clerk named in the filing endorsement on the reverse. The paper was marked filed on March 25, 1845, seventeen days after Weld dated it.

What the paper tells us

Weld authorized Kimball to receive his March-term county allowance. The amount, the reason for the allowance, and the private arrangement between the men remain unknown. The filing endorsement records an administrative step; it does not prove that payment was made. [1]

Read the story, compare the front and transcript and reverse and transcript, or explore the expanded biographies. Source links and PDF bookmarks support closer reading on a phone.

A small paper in a busy town

On March 8, 1845, Weld signed a note at Nauvoo addressed to the clerk of the County Commissioners Court. Its business was straightforward: Kimball, carrying the paper, was to have the amounts the court had allowed Weld at its March term. A name and a signature could connect an approved claim to someone other than its original owner. [1]

Both men knew Hancock County before the great Latter-day Saint settlement. Weld had come to Sonora Township in 1827. Kimball established himself at Commerce in 1833. By 1845 their careers had become entwined with Nauvoo: the doctor through patients, the militia, and public proceedings; the merchant through property, credit, civic office, and family. [2, 3]

Their relationship also crossed a religious boundary. Kimball had been baptized in 1843. Weld worked within Nauvoo institutions and was reportedly friendly to the Saints, but no baptism has been established for him. The note documents a practical connection between them. It does not tell us whether they were intimate friends, creditor and debtor, or simply parties to a collection arrangement. [1, 3]

The street behind the signature

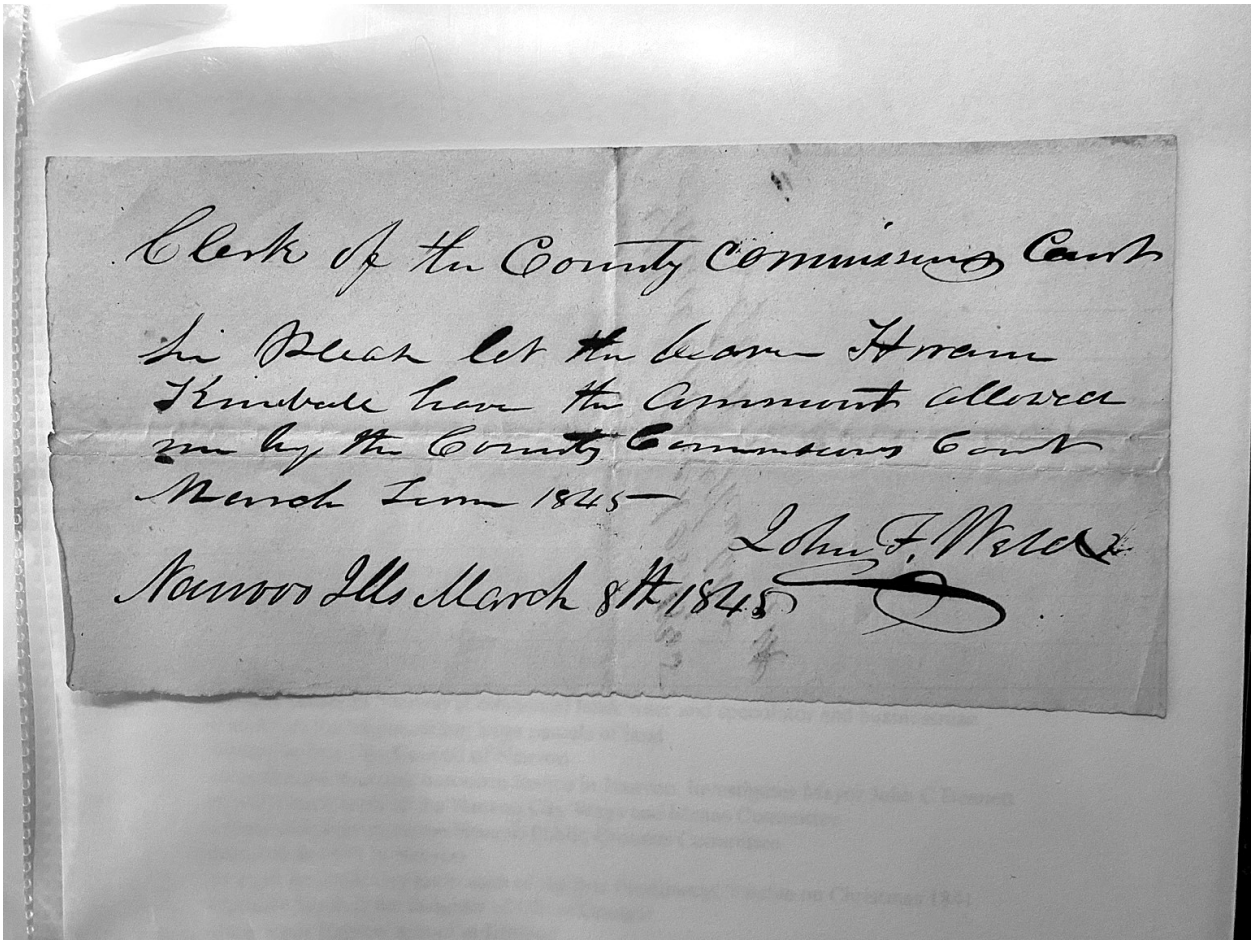
Weld's home and office stood on Mulholland Street. The surviving building, now the Weld House Museum at 1380 Mulholland, is identified by the Looking for Lincoln heritage program as his home and office from 1842 to 1846. That gives the signature a place in the town, although the note does not identify the room or building in which it was written. [5]



Mulholland Street looking east from the south side of the temple block, published in 1904 by Underwood & Underwood. This later view helps locate the story in Nauvoo's business district; it is not a view of the street in 1845, and Weld's office is not identified in this photograph. Library of Congress, LC-DIG-stereo-1s46107. [6]

On the reverse of Weld's paper, another hand supplied the next date: March 25, 1845. The clerk's filing notation gives the document a second moment in time. What happened to the money after that remains a question for the county's accounts. [1]

The original front and its words



Front of the March 8, 1845 authorization, from the original project photograph identified in the earlier report as IMG 3492. The full supplied view is retained. [1]

Faithful transcript of the front

Clerk of the County Commissioners Court
Sir Please let the bearer Hiram
Kimball have the Ammounts allowed
me by the County Commissioners Court
March Term 1845—

John F. Weld

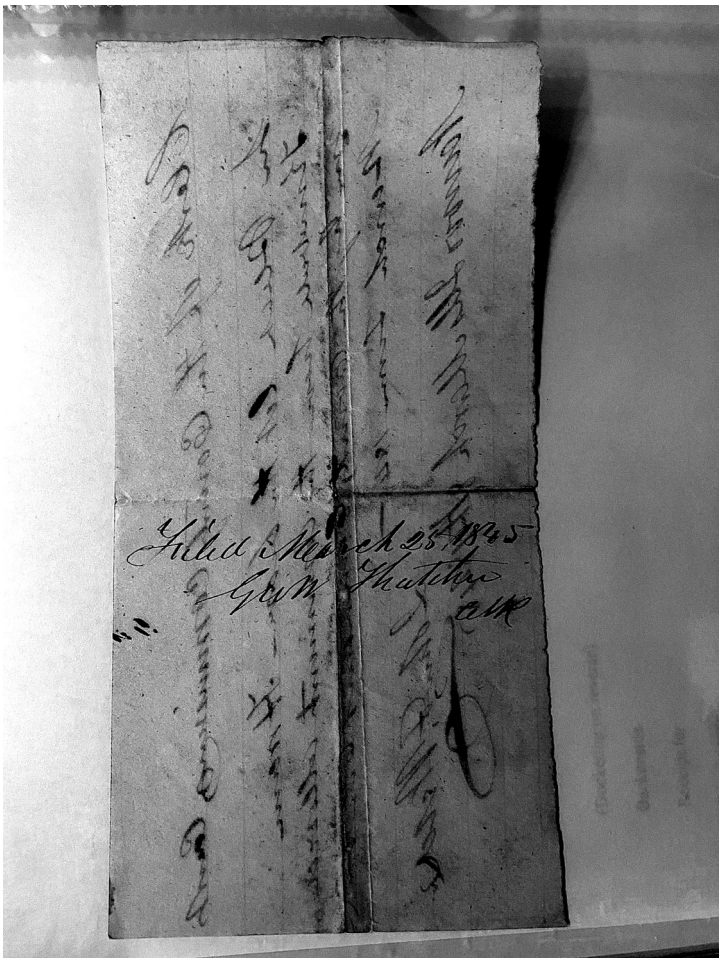
Nauvoo Ill. March 8th 1845

Transcription method. Wording, line divisions, and the apparent spelling “Ammounts” are retained. The raised “th” in the date is placed on the line. The signature is at lower right, above the date’s baseline; its placement is approximated here. Spacing is regularized, and signature flourishes are not represented. The photograph remains the authority for fine punctuation and letter forms.

In everyday language

Weld asks the county clerk to let Hiram Kimball receive the amounts approved for Weld at the court’s March 1845 term. The plural may indicate more than one allowance, but the paper gives neither a count nor a dollar figure. [1]

The reverse supplies a second date



Reverse of the authorization, turned so that the filing endorsement reads upright. Original project photograph identified as IMG 3493. Faint writing showing through or offset from the front is not transcribed as a separate message. [1]

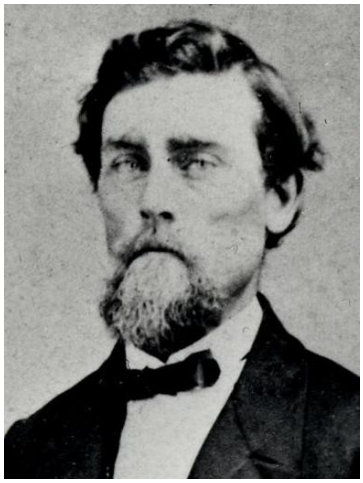
Faithful transcript of the endorsement

Filed March 25 1845
Geo W Thatcher
clk

“Geo” and “clk” are abbreviated forms of George and clerk; the transcript retains the abbreviations. Line divisions follow the dark endorsement. The letter forms support the reading Geo W Thatcher. The Nauvoo Neighbor also identifies Geo. W. Thatcher as clerk of the Hancock County Commissioners Court in September 1845. [4]

Correction to the earlier edition. The previous report read the reverse as “Order March 8th 1845” and “Hiram Kimball.” Inspection of the upright photograph supports the filing endorsement above instead. March 8 remains the date of Weld’s authorization; March 25 is the filing date. Neither date by itself establishes when money was received.

Hiram Kimball before and beyond the note



Hiram S. Kimball, as identified in the Church History Biographical Database. The portrait's date is not supplied in the record used here. [7]

Kimball was more than the man carrying Weld's instruction. He had helped shape the settlement in which Weld practiced. Born May 31, 1806, in West Fairlee, Vermont, to Phineas Kimball and Abigail Colton, he became a merchant, land developer, creditor, iron-foundry operator, and mail carrier. By 1833 he was at Commerce, years before its transformation into Nauvoo. [2]

A merchant with interests of his own

Kimball established stores and accumulated substantial real-estate interests. The Kimball name became embedded in Nauvoo geography through separately platted additions and blocks. He acted in land transactions both for himself and as attorney for Ethan Kimball, showing that his role extended beyond passive ownership into active development and conveyancing. Tax, deed, and court records repeatedly place him in Nauvoo's credit economy. [2]

His business independence is essential to interpreting his relations with Church leaders. He cooperated closely with Nauvoo institutions, yet he also enforced private claims and contested public burdens. In March 1844 Joseph Smith publicly criticized him in a controversy involving the steamboat landing and taxation. That dispute did not amount to a clean religious rupture; Kimball continued in the Church and later accepted missionary service. [2]

His younger brother Phineas came to Nauvoo in 1842 and clerked for him. That family link appears in both the 1874 county atlas and Gregg's 1880 history. It helps us see the business as part of a household and family network, as well as a set of properties and accounts. The two books' biographical entries concern Phineas, so they should not be mistaken for portraits or house illustrations of Hiram. [8, 9]

Public standing before conversion

Kimball served as a Nauvoo alderman from 1841 to 1843 and was appointed assistant adjutant general of the Nauvoo Legion on 3 June 1842. He also belonged to the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge. These roles show that his civic and fraternal incorporation preceded his baptism and rested partly upon property, reputation, and long residence. Contemporary correspondence also connects him with Legion affairs. [2]

Weld's choice of Kimball as bearer therefore fits a man already accustomed to documents, public officials, and the movement of money. It does not establish which of those connections brought the two men together for this particular payment.

The Kimball household and a changing life



Hiram and Sarah Granger Kimball Home, Nauvoo, in a modern photograph published by the Church’s historic-sites program. This is the restored home, not an engraving from the 1874 atlas or an 1840s photograph. Photographer and exposure date are not supplied on the page. [10]

In September 1840 Hiram married Sarah Melissa Granger at Kirtland, Ohio. Published sources give September 22 or 23. Sarah was the daughter of Oliver Granger, an important agent in Church financial affairs. In 1842 her conversation with seamstress Margaret Cook about clothing temple workers led to a sewing initiative that helped bring the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo into being. The home thus adds another relationship to the story: commercial and civic Nauvoo was also a community of households and voluntary work. [2, 7, 10]

Hiram was baptized on July 20, 1843, by Eli Maginn and was a high priest by January 1846. The earlier report noted Sarah’s temple ordinances; Hiram’s exact endowment entry should be checked directly rather than inferred from his wife’s participation. He visited during Joseph and Hyrum Smith’s final Carthage imprisonment and was wounded during the Battle of Nauvoo in September 1846. [2, 7]

Credit and commitment

The earlier research also identified a statement attributed to Newel K. Whitney that Kimball held a claim of roughly $4,000–$5,000 against the Kirtland Temple or the Church interest there. His Granger family connection is a possible route for that claim, but the assignment chain has not been established. It remains a research lead, not an explanation of Weld’s county allowance. [11]

Kimball later moved to Utah. Published accounts disagree on the migration year: the Joseph Smith Papers gives 1850, the home’s history gives 1851, and the Church History Biographical Database associates him with an 1852 company. This edition leaves the year unresolved. On March 1, 1863, he was set apart by John Taylor for a mission to the Sandwich Islands. He died on April 27 in the Ada Hancock boiler explosion at San Pedro, California, before reaching the islands. [2, 7, 10]

John Weld the physician in the community

Weld's signature brings a different career into view. He was a physician whose relationships extended through professional practice, military service, property ownership, and county life. His connection with the Saints was substantial even though no record of his baptism has been established. [3]

From Vermont to Hancock County

John Fuller Weld was born at Berkshire, Franklin County, Vermont, on 11 December 1808 or 1809, the son of Daniel Weld and Lydia Fuller. The Joseph Smith Papers uses 1809, while medical-school and obituary-derived evidence supports 1808; the one-year discrepancy should remain visible until a contemporaneous birth record resolves it. His family moved to Cornish, New Hampshire, by about 1810. [3, 13]

Weld moved to Sonora Township, Hancock County, Illinois, in 1827, making him a pre-Nauvoo county settler. He attended Dartmouth Medical School and Castleton Medical College, with Castleton records placing him in the class of 1835. This training positioned him among the conventionally educated or "regular" physicians of the region, distinct from botanical and Thomsonian practitioners whose methods were widely used on the frontier. [3, 13]

By 1837 he was living in the St. Mary's area and later moved to Nauvoo. He practiced as both physician and surgeon. His residence and professional status explain why he appears across medical, military, civic, property, and judicial records rather than only in church-generated sources. [3]

A place in Nauvoo

Weld was appointed a surgeon in the Nauvoo Legion in March 1841. He also became a member of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge. The combination of medical office, militia rank, and Masonic membership placed him in overlapping networks that included Joseph Smith and many leading Nauvoo citizens. [3]

Third Ward property lists and public petitions place Weld within the city's everyday affairs. His full identity in this report rests on the convergence of name, location, profession, and contemporary records. The manuscript names John F. Weld; the biographical identification is Dr. John Fuller Weld. [1, 3]

Portrait research. A securely identified, reproducible portrait of Dr. Weld was not located in the sources checked for this edition. The City of Nauvoo's online photograph of his surviving home and office offers another visual connection; see source 12.

Weld in the courtroom and the family circle

A doctor called to give evidence

His professional importance is especially visible in Dana v. Brink, the 1843 malpractice proceeding heard before Joseph Smith. Weld, Robert D. Foster, and Samuel Bennett were called as conventionally trained medical witnesses in a dispute involving Thomsonian practice. The objections to their testimony exposed a wider contest over medical authority. For Weld, the case establishes active practice and recognition as an expert in Nauvoo. [3, 11]

That episode helps explain why a county might owe a physician money, but it does not identify the claim in this note. Medical services are one possibility. The allowance could instead have concerned another county service or expense. The missing account is essential before a specific story of treatment or reimbursement can be told. [1, 11]

The Hibbard connection

On 4 July 1845, four months after the present note, Weld married Frances Emiline Hibbard White at Nauvoo. She was a daughter of Davidson Hibbard and had previously married Hugh White. The marriage joined Weld to an old-settler family deeply involved in Hancock County land, militia, justice-of-the-peace, coroner, and Nauvoo affairs. Weld later married Elizabeth Rowe on 7 April 1855 in Hancock County. [3, 11]

This relationship connects Weld's biography to the Hibbard family appearing elsewhere in the Hancock County projects. It should be kept in its proper sequence: the March payment authorization preceded the July marriage. Nothing in this paper shows that the marriage or the Hibbard family caused the transaction.

The Smith murder trial

During jury selection in the May 1845 trial of Levi Williams and the other defendants charged with murdering Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Weld was summoned and sworn for voir dire. He acknowledged that he had formed and repeatedly expressed an opinion, and he did not sit on the final jury. This establishes engagement with the public controversy but does not reveal the content or direction of his opinion. [3, 14]

Later family or local tradition associates Weld with John Taylor's post-Carthage medical treatment and sometimes specifically with removal of bullets. No near-contemporary source located in the completed online searches securely proves that precise claim. It should remain a qualified tradition unless corroborated by Weld's letters, a medical account, Taylor family papers, or another early witness record. [11]

A life that continued in Hancock County

Weld returned to or remained associated with Sonora Township in later life and died there on 28 July 1892. His long Hancock County residence spanned the pre-Mormon settlement era, the rise of Nauvoo, the violence of the mid-1840s, and the county's post-Nauvoo development. [3]

Weld and Kimball eventually followed different paths. Kimball's later life led west and toward missionary service. Weld's long career remained rooted in Hancock County. For a moment in March 1845, this small sheet of paper brought their names together in a matter of county money.

Following the evidence

The paper can support an engaging story without supplying every answer. These distinctions keep the narrative tied to what survives.

Question	What the evidence supports
What is the document?	A private authorization signed by John F. Weld, asking the county clerk to let bearer Hiram Kimball receive Weld's March-term allowance.
When was it used?	Dated at Nauvoo on March 8, 1845; marked filed March 25, 1845. Actual presentation and payment dates are not separately recorded.
What did the county owe?	The manuscript refers to amounts allowed to Weld. It states no total, claim number, or service.
Why was Kimball involved?	He was authorized to receive the allowance. Collection as agent, payment of a private debt, purchase of a claim, and account settlement remain possible explanations.
Was it a medical bill?	Possible in light of Weld's occupation, but unproved. Occupation alone cannot identify the allowance.
Does it prove payment?	No. The authorization and filing are documented; receipt or redemption needs another record.
Does it prove friendship?	It proves a financial authorization between the men. The character or closeness of their personal relationship is not stated.

A short chronology

Date	Event
1827 and 1833	Weld arrives in Hancock County; Kimball later settles at Commerce.
1840 to 1843	Kimball marries Sarah Granger, holds civic and military office, and is baptized. Weld serves as a Legion surgeon and practices in Nauvoo.
March 8 1845	Weld dates and signs the authorization naming Kimball as bearer.
March 25 1845	Geo. W. Thatcher's endorsement marks the paper filed.
May and July 1845	Weld is examined during jury selection in the Smith murder trial; later marries Frances Emiline Hibbard White.
1863 and 1892	Kimball dies en route to his mission; Weld dies in Hancock County decades later.

Sources and editorial notes

The narrative builds on the project report dated September 13, 2026. This revision reexamines the supplied manuscript photographs and adds checked image identifications, a corrected reverse transcript, and clearer distinctions between evidence and inference. Earlier biographical findings remain included; unresolved claims are identified below. Web sources checked October 2, 2026.

1. Original manuscript. John F. Weld to the clerk of the County Commissioners Court, Nauvoo, March 8, 1845; filing endorsement March 25, 1845. Owner-supplied front and reverse photographs embedded in the earlier report, identified there as IMG 3492 and IMG 3493. The source photographs, rather than the earlier transcript, control the readings in this edition.

2. Joseph Smith Papers, “Kimball, Hiram S.” Biography and linked civic, legal, property, military, and financial records. Gives the marriage date as September 23, 1840, and migration to Utah as 1850. The biographical facts were also present in the earlier project report. Open source

3. Joseph Smith Papers, “Weld, John Fuller.” Biography and linked records of the Nauvoo Legion, property, petitions, Dana v. Brink, and State of Illinois v. Williams et al. Gives Weld’s birth year as 1809. Open source

4. Nauvoo Neighbor, October 1, 1845, volume 3, number 22, affidavits of John Harper and Ethel B. Rose, transcribed by BYU Studies. The September affidavits identify Geo. W. Thatcher as clerk of the Hancock County Commissioners Court and corroborate the reading of his name and office on this manuscript. They do not independently establish this paper’s filing date. Open source

5. Looking for Lincoln, Nauvoo Historical Society entry. Identifies the Weld House as his home and office during 1842–1846 and gives its modern address as 1380 Mulholland Street. Open source

6. Underwood & Underwood, Looking east along Mulholland Street, from south side of temple block, Nauvoo, Illinois, 1904. Library of Congress, LOT 11020; digital reproduction LC-DIG-stereo-1s46107. Catalog rights advisory: no known restrictions on publication. The full stereograph is reproduced, including its paired views. Open source

7. Church History Biographical Database, “Hiram S. Kimball.” Source of the identified portrait; photograph date not stated. Includes marriage September 22, 1840; baptism July 20, 1843; association with an 1852 pioneer company; and the 1863 mission. The date differences from other summaries are retained as unresolved. Open source

Sources and picture research continued

8. A. T. Andreas, publisher, An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Hancock County, Illinois (Chicago, 1874), with map work by Charles A. Gilchrist, “Phineas Kimball,” p. 41. Internet Archive digitization, illustratedhisto00andr. The biography identifies Phineas as Hiram’s brother and former clerk. The searchable text and index were checked; no house illustration securely identified as Hiram’s was located. Open source

9. Thomas Gregg, History of Hancock County, Illinois (Chicago: C. C. Chapman, 1880), “Phineas Kimball,” pp. 964–965. Internet Archive digitization, historyofhancock00greg. Checked for the family relationship and the suggested house illustration. No engraving of Hiram’s home was verified in this search. This is a limited finding, not a claim that no such image exists. Open source

10. Church historic-sites program, “Hiram and Sarah Granger Kimball Home.” Source of the modern exterior photograph and the home’s connection to Sarah Kimball, Margaret Cook, and the beginnings of the Relief Society. The page gives the family’s departure for Utah as 1851. Photo date and photographer are not stated on the page used. Open source

11. The Hiram Kimball John Weld Document, project research report prepared September 13, 2026. Basis for the expanded biographies and continuing research leads. In particular, the Kirtland Temple claim and its assignment chain, the precise endowment entry, the Hibbard parentage detail, and the John Taylor treatment tradition need the underlying records for further resolution. The old verso reading and an unqualified 1850 migration date have been superseded by the qualified treatment here.

12. City of Nauvoo, “Museum City,” Weld House Museum entry. Additional online photograph of the surviving home and office, with its modern address. This photograph is linked here rather than reproduced in the report. Open source

13. First Medical College in Vermont Castleton 1818–1862, alumni listing for John Fuller Weld, class of 1835, cited in the earlier research. The earlier report also recorded medical-school and obituary-derived evidence for an 1808 birth year. A contemporary birth record is still needed to reconcile that year with 1809; the discrepancy is not silently resolved.

14. Joseph Smith Papers, Account of Trial, May 21–28, 1845, shorthand, State of Illinois v. Williams et al., linked from Weld’s biography. Earlier research records Weld’s examination and prior expressed opinion. That finding does not identify which side his opinion favored. Open source

Continuing research

Priority records are the March 1845 county minutes and claims, county warrants and treasurer’s accounts, and Kimball’s financial papers. For Weld’s portrait and family correspondence, Rosemary Pollock’s A Friend to All: The Life and Contributions of Dr. John Fuller Weld (1808–1892) (2012) and the Weld family papers noted by the Minnesota Historical Society are promising leads. The Pollock book and the original family collection were not directly examined for this edition.

No likeness has been invented for Weld. No modern house photograph or 1904 street view is presented as an image of Nauvoo in March 1845.