The 1842 Charles Ivins Note and the Men Who Built the Nauvoo Temple and the Nauvoo House

A promise made while the Temple was rising

On 4 January 1842, four men promised Charles Ivins $783.19. A later docket called it a “Note Against Nauvoo Committee.” Their story leads from Nauvoo’s building efforts into religious division, the tragedy at Carthage, and the different lives they made after the Saints departed. The construction connection is persuasive; the Wisconsin origin remains a hypothesis. [1]



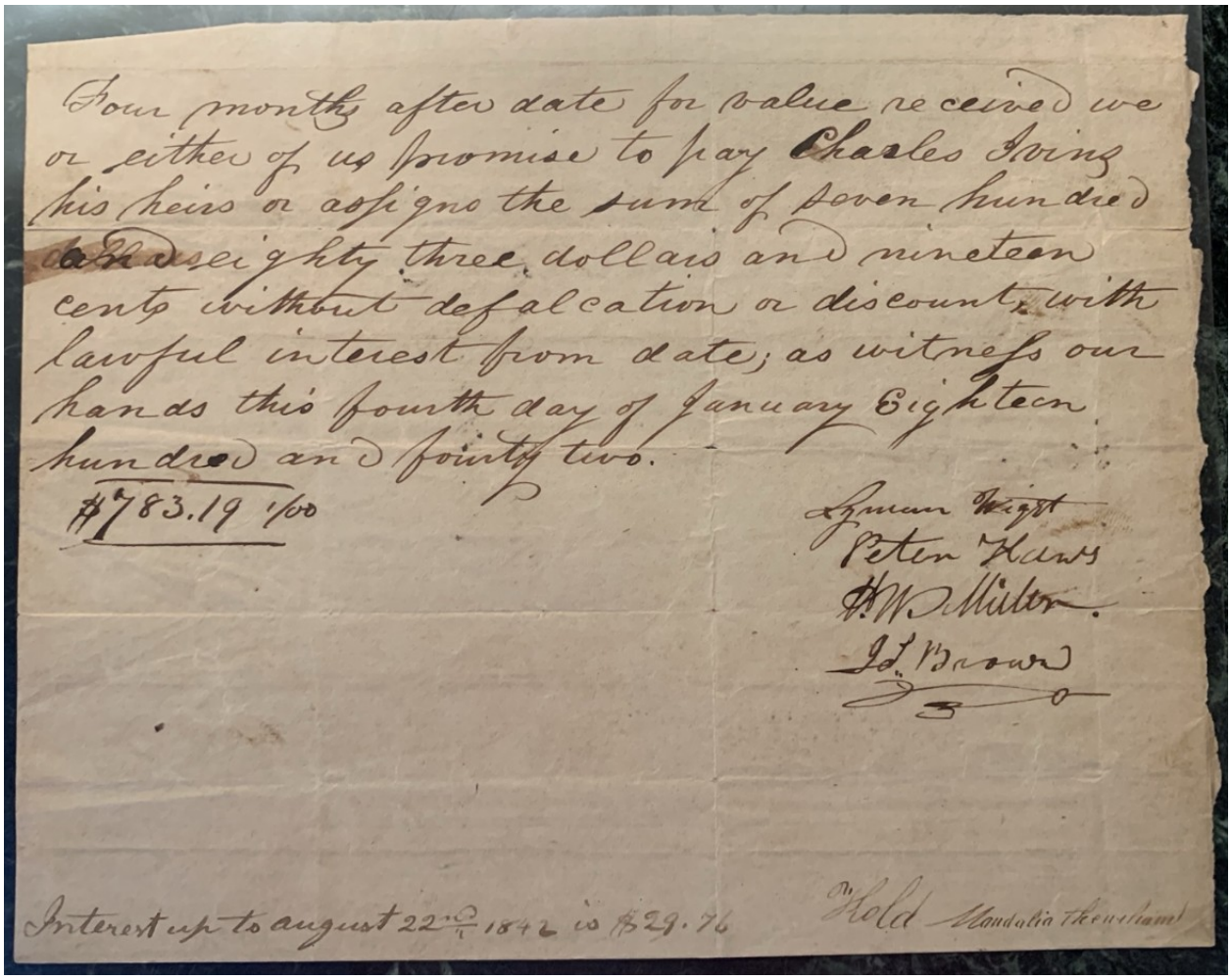
Walter Rane, Nauvoo 1842, Consecrated Labor, oil on canvas, 2020. A modern interpretation of work on the unfinished Temple, reproduced from Historic Nauvoo’s Temple City exhibit. It does not depict the signing of this note. [I1]

People and details to watch

- Lyman Wight and Peter Haws brought the responsibilities of Nauvoo House trustees to the transaction.
- Henry W. Miller’s building and fundraising work linked him to both major construction projects.
- Captain James Brown signed the note as J. L. Brown; he later commanded Company C of the Mormon Battalion and helped establish Ogden.
- Charles Ivins’s later role as an Expositor publisher gives his earlier financial connection to these men particular interest.
- The exact $783.19, the August 1842 interest calculation, and the later committee docket are the clues around which the story turns.

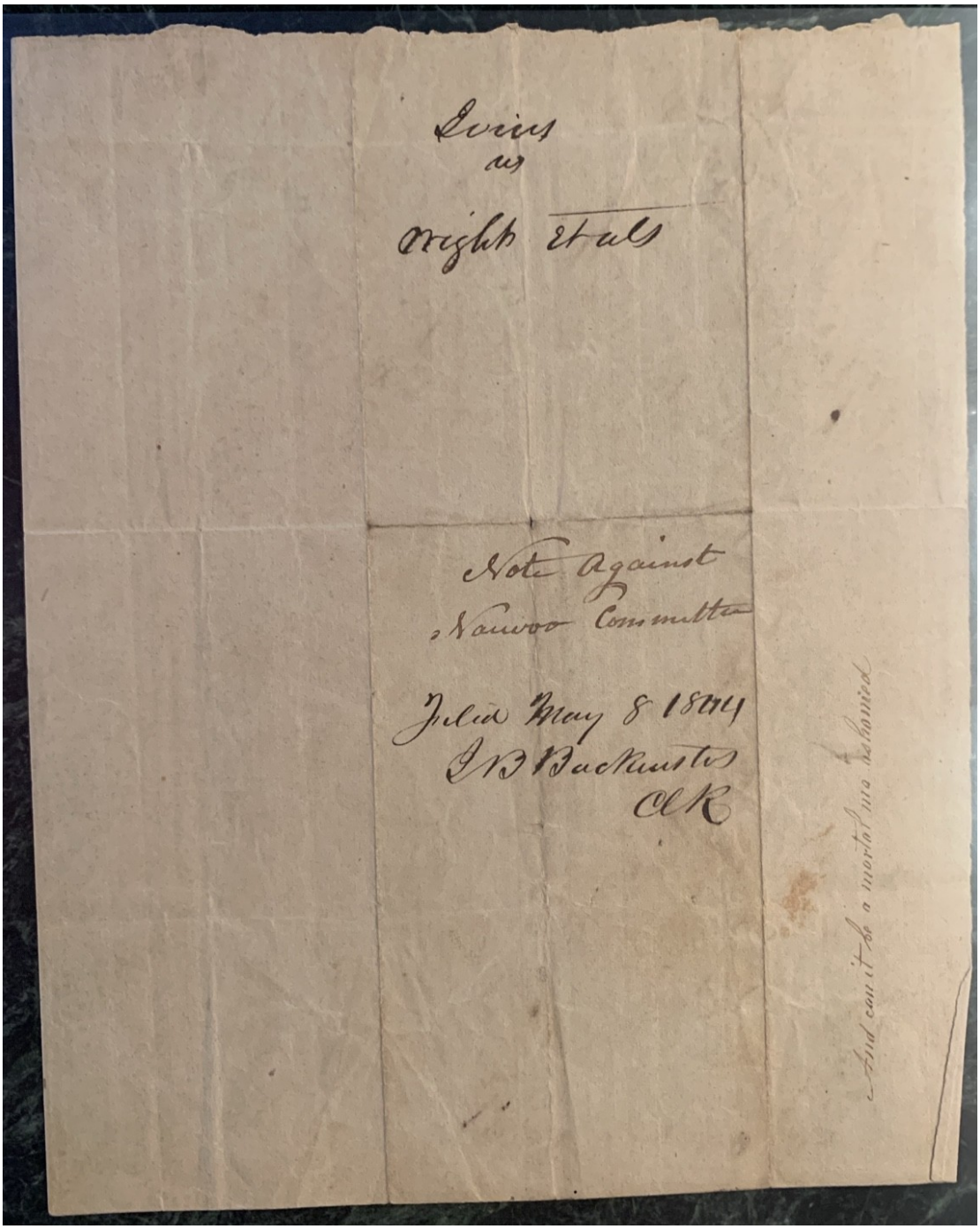
The original note front

4 January 1842 • Photograph supplied by David Larsen



Front of the $783.19 note. Rotated for reading and cropped around the paper; all signatures, the interest calculation, and faint lower-margin endorsement are retained. The original photograph is embedded without retouching. [22]

The original note reverse



Reverse showing the case caption, “Note Against Nauvoo Committee,” the 8 May 1844 filing, and J. B. Backenstos’s clerk notation. The faint writing near the right edge is preserved. [22]

Reading transcript of the note

Transcribed from the supplied photographs. Main-text line divisions are retained; punctuation and capitalization are lightly regularized. Brackets mark uncertainty or editorial description. The crowded beginning of the fourth line is read as “and.” This is a reading transcript rather than a full diplomatic transcription. [22]

Front

Four months after date for value received we
or either of us promise to pay Charles Ivins
his heirs or assigns the sum of seven hundred
and eighty three dollars and nineteen
cents without defalcation or discount with
lawful interest from date; as witness our
hands this fourth day of January Eighteen
hundred and forty two.

[Amount written numerically: $783.19, with a fractional cents notation.]

Lyman Wight
Peter Haws
H W Miller
J. L. Brown

Lower margin: “Interest up to august 22nd 1842 is $29.76.” A separate faint endorsement at lower right remains only partly legible and is not expanded here.

Reverse

Ivins
vs
Wight et al

Note Against
Nauvoo Committee

Filed May 8 1844
J B Backenstos
Clk

A faint endorsement runs along the right margin. Its wording and date are not transcribed confidently from this photograph.

What the photographs establish

The promise was payable four months after its date and bore lawful interest from that date. It names Ivins, his heirs or assigns, and uses “we or either of us” for the obligation. The reverse directly confirms the committee description and filing. These readings strengthen the documentary foundation of the narrative; they do not establish which construction project received the value, the precise origin of the balance, or payment. The signer J. L. Brown is identified as Captain James Brown on David Larsen’s confirmation. [23]

Reading the small document

The supplied photographs now allow the principal terms and the reverse docket to be checked directly. The summary below builds on the photographs and reading transcript presented immediately after the opening highlights. [1, 22]

Date	4 January 1842
Principal	$783.19
Repayment term	Four months after date, with lawful interest from date
Payee	Charles Ivins
Reported signers	Lyman Wight, Peter Haws, Henry W. Miller, and James Brown
Interest notation	$29.76 calculated through 22 August 1842
Later docket wording	“Ivins vs Wight et al” and “Note Against Nauvoo Committee”
Recorded filing	8 May 1844, in a docket attributed to Jacob B. Backenstos

The note was made payable to Ivins. The phrase about the Nauvoo committee belongs to the later docket on its reverse. A docket was a short identification or filing notation used to keep track of a document. Here it matters because it tells us how the obligation was described when it entered the court’s paperwork, more than two years after its original date.

“Committee” points toward an organized undertaking. Wight and Haws were trustees of the Nauvoo House Association, while the Temple had its own building committee. The two organizations shared an interest in the Wisconsin timber enterprise. The docket and the men’s known assignments therefore support a construction-related interpretation, but the wording does not name the Temple Committee or the Nauvoo House Association explicitly. It leaves room for a debt incurred for one project, the other, or their shared operations. [1, 2]

That distinction preserves the importance of the clue. We need not decide prematurely which building received every dollar in order to recognize the world to which the note belongs.

Wight and Haws take on the work

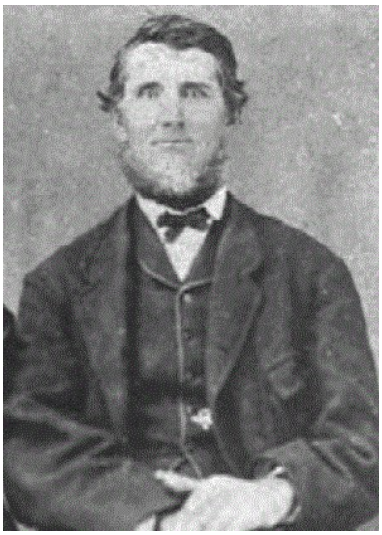
Lyman Wight and Peter Haws had accepted a demanding assignment. They were helping to build a city whose religious ambitions exceeded the cash available to carry them out. The Temple needed materials and labor. The Nauvoo House needed them too. Men could contribute their time, but someone still had to obtain provisions, arrange transportation, acquire equipment, and persuade creditors to wait. A promise on paper could become part of that work. [1]

Wight brought a long history of commitment and upheaval to Nauvoo. He had joined the Church in 1830, participated in Zion’s Camp, and held leadership responsibilities in Missouri. He had also shared imprisonment with Joseph Smith during the Missouri crisis. By April 1841 he was an apostle. Raising resources for the Nauvoo House was one of the practical assignments that accompanied that position. [1, 3]

His name on this note is consequently significant. Wight was accustomed to acting for a religious community whose projects required transactions with the surrounding commercial world. Fundraising involved travel, receipts, donated property, and arrangements with people who could supply something the builders needed. A signed promise could bring spiritual responsibility into the very concrete realm of a creditor's account. The note's opening words sharpen that responsibility: "we or either of us promise to pay." [22]

Haws was a farmer, miller, and businessman. Alongside Wight, George Miller, and John Snider, he served as one of the original Nauvoo House trustees. His experience with accounts is especially relevant: the earlier report identified his financial records as the most promising place to look for the missing explanation of $783.19. He kept books for the pinery operation, where supplies issued to workers and obligations incurred by the enterprise had to be recorded. [1, 2]

Readers should keep the two Millers distinct. George Miller was a Nauvoo House trustee and a major figure in the lumber operation. Henry William Miller was the signer identified on this note. Their overlapping building interests do not make them interchangeable.



Lyman Wight, detail of a photograph of Lyman and Harriet Wight taken before his death in 1858. Photographer and exact date unknown. Community of Christ Archives; digital reproduction through Wikimedia Commons. [I2]

The other signatures

Henry W. Miller's trade made him particularly useful in Nauvoo. A carpenter and builder, he had joined the Church in Illinois in 1839. A March 1841 revelation directed him to buy and sell Nauvoo House stock and help with construction. The surviving financial record also places him repeatedly beside Wight in collecting contributions. These were continuing working relationships, rather than a chance gathering of four names beneath an isolated promise. [1, 4]

The fourth signer was Captain James Brown, the future Mormon Battalion officer. His work with Wight preceded this note: on 27 August 1841 they jointly issued a receipt to Joseph Shelly for building contributions. Brown was already helping turn donations into resources for Nauvoo's construction. [1, 5]

The signature is transcribed here as "J. L. Brown." David Larsen has confirmed the signer as Captain James Brown; that identification is used throughout this edition. [23]

Two buildings and a shortage of ready money

Nauvoo's Temple and the Nauvoo House were different buildings with different purposes. The Temple stood at the center of the Saints' religious life. The Nauvoo House was envisioned as a substantial place of lodging for visitors. Both required organized fundraising, building materials, and sustained

work. Their simultaneous construction stretched the resources available in a rapidly growing community. [1]

The Temple was still in an early stage when the January 1842 note was dated. During the winter of 1841–1842, men were quarrying stone for its walls. In February Joseph Smith called for a steadier distribution of donated labor, because too many workers one week and too few the next slowed progress. The first plinth was set in June, and the walls rose during the building season. The finished structure familiar from later images was still years away. [6]

This is the setting in which merchant credit becomes important. A donated day's labor could help shape a stone; it could not automatically settle a bill for purchased equipment. Property and goods might have real value while being difficult to turn into money at the moment a payment fell due. The earlier report describes a building economy supported by a mixture of contributions, goods, property, stock subscriptions, advances, and promises to pay. [1]

Ivins could participate in that economy as a merchant and creditor. It is reasonable to ask whether his willingness to extend credit helped work continue. It would go beyond the evidence to say that this note alone rescued the Temple, or that a new $783.19 cash advance was handed over on the day it was signed.



Gary Smith's painting of the original Nauvoo Temple under construction. A later artistic reconstruction showing a more advanced stage than January 1842; creation date not supplied by the consulted page. Deseret News archives, reproduced in Church News. [I3]

The clue in the nineteen cents

The amount makes the reader pause. Why $783.19? An existing account, built up through several purchases, advances, or credits, could end at exactly that figure. A note might then consolidate the balance into a formal promise. That is a sensible reading of the amount, although loans and other settlements can also produce uneven totals. [1]

Under this interpretation, the note did not pay off the old account in cash. It formalized the obligation or substituted a written promise for the balance previously carried in the books. Whether Ivins agreed to additional time, demanded security, or simply wanted a more convenient record cannot be established from the memorandum's summary alone. The photographed text now establishes a four-month term

and “lawful interest from date.” It does not identify the underlying purchases or distinguish a new advance from an existing balance. [22]

The difference matters to the story. If Ivins had already furnished value, his contribution to the builders’ work may have preceded January 1842. The signed instrument would preserve a later stage in that relationship: the point at which goods or money already supplied became a specifically documented debt.

A possible trail to Wisconsin

The Wisconsin pineries offer the most coherent specific explanation developed in the original report. Timber for the Temple and Nauvoo House had to be obtained, worked, and moved to Nauvoo. That required people, supplies, equipment, and access to mills before the finished lumber could benefit either building. [1]

Dennis Rowley’s study of the lumber enterprise describes the two building organizations’ participation and Haws’s accounting work. In September 1841, representatives including Wight and Haws signed three notes totaling $1,400 in connection with an interest in the Roaring Creek mill. Promissory paper was therefore already being used for this shared undertaking shortly before the Ivins instrument was dated. [2]

The resemblance is suggestive. Wight and Haws appear in both settings; Henry Miller had timber and construction responsibilities; the later docket calls the Ivins obligation a committee debt. A running account for provisioning or financing this work could explain the odd amount. General expenses for the Nauvoo buildings could explain it too. [1]

We can follow that possible trail without placing Ivins’s name on a purchase order that has not been found. No located entry demonstrates that he supplied exactly $783.19 to the Wisconsin operation. The old memorandum’s proposed search of Haws’s books remains the best way to test the hypothesis. Until then, the pineries provide the likely setting advanced by the research, rather than a proved destination for every cent.

The creditor who needed to collect

Charles Ivins had joined the Church by early 1840 and moved to Nauvoo in the spring of 1841. He therefore entered this financial relationship as a participant in the community. His later opposition should not be read backward into every earlier transaction. [1, 7]

An unusually revealing letter survives from 22 August 1842. Writing to Hyrum Smith, Ivins described illness and the pressure of his own debts. He needed to collect money owed him in order to meet demands against himself. His account referred to an earlier $300 loan, partial satisfaction of it, and the difficulty of obtaining the remaining money. This was a creditor whose own position had become uncomfortable. [8]

The date is arresting because the interest on the January note was also calculated through 22 August. The memorandum records $29.76, which, added to the principal, makes $812.95. That arithmetic is straightforward; the relationship between the letter and the notation is not. The letter does not identify the $783.19 instrument, and the person who wrote its interest calculation has not been established. [1, 8]

The two records nevertheless belong beside one another. They show how a promise that helped one party obtain resources could leave the other waiting for money he himself needed. The coincidence of dates is a reason to investigate a possible collection or accounting event. It is not proof that this particular debt explains Ivins’s complaint, much less his later religious and political choices.

The note enters a changing Nauvoo

The memorandum dates Backenstos's filing notation to 8 May 1844. By then the city's internal divisions had deepened. Ivins's name was about to appear publicly in a different undertaking: the proposed Nauvoo Expositor. Its prospectus was dated 10 May, and he was excommunicated on 18 May. The newspaper's first and only issue appeared on 7 June. [1, 7, 9]

That short sequence gives the document a particularly vivid place in the chronology. A debt originating in the period of common building effort reappeared in the court's records as Ivins was publicly aligning himself with opponents of Joseph Smith. The sequence does not establish that the filing was retaliation. A creditor could pursue an obligation for ordinary financial reasons even amid a religious rupture.

Backenstos supplies another connection. He was the court clerk associated with the docket and later became sheriff during the county's violence. Although friendly toward the Saints, he did not join their Church. His history reminds us that support and opposition did not divide neatly along membership lines. [1, 10]

Ivins and the Nauvoo Expositor

Ivins was one of the Expositor's publishers. He was not its editor. The paper itself identifies "SYLVESTER EMMONS, EDITOR," while the prospectus lists Charles Ivins among the publishers. The publishing partnership operated as Charles Ivins & Co. The distinction gives Ivins his proper place in the enterprise without assigning him responsibility for every editorial sentence. [9, 11]

The publication challenged Joseph Smith's religious and civic leadership, including plural marriage and the concentration of authority in Nauvoo. Its destruction on 10 June, ordered after the city council declared it a nuisance, led to legal proceedings against Smith and others and intensified an already dangerous conflict. Joseph and Hyrum were killed at Carthage Jail on 27 June 1844. [12]

For a reader following the January note, the change is striking. The man to whom Wight, Haws, Miller, and the fourth signer promised payment had become a financial participant in a publication opposing the leadership those building enterprises served. Both transactions involved money and organization. They do not, by themselves, disclose everything Ivins believed or why he acted.

What the accusation actually says

The published History of the Church contains adjacent lists associated with Backenstos and Willard Richards. Their proximity can easily cause confusion. Backenstos's material includes a list of men he associated with the Hancock mob and the killings. A separate list, expressly attributed to Richards, contains the allegation about Ivins and his family. [13]

Richards alleged that "Charles Ivins and family" had "aided and abetted" the people he named. That is the accusation to present, with its attribution intact. The passage consulted does not specify what Ivins supplied or arranged, and it does not establish that he was personally among the gunmen at the jail. It should not be rewritten as a proved account of his planning the murders. [13]

Richards's accusation is historically important, especially given Ivins's documented publishing role, but it remains an accusation requiring evaluation. The later historical discussion by Joseph I. Bentley also cautions about the accuracy of the list's placement of some other men in the Carthage events. Participation in the Expositor venture and responsibility for a killing are separate propositions. [11]

The juxtaposition retains its force when told this way. Ivins's earlier connection to the builders is documented in the project's note; his publishing role is explicit in the newspaper; Richards's later allegation is identifiable in a named source. Each piece says something different about the relationship that had unraveled.

Finishing the Temple and leaving the city

The deaths at Carthage did not end work on the Temple. Under the leadership of the Twelve, the Saints continued building while making plans for departure. The rooms used for the endowment opened in December 1845, before the entire structure was finished. During the following weeks, members sought those ordinances while preparing to leave their homes. [14]

The westward movement began in February 1846. A remaining work force continued preparing the Temple, and the building was dedicated on 1 May. Construction and departure therefore overlapped. The same community that had labored to erect the Temple was dispersing as the work approached completion. [14, 15]

For the men connected with the Ivins note, however, there was no single departure story. Some would help build new centers of Latter-day Saint life. Others would choose a different religious course or remain near the Mississippi. The note joins them at one moment in 1842; their later lives show how temporary that particular alignment proved to be.

The roads beyond Nauvoo

Lyman Wight carries the building impulse to Texas

Wight's departure came before the principal Nauvoo exodus. In 1845 he led followers from Wisconsin to Texas, arriving that November. He understood the venture as carrying out a charge from Joseph Smith and resisted efforts to bring his community under Brigham Young's direction. In 1847 the group settled at Zodiac near Fredericksburg. [3, 16]

The former lumber leader remained a builder. His followers operated mills and supplied neighboring settlers. Texas gave the practical experience of the Wisconsin community a new use, although floods and moves repeatedly disrupted their settlements. Wight also held local public office in Gillespie County. His attachment to Joseph Smith's legacy continued even as his relationship with the Utah leadership broke down. [16]

The Joseph Smith Papers dates his excommunication to 3 December 1848. He died in Texas on 31 March 1858, during an attempt to lead his people north. Wight's story ends far from the Nauvoo Temple, but still among a community he had tried to gather and sustain. [3]

Peter Haws moves from Iowa toward California

Haws crossed into the post-Nauvoo world by a different route. He moved to the Council Bluffs area in 1846, visited Wight's Texas colony in 1848, and returned to Iowa. The old association between the two trustees thus survived long enough for their paths to cross again after Nauvoo. It did not mean that Haws permanently joined Wight's settlement. [17]

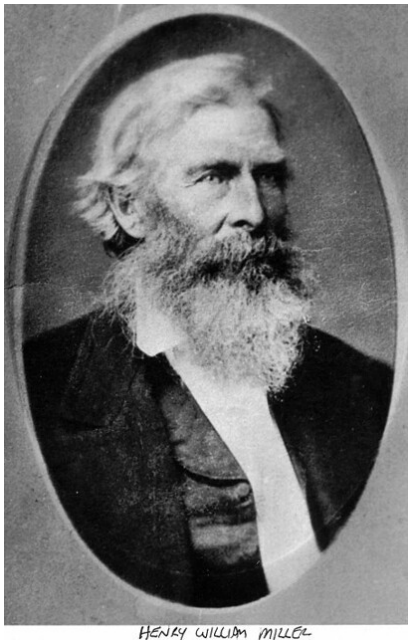
He was excommunicated at Council Bluffs in 1849. By 1854 he was living near the Humboldt River in the Lovelock Valley, in territory now within Nevada, and by 1855 he had moved to California. The man whose books may still hold the explanation of the note had traveled far beyond the building accounts of 1841. [17]

The Joseph Smith Papers and Wilford Woodruff Papers place his death in 1862. Another published biographical sketch gives 1 February 1860. This edition retains 1862 as the date followed by those two reference projects while recording the disagreement in the notes; it does not supply a falsely certain day of death. [17, 18]

Henry Miller keeps building for the Saints

Henry Miller's post-Nauvoo work supplies perhaps the clearest continuity. In Iowa he helped establish Miller's Hollow, later Kanesville and then Council Bluffs, and directed construction of its tabernacle in 1847. He served as a bishop and became the first representative from Pottawattamie County elected

to the Iowa General Assembly in 1850. The skills useful in Nauvoo were useful again where the emigrating Saints gathered. [4]



Henry William Miller, historical portrait reproduced by Council Bluffs Public Library Special Collections. Photographer and original date are not identified on the consulted page. [I4]

Miller went to the Salt Lake Valley in 1850 and brought his family in 1852. He settled at Farmington, participated in further building work, served a mission to Indian Territory, and led emigrants west again in 1862. Later assignments took him to southern settlements and St. George. He died at Farmington on 9 October 1885. [4, 19]

For him, the 1842 note belongs near the beginning of a long record of practical service. His contribution can be followed from raising resources in Illinois to constructing places of assembly, guiding emigrants, and helping establish western communities.

Captain James Brown reaches the Weber River

Captain James Brown’s later career adds a particularly recognizable western connection. In July 1846 he became captain of Company C of the Mormon Battalion. Two sons served with him. His wife Mary McRee accompanied the expedition and helped care for sick men when Brown was assigned to a detachment that wintered at Pueblo. The detachment reached the Salt Lake Valley on 29 July 1847. [20]



Captain James Brown, 1801–1863. Church History Library photograph PH 327 2 9, reproduced in the Church History Biographical Database. [I5]

Brown subsequently traveled to California and returned with Battalion pay. In November 1847, with Church authorization, he arranged the purchase of Miles Goodyear's improvements and livestock on the Weber River for $1,950. Brown's family and other settlers helped establish the community known as Brownsville, later Ogden. The region already had an Indigenous history and a trading-post history before this Latter-day Saint settlement. [21]

Brown later undertook missionary and emigration responsibilities, leading another company to Utah in 1854. He died in Ogden on 30 September 1863. The note connects an early building agent with a man who later helped turn Church resources into a new western settlement. [20]

Charles Ivins remains near the Mississippi

Ivins's destination was much closer to Nauvoo. The Joseph Smith Papers places his move to Keokuk, Iowa Territory, around 1844. His later life is associated with commerce, a hotel, ferry ownership, and farming. He died at Keokuk on 29 January 1875. He did not share the Utah migration of Miller and Brown. [7]

That geographical closeness makes an effective ending to his part of the narrative. While former associates built communities in Texas and the Great Basin, Ivins's life continued in the Mississippi River region. He outlived Wight and Brown and saw the Nauvoo episode become history. The record consulted does not establish a reconciliation with these men or explain his later feelings about the promise they had made to him.

Backenstos also goes west

The clerk who docketed the note became sheriff during the conflicts preceding the exodus. Later he served in the Mexican War and moved to Oregon City around November 1849. By 1857 he was in Portland. He drowned in the Willamette River on 25 September of that year. [10]

His westward journey belonged to a military and civilian career rather than membership in the migrating Church. The paper's history therefore reaches beyond the signers and creditor: it also touches a nonmember official whose dealings with the Saints became a defining part of his public life.

What became of the promise

The men's later lives can be followed more readily than the debt itself. The report records an interest calculation and a May 1844 filing, but no final judgment, satisfaction, cancellation, or release has yet been established for this particular $783.19 obligation. The docket suggests a legal matter styled Ivins against Wight and others; it does not tell us its outcome. [1]

The exodus did not, by itself, settle an old promise. Nor can the survival of the document prove that it was never paid. Payment, compromise, assignment, dismissal, or an uncollected balance remain possibilities until the related records are located. The note's later custody also needs separate documentation. Its apparent match to the Church History Library catalog item cited in the old memorandum should not be treated as a completed provenance study.

What the surviving account does preserve is a moment when these men were financially connected. Wight and Haws had undertaken to help build Nauvoo. Miller worked within that same effort. Brown worked beside them. Ivins was the person to whom repayment was promised. Their names belonged together before the killings, the departures, and the disputes over where the Saints should gather next.

The Temple was eventually used, dedicated, and left behind. Wight's followers built in Texas; Haws reached California; Miller continued his service among the Saints; Brown helped establish a community on the Weber; Ivins remained in the river country. Read against those different endings, the little note preserves an earlier Nauvoo in which shared work still brought their interests together. Its unanswered questions are part of that history, and they give future discoveries in an account book or court file a clear purpose.

Notes on the evidence and illustrations

The narrative revises the presentation of the 30 August 2026 research memorandum without discarding its research. The earlier research follows as an appendix, with the Brown identification updated to reflect David Larsen's confirmation and the remaining research retained. Where its language is more certain than the present narrative, the qualifications here govern this edition.

The most important clarifications are these: the committee description is a later docket, not the original designation of the payee; Wisconsin remains a hypothesis; a note formalizing a balance is not evidence of cash repayment; Ivins was a publisher rather than editor of the Expositor; and the specific published allegation about Ivins aiding and abetting belongs to Willard Richards's list.

Photographs supplied on 2 October 2026 now document both sides of the note. The opening plates preserve the paper edges and marginal writing, with the front rotated for reading and surrounding background trimmed in the document layout. A reading transcript accompanies them. The signature is transcribed as J. L. Brown and identified as Captain James Brown on David Larsen's confirmation. Some faint marginal endorsements remain partly uncertain. [22, 23]

The portraits reproduced here are identified by their source repositories. None is represented as having been taken in January 1842. The Temple paintings are later interpretations, clearly labeled with their artists and available dates. No authenticated portrait of Charles Ivins, Peter Haws, or Jacob B. Backenstos was located in the sources checked. The generic male silhouette displayed on the Wilford Woodruff Papers entry for Haws was excluded. Images of other men with similar names were also excluded.

Haws's death date remains inconsistent across reference works. The Joseph Smith Papers and Wilford Woodruff Papers use 1862; the Susan Easton Black sketch hosted by Doctrine and Covenants Central gives 1 February 1860 at Placerville. A contemporary death or burial record is needed to resolve that conflict. Wight's excommunication is dated here from the Joseph Smith Papers to 3 December 1848, rather than the different disciplinary date appearing in the Handbook of Texas account.

Research memorandum

30 August 2026 • Research appendix with updated Brown identification

The following retains the earlier research, with its discussion of the fourth signer revised to identify Captain James Brown as confirmed by David Larsen. The narrative and evidence notes preceding it supply the present edition's other qualifications and corrections.

RESEARCH MEMORANDUM

The 4 January 1842 Charles Ivins Promissory Note

"Ivins vs. Wight et al." / "Note Against Nauvoo Committee"

Date of memorandum: 30 August 2026

I. Executive Summary

The document at the center of this investigation is an original promissory note dated 4 January 1842 in the amount of $783.19, payable to Nauvoo merchant and lender Charles Ivins.

The signatories are Lyman Wight, Peter Haws, Henry W. Miller, and James Brown, identified in this research as Captain James Brown.

The reverse was subsequently docketed by Hancock County court clerk Jacob B. Backenstos, including the descriptions "Ivins vs Wight et al" and "Note Against Nauvoo Committee." Backenstos's docket records its filing on 8 May 1844. An additional notation on the face of the document calculates interest through 22 August 1842 at $29.76.

The Church History Library separately catalogs what is evidently this same instrument as "Lyman Wight, Promissory note, 1842 January 4," MS 21380. A published description identifies the amount as $783.19, Charles Ivins as payee, and the interest notation of $29.76 through 22 August 1842. A secondary description renders the fourth signer as "J. L. Brown," the signature form retained in this edition.

The $783.19 note most likely represents an institutional or quasi-institutional debt incurred in connection with the Nauvoo Temple/Nauvoo House construction enterprise, probably arising from merchandise, provisions, equipment, cash advances, or accumulated working expenses supplied on credit by Charles Ivins. The Wisconsin pinery operation of 1841-1842 is presently the strongest specific explanation for the obligation.

The final step - demonstrating that the exact $783.19 arose from the Wisconsin operation - has not yet been proven. The decisive evidence would most likely be found in Peter Haws's surviving pinery financial account book and daybook or in otherwise unpublished Nauvoo House/Temple Committee merchant accounts.

II. Description of the Document

The note is unusual for several reasons. First, the principal is not a conventional round amount such as $500, $750, or $800. It is exactly $783.19. Such an amount is highly compatible with the settlement of an existing running account rather than an original cash loan negotiated at a round figure.

Second, four men signed the instrument. They were not merely four Nauvoo residents who happened to know one another. Each was associated, directly or indirectly, with the Church's major construction and fundraising operations.

Third, Backenstos's later docket characterization - "Note Against Nauvoo Committee" - suggests that at least by May 1844 the obligation was understood in institutional terms rather than simply as a private loan to Wight and his associates.

Fourth, the interest notation brings the debt current through 22 August 1842. That date assumes unexpected significance because Charles Ivins wrote Hyrum Smith on precisely 22 August 1842,

describing his inability to meet his own debts because large amounts of money he had lent remained uncollected.

III. Nauvoo's Financial Environment

Nauvoo in 1841-1842 suffered from chronic shortages of specie and working capital. Major Church construction projects therefore depended upon a mixture of donated labor, tithing in kind, real property, Nauvoo House stock, merchant credit, personal promissory notes, orders and drafts, borrowed cash, and goods exchanged rather than money.

The Nauvoo House Association, incorporated in February 1841, was responsible for constructing the Nauvoo House. Its four original trustees were George Miller, Lyman Wight, John Snider, and Peter Haws. Henry W. Miller and others subsequently functioned as stock agents. The association sold $50 shares, which themselves could function as substitutes for scarce currency.

Of particular relevance, the Nauvoo House Association and the Nauvoo Temple building committee jointly administered the Church's Wisconsin lumbering operation. The financial records from this period show precisely the type of mixed economy necessary to produce a debt such as $783.19.

IV. The Wisconsin Pineries

A. Purpose and accounting

The Wisconsin lumbering enterprise was established to obtain timber needed for construction of the Nauvoo Temple and Nauvoo House and related building projects. Published analysis of Peter Haws's accounts establishes that during the first expedition in fall 1841:

- provisions and equipment were obtained in Nauvoo;
- the expenses were borne by the two building committees;
- Peter Haws kept the financial records;
- workers drew supplies, equipment, provisions, and occasionally cash;
- the accounting system resembled a company-store operation.

The Nauvoo House and Temple organizations were therefore jointly accumulating outside obligations in precisely the months preceding the Ivins note.

B. Promissory notes were already being used

On 9 September 1841, representatives of the two construction enterprises, including Lyman Wight and Peter Haws, executed three interest-bearing promissory notes totaling $1,400 in connection with obtaining an interest in the Roaring Creek sawmill. This establishes that using personal signatures on interest-bearing promissory notes to finance the institutional Wisconsin operation was already an established practice only four months before the Ivins note was executed.

C. First-season indebtedness

George Miller later recalled that the first season of the lumbering operation left approximately $3,000 in debt. That amount should be treated cautiously because it is retrospective testimony rather than a surviving Haws summary balance. Nevertheless, a $783.19 unpaid obligation would be entirely plausible within an operation experiencing several thousand dollars of first-season indebtedness. The evidence does not yet permit us to state that the Ivins note was included in Miller's $3,000 figure.

V. Charles Ivins

Biography

Charles Ivins was born 16 April 1799 in Burlington County, New Jersey, the son of Israel Ivins and Margaret Woodward. He married Elizabeth Lippencott Shinn on 1 May 1823. Ivins became a Latter-day Saint by February 1840 and moved to Nauvoo in the spring of 1841.

His occupations included merchant, hotelier, ferry owner, and farmer. He was also a member of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge. He later became estranged from Joseph Smith and the Church, was excommunicated on 18 May 1844, and became one of the publishers of the Nauvoo Expositor. He eventually moved to Keokuk, Iowa, where he died on 29 January 1875.

Ivins as lender

Charles Ivins was demonstrably not merely a shopkeeper. Joseph Smith executed a $100 promissory note to Charles Ivins on 16 January 1840, explicitly acknowledging receipt of value. Later surviving accounts show Ivins pursuing repayment of debts owed by Joseph Smith and others.

Most important is Ivins's letter of 22 August 1842 to Hyrum Smith. Ivins explained that he was himself indebted and unable to pay because he could not collect money owed to him. He specifically described having lent $300, receiving only partial satisfaction, subsequently having to borrow money himself, and facing the possibility that one of his creditors would sue.

Importance of 22 August 1842

The interest on the $783.19 note was also calculated through 22 August 1842. The coincidence is striking. On the very day Ivins was writing Church leadership complaining that he could not collect the money he had loaned, somebody brought this $783.19 obligation current by calculating its accumulated interest. This does not prove that Ivins personally wrote the notation or demanded payment that day, but it strongly suggests that 22 August 1842 may have been a collection or account-settlement event involving the note.

VI. Lyman Wight

Lyman Wight was born 9 May 1796 at Fairfield, Herkimer County, New York. He served in the War of 1812 and married Harriet Benton in 1823. Initially associated with Sidney Rigdon's restorationist movement, Wight joined the Church in November 1830 and rapidly became an important early leader.

His positions included elder, high priest, Missouri Church leader, member of the Clay County high council, member of the Adam-ondi-Ahman stake presidency, Missouri militia colonel, Nauvoo House Association trustee, member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles beginning 8 April 1841, Nauvoo City Council member, Nauvoo Legion officer, Nauvoo Mason, and later member of the Council of Fifty.

By 1841 he was one of the principal men entrusted with raising resources for the Nauvoo House and subsequently became a leader in procuring Wisconsin timber for both the Temple and Nauvoo House. After Joseph Smith's death, Wight ultimately led a separate Latter-day Saint colony to Texas and was excommunicated in 1848. He died in Texas on 31 March 1858.

Relationship to the note: Wight was a Nauvoo House trustee, senior Church authority, active fundraiser, Wisconsin lumber leader, and experienced signer of financial instruments for Church purposes. His presence strongly supports the institutional interpretation of the note.

VII. Peter Haws

Peter Haws was born 17 February 1796 in Upper Canada. He was a farmer, miller, and businessman and became one of the four original trustees of the Nauvoo House Association alongside George Miller, Lyman Wight, and John Snider. He was ordained a high priest on 18 December 1841, only seventeen days before the Ivins note was dated.

His later Church activity included membership in the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, fundraising missions for the Temple and Nauvoo House, missions to Mississippi and Alabama, and admission to the Council of Fifty in March 1844. Haws later moved west, briefly visited Lyman Wight's Texas settlement, was excommunicated in 1849, and eventually moved to California, where he died in 1862.

Haws's relevance is exceptional because he was not only a Nauvoo House trustee; he was also the bookkeeper of the Wisconsin pinery operation. His surviving records are cited as Peter Haws, Financial Account Book, 1841, and Day Book, Church History Library, MS/d/781/6, with related

references C4989/L.C. and C4743. These ledgers are probably the single most important unresolved archival source in this investigation.

VIII. Henry W. Miller

Henry William Miller was born 1 May 1807 in Lexington, Greene County, New York. He worked as a carpenter, builder, and farmer. He moved to Illinois around 1829, married Elmira Pond in 1831, and joined the Church in September 1839. He was ordained an elder in October 1839 and a high priest in November 1840.

Miller presided over the Freedom Stake in Adams County, Illinois, before relocating to Nauvoo. Of direct relevance, a March 1841 revelation instructed Henry W. Miller to buy and sell Nauvoo House stock and assist in its construction. He also assisted in obtaining timber for the Nauvoo House and Nauvoo Temple in 1841-1842.

In Nauvoo he became a major in the Nauvoo Legion, an aide-de-camp, a prominent Mormon, host of Nauvoo Masonic Lodge meetings, and host at his home of the organization of the Council of Fifty on 11 March 1844. He lived until 1885.

The Joseph Smith Papers financial collection preserves numerous receipts signed jointly by Lyman Wight and Henry W. Miller during 1841 for contributions associated with the building effort. Miller's signature therefore fits closely with an obligation incurred in connection with fundraising, construction, supplies, or the Wisconsin operation.

IX. Captain James Brown

Identification and biography

The James Brown identified in this research is Captain James Brown, later of Mormon Battalion fame. He was born 30 September 1801 in Rowan County, North Carolina, the son of James Brown and Mary Williams Brown. Before joining the Latter-day Saints he worked as a farmer, teacher, Baptist preacher, and reportedly served as a county sheriff.

Brown moved to Illinois during the 1830s and joined the Church while residing there. After the death of his first wife in September 1840 he moved to Nauvoo. He was ordained a high priest in July 1841. Contemporary and later biographical accounts describe Brown as devoting substantial effort to raising means for construction of the Nauvoo Temple.

After the Nauvoo period he became captain of Company C of the Mormon Battalion, led the sick detachments that wintered at Pueblo, and reached the Salt Lake Valley in July 1847. He later purchased Miles Goodyear's property on the Weber River and became a founding figure of what developed into Ogden, Utah.

Brown as financial agent with Wight

An especially important contemporary document is dated 27 August 1841. On that date Lyman Wight and James Brown jointly issued a receipt as "Agents" on behalf of the Church for property and cash contributed for building purposes. This is only about four months before the Ivins note. Brown was therefore already acting directly with Wight as a financial/building agent.

Brown and the pineries

Published reconstructions of the Wisconsin workforce also identify a James Brown among men associated with the pinery operation. Thus Brown has two separate relationships to the transaction being reconstructed: documented financial/building activity with Lyman Wight and identification with the Wisconsin lumbering enterprise.

The J. L. Brown signature

The fourth signature is transcribed as “J. L. Brown.” David Larsen has confirmed the signer as Captain James Brown. The identification is adopted throughout this edition. Brown’s documented work with Wight as a building agent in August 1841 supplies the contemporary context. [23]

X. Jacob B. Backenstos

Jacob Benjamin Backenstos was born 8 October 1811 in Pennsylvania. He became a merchant, court official, politician, soldier, and land speculator. He was not a member of the Church but was friendly with Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints.

By early 1842 he lived in Carthage. He served as aide-de-camp in the Nauvoo Legion beginning March 1842, clerk of the Hancock County Circuit Court from 1843 to 1845, member of the Illinois legislature, and later Hancock County sheriff during the violent conflicts of 1845-1846. He subsequently served in the Mexican War and eventually moved to Oregon, where he drowned in the Willamette River in 1857.

Backenstos’s role is important because his notation was made in his capacity within the Hancock County legal system. His phrases “Ivins vs Wight et al” and particularly “Note Against Nauvoo Committee” are highly probative evidence concerning how the obligation was understood when it entered the legal system. It does not, however, tell us with absolute precision whether he meant the Nauvoo House Association, the Temple building committee, or the combined Temple/Nauvoo House organization operating the Wisconsin pineries.

XI. Relationship of the Signers to One Another

- Lyman Wight - original Nauvoo House trustee, apostle, fundraiser, and Wisconsin lumber leader.
- Peter Haws - original Nauvoo House trustee and keeper of the Wisconsin pinery accounts.
- Henry W. Miller - Nauvoo House stock and construction agent who assisted with timber procurement and repeatedly conducted fundraising with Wight.
- James Brown - Temple fundraiser and documented August 1841 church building agent working directly beside Wight; also associated with the pinery workforce.

These are therefore not four unrelated sureties. They represent overlapping branches of the same construction-finance network.

XII. Evidence for an Ivins Merchant Account

There is additional evidence from the Ivins family showing how their Nauvoo business operated. A surviving James Ivins account with Joseph Smith records ordinary store merchandise such as shoes, ribbon, buttons, ginger, wagon irons, a hay fork, a mason’s trowel, screws, and other articles. Another Ivins account records substantial cash transactions, including advances of $25, $40, $22, $50, and $100.

Although these particular accounts are James Ivins’s and date later than the January 1842 note, they reveal the character of Ivins family commercial activity in Nauvoo: goods plus cash advances plus orders plus credits plus settlement balances. Such an account could readily generate an odd balance such as $783.19.

XIII. Probable Reconstruction of the Transaction

During fall 1841 the Temple Committee and Nauvoo House Association were financing a major Wisconsin lumber expedition. They needed food, tools, clothing, transportation equipment, livestock-related supplies, cash, mill expenses, and miscellaneous working capital.

Local merchants and financially capable residents necessarily supplied some of those needs on credit. Charles Ivins was both a merchant and a documented lender to Church leadership. A running account with Ivins could therefore have accumulated during late 1841.

By 4 January 1842, that account may have reached $783.19. Rather than leave the obligation on open account, Ivins may have required responsible representatives of the construction enterprise to formalize it. Wight, Haws, Miller, and Brown consequently signed an interest-bearing promissory note.

The obligation remained unpaid. On 22 August 1842, its interest was calculated at $29.76, perhaps in connection with an attempted collection by Ivins. That same day Ivins complained in writing that outstanding loans were preventing him from paying his own creditors. The debt remained unresolved into 1844. On 8 May 1844, Jacob B. Backenstos handled the instrument within the Hancock County legal system and characterized it as a “Note Against Nauvoo Committee.”

This reconstruction explains virtually every unusual feature of the surviving instrument, but the exact accounting entry behind $783.19 has not yet been located.

XIV. Competing Hypotheses

1. Wisconsin pinery operating debt

Assessment: Strongest specific hypothesis.

Favored by timing; Wight’s role; Haws’s role; Miller’s timber/construction role; Brown’s financial and possible pinery involvement; documented committee responsibility for Wisconsin expenses; known use of promissory notes to finance the pineries; approximately $3,000 first-season debt; and Backenstos’s committee characterization. Missing: a direct Ivins entry in Haws’s books.

2. General Temple/Nauvoo House merchant credit

Assessment: Very strong.

The debt could represent goods or cash furnished to the building organizations generally rather than Wisconsin exclusively. Ivins may have furnished supplies partly for Nauvoo construction and partly for Wisconsin operations.

3. Direct cash loan

Assessment: Plausible.

Ivins demonstrably lent cash. However, the exact $783.19 principal is less characteristic of an original negotiated cash loan than of a settled merchant balance.

4. Red Brick Store financing

Assessment: Possible but weakly supported.

No direct evidence has been located connecting this particular note to Joseph Smith’s Red Brick Store inventory.

5. Purely private obligation

Assessment: Unlikely.

The institutional relationships of the signers and Backenstos’s explicit “Nauvoo Committee” docket work strongly against this interpretation.

XV. Unresolved Questions

What produced exactly $783.19?

This remains the central unanswered question. An Ivins account, committee ledger entry, Haws daybook entry, or settlement statement totaling exactly $783.19 would be decisive.

Does Peter Haws's account book mention Ivins?

This is the highest-priority archival question. Search variants should include Ivins, Chas. Ivins, Charles Ivins, James Ivins, Ivins & Co., cash, provisions, supplies, goods, balance, note, and order, with particular attention to September 1841 through January 1842.

Was the obligation exclusively a pinery debt?

The evidence presently supports a connection but not exclusivity. The account may have represented expenses of both Nauvoo construction and Wisconsin operations.

Who wrote the $29.76 interest notation?

Identification of the handwriting could determine whether the calculation was made by Charles Ivins, an Ivins clerk, one of the signers, an attorney, or a court official.

What happened on 22 August 1842?

The correspondence between the interest calculation date and Ivins's financial-distress letter is potentially important. Further research should determine whether other Ivins notes or accounts were recalculated, demanded, transferred, or pursued on the same date.

Was an actual lawsuit commenced in May 1844?

Backenstos docketed the document "Ivins vs Wight et al," but a complete surviving case file or final judgment has not yet been located.

How is the fourth signature transcribed?

The signature is transcribed as J. L. Brown and identified as Captain James Brown, as confirmed by David Larsen. [23]

Where was Lyman Wight when the note was executed?

Contemporary chronology places Wight traveling extensively around this period. The instrument could have been signed together, circulated, dated according to the settlement date rather than final signature date, or executed through agency arrangements.

XVI. Archival Targets

1. Peter Haws Financial Account Book and Day Book

Church History Library; MS/d/781/6; related references C4989/L.C. and C4743. Priority period: September 1841-January 1842.

2. Original Ivins note

Church History Library: "Lyman Wight, Promissory note, 1842 January 4," MS 21380. Tasks: high-resolution examination; complete diplomatic transcription; ink comparison; identify the hand responsible for the $29.76 notation; inspect every docket and endorsement.

3. Nauvoo House Association records

Priority records include the Nauvoo House Association Daybook, 1841-1843, Ledger A, 1841-1845, and related daybooks. Search Ivins, Brown, Wight, Haws, Miller, Wisconsin, pinery, provisions, and $783.19.

4. Trustee-in-Trust financial records

Particular attention should be paid to Trustee-in-Trust Ledger A, account books beginning December 1841, Temple Committee accounts, invoices, and merchant settlements.

5. Hancock County Circuit Court records

Search “Ivins v. Wight et al.” around 8 May 1844 and subsequent court terms for declarations, summonses, appearances, judgments, dismissals, or related docket entries.

XVII. Historical Significance

If the pinery hypothesis is ultimately confirmed, the note would be significant beyond the individuals who signed it. It would provide a rare surviving piece of evidence showing how the Nauvoo Temple and Nauvoo House were actually financed at the operational level.

The document would illustrate the interaction between local merchants, private lenders, apostles, construction trustees, financial agents, lumber workers, Church committees, promissory credit, and the Hancock County legal system. Rather than representing a simple private loan, it may document the transformation of a Church construction expense into a personally guaranteed commercial debt.

XVIII. Conclusion

Substantially established: the 4 January 1842 $783.19 note belongs to the financial world of the Nauvoo construction enterprise. The signers were deeply interconnected with the Temple, Nauvoo House, Church fundraising, and the Wisconsin lumber operation. Charles Ivins was a merchant and genuine lender capable of advancing the goods or money represented by the instrument. Jacob B. Backenstos later explicitly treated it as a “Note Against Nauvoo Committee.”

Strongly supported: the amount probably originated as an accumulated account for goods, cash, provisions, equipment, or some combination of these rather than as a simple round-number loan.

Leading hypothesis: the obligation was incurred wholly or partly in connection with the 1841-1842 Wisconsin pinery operation, jointly financed by the Nauvoo Temple Committee and Nauvoo House Association.

Not yet proven: no surviving publicly accessible account entry has yet been located saying that Charles Ivins furnished $783.19 for the Wisconsin operation. That is the final evidentiary bridge required to transform the leading hypothesis into a demonstrated transaction.

The $783.19 Charles Ivins note should not be interpreted as an isolated private debt. It belongs within the financial network that sustained the Nauvoo Temple, Nauvoo House, and their associated lumbering and construction operations during one of the most cash-starved periods of Nauvoo’s history.

Selected Sources Consulted

- Joseph Smith Papers, biographical entries for Charles Ivins, Lyman Wight, Peter Haws, and Jacob B. Backenstos.
- Joseph Smith Papers, “Promissory Note to Charles Ivins, 16 January 1840.”
- Joseph Smith Papers, “Letter, Charles Ivins to Hyrum Smith, 22 August 1842.”
- Joseph Smith Papers, “Receipt, Lyman Wight and James Brown to Joseph Shelly, 27 August 1841.”
- Joseph Smith Papers, Nauvoo House Association and financial-records materials.
- Dennis Rowley, “The Mormon Experience in the Wisconsin Pineries, 1841-1845,” BYU Studies.
- Church History Library catalog references for Peter Haws financial account books and MS 21380.
- Biographical sources for Henry W. Miller and Captain James Brown used in the accompanying research.

Sources and image credits

Numbered references support the new narrative. The preserved memorandum has its own source list and archival search targets. Online sources were consulted on 2 October 2026. Links open the source page; manuscript and repository descriptions are distinguished from documents examined directly.

[1] The 4 January 1842 Charles Ivins Promissory Note. Research memorandum, 30 August 2026, ten original pages; preserved above. Source for the instrument's reported readings, principal, interest, filing date, and earlier reconstruction. The later-supplied photographs are separately cited as reference 22 and reproduced in this edition.

[2] Dennis Rowley, The Mormon Experience in the Wisconsin Pineries, 1841–1845, BYU Studies 32, nos. 1–2. Especially the discussion of provisions, Haws's accounts, the September 1841 mill notes, and the appendix of workers. This contextual study does not identify the $783.19 Ivins balance. Open source

[3] Joseph Smith Papers, Lyman Wight biography. Used for the chronology of his offices, Texas migration, 3 December 1848 excommunication, and death. Open source

[4] Joseph Smith Papers, Henry William Miller biography. Used for construction duties and the Iowa and western chronology. Open source

[5] Joseph Smith Papers, Receipt, Lyman Wight and James Brown to Joseph Shelly, 27 August 1841. Contemporary evidence of Brown's work with Wight as a building agent. Open source

[6] Don F. Colvin, A Six-Year Building Program, in Nauvoo Temple A Story of Faith, Religious Studies Center, 2002. Section on 1842; February labor arrangements and June stone setting. Open source

[7] Joseph Smith Papers, Charles Ivins biography. Membership, migration, excommunication, publishing role, occupations, and death. Open source

[8] Charles Ivins to Hyrum Smith, 22 August 1842, Joseph Smith Papers, page 1. The letter concerns Ivins's financial distress but does not name this $783.19 note. Open source

[9] Nauvoo Expositor, 7 June 1844, including its 10 May prospectus and editorial identification. Historical newspaper text and page scans hosted by Wikisource. Charles Ivins appears among the publishers; Sylvester Emmons is identified as editor. Open source

[10] Joseph Smith Papers, Jacob B. Backenstos biography. Court and sheriff service, nonmembership, Mexican War service, Oregon residence, and death. Open source

[11] Joseph I. Bentley, Road to Martyrdom Joseph Smith's Last Legal Cases, BYU Studies 55, no. 2. Publishing partnership discussion and note 211 on Richards's list. Open source

[12] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Nauvoo Expositor, Church History Topics. Context for the publication, press destruction, and ensuing conflict. Open source

[13] History of the Church, volume 7, chapter 12, pages 143–146, hosted by BYU Studies. Backenstos's list appears separately from the list attributed to Willard Richards. The allegation about Charles Ivins and family is on page 146 in the Richards material. No precise act of assistance is specified there. Open source

[14] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Nauvoo Temple, Church History Topics. Temple use in late 1845 and early 1846, dedication, and departure. Open source

[15] Church History in the Fulness of Times, chapter 24, Nauvoo under Apostolic Leadership. Chronology of continuing construction and the February 1846 departure. Open source

[16] Martin Donell Kohout, Wight, Lyman, Handbook of Texas, Texas State Historical Association. Texas settlements, milling, local office, and later moves. Its disciplinary date differs from the Joseph Smith Papers; reference 3 is followed here for excommunication. Open source

[17] Joseph Smith Papers, Peter Haws biography. Council Bluffs in 1846, Texas visit in 1848, excommunication in 1849, and later residence in what became Nevada and California. Open source

[18] Wilford Woodruff Papers, Peter Haws, gives 1862 as his death year. Compare Susan Easton Black, Peter Haws, Doctrine and Covenants Central, which gives 1 February 1860. The disagreement has not been resolved from a contemporary death record. Open source

[18a] Susan Easton Black, Peter Haws, Doctrine and Covenants Central. Alternative death date noted above. Open source

[19] Council Bluffs Public Library Special Collections, Henry William Miller, historical portrait and accompanying biographical text, citing pages 165–166 of a Latter-day Saint biographical reference. Open source

[20] Church History Biographical Database, James Brown, 1801–1863. Battalion, family, migration, mission, emigration-company, and death entries. Open source

[21] Eleanor Knowles, Ogden Utah's Oldest Settlement, Ensign, January 1972. Brown's November 1847 purchase and the beginnings of Brownsville; also discusses the region's earlier inhabitants and traders. Open source

[22] David Larsen, photographs of the front and reverse of the 4 January 1842 Charles Ivins promissory note, supplied 2 October 2026, IMG_0696.jpeg and IMG_0697.jpeg. Primary visual evidence for the reading transcript, repayment term, signatures, interest notation, and filing docket. The embedded photographs retain their original pixels; orientation and crop are document display settings.

[23] David Larsen, confirmation supplied 2 October 2026: the fourth signer is Captain James Brown, later captain of Company C of the Mormon Battalion, and the signature should be transcribed J. L. Brown. This identification is based on the owner's confirmation.

Illustrations

[I1] Walter Rane, Nauvoo 1842, Consecrated Labor, oil on canvas, 2020. Historic Nauvoo, Temple City exhibit. Modern interpretation; artist credited by the exhibit. Image source

[I2] Lyman Wight portrait detail from Lyman and Harriett Wight, before 31 March 1858; unknown photographer. Community of Christ Archives, reproduced through Wikimedia Commons. The Commons file is marked public domain. Image source

[I3] Gary Smith, painting of the Nauvoo Temple under construction. Deseret News archives; reproduced in Sarah Jane Weaver, Church News podcast episode 53, 19 October 2021. Later artistic reconstruction; artwork date unspecified in the consulted source. Image source

[I4] Henry William Miller, historical portrait, Council Bluffs Public Library Special Collections. Original photographer and date unspecified. The 2011 upload date is not the date of the portrait. Image source

[I5] Captain James Brown, Church History Library, PH 327 2 9, reproduced by the Church History Biographical Database. Original photographic date unspecified. Image source

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