An Acre Across from the Kirtland Temple,

Dispute over the Home of Sidney Rigdon

By the summer of 1850, Asa J. Bump had bought an acre at a sheriff's sale, secured the court's approval, and obtained an order for a deed. Still, he had to go back to court. Four men stood between the title he claimed and the possession he wanted. His lawyers put their accusation into print: the deeds in the way had been made for a "fraudulent purpose."[1]

The acre was very probably the former home lot of Sidney and Phebe Rigdon, directly across Chillicothe Road from the Kirtland Temple. That identification is persuasive, though the final comparison of deed boundaries remains unfinished. It gives this small lawsuit an unusually vivid setting: a family home beside the center of a religious movement, contested years after many of that movement's leaders had left Ohio.[3,4]

The newspaper notice supplies the opening. It names the men, counts the dollars, and sets two chains of ownership against each other. Follow those names, and the case becomes a story of a temple craftsman and his son, migrating church leaders, settled neighbors, and marriages that connected the opposing families.

Highlights

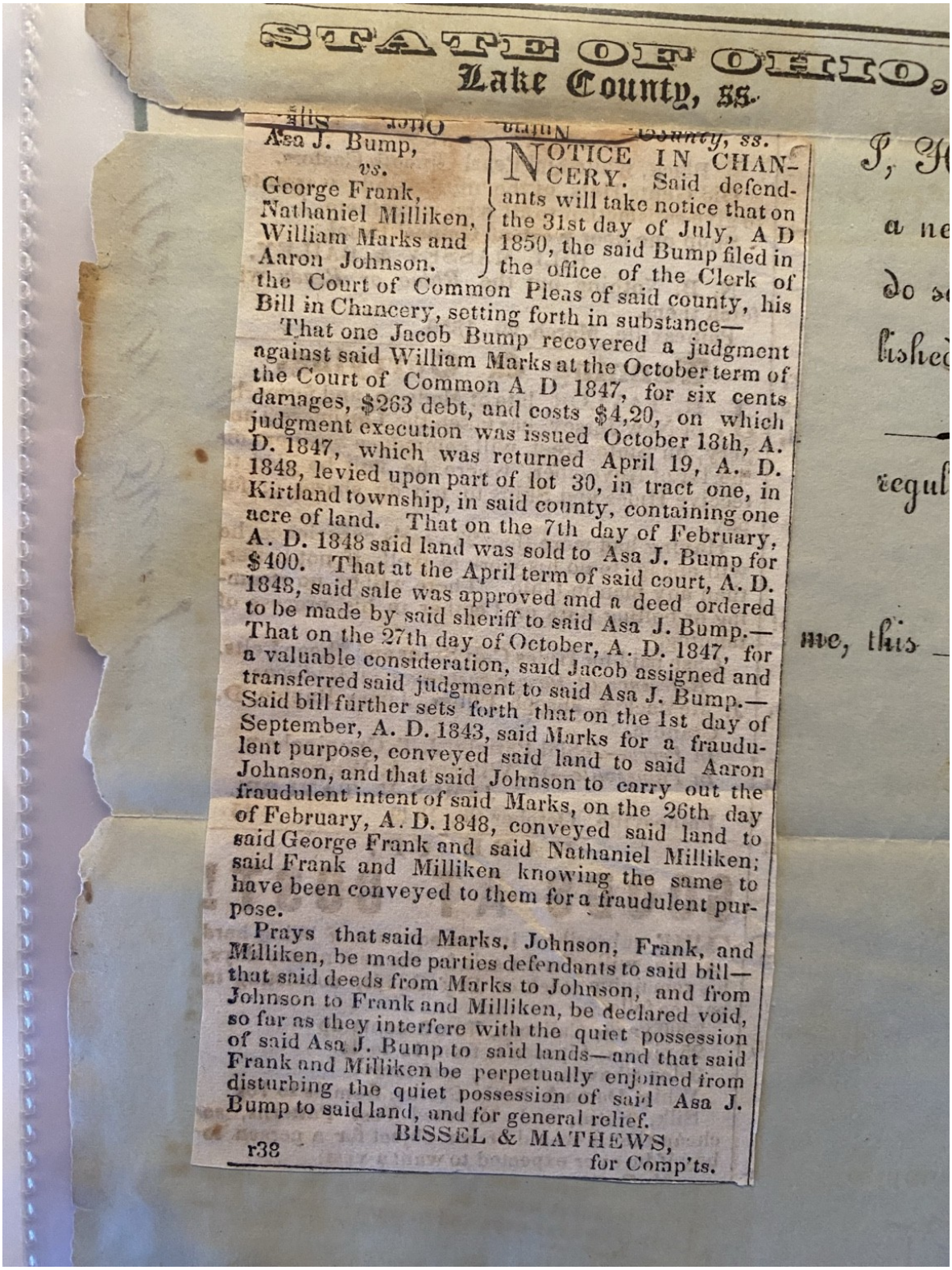
- A father's judgment became a son's claim. Jacob Bump won a debt judgment against William Marks in 1847 and transferred it to Asa nine days after execution issued.
- Four hundred dollars did not settle ownership. Asa bought the acre on 7 February 1848; Aaron Johnson conveyed it to George Frank and Nathaniel Milliken nineteen days later.
- The older deed was the obstacle. Johnson's claim traced back to Marks in 1843, years before the Bump judgment. Asa sought to have that deed and Johnson's later deed set aside.
- The families overlapped. Asa's brother Augustus married Milliken's daughter Mary; Frank married her sister Elizabeth.
- The known result favored Frank and Milliken. A newspaper report in May 1853 records a verdict for them in Asa's ejectment suit. It gives no reason for the decision.

The original notice and a faithful reading transcript follow. The narrative then follows the people and transactions, with the chronology, property research, sources, and image credits at the back.



The Rigdon home in 1907. George Edward Anderson photograph; BYU Religious Education Archive. The house and its probable connection to the disputed acre are explored in the narrative.

The notice that opens the case



STATE OF OHIO,
Lake County, ss.

Asa J. Bump,
vs.
George Frank,
Nathaniel Milliken,
William Marks and
Aaron Johnson.

NOTICE IN CHANCERY. Said defendants will take notice that on the 31st day of July, A D 1850, the said Bump filed in the office of the Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas of said county, his Bill in Chancery, setting forth in substance—

That one Jacob Bump recovered a judgment against said William Marks at the October term of the Court of Common A D 1847, for six cents damages, $263 debt, and costs $4,20, on which judgment execution was issued October 18th, A. D. 1847, which was returned April 19, A. D. 1848, levied upon part of lot 30, in tract one, in Kirtland township, in said county, containing one acre of land. That on the 7th day of February, A. D. 1848 said land was sold to Asa J. Bump for $400. That at the April term of said court, A. D. 1848, said sale was approved and a deed ordered to be made by said sheriff to said Asa J. Bump.— That on the 27th day of October, A. D. 1847, for a valuable consideration, said Jacob assigned and transferred said judgment to said Asa J. Bump.— Said bill further sets forth that on the 1st day of September, A. D. 1843, said Marks for a fraudulent purpose, conveyed said land to said Aaron Johnson, and that said Johnson to carry out the fraudulent intent of said Marks, on the 26th day of February, A. D. 1848, conveyed said land to said George Frank and said Nathaniel Milliken; said Frank and Milliken knowing the same to have been conveyed to them for a fraudulent purpose.

Prays that said Marks, Johnson, Frank, and Milliken, be made parties defendants to said bill— that said deeds from Marks to Johnson, and from Johnson to Frank and Milliken, be declared void, so far as they interfere with the quiet possession of said Asa J. Bump to said lands—and that said Frank and Milliken be perpetually enjoined from disturbing the quiet possession of said Asa J. Bump to said land, and for general relief.

BISSEL & MATHEWS,
for Comp'ts.

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Figure 1. The surviving notice as preserved in the supplied clipping photograph. The bill was filed on 31 July 1850; a matching notice is indexed in the Painesville Telegraph for 11 September 1850. The photograph retains the surrounding scraps and heading strip. [1–2]

A faithful reading transcript

Wording, names, dates, and printed punctuation are retained; columns and line endings are reflowed. In the original, “fraudu-” continues as “lent” on the next line. It reads “fraudulent,” not “lent.”

STATE OF OHIO,
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Four hundred dollars and an acre

The sale came first, on 7 February 1848. According to the notice Asa's lawyers later published, the sheriff sold him one acre in Kirtland Township for $400. It was part of Lot 30 in Tract One, a precise enough description to put the dispute into the county's land records, but one that concealed almost everything a neighbor would have known about the place.[1]

The trouble had begun with his father. At the October 1847 term of court, Jacob Bump recovered a judgment against William Marks: $263 in debt, six cents in damages, and $4.20 in costs. On 18 October, an execution issued—the court's authority to pursue property to satisfy the judgment. Nine days later Jacob assigned the judgment to Asa.

Asa was in his twenties. He had grown up in the town where his father kept stores and worked on the temple. An account in Jacob's 1837 store daybook places the younger Bump inside that family economy long before the lawsuit. Now his name appeared as a purchaser in a much larger transaction.[5,6]

The notice says he received the judgment for "a valuable consideration." It does not tell us what passed between father and son. The phrase establishes the transfer as they presented it to the court; it does not open the door onto a family conversation. What follows is more definite: the judgment became the basis of Asa's claim, the sheriff sold him the land, and at the April 1848 term the court approved the sale and ordered a deed made to him.

Those were substantial steps. They were also only one side of the ownership story.

Five years before the sheriff's sale, William Marks had already conveyed the acre to Aaron Johnson. If that earlier transfer held good against the Bump claim, the sheriff could not simply sell the property as though Marks still owned it. Asa therefore needed to challenge the deed that had carried the acre out of Marks's hands. The date on that instrument, 1 September 1843, mattered as much as the price Asa had paid in 1848.[1]

Then the record tightened. Nineteen days after the sheriff's sale, Johnson conveyed the acre to George Frank and Nathaniel Milliken. Asa's purchase and their purchase led backward through different papers to the same man, William Marks. By July 1850, Asa was asking the court to remove the competing deeds from his path.

This was the practical question behind the legal language: had Asa bought an acre he could actually possess?

To understand why these particular names met over this particular piece of ground, it is necessary to step back from the courthouse. The father whose judgment started the contest had helped build the landmark across the road. The probable former owner of the house had preached beside Joseph Smith. The men now defending their claim belonged to the same small community, and some were already family.

The father who helped build Kirtland



Figure 2. Kirtland Temple from the northwest, photographed in 1907 by George Edward Anderson. The later view places Jacob Bump's building work in its physical setting. Anderson Collection, Church History Library, reproduced by the BYU Religious Studies Center.

Before Jacob Bump appeared as a creditor, he had been one of the men making Kirtland. Born in New York in 1791, he came to the Latter-day Saint gathering with the skills of a mason and plasterer. He joined Zion's Camp in 1834 and worked on the temple as it rose above the settlement. Construction history identifies him with its interior plastering; contemporary recognition of the builders included his name.[5,7]

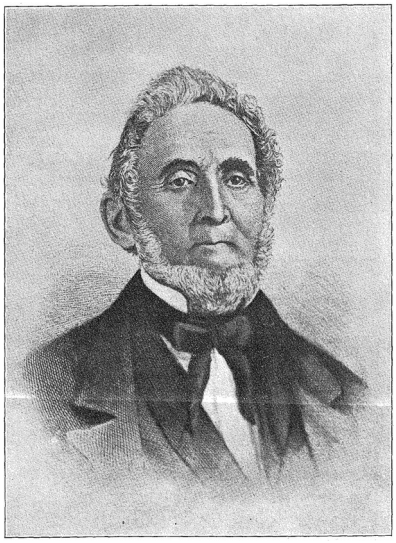
The temple was only part of his working life. Jacob also kept stores. The surviving upper-store daybook records the purchases and obligations of a community in which religious ambition and everyday credit occupied the same pages. For Asa, this was the world of childhood: neighbors who were customers, church leaders who were business associates, and accounts that might remain unsettled long after the goods had changed hands.[6]

Jacob's relationship with church leadership broke down during Kirtland's upheavals of 1837. He stayed in Ohio while the movement's center shifted west. He later participated in other branches of the Restoration, including the movements associated with James Strang and William McLellin. His attachment to Kirtland outlasted a single church allegiance.[5]

An earlier lawsuit makes that attachment tangible. In 1844 Jacob sought the recovery of twenty temple keys. The sheriff reported finding none, and the action was dismissed in April 1845. The claim concerned keys; it does not establish that Jacob owned the temple. But the episode brings the dispute down to something a reader can hold in the mind: even access to the building could become a matter for the sheriff.[8]

Two years later, the judgment against Marks gave the Bump family another route into Kirtland's unsettled property affairs. The notice does not reveal what created the $263 debt. Jacob's plastering contract and store accounts help explain his world, but neither can yet be named as the source of this obligation.

The house across the road





Figures 3–4. Left, Sidney Rigdon in a portrait published with his biography in 1910–1911. Right, the Sidney and Phebe Rigdon home photographed by George Edward Anderson in 1907. The house photograph records its later appearance, not its condition during the lawsuit. Full credits are at the back.

The house enters the story through a chain of ordinary purchases. In February 1832, Newel K. Whitney bought a one-acre home site on Chillicothe Road from Jemima Doane for $90. A log house stood there. After Sidney Rigdon was attacked by a mob at Hiram the following month, he and his family moved into the former Doane home.[3]

Rigdon was already a force in the young church. A preacher before his conversion in 1830, he became Joseph Smith’s scribe and counselor. He brought experience in public speaking and religious argument to a movement still establishing its institutions. His wife, Phebe Brooks Rigdon, and their children shared the consequences of those commitments, including the move from Hiram.[9]

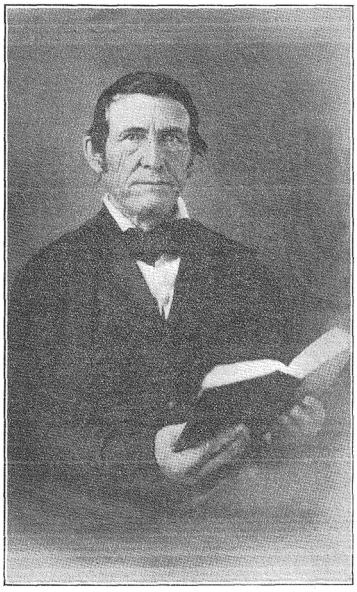
On 30 April 1834, Whitney deeded the acre to Rigdon for $100. The property formed part of the arrangements associated with the United Firm, the church’s early business organization. Across the road lay the temple ground. A home here stood beside the religious and working life of the settlement, rather than at its distant edge.[3]

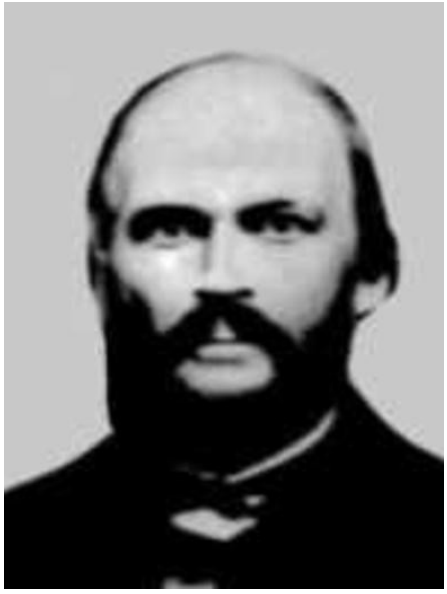
Rigdon built a frame residence on the site. On 7 April 1837 he sold the property to William Marks for a stated $1,500. The surviving deed index places that transfer in Tract One, Lot 30, and gives the area as one acre. Those details, together with Marks’s name, make the connection to the Bump notice particularly strong.[3,4]

The photograph taken seventy years after that sale gives the reader something the notice cannot: a roofline, windows, a fence, and the scale of a lived-in place. It should not be read as an exact portrait of the house in 1848. It does, however, restore a home to a case whose printed description reduces the ground to “one acre of land.”

The modern address 9047 Chillicothe Road is retained here provisionally; the remaining boundary and parcel checks are explained at the back. Rigdon had left Kirtland long before Asa filed his bill. After Joseph Smith’s death in 1844, he claimed the right to lead the church and then pursued his own religious course. He was not a defendant in this suit. His presence here is in the house’s history and the deed that passed it to Marks.

The men whose deeds remained behind





Figures 5–6. William Marks, left, from the High Priests' Annual of 1914; Aaron Johnson, right, from the Church History Biographical Database. These later portraits introduce the men associated with the disputed 1843 transfer.

William Marks arrived in Kirtland as a convert whose experience included farming, printing, and business. In 1837, as financial pressure mounted, several important properties passed into his hands. The Rigdon house was among them. He also acted in business affairs for Newel K. Whitney and became a leading local church officer.[8,10]

Marks's responsibilities carried him onward. He became Kirtland stake president, then presided over the Nauvoo stake in Illinois. After Joseph Smith's death, he supported Sidney Rigdon's leadership claim. The two men connected by the 1837 home deed thus remained connected in a later religious crisis. That association helps explain their place in the larger history; it does not tell us what Marks intended when he transferred the acre in 1843.

The notice names Aaron Johnson as the recipient of that transfer. He was apparently the Aaron Johnson who had come to Kirtland in 1837, a Connecticut-born convert trained as a gunmaker and farmer. The identification fits his documented Ohio property dealings, though the actual 1843 deed remains the best test. By the time of the transfer, this Johnson had followed the migration through Missouri to Nauvoo and was serving as a justice of the peace.[11]

His move did not end his Ohio business. Powers of attorney and later conveyances show that Johnson could transact Kirtland property through the years after his departure. A name on an Ohio deed need not mean its owner was living in the house—or even in the state.

In 1850 Johnson led an emigrant company to Utah and helped settle Springville, where he became its first bishop. While Asa's suit was beginning in Ohio, Johnson's life was taking shape far to the west. Land could keep people legally connected after migration had separated them by great distances.[11,12]

For Asa's case, the decisive point was smaller than either biography. According to his own notice, Marks had conveyed the acre on 1 September 1843. Asa's title depended on overcoming that earlier deed. The office Marks held and the distance Johnson traveled could not, by themselves, establish that the transaction was fraudulent.

Nineteen days and two claims

Set the two February dates beside each other. On the seventh, Asa bought at the sheriff's sale. On the twenty-sixth, Johnson conveyed to Frank and Milliken. The closeness of the dates gives the story urgency, but the apparent race is misleading. Johnson's claimed ownership reached back to 1843.[1]

The competing claims can be followed without the language of a law book.

Asa's route to the acre	Frank and Milliken's route
Jacob's 1847 judgment against Marks Assignment of the judgment to Asa Sheriff's sale to Asa on 7 February 1848	Marks's deed to Johnson on 1 September 1843 Johnson's deed to Frank and Milliken on 26 February 1848
Asa asked the court to set aside the deeds that obstructed his claimed possession.	The earlier deed out of Marks's hands stood in the way of Asa's purchase.

Both routes are recited in the 1850 notice. The actual deeds and the defendants' pleadings would provide the fuller record.

George Frank was a settled Kirtland neighbor, a farmer and tavern keeper whose life centered on the Chillicothe Road neighborhood near the temple. His dealings already touched the Rigdon family: in January 1838, he and his brother Lawrence purchased a Rigdon tannery property from Sidney's mother, Nancy.[3,8]

That was a different acre. The tannery lay near the Whitney store, not on the home lot across from the temple. Keeping the two parcels separate matters, especially because the same family names recur in both. The tannery purchase shows Frank's earlier place in the local property market; it is not the deed contested in this lawsuit.

Nathaniel Milliken had also made a long life in Kirtland. Born in Maine, he joined the church in 1833, moved to Kirtland, became a Seventy, and bought stock in the Kirtland Safety Society. By early 1838 he had been excommunicated. Like Jacob Bump, he remained in the community after separating from its leadership.[13]

These were people with overlapping histories, not strangers encountering one another for the first time over a land advertisement. Asa alleged that Frank and Milliken knew the property had been conveyed for a fraudulent purpose. Their years in Kirtland make their local familiarity understandable. Familiarity, however, is not proof of the knowledge Asa alleged.

The document gives him the first word because it is his notice. It does not supply their answer. A fair telling has to preserve that imbalance: we can follow his accusation closely without making it the narrator's verdict.

And the connections ran closer than residence, religion, or neighboring property. The Bumps and Millikens were already joined by marriage.

The names were also family





Figures 7–8. Augustus J. Bump and Mary F. Milliken Bump, photographed later in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Augustus was Asa's brother; Mary was Nathaniel Milliken's daughter. Council Bluffs Public Library, photographs bearing the Sherraden studio imprint.

In 1842, Asa's older brother Augustus married Mary F. Milliken. Her father was Nathaniel, one of the men Asa would later sue. In 1849, Mary's sister Elizabeth married George Frank, the other local defendant. By the time Asa filed in chancery, both men defending the Johnson deed were connected to his brother's household.[14]

The relationship is easier to grasp through Mary. Her husband's brother was the plaintiff. Her father and her sister's husband were defendants. The court caption divided these people into two sides; their family relationships did not divide so neatly.

No surviving letter tells us what Mary said about the lawsuit, whether Augustus tried to intervene, or whether the dispute strained family visits. It would be easy to manufacture a quarrel around a dinner table. The documented relationships are interesting enough without one. They show how a property fight could run through a family's existing ties rather than between isolated adversaries.

The later portraits provide a useful pause. Augustus and Mary are remembered in Council Bluffs, where they moved in 1852. He served in local law enforcement. She became known as a healing medium, and both were associated with spiritualism. Their lives carried the family beyond the religious and geographic boundaries of its earlier Kirtland years.[14]

Back in Ohio, Asa also established a household while the litigation continued. The county marriage index records his marriage to Charity E. Carter on 11 January 1852. Court dates belong beside such events, not in place of them. The lawsuit occupied years during which the people named in it married, moved, worked, and lost relatives.[15]

The family connection changes how the case feels, but not what the evidence proves. Marriage does not establish a secret arrangement, and kinship does not explain why a jury later decided against Asa. It does make the names on the paper recognizable as people who had reasons to know one another well beyond the courthouse.

Asa asks the court to clear the way

On 31 July 1850, Asa filed his bill in the Lake County Court of Common Pleas. His lawyers' printed notice put William Marks, Aaron Johnson, George Frank, and Nathaniel Milliken on notice of the action. The signature at the foot reads "BISSEL & MATHEWS," followed by "for Comp'ts."—for the complainant's side.[1]

The notice does its work in a single column. First it builds Asa's claim from the judgment, assignment, levy, and sale. Then it turns to the obstacle: the deeds from Marks to Johnson and from Johnson to Frank and Milliken. Finally, it states what Asa wanted the court to do.

His request was specific. He asked that the deeds be declared void "so far as they interfere with the quiet possession" of his land. He also wanted Frank and Milliken permanently restrained from disturbing that possession. The object was to make his purchase effective against their competing claim, not merely to collect another sum of money.

"Chancery" can sound remote to a modern reader. Here it meant asking the court for the sort of remedy that money alone would not supply: action against the deeds themselves and an order controlling the defendants' conduct. The accusation of fraud gave Asa a proposed reason to reach backward through the chain of ownership and undo the obstacle created in 1843.

The print is emphatic about that accusation. A line break splits the word "fraudulent" into "fraudu-" and "lent." Read together, it says Marks conveyed for a fraudulent purpose. It then alleges that Johnson carried out that intent and that Frank and Milliken knew of it. These are charges in Asa's pleading, not findings made by the court.

The dates leave questions that only the underlying papers can answer. The Marks-to-Johnson deed preceded Jacob's judgment by four years. When had the debt itself arisen? What did Johnson pay? What interest, if any, did Marks retain? What did the later purchasers know? The notice answers none of those questions, even though they bear directly on the story Asa was asking the court to accept.

Nor does the order approving the sheriff's sale settle the whole matter. It records an important step in Asa's route to ownership, but an approved sale did not make an earlier competing claim disappear from the record. His return to court shows that the practical contest continued after the auction.

Readers of the Painesville Telegraph encountered a notice of the case in September 1850. The full chancery decree has not been recovered in this research. The next identified result comes nearly three years later, in a different kind of possession action. It should not be called an appeal without the court record connecting the proceedings.[2]

By then, Asa had been pursuing the acre for more than five years.

The verdict and the lives beyond it

The ending arrives in a few words. Under the court news for 25 May 1853, the Painesville Telegraph reported: “A. J. Bump vs Frank & Milliken in ejectment, verdict for defendants.”[2]

An ejectment action sought possession of land. Frank and Milliken had defeated Asa’s effort to recover it. The brief report gives the result and leaves out the explanation: no account of testimony, no statement of the jury’s reasoning, no description of the evidence that carried the day.

That silence sets the boundary of the ending. We can say Asa lost this possession suit. We cannot say the jury found that no fraud had occurred, or that every assertion in the earlier notice was disproved. Nor can we reconstruct the fate of the chancery bill from this sentence alone. The defendants’ victory is clear; the route to it is still missing.

For Asa, the surviving sequence is an account of persistence. He took his father’s judgment, bought at the sheriff’s sale, obtained approval, and pursued further litigation. The documents establish those actions without telling us whether he acted from confidence, family obligation, anger, or some mixture of motives. His later life remained rooted in the region; the family monument records his death in 1895, a year after Charity’s.[15]

The other men continued along different paths. Marks eventually joined the Reorganization and became a counselor to Joseph Smith III. Johnson remained prominent in Utah. Rigdon spent his later years outside the main body of the church he had helped lead. Milliken and Frank stayed associated with Kirtland, where their lives extended decades beyond the verdict.[9,10,11,12,13]

Frank’s later public role adds a final turn. In the probate administration of Joseph Smith’s Ohio estate, he was selected as one of the appraisers of real property, including the temple. The man Asa had accused in a fight over the probable home acre across the road later helped assess the value of the neighborhood’s most famous building.[8]

The acre survived all of them. In 1907, George Edward Anderson photographed the Rigdon home, with its white walls, gabled front, and trees close by. Nothing visible in that image announces the judgment, the sheriff’s sale, or the contest over possession. The house gives no account of the Bumps, Frank, Milliken, Marks, or Johnson. The papers supply those names.

Read together, the photograph and the notice recover two views of the same probable setting. One shows a home that remained recognizable long after its famous occupant departed. The other shows how difficult it could be to decide whose home ground it had become.

The religious center moved west. The land stayed in Kirtland, and its old transactions kept drawing people back into court.

The sequence in the records

Date	Event and significance
25 February 1832	Whitney purchases the future Rigdon home acre from Jemima Doane for $90.
30 April 1834	Whitney conveys the acre to Sidney Rigdon for $100.
7 April 1837	Rigdon conveys his home property to William Marks for $1,500; the deed index identifies one acre in Tract 1, Lot 30.
1 September 1843	Marks conveys the disputed acre to Aaron Johnson, according to Asa’s later notice.
October 1847 term	Jacob Bump obtains judgment against Marks for $263 debt, six cents damages, and $4.20 costs.
18 and 27 October 1847	Execution issues on the 18th; Jacob assigns the judgment to Asa on the 27th.
7 February 1848	The sheriff sells the acre to Asa for $400.
26 February 1848	Johnson conveys to George Frank and Nathaniel Milliken, according to the notice.
April 1848 term	The court approves Asa’s purchase and orders a sheriff’s deed. Execution is returned on 19 April.
31 July 1850	Asa files the chancery bill attacking the competing deeds.
11 September 1850	A notice of the suit appears in the Painesville Telegraph, as indexed in the newspaper abstracts.
25 May 1853	The Telegraph reports a verdict for Frank and Milliken in Asa’s ejectment action.

Sources: the supplied notice; the Telegraph abstracts; the United Firm property study and Geauga deed index. The 1832–1837 home-lot history and the 1843–1853 lawsuit history are joined here as a probable identification, pending comparison of the complete boundary descriptions. [1–4]

Four terms in plain language

An assignment transfers a right or claim to someone else. Execution is the court process used to enforce a judgment against property. Chancery supplies remedies such as setting aside an instrument or restraining interference. Ejectment is an action to recover possession of land. These brief explanations describe how the terms function in this historical case.

Locating the acre



Figure 9. Detail from the Joseph Smith Papers reconstruction of United Firm stewardships in 1834. The Rigdon home lot faces the temple ground across Chillicothe Road. This modern historical map is a location aid, not a survey of the disputed parcel. [16]

The strongest identification combines three particulars. The 1850 notice specifies one acre in Tract One, Lot 30, and names Marks as the earlier owner. The Geauga deed index records Rigdon's 7 April 1837 conveyance to Marks as one acre in that same tract and lot. Published deed research identifies the conveyed property as the Rigdon residence across from the temple.[1,3,4]

The modern address carried as a working candidate is 9047 Chillicothe Road. It remains tentative. A present-day directory listing is not a chain of title, and the nearby historical marker's listed location around 9060 Chillicothe Road should not be substituted for the house address. The narrative therefore retains the probable Rigdon home setting while leaving the street number qualified.[17]

A conclusive match requires the boundary calls in the 1837 Rigdon-to-Marks deed, the 1843 Marks-to-Johnson deed, and the 1848 Johnson-to-Frank-and-Milliken deed, followed through to the modern parcel. The sheriff's deed should be compared as well. Acreage and lot number are strong clues; they do not replace the complete legal descriptions.

Two other properties must remain separate: the Rigdon tannery acre near the Whitney store and the Bump store property. The recurrence of Rigdon, Frank, and Bump in local deeds makes it especially easy to combine neighboring stories that belong to different ground.

Sources and documentary notes

Numbers in the narrative refer to these notes. Original documents, later abstracts, and historical interpretation are identified separately. Online sources were consulted in September and October 2026.

1. Supplied clipping photograph, notice in chancery, Asa J. Bump v. George Frank, Nathaniel Milliken, William Marks, and Aaron Johnson; bill filed 31 July 1850, Lake County Court of Common Pleas. The image is the direct source for the transcript and the detailed 1843–1850 sequence. It preserves Asa's allegations and his lawyers' procedural recitals. The heading strip and adjacent scraps are retained in Figure 1. The printer's mark at the foot reads r38. "Court of Common A D 1847" and the cost notation "$4,20" are retained as printed. This edition corrects the former report's mistaken reading "lent purpose": the word is split "fraudu- / lent" in the image.

2. Judy J. Stebbins, Painesville Telegraph abstracts, Addendum 1850–1861, p. 11, entry for 11 September 1850, newspaper p. 3, col. 3; and p. 91, entry for 25 May 1853, newspaper p. 3, col. 1. The latter is the source of the reported ejectment verdict. It is a later abstract of the newspaper, not the court's judgment entry. The original clipping's issue date cannot be established from its cropped image alone. Open newspaper abstracts

3. Max H. Parkin, "Joseph Smith and the United Firm: The Growth and Decline of the Church's First Master Plan of Business and Finance, Ohio and Missouri, 1832–1834," BYU Studies 46, no. 3 (2007), property discussion and deed notes, especially the Rigdon residence history at pp. 43–44. Cited records include Geauga County Deed Record 15:322, 18:488, and 23:535. The tannery history is separate; Nancy Rigdon's conveyance to George and Lawrence Frank is recorded at 25:303. The home lot is also identified in the annotated edition of the 23 April 1834 revelation. Open Parkin study Open annotated revelation

4. Lake County OHGenWeb, transcribed deed index, William Marks entries: Sidney Rigdon to William Marks, 7 April 1837, Geauga Deed Record 23:535, Range 9, Township 9, Tract 1, Lot 30, one acre. An index verifies the indexed particulars; it does not supply the full metes-and-bounds description. Open Marks deed index

5. Joseph Smith Papers, "Bump, Jacob," biographical directory. This supports Jacob's birth, trades, early church participation, Kirtland residence, and later religious affiliations. Additional family details appear in the project's earlier documentary study. The narrative does not infer the origin of the Marks debt from Jacob's occupations. Open Jacob Bump biography

6. Joseph Smith Papers, Jacob Bump Upper Store Daybook, November 1836–April 1837, source note and transcript, including the Asa Bump account of April 1837. The book documents the family's commercial setting; no entry has been identified here as the specific obligation behind the 1847 judgment. Open daybook

Sources continued

7. Elwin C. Robison, The First Mormon Temple: Design, Construction, and Historic Context of the Kirtland Temple (1997), construction chronology and documentary appendices, including the blessing of those who assisted in building the temple. These provide the context for Jacob's plastering and recognition as a builder. Open construction chronology

8. "The Kirtland Safety Society and the Fraud of Grandison Newell: A Legal Examination," BYU Studies Quarterly 54, no. 3 (2015), discussions of Kirtland property, Marks, and the later administration of Joseph Smith's Ohio estate. Note 327 cites the 1844–1845 temple-key action: Lake County Common Pleas journal B, pp. 249 and 350. The claim was for twenty keys, filed 30 September 1844; the sheriff's return was 9 October 1844, and dismissal was 8 April 1845. The study also documents Frank's later role as an appraiser. Open legal and property study

9. Joseph Smith Papers, "Rigdon, Sidney," biographical directory. The dates and offices establish the former homeowner's place in the church's history. Rigdon was not named as a party in Asa's 1850 suit. Open Rigdon biography

10. Joseph Smith Papers, "Marks, William," biographical directory; see also the property discussion in note 8. The title transfers and Marks's changing church roles are documented facts; his intention in the 1843 conveyance is not established by those biographical facts. Open Marks biography

11. Joseph Smith Papers, "Johnson, Aaron," biographical directory and linked legal documents, including Ohio property dealings after his migration. Aaron Johnson (1806–1877) is the strongly probable identification of the notice's grantee. The 1843 deed's residence, spouse, signatures, and acknowledgment should be used for final identity confirmation. Open Johnson biography

12. Church History Biographical Database, "Aaron Johnson," including the 1850 emigrant-company association, biographical information, and portrait. The image's date is not supplied with the downloaded portrait. Open Johnson record

13. Joseph Smith Papers, "Milliken, Nathaniel," biographical directory. Variant spellings occur in historical records. "Milliken" is retained from the notice. The earlier project report supplies later local biographical details; the narrative avoids assigning an undocumented motive to his purchase. Open Milliken biography

14. Mary Carpenter, "Early Citizens of Council Bluffs—Augustus J. and Mary Bump," Council Bluffs Public Library, with portraits and biographical information on their 1842 marriage, 1852 move, and later lives. The project's family research also cites the Willoughby Independent notice of Augustus's death in 1888 and the Painesville Telegraph account of the Milliken sisters' reunion, 16 May 1889. Those family notices support the connection between Mrs. Augustus Bump and Mrs. George Frank; they do not describe attitudes toward the lawsuit. Open family biography and portraits

Property notes and image credits

15. Lake County OHGenWeb marriage index, Bump entries: Asa J. Bump and Charity E. Carter, license 10 January 1852, marriage 11 January 1852, return B–R, p. 401. The North Kirtland Cemetery transcription gives Asa's lifespan as 1823–1895 and Charity's as 1833–1894. The earlier report's possible military-service identification is not used as an established fact in this narrative. Open marriage index Open cemetery resource

16. Joseph Smith Papers, "United Firm Stewardships, Kirtland, Ohio, 1834," Documents, volume 4. Research by Max Parkin, Matthew C. Godfrey, Brenden W. Rensink, and Elizabeth Willian; cartography by Blake A. Baker. Figure 9 reproduces a detail of the modern reconstruction, not a nineteenth-century cadastral survey. Open full map

17. The working address, 9047 Chillicothe Road, comes from a contemporary directory lead. The Sidney Rigdon Home marker record supplies historical context but lists a marker location around 9060 Chillicothe Road. Neither establishes the complete modern parcel correspondence. County deed and parcel records remain the controlling sources for that final check. Open directory lead Open historical marker

Image credits

Fig 1. Original legal-notice photograph supplied with the Bump project. Reproduced without reconstruction of missing newspaper context.

Fig 2. George Edward Anderson, Kirtland Temple from the northwest, 1907. Anderson Collection, Church History Library. Reproduced from "Kirtland, 1834–36," The Rise of the Latter-day Saints, BYU Religious Studies Center. Image source

Fig 3. "Elder Sidney Rigdon," portrait reproduced in "Biography of Sidney Rigdon," Journal of History, 1910–1911, digitized by LatterDayTruth.org. The date of the underlying likeness is not established here. Cropped from the printed page. Portrait source

Fig 4. George Edward Anderson, "Sidney Rigdon Home in Kirtland," 1907, Religious Education Archive, Brigham Young University, item 993. Catalog credit: Anderson Collection, LDS Church Archives. The catalog designates the image public domain, courtesy of LDS Church Archives. House photograph

Figs 5–9. Marks: High Priests' Annual (1914), printed p. 27, digitized by LatterDayTruth.org, PDF 100635; portrait cropped from that page, underlying date unstated. Johnson: Church History Biographical Database, note 12. Augustus and Mary Bump: Council Bluffs Public Library, note 14, later Sherraden studio portraits, exact dates unstated. Map: note 16. All historical images are presented as documentary reproductions, not images contemporaneous with every event described. Marks portrait source

The records that could complete the story

The remaining questions call for specific records rather than a new general history of Kirtland. Each would add something the notice cannot supply.

Record	What it would establish
The 1847 Jacob Bump v. William Marks papers	The basis of the $263 obligation and when it arose.
Marks to Johnson deed, 1 September 1843	The complete parcel description, consideration, acknowledgment, recording date, and grantee identity.
Johnson to Frank and Milliken deed, 26 February 1848	The later conveyance’s boundaries and terms, and any reference to prior title.
Sheriff’s deed to Asa after the 7 February 1848 sale	The property description and the precise estate purportedly conveyed through execution.
The 1850 chancery file and final decree	The defendants’ answers, any evidence presented, and how the chancery bill ended.
The 1853 ejectment file and court journal	The parties’ claims and defenses, the formal judgment, and any surviving explanation of the verdict.
Modern parcel and intervening deed chain	Whether the disputed acre corresponds to the working address of 9047 Chillicothe Road.

Record locations begin with the Lake County Recorder and Lake County Court of Common Pleas; the earlier Rigdon deed is in Geauga County Deed Record 23:535. The precise custodial location of older court files should be checked before requesting copies.

What the present evidence supports

The notice preserves a coherent sequence from Jacob’s judgment to Asa’s purchase and his challenge to the competing deeds. A later newspaper abstract records a defense verdict in ejectment. Independent property evidence makes the former Rigdon home acre the probable setting. The story can therefore be told now, while the exact modern address, the full decree, and the reasons for the verdict remain open questions.

The distinction matters most at two points: “fraudulent” was Asa’s allegation, and “verdict for defendants” was the reported result. Between them lay a contested case whose complete courtroom record has yet to be recovered.