A Fatherly Friend to Joseph Smith

James and Harriet Denton Adams
From Springfield to Nauvoo

In November 1839, Joseph Smith was thirty-three and trying to obtain justice for a people driven from Missouri. James Adams was fifty-six, an Illinois lawyer and judge with years of experience in public life. Their surviving papers trace a relationship that grew from a letter of introduction into practical help, religious confidence, and an affection James expressed in two words: “My Son.”[1, 2, 10]

The 1841 deed in David Larsen’s collection opens a window into that relationship. Its two signatures bring James and Harriet into view as a household making consequential decisions about property while becoming part of the Latter-day Saint community. Their importance emerges most clearly when this deed is read beside letters, donation records, and Joseph Smith’s journal.

Highlights

1839 — A public advocate. James introduces Joseph Smith to President Martin Van Buren and supports the Saints’ appeal for redress after Missouri.

1841 — Commitment takes visible form. A receipt records James’s gift for the Nauvoo Temple; he receives a patriarch’s license. Harriet receives a patriarchal blessing in October.

1842 — A trusted religious participant. James leads the Springfield branch and joins the small group receiving Joseph’s earliest Nauvoo endowment instruction on 4 May.

1842–1843 — Help when liberty is at stake. James urges Joseph to seek judicial protection in Springfield during the Missouri extradition crisis.

1843 — A closely connected household. James and Harriet are evidently sealed as a couple in May. Their land dealings and arrangements for young Jane Walker link them closely with the Smith family.

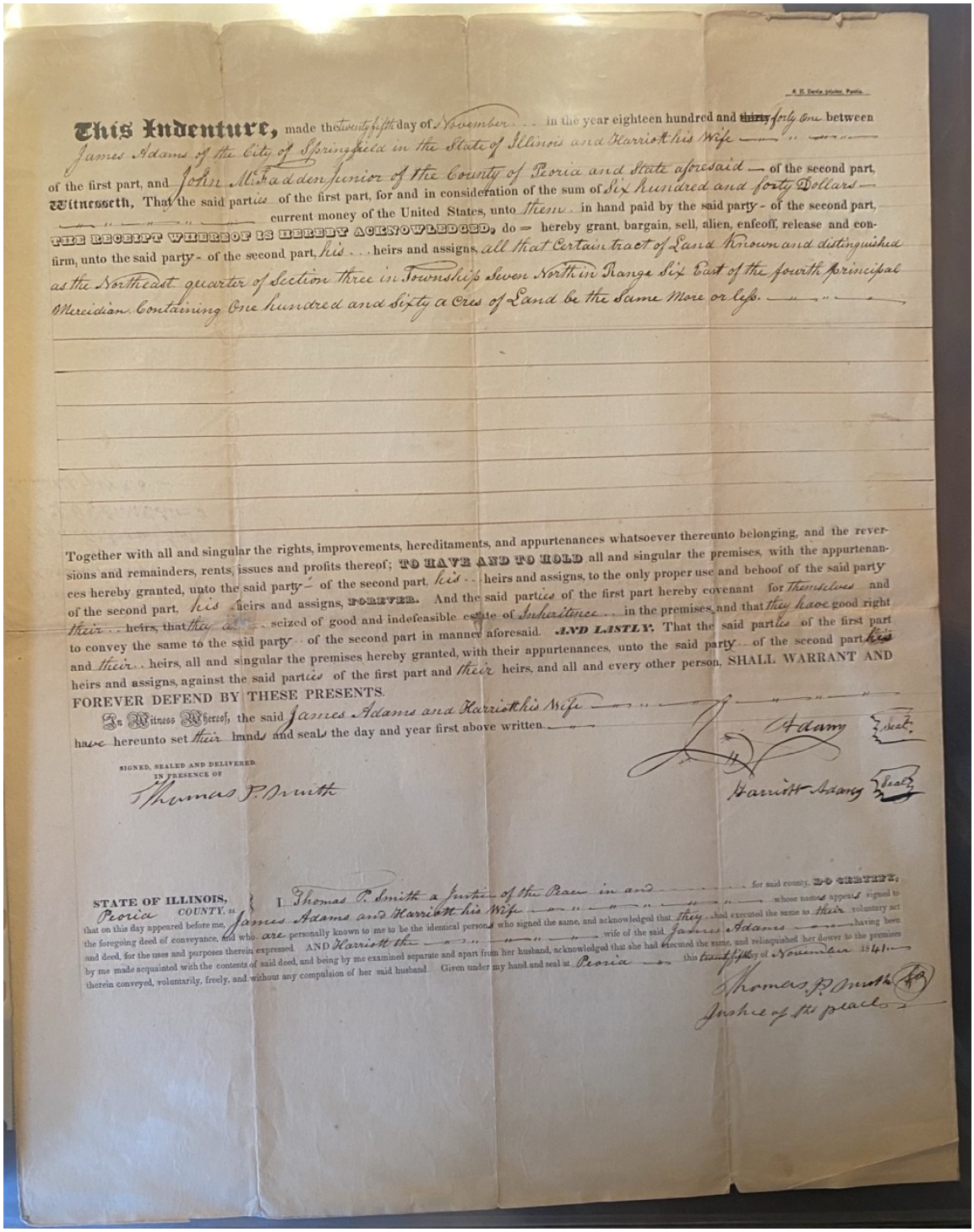
1843–1844 — A short final chapter. James dies on 11 August 1843. Harriet participates in the ordinance circle that October and survives until 1844.

A necessary distinction: James belonged to the early temple ordinance circle, often called the Anointed Quorum. He could not have belonged to the Council of Fifty, organized in March 1844, seven months after his death.[8, 9]

Illustrated documentary edition • Revised 4 October 2026

The document in the collection

On 25 November 1841, James Adams and “Harriott his Wife” conveyed 160 acres to John McFadden Junior for a stated $640. The deed identifies James with Springfield; its acknowledgment was taken at Peoria. The buyer’s name and place of acknowledgment correct the earlier project summary.[3]



This Indenture, made the twenty fifth day of November in the year eighteen hundred and ~~thirty~~ forty one between James Adams of the City of Springfield in the State of Illinois and Harriott his Wife — of the first part, and John McFadden Junior of the County of Peoria and State aforesaid — of the second part, Witnesseth, That the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Six Hundred and forty Dollars — current money of the United States, unto them in hand paid by the said party of the second part, THE RECEIPT WHEREOF IS HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGED, do — hereby grant, bargain, sell, alien, enfeoff, release and confirm, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, all that Certain tract of Land known and distinguished as the Northeast quarter of Section three in Township Seven North in Range Six East of the fourth principal Meridian Containing One hundred and Sixty Acres of Land be the same More or less.

Together with all and singular the rights, improvements, hereditaments, and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging, and the reversions and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof; TO HAVE AND TO HOLD all and singular the premises, with the appurtenances hereby granted, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, to the only proper use and behoof of the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, FOREVER. And the said parties of the first part hereby covenant for themselves and their heirs, that they are seized of good and indefeasible estate of Inheritence in the premises, and that they have good right to convey the same to the said party of the second part in manner aforesaid. AND LASTLY. That the said parties of the first part and their heirs, all and singular the premises hereby granted, with their appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns, against the said parties of the first part and their heirs, and all and every other person, SHALL WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND BY THESE PRESENTS.

In Witness Whereof, the said James Adams and Harriott his Wife have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED IN PRESENCE OF

Thomas P. Smith

Adams [Seal]

Harriott Adams [Seal]

STATE OF ILLINOIS, Peoria COUNTY, ss. I Thomas P. Smith a Justice of the Peace in and for said county, DO CERTIFY, that on this day appeared before me, James Adams and Harriott his Wife whose names appear signed to the foregoing deed of conveyance, and who are personally known to me to be the identical persons who signed the same, and acknowledged that they had executed the same as their voluntary act and deed, for the uses and purposes therein expressed. AND Harriott the wife of the said James Adams having been by me made acquainted with the contents of said deed, and being by me examined separate and apart from her husband, acknowledged that she had executed the same, and relinquished her dower to the premises therein conveyed, voluntarily, freely, and without any compulsion of her said husband. Given under my hand and seal at Peoria this twenty fifth day of November 1841

Thomas P. Smith [Seal]

Justice of the peace

Figure 1. Original deed, front. David Larsen collection; photograph IMG_3274. The image is cropped at the outer photographic margins. The signatures, seals, and acknowledgment remain visible.

The reverse of the deed

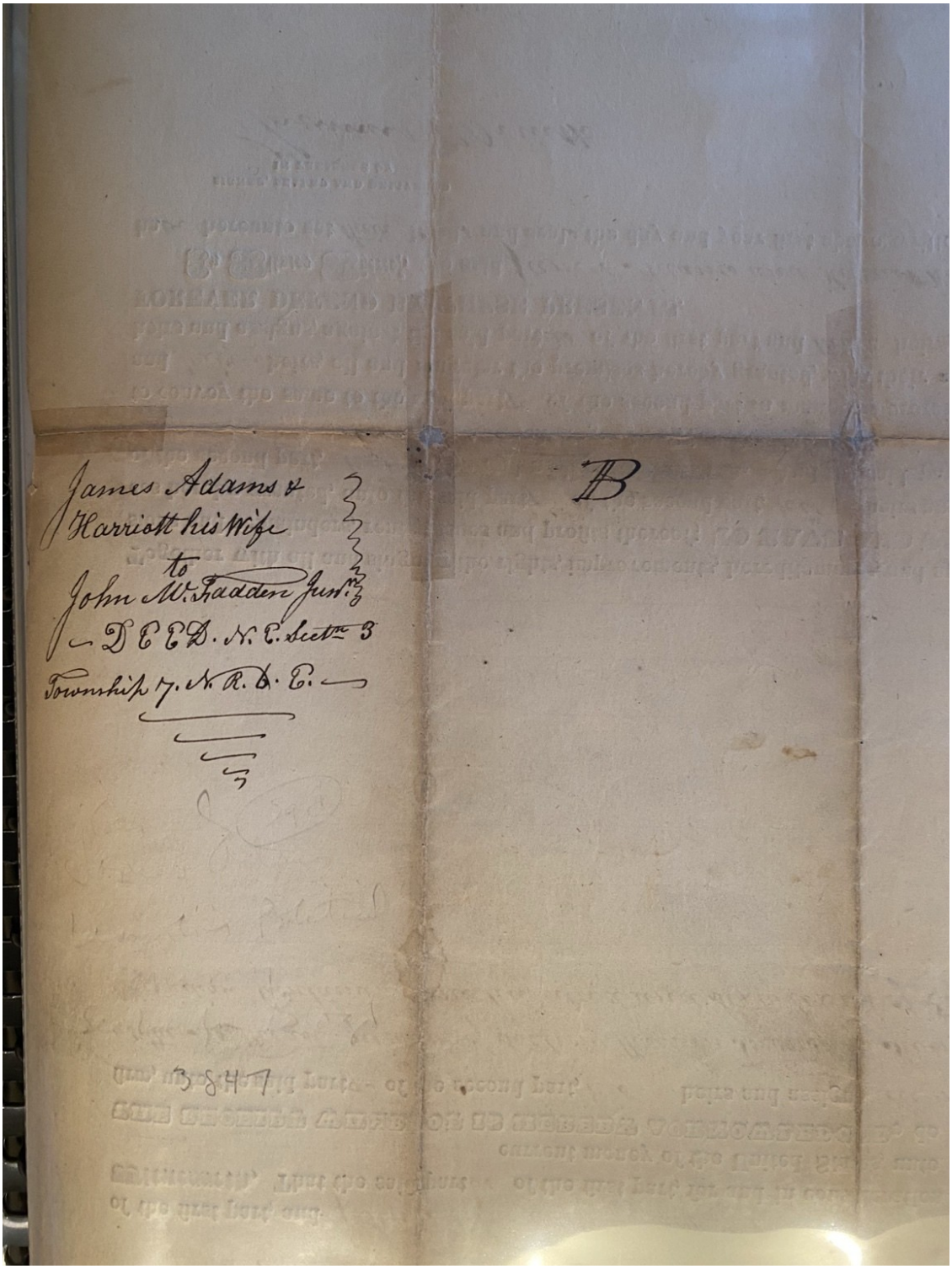
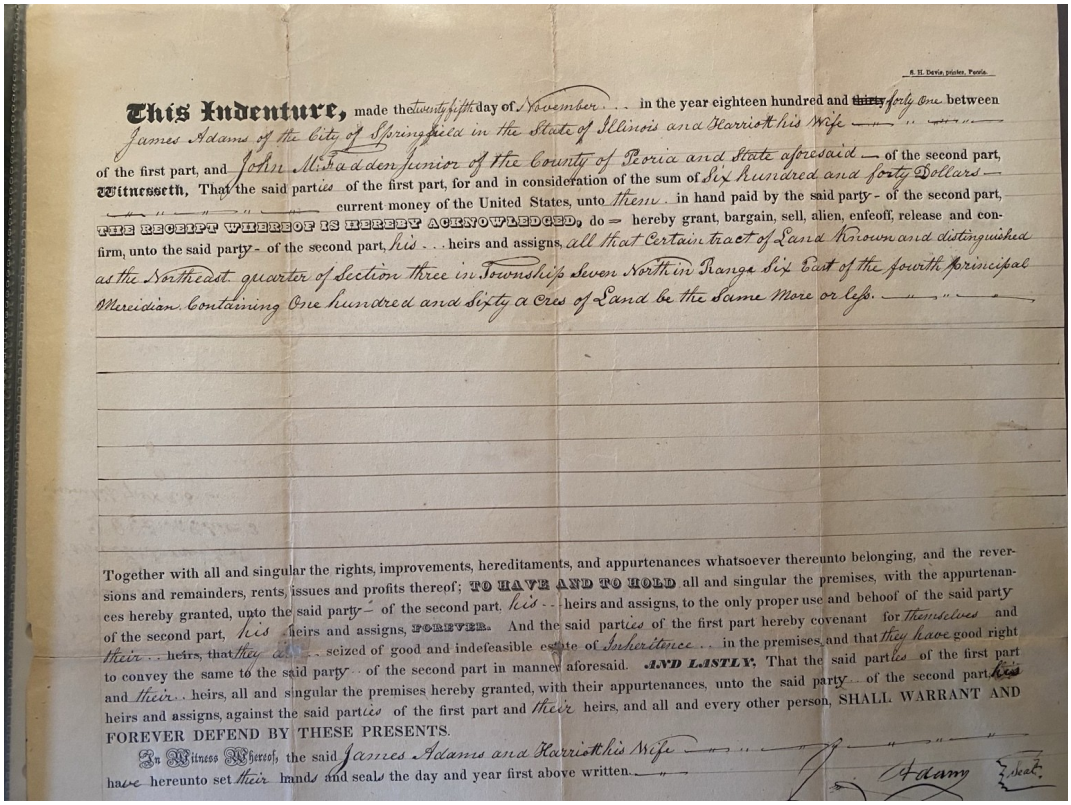


Figure 2. Original deed, reverse, rotated upright. David Larsen collection; photograph IMG_3275. The docket identifies the parties and the northeast quarter of section 3. Much of the lighter text is show-through from the front.

The docket was a practical way of identifying a folded legal paper. It names the same private purchaser as the face of the deed. No visible endorsement directs the purchase money to the Church or the Nauvoo Temple.

Reading the handwriting



This Indenture, made the twenty fifth day of November in the year eighteen hundred and ~~thirty~~ forty One between James Adams of the City of Springfield in the State of Illinois and Harriott his Wife of the first part, and John McFadden Junior of the County of Peoria and State aforesaid of the second part, **Witnesseth,** That the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Six Hundred and forty Dollars current money of the United States, unto them in hand paid by the said party of the second part, **THE RECEIPT WHEREOF IS HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGED,** do hereby grant, bargain, sell, alien, enfeoff, release and confirm, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, all that Certain tract of Land known and distinguished as the Northeast quarter of Section three in Township Seven North in Range Six East of the fourth Principal Meridian. Containing One hundred and Sixty acres of Land be the same More or less.

Together with all and singular the rights, improvements, hereditaments, and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging, and the reversions and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof; **TO HAVE AND TO HOLD** all and singular the premises, with the appurtenances hereby granted, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, to the only proper use and behoof of the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, **FOREVER.** And the said parties of the first part hereby covenant for themselves and their heirs, that they are seized of good and indefeasible estate of Inheritence in the premises, and that they have good right to convey the same to the said party of the second part in manner aforesaid. ***AND LASTLY.*** That the said parties of the first part and their heirs, all and singular the premises hereby granted, with their appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, against the said parties of the first part and their heirs, and all and every other person, SHALL WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND BY THESE PRESENTS.

In Witness Whereof, the said James Adams and Harriott his Wife have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

James Adams [Seal]

Together with all and singular the rights, improvements, hereditaments, and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging, and the reversions and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof; **TO HAVE AND TO HOLD** all and singular the premises, with the appurtenances hereby granted, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, to the only proper use and behoof of the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, **FOREVER.** And the said parties of the first part hereby covenant for themselves and their heirs, that they are seized of good and indefeasible estate of Inheritence in the premises, and that they have good right to convey the same to the said party of the second part in manner aforesaid. ***AND LASTLY.*** That the said parties of the first part and their heirs, all and singular the premises hereby granted, with their appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, against the said parties of the first part and their heirs, and all and every other person, SHALL WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND BY THESE PRESENTS.

In Witness Whereof, the said James Adams and Harriott his Wife have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

James Adams [Seal]

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED IN PRESENCE OF
Thomas P. Smith

Harriott Adams [Seal]

STATE OF ILLINOIS, Peoria COUNTY, ss. I Thomas P. Smith a Justice of the Peace in and for said county, **DO CERTIFY,** that on this day appeared before me James Adams and Harriott his Wife whose names are signed to the foregoing deed of conveyance, and who are personally known to me to be the identical persons who signed the same, and acknowledged that they had executed the same as their voluntary act and deed, for the uses and purposes therein expressed. AND Harriott the wife of the said James Adams having been by me made acquainted with the contents of said deed, and being by me examined separate and apart from her husband, acknowledged that she had executed the same, and relinquished her dower to the premises therein conveyed, voluntarily, freely, and without any compulsion of her said husband. Given under my hand and seal at Peoria this twenty fifth day of November 1841

Thomas P. Smith [Seal]
Justice of the peace

Figure 3. Upper detail, rotated upright. The handwriting names John McFadden Junior and gives the northeast quarter, township 7 north, range 6 east. Photograph IMG_3276.

Figure 4. Lower detail, rotated upright. James and Harriott sign above Thomas P. Smith's acknowledgment at Peoria. Photograph IMG_3277.

Transcription of the deed

Reading transcription from the four supplied photographs. Original wording and spelling are retained as far as legible; line breaks are reflowed. Printed and handwritten text are combined. Decorative rules and blank form spaces are omitted. Square brackets identify editorial descriptions or uncertainty. The printed year “thirty” is struck through and replaced by “forty One.” The name is transcribed “Harriott” here and rendered Harriet in the narrative.

[Printer’s line: B. H. Davis, printer, Peoria.]

This Indenture, made the twenty fifth day of November in the year eighteen hundred and [“thirty” struck through] forty One between James Adams of the City of Springfield in the State of Illinois and Harriott his Wife of the first part, and John Mc.Fadden Junior of the County of Peoria and State aforesaid of the second part,

Witnesseth, That the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Six hundred and forty Dollars current money of the United States, unto them in hand paid by the said party of the second part, THE RECEIPT WHEREOF IS HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGED, do hereby grant, bargain, sell, alien, enfeoff, release and confirm, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, all that Certain tract of Land Known and distinguished as the NorthEast quarter of Section three in Township Seven North in Range Six East of the fourth principal Meridian. Containing One hundred and Sixty acres of Land be the Same More or less.

[Blank ruled space.]

Together with all and singular the rights, improvements, hereditaments, and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging, and the reversions and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof; TO HAVE AND TO HOLD all and singular the premises, with the appurtenances hereby granted, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, to the only proper use and behoof of the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, FOREVER. And the said parties of the first part hereby covenant for themselves and their heirs, that they are seized of good and indefeasible estate of Inheritance in the premises, and that they have good right to convey the same to the said party of the second part in manner aforesaid. AND LASTLY, That the said parties of the first part and their heirs, all and singular the premises hereby granted, with their appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, against the said parties of the first part and their heirs, and all and every other person, SHALL WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND BY THESE PRESENTS.

In Witness Whereof, the said James Adams and Harriott his Wife have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED,
IN PRESENCE OF
Thomas P. Smith

J. Adams [seal]
Harriott Adams [seal]

Acknowledgment and reverse docket

STATE OF ILLINOIS,
Peoria COUNTY, ss.

I Thomas P. Smith a Justice of the Peace in and for said county, DO CERTIFY, that on this day appeared before me, James Adams and Harriott his Wife whose names appears signed to the foregoing deed of conveyance, and who are personally known to me to be the identical persons who signed the same, and acknowledged that they had executed the same as their voluntary act and deed, for the uses and purposes therein expressed. AND Harriott the wife of the said James Adams having been by me made acquainted with the contents of said deed, and being by me examined separate and apart from her husband, acknowledged that she had executed the same, and relinquished her dower to the premises therein conveyed, voluntarily, freely, and without any compulsion of her said husband. Given under my hand and seal at Peoria this twenty fifth day of November 1841.

Thomas P. Smith [flourished mark]
Justice of the peace

Reverse docket

James Adams &
Harriott his Wife
to
John Mc.Fadden Jun^{r}
DEED. N.E. Sect^{n} 3
Township 7. N. R. 6. E.

A separate mark resembling “B” and faint incidental marks are visible. They are not expanded into conjectural words. Superscript abbreviations in the docket are represented typographically. The final punctuation and some flourishes remain indistinct in the photographs.

What the paper lets us see

The old legal vocabulary has a straightforward purpose. James and Harriet convey the land and promise to defend the purchaser’s title. The stated price works out to $4 an acre. The acknowledgment places both grantors before a justice of the peace at Peoria; it does not establish that they lived there.

Harriet’s separate examination concerns dower, the property interest a widow might claim in her husband’s land. The officer certifies that she understood the deed and relinquished that interest freely. The form records a legally consequential act by her, although it cannot tell us what she privately thought or how the couple reached their decision.

There is no religious purpose clause. The deed belongs in their Church-era biography because of who signed it and when. Whether any of its proceeds later supported the Church remains a question for the accounts, not something the document itself answers.

A friend after Missouri

Joseph Smith’s journey through Springfield in November 1839 came only months after his escape from custody in Missouri. He had spent the preceding winter in Liberty Jail while Latter-day Saint families were forced from their homes. Many found refuge across the Mississippi at Quincy, Illinois. After rejoining his family in April, Joseph helped establish a new gathering place farther upriver, at the settlement that became Nauvoo.[1, 22]

The next task was to persuade the federal government to hear the Saints’ claims. Joseph set out for Washington with Sidney Rigdon and Elias Higbee. At Springfield, James Adams gave their mission something immediately useful: the endorsement of an established Illinois public man. The surviving letter is dated 9 November 1839.[1]

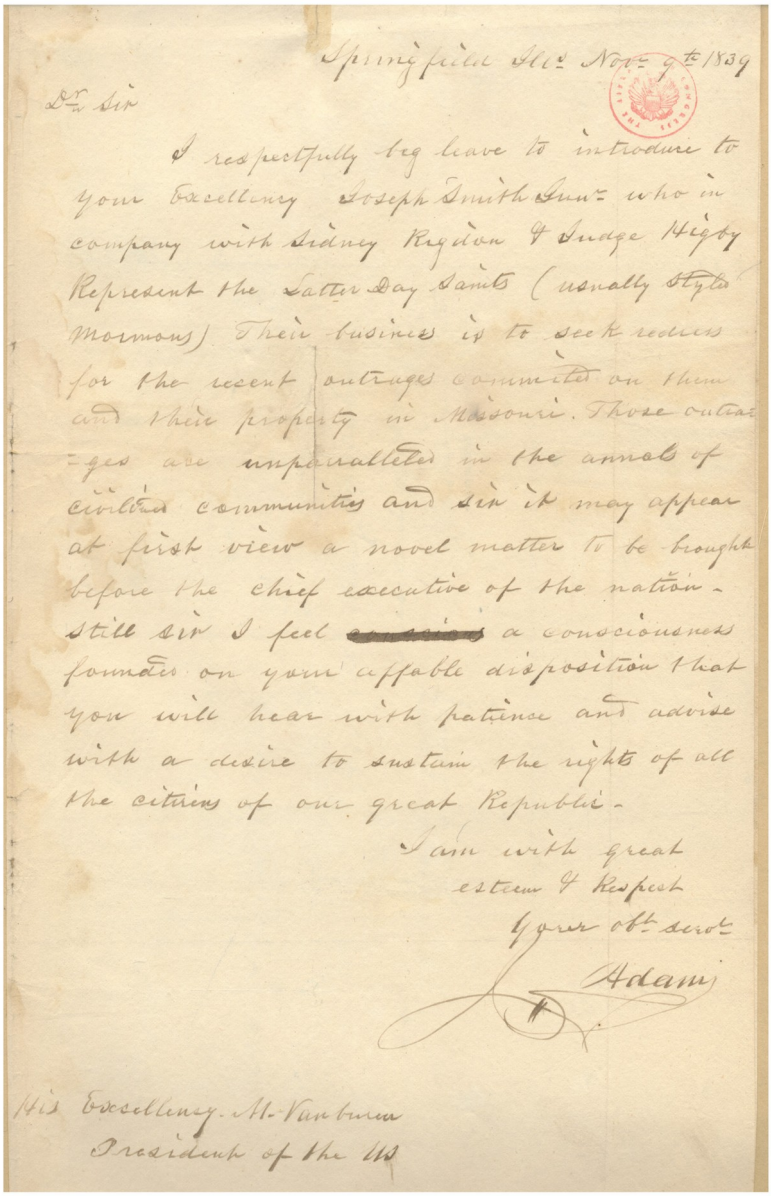


Figure 5. Henry Lewis, Quincy, Illinois, published 1854–1858. Saint Louis Art Museum, 147:1949, public domain. This later river view evokes the city that sheltered the Saints in 1839. Quincy is the refuge setting in this story; Springfield was the Adams family’s home.

James addressed his letter to President Martin Van Buren. He described the Missouri outrages as an affront to civilized society and asked the president to hear the petitioners patiently. He was willing to place his name behind people whose claims many officials preferred to avoid. His recommendation could not guarantee a favorable decision. It could help Joseph enter a political world James already knew.

A few months earlier, Joseph had been a prisoner. Now an established Illinois judge was asking the president to hear his cause. Adams’s importance begins with that specific act of advocacy.

The first surviving introduction



Springfield Illi Nov 9th 1839

Dr Sir

I respectfully beg leave to introduce to your Excellency Joseph Smith Junr who in company with Sidney Rigdon & Judge Higby Represent the Latter Day Saints (usually Styled Mormons) Their business is to seek redress for the recent outrages commited on them and their property in Missouri. Those outrages are unparalleled in the annals of civilized communities and Sir it may appear at first view a novel matter to be brought before the chief executive of the nation - still sir I feel [redacted] a consciousness founded on your affable disposition that you will hear with patience and advise with a desire to sustain the rights of all the citizens of our great Republic -

I am with great
esteem & Respect
your Obt servt
Adam

His Excellency M. Van Buren
President of the US

Figure 6. James Adams to President Martin Van Buren, 9 November 1839. Library of Congress; image provided by the Joseph Smith Papers. Adams introduces Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Elias Higbee as representatives seeking redress for the Missouri losses.

> *“Their business is to seek redress for the recent outrages commited on them and their property in Missouri.”*

The letter speaks the language of citizenship and public justice. Adams asks a president to hear injured Americans. This is an early example of the kind of support Joseph would repeatedly need: someone able to translate the Saints’ experience into terms a governor, lawyer, or judge could act upon.[1]

The letter establishes advocacy by November 1839. James’s exact baptismal date remains uncertain, but his willingness to assist is already clear. Before the records identify him in the intimate religious circle at Nauvoo, they show him using his public standing on the Saints’ behalf.

The experience James brought with him

James Adams had lived much of his life before he joined the Latter-day Saints. Born in Simsbury, Connecticut, on 24 January 1783, he had served in the War of 1812 and risen to brigadier general in the New York militia. “General Adams,” the title that follows him through the Nauvoo records, came from that earlier career.[2]

He and Harriet settled in Springfield in 1821. James practiced law, dealt in land, served as a justice of the peace, and held probate office. Probate work concerned wills, estates, and the practical consequences of death for families. Years of such work gave him experience with the documents and institutions on which a vulnerable community depended.[2, 21]

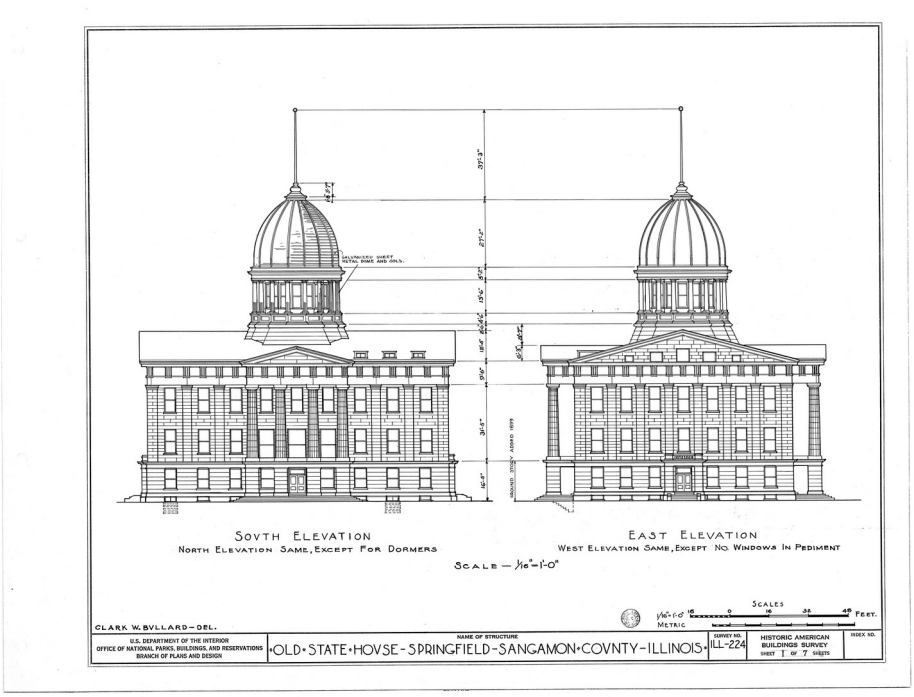


Figure 7. Old State House, Springfield, measured elevations by Clark W. Bullard for the Historic American Buildings Survey, documentation compiled after 1933. Library of Congress, HABS ILL,84-SPRIF,1-, sheet 1. This later survey depicts the building in a later state, including a story added in 1899; it is not an 1839 view.

He also knew political conflict. In 1837, Abraham Lincoln publicly challenged his conduct in a Springfield property dispute. Adams’s standing should therefore be understood as substantial and contested. A man could possess useful connections and public experience without enjoying universal respect. That more complicated James is also the more believable one.[21]

His Masonic standing added another circle of acquaintances. He led Springfield Lodge in 1839 and became deputy grand master of Illinois in 1840. These were connections made before his closest association with Joseph. Joining the Saints brought an established public life into a new religious allegiance.[2]

Harriet and the household that joined

Harriet Denton was born at Goshen, New York, on 31 January 1787, to Harry and Elizabeth Denton. She married James about 1809. The couple had five children, four of whom lived beyond infancy: Lovenia, Charlotte, Lucien, and Vienna. Later evidence describes the grief of losing three daughters. This was a household with a long history of its own when it became connected with the Smith family.[4, 14]

James had been baptized by 1840 at Springfield. Harriet appears to have joined before 5 October 1841, when she received a patriarchal blessing, an individual religious blessing intended to offer guidance and promise. The exact baptismal dates and officiators remain unlocated. Her blessing gives us a firmer point of reference than simply borrowing James's conversion date.[2, 4]

The commitment soon appears in ordinary records. On 16 June 1841, Lyman Wight and Henry W. Miller acknowledged $10 from James for building the Lord's house at Nauvoo. The temple was intended to become the center of the Saints' sacred worship. A receipt for its construction shows the purpose of this particular gift with unusual clarity.[5]

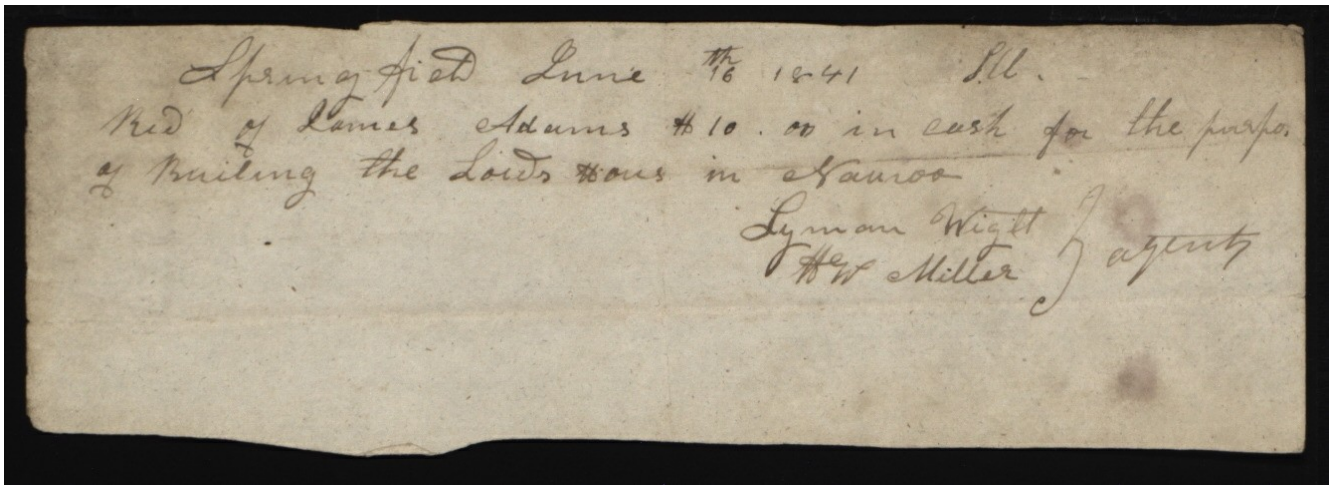


Figure 8. Receipt to James Adams, Springfield, 16 June 1841. Newel K. Whitney Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University; Joseph Smith Papers image. The sum is $10 cash, specifically for the Nauvoo Temple.

Church responsibilities followed. Joseph signed James's patriarchal license on 18 July 1841; Hyrum Smith ordained him a high priest on 2 October. On 25 January 1842, the Springfield branch chose James as its president. A branch was a local congregation, and its president had responsibility for its religious life. These records show a new convert becoming someone other members trusted to lead.[6, 7]

Harriet's signature on the November deed belongs within these same months. Her spiritual participation and her legal acts deserve their own place in the story, even where the surviving records say more about her husband.

An invitation to the upper room

On 4 May 1842, James's name appears in a much smaller company. Joseph Smith's journal lists him with Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and other trusted associates in a day of priesthood instruction. This was the first administration of the Nauvoo endowment, a sequence of sacred instruction and covenants that would later be offered in the completed temple.[8]



Figure 9. Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store, Nauvoo, in a photograph attributed to B. H. Roberts, circa 1886. Church History Library; Joseph Smith Papers. Its upper rooms were used for the May 1842 instruction. The photograph was made decades after the events.

The temple itself was still under construction. The new ceremonies began in rooms over Joseph's store. An ordinary commercial building thus became the setting for teachings he reserved, at first, for a very limited group. Adams's inclusion gives "trusted associate" a precise documentary meaning: Joseph admitted him to religious instruction at the heart of his developing temple program.

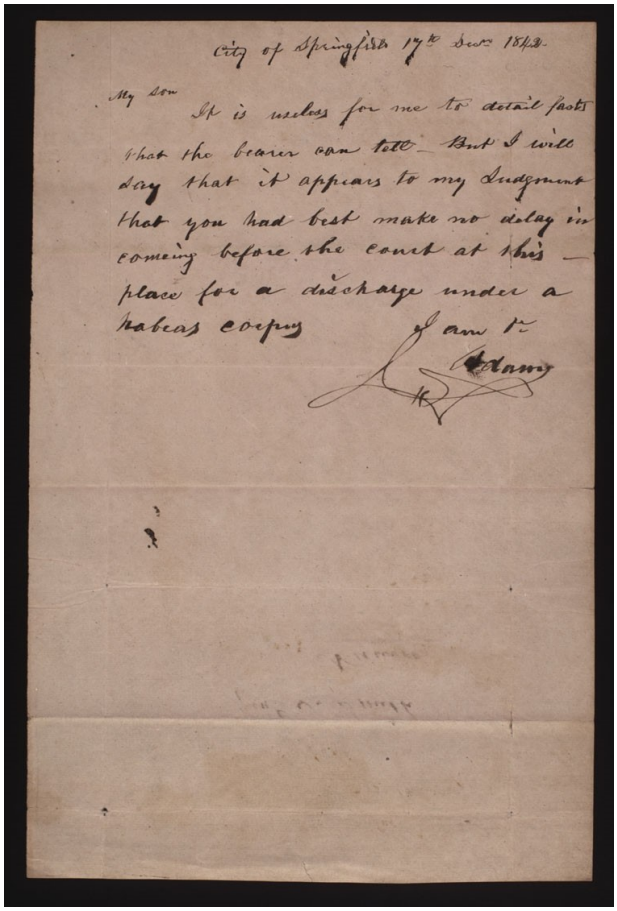
James returned to Springfield the following day. His usefulness did not depend on living constantly beside Joseph. He could remain connected to the state capital while taking part in the most confidential religious gatherings at Nauvoo.[8]

This circle is usually called the Anointed Quorum. It must be distinguished from the Council of Fifty, a political and administrative body organized on 11 March 1844. James died in August 1843. His place in the early ordinance circle is securely grounded without assigning him a later office he never held.[9]

My Son

By December 1842, the relationship had acquired a personal voice. Missouri authorities were again seeking Joseph's extradition, this time in connection with the shooting of former governor Lilburn W. Boggs. Joseph denied involvement. The immediate issue was whether officials could legally arrest and return him to Missouri.[10, 11]

James's letter of 17 December begins simply, "My Son." He urges Joseph to come to Springfield without delay and seek discharge through habeas corpus. That procedure required a court to examine whether a person's detention was lawful. It offered a practical way to challenge the arrest before Joseph was carried across the state line.



City of Springfield 17th Dec 1842.

My Son It is useless for me to detail facts that the bearer can tell — But I will say that it appears to my Judgment that you had best make no delay in comeing before the court at this — place for a discharge under a habeas corpus I am Yr Adams

Figure 10. James Adams to Joseph Smith, 17 December 1842. Church History Library; Joseph Smith Papers image. The affectionate salutation leads directly into advice about obtaining a hearing in Springfield.

> *"you had best make no delay in comeing before the court at this place"*

The warmth and the urgency belong together. James writes as someone who can advise Joseph plainly and who wants him to act. The two-word greeting belongs to an affectionate relationship; the sentence that follows offers a way through an immediate danger.[10]

Experience at the service of a friend

A younger religious leader who had endured imprisonment needed more than sympathy from an older friend. James could help him recognize an available course of action, reach people who understood it, and move at the right time. The surviving December letter is brief because its bearer could explain the details. Its brevity is itself revealing: this was active business between people already in communication.[10]

Joseph arrived in Springfield on 30 December and lodged at Adams's home. The following day, James and Wilson Law each stood as a $2,000 surety for him. A surety promised financial responsibility for the person's appearance; it was not necessarily a cash payment. James's support now involved his house and his own legal obligation.[11]

Justin Butterfield served as Joseph's attorney before federal judge Nathaniel Pope. On 5 January 1843, Pope ruled that the extradition papers were legally insufficient and ordered Joseph discharged. The decision removed the immediate threat under that proceeding, although it could not guarantee freedom from future attempts.[11]

James should receive credit for the help the documents show. Butterfield argued the case; Pope decided it. Adams was the experienced local friend urging Joseph toward the court and helping him navigate the Springfield setting. His value lay partly in knowing what other people and institutions could do.

This is also where his maturity matters most. The difference in their ages did not make Joseph passive or James infallible. It allowed a relationship in which the older man could offer protective, fatherly counsel to someone whose religious authority he accepted. "My Son" gives that unusual combination a human scale.

Why the connection mattered

Springfield and Nauvoo occupied different places in the Saints' lives. Nauvoo was the gathering city, the construction site, and the center of religious innovation. Springfield was the state capital, where political decisions and important legal proceedings could affect the community's freedom. James had experience in one place and growing commitments in the other.

His earlier public roles explain why his advice carried weight; the letters show him using that experience. By the beginning of 1843, the relationship had grown well beyond the recommendation he wrote in 1839. He was a congregational leader, a participant in Joseph's sacred instruction, a host, and a man willing to bind himself financially when Joseph's liberty was threatened.

James was also appointed a regent of the University of the City of Nauvoo in 1841. That position adds to the picture of a man drawn into the city's institutional plans, although an appointment alone does not tell us how much educational work he performed.[2]

The difficult journey of 1843

In spring 1843, grand plans depended on something as ordinary as the condition of a road. Writing on 27 April, James told Joseph that almost daily rain had made travel difficult even within the neighborhood. Harriet was very ill. He wanted to come to Nauvoo, but a long journey with a sick companion required better conditions.[4]

> *“I shall however be at Nauvoo as soon as it appears— even half way tolerable traveling”*

The letter interrupts any easy story of uninterrupted advancement. James had obligations at home, a wife whose health worried him, and weather he could not control. Harriet appears here as someone whose condition shaped the couple’s decisions, not merely as a name beside a husband’s office.



Figure 11. Henry Lewis, Nauvoe, Illinois, published 1854–1858. Saint Louis Art Museum, 143:1949, public domain. The printed view includes the temple and evokes Nauvoo’s river setting. It is a later representation, not a view of the unfinished temple as the Adamses knew it in 1843.

By late May they were again part of the Nauvoo story. A journal entry for 28 May contains shorthand that editors interpret as indicating that Joseph and Emma Smith, and James and Harriet Adams, were sealed to their respective spouses. In Latter-day Saint belief, sealing extended marriage beyond death. Because the entry is compressed and its interpretation depends on surrounding evidence, “evidently sealed” remains the careful wording.[12]

Land and a steamboat

The next day, 29 May 1843, James and Harriet executed a deed to Joseph Smith as trustee for the Church. It described ten tracts totaling a nominal 1,760 acres. The recorded deed speaks of one dollar and of the couple's "love and good will" toward the Church. Read alone, that language appears to describe a very large gift.[13]

Another contemporary record changes the picture. Trustees Land Book B lists the same acreage as land bought from James Adams, valued at $2 an acre, or $3,520. It also records an arrangement for Adams to receive half of Joseph's share in a boat as part payment. The entry is crossed through, and the book does not by itself establish how every obligation was settled. Nevertheless, its commercial terms must be considered alongside the deed. The Joseph Smith Papers identifies the vessel as the steamboat Maid of Iowa.[13]

This was a transaction involving religious commitment, land, and a business interest. The surviving evidence does not justify calling the full 1,760 acres an outright donation. Nor should the formal one-dollar consideration be mistaken for a complete account of what changed hands. The earlier project's description of an unqualified "major consecration" has therefore been revised.

The more complicated transaction still belongs in the story. River transportation mattered to a gathering community. The Maid of Iowa carried passengers and goods; its fortunes linked commerce with the movement of converts. James's June correspondence mentions sending a "mill for the boat," although the precise kind of mill is uncertain. His involvement was practical enough to include equipment as well as land and paper interests.[13, 14]

Three financial records with different meanings

Record	What it establishes
16 June 1841 temple receipt	$10 cash given expressly for building the Nauvoo Temple.
25 November 1841 private deed	160 acres conveyed to John McFadden Jr. for a stated $640; no religious use of proceeds specified.
May 1843 Church conveyance and ledger	1,760 nominal acres transferred to the Church's trustee in a transaction whose accounting includes a steamboat interest as part payment.

These distinctions make his support understandable at its actual scale. A proven temple gift should remain a proven gift; a private sale should remain untraced until matching accounts are found; a mixed property transaction should be described with both sets of evidence in view.

Three dollars for Jane

One of the most revealing papers is also one of the shortest. On 8 June 1843, James wrote from Springfield about the boat, then turned to a child. He enclosed three dollars for Jane Walker's expenses and asked that her brother Lorin bring her to Joseph's house so she could travel to Springfield.[14]

> *"and also enclose three dollars to be handed to Lorens sister Jane for expenses to this place"*

Jane was eleven. Her mother had died, and members of the Church were helping care for the Walker children. In her later account, Jane explained that Joseph sent her to James and Harriet because the Adamses were lonely after the deaths of three daughters. The contemporary letter confirms the travel arrangement; her later recollection supplies its family meaning. It is important to keep those two kinds of evidence distinct.[14]

This small exchange opens another side of the relationship. James did not write only about courts or Church office. The Smith and Adams households were connected through care, bereavement, and the needs of a child. Three dollars for a journey can make that connection easier to grasp than a list of prominent names.

We do not have Harriet's own account of Jane's arrival. We cannot recreate her conversation, describe her response, or say exactly what Jane's presence meant to her. We can recognize that a woman who had lost daughters became part of an arrangement to bring a motherless girl into the household. That is a human event the sources allow us to place beside the public record.

The private circle also had difficult dimensions

James's confidential religious role included matters that later became controversial. Later testimony identifies him as officiating in Joseph Smith's plural-marriage ceremonies involving Emily and Eliza Partridge in May 1843. Editorial research also identifies a July 1843 plural sealing between James and Roxena Repsher. These episodes belong to the history of the circle in which he participated; they should be distinguished from his marriage and evident eternal sealing to Harriet.[15]

The surviving evidence examined here does not establish Harriet's understanding of, or response to, those arrangements. Her thoughts should not be supplied for her. And the Partridge sisters should not be confused with Jane Walker: it is Jane whom the June letter connects with the proposed move to the Adams household.

A future that ended suddenly

On 7 August 1843, voters elected James probate judge of Hancock County, the county that included Nauvoo. Four days later, on 11 August, he died there at sixty. Joseph Smith's journal and the contemporary obituary identify cholera. A new public responsibility had scarcely begun before his place in the community became an absence.[16]

Joseph attended the funeral on 16 August. The record does not show that he preached then. His surviving funeral discourse for James belongs to the Church's October conference, nearly two months later. Keeping the occasions separate helps the reader follow the loss as people actually lived through it.[16, 17]

On 8 October, Harriet joined a prayer meeting at Joseph's house. The journal's names and ordinance wording were crossed through, but remain legible in the fuller transcription. "Sis— Adams" is identified by the editors as Harriet Denton Adams. The entry places her among those blessed, ordained, and anointed. Her own participation in the early ordinance circle continued after James's death.[18]

The following day Joseph spoke about the purpose of mortal life and the condition of the righteous dead. Willard Richards recorded him calling James "Patriarch adams" and placing him among the spirits of the just made perfect. The discourse presents a religious interpretation of death from within Joseph's faith. It also shows that James's loss remained present in the community's worship.[17]

Harriet died at Springfield on 21 August 1844, according to the 1876 Sangamon County history. She therefore outlived Joseph and Hyrum Smith, killed on 27 June 1844. In little more than a year she had lost her husband and the religious leader with whom their household had become so closely connected. The surviving evidence examined here does not disclose how she responded to the resulting leadership crisis.[19]

Neither James nor Harriet lived to attend the completed Nauvoo Temple's 1845–1846 ordinance season or to join the 1846 departure from the city. Their story belongs to the years when the temple was still a promise taking shape, and when Joseph was trying to give a displaced people institutions strong enough to endure.[8, 18, 19]

What their papers preserve

James's importance is visible in what he did when help was needed: he recommended, advised, gave, led, and accepted religious responsibilities. Harriet's smaller record still preserves a blessing, signatures, family obligations, and participation in sacred rites. The two names on the 1841 deed belong to people whose lives reached well beyond its legal formulas.

The most personal surviving words remain the opening of a short letter. In the midst of a legal danger, the older man addressed Joseph as "My Son," then told him what to do next. That combination of affection and useful counsel is the clearest way into James Adams's place in the early Church.

Chronology of a growing relationship

Dates below distinguish firm documentary anchors from conclusions that depend on interpretation. Source numbers refer to the notes at the back.

Date	Event and significance
24 January 1783	James born in Simsbury, Connecticut. [2]
31 January 1787	Harriet Denton born in Goshen, New York. [4]
About 1809	James and Harriet marry. [4]
1821	The family settles in Springfield. [2]
April 1839	Joseph returns to Illinois after Missouri imprisonment; Quincy has sheltered the refugees. [22]
9 November 1839	James writes the introduction to President Van Buren. [1]
By 1840	James baptized at Springfield; exact date and officiator unlocated. [2]
16 June 1841	James gives $10 expressly for the Nauvoo Temple. [5]
18 July 1841	Joseph signs James’s patriarchal license. [6]
2 October 1841	Hyrum Smith ordains James a high priest. [2]
5 October 1841	Harriet receives a patriarchal blessing; baptism apparently preceded it. [4]
25 November 1841	Private deed to John McFadden Jr.; acknowledged at Peoria. [3]
25 January 1842	Springfield branch selects James as president. [7]
4 May 1842	James participates in the first Nauvoo endowment instruction. [8]
17 December 1842	“My Son” letter urges Joseph to seek habeas corpus in Springfield. [10]
5 January 1843	Judge Pope discharges Joseph in the extradition proceeding. [11]
27 April 1843	James reports Harriet’s illness and rain-delayed travel. [4]
28–30 May 1843	Evident marital sealing; land deed signed 29 May and acknowledged 30 May. [12, 13]
8 June 1843	James sends travel money for Jane Walker. [14]
7 and 11 August 1843	Election as Hancock probate judge, followed by James’s death. [16]
8–9 October 1843	Harriet participates in ordinance meeting; Joseph delivers funeral discourse for James. [17, 18]
21 August 1844	Harriet dies at Springfield, according to the 1876 county history. [19]

Research on the money and the land

The 1841 temple gifts

The $10 cash receipt is unambiguous. A separate contribution list names “Judge Adams” with a $16 note on Stringham and an $8 order on Gladden Bishop; it also lists “James Adams $10.00 Cash.” James is the strong identification for “Judge Adams,” and the cash entry appears to correspond to the receipt. On that reading, the listed face value of his contributions was $34. The cash must not be counted twice.[5, 20]

A note and an order were promises or directions to pay, rather than cash already in the committee’s hands. The list records their stated amounts; it does not prove that the full $24 was ultimately collected. The most precise summary is $10 cash documented, with probable additional paper contributions totaling $24 at face value.

The untraced 640 dollars

The November 1841 deed states a $640 consideration but does not supply a separate cash receipt or explain the later use of the purchase money. The June temple gifts occurred about five months earlier. No matching account located for this revision ties the $640 or this quarter-section to the Temple Committee or the Church trustee. The sale may have affected the household’s ability to give, travel, or pay expenses, but that is a possibility, not a demonstrated money trail.[3, 5]

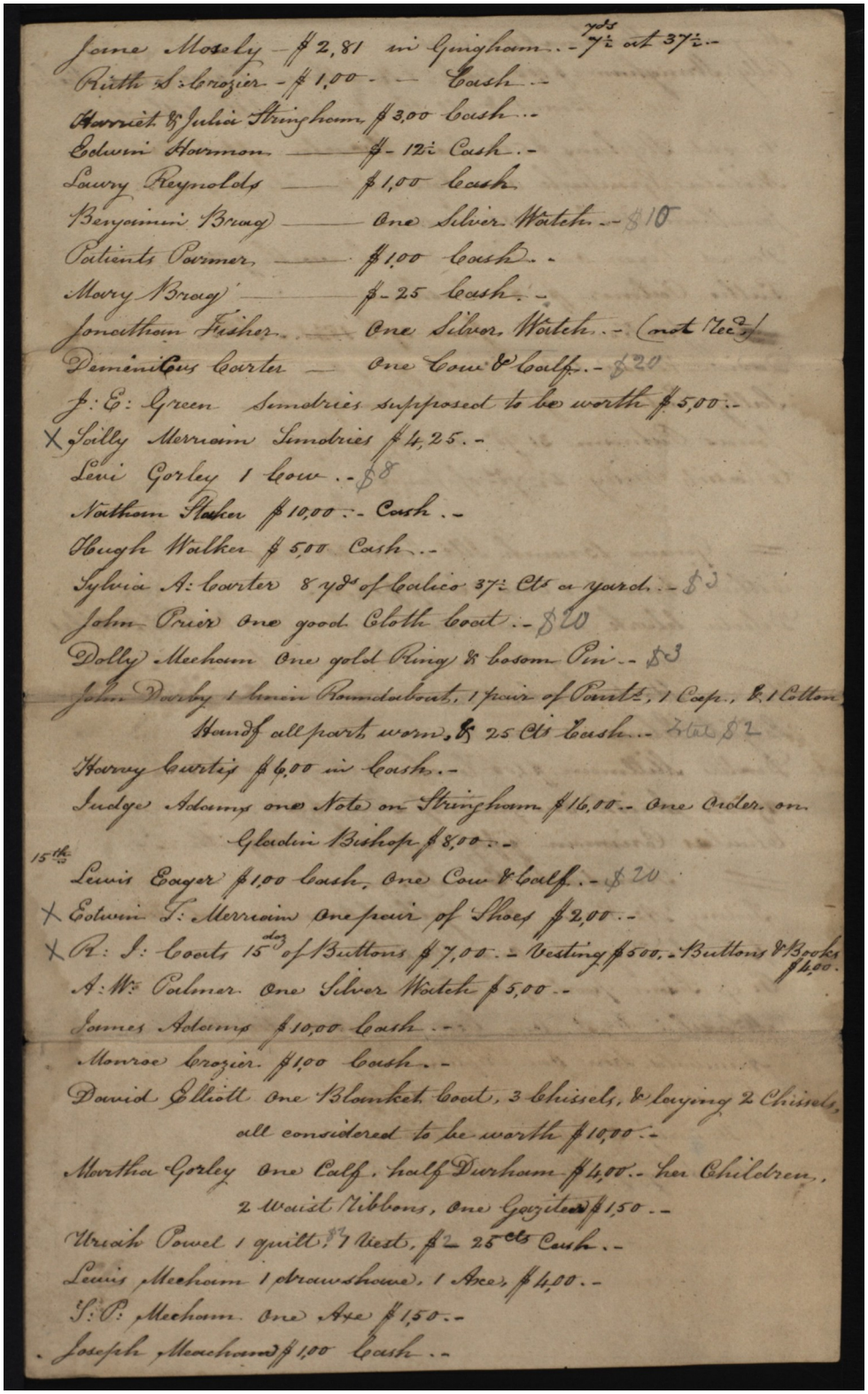
The 1843 property exchange

The ten subdivisions in the May 1843 deed nominally total 1,760 acres: nine quarter-sections of 160 acres and one half-section of 320 acres. The land book independently gives 1,760 acres at $2, totaling $3,520. It records a boat interest as part payment, while the deed uses nominal consideration and devotional language. Both are contemporary evidence; neither should be silently omitted.[13]

The ledger entry is struck through and includes later names and dates alongside particular tracts. Such marks may reflect subsequent accounting or disposition, but this edition does not assign them a definite meaning without tracing the transactions. The record establishes the existence of commercial terms. It does not establish the final cash balance, the value realized by either party, or the extent of any charitable element.

Harriet joined in the 1843 deed and relinquished dower. That is evidence of her legal participation in the transfer. It does not measure her independent control over the portfolio or prove a particular private intention. The couple’s religious commitment is supported by other records as well; it does not require describing every property transaction as a gift.

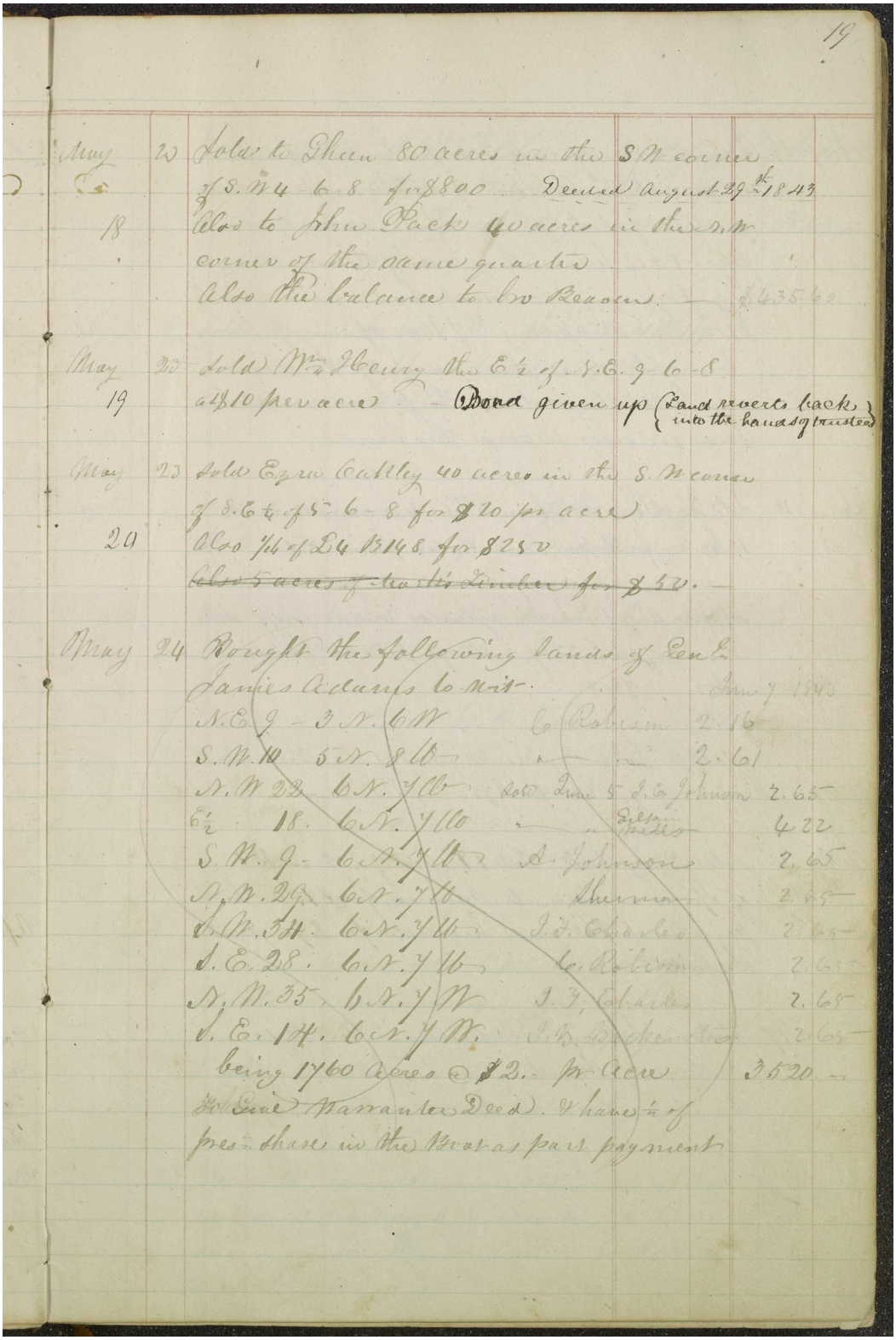
The contribution list



Jane Mosely — $2,81 in Gingham — 7 yds at 37½ —
Ruth S: Crozier — $1,00 — Cash —
Harriet & Julia Stringham $3,00 Cash —
Edwin Harmon —— $- 12½ Cash —
Lowry Reynolds —— $1,00 Cash
Benyamin Bragg —— One Silver Watch — $10
Patients Parmer —— $1,00 Cash —
Mowry Bragg —— $- 25 Cash —
Jonathan Fisher —— One Silver Watch — (not Rec'd)
Demi Curtis Carter — One Cow & Calf — $20
J: E: Green Sundries supposed to be worth $5,00 —
X Sally Merriam Sundries $4,25 —
Levi Gorley 1 Cow — $8
Nathan Parker $10,00 — Cash —
Hugh Walker $5,00 Cash —
Sylvia A: Carter 8 yds of Calico 37½ Cts a yard — $3
John Prier one good Cloth Coat — $20
Dolly Mecham One gold Ring & bosom Pin — $3
John Darby 1 linen Roundabout, 1 pair of Pants, 1 Cap, & 1 Cotton Handf all part worn & 25 Cts Cash — Total $2
Harvey Curtis $6,00 in Cash —
Judge Adams one Note on Stringham $16,00 — One Order on Gladin Bishop $8,00 —
15th Lewis Eager $1,00 Cash, one Cow & Calf — $20
X Edwin S: Merriam one pair of Shoes $2,00 —
X R: S: Coats 15 doz of Buttons $7,00 — Vesting $5,00 — Buttons & Books $4,00.
A: W: Palmer one Silver Watch $5,00 —
James Adams $10,00 Cash —
Monroe Crozier $1,00 Cash —
David Elliott one Blanket Coat, 3 Chissels, & Levying 2 Chissels, all considered to be worth $10,00 —
Martha Gorley one Calf, half Durham $4,00 — her Children, 2 Waist Ribbons, one Gazitee $1,50 —
Uriah Powel 1 quilt, 1 Vest, $2 — 25 Cts Cash —
Lewis Mecham 1 drawshave, 1 Axe, $4,00 —
S: P: Mecham one Axe $1,50 —
Joseph Meacham $1,00 Cash —

Figure 12. Donations from James Smith and Other Illinois Saints, circa June 1841, page 3. Newel K. Whitney Papers, Brigham Young University; Joseph Smith Papers image, retained from the earlier project. “Judge Adams” is listed with a $16 note and an $8 order; “James Adams $10.00 Cash” appears below. See note 20.

The other side of the 1843 deed



19

May 18 — 23 Sold to Dhan 80 acres in the S.W. corner of S. W¼ 6-8 for $800. Deeded August 29th 1843
Also to John Pack 40 acres in the S.W. corner of the same quarter
Also the balance to be Beaver — $435.60

May 19 — 23 Sold Mrs Henry the E½ of S.E. ¼ 6-8 at $10 per acre — Bond given up {Land reverts back into the hands of trustees}

May 20 — 23 Sold Ezra Cathey 40 acres in the S.W. corner of S.E. ¼ of S. 6-8 for $10 per acre
Also ¼ of E¼ 13 14 8 for $25 v
~~Also 5 acres of the Timber for $5 v.~~

May 24 — Bought the following lands of Lem E. James Adams to wit.

N.E. ¼	3 N. 6 W			
S.W. ¼	5 N. 8 W			2.61
N.W. 22	6 N. 7 W	sold June 5	J. G. Johnson	2.65
E½	18. 6 N. 7 W			4.22
S.W. ¼	6 N. 7 W		A. Johnson	2.65
N.W. 29	6 N. 7 W		Sherman	2.65
S.W. 34	6 N. 7 W		J. J. Charles	2.65
S.E. 28	6 N. 7 W		C. Robison	2.65
N.W. 33	6 N. 7 W		J. J. Charles	2.65
S.E. 14	6 N. 7 W.		J. B. Backenstos	2.65

being 1760 acres @ $2. pr acre — 3520.—
Gave Warranty Deed. & have ½ of pres. share in the Boat as part payment

Figure 13. Trustees Land Book B, page 19, May–June 1843. Church History Library; Joseph Smith Papers image. The crossed-through lower entry records the Adams tracts, 1,760 acres at $2 per acre, and a boat interest as part payment. It qualifies the apparent gift language of the recorded deed. See note 13.

The 1843 tracts and the collection description

The recorded deed identifies the land as in Hancock County, Illinois, and gives the following subdivisions west of the fourth principal meridian. Acreages are nominal subdivision totals, not a survey or a valuation of title quality.[13]

Subdivision	Section	Township north	Range west	Acres
Northeast quarter	9	3	6	160
Southwest quarter	10	5	8	160
Northwest quarter	22	6	7	160
East half	18	6	7	320
Southwest quarter	9	6	7	160
Northwest quarter	29	6	7	160
Southwest quarter	34	6	7	160
Southeast quarter	28	6	7	160
Northwest quarter	35	6	7	160
Southeast quarter	14	6	7	160
Total				1,760

Suggested catalog description of the original

Original indenture dated 25 November 1841, signed by James Adams and Harriott Adams, conveying to John McFadden Junior the northeast quarter of section 3, township 7 north, range 6 east of the fourth principal meridian, containing 160 acres, for a stated $640. James is identified as a resident of Springfield, Illinois; the acknowledgment was taken at Peoria by Thomas P. Smith, justice of the peace. The paper includes the grantors' signatures and seals, Harriet's separate acknowledgment and relinquishment of dower, and a reverse docket. David Larsen collection.

Executed during the couple's early Latter-day Saint affiliation and five months after James's documented cash contribution to the Nauvoo Temple. No evidence presently links this sale's proceeds to a Church payment. Their later 1843 transfer of other land to Joseph Smith as Church trustee involved commercial consideration as well as devotional language.

Research that could resolve the remaining questions

The next useful records are the Peoria deed-book entry and indexes under Adams and McFadden; estate and executor papers for James and Harriet; Temple Committee receipts and trustee accounts after November 1841; and the Maid of Iowa accounts for the 1843 exchange. The recorded title chain and later sales of each tract could clarify the net value transferred. A baptismal record or contemporary letter would be needed to fix the couple's conversion dates more precisely.

Sources and research notes

Numbers in the text identify the notes below. Joseph Smith Papers citations refer to facsimiles, transcriptions, and editorial annotation at josephsmithpapers.org. Links are active in the electronic editions. Primary documents are distinguished from modern editorial conclusions and later recollections. Sources checked for this revision on 4 October 2026; specific exceptions are stated.

1 The introduction and the beginning of the relationship

James Adams, letter of introduction to Martin Van Buren, 9 November 1839, Library of Congress; Joseph Smith Papers, facsimile, transcript, and historical introduction. The introduction supplies the Springfield visit and the circumstances of Adams's advocacy. The original letter is the controlling evidence for his appeal.

Letter of 9 November 1839

2 James before and after conversion

Joseph Smith Papers, "Adams, James," biographical directory. Used for birth, early career, Springfield residence, Church affiliation by 1840, high-priest ordination, university appointment, Masonic offices, and death. Dates of probate service vary in later summaries; the narrative does not force them into a false single chronology.

James Adams biography

3 The original 1841 deed

David Larsen collection, James Adams and Harriott Adams to John McFadden Junior, 25 November 1841. Photographs IMG_3274 through IMG_3277. Read directly for this edition. The buyer is McFadden, not Mitchell; the acknowledgment is Peoria, not Springfield. This is a photographic examination, not physical authentication of the paper or ink.

4 Harriet and the April journey

James Adams to Joseph Smith, 27 April 1843, Joseph Smith Papers. Footnote 1 identifies Harriet's birthplace, parents, children, and 5 October 1841 patriarchal blessing, citing Patriarchal Blessings, 4:58–59. Her baptism before that blessing is an editorial inference. The original blessing was not independently examined for this revision.

Letter of 27 April 1843

5 The definite temple gift

Lyman Wight and Henry W. Miller, receipt to James Adams, Springfield, 16 June 1841, Newel K. Whitney Papers, Brigham Young University. The wording specifies $10 cash for building the Lord's house in Nauvoo.

Receipt of 16 June 1841

6 Patriarchal license

License for James Adams, 18 July 1841, extract, Joseph Smith Papers. The certification says he had been received as a member and ordained a patriarch that day. This is a dated documentary anchor rather than a later estimate of the ordination year.

License of 18 July 1841

7 Springfield leadership

Abraham C. Hodge and Springfield, Illinois, branch to Joseph Smith, 25 January 1842, Joseph Smith Papers. The letter records the branch's selection of Adams as president. The narrative explains the office as congregational leadership without inventing a record of his daily administration.

Springfield branch letter

8 The first Nauvoo endowment

Joseph Smith journal, 4–5 May 1842, page 94, Joseph Smith Papers. The entry lists James among the participants and records his departure for Springfield on 5 May. Annotation identifies the 4 May instruction with the first Nauvoo endowment. This occurred before completion of the temple.

Journal for 4–5 May 1842

9 Council of Fifty chronology

Joseph Smith Papers, “Council of Fifty” topic and Administrative Records introduction: formal organization on 11 March 1844. James’s death on 11 August 1843 excludes membership. The Anointed Quorum and Council of Fifty were distinct bodies.

Council of Fifty

10 The fatherly salutation and legal advice

James Adams to Joseph Smith, 17 December 1842, Joseph Smith Papers. “My Son” and the advice to seek a discharge by habeas corpus are in the contemporary letter. The narrative’s interpretation of fatherly friendship rests principally on these words and the documented acts of assistance.

Letter of 17 December 1842

11 Hospitality, financial security, and the legal outcome

Joseph Smith Papers, Petition to Thomas Ford, 31 December 1842, historical introduction; Joseph Smith journal, 31 December 1842, book 1, page 23, note 70; and Introduction to Extradition of JS for Accessory to Assault. These document lodging at Adams’s home, Adams and Wilson Law as sureties for $2,000 each, and Pope’s 5 January discharge. The bond was a legal obligation, not a documented cash donation.

Springfield lodging • Journal and sureties • Extradition case

12 The May sealing

Joseph Smith journal, 28 May 1843, book 2, page [225], Joseph Smith Papers, especially note 457. Taylor shorthand reads “were married.” The editors infer eternal marriage of Joseph and Emma and of James and Harriet from the surrounding evidence. No fuller contemporary account is known; this edition therefore says “evidently sealed.”

Journal for 28 May 1843

13 The land deed and the boat consideration

James and Harriet Denton Adams to Joseph Smith, 29 May 1843, recorded 12 June 1843, Hancock County Deed Record L, 261–262; Trustees Land Book B, 19; and Joseph Smith Papers, “Introduction to Steamboat Maid of Iowa.” The ledger’s Adams entry is crossed through. Its stated acreage and boat consideration require qualification of an outright-gift interpretation; they do not alone prove final settlement.

Recorded deed • Land book page 19 • Maid of Iowa introduction

14 Jane Walker and the June letter

James Adams to Joseph Smith, 8 June 1843, Joseph Smith Papers, with historical introduction and notes citing Jane Walker Smith’s later life sketch. The letter documents three dollars for Jane’s travel and proposed transport by Daniel Repsher. Jane later remembered a different escort. The family-loss explanation is retrospective, not a statement in the letter itself.

Letter of 8 June 1843

15 Plural marriage and the private circle

Joseph Smith Papers, Minutes and Discourses, 6–9 October 1843, page 331 and associated annotation; and the historical introduction to Adams’s 27 April 1843 letter, which discusses later evidence concerning the Partridge ceremonies. The report preserves the distinction between contemporary records and later testimony. No view is assigned to Harriet without evidence.

October conference record • April letter and annotation

16 Election and death

Joseph Smith Papers, James Adams biography; journal for 16 August 1843, book 3, page [58], note 105; and annotation to the 28 May journal. These cite the Hancock election returns and “Obituary for Gen. Judge Adams,” Times and Seasons, issue dated 1 August 1843, 4:287. The issue appeared after its nominal date. Contemporary evidence places his death at Nauvoo, despite conflicting later summaries.

Funeral attendance and death annotation

17 The October funeral discourse

Discourse, 9 October 1843, as reported by Willard Richards, page [121]; and Minutes and Discourses, 6–9 October 1843, page 332, Joseph Smith Papers. Joseph attended the August funeral; the surviving funeral sermon was delivered in October. Harriet's attendance the preceding evening may have prompted it, but that causal connection is not certain.

Richards report • Conference record

18 Harriet in the ordinance circle

Joseph Smith journal, 8 October 1843, book 3, page [120], note 235, Joseph Smith Papers. The names and ordinance wording are struck through but recoverable in the expanded transcript. The editors identify "Sis—Adams" as Harriet Denton Adams. The record supports her personal participation after James's death.

Journal for 8 October 1843

19 Harriet's death

John Carroll Power and S. A. Power, History of the Early Settlers of Sangamon County, Illinois (1876), Adams family entry, page 76, consulted through the ILGenWeb transcription. It gives Harriet's death as 21 August 1844 at Springfield. The entry also contains conflicting birthplace and James death-place details, for which the closer documentary evidence in notes 2, 4, and 16 is preferred. A contemporary notice of Harriet's death remains a useful follow-up.

1876 Adams family entry

20 The additional paper contributions

Donations from James Smith and Other Illinois Saints, circa June 1841, page 3, Joseph Smith Papers. "Judge Adams" is strongly identifiable as James; $16 on Stringham and $8 on Gladden Bishop are face amounts. The $10 cash entry appears to be the same payment documented by the separate receipt. No collection of the paper at face value is established here.

Contribution list

21 A contested public reputation

Papers of Abraham Lincoln, "Adams, James," biographical directory and its references to the 1837 controversy. Used to acknowledge the property dispute and political setting, not to treat allegations as adjudicated facts. Its place-of-death statement conflicts with the contemporary Nauvoo evidence preferred in note 16.

Papers of Abraham Lincoln biography

22 Missouri, Quincy, and Nauvoo

Joseph Smith's 1839 history and correspondence, contextualized in the Joseph Smith Papers' introduction to Documents, Volume 7, and the November 1839 letter of introduction. Quincy is included as the Saints' place of refuge; this edition makes no claim that James joined the Church or maintained his principal residence there.

Documents Volume 7 introduction

Illustration credits and editorial record

Figures 1–4. Original deed photographs IMG_3274–IMG_3277, David Larsen collection. Supplied photographs, rotated where needed; Figure 1 cropped at outer photographic margins. No handwriting has been reconstructed or retouched.

Figure 5. Henry Lewis, Quincy, Illinois, 1854–1858, lithograph published by Arnz & Co., Düsseldorf. Saint Louis Art Museum, museum purchase, 147:1949. Collection record identifies the image as public domain.

Figure 6. James Adams letter of introduction, 9 November 1839. Library of Congress, Washington, DC; digital facsimile through the Joseph Smith Papers.

Figure 7. Historic American Buildings Survey, Old State House, Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois, sheet 1 of 7; Clark W. Bullard, delineator. Library of Congress, HABS ILL,84-SPRIF,1-. Documentation compiled after 1933. Public-domain federal survey drawing; obtained through Wikimedia Commons.

Figures 8 and 12. Newel K. Whitney Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; digital facsimiles through the Joseph Smith Papers. Figure 12 retained from the source project PDF.

Figure 9. Red Brick Store photograph attributed to B. H. Roberts, circa 1886. Church History Library, Salt Lake City; Joseph Smith Papers, Nauvoo Store historical material.

Figure 10. James Adams letter, 17 December 1842. Church History Library; digital facsimile through the Joseph Smith Papers.

Figure 11. Henry Lewis, Nauvoe, Illinois, 1854–1858, lithograph published by Arnz & Co., Düsseldorf. Saint Louis Art Museum, museum purchase, 143:1949. Collection record identifies the image as public domain.

Figure 13. Trustees Land Book B, page 19. Church History Library; digital facsimile through the Joseph Smith Papers.

Collection and image records: Quincy • Nauvoo • State House survey

Changes from the earlier project

This edition replaces the earlier summary with an illustrated narrative, adds the original deed and full reading transcription, and corrects the purchaser’s name, the place of acknowledgment, Harriet’s birthplace, the Jane Walker household episode, and the interpretation of the 1843 land transfer. It separates the Anointed Quorum from the later Council of Fifty and corrects the chronology of the October sermon and Harriet’s survival into the succession period.

No portrait is assigned to either spouse without secure identification. Historical city views are dated as later representations. The narrative uses documented events and quotations; it does not invent dialogue, private thoughts, or an eyewitness scene.