



Early Seal of the Church



Community of Christ
Historic Sites Foundation

Name: _____

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In the 1870's, two RLDS missionaries on their way to Australia found themselves in Tahiti. While waiting for repairs to be made to their ship, they stumbled upon a local member who led them to a thriving congregation of our church known as "Tiona," from the Tahitian word for "Zion."

The missionaries took their seats on a long pew made from the center rip of a coconut frond as the chapel filled with worshippers. It was then that the congregation began to sing in Tahitian the historic hymn, "The Spirit of God, Like a Fire is Burning." The missionaries recognized the beloved hymn written for the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. Rejoicing to have discovered an early congregation of the church, the missionaries baptized fifty-one members in the nearby lagoon before continuing on to Australia.

When the news from Tahiti reached the church community in North America, the excitement was contagious. Soon after, the first official church seal was introduced and its designer included a palm tree to represent the church presence in French Polynesia. The palm tree tradition continued in the 1891 seal, as shown on the reverse side.