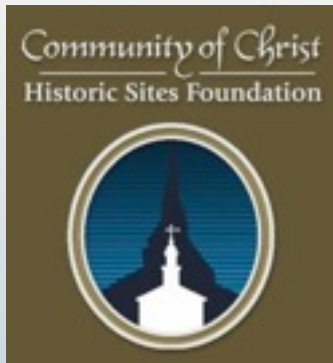


# THE FORUM

**On Board**  
Kent Brooner  
joins foundation.  
See Page 3.



*Preserving & Sharing  
Church Heritage*

## To Make a Donation

Preserving and sharing church heritage and telling the sacred story is both a privilege and a responsibility.

To give to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, call (217) 453-2246.

An alternative is to send donations to P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354. You also can give at [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org).

## On the Web

To stay up to date with foundation events, view striking photos, and learn contact information, visit [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org).

## Electronic Forum

If you want The Forum electronically, visit [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org).

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## Mansion House Restoration

*Replicas of the original rain collectors on the Mansion House at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois, were crafted and installed in the summer season.*

## Faith, Love Blossom during Internships

By Greg Clark

When Nathan and Kari interned at the Kirtland Temple in the summer of 2001, they had an idea of what they wanted.

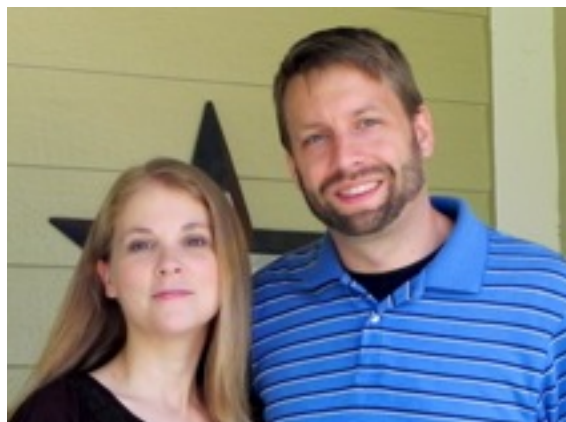
Kari yearned to strengthen connections with nearby family members, learn more about the church, and draw closer to God. Nathan, who had interned the sum-

mer before at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois, wished to broaden that experience, make friends with

other interns, and develop skills, such as public speaking.

Neither was focused on romance. But by the end of the summer they had begun heading down a path that led them to the altar in 2003, hearing the words, "Mr. and Mrs. Twombly."

The internships also served



*See Twomblys  
on Page 7*

# When History, Heritage Become Personal



From left, John Garver, Israel A. Smith, and F. Henry Edwards at one time formed the church's Presidency.

By Tom Morain

From his conversion as a 19-year-old farmhand in southwest Iowa through his appointment as a counselor to President Israel A. Smith four decades later, John Garver saw the RLDS church as the center of his life. In 1908, he began a diary to chronicle his first assignment as counselor to the Lamoni Stake president.

I took a personal interest in the diaries because John Garver is my grandfather, and because I am a historian by profession. The entries provide a first-hand account of family history, social history, and church history, three of my favorite subjects. But his accounts of encounters with Divinity—prophecies, revelations, divine healings—were what captured my attention. Did they really happen the way he described?



Tom Morain

One episode in particular became a test case of how a historian must deal with that question. After preaching in a small congregation many miles from Lamoni, Garver was asked by the pastor to stay to consider some priesthood calls. It was in January, and the weather was bad.

A local member loaned him a horse, and by late afternoon he reached his in-laws' farm a couple of miles west of town. By that time, the horse was sick, "in dreadful agony," and lay down in a

barn stall while two men went to town for some medicine. Garver, nearly penniless, feared the horse, valued at about \$200, would die before they returned. He wrote in his diary:

I went down on my knees in the stall next to the horse, presented the situation to God, pled for his help and a manifestation of his divine power in behalf of the needs of his children. Shortly after I arose, the horse also arose, shook himself, began chopping at the hay before him, and when the men returned, they were surprised to see him improved. The medicine was given, and I remained with the horse until 12:15,

*See Morain on Page 8*

# Family, Church, Heritage



By Greg Clark

For Kent Brooner, it's all about family, church, and heritage.

It's clear when he talks about his grandchildren. It's clear when he talks about his church. It's even clear when he talks about his construction company.

So when he agreed to become one of several new board members for the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, it was easy to see what kind of values he carried.

Besides owning his company, he has exhibited leadership in several other venues. He served as an assistant pastor for 25 years. He's served with an agribusiness facility in his hometown of St. Joseph, Missouri. And he's on the board of InterServ, which provides multiple programs for children through senior adults. In addition he's been part of mission center leadership.

That's a lot. So does he have time to add historic sites to his plate?

"It was a concern about being spread too thin. But [Board President] Jeff [Naylor] shared about the number of meetings and what time and involvement might be needed," Kent said.

He thought he could manage it, and he received assurance from Board Member Mary Lou Piepergerdes and Lach Mackay, director of

the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois.

"He was very receptive and excited," Mary Lou said. "He was a longtime friend of mine. I think he is a very good person to have on our team, especially with his background."

Kent, 56, found the prospect of serving on the board intriguing for several reasons.

"With every conversation it sounded more interesting. The older I get the more interested I get in history."

He sees his vocation—he's a second-generation construction company owner and third-generation carpenter—as a plus that can give him insights when dealing with properties that date from the 1800s. Those other qualities did not go unnoticed by other board members and people like Barbara Walden, executive director of the foundation.

"The foundation is incredibly fortunate to welcome Kent to the board of directors," Walden said. "Kent's knowledge and years of experience in construction, engineering, and working with contractors will be a significant asset."

That's not his only attribute. When board members began searching for candidates, Tom Morain quickly identified the type of person needed: "We need people

who have an understanding of the culture of the sponsoring church, and an appreciation for it."

Kent easily meets those criteria.

"Kent's genuine interest in church history and the historic sites makes him a perfect fit with his fellow board members," Barbara added. "In the limited time I have had with Kent, I can already see that he will contribute much to the maintenance and preservation of the historic sites."

That brings us back to the church heritage that is so important to Kent.

"By being a member of the church I've obviously known of the sites of Kirtland, Nauvoo, and Plano, and through church school classes and extra reading have known of the Saints' struggles and historical significance. It's very important. If we don't place importance on our history, we lose the importance of our future."

But Kent can't spend all his time with his construction company, his church, or the historic sites. So what does he do for leisure?

"Play with the three grandkids and family activities. My wife is an elementary school teacher, and we have three children, all in the St. Joseph area."

## “Gang” Members Find Niche as Nauvoo Volunteers

By Greg Clark

Just call Waneta Pope a “gang” ringleader.

With a little assistance she led her gang—husband, Russ; her brother, J.R. Sutton; and his wife, Judith Sutton—into a month of adventure, surprises, and opportunity.

So what did she do? She persuaded her gang to volunteer all April at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois. Not that there weren’t a few reservations. Just listen to Russ.

“We were touring the northeast USA [in 2013], and we ran into Lach [Mackay, director of the historic site].”

Lach brought up the topic of volunteering. “I was kind of saying, ‘I’m not too sure,’ Russ said. “But Waneta kept indicating through the fall and winter that she’d like to do this. “Then she called her brother. He said, ‘Yeah.’ Judith said, ‘I don’t know.’”

“But we all came, and we all had a good time. I’ve learned so much and been so involved. Sitting on the Mississippi has been quite a deal.”

J.R. and Judith, from Appleton City, Missouri, also had some initial reservations.

“After we retired, we thought about [volunteering], but we had some health issues, so we were dragging our feet,” J.R. said.

Here’s where that “little assistance” came into play. At a winter reunion, the Suttons ran across longtime volunteer Glenna Van Buskirk and Barbara Walden, executive director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation. They helped sell the idea.

“And my little sister (Waneta) had showed interest, so it seemed like they kind of ganged up on



*The Suttons (left) and Popes enjoyed volunteering.*

me,” J.R. said. “It was time...We decided we’d give it a shot for at least a month.

“Nauvoo has always interested me because of being on the Mis-

### Value in Volunteering

Serving as a volunteer at properties supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation is rewarding, essential, and uplifting. Listen to what the volunteers say:

“There’s a tremendous amount of expense to keep places like this operating and open to the public,” J.R. Sutton said. “The volunteer program cuts down the expense, and volunteers do a good job of representing the purpose.”

Added Russ Pope: “When you volunteer for something, you put yourself into it. You gain a lot by helping out. It is really important. I hope young people continue to do this.”

For more information, contact Lach Mackay at [lmackay@CofChrist.org](mailto:lmackay@CofChrist.org) or (217) 453-2246.

issippi River, and it was an interesting and novel time. I figured this was one way to get some information and live it at the same time. A way to be on the peninsula, see the homes, and get involved in activities.”

The two Suttons went to Nauvoo with the expectation of serving primarily by performing maintenance work. What they found was something different, a delightful surprise.

“I came along to do the dishes, laundry, and cook, and I didn’t know about all this other stuff,” Judith said.

The “other stuff” stemmed from Lach’s belief that “it would be helpful if they learned the history as well since they sometimes get questions from visitors while on the grounds. They were willing to give it a go.”

The result: “I really enjoyed it,” Judith said. “I was a little nervous until we went out the door, and then everything was good. “I’ve always enjoyed learning about my roots. I’d just never done a whole community thing before.”

But why did Waneta, who lives in Sun Lakes, Arizona, pull this gang together?

“I just thought I would really enjoy it, and it would be doing a service for my church,” she said. “It’s been fun.

“I love people and building relationships, so this was a really good opportunity. We took two weeks to get trained. Lach taught us not only how to tour guide, but also about church history. I was scared at first to go out on my own, afraid I wouldn’t be able to answer questions. But it’s been very fun.”

## Youth Lend a Hand

The Mississippi River has a long history of overflowing its banks. Every time it happens, leaders of the Joseph Smith Historic Site cringe.

Rising waters mean rising worries about protecting historic properties.

This year, when the waters rose in July, help came from the Midlands USA

Mission Center. Youth from the mission center were enjoying a summer trip to historic sites. When they arrived in Nauvoo, they helped fill sandbags, a task proba-



bly not on their list of expectations for the visit.

They placed the sandbags near the historic Nauvoo House, easing concerns.

Within a few days the river waters receded without harming any properties. The Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation greatly appreciates their help.

## Ron Romig Receives Lifetime Award

It was fitting and oh so well deserved. Ron Romig, former Community of Christ archivist and current site director of the Kirtland Temple, recently received the Leonard J. Arrington Lifetime Achievement Award.

The presentation was made June 6 in San Antonio, Texas during the annual conference of the Mormon History Association.

For members of the Latter Day Saint history community, the award is among the highest given to a historian. Of 26 recipients, only one other Community of Christ member has received it: Dick Howard in 1989.

After leaving as Community of Christ archivist several years ago, Romig, who will retire at the end of this year, became site director of the Kirtland Temple. His acceptance of that role marked a return to his boyhood home.



*An actor portraying former President Abe Lincoln greeted Joseph Smith Jr. at Nauvoo in July.*



## Getting Ready to Deck Liberty Hall Again

Mere mention of it elicits pleasant memories of seasonal sights, sounds, and smells. The traditional Christmas Tea at Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa, has that kind of power.

This year's event will run from 2:00-4:00 p.m. December 7. Planned entertainers include Ceaseless Praise, Bryce Wilson, the Bloomington Bell Choir, the Mount Ayr Restoration singers, and The Lamoni Community of Christ Congregation.

Of course, the event wouldn't be complete without beautiful decorations and yummy snacks.

As seen in the pictures on this page from last year's event, the Christmas Tea promises a wonderful time. Come see for yourself!



# Twomblys

Continued from Page 6

as steppingstones to professional careers, deeper faiths, and commitments to supporting the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation financially.

In their 30s, the Twomblys now live in Blue Springs, Missouri, with their two children. She's a seventh-grade math teacher, and he's in software development.

Both were college students—Nathan at Graceland University and Kari at Central Missouri State—the summer they interned together. They didn't really connect until late in their time together at Kirtland.

"Everyone says when you let go and stop worrying about finding someone, God drops them in your lap," Kari said.

After returning to their schools, they spent a lot of time on the phone and met at least once a month in Independence, Missouri. Both credit their intern experiences with helping them grow. Kari now is a priest, and Nathan is an elder.

"I loved the big bus tours with 50–100 kids and answering questions," Kari said. "At first it was a little nerve-wracking...But it made me stronger. I was able to deepen my faith and convictions and stand firm on what we believe. It connected me more with my church past and family past."

The internship also bolstered Nathan's faith. "A lot of testimonies I give in sermons come from those experiences."

Barbara Walden, executive director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, wasn't surprised to hear about the Twomblys' professional success.

"Personal experiences at the historic sites play a significant



role in leadership development in a variety of career fields from public education to architectural engineering," Walden said. "The impact of church heritage continues to be felt long after the visitor departs the historic site."

Nathan said the importance of church heritage can't be overstated.

"The stories just aren't being told," he said. "People connect with the church on different levels, some connect with history,

and that's part of the foundation. So I think a lot of people look at it with new eyes."

But it's one thing to feel passionate about the past. It's quite another to support it financially, especially when you're establishing a family with two young kids. So why do the Twomblys donate to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation?

"You spend money on what you value," Nathan said. "There's a sense of pride that our church has made it a first-class historic experience. The foundation has some good people working for it, and they're doing the right things."

Added Kari, who also interned in 2002 at the Temple in Independence: "There are so many people who don't know the history. We want to help make sure they can get there and that it's still there."

Walden talked about the importance of generosity for maintaining and showing the sites.

"The needs are great, and we need to respond with even greater generosity. Many of our generous supporters are taking advantage of the automatic monthly giving service available on our website ([www.historicsitesfoundation.org](http://www.historicsitesfoundation.org)). The electronic gifts make preserving the sites 'hassle-free' for people who lead busy lives AND care passionately about supporting young-adult internships and preserving church heritage for future generations."

For example, she said a gift of \$26.50 a month for 12 months will support a summer intern for a full week at the Kirtland Temple.

Kari said the internships were invaluable for her and Nathan.

"The experience meant a lot to us. We hope to go back when we retire and volunteer then. We want the historic sites to live on and other people to experience what we've experienced."

## How to Help

To donate to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, call (217) 453-2246, visit [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org), or send mail to P.O. Box 3308, Nauvoo, IL 62354.

## Become an Intern, Fellow, Volunteer

To learn more about internships, fellowships, or volunteering at a Community of Christ historic site, please call Lachlan Mackay at (217) 453-2246 or send an e-mail to [LMackay@CofChrist.org](mailto:LMackay@CofChrist.org).

## **Make a Donation, Aid Preservation**

*Preserving and sharing church heritage and telling the sacred story of our journey is a privilege and a responsibility.*

*To help the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation fulfill that mission, call (217) 453-2246 to make a donation.*

*Another alternative is to send donations to P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354.*

*You also can donate at [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org).*

## **Volunteers Needed**

*To volunteer at a historic site supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, call Lachlan Mackay at (217) 453-2246 or e-mail him at [lmackay@CofChrist.org](mailto:lmackay@CofChrist.org).*

## **Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation**

P.O. Box 338  
Nauvoo, IL 62354

## **Morain**

*Continued from Page 2*

when I left him and went home to bed.

I read and reread the passage until I almost knew it by memory. How, I wondered, do I deal with that information honestly as a historian, asking questions I would ask if the source were not my grandfather or another revered church figure?

What really happened? Was the horse really sick or just winded with a sore throat? Did it really just get up after Garver prayed for it? Can I simply take the word of one who so much wanted to believe in himself as a young minister, eager to confirm his worthiness as an appointee? Above all, what does historical objectivity

mean when God is given a role in the plot?

As I pondered, new thoughts began to emerge, new questions, new angles. Is the important issue whether the horse was sick? Does the answer to that tell me anything important about John Garver or anything else? I came to accept that the tools of the historian cannot validate or invalidate Garver's account. As a historian, I shall never know what really happened in that horse stall three miles northwest of Lamoni on January 21, 1909.

I came to understand the historian does not ever see God directly in history but only second-hand through the accounts of people who claim to have experienced God directly. The historian always sees "through the glass darkly."

So is there a value in history? Absolutely. History can tell us what impact that event had on the life of John Garver. It also becomes a springboard to the creative frustration of contemplation.

For me, the essence of the Restoration is that God does play a role in human history and is engaged in creating the world meant to be. But how? For me, the essence of the Restoration is that the individual can have a personal relationship with the Creator of the universe. Can that happen in my life? Will it happen? How?

History teaches us to ask better questions. While I will never know for certain what I would have observed and understood had I been in that stall with Grandpa and the horse, I do know my faith has been enriched because I have taken the time to wonder.