

Church to Restore Site of Priesthood Restoration

The First Presidency has announced plans to restore a historic site formerly known as Harmony (near present-day Susquehanna), Pennsylvania, USA, where the Prophet Joseph Smith translated much of the Book of Mormon and where John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood in 1829.

The project will include construction of historic buildings and the farm setting at Harmony as well as monuments commemorating the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods in 1829. The groundbreaking is expected to take place in 2012, and the project is estimated to take two years to complete.

Harmony, Pennsylvania, was the site where Joseph Smith translated much of the Book of Mormon between 1827 and 1830. There the prophet received 15 of the earliest revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants.

At the same site, as recorded in Joseph Smith—History 1:66–75, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist in 1829. Peter, James, and John conferred

the Melchizedek Priesthood upon them at a location nearby a short time later.

Mark Staker, senior researcher in the historic sites group of the Church History Department, said that the department has already begun archeological research to identify the location of some of the original buildings in the area.

“We are looking to restore the home where Joseph and Emma lived in Harmony as well as the birthplace of Emma Smith and her family home,” he said.

A sculpture of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery receiving the Aaronic Priesthood already exists on the 90-acre (36 ha) site. Plans for new monuments are being designed. There are also plans to construct a visitors’ center at the site.

Church leaders have invited members who are interested to make a small, one-time contribution to the project. This can be done by specifying “Priesthood Restoration Site” in the “Other” category on the tithing slip that is available from bishops and branch presidents. ■



A 90-acre (36 ha) site in Pennsylvania is being restored to commemorate the restoration of the priesthood and the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Maintaining Church History around the World

Several Church departments work with historians, architects, archaeologists, lawyers, artisans, contractors, and groundskeepers to preserve places of historical significance around the Church. These places fall into three categories:

Historic sites are places where events of great significance to Church history occurred, such as the Joseph Smith farm or historic Kirtland. About two dozen historic sites dot the United States, with one site outside the United States—Worcestershire’s Gadfield Elm Chapel, the first chapel of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in England.

Historic landmarks, of which there are about four dozen, comprise temples, tabernacles, and meetinghouses that are distinctive in architectural or aesthetic value.

Finally, because not every important site can be restored, **historic markers**—more than 100 of them—identify other places the Church desires to preserve in the hearts and minds of Latter-day Saints. Markers can also designate areas (such as the Far West Temple site) where there is not enough information to restore the site accurately. There are dozens of international historic markers.