

Small & Simple Things

“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).

GREAT LIVES REMEMBERED

Newel K. Whitney (1795–1850)

Below, left inset: An engraved portrait of Newel K. Whitney. Below, right inset: The upstairs of the Newel K. Whitney store in Kirtland, Ohio, where the School of the Prophets and Church meetings were held. Bottom: The Whitney store.

Newel Kimball Whitney was born in Vermont, USA, on February 5, 1795. He was a talented businessman and started up a friendship and business partnership with Sidney Gilbert. In their early business days, they traveled frequently. On one of these business trips, Newel met Elizabeth Ann Smith in Kirtland, Ohio. Newel and Ann courted for three years and married in 1823.

Together Newel and Ann sought for truth and, for a time, took part in the Campbellite movement, which professed to have restored ancient Christianity. One night Newel and Ann prayed “to know from the Lord

how [they] could obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Ann described the vision they received in answer to their prayer: “The Spirit rested upon us and a cloud overshadowed the house. . . . Then we heard a voice out of the cloud, saying: ‘Prepare to receive the word of the Lord, for it is coming.’”¹

Shortly after this answer to prayer, in October 1830, Latter-day Saint missionaries came to Kirtland. In November, Newel and Ann were baptized. Only months later, Joseph and Emma Smith came knocking on the Whitneys’ door. When Joseph greeted Newel

by name, Newel couldn’t say he knew the Prophet’s name, so Joseph responded, “I am Joseph the Prophet; you have prayed me here, now what do you want of me?”² The Whitneys then housed the Smiths for several weeks and provided a home for them in September 1832.

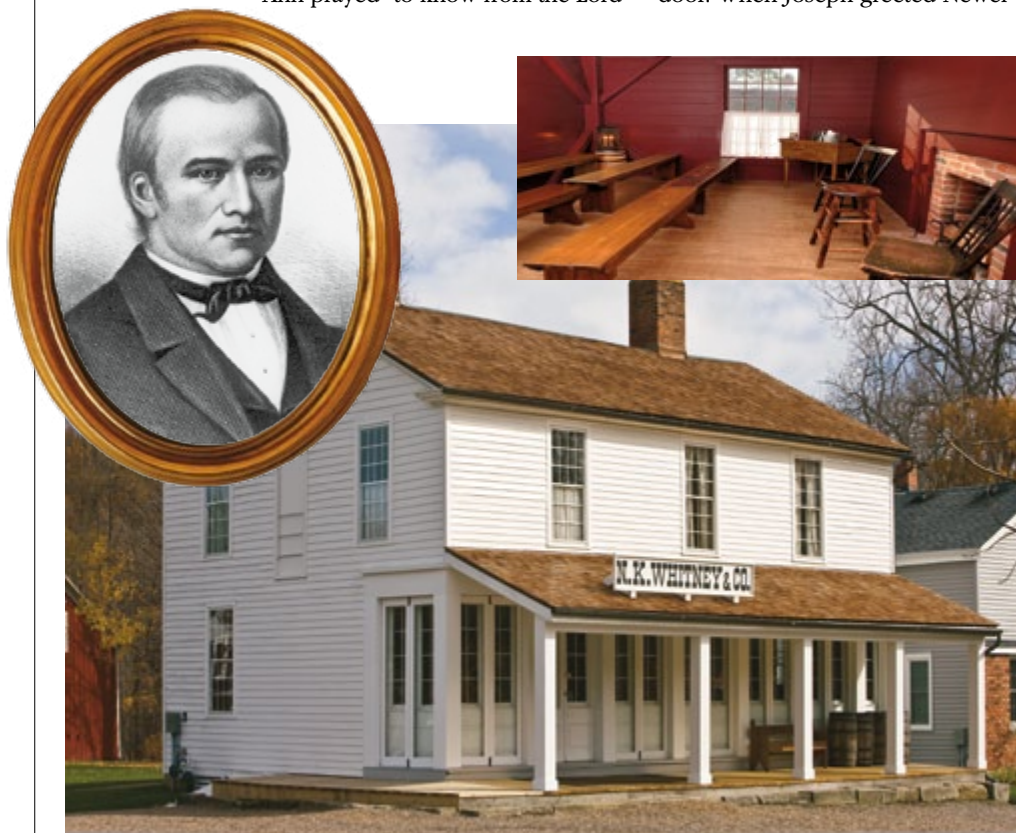
In addition to providing the Smiths a place to stay, Newel also gave the Church full use of the upstairs space in his store. At the Whitney store, Church leaders held meetings and the School of the Prophets.

In December 1831, Newel was called as the second bishop of the Church and later served as the manager of financial operations of the Church, helping the Church manage its funds and get out of debt. In the fall of 1838, the Whitneys moved to Far West, Missouri, where Newel was again called as bishop, and 10 years later, he and his family crossed the plains to Salt Lake City, where he served as Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Newel died on September 24, 1850, in Salt Lake City from a respiratory condition.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, quoted in Edward Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (1877), 41–42.
2. Joseph Smith, quoted in Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “A Leaf from an Autobiography,” *Woman’s Exponent*, Aug. 15, 1878, 51.



Dan Jones (1810–62)

More than one million missionaries have been called since the organization of the Church, but Dan Jones was more than just one in a million. Of the Welsh missionary, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, “In terms of the number of converts, Dan Jones must certainly be included in the half dozen or so most productive missionaries in the history of the Church.”¹

Before he was a missionary, Dan emigrated from Wales to the United States and worked on the Mississippi River as captain of a steamboat called the *Maid of Iowa*, which brought many Latter-day Saints to Nauvoo, Illinois. He joined the Church in 1843 and became close friends with the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Dan’s missions fulfilled Joseph Smith’s last recorded prophecy. The night before the Prophet Joseph Smith was killed, he heard gunfire outside the window of Carthage Jail, so he chose to sleep on the floor. Near him was Dan Jones. The Prophet asked Dan if he was afraid to die. He replied, “Has that time come, think you? Engaged in such a cause I do not think that death

would have many terrors.” Then Joseph prophesied, “You will yet see Wales, and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die.”²

The Prophet’s promise was fulfilled in 1845, when Dan and his wife, Jane, were called to serve in Wales. Dan used his talent for speaking to teach the gospel with great conviction. He was fluent in Welsh and English, and witnesses recorded that he spoke so captivately that he could hold his audience’s attention in either language for hours.

While in Wales, Dan published Latter-day Saint periodicals, tracts, and books in Welsh. Under Dan Jones’s direction, missionaries in Wales established 29 branches and baptized nearly 1,000 people each year of his first mission. He was

called on a second mission to Wales in 1852, and despite growing persecution of the Church, some 2,000 people were baptized in four years.

Upon his return to Utah, Dan helped bring many Welsh converts to Utah. When he died at age 51, he had helped bring an estimated 5,000 people to the western United States.

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Thing of Most Worth,” *Tambuli*, Mar. 1994, 8; *Ensign*, Sept. 1993, 7.
2. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:601.



From left: Portrait of the Welsh missionary Dan Jones. A steamboat, like the one Dan Jones captained, approaches the landing at Nauvoo, Illinois. Dan Jones helps Welsh emigrants.