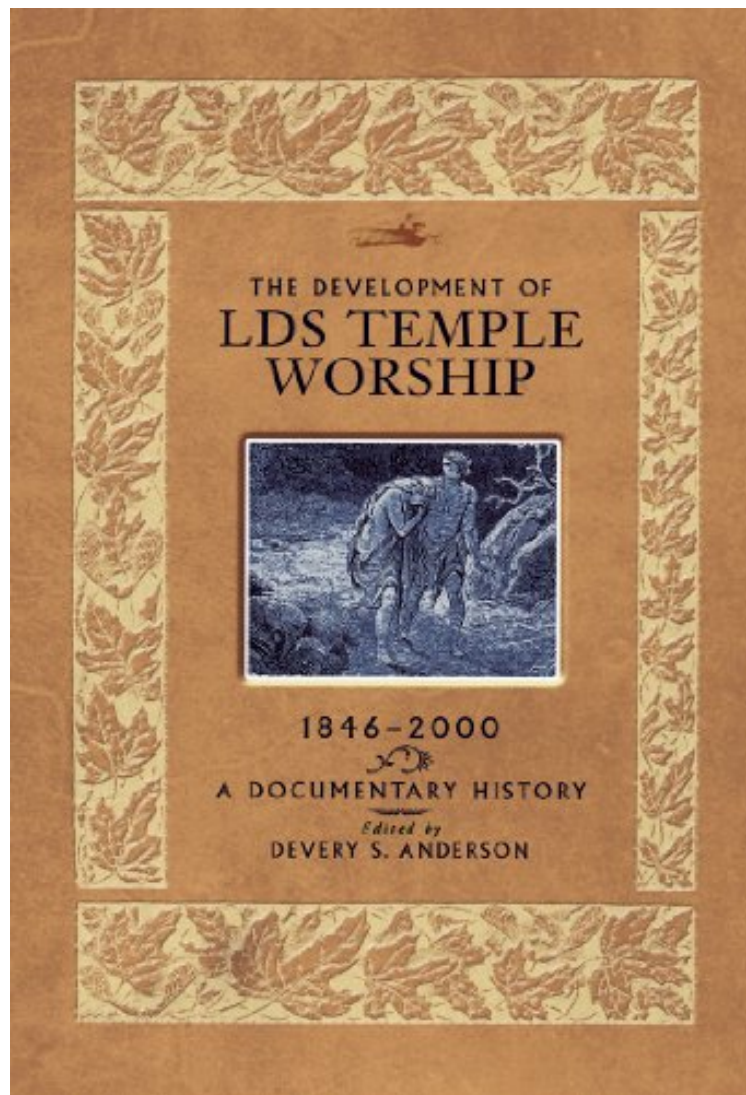


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## Development of LDS Temple Worship, 1846-2000: A Documentary History

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Over the years, the LDS Church has struggled with how best to convey information about the temple to its members. We recommend that a definition be given in the temple of the symbolism and significance of the various marks in the garment, a committee of apostles wrote to the First Presidency in 1936. We are very concerned that our people [who are] going to the temple for the first time have a better introduction to the temple, said Apostle Mark E. Petersen to regional representatives in 1969. In that spirit, historian Devery S. Anderson has brought together a comprehensive collection of official documents on temple ceremonies, limited only by what would be inappropriate to discuss publicly. The documents include rulings by the First Presidency on changes to the ceremonies, letters to temple and stake presidents and bishops reminding them of temple policies, minutes of Quorum of the Twelve meetings, excerpts from sermons and Church publications, and commentary by apostles and temple presidents in diaries, letters, oral histories, and temple scrapbooks. Yes, the temple ceremonies have changed since their inception in Nauvoo in the 1840s. The liturgy was originally conveyed as a memorized, oral tradition, then in 1877 the leadership committed it to writing to guarantee consistency among several temples and facilitate changes they wanted to make at that time. This was repeated in 1922 when George F. Richards and a committee of apostles was charged with reviewing and rewriting the ceremonies again in the 1950s when the dramatic presentation was replaced with a motion picture and the script was shortened. One comes away from these documents with a better understanding of what constitutes the essence of the temple and what, by contrast, is malleable: staging, costumes, wording of the dramatic portions, and practical details such as whether marriage proxies should kiss across the altar.

From the Inside Flap from the jacket flap: Originally, in the Nauvoo temple and Utahs Endowment House, people dressed for the temple in a long white nightshirt or nightgown that extended below the knee. At a veil representing heaven, the participants underclothing was marked, this being the crowning act of the ceremony. There was a logic to this sequence in that one promised to live a moral life and then received the marks to remind him or her of the promises made, versus the sequence today whereby an initiate puts on pre-marked underclothes at the beginning of the endowment ceremony in a washing room. In a related departure, the nightshirt used to be marked along with the underwear as a nod to modesty. Brigham Young gave instructions on this in 1869 when he took the scissors soon made the marks, saying that even if the shirt was colored[,] mark it [I]f [there is] flannel or buckskin between [the] shirt garment[,] that also should be marked. Twenty-five years later, a new First Presidency decided that whereas it has been the practice to mark the shirt, we think this unnecessary as it is not strictly a part of the Temple clothing. The marking of the garment should be done in the washing room and not at the veil; and the greatest care should be taken to see that no person is permitted to leave that room wearing an unmarked garment. It is the mind of the First Presidency, Church leaders later wrote to the St. George temple president, that you adopt as soon as it can be done conveniently the practice of brethren wearing white pants while doing Temple work. This change would necessarily do away with the long white shirt usually worn by them, and admit of their wearing the regular white shirt, with collar and white tie if they choose to do so. In time, the garment was standardized as a one-piece union suit, although this was not the original design. The garment is [now] like the ordinary union suit, Apostle John A. Widtsoe said in 1934, and much better than the two-piece suits our grandfathers and grandmothers grew up with. When two-piece garments were later re-introduced, the change was met with some resistance, similar to the reaction in 1923 when the garments were shortened to two inches above the ankles and wrists. By 1937, one could purchase unmarked undergarments at ZCMI, and in the temple they were tailored, more or less, according to guidelines issued by Elder George F. Richards that year: When marking the garments, place the garment on the person unmarked, place pins in the marked space, take the garments off[,] and proceed to cut the marks. Some aspects of the ceremony have been altered, the foregoing being only one example of many such refinements. It is instructive to know what has changed and what has not and why, as well as what the process has been. These are issues that are both interesting theologically and of significance on a personal level for those who have been to the temple.