

Behind the Scenes Tour of the Kirtland Temple
From Basement to Bell Tower
By Ron Romig
Reviewed by: Christin Mackay

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Having lived in Kirtland for many years I was excited to read Ron Romig's latest book, *Behind the Scenes Tour of the Kirtland Temple from Basement to Bell Tower*. The text is the actual behind the scenes tour given at the Temple today, even asking you to grab a hard hat and flashlight as you investigate areas of the Temple not included on the standard Temple tour. In the introduction, Barbara Walden, a former Temple Site Director gives a brief explanation of the tour, "Behind the Scenes tours have gone on informally since the Temple's construction, it wasn't until 2006 when a formal public tour was offered. A typical tour of the Temple takes about an hour, the behind the scenes tour lasts anywhere from 2-3 hours exploring the building from Basement to Bell Tower."

There are over 100 interior images of the Temple included in the book from the stone pillars that bear the load of the building to slates from the roof that were removed because they were too heavy. Photos of modern sprinkler heads are included as well as the molds used in making sconces for the Lower Court by handyman and ceramicist Earl Curry.

The Temple has had many caretakers and guides throughout its history, Romig includes an account of Rebecca Dayton who lived across the street from the Temple in the 1870's. She occasionally gave tours of the Temple and became dismayed that Joseph III had asked that the first level of the Melchisedec Pulpits be removed in order for worshippers to have a better view of the floor and seating area of the Elders' pulpit. She wrote to him requesting permission to restore the pulpit and hired a carpenter to reinstall the front of the Elders' pulpit. (15)

The "tour" focuses on the construction of the temple and those who built and maintained the building over the past 178 years. Another interesting moment in history included in the book mentions the Temple cornerstone, "In 1933 the RLDS Church commemorated the laying of the cornerstone...history reports that commemoration leaders opened the cornerstone and found and removed a penny. Today, we do not know where either the cornerstone or penny is located." (23)

The Kirtland Temple bell has rung in the bell tower since 1890. On the "tour" we learn that the bell was not originally cast for the Temple. RLDS Apostle Gomer Griffith helped to raise funds for a Temple bell and, in all \$300 was collected. "As Griffith was traveling in southern Ohio, he stopped at a Cincinnati foundry. The owners told him that a new bell would cost much more than three hundred dollars. They showed him a bell that another church had ordered, then decided not to install. Griffith bought that bell for \$300". (56) The bell was transported to Kirtland to be installed in the Temple bell tower.

Sprinkled throughout *Behind the Scenes Tour of the Kirtland Temple from Basement to Bell Tower* are historical tidbits about the years of maintaining and preserving the Temple from construction to present day. It is a wonderful resource for those interested in the minutia of the materials used to build the Temple.