The Way We Were

Overview: Temple Block: 1100 Block
North side of Mulholland

By 1850 the Mormon Temple had been destroyed by fire and tornado, and the Icarians (1849-1846), who had purchased the vacated block in 1849, were utilizing it as the hub of their experimental, utopian community. (A diagram depicting the location of the Icarian buildings on Temple Block can be seen on the Icarian Interpretive Panel located at the beginning of the Walking Tour.) Never much more than 500 at any given time, the Icarians' social experiment started out with promise, but by 1856, internal dissension caused it to fall apart. By the 1900s, the former Icarian School and a few frame apartment buildings were all that were left of Nauvoo's Icarian community's existence on Temple Block. (Refer to A and D on 1912 Sanborn Map diagram.)

Once the 1860s rolled around, the block saw little economic activity. Over the years that followed, a few local businesses dotted the block, along with a few houses, a hospital, parochial school, and parish hall.

By 1962, the entire block had been purchased by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and Nauvoo Restoration, Inc. (NRI). In 2002, a new Mormon Temple was dedicated.

The building that had served as the Icarian's school and dormitory stood for 121 years, serving the Icarians, Catholics, and Mormons in differing capacities (Approximately one-fourth of the stone used in the Mormon Temple was recycled into this building.)

The Evolution of the Icarian School Building on Temple Block
(See A on diagram, p.2)

1860-1890
Drug Store/Post Office

In 1879 the southwest corner was used as a post office and the southeast room as a drug store. Robert Aitchison operated the drug store and served as postmaster from 1879-1886 and was reappointed in 1889.

1907-1912
Feger's Hospital and Drug Store

Dr. G. W. Feger used the building as a hospital for a few years. Two apartments were in the building, as well. Later, the entire building was used by the Bossler and Knaust families as living quarters.

1918-1961
Former Icarian School as Sts. Peter and Paul's Grade School

Parts of the building were used as a rectory and a business school for at different times.

1962-1972
Former Icarian School as Latter-day Saints (LDS) Visitors Center

Purchased by LDS Church in 1962  Razed: 1972

Drawing by David Alan Rodger

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1912 Sanborn Map of Temple Block

Listing (right) refers to placement on map. Inclusive dates refer to buildings’ usage.

A drawing of what the Mormon Temple looked like after it was damaged by fire (1848) and a tornado (1850). The Icarians utilized the limestone from the ruins in many of their buildings: (A) the Icarian School, (D) the foundations of the Icarian apartment houses and the (H) Icarian Refectory/Dining Hall.

In 2002, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints dedicated the new Nauvoo Temple.
In 1848, Vitus Schaffer operated “Schaffer’s Harness Shop” on Mulholland. In the 1860’s, he moved his business and residence to the apartment house facing Mulholland. (C) Sons Lutz “L.C.” and Al joined the business, and a shop addition was built (1882) onto the west side. In 1892, Joseph Ochsner operated a business here. From c. 1912-1930’s John Dusenberry’s “West End Garage” was on the premises. It was followed by “Gasaway Plumbing,” “Schenk Cabinet Shop” and Steve Kelly’s and Leo Gasaway’s used car businesses. Razd: 1952

C 1912-1930’s Dusenberry’s West End Garage

Three, two-story frame apartment buildings housed members of the Icarian Community. A fourth, similarly constructed building was also located on Bluff (12th) (to the right of the two pictured above) and was probably used as the Icarian’s library and print shop. Razd: 1949-52

D 1850-1856 Icarian Apartment Houses

Circa early 1900’s. Former Icarian apartment house on the corner of Bluff (12th) and Mulholland

D The building on the corner of Mulholland, facing Bluff (12th) (left in picture), housed several businesses over the years: “Loomis’s Drug Store,” “Nicaise’s Sewing & Millinery”/”Nicaise-Hohl’s Dressmaking Shop.”
E 1917-1935 L.V. Datin Residence

The original Mormon Temple, built in the 1840's, would have been located directly behind it. Between 1937 and 1963, the property was owned by the Reorganized Church of Latter-day Saints (RLDS/Community of Christ Church) and used as a rental property. In 1963, the LDS Church and RLDS Churches made a mutual property swap for the property. Razed: 1987

F 1890's Palace Saloon was operated by the Schenk brothers. In 1903 “Frank Goult’s Photography” was located here, moved from the 1300 Block of Mulholland in the 1880's.

G Max Reimbold Store and Charlie Reimbold’s Residence

The Icarians had a blacksmith and harness shop at this location in the 1850's. It was replaced by Max Reimbold’s Dry Goods Store in the 1870's (above) and, later, by Charlie Reimbold’s home (right), the last remaining structure on Temple Block before it was razed in 1973.

H 1853 Drawing of Temple Block, showing Temple ruins, Icarian School, and “Refectory”

The Icarians built a “Refectory” (dining and meeting hall), a large, L-shaped, frame building, at this location in the 1850’s. The frame building’s foundation was made from recycled Temple stone. Burned sometime prior to 1864.

H 1888 “Opera House”

In 1864, John Dornseif replaced the Icarian building with another frame building, presumably on the same foundation, which was called “City Hall” (which appeared to be more of a gathering place than a political venue.). It also burned [sometime between the 1860 Plat, when it was labeled “City Hall” and the 1912 Sanborn Map, when it was labeled “Opera House”). Dornseif replaced it with a smaller, brick structure called “Nauvoo Opera House,” which was used a dance hall, theater for dramatic productions, movie theater, etc. It burned, due to a projection room fire! Burned: 1938

Note: South side of the building can also be seen on p.3, bottom, background.

Note 1: Most sales of Temple Block property were made to the LDS Church between the early 1940’s and early 1950’s. In the 1940s, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and Nauvoo Restoration, Inc. (NRI) began acquiring parcels on Temple Block. By 1962 the entire block had been purchased. All remaining buildings were razed by 1973.

Note 2: Over the years, all, or parts, of Temple Block had various owners: local residents, the early Mormons, the Icarians, the Catholics, and the RLDS Church (Community of Christ). By 1962, the entire block had been re-purchased by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 2001, a new Mormon Temple was built.