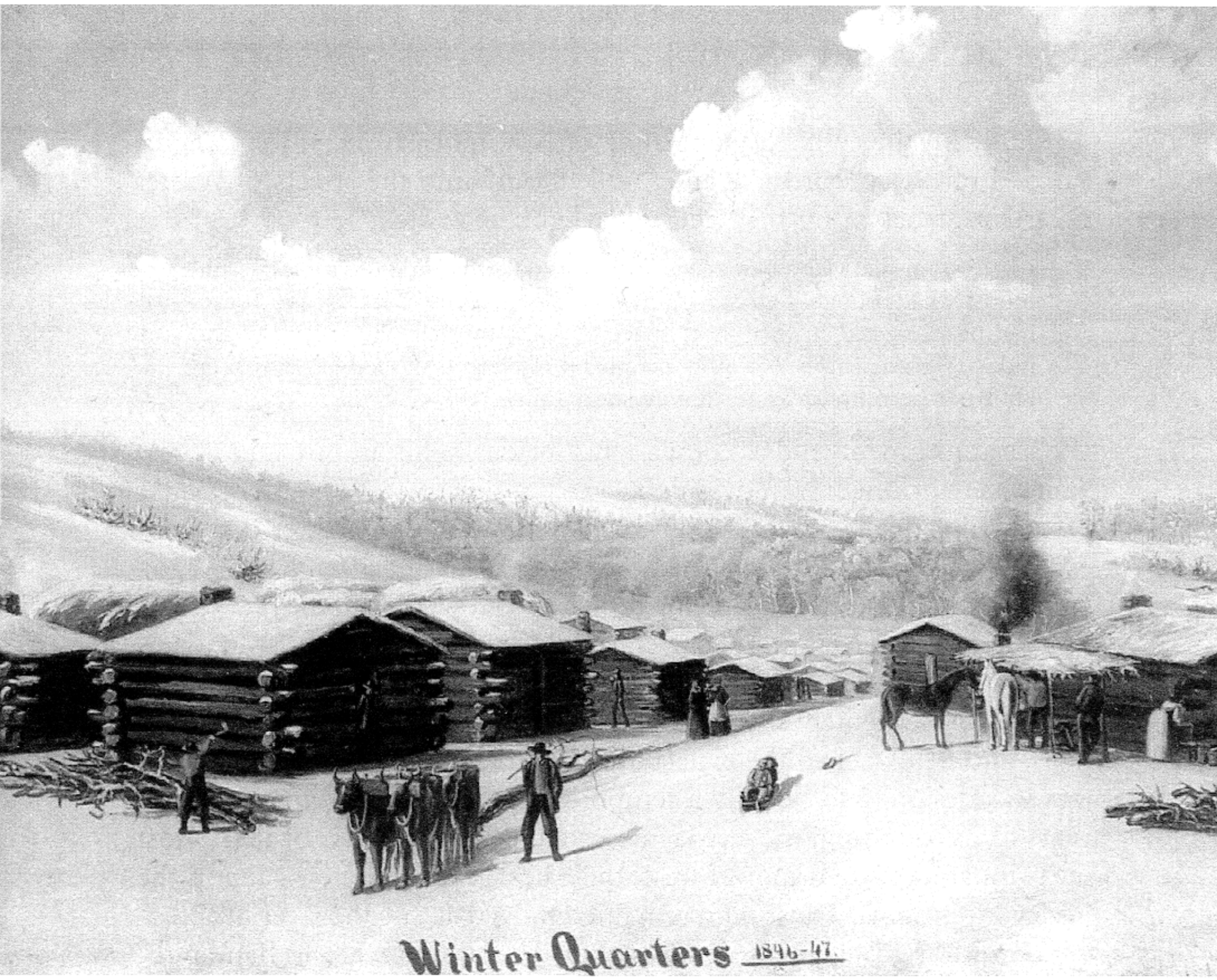


Courtesy Jeanette Taggar

***Winter Quarters*, by C. C. A. Christensen, undated (probably 1880s).** This intimate scene of Winter Quarters captures a pleasant time. Note the men and women working, the dark smoke billowing from the blacksmith's forge, and the children sledding on the hillside.

"Pleasing to the Eyes of an Exile": The Latter-day Saint Sojourn at Winter Quarters, 1846–1848

Jennifer L. Lund

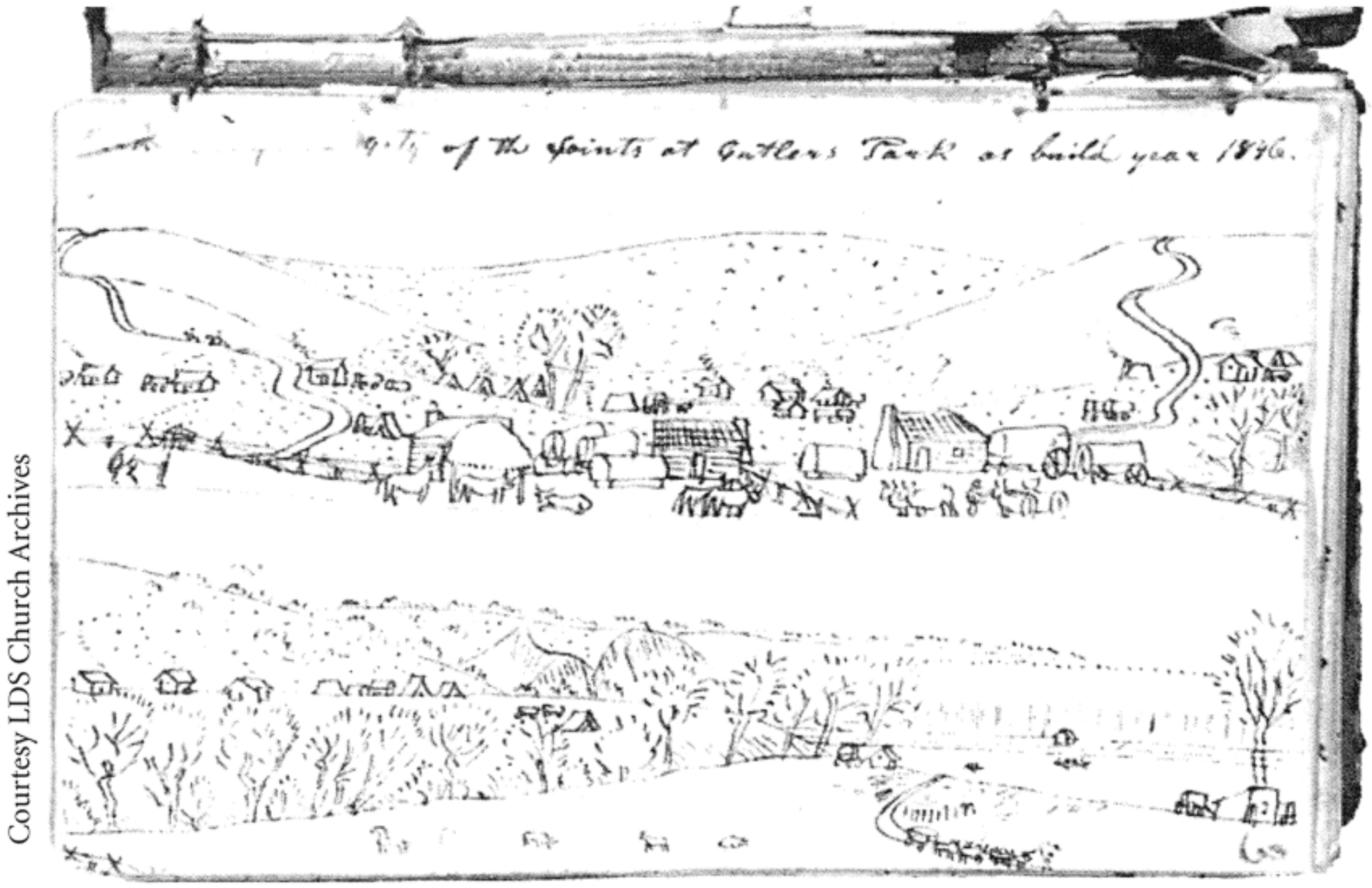
Early on the cold, clear morning of November 21, 1846, John D. Lee "arose from sleep," dressed, and "walked out" into the streets of Winter Quarters. Struck by his first view in daylight, he wrote:

> I was astonished when I looked around and saw what serious enterprise and industry had brought to pass within 6 weeks past. A city of at least 400 houses had been erected in that short space of time, through the ingenuity and industry of the Saints. No other people but the Saints of God has ever been known to accomplish as much in so short a time.[1]

Lee's astonishment and accompanying pride in his industrious fellow Saints were justified. As if overnight, a city appeared on the western banks of the Missouri River to shelter nearly four thousand Latter-day Saint exiles. It boasted an air of permanence and prosperity as tents and wagon boxes were exchanged for solid log cabins and plows turned the prairie sod. By all appearances, Winter Quarters heralded abundant promise as a new outpost on the American frontier.

Yet the settlement's hundreds of orderly cabins, outbuildings, gardens, and fields belied the expectations of its inhabitants. Winter Quarters was designed to be only a temporary settlement. Within just a few years of its founding, the city lay deserted. By the summer of 1848, most of its inhabitants had moved west, their hearts set on a new Zion in the Rocky Mountains. Those who remained moved across the river in accordance with a government demand that the Saints vacate Indian lands. Buildings and fields were stripped and eventually burned, leaving little but a small cemetery on the bluff west of town and the outlines of the settlement in the dirt.

Nevertheless, Winter Quarters has retained a prominent place in the collective memory of the Latter-day Saints. From this temporary headquarters, the "Word and Will of the Lord" went out to the world as Church leaders sought inspiration, deliberated, and instructed the Saints (D&C 136:1). The town was home to most of the Church leadership. The first wagon trains rolled west from Winter Quarters, and even following its demise, it continued as a staging ground for wagon and handcart companies for more than a decade.



Courtesy LDS Church Archives

A sketch of Cutler's Park by Peter O. Hansen, drawn in Heber C. Kimball's diary, 1846. The bottom half of the sketch is actually a continuation of the top as if attached on the right side. The inscription reads, "North end of the city of the Saints at Cutler's Park as build year 1846."

It is not the accomplishments of the Saints, however, which loom large in latter-day memories. It is, instead, the illness that ravished the camp and caused many to lay down their lives in one final sacrifice for the kingdom. Winter Quarters, especially its small cemetery on the hill, is symbolic of the forced exile from Nauvoo. Not only does Winter Quarters call to mind those who died within its walls, but it represents all those who lost their lives in nearly one hundred settlements scattered along the banks of the Missouri River and across Iowa between 1846 and 1853. Avard Fairbanks's impressive monument in the Winter Quarters cemetery eloquently memorializes this defining chapter of trail history. The pathos evoked as grief-stricken parents gaze into the grave of an infant child reminds each visitor that the Latter-day Saints were willing to sacrifice everything for their faith in God and their desire to build his kingdom upon the earth.

The Saints faced unspeakable tragedy at Winter Quarters, yet they labored to build part of that kingdom there on the banks of the Missouri. Their efforts were all the more remarkable because of their understanding, from the very beginning, that everything they built would soon be left behind. The memory of their sacrifice in the face of adversity should be coupled with an admiration for their industry, determination, resilience, and

ingenuity in pioneering a new life and a new land. Winter Quarters, long a symbol of tragedy, should also be remembered for its triumphs, for the place truly was, as Mary Richards wrote, "above all things pleasing to the Eyes of an Exile in the Wilderness of our afflictions."[2]

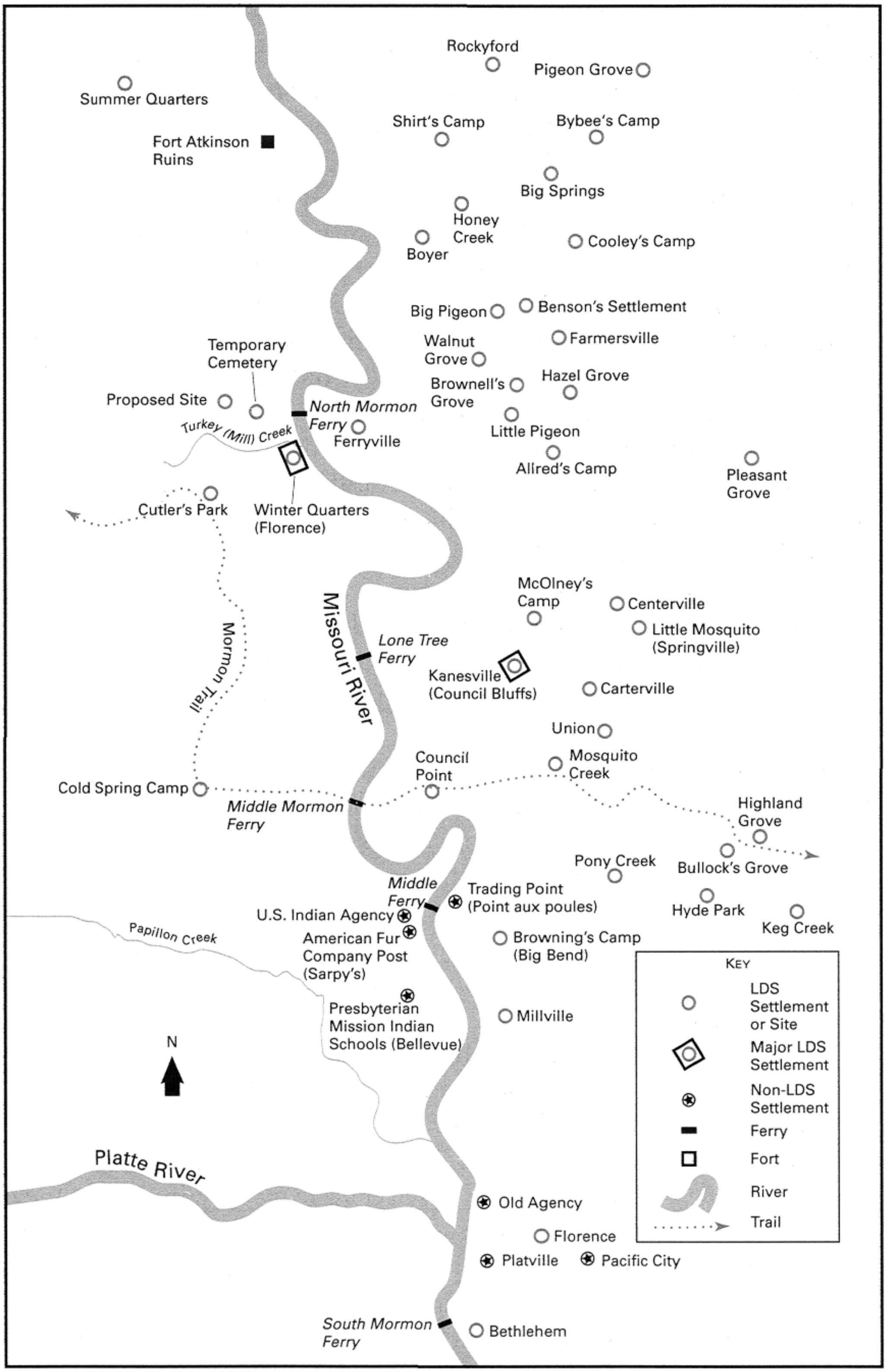
Finding a Winter Campsite

In the fall of 1845, facing increasing political pressure and acts of mob violence, Latter-day Saint leaders concluded that the time had come to abandon Church headquarters at Nauvoo, Illinois, and its surrounding settlements. They intended to find refuge in the West and had planned for an orderly exit the following spring. However, continuing unrest in the surrounding community and rumors of plans to arrest Church leaders and stop the exodus forced an early departure. Nearly three thousand Saints left Nauvoo in the snow and ice of February 1846 and were followed by ten thousand more in the ensuing months. By July, the majority of Saints were on the trail, strung out across Iowa and headed west. The vanguard groups, led by Brigham Young, had already begun crossing the Missouri River in hopes of sending an advance party all the way to the Rocky Mountains that same year. Unfortunately, their hasty exodus had taken a toll. Many of the Saints were inadequately prepared for the journey. Provisions were scarce and companies were disorganized. Unusually warm weather had bogged the first companies down in mud sometimes as deep as a wagon axle. And finally, they had just encouraged almost five hundred of their ablest young men to join the U.S. Army to fight in the war with Mexico.[3]

By early August 1846, it was clear that not even a small portion of the Latter-day Saints then spread out over the rolling hills of Nebraska and the prairies of Iowa could continue on to the Rocky Mountains that season. As Parley P. Pratt recalled:

> The lateness of the season, the poverty of the people, and, above all, the taking away of five hundred of our best men, finally compelled us to abandon any further progress westward till the return of another spring. The camps, therefore, began to prepare for winter.[4]

The vanguard companies, principally those led by Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, initially planned to stay at Cold Springs camp, where they were then stopped, but the site soon proved too small to accommodate those who joined them on the western banks of the Missouri. Moving fourteen miles north, they founded a settlement, christened it "Cutler's Park" in honor of Alpheus Cutler (who located the site), and busily set about preparing for winter. During the next few weeks, the Saints at Cutler's Park organized a municipal government, cut nearly two thousand tons of hay, and constructed a handful of cabins, corrals, and fences.[5]



Missouri River Area Settlements, 1846–1850. While Winter Quarters and Kanesville were the Saints' major settlements, there were a multitude of smaller settlements spread through the region.

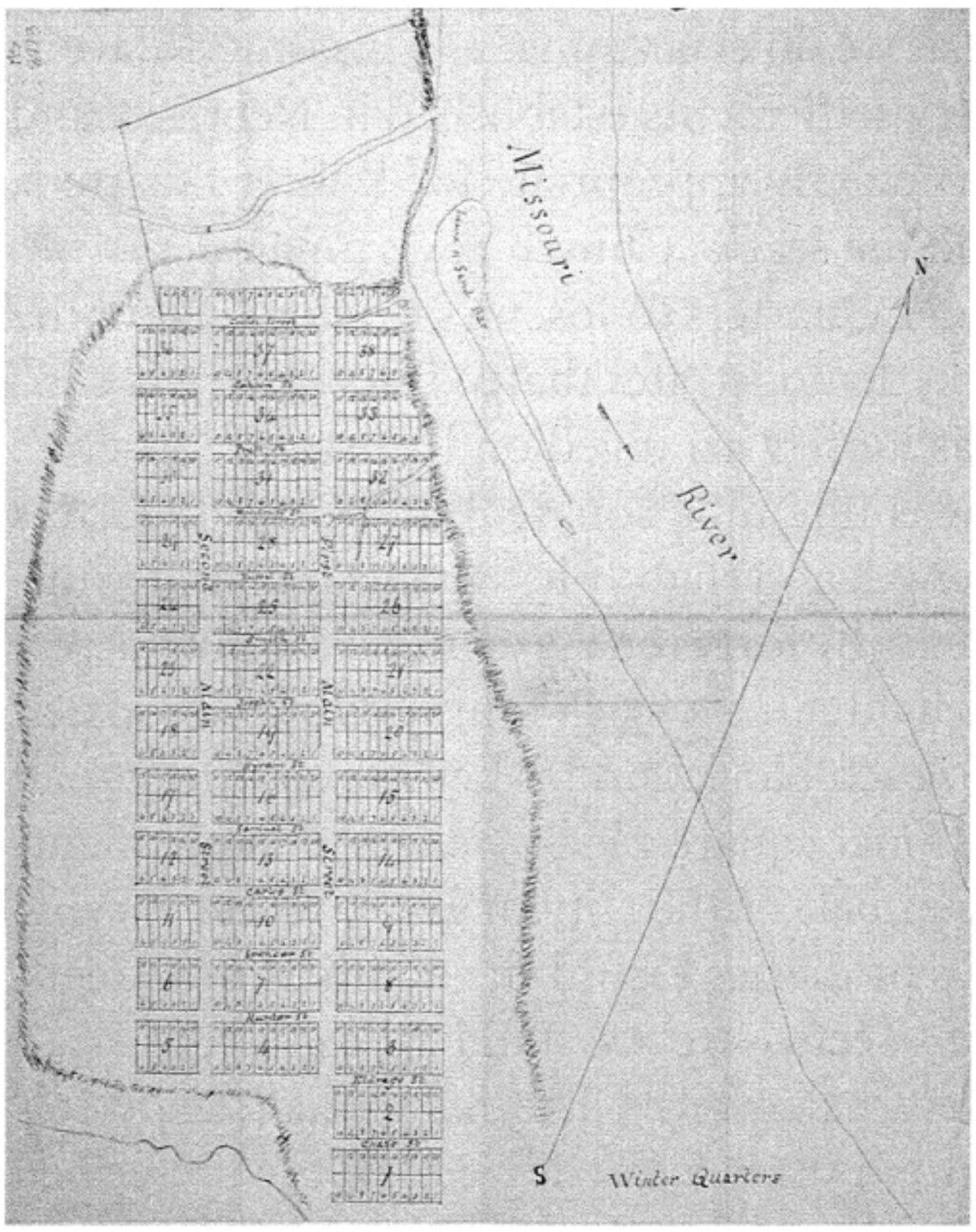
Unfortunately, Cutler's Park was situated on land disputed between two groups of Indians: the Oto and the Omaha. Brigham Young and other Church leaders met with chiefs of both tribes in late August to negotiate the rights to stay on the land and to use timber and other resources. Although the Saints received a warm welcome, it was evident that neither tribe was content with the settlement's current location. Following an offer from Omaha chief Big Elk to move further north onto land firmly in control of the Omaha, an expedition set out to explore the area around abandoned Fort Atkinson. The party returned discouraged by the lack of timber and the crumbling ruins of the fort. In response, the Oto expressed their hope that the Mormons would not move onto Omaha land, denying the Oto a share in the fruits of Mormon friendship.[6]

It is not clear exactly why Church leaders decided to abandon Cutler's Park. Concerns about the site's ability to sustain such a large encampment, vulnerability to possible Indian or mob attack, and exposure to high prairie winds likely played a role. However, the decision came quickly on the heels of the councils with the Omaha and Oto. Apparently, Church leaders wanted to withdraw from disputed territory. Once established, Winter Quarters was always identified as being located in the "Omaha Nation," suggesting that the Saints did indeed move onto land firmly in Omaha hands.[7]

Aware that the cool nights of fall and the freezing rain of winter were fast approaching, Church leaders felt pressured to find a suitable location for a settlement. On September 11, members of the Quorum of the Twelve walked directly north of Cutler's Park, where they selected a site on the banks of "Willow Creek." Here they spent the next six days "laying out a city for the winters encampment." Beginning at the site selected for a council house, they surveyed the city, marking off streets, blocks, and lots, and established a cemetery.[8]

The Saints in Indian Territory thought they had finally found a home for the winter. Church leaders selected lots and voted to begin moving to the new site immediately. The following day, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, and Alpheus Cutler rode three miles east to a stretch of tableland near the river to select a site for farming. What they saw apparently pleased them—not only for farming but for the settlement as well. The relatively flat strip of land was bordered on north and south by creeks, on the west by a high bluff, and on the east by a steep descent to the river's edge. The rich loess soil promised an abundant harvest, and the bluffs provided shelter from the prairie winds. The site was also near the newly established ferry.[9]

Following a visit to the tableland with members of the Twelve and the high council on September 18, Brigham Young called a special meeting of



Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art

Thomas Bullock's plat of Winter Quarters, drafted December 1846. Following the example of Joseph Smith's plat for the city of Zion, the Saints carefully laid out their temporary town. The area below the lots on the south side of Joseph Street was never settled and was used as farmland.

the municipal high council. After more than seven months of living out of wagons and several false starts at settling in, he asked them to consider one final change of plans. Instead of moving north to the townsite already laid out on the prairie, he proposed that they move east to the tableland along the river. The discussion was lively, and an initial vote was evenly split. Some argued in favor of Cutler's Park. Others spoke for the settlement already surveyed to the north or a site near the abandoned Fort Atkinson. Still others praised the tableland for good farming, health, and protection from the prairie winds. Finally, Brigham Young rose to speak:

> It is wisdom for this Camp to locate togeather as mutch as posible in order for our protection and saftey from Mobs of Missourie or the Indians . . . if we scatter here it will take a long time if a difficulty should happen to occur; before we could concentrate our forces in order to protect our selves and property . . . I recommend therefore that all the breathren concentrate themselves and settle togeather on this Table land.[10]

A final vote was unanimous, and the Saints again began laying out a townsite for a winter encampment.

Laying Out a City

Surveying commenced in earnest on September 19, and the lines of an orderly settlement were inscribed in the sod. In its basic form, the plat of the new city reflected the principles of Joseph Smith's "City of Zion," which provided a blueprint for the establishment of the physical Zion. Order was its hallmark, a concept the high council emphasized in a letter describing the settlement: "It is true we are building a mud and log city with regular

lots and streets, all in order just as we do everything."[11] This orderly layout was unique among the temporary settlements established in Nebraska and Iowa that winter; it seemed particularly appropriate for Winter Quarters, the largest of the settlements and the seat of Church government.

Comparing the plat of Winter Quarters to Joseph's original plat of the city of Zion and his later revision demonstrates that Winter Quarters contained elements of both and was loosely arranged on half scale.[12] Joseph's vision originally prescribed towns one mile square, but Winter Quarters was first platted to one mile in length and slightly less than a half mile wide. Rectangular blocks stretched twenty by forty rods (330' x 660', about 5 acres) and were divided into twenty individual lots (each four rods by ten rods, or 66' x 165', about a quarter acre), each block and lot being exactly one-half the size of Joseph's ideal. Additional square blocks reflected adjustments made in a revision to the original plat of the City of Zion, as did varying street widths. Although no maps or diaries record the width of the streets, it is likely that the two principal streets were the standard eight rods (132') wide, while the cross streets were narrower.[13] The main axis clearly followed the line of the bluff, which was only a few degrees off the prescribed north-south orientation. Also in harmony with Joseph's concept, a block near the center of town was reserved for religious and public use, and farmland was located outside the city limits. Many of the basic elements of the newly planned Winter Quarters echoed earlier Latter-day Saint settlements based on the plat of the City of Zion.[14]

Of course, there were departures from the City of Zion plat as well. The intended brevity of their stay, limited resources, and the fast-approaching winter dictated the use of logs, sod, and mud in place of brick or stone. Also there was little need for a temple or quorum buildings in what was intended only as a temporary stop on the way to a new gathering place in the West. In addition, the extremity of their situation required crowding on a scale not considered in the designs for an ideal Zion. Nevertheless, the original plans for the city reflected the Saints' devotion to establishing Zion, even in a temporary way station on the edge of the frontier.

Settling In for the Winter

On September 23, the first wagons arrived on the tableland at the river's edge—"a beautiful place for a City," according to Isaac Haight. Each company was assigned a particular block or section of the city. Wilford Woodruff's company of forty families, for instance, was allotted block thirty-four. Individual lots were distributed immediately, and the Saints set to work building a winter encampment with what one pioneer recalled was "nothing but labour and toil all the day long."[15]

Men traveled north to large stands of cottonwood trees, which they felled and rafted down the river to the new campsite. They built corrals for livestock; dug wells, cellars, and privies; cut sod; laid foundations; and raised cabin walls. What John D. Lee referred to as "serious enterprise and industry" gave birth to a city in a matter of a few weeks. Even those who had toiled the long hours were impressed with their progress. In a letter to his brother, George Alley boasted, "It is astonishing what a city of Log cabins has been created in a few short weeks, looking at a little distance like a great city of long standing."[16]

Since the days at Cold Springs camp, the Saints often referred to their winter camping place with the military term "winter quarters." In fact, this generic title, usually written in lowercase letters, was applied to a variety of potential stopping places. The discussion over a name for the new "city of Log cabins" must have lasted several days, as indicated by Willard Richards's custom of beginning each diary entry with a different name for the same location—first "Winter Rest," then "Council Plain," and finally "Winter Quarters." The crowning selection, apparently made at a council meeting on Sunday, September 27, 1846, officially elevated a common military term to describe a winter refuge for the Camp of Israel.[17]

The city plan for Winter Quarters reveals that Church leaders originally intended to fill up the entire tableland between the two creeks. However, with settlers scattered over nearly a mile, Indians crept in by night to spirit away the cattle. It was evident that the settlement plan left them open to theft and, potentially, to attack. At a meeting on October 18, Brigham Young exhorted the Saints to "begin at the north end and pack close till the people are all together."[18] He intended that the cabins on the perimeter be positioned adjacent to one another in order to form a protective wall. A week later, leaders appointed a committee to realign the perimeter and voted to erect a picket fence to secure the city. The south third of the tableland was abandoned, with all its residents encouraged to move above the south line of Joseph Street.[19] The closer quarters provided a semblance of security, although little was done on the stockade. There were more pressing matters at hand before winter set in—the most urgent, of course, being shelter.

Building a City

While the "ingenuity and industry of the Saints" may be seen in many aspects of life in Winter Quarters, it is nowhere more evident than in the physical reality of the city that they built on the banks of the Missouri. Homes, schools, stores, factories, corrals, stables, chicken coops, fields, fences, and a council house all bore eloquent witness to the triumph of hard work, determination, organization, and cooperation. Unfortu-

nately, since the townsite was abandoned and eventually destroyed, there are few tangible remnants to speak to later generations. However, a careful reading of the historic sources allows us to create a partial image of this city on the frontier.

Homes and Lots. Anticipating the winter's blast, most Saints were secure in some form of permanent shelter by the end of 1846. A survey taken in December enumerated 538 log cabins and 83 soddies, distributed somewhat unevenly throughout the city. In the bluff at the foot of Cahoon Street, the poorest of the Saints burrowed out holes for dugouts in an area nicknamed "Gopher Hill."[20] While a few additional cabins were constructed the following spring, it is doubtful that the total number of cabins exceeded seven hundred.[21]

When Eliza Lyman moved into her cabin on October 25, she remarked with considerable relief, "I feel extremely thankful for the privilege of sitting by a fire where the wind cannot blow in in every direction and where I can warm one side without freesing the other."[22] Shelter against the wind and cold was of utmost importance, and log cabins provided the most effective protection. George Alley provided his brother with a detailed description of his family's accommodations:

> I will show you my log cabin, it is 12 by 14 feet in the clear, 6½ to the eaves, with one door & one little place for a 6 pane 7 by 9 peep hole, the roof is covered with willows put on the ribbs, then a coat of long prairie grass, & that covered with about 6 inches of earth, well trod down, which makes it tight & warm—A row of sods form the cornice & weather boards of the gable ends, and then a row of good thick sods, make the saddle boards, on the ridge pole. It looks pretty well in the warm season, when the grass is green. . . . The spaces between the logs is filled with clay morter, which makes it tight—The logs are of course in their rough state.[23]

While Alley notes with satisfaction that the dirt roof made his cabin "tight and warm," others were not so fortunate. Water and mud drizzled through less carefully constructed shelters, and one pioneer arrived home to discover "to [his] astonishment [that] one side of the roof of [his] house had slid and blown off, filling everything with dirt."[24]

Slabs of prairie sod were an important building material in Winter Quarters. Alley records that he used sod for the cornice, gable ends, and saddle boards in his snug cabin. Although he does not mention the chimney, it is likely that it too was built of sod, as were the great majority of hearths and chimneys throughout the village. Sod was unlikely to burn, and it was plentiful as the settlers cleared ground for cabin foundations, garden plots, and farmland. A few, like Louisa Pratt, built their entire cabins with prairie sod:

> I hired a man to build me a sod cave. He took the turf from the earth, laid it up, covered it with willow brush and sods. Built a chimney of the same. I hung up a blanket for a door, had three lights of glass to emit light. I built a

> fire, drew up my rocking chair before it, and that moment felt as rich as some persons (who have never suffered for want of a house) would be to be moved into a costly building.[25]

Unfortunately, sod structures were not as stable as log ones. Louisa's chimney eventually collapsed, forcing her to move into a dugout "five feet under ground."[26]

Apparently, two types of dugouts were used at Winter Quarters: caves dug horizontally into the bluff wall and vertical pits similar to Native American pit houses. Lyman Hinman described one of these pit houses, to which he was carried while in the depths of illness:

> [I was] taken on a chair and carried to a house shall I say house, or a place, a place I will say for it was a hole dug in the ground with some poles laid over and some grass and dirt thrown on top of the poles a hole to go in and out of for a door and window an old blanket hung up for a door and that was our habitation.[27]

As Louisa Pratt noted, living in these dugouts "was a very damp unhealthy situation." Brigham Young was so concerned with their instability, in fact, that he exhorted those living in dugouts and sod-covered cabins to abandon them for tents and wagons before the spring rains set in.[28]

Despite the variety of homes, each residential lot evoked a sense of order. In a deviation from the principles of the City of Zion, which required that homes be set back from the road twenty-five feet, Brigham Young instructed the Saints to build their cabins at the street's edge. Wells were to be shared among several families, and vaults for privies were to be dug on the center line of the block. The backyard between house and privy was used for stables, cellars, corrals, sheep pens, chicken coops, and haystacks. Every lot had at least one wagon parked in the yard, and many Saints reserved enough space for a small kitchen garden. Despite the brevity of their stay, they built enough of a homestead to care for their animals, to provide for their families, and to prepare for the journey to come.[29]

By June 1847, many cabins were left empty as the large Emigration Camp headed for the West. There was much buying and selling as the more destitute, who were unable to make the journey that year, traded up for better accommodations. Most log cabins sold for between five and ten dollars, and dugouts and soddies were abandoned.[30]

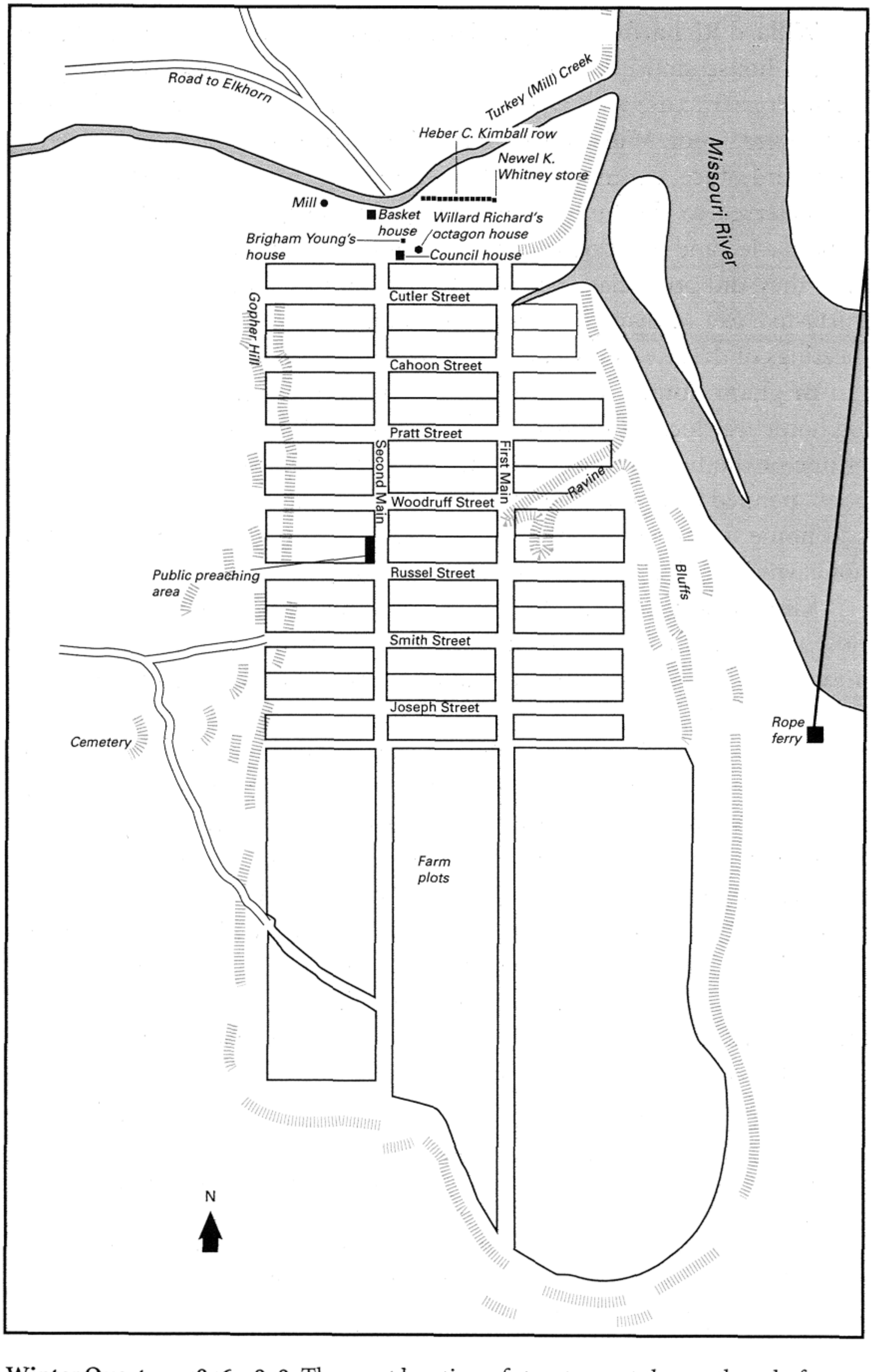
Stockade. The safety of the Saints was a primary concern for Brigham Young and other Church leaders, who worried about their vulnerability in the midst of Indian Territory. The artillery company, with at least three cannons in their charge, was quartered on a bluff north of town. From their vantage point, they had several miles of range both along the river and to the west across the prairie.[31]

In October 1846, community leaders decided to stockade the city, yet little work was actually done beyond encouraging the Saints to concentrate their cabins in the northern section. However, as the vanguard company prepared to leave the following spring, Brigham Young renewed his campaign with vigor, and a new perimeter was defined. Homes outside the revised borders were either abandoned or pulled into a line to be used as walls in the fortification, including all homes south of Joseph Street, west of Second Main, and north of Turkey (later Mill) Creek. Spaces between cabin walls were filled in with pickets that were seven and a half feet high and sharpened to a point. Gates provided access at principal roads, with two gates on the south and west and one gate each on the north and east. Much of the east side of the city, which bordered the river, was left unprotected, the water and the steep banks of the bluff providing a natural barrier. Work on the stockade was probably completed by June 1847, just in time for the departure of the large Emigration Camp; the camp left the city secured by the stockade but with fewer men and no artillery.[32]

Public Square. During good weather, religious activity at Winter Quarters centered on the public square, an open spot of ground near what was originally the heart of the city. Here the Nauvoo Temple bell called the Saints to gather and leaders preached. The stand and benches, which could seat three hundred, were relocated from Cutler's Park. Church leaders had originally intended to build a large council house on the site of the public square, but their plans were apparently abandoned in favor of a small council house and individual ward meeting places.[33]

Meetinghouses. As the cold winds of winter blew in, meetings at the stand became less and less practical. Brigham Young suggested instead that "the bishops will have to prepare a large room in each ward and meet once a week."[34] His instructions represented a major development in Church government, with wards gathering for weekly meetings presided over by a bishop. These meetings were generally held in the largest house in the ward, although apparently in a few instances ward schoolhouses were also used for worship.[35]

Council House. Although plans for a large council house were discarded, a smaller council house, intended primarily for meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve and the municipal high council, was built on a rise near the north end of town. Construction began in December with Brigham Young's request that members of the Twelve and high council and the bishops each contribute one log. The building, which measured twenty-four by thirty-two feet, was dedicated on January 23, 1847. The week that followed was "a kind of Jubilee" as Saints gathered night after night to dance and rejoice in the Lord's blessings. Quorum meetings, preaching, dancing, and social gatherings prevailed in the house until it was abandoned, along with the town, the following year.[36]



Winter Quarters, 1846–1848. The exact location of structures at the north end of town is unknown. The cemetery shown on this map was the third one used by the Saints in the area. Some Saints lived in homes dug into the bluffs at a spot nicknamed Gopher Hill.

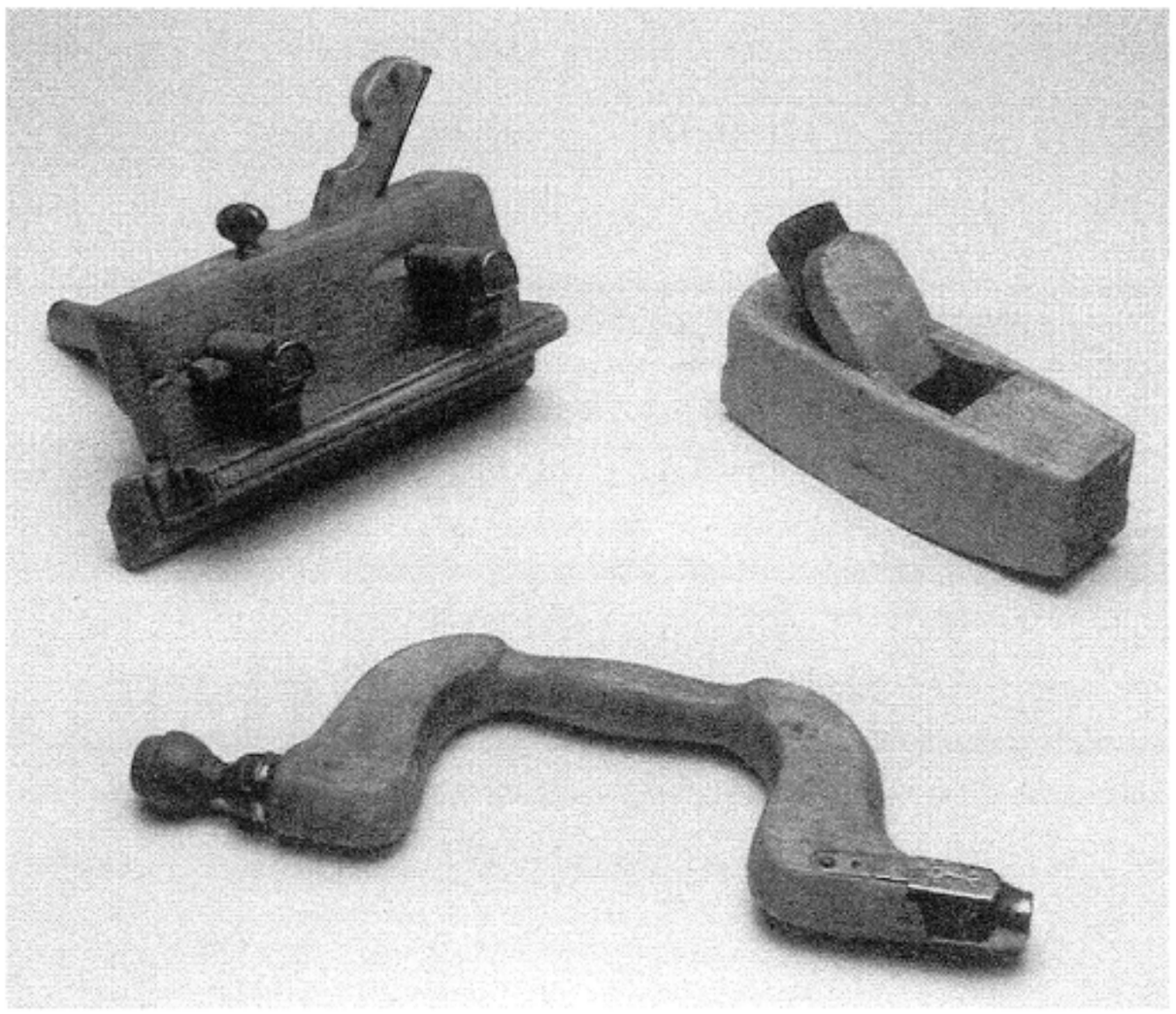
Willard Richards's Octagon House. Just a short distance east of the council house stood the most intriguing building in town, an octagon-shaped log structure with an ell to one side and a cupola emerging from its dirt-covered roof. Willard Richards, who constructed the building as his home and office, endured considerable ribbing from lighthearted friends who referred to the building as the "potato heap," the "windmill," the "tabernacle," and the "doctors den." If they didn't appreciate its looks, however, they did appreciate its size, the central room being approximately thirty-five feet in diameter. Until the council house was completed, most meetings of the governing councils were held in the "doctors den."[37]

Brigham Young Residence. Brigham Young's one-and-a-half-story log home was located immediately to the west of the Octagon at the head of one of the two principal avenues, probably Second Main. A hint in a poem penned by plural wife Eliza R. Snow suggests that he also had a second home to house his large family, but the location is unknown. Additional wives, including Eliza, made their homes with friends or family.[38]

Kimball Row. While Brigham Young and Willard Richards settled close together, Heber C. Kimball, the third member of the executive committee of the Twelve, gathered his family on the south side of Turkey (Mill) Creek. Here they constructed a row of thirteen cabins, many with shared walls, for the extended and adopted Kimball family. The row was anchored on one end by Kimball's own residence, which featured four rooms on the ground floor and two on the second half story. At the other end, Newel K. Whitney built his home and the bishop's storehouse. In between stood a series of one-room log cabins, each with one door, a window of four panes of glass, and a roof and chimney made of sod.[39] Kimball's daughter Helen Mar Whitney recalled her misfortune at "having a chimney that seldom drew [up] the smoke." She "shed many unbidden tears" before replacing the chimney with brick from Fort Atkinson. Helen Mar provides a vivid description of the little cabin she shared with Horace K. Whitney, her husband of just nine months:

> Our floors we managed to cover with canvas or pieces of carpeting, which had outlived the storms and the wear and tear while journeying from the States. We made curtains serve as partitions to divide the bedrooms, repositories, etc., from the kitchen. Most of our furniture we had made to order—such as cupboards and bedsteads—they being attached to the house, also tables, chairs and stools, and an occasional rocking chair, relics of other days, graced our ingleside. [40]

Markets. On the street that bordered Kimball Row, a small business district developed, inspired no doubt by the gristmill constructed at the far west end and Whitney's bishop's storehouse. The store provided goods for



Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art and Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.

Pioneer-era planes and brace. These tools were used in woodcrafts at Winter Quarters and taken on to Salt Lake City.

the entire community, as well as distributed necessities to the poor and the "battalion widows," whose husbands were serving in the Mormon Battalion.[41] Several other stores were also in the same general area of town, including one operated by Albert Rockwood and John D. Lee. Vilate Kimball rented her dining room as a showroom to another pair of entrepreneurs. Even non-Mormon merchants took advantage of the potential customers in Winter Quarters: George Alley noted, "Some St. Louis merchants have opened within a day or two a very full store, within a few steps of my log cabin."[42]

Mills. The most vital businesses in town were mills that ground corn and grain into flour. Even before plans for the new settlement were announced to the general populace, Frederick Kesler scouted out a site for a mill. The two-story gristmill with an overshot wheel was built with Church labor on Turkey (Mill) Creek in the north end of town. Unfortunately, the mill pond dam broke on several occasions, and the mill was not operational until March 20, 1847. By the following winter, three additional small mills, all horse or oxen powered, were also in use.[43]

Cooperatives and Manufacturing Shops. Several enterprises provided work for the most destitute Saints. Near the north gate, the seventies quorums built a house where workers learned to make baskets that were shipped to Missouri for sale. A carding house was also erected for the processing of wool. Cattle herds were sent to the rush bottoms near Fort Atkinson, while sheep grazed under the watchful eyes of boys and young men to the north and west of Winter Quarters. A fishing cooperative cast nets into the river and fed many. These cooperatives provided for the poor, as well as shared the burdens of work on the frontier.[44]

In addition to the stores, mills, and cooperative ventures, there were many other businesses in Winter Quarters. One settler recalled, "A meat markit was erected saveral blacksmith shops sue [shoe] shops chare makers, and nerly all kind of work as if the peple was going to stay for years."[45] Perhaps they weren't going to stay for years, but they were certainly intent on

building a community and preparing for their journey. This pioneer's simple statement does not do justice to the work at hand. One blacksmith shop, operated by Thomas Tanner, functioned on a factory scale. Tanner employed enough smiths to keep fourteen fires going at once.[46]

Courtesy Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.

Pioneer-era anvil. This anvil was brought from Nauvoo to Winter Quarters, then taken to the Salt Lake Valley.

Farms. The most successful and most productive business in Winter Quarters was farming. Recognizing their precarious position, the Saints worked tirelessly to provide for themselves and their families and to provision the journey to come. Although the settlers began clearing land in the fall of 1846, farm work did not begin in earnest until spring. The land south of town was apportioned out in five- and ten-acre parcels, the choicest lots going to those who agreed to fence the most land. The plowing was done in great, long furrows "for we ar all one family"[47] and then planted with corn, buckwheat, turnips, potatoes, squash, melon, and cabbage. The fields, bordered by a neat sod fence, extended for miles below town. As one pioneer noted, "Farms sprung up in all directions and the wildness was fast being made to blossom with the fruit of the husbandmen."[48]

Ferry. Immediately after the first wagons crossed the Missouri River in June 1846, Church leaders saw the need to construct a ferry. Not all of the pioneers could pay the high fees charged at the lone existing ferry. The Saints soon established their own ferry to the north and then in September moved it even further north to a spot near their new settlement. It was no easy task to ferry wagons loaded with goods, passengers, and oxen across the wide Missouri, as noted by Frederick Piercy, who crossed in 1853:

> The ferry-boats are flat-bottomed, and large enough to carry 2 wagons of the ordinary size. The starting point is usually chosen a considerable distance up the stream, so that the current may assist in conveying the boats to the landing place on the opposite side of the river. Ferrying is hard work. When the boat is pushed from the bank the rowers are obliged to ply their oars most vigorously, as it is no slight matter to row across a river a quarter or half a mile wide, with a current running at the rate of 4 or 5 miles an hour.[49]

In 1850 the Church moved the ferry down the Missouri River to a spot just below the confluence of the Platte River, serving emigrants traveling on

the south side trail. Peter Sarpy and other investors then operated a small ferry at the Winter Quarters site; that ferry was eventually replaced by a steam ferry.[50]

Steamboat Landing. Near the southern section of town, steamboats were welcomed at a flat section of beach. Unfortunately, during the first few months of settlement, the river was so low that the great paddle-wheelers could not travel upriver to Winter Quarters. Church leaders had hoped to bring in provisions from Missouri by steamboat, but they were forced to send wagons overland instead. Steamboats did ply the waters to Winter Quarters in 1847 and 1848, transporting goods and returning missionaries to town.[51]

Cemetery. Of all the landmarks in Winter Quarters, the little cemetery on the hill is the most enduring, one of only two remnants of the settlement to survive into modern times.[52] However, there are actually three cemeteries associated with Winter Quarters. The first, located near Cutler's Park, gives rest to the many who died of fevers during the Saints' six-week stay at that location. The second was laid out on September 15, 1846, "about ½ mile S. E. of the bluff" where the then-newly-platted settlement north of Cutler's Park was located. Later that afternoon, Wealthy Lovisa Richards, three-year-old daughter of Franklin and Jane Snyder Richards, was laid to rest.[53] Although the site for this settlement was abandoned almost immediately, the sexton's report shows fifty-six burials between September 15 and November 15.[54] There may have been additional burials as well, since the sexton complained to the high council in early November that "people would go and bury in the grave yard un be knowns to him & some times bury between the graves . . . and that he did not know who were buried there neither those who buried them."[55]

The distance to that northern cemetery was soon too great for the frequency with which the inhabitants of Winter Quarters were forced to travel the lonely road to the burial ground. Therefore, on November 11, the high council voted to establish a new cemetery on the bluff immediately west of Winter Quarters. This third site was surveyed a few days later, and a grave was prepared for one-year-old James Brinkerhoff, the first to be interred. Before the city was abandoned in June 1848, 304 identified burials were recorded at Winter Quarters. An additional nineteen grave sites were numbered, probably the sites of burials that were never reported to the sexton. If so, there were probably 323 burials in this third cemetery during the 1846–48 Latter-day Saint sojourn at Winter Quarters.[56]

Despite the existence of an official record book, the number of deaths at Winter Quarters has often been overstated. In an 1850 published speech, Thomas L. Kane commented in a footnote, "I am furnished with something over 600 as the number of burials in the graveyard there." Kane's

speech was widely distributed and is the source for many estimates of burials at the cemetery.[57] Unfortunately, Kane did not provide a source for the figure of "something over 600 deaths." He had visited Cutler's Park in August 1846, when he was not only a witness to the fevers that ran through the camp but also a victim. However, he left several weeks before Winter Quarters was founded, so he was not an eyewitness for most of the two years in question. He likely received the estimate from one of his many correspondents among Church leaders. Although Kane ascribes the number of "600 deaths" to the "graveyard" at Winter Quarters, this estimate may have originally included a much larger region. However, 600 graves—even in all three cemeteries—is inconsistent with the carefully kept burial records. Kane's estimate was much too high for the Winter Quarters settlements alone.[58]

A reliable estimate of deaths in the Winter Quarters area can be established using the sexton's record and other sources. Although there is no official accounting of the deaths at Cutler's Park, an estimate of forty-seven is consistent with the death rate during the first two months of record keeping. This estimate assumes that the same afflictions, primarily fever and chills, continued to take their toll into the fall of 1846.[59]

Fifty-six burials were recorded at the second cemetery with sixty-three numbered graves. Taking into account two double burials, there were nine numbered but unrecorded graves. Finally as noted above, there were likely 323 burials in the graveyard currently identified as the Winter Quarters cemetery. Thus the estimate for the three cemeteries, including a small margin for numbered but unrecorded graves, is 433 burials. There were also as many as eighteen burials at Summer Quarters, a farm community to the north that had its own cemetery. That number brings the total to 451 for all the Latter-day Saint settlements in the Winter Quarters region west of the Missouri River between August 1846 and May 1848. This figure might be expanded to between 460 and 500, but it is still considerably less than the 600 deaths often cited.[60]

The reassessment of the number of deaths in the Winter Quarters area should not, however, diminish our appreciation of the trials and sacrifice that the Saints endured during their sojourn there. Even just 451 deaths *represent* a death rate of almost 113 per thousand—a rate of epidemic proportions.[61] In some cases, death was a welcome relief to those that suffered. The fevers and chills of summer, childhood diseases, and accidents alternated with the excruciating scurvy or "black leg," which "commences by the feet swelling & turning black" and "continues to assend up into the limbs."[62] While some families withstood the onslaught and recovered, others were devastated. Theodore Turley buried seven of his family at Winter Quarters in less than ten months, including two wives, four

children, and a granddaughter. It is no wonder that the residents' memories were seared with images of "the small mournful-looking trains that so often passed" on their way to the cemetery on the hill.[63]

The cemetery itself was a dreary place. Many of the graves were marked only in the hearts and memories of the living. In preparation for leaving Winter Quarters in May 1848, Wilford Woodruff, Orson Pratt, George A. Smith, W. Porter, and P. W. Woodruff carried a load of stones to the cemetery to mark the graves of their family and friends. Yet within a few years the site was "so grown up with grass and weeds" that Allen Stout could "scarcely designate" the grave of his late wife.[64] The forlorn graveyard captured the attention of Amelia Hadley, who passed by in 1851 and confided in her diary, "There burying ground covers an acre and were just as thick as they could dig the graves, It beat anything I ever saw. . . . The old burying yards stands open and look lonely and solemn. One cannot but help drop a tear to see how providence will order everry thing."[65]

Viewing Winter Quarters

Although the cemetery held a prominent place in the community, other features of Winter Quarters stood out, particularly in the writings of its inhabitants. They described the ravages of illness with awful vividness and occasionally bemoaned their difficult circumstances, but their comments about the city itself are surprisingly cheerful. All seemed to agree that the tableland near the river was a "beautiful site" for a city.[66] Parley P. Pratt described the spot as both safe and lovely, the "land sloping up from the immediate banks of the river sufficiently high to be secure from high water, and then stretching away in an unbroken plain to the hills, which swelled up at less than half a mile distant in beautiful rounded grassy points, or in rising benches, one above another."[67] In addition, the location provided "good land good watter and plenty wood handy."[68] These measured but positive assessments were augmented by the exuberant declaration of Mary Richards that "the place where we have settled for winter quarters is one of the most beautyfull flatts I ever see." In her eyes, the scene could even be "quite Romantic."[69]

Complaints were seldom evoked by general conditions but rather by individual circumstances—usually due to inadequate housing. Eliza R. Snow recalled being ejected from her wagon box, which was needed for a supply trip, and moved into a cabin "having been built of logs, with openings only partly chincked and mudded." As a result,

> the wind cold and blustering, found plenty of crevices on the sides through which to play; while the roof was shingled only on one side, with a tent-cloth thrown over the other: and besides, it was minus a chimney, and when a fire was kindled, the smoke so filled the house, that a breathing

> apparatus was of little use, and the fire was put outside. . . . cooking done out of doors, etc, until past the middle of Nov., when our chimney was built—the house chinked, and other improvements added, which we were prepared to appreciate.[70]

Her situation, like those of many others, improved as settlers put the finishing touches on their homes. Besides, even a poorly chinked cabin was preferable to living in a tent or wagon box; Fanny Murray noted, "Some are very good log houses, and others about the medium, and many poor indeed, but better than none."[71] Perhaps Mary Richards put it best when she confided in her diary:

> Our little house seemed to me almost like a Palace I rejoiced to think that after passing through such a dreary Winter living in a Tent. and wandring from house to house to keep from perishing with the Cold. suffering almost every inconveniance and often very unpleasant feelings I had once more a place I could call my home.[72]

Most of the Saints at Winter Quarters did have a place to call home, and they viewed themselves as blessed—and even comfortable. In fact, several inhabitants described their situations in just such words; for example, Ursulia Hascall assured her sister and brother-in-law in the spring of 1847, "We have lived in our log cabin through the winter very comfortably."[73]

However, the cooperative efforts of the entire camp were what *inspired* the Saints to wax eloquent about their little city on the Missouri. Late arrivals, obviously expecting much less, were pleasantly surprised. The very day of his arrival in November 1846, Thomas Bullock walked through the city that had been under construction for less than three months and marveled, "Where, nine weeks ago there was not a foot path or a Cow track, now may be seen hundreds of houses, and hundreds in different stages of completion." In his view, there was "every prospect of a large City Being raised up here."[74] There was not only prospect but reality. John Pulsipher noted that the "'Camp of Winter Quarters' is a respectable city for one of its age," and Fanny Murray proposed to a relative, "If you could sail up the river and take a peep at our town, you would say it was romantic and even grand, notwithstanding the log huts."[75] Together the community of Saints had built a city that reflected order, industry, and accomplishment. The inhabitants' pride in their city is evident in their letters, diaries, and reminiscences. Oliver Huntington summed up the feelings of many when, before his departure, he reflected:

> The great celebrated city of Mormons was a curious sight to see, all log huts with sod and stick chimneys, and to contemplate the work that was to be seen, had been done; was wonderfull and maraculous, when the condition and circumstances of the people that done it, is taken into consideration.[76]

Courtesy Daughters of Utah Pioneers

Brigham Young's wagon. Brigham used this wagon to travel from Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake Valley.

There truly did seem to be something "wonderfull and maraculous" in the city that sheltered the Saints from the winter's blast. There was a sense that, even in their extreme and desperate circumstances, they had been blessed. Several Saints noted their favorable circumstances: George Alley wrote, "It is very fortunate to our slip shod condition, that the weather is so favourable. The Lord does indeed, temper the weather, to the shorn lamb."[77] The Saints felt blessed not only in weather, but in location, resources, skill, determination, and foresight—all of which helped to sustain them in the trials they faced on the edge of the frontier.

Perhaps the record is skewed, but when it comes to the physical makeup of Winter Quarters, the comments are generally positive, if not glowing. It may be that those who wrote were more inclined to see the world through rose-colored glasses. However, those same authors give us vivid descriptions of despair at death's door, suggesting that their writings are not slanted but are accurate reflections of their own perceptions. Those Saints knew that without Winter Quarters their losses might have been much greater and that they would have been unable to launch the massive emigration west in 1847 and 1848. Winter Quarters gave them protection, resources, and the ability to recoup and reorganize for the challenges to come. In addition, their perspective was tempered by their unshakable faith in God. As Fanny Murray noted, "There has been great destruction of life, both with man and beast, since we left Nauvoo, but none of these things move us while we are keeping the commandments of our Lord and Master, for we know that whether we live or die we are His."[78]

Abandoning Winter Quarters

Shortly after their return from scouting a new home in the Salt Lake Valley, the Quorum of the Twelve met to discuss the future of the settlements along the Missouri. Winter Quarters was of particular concern since from the beginning the commissioner of Indian Affairs had opposed their presence on Indian land. Captain James Allen, who had recruited volunteers for the Mormon Battalion, had offered the Saints permission to winter on the banks of the Missouri, including temporary settlements on the Indian lands of the west bank if necessary.[79] The local Indian superintendent was apparently unaware of this special provision, and documents forwarded to Washington accounted only for the east bank settlements. In addition, the Mormons had the audacity to negotiate directly with Indian tribes, a clear violation of U.S. policy at the time. Perhaps exacerbated by the efforts of Thomas L. Kane to mediate, the situation reached an impasse, and the commissioner of Indian Affairs rescinded permission for the Saints to remain at Winter Quarters, although he later granted an extension until the spring of 1848.[80]

The Twelve were also concerned with the status of the Latter-day Saints spread throughout Iowa and the need to populate the new Zion in the West. Thus, on November 14, 1847, Brigham Young announced plans to abandon Winter Quarters the following spring. Those who were not yet ready to go west moved back across the river to the Iowa settlements, while the rest packed their wagons for the long and arduous journey to the Salt Lake Valley. When the last wagons rolled out on July 3, 1848, Winter Quarters appeared "a perfect desolation."[81]

The Omahas visited the site on occasion to collect forgotten potatoes from cellars and harvest volunteer squash from abandoned garden plots. Emigrants who traveled the north side of the Platte, crossing at the Mormon Ferry, often camped nearby, wandering through the deserted streets and wondering upon "the old Mormon Village."[82]

By mid-1850, however, only "the prints of their old houses and Gardens" were left to be seen. All other evidence of habitation, including more than seven hundred buildings, had disappeared. Ever-provident Saints ferried boards and timbers to the Iowa settlements before being cautioned not to remove anything from Indian lands. The wood scavengers who regularly plied the river in search of fuel for steamboats may have also taken their share. But it was a prairie fire that scoured the tableland clean. On the night of April 29, 1850, William H. Kilgore, camped nearby, witnessed the devastation: "It dark by this time & the wind blew a perfect herricane, whirled the tents topsie tervy an the fire Came in flames & Sparks filling the whole heavens." Nearly all of the "old

Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art

Council Bluffs, Iowa. Frederick Piercy sketched the Winter Quarters area as he passed through in 1853. He noted, "The camping place on the west side of the Missouri was about a mile from the landing, in the vicinity of 2 springs, near the site of Winter Quarters. I paid a visit to the old place, and found that some person had set fire to the last house that remained of the once flourishing settlement." *Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*, ed. James Linforth (Liverpool: Franklin D. Richards, 1855), 81.

Mormontown" was on fire.[83] By morning, many of the buildings were gone, and others stood charred and dilapidated. Within a few years, the remaining walls disappeared as well, leaving but little trace of a once-thriving community.

Remembering Winter Quarters

Stories of Winter Quarters have survived into the present day with both power and poignancy. For those who know the story, the very mention of the name Winter Quarters evokes images of faith, commitment, and sacrifice. In this city of refuge, these abstract religious principles were

made manifest in the lives of people. Those who suffered and died in Winter Quarters and throughout the trail experience should always be remembered. However, those who worked to build this city of refuge and then left it behind should be honored as well. Winter Quarters was indeed an astonishing accomplishment. The story of its founding, its layout, its structures, the testimonies of its residents, and the Saints' willingness to abandon it—all call forth those same images of faith, commitment, and sacrifice. Those who labored to fell trees, build cabins, cut sod, plow fields, plant gardens, herd cattle, and create a community, all with the knowledge that "even now we are prepareing to move on again," are the hidden heroes of the triumphal chapter of Winter Quarters history.[84]

On July 9, 1847, with Winter Quarters at the height of its prominence, Mary Richards and her friends Amelia Richards and Ellen Woolley went for a stroll upon the bluff. Mary later reflected, "We gazed with delight upon our City of 8 months groweth its beauty full Gardins and extensive Fields' Clothed with the fast growing Corn and vegetables of every description."[85] Like a prairie flower that blooms only briefly, Winter Quarters flowered on the banks of the Missouri for a short season as a refuge for the Saints of God. Although their sojourn was brief, those who left in the late spring and summer of 1848 could look back on a Winter Quarters, "above all things pleasing to the Eyes of an Exile in the Wilderness of our afflictions."[86]

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1. John D. Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee, 1846–47 and 1859,* ed. Charles Kelly (1938; rpt., Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 17 (November 21, 1846).

2. Mary Haskin Parker Richards, *Winter Quarters: The 1846–1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards,* ed. Maurine Carr Ward (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 151. Mary Richards's diaries, in particular, paint a positive view of Winter Quarters. Students of the period have also pointed out that the community's strengths have sometimes been overlooked. See Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Winter Quarters: Glimmering Glimpses into Mormon Religious and Social Life," in *A Sesquicentennial Look at Church History* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1980), 149–61; and Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846–1852: "And Should We Die . . . "*

(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987). A popular telling by Conrey Bryson, *Winter Quarters* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), takes a similar stance. The most adamant proponent of this broader, positive view is Gail George Holmes, who in several short studies has emphasized the accomplishments of the Saints and their contributions to Nebraska and Iowa history. See Gail Geo. Holmes, "A Prophet Who Followed, Fulfilled, and Magnified: Brigham Young in Iowa and Nebraska," in *Lion of the Lord: Essays on the Life and Service of Brigham Young,* ed. Susan E. Black and Larry C. Porter (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 128–53; Gail Geo. Holmes, review of *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846–1852: "And Should We Die . . . "* by Richard E. Bennett, *BYU Studies* 28 (summer 1988): 113–17; Gail Geo. Holmes, "Seven-Year Epic Flowed along Missouri River with Tragedy, Triumph," *Church News,* July 18, 1992, 7, 10; and Gail Geo. Holmes, "Doors Opening Now to Old Council Bluff(s)," *Nauvoo Journal* 6 (spring 1994): 3–7.

3. William G. Hartley, "Winter Exodus from Nauvoo: Brigham Young's Camp of Israel, 1846," and "Spring Exodus from Nauvoo: Act Two in the 1846 Mormon Evacuation Drama," in *The Iowa Mormon Trail: Legacy of Faith and Courage,* ed. Susan Easton Black and William G. Hartley (Orem, Utah: Helix Publishing, 1997), xiii–xxxii, 61–83.

4. Parley P. Pratt Jr., ed., *The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt,* 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 311.

5. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri,* 68–70.

6. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri,* 70–73. Contemporary accounts often mention the abandoned fort at Council Bluffs, identified today as Fort Atkinson. United States soldiers were stationed at Fort Atkinson from 1820 to 1827 to protect fur trade and overland routes. The fort, near present-day Fort Calhoun, Nebraska, was located at the site of Lewis and Clark's 1804 council with Oto and Missouri Indians. Kent Ruth, ed., *Landmarks of the West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 132; *Fort Atkinson, 1820–1827: A State Historical Park* (Fort Calhoun, Nebr.: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, n.d.); Brigham Young, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847,* ed. Elden J. Watson (Salt Lake City: Elden J. Watson, 1971), 359–61.

7. See Municipal High Council Records, Winter Quarters, September 18, 1846, holograph, microfilm, Archives Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives) for a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the Cutler's Park site. Although Holmes argues that the Indians considered the Winter Quarters site as a "public highway . . . not open to contest," it is clear that the Saints felt they were on Omaha lands. Holmes, "Prophet Who Followed," 140. There are numerous letters and diary entries penned from Winter Quarters and headlined "Omaha Nation." See particularly letters from Church leaders included in *Messages of the First Presidency,* comp. James R. Clark, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 1:306, 308, 315, 329, and 340 (November 6, 1846; January 6, 14, and December 23, 1847; and April 22, 1848). In addition, a letter from Orson Spencer reporting a meeting with Thomas L. Kane states specifically that the Saints had the "permission of government to remain on the Omaha lands." Young, *Manuscript History,* 488–89.

8. Willard Richards, Journal, September 11, 15–16, 1846, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript,* ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–84), 3:76, 82 (September 10, 14, and 16, 1846); Young, *Manuscript History,* 376–77, 385, 387–89 (September 10, 11, and 14–16, 1846).

9. Woodruff, *Journal,* 3:83 (September 17, 1846). On the evening of September 17, Brigham Young and Willard Richards drew "three drafts of the design plot for the new

location." Willard Richards, Journal, September 17, 1846. As the men had just scouted out the tableland that morning, it is unclear whether the new location mentioned is the site on the tableland or the former site north of Cutler's Park. If they did lay out plans for the tableland site, Young had apparently already made his decision prior to a vote of the presiding councils.

10. High Council Records, September 18, 1846. Additional accounts of the discussion can be found under the same date (September 18, 1846) in Willard Richards, Journal; Woodruff, *Journal,* 3:83; and Young, *Manuscript History,* 390. Previous authors have ignored this platted but unsettled site north of Cutler's Park. The record is confusing because this site too is referred to as "Winter Quarters." However, a careful comparison of dates, geography, and the layout described in Willard Richards's journal clearly shows that this location is distinctive from Winter Quarters. Although Bennett misses this point as well, he does realize that there were likely three cemeteries. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri,* 287 n. 40.

11. Alpheus Cutler, in behalf of the high council, to Major M. H. Harvey, November 6, 1846, quoted in Young, *Manuscript History,* 442.

12. For information on the original and the revised plat of the city of Zion, see Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:357–59; and C. Mark Hamilton, *Nineteenth-Century Mormon Architecture and City Planning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 17–19.

13. A plat map of Winter Quarters omits dimensions but does reveal a slight difference in width between main and cross streets, suggesting that cross streets were the standard eighty-two and a half feet called for by the revised plat of the City of Zion. See Plan of Winter Quarters, ca. 1846, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; Hamilton, *Mormon Architecture,* 25.

14. Plan of Winter Quarters; Hamilton, *Mormon Architecture,* 13–19, 24–25.

15. Isaac C. Haight, Journal, September 16, 1846, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; Woodruff, *Journal,* 3:85 (September 23, 1846).

16. George Alley to Joseph Alley, January 26, 1847, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives.

17. Willard Richards, Journal, September 25–28, 1846.

18. Willard Richards, Journal, October 18, 1846.

19. Willard Richards, Journal, October 25, 1846; Horace K. Whitney, Journal, October 25, 1846, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861,* 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:206–7 (October 24–26, 1846); Young, *Manuscript History,* 428 (October 25, 1846).

20. Journal History of the Church, December 31, 1846, 6, Library Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Library); microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Willard Richards, Journal, January 10, 1847.

21. In letters dated January 7 and February 15, 1847, Brigham Young estimates seven hundred cabins; journal entries show very little new construction after that time. Young, *Manuscript History,* 494, 600.

22. Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, "Journal of Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, February 1846–December 1885," in *Journey to Zion: Voices from the Mormon Trail,* ed. Carol Cornwall Madsen (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 103.

23. George Alley to Joseph Alley, January 25, 1848, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives.

24. Lee, *Journals*, 74 (February 15, 1847).

25. Louisa Barnes Pratt, *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Being the Autobiography of a Mormon Missionary Widow and Pioneer*, ed. S. George Ellsworth (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), 87.

26. Louisa Pratt, *History*, 88.

27. Lyman Hinman, "Letter from Lyman Hinman of Winter Quarters, Douglas, Nebraska to 'Brother and Sister Taylor,'" *Nauvoo Journal* 5 (fall 1993): 48.

28. High Council Records, February 28, 1847; Louisa Pratt, *History*, 88.

29. Young, *Manuscript History*, 416 (October 18, 1846); Willard Richards, Journal, September 22, 1846. For examples of structures included on individual lots, see Horace K. Whitney, Journal, December 2, 12, 14, 16, and 19, 1846; Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:266, 289 (July 12–13 and November 2, 1847); Woodruff, *Journal*, 3:289 (November 2 and 4, 1847); Winter Quarters Manuscript History, April 2, 1848, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; Lee, *Journals*, 119 (March 13, 1847); Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters*, 169 (June 9, 1847); Jeremiah Willey, "History of Jeremiah Willey," 31, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; High Council Records, August 1, 1847.

30. For cabin prices, see Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters*, 201, 173; Louisa Pratt, *History*, 89; Delila Gardner Hughes, *The Life of Archibald Gardner: Utah Pioneer of 1847*, 2d ed. rev. (Draper, Utah: Review and Preview, 1970), 36.

31. Norton Jacob, *The Record of Norton Jacob*, ed. C. Edward Jacob and Ruth S. Jacob (n.p.: Norton Jacob Family Association, 1953), 26 (September 26 and 27, 1846); Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:201 (September 24, 1846).

32. Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:222, 242 (January 2 and March 22, 1847); Winter Quarters Eleventh Ward Record, April 1847, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; J. L. Taylor to Morgan Lewis, December 31, 1847, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives.

33. Willard Richards, Journal, September 19, 27, and October 3, 1846; High Council Records, September 19, 1846; Woodruff, *Journal*, 3:66 (August 9, 1846); Lee, *Journals*, 127 (March 21, 1847).

34. Lee, *Journals*, 33 (December 14, 1846).

35. Hiram B. Clawson, "Crossing the Plains," *Young Woman's Journal* 18 (1907): 216; Woodruff, *Journals*, 3:296 (December 12 and 14, 1847). See Dale F. Beecher, "The Office of Bishop: An Example of Organizational Development in the Church," *Task Papers in LDS History*, no. 21 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978), 9–10.

36. Willard Richards, Journal, December 13, 1846; Young, *Manuscript History*, 495, 509 (January 7 and 23, 1847); Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters*, 128.

37. Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:222 (January 2, 1847); Willard Richards, Journal, December 31, 1846. For a drawing of the house, see Thomas Bullock, Willard Richards Octagon and Office in Winter Quarters [ca. 1854], holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives. Octagons were a novel building form in America until popularized by the publication of Orson S. Fowler, *A Home for All; or, a New, Cheap, Convenient, and Superior Mode of Building* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1848).

38. Dean C. Jessee, "Brigham Young's Family: The Wilderness Years," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 4 (1979): 487. Eliza composed a poem for "All the Ladies who Reside in the 2d Mansion of Prest. B. Young."

39. Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 144; Horace K. Whitney, Journal, October 16, 17, November 2, 3, 7, 10, and 30, 1846; Willard Richards, Journal, December 19, 1846.

40. Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes and Incidents at Winter Quarters," *Woman's Exponent* 13 (February 15, 1885): 139. Heber C. Kimball sponsored the construction of at least twenty-five log cabins in Winter Quarters. Willard Richards, Journal, December 19, 1846.

41. Biographies of 150 wives of battalion members may be found in Shirley N. Maynes, *Five Hundred Wagons Stood Still: Mormon Battalion Wives* (Sandy, Utah: by the author, 1999).

42. George Alley to Joseph Alley, May 28, 1847, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives, emphasis in original; Willard Richards, Journal, December 8, 1846; Lee, *Journals*, 52 (January 12, 1847); Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes and Incidents at Winter Quarters," *Woman's Exponent* 14 (October 15, 1885): 78.

43. High Council Records, September 20, 1846, February 21, 28, 1847; Young, *Manuscript History*, 538 (March 20, 1847); Brigham Young to Orson Spencer, January 23, 1848, in *Millennial Star* 10 (April 15, 1848): 114.

44. Lee, *Journals*, 36–37 (December 14, 1846), 42 (December 20, 1846); Willard Richards, Journal, October 2, 14, 1846; James Henry Rollins, Autobiography, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as USHS).

45. Robert Gardner Jr., "Journal and Diary of Robert Gardner Jr.," in Madsen, *Journey to Zion*, 270.

46. Phineas Wolcott Cook, "Life and History of Phineas W. Cook," 52, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives.

47. Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters*, 169; Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:253 (April 29, 1847).

48. Franklin Benjamin Woolley, Autobiography, typescript, 7, LDS Church Archives; Woodruff, *Journal*, 3:308 (January 12, 1848).

49. Frederick Piercy, *Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*, ed. James Linforth (Liverpool: Franklin D. Richards, 1855), 81; "Keep It before the People: To Emigrants," *Frontier Guardian and Iowa Sentinel* (this advertisement ran in every issue from March 11 to September 2, 1852); Henry DeLong, Reminiscences, 7, LDS Church Archives; Helen Mar Whitney, "Travels beyond the Mississippi," *Woman's Exponent* 13 (November 15, 1884): 91.

50. The Latter-day Saints operated several different ferries across the Missouri River. See Holmes, "Prophet Who Followed," 150–51; and Thomas Sebreng, "Steam Ferry Boat," *Western Bugle* (this advertisement ran in every issue from July 28, 1852, to September 7, 1853).

51. Willard Richards, Journal, October 26, 1846; Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:256 (May 24, 1847); Oliver B. Huntington, Diary and Reminiscences, typescript, May 9 and 19, 1848, LDS Church Archives.

52. Timbers in the Florence Mill are reputed to have come from the original Winter Quarters mill. The Florence Mill, which is currently owned by a nonprofit organization hoping to preserve the structure, was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. Linda Meigs, "Florence Mill—a Witness to the Trails," *Old Mill News* 28 (winter 2000): 20.

53. Willard Richards, Journal, September 15, 1846. Mary Richards confirms that Wealthy was the "first one laid in the new burying ground." Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters*, 92.

54. Winter Quarters Sexton's Record Book, 1846–48, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives. I have used what appears to be the earliest copy of two versions of the record book filed with the papers of the Municipal High Council. Because of the consistent ink and handwriting, this small hand-sewn volume was likely a later compilation of the sexton's reports to the high council. Its late creation, possibly by a

clerk in the Historian's Office, also accounts for the misidentification of one of the two cemeteries which it covers. The first fifty-six burials are identified as being at Cutler's Park, yet the deceased were actually interred in the second cemetery to the north. This collection also includes six of the cemetery sexton's original reports to the high council from April 26, 1847, to June 1848.

55. High Council Records, November 8, 1846. After multiple complaints from the sexton about unrecorded burials, the high council instructed bishops to contact ward members, determine who had been buried in the cemetery, and make a complete report. The recurring issue finally disappears from the high council minutes in April 1847, suggesting that the bishops responded and that the records were amended. In addition, if all numbered graves actually held bodies, there are an additional twenty-eight unidentified burials in the two cemeteries. A comparison of the sexton's record book with more than 150 diaries and autobiographies reveals only two unrecorded deaths for the period from September 14, 1846, through May 14, 1848, demonstrating the accuracy of the record. Bennett made a similar comparative study, which turned up thirty deaths unrecorded by the sexton, but he does not specify the time period of his focus. The discrepancy may be accounted for if he included deaths at Cutler's Park that are undocumented in the official record and that I omitted in my comparison. See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 287 n. 40.

56. Sexton's Record Book. These figures include the burials of Loisa Cook, which is included in the record book but took place on the prairie twelve miles north, and W. A. Sirrine, who died on a steamboat and was first buried at Nauvoo but then reinterred at Winter Quarters. It also includes the double listing of the death of Charity Campbell.

57. Thomas L. Kane, *The Mormons: A Discourse Delivered before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1850), 51. Copies of Kane's speech were presented to the President of the United States, members of Congress, and other government officials. Church leaders published the speech in the British Mission's *Millennial Star* and Kanesville's *Frontier Guardian*. With such wide distribution, it is not surprising that Kane's figure of six hundred deaths was picked up by other authors and published in numerous histories. For example, see B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Corporation of the President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 3:151.

More recent authors have looked at Kane's estimate more critically. The most detailed and thoughtful study is that of Richard Bennett, who devoted a chapter to the subject in *Mormons at the Missouri*. He notes that there were 361 burials recorded but points out that (1) the recorded deaths do not include those that occurred from the time they crossed the Missouri to September 13, 1846; (2) the sexton's repeated complaints to the high council indicate burials that were not recorded; and (3) there seems to be an undercount of deaths attributed to scurvy when compared with the diaries and autobiographies. He estimates that there were at least four hundred deaths in all the west side settlements (including the Ponca camp) in the first year alone. Other writers, such as Holmes and Bryson, use the sexton's record book to refute Kane's estimate, but they do not calculate their own estimates for the unrecorded Cutler's Park period. See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 136–41; Holmes, "Prophet Who Followed," 142–43; and Bryson, *Winter Quarters*, 5–6, 70–75, 131–63.

In my analysis, the sexton's record book appears to be a reliable document for estimating burials at the three cemeteries. I have used the death rate from the first two months of actual record keeping to estimate figures from the unrecorded period at

Cutler's Park. The burials which were unregistered and inspired the sexton's complaints to the high council were either recorded at a later date or are represented by the twenty-eight numbered graves for which burials are undocumented. While some additional burials may have gone unrecorded, only two show up in a search of diaries, letters, and reminiscences. In addition, although there may be an undercount of deaths attributed to scurvy, as Bennett points out, nearly a third of all entries do not list a cause of death at all, thus making it impossible to assess accurately the total number of deaths from any disease.

58. This paper considers only the three cemeteries associated with Cutler's Park and Winter Quarters and the deaths at Summer Quarters. It does not cover George Miller's Ponca camp on the Niobrara River, nor does it include the approximately ninety Latter-day Saint settlements in western Iowa. There were obviously many deaths in each of these communities as well, and each likely had its own cemetery.

59. During this two-month period, 64 percent of deaths for which a cause was identified were attributed to "fever" or "chills." These were also the primary complaints during the Cutler's Park stay. See Sexton's Record Book, deaths from September 14 to November 15, 1846.

60. Summer Quarters, established by Brigham Young in the spring of 1847 as a family farm, experienced at least nineteen deaths. The body of one woman, Sarah Lytle, was taken to Winter Quarters for burial and is recorded in the Sexton's Record Book. It is unknown if any of the others were likewise returned to Winter Quarters for burial. Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, and possibly other Church leaders also established large-scale family farming operations outside Winter Quarters. However, individuals who died at these farms were taken to Winter Quarters for burial. See Daniel Davis, Diary, LDS Church Archives, for an account of Heber C. Kimball's farm, including deaths that occurred there. Also see Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 163–65.

61. The Saints camped on the Missouri were dying at nearly the same rate as the populace during the great yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia in 1793. Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790–1840* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 83.

62. Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters*, 133. Helen Mar Whitney describes scurvy as "causing such intense agony that death would be welcomed as a release from their suffering." Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes and Incidents at Winter Quarters," *Woman's Exponent* 14 (July 15, 1885): 31.

63. John R. Young, *Memoirs of John R. Young: Utah Pioneer, 1847* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1920), 41. See Sexton's Record Book to document deaths of Turley family members—Francis A. Daniels, Francis G. Daniels, Joseph Smith Turley, Hyrum Smith Turley, Sarah E. Turley, Frances Turley, and Princetta Turley.

64. Allen J. Stout, "Journal of Allen Joseph Stout," typescript, research files at the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City; Woodruff, *Journal*, 3:346 (May 2, 1848).

65. Amelia Hadley, "Journal of Travails to Oregon," in *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries and Letters from the Western Trails, 1840–1890*, ed. Kenneth L. Holmes, 11 vols. (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1983–93), 3:58 (May 7, 1851). The cemetery at Winter Quarters continued to be used by the early settlers of Florence and by the Church. During the years that Florence served as an outfitting post, many more Latter-day Saints were laid to rest on the lonesome knoll. See John Taylor to Brother Appleby, July 1, 1857, Journal History, July 1, 1857, 3–4.

66. Jacob, *Record*, 26 (September 24–26, 1846). See also Woodruff, *Journal*, 3:85 (September 23, 1846); Joseph Lee Robinson, Notebook, 1846–47, 53, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; and Brigham Young to Jesse C. Little, November 15, 1846, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives.

67. Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography*, 311.

68. Robinson, Notebook, 1846–47, 53.

69. Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters*, 92.

70. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed., *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 24.

71. Fanny Murray to Gould and Laura, July 5, 1847, quoted in Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes and Incidents at Winter Quarters," *Woman's Exponent* 14 (November 1, 1885): 82.

72. Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters*, 121.

73. "Letters of a Proselyte: The Hascall-Pomeroy Correspondence," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 25 (July 1957): 238. See also George Whitaker, "Life of George Whitaker, a Utah Pioneer," typescript, 28, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters*, 121, 173; Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:260; Rachel Emma Woolley Simmons, "Journal of Rachel Emma Woolley Simmons," in *Heart Throbs of the West*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1939–51), 11:160–61; Eliza A. Cheney to Charles Beebe, January 18, 1848, typescript, microfilm, Nathan Calhoun Cheney Letters, LDS Church Archives; Willey, "History," 31; and Young to Little.

74. Thomas Bullock, *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock*, ed. Will Bagley (Spokane, Wash.: Arthur H. Clark, 1997), 99 (November 28, 1846).

75. John Pulsipher, Diary, 30, USHS; Murray to Gould and Laura, 82.

76. Huntington, Diary, May 9, 1848.

77. George Alley to Joseph Alley, January 25, 1848, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives, emphasis in original. A number of Saints marveled at the comparatively mild weather they encountered during their two-year stay. Weather conditions can be documented on an almost daily basis through the diaries of John D. Lee, Hosea Stout, Mary Richards, and Daniel Davis. These sources confirm that although a piercing winter wind blew at gale forces and temperatures dropped as low as 17½ degrees below zero, there were few storms of any consequence. In fact, when it did snow, the accumulation was light and usually melted quickly, allowing George Alley to record "but two or three rains and one snow of any account" during the first winter. Balmy days found men walking about in their shirt sleeves. While there was an occasional complaint about "intensely hot" weather in midsummer, those months were characterized primarily as "pleasant."

78. Murray to Gould and Laura, 82.

79. James Allen, document quoted in Journal History, July 18, 1846, 3. The document states, "The Mormon people now in rout to California are hereby authorized to pass through the Indian country on their rout, and they may make stopping places at such points in the Indian country as may be necessary to factiitate the emigration of their whole people to California, and for such time as may reasonable be required for this purpose."

80. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 101–11; Journal History, July 2, 10, and 18, 1846; Lawrence G. Coates, "Refugees, Friends, and Foes: Mormons and Indians in Iowa and Nebraska," in *Coming to Zion* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1997), 49–97.

81. George A. Smith to John Smith, July 3, 1848, Journal History, July 3, 1848, 2; Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 166–67.

82. Harriet Sherrill Ward, *Prairie Schooner Lady: The Journal of Harriet Sherrill Ward, 1853*, ed. Ward G. DeWitt and Florence Stark DeWitt (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1959), 44; George A. Smith to Orson Pratt, October 20, 1848, Journal History, October 20, 1848, 2.

83. William H. Kilgore, *The Kilgore Journal of an Overland Journey to California in the Year 1850,* ed. Joyce Rockwood Muench (New York: Hastings House, 1949), 16; Journal History, October 2, 1848, 3, 11. Kilgore's description is both vivid and specific ("about Six hundred houses and nearly all on fire"), suggesting that he is a reliable witness. Yet John Steele who passed through two weeks later spent the night in a "vacant cabin for a tent" and described the "unsightly ruins of about six hundred log houses." Some believe that Steele's description belies that of Kilgore. However, Steele mentions only "unsightly ruins" and one "vacant cabin." Other travelers that same spring actually support Kilgore's account. Jerome Dutton, who stopped there on the same day as Steele, described only "a few log houses," and Abram Sortore said he "could see relics of their old fireplaces and 'such like.'" Unfortunately, neither of these witnesses confirms that the town had burned. However, it is certain that by 1851 the cabins were essentially gone. Witnesses from that year describe only outlines in the dirt and a few chimneys. Ossian Taylor, Journal, June 25, 1851, typescript, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; John Steele, *Across the Plains in 1850,* ed. Joseph Schafer (Chicago: Caxton Club, 1930), 33–34; Jerome Dutton, "Across the Plains in 1850," *Annals of Iowa* 9 (July–October 1910): 456; Abram Sortore, *Biography and Early Life Sketch of the Late Abram Sortore* (Alexandria, Mo.: n.p., 1909), 2; Hadley, "Journal of Travails to Oregon," 58; Edna Walton Muir, "Rebecca Card Walton," in Carter, *Heart Throbs,* 12:415.

84. Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier,* 1:235 (February 6, 1847).

85. Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters,* 151.

86. Mary Richards, *Winter Quarters,* 151.