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Guest Editor's Prologue

Leonard J. Arrington

The assassination of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum in June 1844 marked the beginning of an aggressive attempt by a coterie of Illinois vigilantes to rid the state of the Latter-day Saints. In January 1845 the Illinois legislature repealed the charter which had given self-rule to the Mormon headquarters city of Nauvoo. During the following months, Latter-day Saint leaders were harassed with legal writs. In September, hostile mobs began a systematic campaign of burning the barns and crops of LDS residents. By the end of the month, it was clear to Brigham Young and his followers that they would have to leave Nauvoo.

Before his death, Joseph Smith had proposed the establishment of Latter-day Saint settlements in Wisconsin, Texas, Oregon, and California; and Church leaders now gave these locations active consideration. Leaders carefully studied the published reports of western travelers and interviewed government officials, trappers, and explorers. A consensus was reached that the main body of the Church would move to the Great Basin and that advance parties were to lead the way there in 1846. Saints in the Northeast would charter a ship and go to Yerba Buena (San Francisco). Saints in the Southeast would move from northeast Mississippi to Independence, Missouri, and then overland to the headquarters location in a valley adjacent to the Great Salt Lake or one of its tributaries. Illinois Saints would cross Iowa toward the Missouri River; the precise plan of moving them west would be announced after their arrival there.

The articles in this special issue present in some detail this movement west. "The Iowa Journal of Lorenzo Snow," edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and never before published, describes the difficulties encountered by a leading personality among the Saints who crossed Iowa. "Cultural Conflict: Mormons and Indians in Nebraska," by Lawrence G. Coates, analyzes the relationship of the Saints

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and their leaders with Native Americans in the Missouri Valley. Richard E. Bennett, who has spent the past few years studying the Mormon experience in Winter Quarters, discusses the formulation of the final plan to move west. Stanley B. Kimball puts in perspective the Mormon Trail network in Nebraska, 1846–48, while Stephen F. Pratt furnishes insights into the larger company which followed the 1847 pioneer company of Brigham Young. A final view of the important role of Nebraska in the outfitting of subsequent companies which migrated west is given in William G. Hartley’s article “The Great Florence Fitout of 1861.”

Each of the articles in this issue has involved extensive research in primary documents never before examined, or, as in the case of Stanley Kimball, new investigation of the trail. Together, these articles furnish a fresh perspective on the Latter-day Saint journey to, sojourn in, and movement from the Missouri River Valley.
The Iowa Journal of Lorenzo Snow

Edited and with an introduction by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher

Just as the Kirtland Camp served as a training and testing ground for the first-generation leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, so the move across Iowa became a preparation and proving experience for a second group. Among that second wave was young Lorenzo Snow, the man who in 1849 would be called into the Quorum of the Twelve and in 1898 would become President of the Church. A small journal, preserved in photocopy in the LDS Church Archives, provides a sketch of the young man learning his roles and of the Iowa experience which helped teach him.

Not exactly a diary, the four-by-six inch notebook is more a series of catch-up accounts, the last of them finished by spring 1847, but none of them written on the day they happened. The location of the notebook itself, identified by the catalogue of the Church Archives as being "in private hands," is now unknown; the photocopy is at least eleven years old. Of a total of ninety-three pages, thirty-seven comprise the Iowa account. The rest of the notebook is a miscellany of entries from Snow’s British missions, accounts, lists of members under his charge, and scattered genealogical data. The book concludes with a copy of a letter which Lorenzo Snow composed for Charles Dana and Robert Campbell to deliver to his unconverted relatives in his native Ohio.

Prior to the opening of the Iowa journal, Lorenzo Snow had proven himself a devout Latter-day Saint and a gifted leader. After his conversion at Kirtland in 1836, he had undertaken several missions; the longest mission, to England, had demonstrated his considerable abilities. Climaxing that assignment, he had successfully led a group of approximately 240 emigrating Saints across the Atlantic and up the Mississippi to Nauvoo.1

Maureen Ursenbach Beecher is an associate professor of English and senior research historian with the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History at Brigham Young University.

1Existing full biographies of Lorenzo Snow include Eliza R. Snow Smith, Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, One of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Written and Compiled by His Sister (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1884); Thomas C. Romney, The Life of Lorenzo Snow, Fifth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: S.U.P. Memorial Foundation, 1935); and Francis M. Gibbons, Lorenzo Snow: Spiritual Giant, Prophet of God (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982). Details about the Snow family are contained in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher.1

Shortly after his arrival in Nauvoo, at the request of his older sister, Eliza, Lorenzo had been taught the principle of plural marriage by Joseph Smith, to whom Eliza had for a year been sealed as wife. In 1845, before the completion of the temple, Lorenzo himself had taken two wives on the same day. After the dedication of the ordinance section of the temple, he had been sealed to them and to two more, so that by the time the Iowa journal opens, his family responsibility had become considerable.2 By the end of the diary, at least eleven people would turn to him as paterfamilias for direction and support.

Setting out for Sugar Creek camp, the first gathering place across the Mississippi, Lorenzo Snow counts seven in his family, “the remaining part . . . to follow on as soon as spring should open.” Three wives—Charlotte Squires, age twenty-one; Sarah Ann Prichard, twenty; and Harriet Squires, twenty-seven—accompany him. Through this diary, and that of Eliza R. Snow, whose experience parallels her brother’s, it is apparent that Harriet holds the reins of domestic accord. The fourth wife, Adaline Goddard Hendrickson, is left behind in Nauvoo, possibly because of her “delicate condition”—she would give birth almost nine months later. Two years her husband’s senior, thirty-four-year-old Adaline, Lorenzo’s cousin, had been married previously and brought with her into the Snow family her three sons. Hiram, twelve, the oldest, stays with her in Nauvoo until June when Adaline, Hiram, and Adaline’s mother (Lorenzo’s Aunt Percy Amanda Goddard) would join the family in Mt. Pisgah. Her other two sons, Orville and Jacob, ages ten and six, come ahead with their stepfather—the diary notes their usefulness in running the hand mill at Mt. Pisgah. Unmentioned except at her departure in September, but most likely in the first party, is one “Hannah,” presumably Hannah Goddard, Adaline’s seventeen-year-old sister. These people—Lorenzo Snow, his three wives, one sister-in-law, and two stepsons—make up the original seven.

Added later to that number are two more cousins, Calvin and Porter Squires (Harriet’s brother), who, though they leave the family at Mt. Pisgah, are reported later to have stayed with the Snows in Utah until the mid-1850s.3 They contribute to the welfare of the group by working at Bonaparte on the Des Moines River for goods and money, or by tending a garden at Mt. Pisgah during the summer covered by this diary.

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2 Smith, Lorenzo Snow, 84-86, 92.
3 Ibid., 93.
Mt. Pisgah, where the Snows sojourned almost two years, was intended by Brigham Young as a place of resting and replenishing for the Mormons yet to come. There the first Saints were instructed to make improvements, to build houses and cultivate farms. While for most it would prove a brief assignment, for Lorenzo Snow the responsibility would extend through that year and until spring 1848, when he would bring his family on to Utah. His calls would include being counselor to Charles C. Rich, who succeeded William Huntington as president of the Mt. Pisgah settlement, and then, at Rich’s departure, serving as president himself. But first would come a long and serious illness.

Eliza R. Snow, traveling with the Stephen Markham family over the same trail, mentions in her almost daily diary her meetings with her brother’s family, though she is noticeably and inexplicably absent from his account. Her mentions of his sickness are much more explicit than his long and dream-like account, and so are summarized in the footnotes to this printing. Eliza leaves Mt. Pisgah with the Markhams in mid-August and spends the winter in Winter Quarters, going to the Valley the following summer. Leonora Leavitt, the oldest Snow sister, comes occasionally into the account in connection with Isaac Morley, to whom she is plurally married. Isaac Morley established the small settlement out of Mt. Pisgah to which the Snows gravitate during the difficult 1846 summer.

As the year passes, Lorenzo Snow’s diary accounts become increasingly sparse. He records the births of his two daughters, Adaline’s Rosetta in November 1846 and Charlotte’s Leonora in January 1847. That he fails to mention the death of the second baby five months later suggests that the last actual entry was posted before that date.

One final section, evidently written in early July 1847, concludes the diary. While it is not a journal account, but a letter, it is included here for the further details it gives and for the significance of the occasion for which it was written.

Charles Dana and Robert Campbell, two of the Mt. Pisgah members, had been called to undertake a mission to the East to raise funds to assist the Saints in their further move west. With misplaced

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4Studies of Mt. Pisgah include Leland H. Gentry, "The Mormon Way Stations: Garden Grove and Mt. Pisgah," Brigham Young University Studies 21 (Fall 1981): 445–61; also Clare B. Christensen, Before and After Mt. Pisgah (Salt Lake City: N.p., 1979), a multiple family history with its center in Iowa in the 1840s. 
5Eliza R. Snow, Diaries, 1846–49, holograph. Huntington Librarias, San Marino, California. The full diaries are soon to be published by the present author under the title Eliza and I: The Personal Writings of Eliza R. Snow.
confidence, Lorenzo Snow recommends the two approach his relatives in Auburn, Ohio, and his friends and fellow Saints across the county line in Mantua, where the Snows had lived before their conversion. Dana’s diary reports their August 1847 visits with disheartening candor: of all the Snows visited, none is willing to alleviate his relatives’ need. Loren Snow, half-uncle to Lorenzo, excuses his unwillingness to aid his nephew by accusing that “if Lorenzo had been an honest boy he might have been in better circumstances.” The charge goes further: Dana writes that “they complained that Lorenzo had defrauded his father and been the means of his father losing his property.” Kind enough to lend the missionaries his horse and buggy and to put them up overnight, Alvirus Snow, another half-uncle, nevertheless insists that Lorenzo “should never have one cent of his money.” A legendary irony is found in the willingness of a Widow Hinkley in Mantua who, Dana writes, “gave me for the good of the church some clothing and ten dollars in cash.” Dana sums up his Ohio visit with Esquire Goodall’s comment that “if Lorenzo would come back they would be willing to help him” and Dana’s own cynical response that “it would be to a coat of tar and feathers if anything.”

It is indicative of Snow family loyalty that neither Lorenzo nor his sister Eliza bore ill will towards these relatives, choosing rather to maintain family ties over the years. Lucius Scovill, widower of Franklin Snow’s daughter Lury, would call again on the Auburn relatives in 1861, with little improvement in relations, and Eliza and Lorenzo would visit on their return from their 1872 trip to Palestine.

The journal as it is here reproduced has been but little altered for print. With her usual care, Edyth Romney made the first typescript, which I then checked against the original. Occasionally, for readability, I have supplied periods at the ends and capitals at the beginnings of obvious sentences; other marks I have left as I read them. Spelling is as in the original, with occasional clarifications provided in brackets. The whole Iowa account is provided here, despite some lengthy sections, in the hope that it will bring readers one step closer to an understanding of a man whose contributions would mark Mormonism for the remaining half of the nineteenth century.

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7Charles Root Dana, Diary, 12–20 August 1847, holograph, Library–Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.

8Lucius Scovill, Diary, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church Archives; also Smith, Lorenzo Snow, 350.
Journal of Lorenzo Snow

I left Nauvoo with part of my family on the 9th of Feb '46. Camped at Sougar [Sugar] Creek where we remained till the first of March. This place is about nine miles from the City [Nauvoo] in the Territory of Ioa [Iowa]. After we arrived at Sougar Creek we sewed a couple of waggon covers together that were not in use and made them into a very comfortable Tent; having got away in so much haste that we were not so well prepared as we otherwise should have been. There were seven in family: So with Two wagons and a Tent we made ourselves as comfortable as the circumstances of the wether would admit. There were a hundred families gathered in there before us and others were now constantly arriving. We had been but few days in camp when we had to put up with the inconvenience of a heavy snow storm. The weather turned severely cold and the Mississippi froze so hard that teams and heavy loaded wagons crossed over with perfect safety. Tho' we suffered some from the wether yet we felt greatly to rejoice in having accomplished this much towards freeing ourselves from the land of Gentile oppression, and we felt as tho' we could breath more freely and speak one with another upon those things where in God had made us free with less carefulness than we had hitherto done. I visited the city a number of times to see that part of my family that remained and felt that it was no longer my home and had one strong feeling (ie) that was to get away the remaining part of my family and see the saints freed likewise, all the honest in heart. I had made arrangements for the remaining part of my family to follow on as soon as spring should open. At Sougar Creek after the families had about all crossed over that intended to go with the first Camp we entered into an organization for journeying. I was numbered in Orison Pratts [Orson Pratt's] Ten, and appointed Capt. and Clerk. This was the 2nd Ten of P P Pratt's Hundred.

On the first of March we struck our Tent and commenced our journey. The first day was rather unpleasant travelling it being quite muddy. I had some trouble with one of my horses had to loose it several times from the wagon, soon learned that it was naturally balky. As we moved on in camp from day to day we excited great curiosity among the Gentiles but received no molestations.

As we travelled very slow and stoped occasionally several days at our places of encampment many improved the opportunity of working and obtaining provisions for their families. About the first of April we arrived at Shoal Creek it being only about [blank] miles from Nauvoo & it having been so very wet and muddy that we could make but slow progress. Our camp composed about [blank] families and numbered [blank] Wagons. About the middle of this Month the whole Camp was newly organized. I still retained my Office as Capt of O Pratts Ten and chosen Clerk of P P Pratts Fifty. About the First of this month Sarah Ann was taken very sick of the fever which lasted several weeks but her health had become considerably improved so that when the Camp was ordered to move she could ride without suffering much inconvenience. I had exchanged my horses for oxen and found it much easier getting

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*Lorenzo Snow's sister, Eliza Roxy, ten years his senior, arrived at Sugar Creek with the Stephen Markham family on 12 February and stopped beside her brother's tent, lodging in the tent of David Yearsley and his family. She dates the snowstorm as 13 February.

*That Lorenzo Snow left blanks to be filled in later suggests both that he had no maps at hand and that he wrote in haste. The distance from Nauvoo to the Shoal Creek camp is about 110 miles. Stanley B. Kimball provides maps in "The Mormon Pioneer Trail, 1846-47," *Ensign* 9 (September 1979): 72, 73.
along. But we had a good deal of difficulty in getting feed for them. The country was thinly settled and we were much troubled to get corn to supply the whole Camp. There were a great many that fed their parched corn and Meal [to] their cattle and horses.

We browsed our cattle when we could but travelling thro a prairie country it was not always we could find brows.\(^{11}\)

About the [blank] of April our Fifty left this place. In consequence of some business which my Teamster had out in the country we did not start till the next morning.\(^{12}\) We had a number of very bad creeks to ford made worse by the vast many teams that had passed as the Whole Camp was now before us. It was quite rainy and extremely muddy. We had reached within a few rods of the place where we intended to Camp for the night when we met with a very unpleasant affair in breaking an axeltre(e) to our wagon. It was then raining very hard and quite cold. We immediately pitched our Tent, made a good hickory fire. I then went back to my wagon that I had broke to fix some plan to get Sarah Ann to the Tent, for she rode in this wagon and was so feeble she could not walk. The water and mud was very deep and we could not get to the wagon without wading. I could think of no better way than to take her and carry her to the Tent on my back which I accordingly did, a circumstance that we often have laughed at since tho' we felt but little like it at that time. We were now about fifteen miles from the Camp and nine or ten to the first house and none of us being mechanicks the prospects of getting our wagon repaired was not very encouraging. Granting one favor often leads to obtaining another: so we found in this case. A stranger who called himself a brother came to me the day before and requested that I would let him put his trunk in my wagon, said he could not get it carried any where else. Tho' our wagons were perfectly crowded and as much as seemed we could possibly get along with still I told him to put it in and come along and share with us. I was lamenting over my misfortune when he came up to me and informed me that his trade was wagon-making and could very easily repair my wagon. The next day was very rainy and cold. We had no corn for our cattle, and a very poor chance for brows.

As soon as the wether would admit, brother Wilson (that being the name of the afore mentioned person) went to work and made an axeltre[e] much better than the one I broke. Our wagon being repaired we left this place having stayed several days on account of rain and mud.

The first day after leaving this place we mired one of our waggons and had to take every thing out carrying them some rods before we could find dry ground on which we might set them down. This night and the next morning we had to eat dry crackers not having or being able to get any wood for fire. The next day we reached the Camp. We found our fifty prepared to start the following day. Two days from this point we reached a creek called [blank].\(^{13}\) There we rejoiced to find an abundance of grass for our teams. We stayed here several days to recruit our teams.

\(^{11}\)To *browse* the cattle means to break off tree limbs and let the animals nibble what green shoots and small twigs they could, a poor substitute for grazing.

\(^{12}\)When Eliza Snow left Shoal Creek on 2 April, her brother had not yet arrived. Her next meeting with him was at Big Locust Creek, where he arrived on 15 April. The date left blank in the diary would be between those two dates.

\(^{13}\)This is most likely Big Locust Creek, the campsite described by Eliza Snow as being "on the edge of a high shady prairie," the stream being "thickly skirted with timber." Such surroundings would make an ideal location for recruiting both teams and people.
then went on about 25 miles and stopped at a place which we call'd Garden Grove. The day after we left [blank] Creek I had the good luck to get a small hog which a friend of mine shot, it being a wild one. At Garden Grove we all fell to work and fenced a large field and built a number of houses. We arrived here the first day of March. We had been here about eleven days when we were counseled by Pres. Young that is our Father to go on and make a settlement about 300 miles beyond Council Bluffs up the Platt. We accordingly set out and proceeded on about 30 miles where we stopped a few days waiting the arrival of the Camp. As soon as we heard of their appearance I was appointed to go out and meet them upon the prairie and pilot them in.

As soon as the Camp came up different arrangements were entered into in relation to our Fifty. It was concluded not to be wisdom for us to go on as it was at first intended. But for the whole Camp to go to work ploughing, fencing and putting up houses. I assisted in chopping and putting up brother Pratt's House logs and about that time was taken sick with the fever (25th of May.) I never had such a severe fit of sickness before since my recollection. My friends and family had given up most all hopes of my recovery. Father Huntington, the President of the Place, called on his Congregation to pray for me. He also with Gen. Rich and some others clothed themselves in the garments of the Priesthood and prayed for my recovery. I believe it was thro the continued applications of my family and friends to the throne of Heaven that my life was spared. In my sickness I went through in my mind the most singular scenes that any man ever did. My family generally believed that I was not in my right mind. But the scenes thro' which my spirit travelled are yet fresh in my memory as tho' they occurred but yesterday. And when my people supposed me in the greatest pain and danger I am conscious of having a great many spiritual exercises sometimes partaking of the most acute suffering that heart can conceive and others the most rapturous enjoyment that heart ever felt or immagination ever conceived. I suppose at first I must have been left in the hands of an evil spirit, in fact I was administered to upon this supposition. I was led into the full and perfect conviction that I was entirely a hopeless case in reference to salvation, that eternities, upon eternities must pass and still I saw my case would remain the same. I saw the whole world rejoicing in all the powers and glories of salvation without the slightest beam of hope on my part, but doomed to a separation from my friends and family all I loved most Hear to eternity upon eternity. I shudder even now at the remembrance of the torments and agony of my feelings. No tongue can describe them or imagination conceive. Those who were attending me at that time describe me as being in a condition of body. I remained several hours refusing to speak. My body was cool, and my eyes and countenance denoted extreme suffering.

14Eliza Snow corrects her brother's date, which obviously could not be March. Already in Garden Grove, she records, "May 1st... Lorenzo arrived this evening."
15Brigham Young had intended Grand Island, a forty-mile-long island created by diverging branches of the Grand River, to be the wintering spot for the Saints. They would not get that far and stopped instead at the Missouri River at Council Bluffs.
16Considering the role he would later play in the place, it seems appropriate for Lorenzo Snow to be acting the part of host at the settlement which was to become Mr. Purgah.
17Eliza Snow, arriving 25 May at the camp, describes it as "a small grove with a beautiful prospect... on the middle fork of the Grand River."
18For further discussion of the ritual of the prayer circle, see D. Michael Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," BYU Studies 19 (Fall 1978): 79-105.
After this scene ended I entered another of an opposite character. My spirit seems to have left the world and introduced into that of Kolob. I heard a voice calling me by name saying "he is worthy, he is worthy, take away his filthy garments." My cloths were then taken off piece by piece and a voice said "let him be clothed, let him be clothed." Immediately I found a celestial body gradually growing upon me until I found myself crowned with all its glory and power. The excty of joy I now experienced no man can tell, pen cannot describe it. I conversed familiarly with Joseph, Father Smith and others, and mingled in the society of the Holy One. I saw my family all saved and observed the dispensations of God with mankind until at last a perfect redemption was effected, tho' great was the sufferings of the wicked, especially those that had persecuted the saints. My spirit must have remained I should judge for days enjoying the scenes of eternal happiness.19

While I was sick that part of my family which I left at Nauvoo, arrived which relieved a good deal of anxiety as they were all well and in good health.20 Soon after their arrival, Calvin took two yoke of my cattle and wagon and went to Stringtown with brother S Smith to work for provisions. Porter with the assistance of Father Morley ploughed and fenced a small garden and planted it. About the middle of July Chandler Rogers being about to move to the Bluffs offered us his house which we gladly accepted. We had suffered much inconvenience living in Tent and wagons in the hot weather. I was now so far recovered that I could walk about some tho' still very weak. Brother Smith returned in about five weeks after he left, bringing us some provisions which was very welcome. He taried a few days, then went back.

President Young, Elder Kimble and Elder W Richards, paid us a visit about this time which with a few hours of social and familiar chat gave me much satisfaction.

Prest. Young said he wished me as soon as I was able to join him with my family at Grand Island, about 300 miles beyond the Bluffs. But he altered his arrangements afterwards and did not leave the Bluffs.

The latter part of July and August witnessed a general and almost universal scenes of sickness throughout Pisgah. Well persons [could] not be found to take care of the sick; it was indeed a distressing scene. A great number of deaths occurred and it

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19Eliza Snow gives a more clinical account of her brother’s illness. She notes seeing Lorenzo the day following her arrival at Mt. Pisgah, 26 May 1846, but makes no mention of his illness. On 31 May, however, when Harriet called to inform her of it, Eliza sent some "aloy," a purgative medicine. Not until 3 June did she visit, at which time she ‘‘found L. very sick altho’ the med[cine] I sent on sun[day] eve. had a good effect.’’ Four days later, visiting again, Eliza ‘‘found him worse.’’ Their sister Leonora arrived 9 June, ‘‘but the pleasure of our meeting was lessened by our brother’s severe illness.’’ After the prayer circle on 15 June, Eliza reports, ‘‘He soon became calm—had a short paroxysm in the eve. I sat by him all night—he tested quietly’’ although Lorenzo had been ‘‘raving’’ and ‘‘in a distressed condition’’ that morning. The baptism for return to health, a common practice in the early Church, was performed 17 June.

Eliza Snow’s next mention of her brother’s condition is 27 June, when ‘‘L. had his wagon driven to our tent & I couldn’t dissuade him from his purpose but I must go with him to fath[er] Morley’s [Leonora’s husband] settlement about a mile up the river, where Porter [Squires] has made a garden.’’ On 2 July ‘‘L. walked from the wag[on] to the garden—seems getting well.’’ By 9 July, Brigham Young was directing Lorenzo to ‘‘come on to Grand Island’’; this suggests either Lorenzo’s improved health or Brigham’s suspicion that the illness was climate related (Eliza Snow, Diary, 26 May to 9 July 1846, passim).

20Eliza Snow notes the arrival on 5 June 1846 of ‘‘Adaline, aunt G., & H.,’’ namely, Adaline Goddard Hendrickson (Lorenzo’s wife); Adaline’s mother, Percy Amanda Goddard; and Adaline’s son, Hiram (Eliza Snow, Diary, 5 June 1846; commas added).
was often very difficult to get their bodies decently intered. In one or two instances bodies were put into the ground without any coffin or box. Scarcely a family escaped sickness and very few where death did not make an inroad. A general spirit of lamentation and sorrow prevailed Miss Pogah. In August Father Huntington Presdt. of the place died after a short illness. I attended his funeral and assisted in putting him into his coffin. Mother Huntington was quite sick at the time. On the same day he was buried Gen Rich presented me a letter to read containing an account of Father Bent’s death, Prest of Garden Grove. The fore part of Sept. brother Smith and Calvin returned. We had been anxiously looking for them calculating as soon as they returned to go immediately to the Bluffs. But I was much disappointed when I learned that they had been sick most of the time since he last went, and had left their job only partly completed and had also left my teams. I had no other alternative left me than to go myself and get my teams and some provisions for we had but little left at this time. I accordingly started back. Stayed about three weeks in which I earned about four barrels of flour and then returned to Pisgah with the intention of going directly to the Bluffs with my family. I had been at home but a short time when Adaline presented me my first Daughter which we named Rosetta Adaline born 7th November. She was very sick and before her health would admit of going out it had become so late it was judged wisdom to give up going to the Bluffs. I soald two of my Cows for hay, put up a small Mill House in which I put a couple of Had Mills, and myself and little boys Hyram Orvland Jacob kept them a going almost constantly till into Feb. when House Mill was got to running, the only Mill in the place. Porter and Calvin had got uneasy and wanted to return home to Ohio. I tried to reason with them upon the impropriety of leaving the Church and promised them a home and fare as good as we had so long as they would continue with the saints, but it was all to no purpose so I let them go. Hannah who had been a member of my family, left Pisgah the fore part of Sept. contrary to my council and went back among the Gentiles throu’ the persuasions of her mother. Observation has taught me that it is neither strange nor uncommon that people should make themselves instruments of their misfortunes and misery and nothing tends to this more directly and surely than disobeying public council.


The 2d day of Feb. Elder Pratt having arrived from the Bluffs calld a general Meeting and read the revelation in reference to the Organization of the People &c. David Fulmer Prest. of Garden Grove was appointed Prest of the Organization of that place and this, and I was appointed one of his council. The same day I received

21 Assuming the Hannah mentioned here is Hannah Goddard (eighteen-year-old daughter of Lorenzo's aunt and mother-in-law, Percy Amanda Goddard), it seems that his counsel was not entirely lost: a family group record filed with the Genealogical Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Florence Tumbah shows that a Hannah Goddard married Joseph Ellis Johnson, receiving her temple endowment 17 November 1861. Although she “went back among the Gentiles,” as Lorenzo observes, she eventually rejoined the Saints. Porter and Calvin Squires, also afflicted with the desire to return to the East, likewise surprised their brother-in-law by remaining faithful to the Church.

22 The necessity for secrecy regarding plural marriage forced Snow’s coding of the entry recording the birth of his second child just six weeks after the first, obviously to another wife. Charlotte’s baby lived only five months.

23 The revelation, usually referred to as “The Word and Will of the Lord,” was announced in Winter Quarters (“the Bluffs”) on 14 January 1847. It now appears as Doctrine and Covenants 136.
intelligence of the death of My Mother. A feeling of melancholy and spirit of depression and sorrow swelled my bosom on hearing this news. A more kind indulgent, and affectionate parent than her no man ever had. She was good, and virtuous benevolent and charitable to all, true and faithful in the New and Everlasting Covenant. Therefore I am comforted in the thought that her spirit rests in peace in the presence of her Great Father. Oh that my Daughters may live out their probation with no more blots upon the page of their History than Angels see upon that of their Grand Mother whose head now lies low, yet honorable in the grave. Strive to do right, and think right, follow proper council and live virtuous and spotless lives, that I may rejoice over you and honor you in the Resurrection; that I may never be ashamed to serve you. The whole aim of my life has been to endeavour to think right and act right, and acquire and preserve a good name among the wise and good. But above all to be conscious that I really merited it maintaining a conscience void of offence toward God, Saints and the World. Let my Sons, and daughters let all my children follow the examples of their Father in Truth and virtue. I have eschewed private and selfish interest and made them bow to the general good. You will often find it your duty also to do this, to sacrifice your feelings pleasures and conveniences that thereby you may do a general and necessary good. Your Father and Mothers have had to do this, and you must not think it hard to always hoard yourselves also in readiness to do the same, and you shall be blest and always prospered and always maintain peace and rest in your own bosoms which is a great, yeah, the greatest of blessings, but too often neglected. Love, respect, honor, and reverence Your Mother, also Him who shall be your Head, with much patience and long suffering. And think it not strange when you find deprivations of pleasures in circumstances where you expected them not, for you will not be the first ones, who have met with such disappointments. Expect not much happiness from physical circumstances in this world but you will find it rising out of a consciousness of having good determinations and performing them. In this you need never miss your object. You enjoy benefits in this life and are certain of them in the next.

Gen. Rich has wanted to move to the Bluffs, and the 22d of Feb. I received the Office of President of Mount Pisgah. There were One Hundred and Fifteen Families in the place which I organized into Tens and Fifties. Gen Rich and all his family paid us a very agreeable visit before they left for the Bluffs, and a day was fixed on for us to return the compliment but teams came unexpectedly from the Bluffs to assist him in moving which gave both families an unpleasant disappointment.

In the fore part of March provisions began to grow scarce in Pisgah. We had made arrangements for each Ten to send as many hands as possible into the Settlements to work for provisions but the weather was so cold and blustering and roads so slippy they did not get away till about the middle of the month. Our dependence for sustaining the lives of People of Pisgah rested almost entirely upon the successful and speedy execution of these arrangements.

In this place we were about 50 miles to the nearest point for any kind of Tract[?] with the Gentiles; of course being so far from any place of getting and having but little means to buy with we begun to do without many and most all the conveniences

24Rosetta Pettibone Snow died in Walnut Grove, Illinois, 12 October 1846, nearly four months earlier. That Eliza Snow, by then at Winter Quarters, had heard of their mother’s death six weeks before Lorenzo did suggests the even greater isolation of the Mt. Pisgah Saints. Neither Eliza nor Lorenzo tells how they heard the news (Eliza Snow, Diary, 22 December 1846).
of living. Pies, Cakes Coffee Tea, Sougar Cheese preserves, and Aples and Cider, was tastt but seldom and some only known now in past rememorrence. This was a depravity that most of my family had never suffered having been some time in larg Farm Houses and enjoyed all these articles in full abundance and without limitation. I feel it due to them to add that thus far they suffered without a groan or murmur, or any bitterness of complaint. Our living was coarse but we always had bread stuff of some kind. Such articles as Beans, Onions Turnips and Potatoes &c. we done without. Our living indeed was a great contrast with that of former years. And I feel grateful beyond expression that I am honored with a family that have endured these things with so good feelings. A word of praise is justly due to Harriet for the good and wise management of my household concerns thus far upon this journey. My general interest and general good and the general good and general interest of my family has been studied in all her movments, and realizing that I had a large family to provide for with but little means to do it she persued that course of management that was prudent saving and economical, relieving me of much care and burden. Perfectly upright and honest without the least shadow of deception making my council and wishes her standard of right without any deviation therefrom.


Respected Relatives

The circumstances of myself and family, also the situation of those of my relatives who belong to the Latter D[ay] Saints, together with a duty I owe them compell me to address you at this time.

A year ago the ninth of Feb last I left Nauvoo with my family. A large Company of us were compelled to leave at that time in consequence of the severe threats of the Mob and in order to give assurance of our determination to leave the country so that those that could not get away might not be destroyed till they could get the means, or we could get in a situation to afford them assistance. In hurrying away I was obliged to sacrifice about one half of my property, had I stayed later I should have been less fortunate. In fact many that did stay having property their got very little and some nothing, and some barely escaped with their lives and a number were murdered by the Mob. To speak of our unplesent situation, and our sufferings from the severity of the weather, and our sickness from exposures is needless. It would only be reading what you have red before, similar chapters out of the book of Mormon [unclear].

21It is understandable, considering such dietary limitations, that one of the most fatal diseases among the Saints that winter was scurvy or, as they called it, "black leg" or "black canker." Historian Richard Bennett estimates the death rate among the Saints in Iowa and Nebraska that winter as about eighty-five per thousand. Of Lorenzo Snow's family, only the one infant daughter died before reaching Utah, making them about average.

26Alvirus and Loren Snow, of Geauga County, Ohio, were younger half brothers of Oliver Snow, Lorenzo's father. Jonathan Burnet had married their sister; Lura Reue was another sister. Charlotte Granger was Oliver's full sister, Lorenzo's aunt, widow first of Jacob Blair, later of Horace Granger of Aurora, Ohio. Jacob Pettibone was Rosetta Snow's brother, Lorenzo's aunt; and Franklin Snow, by now moved from Mantua to Lorraine County, was his paternal uncle. Benjamin and Edwin were Franklin's sons. It is unclear who Lowton Wadsworth was, but Rosetta Snow's mother was a Wadsworth, suggesting a maternal relationship. The purpose of this letter and its effect are described in the introduction.
Our place of Location will be Bear River Valley 100 miles beyond the Pass in the Mountains upwards of 1000 miles from this place. One Company are now there, I expect. I wish to go next spring with my family and some few others that I feel our obligations to assist, Namely my sisters Eliza and Leonora with her two daughters, my Aunt G. & three children, My Cousin Adaline, daughter of Aunt G and her four children. The persons mentioned have neither cow ox or wagon or any means to assist themselves and very little clothing. I cannot go and leave them behind. They have no chance to work in this place and cannot go out among the M. without endangering their lives or what is more sacred, their characters.

I have but two wagons and two yoke of steers. To fit us out properly we want 6 Wag[ons] and 12 yoke of cattle. Each person has to be fitted out with provisions to last one year and a half. 500 pounds of bread stuff to each person is required, 1500 to each wag[on] and two yoke of cattle. One cow to every two persons. We do not ask of you the conveniences of living but the means to get away from our enemies to obtain a peaceful home that we enjoy our principles unmolested and enjoy the fruits of our own labours the same as other people. Can we but get to our place of destination with but a little means to commence on our situation in a very few years will be the most encouraging and flattering. A rich and fertile soil, a mild healthy climate settled by a people gathered like the inmates of Noah’s Ark but from every part under heaven will have men that understand every branch of mechanical labor or Architecture that is practiced in the world. These considerations together with that union of spirit which has always characterized us as a people the whole crowned by the blessings of heaven which are sure to follow if people persecuted for the truth’s sake—will be certain to give us unbounded prosperity. We never did make a stay in any place but things prospered around us far beyond that of our neighbors. This circumstance has caused jealousy and brought upon us the indignation of our enemies. We have been driven from our homes; we are exiles from our country, We seek a home in a land of peace, We have no way to obtain the means except thro your benevolence and liberality. Be our friend now in this our time of need and the Lord will be yours and open your way if it should ever fall to your lot to be placed in a similar situation, I think it very likely, I may yet see a time when I can reward you a hundred fold for all your liberality. What ever you do for me shall be credited to you [unclear]ly upon our church records and in my family record wherein I shall hold myself and my Posterity bound under a sacred obligation to help you or your children. The day fast approaching when calamity and destruction and famine and sword shall come upon this nation and you or your children shall wish to seek an asylum of peace with the Saints among the Mountains.

Mr Campbell and Mr D[ana] will take this Circular to you. They are Agents appointed to collect Funds for this Church as their recommendations will show. What you see proper to give, please place in their hands. They will see it safe to me. I now close praying the Lord to pour out his spirit upon you and bless you abundantly.

With the highest respect I remain still bound in the ties of consanguinity,

Your Nephew, and Cousin

L Snow
On the North Side of the Platte

MID-APRIL 1845

The plains were black from burning. 
Along the north side of the Platte, 
The horse and ox teams had nothing 
But sparse patches of grass to eat.

Indians began the fires, preparing 
The land, a conflagrative incision, 
Scalping old growth, but cleansing 
And cauterizing for the new season.

Prairie cottonwoods, now beginning 
To green, were cut down for fodder, 
But the animals weakened, browsing 
Listlessly, slower now with hunger.

EARLY-MAY 1845

The plains were black with buffalo. 
Tens, hundreds of thousands strong 
They surged like tempests until no 
Grass, no growth survived, killing

It beneath a million hooves. Below 
That earth, graves of recent grief 
Cried from Winter Quarters—a flow 
Of hope, yet children died. Belief

In God was the Saints’ life and so 
They came past the ashes and death, 
With the plains black with buffalo. 
Again they’d touch blackness, with

Crops blanketed black with locusts. 
Disease yawning in black readiness, 
Tender new things black with frost, 
Yet they followed the white vision 
of truth.

—Sally T. Taylor

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Cultural Conflict:
Mormons and Indians in Nebraska

Lawrence G. Coates

No record reveals any significant contact between the Mormons and the Indians of Nebraska before the Saints left Nauvoo; Mormon experiences with the Indians in Nebraska began during the epic march of the Latter-day Saints to the Great Basin. During the Nauvoo period, however, the Saints enjoyed a particularly friendly relationship with some Indian tribes in Iowa—the Sac, Fox, and Potawatomi. On several occasions, these Indian bands came to Nauvoo, and the Mormons frequently sent men to strengthen their ties with these friendly natives before the Mormon hegira. At the same time, Lyman Wight made contact with some Plains Indians in Texas, and James Emmett spent the winter of 1845 among the Sioux in what became South Dakota. But, apparently, no Mormons made contact with the Omaha, Ponca, Otoe, or Pawnee before 1846 when the Saints spent their historic winter among the natives of Nebraska.

Nevertheless, the Mormons knew the location of the Indians in Nebraska. They studied "a map of Oregon, and also a report on an exploration of the country lying between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains" which Stephen A. Douglas had given to Orson Hyde. One version of this map listed the location of the Indians in Nebraska. The Mormons also used S. Augustus Mitchell's "A New Map of Texas Oregon and California," and it specifically identified the Indian tribes living in Nebraska. They may have seen a map of the area in the map portfolio of the expeditions of John C. Fremont.1 Certainly as a result of their study, the Saints knew which Indians they expected to meet in Nebraska during their exodus to the Rockies.

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The Mormons also gathered additional information about the Indians from various sources and printed it in their newspapers. In March 1845, the editors of the *Times and Seasons* read 203 pages of government reports on the Indians and summarized the contents in four pages. They listed the population of each tribe living west of the Mississippi. For the Indians in Nebraska, they reported 1,301 Omaha, 931 Otoe and Missouri, 777 Ponca, and 12,500 Pawnee. In December 1845, they reprinted a story from the *Independence Express* telling about the extreme difficulties Elijah White and his party had experienced with the Pawnee. These Indians were depicted as "highway robbers," who had stripped White's party of all their property and given them in return a few old clothes, some weak horses, a few arms and some ammunition. Many other stories were told in Nauvoo about the experiences of travelers while passing through Nebraska.

Church newspapers occasionally told the Saints how other Americans mistreated the Indians. In January 1846, the editor of the *Times and Seasons* reported that the Oneida Indians once had lived in New York state but had subsequently been moved to Wisconsin. Now the people at Green Bay claimed they wanted the Indians to move to the Missouri not "because we envy them their rich lands and comfortable farms" but to save them from the vices of stealing, drinking, and acting immoral which they learned by living too close to white people. "What shall we say [upon] so extraordinary a result of christianity, liberty, and intelligence?" the editor asked. He then replied, "It is a melancholy fact, among all classes, sects, and denominations, (save the Mormons only) that there is not enough virtue among the better to create a reverence for purity among the worse portions of the community. . . . Who [but the Latter-day Saints] will forego the shining moments of amassing a fortune, for the mere name of 'doing to others as he would wish them to do unto him'?" Then reminding the Mormons of their divine duty towards the Indians, he rhetorically asked, "'What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'"

Mormons had difficulty living in harmony with this noble ideal; nevertheless, they tried. When the pioneers reached the Missouri River on 14 June 1846, they adopted an important rule governing their relations with the Indians. To avoid conflicts with Indians and government officials, the Church members, under threat of being

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2 *Times and Seasons*, 7 March 1845.
3 Ibid., 1 December 1845.
4 Ibid., 1 January 1846.
Mormons and Indians in Nebraska

disfellowshipped, were told not to trade with the natives because "the Church had no right to trade with the Indians."  

Seeking a proper relationship with both Indians and Indian agents, the Mormon leaders on 20 June visited the Indian agency at Trading Point and met with the government agent and several Indian chiefs. The meeting was friendly, and the government agent promised to do all in his power to help the Mormons in their move west.  

On 29 June, the Mormons began ferrying a few Saints across the Missouri River into Omaha Indian territory. The following day Captain James Allen arrived at Council Bluffs to recruit five hundred Mormons for service in the recently declared Mexican War. This request came as no great surprise to Mormon leaders, for they had previously authorized Jesse C. Little to seek government funds to assist the Saints in crossing the Plains. However, the Mormons had hoped to receive money to build forts or way stations across the Plains to the Rocky Mountains. With the declaration of war, President James K. Polk turned this request for funds into an authorization to pay the five hundred Mormon recruits the regular military salary.  

The recruiting of so many from their ranks altered Mormon plans to send a company of able-bodied men over the Rocky Mountains in 1846 to plant seed and prepare for the arrival of the main body of the Church. After lengthy discussions, the Mormon leaders decided to have the Saints spend the winter in Potawatomi and Omaha country. Therefore, the Mormon leaders felt it was necessary to get permission from the government to remain on this native territory. Land on the east side of the Missouri became government property during the summer when the Indian land was traded for a region in Kansas, with the Indians retaining the right to use their homeland for several years. However, the land west of the river belonged exclusively to the Indians,

1Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 14 June 1846, located in Library-Archives, Historical Division, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.

2Ibid., 20 and 26 June 1846.


4Jesse C. Little was commissioned to serve as president of the Eastern States Mission on 26 January 1846, and he was instructed to seek aid from the government to help the Saints move west. He used the good offices of Thomas L. Kane to get acquainted with many high government officials including President James K. Polk. Jesse Little proposed that the government use one thousand Mormon settlers to win California, but his idea was modified. Instead, the government recruited five hundred Mormon men for service in the military. Colonel Kane carried this message to General Stephen W. Kearny, who commissioned Captain James Allen to recruit the Mormons. No doubt when Captain Allen arrived at Mount Pisgah on 26 June, he explained the nature and purposes of the recruitment. (See Leonard J. Arrington, "'In Honorable Remembrance': Thomas L. Kane's Services to the Mormons," BYU Studies 21 [Fall 1981]: 389–91.)

5History of the Church, 3:71–77.

6Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 28 June 1846.

7Ibid. See entries on the following dates: 20 and 26 July, 1 and 9 August 1846.
and the government was legally bound to prevent white people from living on the Omaha, Otoe, Ponca, or Pawnee domain.\textsuperscript{12}

Nevertheless, Mormon leaders asked Captain Allen for authorization to stay in Indian country since they would be unable to reach the Rockies before winter. Without hesitation, the captain gave the Saints permission to pass through Indian territory en route to California and to make all necessary settlements or fortifications. However, this permission had to be ratified by President Polk.\textsuperscript{13} At the same time, although it was illegal for any party other than the United States to make agreements with the Indians, the Mormons negotiated a "treaty" with the Potawatomi Indians living near Council Bluffs. The Indians consented to let the Mormons make a settlement and plant crops while the body of the Saints migrated to the Far West.\textsuperscript{14} Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders took additional steps to ensure friendly relations; they visited various Indian camps and talked with the Indians not present when this agreement was signed.\textsuperscript{15}

Meanwhile, Church leaders turned their energies toward recruiting men for the Mexican War. As the Mormon Battalion was making its way to Kansas, Bishop George Miller began ferrying people across the Missouri and led a company of Saints toward Grand Island.\textsuperscript{16} While moving west, James Emmett and many members of his company joined them. At this time, Mormon leaders planned to send Miller's company over the Rockies during the fall of 1846 and to move the main body of the Saints up the east side of the Missouri for the winter.\textsuperscript{17} But subsequently, these plans were later altered.

As Miller's company moved west, they met several Presbyterian missionaries who were employed by the government to teach farming to the Indians at the Pawnee villages near Grand Island. The Saints learned that recently a band of Sioux had attacked the mission, destroyed some buildings, and killed two of the missionaries. As a result of this tragic episode, the missionaries, who had also experienced internal strife at the mission and were on poor terms with the Pawnee, decided to abandon the farm. When Bishop Miller arrived, the Mormons offered to help the missionaries return to Council Bluffs.

\textsuperscript{13}Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1 July 1846.
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid. See documents inserted on 25 July 1846.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 10 and 11 July 1846.
\textsuperscript{17}Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 14, 17, and 22 July 1846. On this topic, see Brigham Young to George Miller, letter inserted in Manuscript History under date of 1 August 1846.
in exchange for the crops grown on the farm. All the missionaries
returned to the United States except James Case, who remained with
the Mormons, joined the Church, and subsequently migrated with
the first group of Mormons to the Great Basin where he later served as
a farmer to the Indians.\textsuperscript{18}

About this time at Council Bluffs, Brigham Young planned to
move the main body of the pioneers to a location between the headwaters
of the Elkhorn and the Missouri rivers so the Saints could winter their
stock on the peavines growing along the river bottoms and still be
able to send to St. Louis for grain, millstones, a carding machine, and
other provisions. With this idea in mind, Brigham Young instructed
Bishop Miller to leave some of his people at the Pawnee Mission and
take the remainder to Grand Island for the winter instead of taking a
company to the Rockies. According to this proposal, the main body
of the Saints would overtake Miller’s company in the spring and they
would all cross the Plains together.\textsuperscript{19} Soon, Mormon leaders changed
their minds again; they decided to settle on both sides of the Missouri—
at Council Bluffs and Winter Quarters.

Meanwhile, Bishop Miller met several Ponca Indians, who came
to the Pawnee Mission to settle their differences with the Pawnee.
Learning that the Pawnee were hunting buffalo and that the Saints
were planning to remain at this location for the winter, the Ponca
warned Bishop Miller not to stay at the mission because the Mormon
livestock would eat the peavines which the Pawnee used for their
horses during the early winter. Considering this situation unsafe, the
Ponca invited Bishop Miller to winter with them. He accepted this
offer and moved 175 wagons to the mouth of the Running Water
River, about 150 miles north of the Pawnee Mission.\textsuperscript{20}

However, a few Mormon pioneers remained at the Pawnee Mission.
Soon after Miller’s departure, the Pawnee returned from their hunt
and appeared mildly disturbed because Miller’s company had taken
the corn in exchange for helping the missionaries. But rather than
taking vengeance on the few remaining Mormons, the Pawnee, who
had enjoyed great success on their summer hunt, were friendly.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{18}William C. Staines lived with Bishop Miller at this time and kept a journal. In the 1880s, Staines
published his experiences on this trip into Indian country in the \textit{Juvenile Instructor}. His experiences were
entitled “A Reminiscence” and ran in serial from 15 June through 1 November 1880. The same story was
later reprinted in 1882 in \textit{A String of Pearls}, the second book of the Faith Promoting series. In 1968 it was
reprinted by Bookcraft of Salt Lake City as \textit{Four Faith Promoting Classics: A String of Pearls, Fragments of
Experience, Gems for the Young Folks, Early Scenes in Church History}.

\textsuperscript{19}Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1 August 1846.

\textsuperscript{20}Staines, “A Reminiscence,” \textit{Juvenile Instructor}, 1 July 1880.

\textsuperscript{21}Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 9 September 1846.
The Pawnee, like most other Indians the Mormons met while traveling to the Great Basin, enjoyed a varied life-style hunting buffalo, harvesting, digging wild plants, and growing corn, squash, and beans. Early in the spring, the Pawnee would begin performing religious ceremonies while planting their crops near their permanent earthen lodges. When the vegetables were hoed for the second time, the Pawnee would pack most of their belongings in skin bags, load them on travois pulled by horses, mules, and dogs, and travel their traditional paths searching for buffalo, deer, antelope, elk, and edible roots. Elaborate religious rituals would also accompany these activities. Late in the summer, they would return to their villages, harvest their crops according to certain prescribed rites, feast for several days, and cache their surplus meat and vegetables at strategic locations in the villages. Early in the fall, the Pawnee would return to the hunt, searching for good pelts to be used for robes or for trading to the whites. Returning to their villages in the spring, the Pawnee would rely upon their cache of food to tide them over until they would begin their hunt in the early summer.  

When the Pawnee had returned to their earthen lodges, the few Mormons living at the Pawnee Mission realized that the Indians' friendship might not last, so they sent word to Brigham Young explaining their situation. He advised them to abandon their mission and return to Winter Quarters.  

Meanwhile, Miller's company reached the Ponca villages on the Running Water River and made good friends with a tribe of nearly two thousand people whose life-style of following the buffalo was similar to that of the Pawnee. Communicating through one Ponca chief who spoke Sioux and through James Emmett who had learned some of that language, the Mormons learned the Ponca would soon abandon their camp and go on their winter hunting expedition. In these talks, during which Bishop Miller smoked the peace pipe with them, the Ponca invited the entire Miller company to go with them on their winter hunt, but the Saints declined the offer, sending instead three Mormons to accompany them. Soon, two of the Mormons, John Kay (a gunsmith) and Frederick Bainbridge, unable to endure the ordeals demanded during the hunt, returned to the Mormon encampment. But William C. Staines, although greatly distressed by boils, scurvy, and unfamiliar foods such as dog and skunk, managed to last through the winter. Staines mastered some of the language

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23Manuscript History of Brigham Young. 14–15 September 1846.
and a few customs but failed to grasp the fundamental religious ideas of the Ponca. In the spring, Staines learned that the Ponca planned to meet Peter Sarpy, who operated a trading post for the American Fur Company, and exchange their furs for items of trade. Feeling the Saints might wish to participate in the trade, Staines returned to the Running Water encampment and told them about the rendezvous between the trader and the Ponca. To his surprise, he learned that the Saints were preparing to return to Winter Quarters.24

During the winter, Bishop Miller and a few dissatisfied pioneers had returned to Winter Quarters to confer with Mormon leaders.25 In a short while, Bishop Miller had gone back to the Running Water colony. In January 1847, the Twelve, seeking to unite all Mormons in the migration westward, had sent word to Miller’s colony among the Ponca, telling them about the revelation Brigham Young had received concerning the migration of the Saints to the Great Basin. Furthermore, they had requested that Bishop Miller return to Winter Quarters.26 When Staines arrived at Running Water, the entire camp was preparing to move to Winter Quarters.

Soon after the Running Water colony arrived at Winter Quarters, Bishop Miller proposed that the Saints change direction and migrate to Texas between the Neuces and Rio Grande rivers. Considering Miller out of harmony with the Twelve, Brigham Young rejected this notion, labeling it “wild and visionary,—that when we move hence it would be to the Great Basin, where the Saints would soon form a nucleus of strength and power sufficient to cope with mobs.”27 Frustrated by this rebuff that added to the rift already growing between himself and Brigham Young, Bishop Miller left Winter Quarters with a small company and moved to Texas, where he joined forces with his former friend from the Wisconsin pinery, Lyman Wight.28 Eventually, George Miller left Texas and the Church and joined James J. Strang and his followers on Beaver Island.

When Miller’s company had begun making its way to Grand Island in August of 1846, several prominent Mormon leaders ferried across the Missouri to Omaha Indian territory. After some deliberation, they decided to build a community with streets, a school, and log houses and to clear the land, plow the ground, and plant crops. Seeking

25Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 7 January 1847.
26Ibid., 29 January and 23 March 1847.
27Ibid., 2 April 1847.
28Andrew Jenson, Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Co., 1941), 509.
Big Elk

Portrait by George Catlin
Mormons and Indians in Nebraska

to establish friendly relations with the Omaha, Mormon leaders made two very important decisions. First, they agreed to ask the Omaha Indians as soon as they returned from their summer hunting expedition for permission to stay on their land. Second, they decided to advise all their people not to bother Indian burial grounds. On this point, Brigham Young, not knowing the Omaha buried their dead in a sitting position in the ground facing east, warned the Saints not to disturb an Indian grave, because the Indians frequently deposited their dead in the branches of trees, wrapt in buffalo robes and blankets leaving with them arrows, pipes and other trinkets, which they considered sacred and we should not remove them and our children should be taught to let them alone.39

In a short time, the Mormons heard that the Omaha had returned from their summer hunt, so Brigham Young commissioned three men to arrange for a meeting between him and the Omaha chiefs. Brigham warned this committee not to make any firm agreements with them but simply to tell the Indians that the Saints wanted the privilege of cutting timber, building homes, planting some crops, and perhaps leaving some families on Indian land in the spring. He promised the Mormons would help the Indians by “repairing their guns, and learning them how, and teaching their children, and if they want pay for occupancy of their lands we will pay them; [but] they should not touch our property, and we will not their’s.”30

When the Mormon representatives met with the Indians, Mormon leaders smoked the peace pipe with about eighty Omaha, discussed the Saints' intentions of journeying to California and asked permission for staying on Indian territory. Brigham Young reaffirmed the promises the Mormons had already communicated to the Omaha, and in addition he said the Mormons were acting according to the instructions of the government. Consequently, the Saints wanted the Omaha to sign an agreement permitting the Mormons to stay on their soil during emigration. Big Elk said that he was willing for the Mormons to stay in his territory, but he was not sure how the government felt about it. In addition, he stated there was some uncertainty about the ownership of this region; the Otoe also claimed it. Big Elk said he had received good reports about the Mormons, and he hoped the Omaha would have a good relation with the Saints.31

39Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 7 August 1846.
30Ibid., 15 August 1846.
31Ibid., 28 August 1846.
Taking a cue from Big Elk’s talk, the Mormons visited the Otoe who lived on the north bank of the Platte and asked them for permission to stay in the region for the next two years. But the Otoe said they wanted no difficulties with the Omaha. Evading a direct answer to the Mormons’ request, the Otoe said they would give the Saints an answer when their chief returned. 32 Apparently satisfied that no serious troubles would result with the Otoe, the Mormons held another council with the Omaha and discussed the provisions for staying on their property and for employing their young men to herd Mormon livestock. But the Omaha declined the latter offer because they did not have enough young men to herd stock. They also questioned how much timber the Saints would burn. The Mormons reassured them that the Saints would only use a little wood in their stoves and for improvements such as houses, fences, and other structures. The Mormons also promised they would leave these wood buildings for the Indians. Big Elk, Standing Elk, and Little Chief all accepted this offer and placed their “x” on an agreement granting the “Mormon people the privilege of tarrying upon the lands for two years or more, or as long as may suit their convenience . . . provided that our great father, the President of the United States shall not counsel us to the contrary.” 33

Meanwhile, Thomas L. Kane, a confidante and friend of the Mormons, had arrived at Council Bluffs with news from his father, Judge J. K. Kane, that President Polk had agreed to let the Mormons stay on Potawatomi soil. 34 In addition, Judge Kane forwarded a copy of the instructions which the War Department sent to Major Thomas H. Harvey, superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis, saying that as long as the Mormon settlement in Potawatomi territory was “really to be temporary” then the Saints were at liberty “to supply their wants and procure the necessary means for proceeding on their journey.” However, the Mormon stay on Potawatomi grasslands, the secretary warned, must not delay “the survey and sales of lands” needed for Iowa to become a state. Nor should the Saints’ stay threaten Indian rights and interests. 35

Realizing they needed authorization to be in Omaha country as well as the authorization to be on Potawatomi soil, Mormon leaders immediately wrote to President Polk, asking for permission to camp

32 Ibid., 3 September 1846.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid. J. K. Kane to Thomas Kane, 18 August 1846. Copies of letters sent to Colonel Kane by his father are inserted in the Manuscript History under the date of 4 September 1846.
35 Ibid. On 18 August, Judge Kane sent to his son Thomas Kane a copy of the instructions that the commissioner of Indian Affairs, William Medill, later on 2 September sent to Thomas H. Harvey.
The Blackbird Hills were not called that by the Omaha; they were called On’pontonga xaithon or "where Big Elk is buried." Photograph from the Bureau of American Ethnology, Twenty-seventh Report, reprinted from Fletcher and La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe*. 
west of the Missouri River while moving to the Rockies. Including a copy of the agreement signed by three Omaha chiefs with the letter to the president, the Mormons emphasized their humanitarian intentions by saying they would lend horses to the Indians "to draw their corn at harvest," assist them "in building houses, making fields, doing some blacksmithing, etc.,” and give them "a few beeves when hungry" in return for skins and furs to "substitute for worn out clothing and tents in our camp." In order to legally associate with the Indians in this way, the Mormons further requested "a license giving . . . permission to trade with the Indians while . . . tarrying on or passing through their lands, made out in the name of Newel K. Whitney.”

Feeling confident they would eventually gain permission to establish a settlement on the west side of the Missouri, the Mormons asked the Omaha Indians to approve a location for the Saints to build a town. Subsequently, the Indians told the Mormons to build their city two miles north of the old barracks. So, late in September the site for Winter Quarters—eighteen miles north of Bellevue upon tableland, covering about six hundred yards toward the Bluffs and extending down the river about one mile and a half—was surveyed into blocks. By late December, approximately three thousand five hundred Mormons had moved onto the surveyed land and were living in a number of linen tents, eighty-three mud huts, and forty-eight log cabins.

Mormon settlement on the prairie, however, infuriated Indian Superintendent Thomas H. Harvey, who felt uneasy about the Mormons crossing the river into Indian country. In fact, when he heard reports in mid-April of 1846 that six thousand Mormons were crossing the ferry at Ivory Point, Iowa, on their way west, he said that "so large a body of persons in Indian Country under any circumstances is objectionable; the objection in this case will be greatly increased from the character of the Mormons.” Responding to what he considered a Mormon threat, he requested Major C. Wharton at Fort Leavenworth to send a company of dragoons to alleviate any problems that might arise and to force the Mormons to cross his subagency at a point "50 or 60 miles from the river.” Under this arrangement, he wrote,

34Ibid., Brigham Young to James J. Polk, 7 September 1846.
35Ibid., 8 September 1846.
36Thomas H. Harvey to Major C. Wharton, 18 April 1846, Letters Received, Office of Indian Affairs, 1824–81, St. Louis Superintendency (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis). See also Thomas H. Harvey to William Medill, 4 May 1846. In this letter, Harvey warns the commissioner of Indian Affairs that "from their character [Mormons], I consider it necessary that their movements be observed. I therefore addressed a letter to Major Wharton commanding at Fort Leavenworth a greeting to send up a company of dragoons should he be informed of their approach.”
"One company would be sufficient to control these mormons—should they decline such an arrangement they might be brought to terms by preventing them crossing."

When Superintendent Harvey heard that the Mormons had crossed the Missouri and started a village, he wrote to them and said, "No white persons are permitted to settle on the lands of the Indians WITHOUT AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT." In reply, the Mormons said that they had planned to move farther west than Winter Quarters but that the government had enlisted five hundred of their best men to serve their country, making it impossible for them to move farther west in 1846. In the spring, the Saints planned to settle west of the Rockies. Meanwhile, they stated, Captain Allen had granted them permission to stay on Indian soil while they moved west.

Not satisfied with the Mormons' reply, Superintendent Harvey went directly to Winter Quarters and personally investigated the situation. Upon arriving, he talked with Brigham Young, who repeated that Captain Allen had given the Saints permission to make settlements in virgin territory while they moved west. Realizing that Captain Allen may have overstepped his authority on this matter, Brigham said that he had written to President Polk asking for permission to remain on Omaha country but that the president had probably not had sufficient time to reply. When Superintendent Harvey learned it might take the Saints four years to vacate Winter Quarters, he flatly told Brigham Young that Congress in 1830 had made it strictly illegal for white persons to settle on Indian territory, "west of the States of Arkansaw and Missouri & Missouri river."

Exasperated by the situation, Superintendent Harvey wrote to his superior officer, William Medill, commissioner of Indian Affairs, saying:

I am at a loss in forming an opinion in relation to the future of this . . . deluded people, they say their intention is to cross the mountains, if so, I cannot see any satisfactory reason for them making on the Missouri, such substantial improvements. It may be that their object is to establish a chain of improvements to the Mountains, commencing on the Missouri, as resting points for their people in their emigration to the Pacific; or it may be that they hope to establish themselves on the Missouri, in the Omaha and Purncah Country.

39bid.
40Thomas H. Harvey to Alpheus Cutler, 5 November 1846, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis.
41Alpheus Cutler to Thomas H. Harvey, 6 November 1846, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis.
42Thomas H. Harvey to William Medill, 3 December 1846, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis.
43bid.
Meanwhile on 15 November, the Mormon leaders, feeling the Indian agents were putting undue pressure on them to evacuate Winter Quarters, registered their complaints against the agents with their trusted gentile friend, Thomas Kane, asking why Superintendent Harvey continued to harass them for being on "the lands of the Indians without authority of the government." Didn't the superintendent realize that the plight of the Mormons was complicated by the government's drafting five hundred men, they queried. Further venting their feelings, they complained that the Indian agents were discriminating against them by refusing government annuities to those "one or two half breeds or French who have married and been adopted into the Potawatomi nation and believed in Mormonism." In addition, the agents refused to pay James Case for his services as government farmer for the Pawnee, discharging him from government service "only because he was a Mormon."**

On 5 December, before these complaints reached Colonel Kane, the Mormons received some encouragement from him. Stating he hoped they had not allowed themselves to "be discouraged by my long continued silence," he assured the Saints that justice would prevail. "There will be less difficulty with regard to the Omaha lease than my Father had with regard to that of the Pottawatomies; which stands to me as a precedent."** On the last day of December, the Mormon leaders received word from Orson Spencer that Colonel Kane had recently said the government had granted permission for the Saints to "remain on the Omaha lands." However, Kane had said the government had not authorized the Mormons to have a subagency for the Indians. Finally, on 18 February 1847, thinking the government had authorized their petition, the Saints sent Levi Stewart to see Superintendent Harvey at St. Louis to get "the Government permit for us to remain on the Omaha lands."**

The Mormons were mistaken, however. Government officials refused permission for the Saints to stay in Indian territory. Feeling it a duty to protect Indian rights and fearing permission for the Saints to stay at Winter Quarters would result in the Mormons' establishing many similar settlements at strategic locations on the Plains, William Medill, commissioner of Indian Affairs, denied the Mormons' application for

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**Willard Richards to Thomas Kane, 16 November 1846, Manuscript History of Brigham Young. Also see complaints registered on 6 November 1846.

** Thomas L. Kane to Willard Richards, 26 October 1846. The letter is inserted in the Manuscript History of Brigham Young under the date of 3 December 1846.

** Orson Spencer to Brigham Young, 25 November 1846. The letter is inserted in the Manuscript History of Brigham Young under the date of 31 December 1846.
a permit to remain at Winter Quarters. He felt not even the president of the United States could legally authorize the Mormons to stay in Indian country because the 1830 Indian trade and intercourse law prohibited any white person from making settlements on land belonging to any Indian tribe. Moreover, this law required the president to employ military force to remove such persons who violated the law. Seeking to show no discrimination in applying the law to all emigrants passing through the territory, Commissioner Medill asked, "Are they [Mormons] more deserving the protection of the Government, and entitled to privileges which are not granted to the mass of bold & hearty pioneers who have already crossed the plains west of the Missouri? . . . Because they are banded together in one common community gives no rights," he said; "on the contrary, their associations so distinct and separate, require the exercise of caution and prudence."^47

Undaunted by Medill's stand, the Mormons, through their friend Thomas L. Kane, continued asking the government to give them permission to live in Omaha territory while they migrated to the Great Basin. Seeking to influence important government officials, Colonel Kane wrote several letters, saying the Mormons were a destitute and persecuted people who planned to migrate to "the Bear River Valley or some portion of the Utah Country" and as a result they needed shelter for thousands of people while crossing the Plains. Humanity demanded at least that much concern.^48 Moreover, while the Saints had been in Indian territory, they had had a good influence on the Indians, he said, by protecting the Omaha from their fierce Sioux enemies, by providing material assistance for them, and by avoiding the introduction of liquor among them.^49 After a few months of pleading, Colonel Kane realized there was no hope of gaining permission for the Mormons to stay west of the Missouri River, so he pled with officials to at least let the Saints know through reliable channels if the president had decided to use force to evict "the aged men, the women, and children . . . while the natural protectors are still serving at a distance under the flag to which government itself

^47William Medill to William L. Marcy, Secretary of War, 24 April 1847, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis.

^48See Thomas L. Kane to William L. Marcy, 20 April 1847, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis. In this letter, Colonel Kane, after rehearsing the difficulties of the Mormons, made two requests: first, he asked for a permit for the Saints to remain on Indian land west of the Missouri; second, he asked Secretary Marcy to commission some Mormons as agents or subagents. This would enable the Saints to legally conduct relations with the Indians while moving west. (See also Thomas L. Kane to William Medill, 21 March 1847, and especially Kane to Medill, 24 April 1847.)

^49Kane to Medill, 21 March 1847.
invited them." 50 Finally, after months of failure, the Mormons decided in December 1847 that they would abandon their settlement at Winter Quarters. 51 However, even though it was illegal, the Mormons remained at Winter Quarters until the summer of 1848.

During the time the Saints lived among the Omaha, their relations with these Indians were not very cordial, and this conflict tested the ability of the Saints to live up to their ideals. From their viewpoint, the most serious infraction of civil life came from the Indians' stealing their cattle, sheep, pigs, and horses. Soon after crossing the Missouri, the Saints turned their livestock into the river bottoms with little supervision, and the Omaha began taking two or three cattle per day. Disturbed by these losses, the Mormons held a council among themselves and decided the Saints should not feed the Indians, "nor let them into their tents; for they would steal with one hand while you give them a loaf of bread in the other." But if the Saints caught the Indians "skinning their oxen," they should not shoot them. 52 Considering the Indians to be somewhat like the Gadianton Robbers spoken of in the Book of Mormon, Brigham Young advised the Saints:

> to gather and form a square so that we could keep them out our midst and then if they came and went either to killing cattle or stealing our clothing blankets or anything else for us to whip them . . . and not sell our dogs . . . for the Indians were buying them to get them out of camp so that they could more easily pilfer from us. 53

Subsequently, the Mormons confronted the Omaha chief, Big Elk, on the subject of stealing. Hearing that his people had taken at least fifty oxen and many sheep, Big Elk said he thought the Saints "were soldiers enough to defend" themselves and their property and furthermore he "considered the destruction of his game, timber and land of more value than the cattle taken." As he continued, Big Elk reported:

> His young men could not help stealing when our cattle were all about, and they would steal if they were admitted into . . . camp; his young men did not like white people, and they did not like him; he told them we would do them good, and they call him a liar. . . . His young men

50 Thomas L. Kane to Dear Sir [probably Marcy], 21 June 1847, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis. In this letter, Colonel Kane said he had already made the same request of Medill.
51 Thomas L. Kane to William L. Marcy, 22 January 1848, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis. Kane reports that the Mormons have decided to abandon Winter Quarters.
52 Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 21–24 October 1846. For another account of the same troubles, see Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 1:204–7.
53 Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 1:205.
felt bad when we crossed the river. When we cut their timber, we left them like the trunk of a tree,—without leaves or limbs.  

Under these trying circumstances, Brigham Young maintained his famous Indian policy which held that it was "cheaper to feed the Indians than fight them." For on this occasion, he promised Big Elk some tobacco, powder, and lead if the Mormons could range their cattle on the bottoms, without molestations. Replying to this offer, Big Elk said "he knew the white people were quick tempered, his people were slow; he should counsel them till he went into his grave; he came to settle the difficulty . . . [but] he would not ask for powder and lead, if he had means to buy it." In a few days, Brigham Young sent Big Elk a barrel of powder and one hundred pounds of lead, wished him a prosperous buffalo hunt, volunteered to get his guns repaired, and asked him to counsel his men "not to kill any more of my cattle." Big Elk accepted the gifts, visited the Mormon leader, gave him two horses, and said he could not control his bad young men, "although they had been chastised for their conduct."

Obviously, Mormon settlement among the Omaha created many sharp cultural contrasts for Big Elk, whose ideas were radically different from those of the Mormons. Unlike the Mormon concept of God as a personal being, the Omaha believed in a mysterious life power, called Wakan'da, that purportedly permeated all visible and invisible portions of the universe. For the Omaha, as well as for many people in the Orient, this life power was not synonymous with nature, an objective god, nor the Great Spirit which the Mormons mentioned when they talked with the Omaha. Instead, the Omaha believed that nature simply reflected the activities of the invisible Wakan'da that punished those who were not truthful, not faithful, not responsible, nor kept their vows by striking them with disaster. Furthermore, the whole universe was thought to be divided into two forces, male and female. In this regard, the sky, sun, father, day, certain heavenly bodies, and other things were all considered masculine while the earth, mother, night, moon, and other celestial bodies were all seen as feminine. Accordingly, the Omaha thought it was necessary for some form of union to occur between the masculine and feminine in order for harmony to be maintained throughout the entire cosmos. If

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14Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 24 October 1846.
15Ibid.
16Ibid., 6 November 1846.
17Ibid., 15 November 1846.
man interrupted this order, the natural food supply would not continue, for Wakon’da would mete out some punishment.\textsuperscript{58}

So that every person would understand his niche in this universal scheme, many elaborate rituals and ceremonies were performed to instruct the people. Shortly after a birth, a certain priest would come to the tent of the newborn child, raise his hands to the sky, and intone a prayer that acknowledged a common life power, introduce the child into the whole universe including the wind, rain, mist, and the earth’s varied landforms, and to all animal life, and implore the mysterious life power to make the child’s path safe during his passage over the four hills of life.\textsuperscript{59} When an Omaha child reached the age when he could walk on his own, the priests placed moccasins with a hole in the sole upon his feet so if a messenger came from the spirit world and asked the child to go with him the child could say, “I cannot go; my moccasins are worn out.” During this ceremony, called turning the child, the priest also gave the child a name, designated his place in the tribe, and assured him a long journey through life.\textsuperscript{60} Furthermore, when a boy reached a certain age he was consecrated to Thunder, the god of war, through an elaborate ritual that involved cutting the hair in a prescribed style, performing sacred ceremonies, and singing certain songs.\textsuperscript{61}

But the most sacred ceremony of all was the one introducing the Omaha youth to Wakon’da. According to the Omaha, it was necessary that the mind of the child, which symbolically represented the feminine portion of the cosmos called the dark of night, be united with the masculine portion known as the clear light of day. When a young person reached puberty, he was no longer in the dark like a child, but he was a conscious individual who had known sorrow, could remember things in the past, and could observe discriminately. Consequently, this age was the proper time for him to enter a personal relationship with Wakon’da.

As a result, early in the spring, each youth who had reached puberty and had not yet married silently slipped away from the village, secluded himself from all other people for four days and

\textsuperscript{58}Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, \textit{The Omaha Tribe} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 2:597–601. The two volumes published as a Bison Book edition were originally published as the Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1905–1906 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911). Alice Fletcher spent twenty-five years collaborating with Francis La Flesche, the son of a principal chief of the Omaha Indians. During this period, Fletcher interviewed many Omaha, examining their artifacts and recording their beliefs and customs.

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., 1:115–16.

\textsuperscript{60}Ibid., 1:117–22.

\textsuperscript{61}Ibid., 1:122–28.
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nights, fasted, prayed, and sang a prescribed song. During the time he followed this ritual, he thought about having a happy life, good health, successful hunts, victorious wars, and being protected from the weapons of his enemies. If during this ordeal he fell into a trance or sleep and saw a vision or had a dream, then the object that he visualized became his special medium for receiving supernatural aid from Wakon'da. After four days of fasting and prayer, the youth returned to his father's lodge, said nothing about his experiences, and recuperated for four days. He then went to a trustworthy old man, smoked a pipe, and told him about his vision. Following his report, the youth again left camp, found the object he had seen in vision, killed it, and preserved a portion of it as a symbol of his vision. From this time forward he was forbidden to eat the object since it was now sacred.62

Not only were the ideas of the Omaha Indians different from those of the Mormons but also the Omaha life-style was a marked contrast to the Saints' agricultural life pattern. The Omaha, like the Pawnee and Ponca, established villages in good locations, built permanent earthen lodges, planted crops, and hunted buffalo, deer, and elk during the summer and winter months.63 When the Mormons arrived on the scene, the Omaha probably felt the Saints might take advantage of their absence during the hunts and plunder their villages, so they left some people to protect their property. This action meant fewer hunters and considerable competition between those Omaha who were left behind and the Mormons for the game, grass, and other natural resources. To compensate, individual Omaha Indians simply took the stray Mormon livestock.

During the winter and spring of 1847, the competition between the Mormons and the Indians became very keen. As a result, the Omaha Indians, since they usually prohibited unauthorized war parties from looting or fighting their enemies, empowered small war parties to secure booty from the Mormons. According to custom, those who wanted to form a party to take spoils from an enemy invited the Keeper of the Sacred Pack of War to four feasts. During the fourth feast, the Keeper of the Sacred Pack instructed the leader of the party in the rituals that he must perform, indicated the relative size of the party, explained how to organize and conduct the raid, and gave him certain charms concealed in small bags which were to be carried by a member of the war party. At this point, the leader solicited

63Ibid., especially 1:1-68, 161-312.
volunteers, organized them, and directed the party according to instructions.64 During the raids the Omaha conducted against the Mormons, some members of the war party hid in grass and the timber, slipped among the cattle herds, stampeded the livestock; then others appeared on horses and rounded up all the stray cattle. These raids were so successful that the Mormons became alarmed at the incredible ‘‘amount of cattle killed by them the past winter & spring.’’65

Property loss had become so great by the time the first company of Mormon pioneers began their historic march across the Plains that the Saints who remained in Winter Quarters decided they had to stop the Indians ‘‘if it had to be by harsher means.’’66 Three steps were taken to protect their cattle.

First, they sent a committee to discuss the matter with the Indians. In their initial discussion, Big Elk said the Indians were justified in taking the cattle since the Saints were cutting the timber, using the grass, and driving the game away. But he would try to stop his young men from taking the cattle, Big Elk said, if the Mormons would give him two hundred dollars’ worth of corn. Unable to make such a commitment, the committee said they had to talk the matter over with their Mormon chief, Alpheus Cutler, when he returned from St. Louis.67

Simultaneously, the Mormons took their second step by revising their method of protecting their cattle. Mormon leaders told their bishops to group the cattle of the ecclesiastical units called wards, appoint a captain, and arm all able-bodied men ‘‘with guns &c. to defend the cattle.’’ In addition, Hosea Stout, chief of police, was ordered to mount ten men on horses, arm them with horsewhips, ‘‘and reconnoitre the country and see if there were any Omahas lying in hiding places and if so . . . to give them a severe flogging.’’ The Saints also advised the Indians they were going to prevent them from entering Winter Quarters by placing additional guards ‘‘to meet them in case they attempted to force our cattle away.’’68

Finally, Mormon leaders took a third step; they held a general meeting of the Saints to tell them that all the trouble there had been with the Indians had been caused by the ‘‘stupidity of the people in [not] observing the council & instructions of the Twelve & their

64Ibid., 2:404–9.
66Ibid., 1:251.
67Ibid.
68Ibid.
heedlessness about their cattle in exposing them to the Omahas.'” Following the severe reprimand, the Saints voted unanimously to “obey council,” to finish the stockyard before any more Saints moved west, to herd the cattle more closely and secure them against the Omaha, and to pay “a company of ten tough Rangers . . . [who had already been appointed] to guard the outskirts of the Herds to prevent Omaha depredations.”

These stronger measures paid some dividends, for in two weeks Young Elk and some of his men made their way to Winter Quarters to return six stolen horses, and when they reached the Mormon picket lines, the guards stopped them. Chagrined by this treatment, Young Elk protested, saying he had a right to go where he wished, but the guards told him they could not violate their orders. After some debate, the guards agreed to permit Young Elk and a few of his men to enter Winter Quarters to parley with the Mormons.

Soon after Young Elk reached the city, a regular council was called with Lot Smith, Hosea Stout, and some guards on one side and the Omaha on the other. Opening the conversation, Young Elk said he was ready to hear anything the Mormons had to say. In anger, Lot Smith blurted out that the Indians had not lived up to their agreements and unless they were ready to keep their word, there would be no use talking. Controlling his emotions, Young Elk coolly remarked “he had been sent . . . by his father [Big Elk] to bring in our horses & enter into a better understanding of peace.” But in attempting to carry out this mission he and his men had been “stoped on the praire like wild beasts & not even admitted a hearing & how it wounded his feelings to have to be guarded into town & leave his braves under guard to offer peace to us & deliver up stolen property & give their pledge that no more should be stolen.” At the same time, Young Elk said he had to contend with his own people to give up the stolen horses and now he was being treated like a prisoner. If the “‘Big Red headed’ chief [Brigham] had been here,” Young Elk sharply said, “he would have taken them & spoken friendly to [them] . . . [oh how] he wished the Big Red Head chief would come home & stay here & then we would have peace.” Since Brigham Young was not here, Young Elk would accept presents from the Mormons to cement peace.

Deeply moved by Young Elk’s sincere words, the Mormon delegation said they could not give him an answer until their Mormon

69ibid., 1:254.
70ibid., 1:257.
chief [Alpheus Cutler] returned from Missouri with supplies. Although not well pleased with this reply, Young Elk left, and in a few days Alpheus Cutler met with the Indians and gave them some presents.\textsuperscript{71}

Despite the hopes for peace generated by the parleys with the Omaha, serious trouble continued between the Mormons and the Indians. Within a few days after Young Elk’s peace talks, the Indians killed Francis Weatherby near the Mormon gristmill at the Horn. As a result, the Mormons contacted the Indian agents and demanded the guilty Indians be brought to justice. Thinking the agent had asked the Mormons to provide fifty men to search for Weatherby’s assailants, the Saints raised the troops and started for Bellevue to meet the agent; but complications arose regarding the jurisdiction of the agents, and so the case was dropped.\textsuperscript{72} This incident only foreshadowed many other occasions in which the Indians took Mormon livestock and threatened the lives of the Saints while the Mormons remained in Winter Quarters.\textsuperscript{73} In June 1848, for example, as the Heber C. Kimball Company was beginning its migration westward, several Omaha Indians attacked and wounded Thomas E. Ricks and Howard Egan while they were trying to stop the Indians from raiding their cattle and horses.\textsuperscript{74}

Obviously, Mormon settlement on Omaha lands depleted much game and timber which the Indians needed to sustain their traditional life-style. The Omaha felt completely justified in taking Mormon livestock to compensate for the losses they sustained while the Mormons were on their soil. The Mormons felt otherwise; to them the Indians’ taking livestock was pure and simple theft. The Saints felt they were giving the Omaha other compensations. For one thing, the Saints felt the protection they gave the Omaha from their traditional enemies was more than ample pay for the Saints’ using their land.

No doubt the Mormons did provide a measure of protection to the Omaha from their tribal enemies. On several occasions the Omaha sought the protection of the Saints in the conflict with their enemies. For example, about 3 A.M. on 9 December 1846, a band of Omaha camped near Winter Quarters was attacked by a party of Iowa. After the raid, the Omaha fled to Brigham Young’s house. In

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., 1:258–59.
\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., 1:262–65. See also letter of Alfred B. Lambson, dated June 1847 and located in LDS Church Archives. The letter details the incident, explaining how they stopped in the path of the oxen and the men tried to get the guns from the Indians. In the process Francis Weatherby was shot.
\textsuperscript{73}Hosea Stout reported of at least fifteen incidents of Indians taking livestock between October 1847 and June 1848.
\textsuperscript{74}Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 1:315.
describing this incident, Hosea Stout said that when he got to Brigham's house it was "crowded full of Omahas who had fled for shelter." Filling in the details, Stout said:

One squaw had been shot through the arm which was shattered to atoms & an old indian picking out the little bones with his fingers. . . . Old Big Head a chief was shot in the head arm & had his thumb shot off. He was badly wounded some were missing and supposed to be dead. . . . I in company with a party of police and some others went with some of the indians to their Lodges to see if any thing more was done and to hunt for the missing.

Their lodges were in a gore of blood but could not find any one. However, after a long while one of the old Indians raised a howling yell & was answered not far off where we found the one we supposed to be dead. He was at Charles Patten's he was very badly wounded a ball passing in near the left eye. The ball was started out of its socket. . . . We then went back and after seeing that all was put to rights came home & yet it was not day. While at their Lodges we could hear the howas howling on the other side of the river.

About the middle of the afternoon, I went up again to see how matters were going on. I found the wounded indians located in a sod house where they had been put up by order of President Young. . . . The rest of the Indians moved their lodges by President Young's house as they were afraid to stay any longer where they were least they should be attacked again.75

The Mormons frequently reminded the Indian agents, government officials, and the Indians of the protection they were giving the Omaha.76 The Indian agents also felt the Saints provided a measure of protection for the Omaha Indians, for they suggested the government build a fort at Winter Quarters to give the Omaha the protection they were getting from the Saints when the Mormons evacuated Winter Quarters and moved west.77

In addition to giving protection, the Saints felt they made a signal contribution to improving the life-style of the Omaha. Certainly, the Saints believed the land they cleared, the crops they harvested for

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75Ibid., 1:216-17. See also Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 9 December 1845. For other examples of protection, see the Manuscript History on 9 and 13 December 1846; 7 January 1847; 10 and 15 1847; and Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 1:189. On this occasion, Big Elk said he wanted Brigham Young to protect his people and take pity on them. Big Elk also asked the Mormons to store the Indians' corn to keep other tribes from getting it. However, the Mormons made it clear they did not want to get so involved that they were forced into an intertribal war. See also Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 1:233, in which he tells how he was told to post extra guards to watch Indians other than the Omaha when they came to Winter Quarters.

76See previously cited letters Thomas L. Kane wrote to public officials, particularly Kane to Medill, 21 March 1847.

77John Miller to William L. Marcy, Secretary of War, in care of Thomas H. Harvey, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis, 20 January 1847, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis.
the Indians, the livestock they gave them, the skills they taught them, and above all the houses, other buildings, gristmills, and other improvements which they would leave the Indians when they abandoned Winter Quarters were more than sufficient compensation to the Indians for the privilege of staying on Omaha soil.78

But apparently the Indians did not feel these services compensated for the timber, game, and other natural resources used by the Mormons. The log houses, school buildings, and other structures arranged in city blocks which the Mormons had built in Winter Quarters were of little value to the Omaha since they arranged their tribe to conform to their fundamental religious ideas. Since the Omaha believed Wakon’da had arranged the entire universe into male and female forces, they divided their tribe into two grand divisions, one the sky people or the masculine, and the other the earth people or the feminine.79 This philosophy influenced Omaha marriages, tribal organization, and even the arrangement of their villages. Each village, hunting camp, and lodge was circular in form and was arranged according to the Omaha concept of the cosmos. Each tribal unit or gens had a designated location within the village. The five tribal units or gentes which composed the sky people formed the northern half of the village, camp or ceremonial lodge and the five gentes which were designated the earth people were situated on the southern half. Even within the family lodge or dwelling, each person had his or her special place based on the belief about the masculine and feminine forces within the universe.80

Thus, the Mormon arrangement of Winter Quarters into city blocks did not fit the Omaha’s ideas for an ideal village. If the Mormons had understood clearly the religious ideas of the Omaha and how these ideas motivated the Indians to think and behave as they did, their relationships with the Indians would have been more cordial. At the same time, the Omaha did not understand the Mormons’ religious ideas and life-style.

The local Indians felt no remorse when the Saints evacuated Winter Quarters during the summer of 1848. For along with the trouble they had received for taking Mormon beef, they no doubt remembered the episode that involved the desecration of graves. Although Brigham Young had strongly advised the Saints to leave Indian

78Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 15, 20, 28, and 31 August 1846. See also Jenson, Encyclopedic History, 957.
79Fletcher and La Flesche, Omaha Tribe, 1:134–98.
80Ibid., 1:134–41.
graves alone, sometime in 1847 Arza Adams and Henry W. Miller reportedly took a wagonload of buffalo robes, leggings, and other articles from an Omaha burial ground and planned to sell them. This act created great resentment; the Omaha considered it to be a "sacraligious insult to their dead friends." Trying to settle this affair respectively, Mormon leaders demanded these men "restore the things taken to the place whence they took them & make satisfaction to the Omahas as soon as possible."

Mormon memories of their relations with the Indians at Winter Quarters, for the most part, were not pleasant ones. Added to the list of the loss of property and life already mentioned, the Saints also had some trouble with the liquor traffic among the Indians. Repeatedly, Indian agents pointed their finger at the Mormons for this illicit trade. Sufficient amounts of whiskey were sold to the Indians at Winter Quarters that it caused trouble among the Indians. Frequently, Joseph and George Herring, two Indian converts, became drunken "specticals." On one occasion, Joseph Herring, who had been drunk all day, was cared for by Hosea Stout. Speaking of this incident, Stout records, "At Bed time he was dead drunk & I had to lay him down to bed as a dead man." Repulsed by this drunken episode and others, Brigham Young said if anyone sold whiskey to the Indians "they ought to be handed over to the Indian agent to be delt with according to the laws of the United States."

Finally, the Saints were plagued by the question of whether the Otoe or the Omaha owned the land where Winter Quarters stood. In this regard, the Mormons, just days before abandoning their improvements, were approached by the Otoe and Agent Miller, who demanded the Saints pay them instead of the Omaha for using the land at Winter Quarters.

Nevertheless, not all Mormon memories of the Indians during their stay among the natives in the Indian territory were unpleasant ones. Sometimes the Saints were on friendly terms with the Indians and preached their religion to them, and occasionally the Indian

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81 Stout, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:233. See also Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1–2 February 1847.
82 Thomas L. Kane to William L. Marcy, 20 December 1846, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis. Kane, reacting to the charges the agents were making about the Saints, denied that the Mormons would sell whiskey to the Indians (see also Kane to Medill, 21 March 1847, and John Miller to Thomas H. Harvey, 10 September 1847). Agent John Miller reported the Mormons had bought from the Omaha "in the last 12 months some 30 horses for whiskey, not getting more for a poney than from 2 to 4 gallons & that well watered."
83 Stout, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:229, 308. For some unexplained reason, the Herring brothers became very disappointed with the Twelve. The Twelve later excommunicated them from the Church.
84 Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 17 January 1847.
agent hired Mormons to serve the government.\(^6\) For example, a Mr. Wicks hired some Mormon women, whose husbands were in the Mormon Battalion, to move to Indian Mills where they held school for the Indian children, teaching them to sew, spin, read, write, cipher, and spell.\(^7\) However, these teachers had a hard time keeping the children in school or even teaching the girls to knit and sew. Apparently, Mormon children were more successful in reaching the Indian children than were their parents. Mosiah Lyman Hancock, who was a youngster at the time, reported in his autobiography that some of the children taught the Potawatomi and Delaware children to read. Indeed, Hancock recorded that he had a friend named Optekseeck who learned to read the Book of Mormon.\(^8\)

Had the government permitted the Saints to remain on Indian land, no doubt the Mormons would have tried to lessen the sharp cultural conflicts which they had experienced with the Indians. Obviously, the cultural gap that existed between the Indians who followed a deeply religious life blended with a hunting life-style and the Mormons who lived a different religious life pattern based on cultivated agriculture was so sharp that peaceful relations would have been impossible without considerable tolerance, understanding, and adjustment in behavior on both sides.

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\(^6\)Hyde, *Pawnee Indians*, 166-68, 224-26. For example, Hyde reports that when the Presbyterian missionaries were brought back to Winter Quarters by Miller’s company, they brought with them several Pawnee children. When they arrived, Brigham Young provided warm clothing, food, and other necessities for the children until some were returned to the tribe with the others taken by a group from Oberlin.

\(^7\)Mosiah Hancock Journal, 95, LDS Church Archives.

\(^8\)“The Life Story of Mosiah Lyman Hancock,” 22, LDS Church Archives.
Finalizing Plans for the Trek West: Deliberations at Winter Quarters, 1846–1847

Richard E. Bennett

Those focusing only on Nauvoo difficulties and deliberations for the Mormon exodus to "Zion" have overlooked the intense planning sessions at Winter Quarters on the west side of the Missouri River during the winter of 1846–47. Nauvoo was left in haste long before the final details of the westward march had solidified. Due to the weather, disorganization, lack of preparation, and recurring arguments over leadership, the Mormon vanguard took more than four months to cross Iowa, only to be again delayed by the call for the Mormon Battalion. With the inevitable decision to winter at the Missouri in the Council Bluffs region, Church leaders found the time to catch their collective breath and more thoroughly prepare for the mountain trek. This article details the plans, arguments, and decisions of that winter of 1846–47. At stake was far more than mere route plans; rather, basic questions of leadership and authority were being tested.

INTRODUCTION

While building their cabin city at Winter Quarters, skirmishing with Indians, sparring with agents, eking out a living, and coping with sickness and disease, Church authorities analyzed and reanalyzed their plans. In question was the spring departure of a pioneer company of yet unknown size and makeup, along some still-to-be-finalized overland trail, to some obscure resting place at the foot of the mountains, and eventually to "Zion" in some undetermined valley over the Rockies. The planning councils in which these issues were discussed were essentially extensions of earlier Nauvoo deliberations, for the leaders had always intended to reestablish the Church in the West.

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But their stay at the Missouri provided time and opportunity to restock their supplies; rethink their plans; confer with gentile traders, trappers, and missionaries who knew the West firsthand; obtain the best, most reliable maps; and formulate a deliberate, foolproof plan of action. Yet despite these advantages, until the eve of their exodus they did not agree on many details of their impending march and eventual destination. And if Brigham Young knew precisely where he was going when he and the advance party left in April 1847, it was the best-kept secret in camp.

Besides the trapper Peter Sarpy, who told what he knew of the prairie and mountain west, Brigham Young and his colleagues in the Quorum of the Twelve conferred at length with Father Jean Pierre De Smet, who visited the settlements on 19 November 1846. They asked me a thousand questions about the regions I had explored, De Smet later reported, "and the spot which I have just described to you [the Great Basin] pleased them greatly from the account I gave them of it." And they would talk to others.

The pioneers' destination remained the same as a year before—some secluded valley in either the Great Basin or Bear River country. In all the official correspondence coming out of Winter Quarters between August 1846 and April 1847, references to an ultimate destination were consistent but guarded. In August 1846 Brigham told Colonel Thomas L. Kane "they were intending to settle in the Great Basin or Bear River valley." John D. Lee, who participated in the confidential conversation with Colonel Kane at Cutler's Park, elaborated on Brigham's comments:

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1 Peter Sarpy had been an employee of the American Fur Company for many years and knew the Missouri River as well as any man of his times. He owned property on both sides of the Missouri River and operated flourishing trading posts at Bellevue and at Council Point, across the river on the Iowa side just south of present-day Council Bluffs. He proved sympathetic to the Mormons, providing assistance in the building of ferries, offering fur contracts, and giving advice about the West.


3 De Smet later served as chaplain in the infamous Johnson's Army sent to destroy the Mormons in 1858. At that time, De Smet described the Mormons as "that terrible sect of modern fanatics, flying from civilization ... [who] never ceased to defy the Government" (Chittenden and Richardson, *Life, Letters and Travels of De Smet*, 2:717-18).

4 Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 7 August 1846. The Journal History is a multivolume compendium of facts, extracts, journal entries, letters, clippings, and historical insertions of all kinds, documenting chronologically the history of the Church. It is freely available in the Search Room of the History Division Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives).
With reference to our Settlements in the California's—we do not intend
growing and [settling] the Majority of our People on the [coast] or near
the Bay of Francisco—but intend settling the greater part of our People
in the great Basin Between the Mountains near the Bear River valley.

In correspondence to President James K. Polk, "the Great Salt
Lake or Bear River Valley" was plainly specified. In September, Brigham
again spoke of Bear River, the Great Basin, or some other favorable
valley. A Willard Richards letter to Colonel Kane in mid-February
1847 proves winter discussions did not affect the ultimate destination.
"We have not changed our views relative to a location," wrote the
camp historian. "It must be somewhere in the Great Basin, we have
no doubt."

But if their target remained consistent, the complex plans for
gaining there evolved through at least three subtly distinguishable
stages of development. Such matters as the time of departure, the
number of men, the route, the need for another farm or way station,
the regulation of authority, camp organization, and other related
concerns were in constant debate. How, not where, was the divisive
issue.

SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER PRELIMINARY PLAN

The first plan was to send across the mountains to the Great
Basin or Bear River Valley a substantial number of able-bodied men

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4Journal of John D. Lee, 7 August 1846, LDS Church Archives. There is some indication that their
destination was private information, not known by most in camp and revealed to Thomas L. Kane only after
he had won the confidence and trust of Mormon leaders. Brigham had his reasons for confidentiality.
Mormon Battalion enlistees might not look favorably at a one-thousand-mile march inland from their military
destination on the Pacific Coast; he wished to keep the federal government guessing; and in case the Valley
did not turn out as expected, changes could be made without others questioning his inspiration.

Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman expressed the popular sentiment while watching the departing pioneer
wagons in early April. "They are going west to look for a location for the Latter-day Saints and have no idea
where that is but trust that the Lord will lead them to the place" (Journal of Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman,
8 April 1847, LDS Church Archives).

5Journal History, 9 August 1846.

6See Brigham Young to the Nauvoo Trustees, 11 September 1846; and Brigham Young to Joseph A. Strasen,
12 September 1846, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives. Lewis C. Christian contends that the
Bear River Valley mentioned referred to the one in present Wyoming rather than its counterpart in present
northern Utah (see Christian, "Study of the Mormon Westward Migration," 223 and 238). However, most
of the trappers spoke highly of the Cache Valley area of Utah, and Brigham might have had that area in
mind.

7Journal History, 15 February 1847. The only modification of their destination plans was the abandonment
of any further serious consideration of locating a portion of the British Saints at Vancouver Island. While as
late as August 1846, lip service had been given to the idea of British converts' reaching the Great Basin
by the Vancouver water route rather than by the more costly overland crossing, it was probably never more
than a poorly conceived economic alternative. Routing the Saints through Vancouver was no longer an alternative
after the signing of the Oregon treaty in June 1846. Considering the need for consolidating their resources
once in their mountain retreat, maintaining close communication and unity, and protecting themselves, I
find it hard to believe the reference to the scheme was anything but a smoke screen to gain any possible
British and American concessions.
who would plant extensive crops and erect substantial improvements and facilities. After a year or two they would return to bring back to the Great Basin area as many of the Missouri River encampments as possible. Central to the operation were the completion of the Winter Quarters mill far enough in advance to provide abundant seed, a very early departure, and a universal understanding and willingness among the families to surrender their sons and husbands and to remain a year or two longer at the Missouri.

Specifically, the proposed company was variously described as "a portion of our effective men," 8 a "few hundred men" 9 and "all the able bodied brethren who possibly can." 10 The company was to consist of carpenters, millwrights, fence-builders, and experienced farmers, who, after reaching their new home, would lay out a city, select a temple lot, sow extensive acreage, build permanent living quarters, erect mills, and in every possible way "prepare something tangible for our families and the Saints when they follow after." 11 Apparently most of the party, if not all, would winter there. In short, the leaders envisioned a large work party of several hundred men who would accomplish far more than merely locate the site.

Also critical to the plan was reaching the destination in sufficient time to plant abundant summer crops and build extensively before winter. The leaders predicted reaching their chosen valley in a minimum of "six weeks," certainly no later than 1 June. 12 To make it by that date they would have to leave "at the earliest moment," 13 "say one month before grass grows," 14 or, as finally defined, "by the first of March." 15 Without families and excessive paraphernalia, the proposed company could leave early and travel quickly, a lesson Iowa taught them by hard experience. Following the route of the pathfinder James C. Fremont, they would travel up the North Platte to Fort Laramie, along the Springwater and through the South Pass.

Meanwhile, their families would remain at the Bluffs or "up and down the river and back in Iowa" 16 for "one or two years" 17 if forced

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8Brigham Young to Joseph A. Stratton, 12 September 1846, Brigham Young Papers.
9Journal History, 28 September 1846.
10Brigham Young to the Nauvoo Trustees, 27 September 1846, Brigham Young Papers.
11Journal History, 15 November 1846.
12Minutes of the Winter Quarters High Council, 8 September 1846, LDS Church Archives.
13Brigham Young to the Nauvoo Trustees, 11 September 1846, Brigham Young Papers.
14Ibid., 27 September 1846.
15Ibid., 14 November 1846; and Journal History, 15 November 1846.
16Letter of Brigham Young to the Nauvoo Trustees, 27 September 1846, Brigham Young Papers.
to vacate Winter Quarters and then come en masse in "the spring of 1848." Bringing large numbers of families before reaping sustaining harvests would be potentially disastrous. Realizing the perennial objections of the faithful to being left behind, Brigham argued that "a year's comfortable situation in any civilized community for women and children is far preferable to a year or two's risque of starvation in the wilderness." Once the new settlement was secured, crops sowed, and adequate shelter provided, "then they will come to us, or we can come and bring them."20

Finally, to lessen family fears and bolster confidence, Brigham related at a meeting of the "general council" or Council of Fifty in mid-November a dream which he had recently had "concerning the Rocky Mountains" and promised "that we should go in safety over the mountains, notwithstanding all the opposition and obstacles government officials and others might interpose."21

COUNCIL OF FIFTY'S DECEMBER PLAN

But the Council of Fifty had other ideas—dreams or no dreams. In a series of meetings in November and December, the Council of Fifty, reconvening officially for the first time since Nauvoo days, met to discuss "the organization of the camp of Israel and our contemplated journey."22 The most important meetings were held in December. Assistant Presiding Bishop George Miller and James Emmett returned from the Ponca settlement on the day of Christmas Eve, having made the trip two or three times previously. The Council of Fifty assembled the following day, Christmas, at Willard Richards's octagonal cabin, starting at 4 P.M. Their deliberations lasted until ten that night, continued from 10 A.M. (with a break for lunch) until 9 P.M. the next

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19Journal History, 15 November 1846.
20Brigham Young to the Nauvoo Trustees, 11 September 1846, Brigham Young Papers.
21Brigham Young to Joseph Herring, 13 September 1846, Brigham Young Papers.
22Journal History, 8 and 12 November 1846.
23Journal History, 29 December 1846. Shortly before his death, Joseph Smith organized the Council of Fifty as a political advisory body. Two of its assignments were to assist in the election of Joseph as president of the United States and to advise on a future location for the Church. Some authors have argued that the Council of Fifty had far-sweeping powers to govern the Church, but this does not seem to be the case. Apostle George A. Smith at one time referred to it as "a debating society" (A Report, Orson Hyde, George A. Smith, and Ezra T. Benson to Brigham Young, 5 April 1849, Brigham Young Papers), though some of his colleagues, particularly those who disagreed with Brigham Young, saw the Council as a body of power almost equal to that of the Quorum of the Twelve. (For two sharply contrasting points of view, see Klaus Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* [Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967]; and D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," *Brigham Young University Studies* 20 [Winter 1980]: 165–97.)
day, and concluded at 6 P.M. Sunday, 27 December. It is significant that Brigham Young and Willard Richards were quite ill at the time and attended only intermittently. George Miller later indicated that his ideas were not "wholly overlooked in their deliberations." The plan that resulted superseded the preliminary plan of just a few weeks earlier.

Central to this approach was the establishment of a large farm or way station, like Mt. Pisgah or Garden Grove, in an isolated setting in Yellowstone country north of Fort Laramie. Planting spring crops at the foot of instead of across the mountains was safer than risking all on an over-the-mountain dash. Fewer men would be required since few large facilities were envisioned and only planting would be required at this temporary site, while more men could come on after spring. If successful at the Yellowstone, a small band might later go over the mountains, find the right valley, and at least make a tiny foothold and plant some fall crops. If the plan were successful on both counts, the bulk of the Church could be brought out in the spring of 1848 as originally decided. More cautious than the first, this second plan was a scheduling change, a guarantee for essential wilderness crops in the summer and fall of 1847; but the end result would be the same. Prompting this revision were the advice trappers were offering, the three hundred pounds of flour per man required, the failure of the mill to begin operating in time to supply the pioneers with sufficient seed grain, and a feeling that a way station farther west would be a healthier place to spend another summer than Winter Quarters.

The plan apparently stemmed from Bishop George Miller. Bishop Miller and James Emmett, from their conversations with local Indians and explorations up the Running Water River, were convinced that the spring expedition should travel west up the Running Water rather than the more southerly route along the North Platte. Writing as early as October, Bishop Miller had argued that his route was "the nearest and best rout to the pass in the mountains" and that it was "a

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23See Journal of Willard Richards, 24–27 December 1846; and Journal History, 27 December 1846, LDS Church Archives. George Miller, a convert to Mormonism in early Nauvoo days, was a very capable and devoted follower of Joseph Smith. The Prophet eventually appointed him Assistant Presiding Bishop of the Church. Bishop Miller took a leading role in Council of Fifty proceedings and was Brigham's main pathfinder while crossing Iowa. The Ponca settlement derived from George Miller's decision to abandon his original assignment to establish a winter camp among the Pawnee Indians near the Loup Fork of the North Platte River. For various reasons, not the least of which were the advice of James Emmett to follow the invitation of the Ponca Indians and Miller's desire to establish a community upon different economic principles than those Brigham Young was implementing at Winter Quarters, Bishop Miller and his company of almost four hundred souls moved north to the Ponca Indian villages on the Running Water River near its confluence with the Missouri River, about two hundred miles north of Winter Quarters.

24Northern Islander, 20 September 1855.
level road all the way to Fort Laramie. '25 He sent Emmett and Butler to explore the river, and upon their return in December they reported it as a "good route." Joseph Holbrook called it "one of the best I ever saw for spring traveling."26

Then, in late November, Justin Grosclaude and a Mr. Cardinal strongly endorsed Miller's proposed route. They spoke favorably of at least a summer way station in the Yellowstone country near the forks of Tongue River "just five or six days above Fort Laramie," in present southeastern Montana, south of Miles City.27 The two men, according to Horace K. Whitney, had settled in the area of "the Salt Lakes" for sixteen years. "They narrated [and] gave an account of the climate, etc. which was quite interesting indeed."28 Grosclaude, a trader for the American Fur Company, and Cardinal, an expert hunter and trapper, claimed a knowledge of most of the Indian languages and all the best trails to and over the Rockies. They offered "to pilot the camp over the mountains" the following spring for $400. A noncommittal but interested Brigham Young listened carefully to their recommendations of establishing a summer farming station in the Tongue River area; he himself had introduced the subject of a way station in the foothills some weeks previously. As one of the clerks recorded, "Mr. 'G.' gave an interesting account of the sources of the Yellowstone and sketched with pencil a map of the country west of the Missouri and north of Puncah above the Yellow Stone."29 Because of his conversations with the two men, Brigham gave more serious consideration to Miller's Running Water-Tongue River plan. "The thought occurred to us," he said in a letter to Bishop Miller,

that perhaps Brothers Emmett and Butler might like to explore that country [Yellowstone] this winter to see if there was a chance for a good location or any other speculation in that vicinity to become familiar with routes. . . . We have written the thought, but have no particular council on the subject.30

Although Brigham was never overly enthusiastic about the Yellowstone proposal, before long Grosclaude's suggestions had become the pioneers' concrete plans.

26Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 17 December 1846, LDS Church Archives; and Joseph Holbrook to Brigham Young, 7 December 1846, Brigham Young Papers.
27Brigham Young to George Miller and Council, 25 November 1846, Brigham Young Papers.
28Journal of Horace K. Whitney, 24 November 1846, LDS Church Archives.
30Brigham Young to George Miller and Council, 25 November 1846, Brigham Young Papers.
By mid-December, after the November round of Council of Fifty meetings, Thomas Bullock and other assistant clerks dispatched letters describing "the route to our next intended location on the head waters of the Yellow Stone River." At a Sunday public meeting in Winter Quarters two days after Christmas, and immediately after the December meetings of the Council of Fifty, Orson Pratt described the way station plan, explaining the intention to send out a pioneer company to get to the head waters of the Running Water by the time grass comes or before and be ready to go over the Black Hills [of present-day eastern Wyoming] & put in a crop of corn somewhere on this side of the mountains near the head of the Yellow Stone. He was followed by Woodruff & Benson approving of his views on the subject.

Mary Richards, who also attended the meeting, noted that it was similarly contemplated that if time and energy permitted they would send out from the proposed Yellowstone winter quarters "a company across the mountains . . . to put in a crop of wheat in the fall."

Brigham, writing to Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, and John Taylor, who were then about to depart from England and return home to the camps, indicated that after conferring with George Miller and others at Christmastime the Council of Fifty had decided to send ahead two or three hundred men "as early as circumstances would possibly permit" to the Yellowstone River, "perhaps at the Fork of Tongue River," to prepare a large summer crop for "some thousand or two of the saints, who should follow after them as soon as grazing would permit." All who did not go to the Yellowstone in either of the first two parties would "remain at this place and raise crops preparatory for emigration the following Spring."

BRIGHAM YOUNG AND THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE'S PLAN

Despite his tentative agreement with the Yellowstone plan and the words of support given by various members of the Twelve, Brigham never warmed up to it. After receiving more information and considering all the geographical and administrative matters concerned, he tendered a revision of the original plan, this time with the weight of divine

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31Journal of Thomas Bullock, 12 December 1846, LDS Church Archives. Bullock continued: "The Buffalo grass is fine & plenty on the head waters of the Yellow Stone—a stream strikes above the two forks of Tongue River—the winter set in there about 1st Nov.—& lasts till last of March—"
32Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 27 December 1846, 1:221.
33Journal of Mary H. P. Richards, 27 December 1846, LDS Church Archives.
34Journal History, 7 January 1847.
35Brigham Young to Hannah Staley, 8 January 1847, Brigham Young Papers.
approval behind it. Involved were far more than routes, rivers, and way stations; rather, the matter had become an issue of leadership and authority.

Brigham developed several objections. First of all, he did not like the direction the Yellowstone plan would take them. He saw in it a repeat of Miller’s Ponca settlement—a way station off the main line and north by hundreds of miles from where they were intending to go. Why risk living among other potentially hostile Sioux and Mandan Indian tribes for another winter? Why risk unnecessarily an uncertain crop in an unknown area away from trading posts and settlements? In short, why delay at all? Better to take the risks of getting over the mountains than to mire in the swamps of the Yellowstone.

Second, Brigham didn’t like what he was hearing about the Yellowstone. He gradually concluded that Grosclaude and Cardinal were influencing George Miller and the others the same way the Ponca Indians had done earlier—possibly for their own advantage. Joseph Holbrook, after returning from his explorations west with James Emmett, told Brigham that while the Running Water was a fairly direct route, the feed along the way was ‘‘entirely eat out’’ by large buffalo herds. More seriously, the Sioux Indians ‘‘expressed an unwillingness for us to pass through their country and make a large road as it would serve to drive off their Buffalo and other game.’’ The Ponca, confided Holbrook, ‘‘expressed the same opinions as the Sioux.’’36 If the warlike Sioux were concerned about a tiny exploration party, how would they react to large caravans? Besides, the Sioux were already a serious enough hazard to the settlements at the Missouri. To aggravate them further would be risking the lives of both the overlanders and the weakly defended settlers back at Winter Quarters.

What Logan Fontenelle described was equally unsettling, if not more so. Fontenelle was the interpreter to the Omaha Indians and a frequent visitor at Winter Quarters. A half-breed son of the mountain man Lucien B. Fontenelle, he possessed extensive knowledge of the Far West. Logan Fontenelle disagreed with Grosclaude and thought the Yellowstone plan unwise. ‘‘The soil about Tongue River is red and yellow clay and you cannot raise crops on it,’’ he advised Willard Richards, Thomas Bullock, and Henry G. Sherwood in mid-December. ‘‘From the Ponca to the Oregon trail is a broken country—between the divides are swamps—the Creeks that run into

36Joseph Holbrook to Brigham Young, 7 December 1846, Brigham Young Papers.
the Running Water are not miry, but it is a rough Country. . . . Up the Running Water you will see trouble and may break your wagons. I would not undertake to go up that River.'" Instead, Fontenelle strongly recommended they pursue their original plan to follow the North Platte, which he described as "a level prairie and good sound road to the Mountains." He also spoke encouragingly about the "best soil" south of the Salt Lake.37

Another drawback to the Yellowstone plan was the increased hardship it would place on members of the Mormon Battalion. Brigham was keenly aware that after their discharge in the summer of 1847 many of the soldiers would be returning from the Pacific Coast to their families.38 He therefore wanted a large number of Battalion families in the proposed summer train of one thousand or two thousand so that as few soldiers as possible would have to travel all the way back to the Missouri.39 They had already marched enough at his insistence. The Yellowstone scheme would add several hundred more miles to the soldiers' march. Enough criticism had already been raised over the Battalion matter—why make it worse?

Third and of most importance, in addition to disliking the direction of travel and to receiving negative input about the Yellowstone plan, Brigham disliked the source from which the plan came. George Miller and his tagalong, James Emmett, represented an excessively independent spirit that had manifested itself before the exodus from Nauvoo, all across Iowa, at the Missouri, and most recently at the Ponca settlement. Their goals and perspectives were repeatedly at variance with Brigham's and the Twelve's. George Miller and others of the Council of Fifty, such as Lyman Wight, Brigham believed, were following the shadow of the deceased Joseph Smith, not the living Quorum of the Twelve, and were not really convinced that settling the Church in the Great Basin was of any merit. During the winter, Bishop Miller had disobeyed counsel by dealing with Missouri traders without clearance and had steadfastly refused to pool his funds with Orson Whitney's to buy at cheaper wholesale prices.

At a raucous meeting in Daniel Cahoon's cabin at Winter Quarters on 29 October, George Miller railed against Brigham's policies,

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37See Journal of Thomas Bullock, 12 December 1846; and Journal History, 12 December 1846. Fontenelle also suggested that before departing they build a leather boat or "revenue cutter" to aid in fording swollen streams and rivers.
38A detachment of the Battalion incapacitated by illness and weakened conditions, along with most of the women and children, had been sent north to Pueblo, Colorado. This contingent would also want to rejoin their families at the earliest moment.
shackles, and ambitions in the presence of Willard Richards. After their meeting had adjourned,

Brigham appeared at the door and took up the subject. He had been without and heard all that was said. He handled the case very ruff. He said that Miller and Emmett had a delusive spirit and any one that would follow them would go to hell etc. that they would sacrifice this people to aggrandize themselves or to get power . . . and that he would not clean up after him any longer. He said that they would yet apostatize.40

Brigham wanted to dispel once and for all any doubt that the Quorum of the Twelve was in command. Several of the pioneers in and out of camp, such as Peter Haws, George Miller, Lyman Wight, and Lucian J. Woodward, were clinging to the belief that the Council of Fifty was directing the migrations west and held supreme authority at least over temporal and political matters. Miller, Haws, Emmett, and Wight all felt they were equal trailblazers with Brigham as fellow members of the Council and would not willingly submit to his direction, particularly regarding non-Church affairs.

To take matters completely out of the hands of the Council of Fifty or any other similar group and to scotch the already approved Yellowstone plan would require a forceful declaration. On 11 January, Brigham told of another dream he had received the night before of Joseph Smith and his mother Lucy Mack Smith, reporting that he and Joseph "conversed freely about the best manner of organizing companies for emigration."41 Three days later, on Thursday, 14 January, Brigham presented his canonized revelation to the Church. Recorded today in the Doctrine and Covenants and received then as "'The Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel in their journeyings to the West'" (D&C 136:1), the document was a brilliant and well-timed statement, not because of what it said regarding the organization of companies (since they had already had companies of hundreds, fifties, and tens all across Iowa) but for what it declared concerning the source of final authority. Above all, it was a lecture on apostolic supremacy.

Given first to the Twelve on 14 January, to the High Council on 16 January, to the general priesthood quorum on Sunday, 17 January, and finally to the general membership on 19 January, "'The Word and Will of the Lord'" said many things but perhaps none more important than this—that the journey westward, its organization, its

41Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 11 January 1847.
conduct, all must be "under the direction of the Twelve Apostles" (D&C 136:3).

For the first time since Joseph Smith, the faithful proclaimed, God had given direction. He had not left his people alone in the wilderness and he would not abandon them. And he had stated unequivocally who was in charge.\(^{42}\) Though the revelation said nothing about the Saints' final destination nor the feasibility of a way station—indeed leaving these matters entirely open—it did establish ultimate authority. The Twelve were in control—not the Council of Fifty, not the High Council, nor any other group. And the issue was not missed by those who participated in the meetings and procedures to ratify the revelation.

Brigham endeavored to show that the Apostles were following the will of Joseph Smith while others were pretenders. "The Church has been led by Revelation just as much since the death of Joseph Smith as before," said Brigham on 17 January. "Joseph received his apostleship from Peter, and his brethren, and the present Apostles received their apostleship from Joseph, the first apostle, and Oliver Cowdery, the second apostle."\(^ {43}\)

Hosea Stout, aware of the tensions over conflicting claims to authority, recorded his impressions of the revelation.

This will put to silence the wild bickering and suggestions of those who are ever in the way and opposing the proper council. They will now have to come to this standard or come out in open rebellion to the Will of the Lord which will plainly manifest them to the people and then they can have no influence.\(^ {44}\)

The content of the revelation was delivered in person to the Ponca settlement in early February by Ezra Taft Benson, Erastus Snow, and Orrin Porter Rockwell. They relieved Bishop Miller of his command,

\(^{42}\)Almost everyone at Winter Quarters accepted the revelation without reservation. The Municipal High Council’s response was typical:

Reynolds Cahoon moved that the communication be received as the Word and will of God; seconded by Isaac Morley. Alanson Eldredge approved of the same: it was plain to his understanding. . . . Reynolds Cahoon said it was the voice of righteousness. Winslow Farr said it reminded him of the first reading of the Book of Mormon; he was perfectly satisfied and knew it was from the Lord. Cornelius P. Lott was perfectly satisfied. . . . Geo. W. Harris was so well satisfied that he wanted all to say Amen, at once. Thomas Grover felt that it was the voice of the Spirit. The vote passed unanimously. . . . Hosea Stout said if there is anything in "Mormonism" that is the voice of the Lord to the people, so is the word and will of the Lord.

\(^{43}\)Ibid., 17 January 1847.

\(^{44}\)Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 14 January 1847, 1:227–29.
told him he was wanted back at headquarters, and put the camp under Apostle Benson’s jurisdiction.45

Shortly after reading Brigham’s document, even though it did not necessarily forbid the Yellowstone scheme, George Miller came out in public opposition to the plan, to the authority of the Twelve, and to Brigham personally. “I was greatly disgusted at the bad composition and folly of this revelation,” George Miller later recorded, “so disgusted that I was, from this time, determined to go with them no longer. . . . I must confess that I was broken down in spirit on account of the usurpation of those arrogant apostles and their oppressive measures.”46

In a letter to Brigham on 17 March, George Miller stated his long-held but unexpressed objections to settling in the Great Basin where, he declared, “we would find it hard to sustain ourselves in food and raiment; and would, most likely bring on the thoroughfare where all the slime and filth, malcontents . . . from Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, etc., would pass near by us to the newly acquired Territory of California and Oregon.” Better to find a location in some lonely valley in Oregon (probably the genesis of the Yellowstone plan) or, better still, in the far Southwest “on the Camanshee [Comanche] lands, on the eastern side of the Cordilleras Mountains, so far south that we could grow cotton, and even sugar-cane.” Such a colony (one very close to Lyman Wight’s in southern Texas), he argued, could stand as a buffer state between warring Mexico and the United States. As a go-between, the Saints could effect a treaty by which “we could get sea-coast on the Gulph of Mexico, where we could land emigrants from the States of England, France, Germany, Norway, etc., in our own ports.” He concluded with this parting, poignant testimony:

Although I am in poverty and rags, I am not unwilling to undertake to do any thing that this people persist in doing to build up this kingdom. I have been as a beast of burden ever since I came into the church, and have never swerved in my actions, or feelings, to do with my might all things to push forward the cause of Zion, and am, and ever have been, willing to spend and be spent for the cause. I do not say this by way of boasting, but because of the frankness of my heart.47

His loss was keenly felt by many in camp even though they had disagreed with him. Joseph Fielding, brother-in-law of Hyrum Smith

45Journal History, 25, 29 and 30 January 1847.
47George Miller to Brigham Young, 17 March 1847, Brigham Young Papers.
and a fellow member of the Council of the Fifty, said, "He was dear to me in the office he held, he was indeed a fine man, and I hope to see him again in our midst."48

However, both George Miller and James Emmett left the Church shortly thereafter. Miller went south to Texas in July 1847 and lived with Lyman Wight for a short time until he decided Wight was "an intoxicated no-good."49 In October 1847 he traveled north to Vorcee, Wisconsin, and later to Beaver Island, Michigan, and took up with the followers of James J. Strang. Thrilled at having another former authority of Brigham's church join with him, Strang gave Miller prestige and such high-sounding titles as "Prince, Privy Councillor and General Chief in the Kingdom of God," though very little real authority.50 After Strang's death in 1856, George Miller left Beaver Island and died soon afterwards in Marengo, Illinois.

The third plan, then, the Quorum of the Twelve plan, was more than a mere restatement on camp organization or direction. It pronounced in unambiguous terms once and for all the supremacy of the Quorum of the Twelve over not only spiritual but also temporal and political matters. It cost the Church the allegiance of some of its finest pioneers and frontiersmen who, in the end, probably ran aground as much over personality differences as purely ecclesiastical or doctrinal issues.

With the matter of authority finally settled, the Saints could now focus on the specifics of preparing for their departure. A confident Brigham Young, four days after announcing his revelation, stated "he had no more doubts nor fears of going to the mountains, and felt as much security as if he possessed the treasures of the east."51 But at this point he had more confidence than answers. Who would go in the advance party? Was the Yellowstone still a viable option? How soon could they realistically start the trek given the need to reorganize all the camps? When would all the rest join the advance company? Many of these questions would not be answered until the eve of their journey.

Determining the makeup of the pioneer companies was a two-step affair and must be seen as part of a larger effort to organize all of the

49Mills, "Palo," 143.
50Unbound minute book of Strangite conferences held between July and October 1850. J. J. Strang Papers, Library-Archives, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Auditorium, Independence, Missouri (hereafter cited as RLDS Library-Archives). As late as 1854, Miller was urging Wight to abandon Texas and join Strang. "The more I reflect on the subject the more I am convinced that it would be to the best you could do under all the circumstances, both in a spiritual and temporal point of view" (George Miller to Lyman Wight, 19 January 1854, RLDS Library-Archives). Wight refused.
51Journal History, 18 January 1847.
Mormon encampments at the Missouri. According to the revelation, all the Saints had to be accommodated within a traveling organization whether or not they could leave in the spring or fall. Brigham wanted to put the camps on a standby basis, alert to the need of leaving as soon as possible. He would overlay the existing ecclesiastical structure with a traveling organization in order to constantly remind his followers that their stay was only temporary.

According to the revelation, three other companies besides Brigham’s and Heber C. Kimball’s were to be organized, and from these, the best-prepared, most able-bodied men would be selected to form the advance company. Each of the five companies would take an equal portion of widows, orphans, and Battalion families. Brigham and Heber would divide the Winter Quarters population basically along family lines. Wilford Woodruff and Orson Pratt were to take the remnants of Winter Quarters before incorporating everyone at Mt. Pisgah and Garden Grove. George A. Smith and Amasa Lyman were ordered to organize the east bank settlements. It took these Apostles five to six weeks to tour all the settlements; read the new revelation; choose captains of hundreds, fifties, and tens; and complete their preparations. Ezra Taft Benson, meanwhile, reorganized the Ponca settlement.

Heber C. Kimball, excited at the response and anxious to get away, gave a valuable progress report on the reorganization and mobilizing efforts:

The union that now exist[s] in the camp of Isreal, which are now on the west side of the Missouri River, surpasses any since the Church was organized from the Quorum of the Twelve down through every organization of the Church... We have now already organized somewhere between twelve and fifteen hundred men, and the Brethren on the east side of the river are flocking to the standards daily: There are many of those on the east side of the river that are in a scattered state, and have become rather cold and lifeless as it were, like unto a firebrand that is separated from the fire.

Evidence indicates that there was initially some confusion over the inclusion of families in the early departing companies. The

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5Ibid., 18 and 25 January 1847.
55See Journal of Wilford Woodruff, 15 and 18 February 1847; and Journal of Erastus Snow, early February 1847, both in LDS Church Archives.
56Journal History, 12 and 15 February 1847.
5See Heber C. Kimball to John M. Bernhisel, 17 February 1847; and Journal of Heber C. Kimball, 23 February 1847, LDS Church Archives.
5The Twelve Apostles to Titus Billings, 25 March 1847, Brigham Young Papers; and Journal History, 25 March 1847.
earliest would leave in March, followed by a second caravan once grass had grown. This later company would consist of many of the Battalion families. Other companies would come on in intervals until 1 July. The rest would vacate the Missouri the following spring.

But the matter of who would go was inextricably part of another dilemma—where to go and how to get there. By the end of January, Brigham had reverted to taking the Platte route and advised his Ponca followers to convey that information to Grosclaude and Cardinal. "Say to them we have none but the best of feelings towards all good men, themselves particularly so far as we are acquainted."\(^57\)

The way station plan, meanwhile, was tossed back and forth before a final decision was made on the eve of departure. By mid-February the leaders were leaning heavily toward risking a nonstop, over-the-mountain thrust to the Great Basin with this one precaution: "Should our bread stuff fail for lack of means to procure, we will then be obliged to stop a part of the camp at the foot of the mountains and plant late crops."\(^58\) In other words, they would reverse the order and priority of the Council of Fifty plan—put in a spring crop in the Basin first, and then, if required, plant fall crops at the foot of the mountains.

Arguing against the way station plan, Isaac Morley said it would dilute their efforts. "If there is a company here, a company at the mountains and a company across the mountains it is weakening our hands—the building [of] another city is [full] of trouble and expense."\(^59\) Willard Richards, at the same meeting and of the same mind as Isaac Morley, argued that "if we go 5 or 600 miles to put in a crop this spring, we are too late—we have to be particular in picking our location so as to irrigate the farm. You can plant two acres here to one there."\(^59\) He concluded:

> Will it not be better to leave the families here this season where they have houses to shelter them from the storms and other necessaries prepared and let the pioneers go over the mountains and prepare the place, then return and bring the families over next season in perfect safety to the place of gathering without having to make and leave another stopping place for the devil.\(^60\)

As Benjamin Clapp put it, we "may as well stick the stake this year, as three or four years hence."\(^61\)

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\(^57\)Journal History, 29 January 1847. He went on to say he would "be pleased to have them accompany us," although they never did.

\(^58\)Ibid., 15 February 1847.

\(^59\)Minutes of a Meeting of the Twelve and Others, 6 March 1847. Brigham Young Papers.


\(^61\)Minutes of the Twelve and Many of the High Council, 6 March 1847. Brigham Young Papers.
Finalizing Plans for the Trek West

Though initially they had expected to leave by early March, a target date they surrendered with reluctance, Brigham conceded early in 1847 that it was "very uncertain whether the Pioneers will leave here before April."62 The difficulty lay in the matter of provisions and seed grain, in whether the pioneers could gather necessary commodities in time. The failure of the Winter Quarters mill, which never operated all winter, aggravated matters. Obviously, large numbers of people could not be provided with either adequate flour or enough seed for large midway farms.

But while the mill's failure was a serious impediment, another equally complicating factor was the same problem of the year before—constant nagging from faithful families not to be left behind among the Indians in such a sickly place.63 Some complained the advance party was taking most of the available foodstuffs with them, leaving the rest with a paucity of provisions until the first spring crops.64 Others feared further outbreaks of disease and death, while not a few were uncomfortable at relinquishing so many more possible defenders at a time of escalated Indian thievery.

Brigham responded in his characteristic fashion by suggesting solutions while condemning wanton, aimless criticism. To the concern over provisions and the widespread feeling that a way station would at least provide food and refuge from sickness, leaders gave several answers. Willard Richards argued that the purer, wholesome air of the mountain regions would prove fatal on an already unhealthy people unless accommodated gradually. "If we go in the sick state we now are in to the mountains, we should drop like the wind. If I don't want to kill my family, I wont take them too sudden to this purer atmosphere."

Ezra Taft Benson agreed, saying "I do not think this [Winter Quarters] is an unhealthy location. At least I would not be afraid to leave my family here."66 With the coming of spring and vegetables, surely health would improve as the Saints rested from further travel and planted abundant crops.

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62Brigham Young to Joseph A. Strattan, 22 January 1847, Brigham Young Papers.
63Lee, Journals of John D. Lee, 6 March 1847, 108–10. One of the problems causing the delay in crossing Iowa was the cry of the faithful to remain with the Twelve regardless of how slow it would make them all. Brigham Young could escape his enemies with far greater ease than he could his followers.
64Patty Sessions referred to "the scarcity of provisions at Winter Quarters and how hard it was even to get a little corn-meal" (Manuscript History of Winter Quarters, 15 April 1847, LDS Church Archives). Camp leaders were aware of the problem. To minimize demands on camp supplies, Brigham recommended only 100 pounds of provisions be taken per pioneer. As he had done back in Iowa, Joseph Young objected to the foolhardiness of the scheme and strongly suggested more ample supplies. The final company took with them closer to 300 pounds of provisions per person (Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 3 March 1847).
65Minutes of a Meeting of the Twelve and Others, 6 March 1847, Brigham Young Papers.
66Lee, Journals of John D. Lee, 6 March 1847, 109–11.
To counter fears of Indian loitering and theft, the Twelve promised that the police force would be maintained and a large picket fence would be built along the exposed southern flank of the city. Every precaution would be taken to keep the city as safe as possible, though some of the cannons would have to go west with the later company.

And as to the anxiousness of Mormon Battalion wives and families to rejoin their loved ones, Brigham promised that every effort would be made to include them in the ensuing summer companies.67

The Twelve also argued that those left behind would have more than sufficient provisions. Brigham urged that every family in the city plant "a garden of their own" and that large "public fields" or farmlands be administered south of the city, with land apportioned not by price but by a personal pledge of improvement. Large, separate family farms were also envisioned for members of the Young, Kimball, and Richards adopted families.68

Despite all these assurances, some still complained. Believing that many were self-serving, Apostle Amasa Lyman was "perfectly well satisfied that the feelings of the people are at war with their interest."69 Heber C. Kimball agreed, saying, "I have been chained up once and the Twelve are chained up again."70 And Brigham, in terms reminiscent of those he used the summer before, put it most bluntly in a 21 March address:

You poor stinking curses, for you are cursed and the hand of the Lord shall be upon you and you shall go down to hell for murmuring and bickering. This people means to tie my hands continually as they did last year so that we can't go to the place of our destination. They are already coming to me saying can't you take me along? Don't leave me here, if you do I am afraid I shall die, this is such a sickly place. Well I say to them, die, who cares. If you have not faith to live here you will die over the mountains.71

This time Brigham would not be hindered.

Monday, 22 March, had for some time been targeted as the departure date, but the last minute elimination of the Yellowstone

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67Minutes of a Meeting of the Twelve and Others, 6 March 1847, Brigham Young Papers.
68Ibid. At the time, many of the leaders of the Church were practicing the "law of adoption" as understood by Brigham Young, a practice by which families were "sealed" to priesthood leaders through adoption to insure eternal priesthood blessings. (For more on the topic, see the author's forthcoming book on the Mormon trek West; see also Gordon Irving, "The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830-1900," BYU Studies 14 [Spring 1974]: 291-314.) The Law of Adoption was implemented in Winter Quarters on a large scale, but with mixed results. It was later abandoned.
69Minutes of a Meeting of the Officers of Both Divisions, 22 March 1847, Brigham Young Papers.
70Minutes of a Meeting of the Twelve, the High Council and Others, 22 March 1847, Brigham Young Papers.
71Lee, Journals of John D. Lee, 21 March 1847, 129.
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plan, delays because of unfinished work in organizing the camp according to "The Word and Will of the Lord," difficulties in gathering provisions, and the time required to confront objections all forced a postponement. Part of the change involved a major reduction in the size of the pioneer company from well over three hundred to less than half that number. A smaller company could move more quickly while leaving more crop growers and defenders back at Winter Quarters. Another target date, 1 April, also came and went. Finally on Saturday morning, 5 April, the first of Heber C. Kimball's company began rolling out of Winter Quarters. Others followed on Monday, and on 8 April, Horace K. Whitney and many General Authorities set out for the main rendezvous point at the Elkhorn ferry about fifteen miles west.

But the sudden arrival of Parley P. Pratt from his mission to England forced another week's delay. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Ezra Taft Benson, Orson Pratt, Porter Rockwell, George A. Smith, Wilford Woodruff, and Willard Richards all returned on horseback to Winter Quarters on 12 April while the rest of the advance company were sent ahead to the Platte River to cross it before heavy rains intervened.

Parley P. Pratt met in council with his fellow Apostles the evening of the twelfth and reported on his mission to England, the "demise" of Reuben Hedlock's "Joint Stockism," the perils of his journey, and Strangism's progress in England. He also indicated that John Taylor, hourly expected, was bearing the treasures of England with him—469 sovereigns of gold, representing tithes from the British Saints, and almost five hundred dollars' worth of astronomical and other instruments useful to the pioneers on their journey.

The next day John Taylor did arrive by boat up the Missouri with the money and two sextants, two barometers, two artificial horizons, one circle of reflection, several thermometers, and a telescope. Orson Pratt, the most scientific-minded of anyone in camp, would put such instruments to excellent use during the ensuing trek. The Twelve continued their deliberations, and many commendations and

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72Journal of Horace K. Whitney, 22 and 23 March 1847.
73Journal History, 8 April 1847.
74Journal of Horace K. Whitney, 8 and 12 April 1847. See also Journal History, 12 April 1847; and Journal of Wilford Woodruff, 12–13 April 1847.
75Journal of Erastus Snow, 7 and 8 April 1847. One wonders if Brigham Young had not purposely been delaying the departure until Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor's return. He must have known the funds and instruments were on their way.
76Journal History, 13 April 1847. Besides these instruments, they had recently obtained several maps of Texas, Oregon, and California, including Fremont's, Mitchell's, and a most recent map from General Atchison (ibid., 18 February, 27 March, and 4 April 1847).
criticisms were expressed of the missionaries' work in England. At the same time, Brigham Young urged John Taylor and Parley P. Pratt to make every effort possible to join the advance party, but the two were more anxious to catch their breath and spend time with their families. Their refusal did not square well with Brigham and later became a source of irritation and complaint within the Quorum.77

It was decided that Brigham should have disposal of the British moneys. Meanwhile, Elders Pratt and Taylor were given responsibility for organizing—along the patterns set forth by "The Word and Will of the Lord"—the first emigration company and later smaller companies until 1 July. These later emigration companies were to bring five hundred pounds of breadstuff per person, enough to last eighteen months, in case the pioneer companies failed to reach their destination in time to put in fall crops. There must be no repetition of the ill-fated Donner party. "In all cases," instructed Brigham, "the brethren must run their own risk for food, and not depend on the pioneers, or any company in advance for support."78 After their departure, Orson Hyde, expected back later in the spring after visiting branches of the Church in the eastern states, would, as he had done in Nauvoo the preceding spring, be in charge of the rearguard Mormon settlements.

On 14 July, all but John Taylor and Parley P. Pratt returned to the Elkhorn, rejoining the pioneer company near the Platte River the following day. After the final organization and preparation of the company of 143 men and boys, three women, and two children—the amalgamation of leaders from all five companies—at 2 P.M. on Friday, 16 April, following months of planning, turmoil, and twisted expectations, Brigham Young and the Mormon pioneers headed west into history.79

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77Brigham said months later: "I told Bro. Parley if you go with us you will never be sorry for it but if you don't you will always be sorry for it. I tell you, they will lose more ground than they ever gained." Brigham wanted all the Twelve present not only to travel west with the advance party but also to discuss the creation of a First Presidency. He may have worried also about leaving John Taylor and Parley P. Pratt to manage affairs at Winter Quarters and to organize the emigration companies that would follow (Minutes of Miscellaneous Trustees Meetings, 17 November 1847. Brigham Young Papers; see also Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 26 November 1847, 1:289).

78Brigham Young and the Council of the Twelve to the Brethren at Winter Quarters, Journal History, 16 April 1847.

79Journal History, 16 April 1847. See Journal of Horace K. Whitney, 16 April 1847; and Journal of Erastus Snow, 16 April 1847. The above-mentioned journals disagree on the total number constituting the camp. The Whitney journal says only two women joined them; the Snow journal says three.
Mormon Trail Network in Nebraska, 1846–1868: A New Look

Stanley B. Kimball

For more than twenty years during the mid-nineteenth century, between 1846 and 1868, thousands of Mormons traversed southern Nebraska, going east and west, utilizing a network of trails aggregating well over 1,800 miles, considerably more than the famous 1,300-mile-long Mormon Trail from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake.¹

To date, interest in and knowledge of these Nebraska trails has focused largely on the pioneer route of 1847. But there were many other trails and variants. A new picture of Mormon migration in Nebraska is emerging, showing that state to have been much more widely traveled by Mormons than has heretofore been recognized. We are just now beginning to appreciate the dimensions and magnitude of the Mormon use of Nebraska trails (see foldout map on preceding page).

These trails and variants may be grouped into three basic categories, time periods, and degrees of importance as follows:

1. The Mormon Pioneer Trail of 1847 from Winter Quarters to present-day Wyoming. Used throughout the emigration period, 1846–68, it is the best known of all Mormon trails in Nebraska. There are, however, several little-known variants:

   Variant A: At least four alternate routes between the Missouri River and the Elkhorn River.

¹Stanley Kimball, a professor of history at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, is historian of the Mormon Pioneer Trail Foundation.

Diane Clements is the cartographer of the map on the preceding page.

¹I say utilized, rather than developed, for there is scant evidence that the Mormons blazed as much as one linear mile of trail in Nebraska (or anywhere else). Mormons always used available roads and trails. The legend that they established the famous trail north of the Platte River is just that. In reality, the original Oregon Trail was north of the Platte before it was moved to the south bank. Mormons, like many others, did, of course, create small variants here and there in response to high water, bad weather, the fear of cholera, the desire to avoid crowds (and messy campsites), and the scarcity of feed for animals.

The concept of western trails as two wagon ruts disappearing into the sunset is strictly romantic. We should, rather, think in terms of corridors—yards, hundreds of yards, even thousands of yards wide.
Variant B: The Lone Tree Variant between Genoa and Grand Island and between Columbus and Grand Island.

Variant C: The Grand Island Bypass.

Variant D: The Shinn Ferry Crossing connecting the 1847 trail with the Oxbow Trail.

Variant E: The Fort Kearney Crossing connecting the 1847 trail with the Oregon Trail.

Variant F: The Roubadeau Pass and Mitchell Pass variants west of Scottsbluff and south of the Platte River.

2. *The Oregon Trail* along the Little Blue and Platte rivers via Ash Hollow to the Wyoming line. The Mormons used all or part of this trail and its variants from at least 1849 through 1868.

Variant A: The Oxbow Variant between Nebraska City and Fort Kearney, 1849–64.

Variant B: The Wahoo Variant (of the Oxbow).

Variant C: The Mormon Variant (of the Oxbow).

Variant D: The Bethlehem or Plattsmouth Ferry Variant between the Missouri River and the Oxbow.

Variant E: The Nebraska City Cutoff Variant between Nebraska City and Fort Kearney, 1864–66.

Variant F: The Wyoming Variant north of Nebraska City.

Variant G: The Upper California Crossing Variant via Courthouse Rock, 1859–64.

3. *The Lodgepole Creek Trail* between the Upper California Crossing of the Oregon Trail along Lodgepole Creek into Wyoming. The Mormons used this trail between 1864 and 1867.

While the above list which atomizes the Mormon Trails system in Nebraska is useful and necessary, it is much more practical and simple to observe that we actually have but two main trails, the Mormon and the Oregon. These trails have many variants, much like two ropes frayed at both ends and stretched along the north and the south banks of the Platte River.
Mormon Trail Network in Nebraska

THE TRAILS

Mormon Pioneer Trail of 1847

The famous Mormon Pioneer Trail of 1847, which needs little description here, began at Winter Quarters (present-day Florence, Nebraska, just north of Omaha), and generally followed the north bank of the Platte River for 504 miles (according to William Clayton) to the current Wyoming line.

The Mormon use of this pioneer route has been well marked by the state of Nebraska, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Latter-day Saints. In the Winter Quarters area there are markers at the west entrance of the south span of the Mormon Pioneer Memorial Bridge, which carries I-680 across the Missouri River; one at the approximate site of the old Mormon mill at 9200 North 30th Street; two in the Florence City Park; several at the Mormon Pioneer Cemetery at State and 34th streets; and one in the Mormon Visitors' Center across the street from the cemetery.

Other markers referring to the Mormons are found at the intersection of 64th Street and old Highway 36 (just south of the North Omaha Airport); in Barnard Park at Fremont; in the Fremont State Recreation Area just west of Fremont; one-half mile east of Ames; in Genoa City Park; on Highway 14 just south of Fullerton; at the Mormon Island State Wayside Area on I-80 at the Grand Island exit; west of Second Avenue in Kearney; just north of Lexington on Highway 21; at an I-80 rest stop about five miles east of Cozad; on the grounds of the Lincoln County Museum in North Platte; immediately north of the Platte at Bridgeport; at the intersection ("trisection") of Highway 26, the Beltline Highway; and at the Burlington Railroad tracks east of the town of Scottsbluff, as well as one-quarter mile west along these tracks.

This trail north of the Platte River later became famous because Brigham Young led the Mormon Pioneer exiles along it in 1847; however, it was used by some Mormons in 1846. During July of that year, Brigham Young dispatched some "pre-pioneers" to the Grand Island area. By 27 July their leader, Bishop George Miller, was at the Pawnee village, about 120 miles west of Winter Quarters on a well-known and well-worn trappers' trail. Eventually fourteen families settled at the Pawnee village, but by mid-September they had either returned to Winter Quarters or followed Bishop Miller north to winter on the Ponca River with some friendly Indians.2

2For a more complete discussion of this group of pioneers, see Lawrence G. Coates, "Cultural Conflict: Mormons and Indians in Nebraska," 274-300, in this issue.
**Variants of the 1847 Trail**

The first set of variants developed when several ferries crossing the Missouri River gave rise to different routes to the Elkhorn River. The "Mormon Ferry" was near the mouth of Mill Creek, about one-half mile above today's Mormon Pioneer Memorial Bridge at Florence. This was the major ferry used by the Mormons. A second ferry was at Trader's Point, almost due west of Kanesville, approximately where I-80 crosses the Missouri River today. A third crossing was just north of old Bellevue, Nebraska's oldest city, founded in 1822.

To the north of Winter Quarters about twelve miles was the so-called "Wet Weather Variant" westward from old Fort Atkinson, which had been built in 1820 to protect the American fur trade. (It was built at the site of the original Council Bluffs. Subsequently, the name Council Bluffs drifted downstream and across the river to the present-day city of the same name in Iowa.) This variant followed very closely the trail which Major Stephen H. Long used on his well-known expedition of 1820.

The Mormons also used a short trail north to the Fort Atkinson area where they established "Summer Quarters" for haying, farming, and grazing purposes. Like others before and after them, they used the mud bricks of ruined Fort Atkinson (which had been abandoned in 1827) for their own purposes.

Along these variants there are only two Mormon markers. One marks the semilegendary "Mormon Hollow" where some Mormons allegedly wintered in 1846. No hard evidence supports the existence of a Mormon camp there, but the tale is persistent. Mormon Hollow is located in the Fontenelle Forest Natural Landmark north of Bellevue. The marker, which was erected by some Boy Scouts in 1932, has since been thoroughly vandalized, and nothing is left but the cobblestone base. This base can be reached from Camp Wakonda off Forest Drive or by following the Burlington and Northern Railroad tracks for four-tenths of a mile south of Childs Road. The ruined marker is just to the west of the tracks. The second marker which refers to the Mormons is located in the Amelia Hill rest area off the south lane of I-80 in Sarpy County.

Two variants of the Pioneer Trail of 1847 developed along the Loup River. The early Mormons forded this stream near present-day Fullerton. Later, in 1857, a downstream ford was discovered near Genoa, which the Mormons established as a way station that same year. From this ford the trail angled southwest along the Platte, reaching the 1847 trail a few miles east of Grand Island. In 1858 a
Mormon Trail Network in Nebraska

All Pictures Courtesy of Bruce Elm

Elkhorn River Crossing

Stone Marker at the Site of the Lone Tree
ferry began operating at the mouth of the Loup near today's Columbus. Since both of these variants passed the famous "Lone Tree," they can be dubbed the Lone Tree variants.

Three markers along these Lone Tree variants refer to the Mormons. The first is in the Genoa City Park. Although Genoa was first laid out by the Mormons with distinctive ten acre blocks and 132 foot wide streets following the compass, none of that remains today. Current Genoa consists largely of 1.6 acre blocks with streets 80 and 100 feet wide. (The Mormons were run out of the area in 1859 by an unfriendly Indian agent who wanted the land for the Pawnees.) Another marker, also commemorating the famous Lone Tree, is located in the Mormon Trail Wayside Area on U.S. 30 nine miles east of Central City; a third is at the western end of Central City. Trees being scarce in Nebraska, the Lone Tree was a noted landmark; however, it died in 1863.

The only other significant variant on the trail of 1847 appears to have been west of Scottsbluff. (The Grand Island bypass, Shinn Ferry Crossing, and Fort Kearney Crossing were very minor variants.) Most Mormons remained north of the Platte all the way across Nebraska, but a few, including Heber C. Kimball in 1848, crossed the river near Scottsbluff and picked up the Oregon Trail, which left Nebraska via the Roubadeau Pass until 1851 and thereafter via the nearby Mitchell Pass.

Oregon Trail

The Oregon Trail, the eastern terminus of which in the 1840s was Independence, Missouri, entered Nebraska near present-day Steele City, Jefferson County, and followed the Little Blue and Platte rivers, via Ash Hollow and Chimney Rock, across the state. The Mormons used all or parts of this "Main Street of the Old West" from 1846 through at least 1867. This trail, which lay south of the Platte, had two advantages for the Mormons, especially for those whose jumping-off places for the West were already south of the Platte—it was a little shorter and it avoided the difficult crossings of the Elkhorn and Loup rivers. Several Mormons to use this trail were Thomas W. Cropper in 1853, Christian J. Larsen in 1854, and Joseph Heywood in 1856.

Other Mormons picked up the Oregon Trail at Marysville, Kansas (ten miles south of Nebraska), via the "Mormon Grove Trail" out of Atchison and nearby Mormon Grove, Kansas. (I have found nine accounts of this, all during 1855-56.)

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3Among these nine accounts are those by J. M. Coombs, Truman O. Angell, Matthew Rowan, and Henry I. Doremus. The first Mormons to use any part of the Oregon Trail were some Mississippi Saints in 1846. For a detailed study of the "Mormon Grove Trail," see my Discovering Mormon Trails (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970).
Mormon Trail Network in Nebraska

Although the Oregon Trail proper is extensively marked in Nebraska, I have noted only two markers and one museum exhibit referring to the Mormons on this trail. The first marker is on U.S. 183 twenty miles west of Fort Kearney; the second is at the southern end of Bridgeport on County Road 385. The museum exhibit, which tells the story of westering Mormons and features a full-scale reproduction of a handcart, is in the Oregon Trail Museum at the Scotts Bluff National Monument. There was, at one time, a third marker pertaining to the Mormons on this trail. It was located at the Sioux Lookout Monument about eight miles southeast of North Platte, but this marker has, regrettably, been removed to the grounds of the Lincoln County Museum in North Platte.

Variants of the Oregon Trail

There were at least eight variants of the Oregon Trail proper which the Mormons used. The Oxbow Trail came into existence in 1849 to connect Fort Kearney with the Missouri River. It started at present-day Nebraska City and generally followed the Platte in a huge bow (hence its name) to Fort Kearney. This trail lasted until 1864 when it was replaced by the shorter and more direct Nebraska City Cutoff.

The Oxbow itself had two variants. One, which I designate the Wahoo Variant, followed the Wahoo Creek north from the Salt Creek Ford, near present-day Ashland. There was also what came to be called the "Mormon Variant" (by what means I know not), which separated from the trunk route at the Weeping Water Creek, rejoining near Brainard.

Of the twenty-two accounts I have read of Mormons using the Oxbow and its variants, none specify which of the three routes they followed. Furthermore, all of these accounts indicate that the Mormons did not pick up the Oxbow at Nebraska City but to the west (by two differing routes) from the Bethlehem or Plattsmouth Ferry. This ferry was very popular with the Mormons because it was only about twenty-five miles south of Winter Quarters and Council Bluffs and, during high water, enabled them to avoid the Elkhorn and Loup rivers crossings. This ferry was used between 1849 and 1867, especially during the high water years of 1850-52.

Along all these variants of the Oxbow I have located only one marker referring to the Mormons—located on U.S. 6 in Ashland, site of the famous Salt Creek Ford.

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4Among those who took this route were Jesse Crosby, Ephraim Green, Shadrach Roundy, Sophis Hardy, and Warren Foote.
Another variant of the Oregon Trail goes by the name of the Nebraska City Cutoff, commencing, of course, at Nebraska City, one of the many Missouri River points of departure for the Far West. That Mormons used this trail is certainly not well known today. Actually, the Mormons seldom were in Nebraska City itself; rather they were seven miles north at an obscure village named Wyoming, just forty-five miles downtriver from Winter Quarters. While far from being one of the most important trails west, this cutoff is considered the last of the overland trails to the West. It flourished from 1859 to 1866, when it gave way to the Union Pacific Railroad. This cutoff, as its name clearly indicates, went nearly straight west for 169 miles to Fort Kearney and shortened the distance of the roundabout Oxbow Trail by about forty miles, or twenty-three percent—two or three days of travel. And then as now, time was money.

The principal reason for the Mormons’ switch to this trail seems to have been the Indian troubles that broke out during the Civil War when many regular troops were withdrawn from military posts on the Plains. The Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and other tribes seized this opportunity to try to drive the whites off the Indians’ ancestral lands.

The town of Wyoming, founded in 1855 as a river port, was favored by the Mormons over nearby Nebraska City because it provided more open area for their staging ground and was well removed from the rough elements of the bigger community. Although the Mormons built a few structures in Wyoming, nothing is left of the buildings, or much of anything else, today.

Although most Mormon emigrants experienced no trouble at all with Indians along western trails (Indian depredations along the trails have been criminally exaggerated by films and fiction), they, like many others, did have trouble during the Civil War, especially in 1864 and 1865. In 1864, Jesse N. Smith reported several deserted and burned ranches; Orley D. Bliss saw a dead body at a ranch where Indians had burned eleven wagons, killed eleven men, and kidnapped a white woman; he also saw some Indians burning another ranch. In 1865 Jonas Myers witnessed an attack on his freight train when Indians tried to steal the cattle. One white man was killed. In that same year, one of the very few documented cases of a white Mormon woman’s being kidnapped by Indians took place when F. C. Grundvig’s

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3For a more detailed story of this trail, see my Discovering Mormon Trails. I have found twelve Mormon trail accounts of this route, including those of Zebulon Jacobs, Thomas Briggs, Joseph W. Young, Orley Bliss, Henry Ballard, and F. C. Grundvig.
Mormon Trail Network in Nebraska

Scotts Bluff

Stockade at Fort Kearney
wife, Jesine, was captured (in Wyoming, not Nebraska) and never heard from again.\(^6\)

The Nebraska City Cutoff has been fairly well marked, but only four of the markers refer to the Mormons. The first is located in Nebraska City east of the Courthouse at Central Avenue and Fifth Street near restored "old" Fort Kearney, established 1846. ("Old" Fort Kearney had a very short life before being moved to present-day "new" Fort Kearney.) The second marker is on Highway 2, near the hospital in Syracuse. The third and fourth are located at rest stops on the east- and westbound lanes of I–80 at the York exit.

Regardless of when and which of all these trails and trail variants the Mormons used between 1846 and 1868, the trails all converged near the southernmost bend of the Platte, near Fort Kearney. The Mormon Trail and its variants remained along the north bank, all others on the south.

Since we have already discussed the Mormon Trail to and beyond the Fort Kearney area, we will now follow the Oregon Trail and its variants west of Fort Kearney via O'Fallon Bluffs to various Platte crossings.\(^7\) Until 1859, almost all Mormons crossed the South Platte at what came to be known as the Lower California Crossing and proceeded via California Hill and Ash Hollow to the south bank of the North Platte. A few experimented with other crossing places, notably at the so-called Lower Crossing, and headed for Ash Hollow, reaching that camping site by the Cedar Grove route rather than by the very difficult Windlass Hill approach.

After the 1859 gold rush in Colorado Territory, the Oregon Trail was extended farther along the South Platte River to a Cheyenne crossing in the area of Julesburg, Colorado, where a new crossing, dubbed the Upper California Crossing, was developed. After making this crossing, the gold rushers followed the South Platte River to Denver. Mormons and Oregonians, however, picked up the Lodgepole Creek and followed it west to where Sidney, Nebraska, is located today, then northward via Mud Springs and Courthouse Rock, joining the older route of the Oregon Trail near present-day Bridgeport. In the various Mormon accounts of traveling along the Oregon Trail, I

\(^6\)Perhaps the first serious Indian trouble on Nebraska trails was on 19 June 1847 when Francis Weatherby was killed near the Elkhorn River (see Coates, "Mormons and Indians in Nebraska," 296, this issue). In the same place a year later some Indians wounded several other Mormons; both attacks were made by Indians trying to steal Mormon cattle at this difficult crossing. The best-known account of a Mormon being killed by Indians was the case of Almon Babbitt, secretary of Utah Territory, who was killed in September 1856 by Cheyenne Indians about fifteen miles west of Fort Kearney.

\(^7\)For a detailed study of the Mormon use of this section of the Oregon Trail, see my "Another Route to Zion: Rediscovering the Overland Trail." in the Ensign 14 (June 1984): 34–45.
Mormon Trail Network in Nebraska

Windlass Hill

Ash Hollow
have located only two references, both in 1864, to the Upper California Crossing. (The tip was reference to the Muddy Springs.) Despite the seemingly little Mormon use of this fording area, one crossing place south of the Lodgepole Creek did acquire the name "Mormon Ford."

Lodgepole Trail

Once overland emigrants started following the Lodgepole Creek to present-day Sidney and north to the North Platte River, it was perhaps inevitable they would follow it west into present-day Wyoming.

What became the Lodgepole route officially began in 1850 as a result of the efforts of Captain Howard Stansbury of the U.S. Army Topographical engineers, guided by Jim Bridger, to find a route far south of the Mormon and Oregon trails in order to avoid the heavy snows along those trails. Actually, parts of this southern route from Julesburg to Fort Bridger had been known to trappers as early as 1825. Part of the route was often referred to as the Cherokee Trail from the fact that in 1849 a party of Cherokee followed part of it through Colorado and Wyoming to California.8

This southern route became especially popular after 1862 because of a great increase in Indian trouble, especially Sioux, along the northern route. The Mormon use of the route appears to have been restricted to the years 1864–67.

TRAILS TODAY

All of these trails can be followed today quite closely in ordinary passenger cars. At no time during my travels in Nebraska over the years have I ever needed four-wheel drive. The accompanying map, by Diane Clements, lays out the trails and modern roads clearly enough to be followed, if supplemented with an ordinary state road map. For the closest approximation of the old trails, however, travelers should secure official county maps for those counties they wish to explore in detail. These maps are on a one-half inch to the mile scale and can be obtained from the Nebraska Department of Roads at Lincoln.

Scattered along these trails, twenty-seven markers, one museum exhibit, and one visitors' center refer to the Mormons. In addition, there are many other trail markers which do not mention the Mormons.

East of Fort Kearney are few topographical features of either interest or significance, other than the several rivers which had to be

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8Ibid.
Mormon Trail Network in Nebraska

Wagon Ruts in the Oregon Trail

Chimney Rock
ferred or forded. Fort Atkinson and Fort Kearney are well worth visits, and traveling Saints may choose to picnic at any of an assortment of interesting spots: the old Winter Quarters area, the Mormon Trail Wayside Area, the Mormon Island Wayside Area (which commemorates an 1848 Mormon Winter Camp on an island in that area), Mormon-founded Genoa, or other trail sites.

The only wagon ruts east of Fort Kearney which have endured (roads, railroads, plows, and urban sprawl have left few trail ruts in Nebraska) are to be found at the Rock Creek Station State Historical Park, located on an isolated county road north of Endicott and east of Fairbury. These are ruts of the Oregon Trail proper, but many Mormon wagons helped deepen them.

On the Oregon Trail and on variants west of Fort Kearney the terrain gets a bit more interesting, especially near the previously mentioned Sioux Lookout Point. Of interest are the trail ruts at O'Fallon Bluffs, located at a rest center on the eastbound lane of I–80 two miles east of Sutherland.

Much more dramatic ruts, which are more than six feet deep, are found at the California Hill area about five miles west of Brule town center and to the north of U.S. 30. These ruts are on private ground, and permission must be obtained to visit them (also watch out for a mean bull). Nearly as dramatic are some ruts at Ash Hollow. To see them, one can merely hike to the crest of Windlass Hill and go westward several hundred yards. (In the visitors’ center at Ash Hollow are brief references to the westering Mormons.) Courthouse Rock, Chimney Rock, the Scotts Bluff National Monument, and the famous ruts in nearby Mitchell Pass are also Oregon Trail sites that should be visited.

On the Mormon Trail west of Fort Kearney, travelers should note the 100th Meridian at Cozad (beyond which rain was once considered too slight for agriculture), as well as some excellent (and rare) Mormon wagon ruts atop the sand hills immediately north of the North Platte River due north of Hershey. (Buffalo steaks may be obtained on Ogallala’s Front Street.) Indian Lookout Point, located one and one-half miles west of Lisco on U.S. 26, is well worth a climb for the view, as are the Ancient Bluff Ruins six miles farther west. These bluffs, however, are on private ground, and permission to visit them must be obtained from the local rancher. Some slightly discernible ruts may be seen just north of U.S. 26, three-tenths of a mile east of the ranch road leading into the Ancient Bluff Ruins area. Several miles east of Scottsbluff is an informational sign regarding
Wagon Wheel Marking Rebecca Winter's Grave

Marker at Rebecca Winter's Grave, with Railroad Tracks Passing near the Grave
Rebecca Winters’s grave. The grave itself is one-quarter mile west along the tracks.

THE RAILROAD

In conclusion, a few words should be said about the Mormon use of the Union Pacific Railroad across Nebraska. The Iron Horse, or at least its tracks, started west from Omaha on 10 July 1865. Unfortunately, on the Omaha side of the Missouri River area, there is nothing except the Union Pacific Museum to commemorate or mark this event. When the Missouri changed course in the mid-1870s, ground zero was inundated and is now in the middle of Carter Lake opposite Pratt Street. Across the river in Council Bluffs, however, the Golden Spike Monument may be seen near the intersection of 9th Avenue and South 21st Street.

Few, if any, Mormons bothered using the railroad until the summer after it reached North Platte 291 miles west on 2 January 1867. A few proceeded by rail to Julesburg, Colorado, after the line reached there later that same year on 5 July. Extensive use of the Union Pacific by Mormons, however, did not take place until after it had reached as far west as Laramie, Wyoming, on 16 May 1868. The next and last main jumping-off point was Benton, Wyoming, which was reached early in August of 1868. During all subsequent migrating seasons, it was possible to go by rail all the way to Ogden, Utah, which the Union Pacific reached on 9 February 1869. The “last spike,” of course, was driven at Promontory, Utah, on 10 May 1869.

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9Rebecca Winters's grave is one of many wayside graves that can be found along the old Mormon Trail. Rebecca Winters died in 1862 at the age of fifty and was buried near Scottsbluff, Nebraska. The railroad was moved slightly from the proposed course in order to avoid passing over the grave. At that time her grave was marked with an old wagon wheel; later, however, Heber J. Grant erected the permanent marker that can be seen today.

10References to Mormon emigrants at the North Platte railhead are very scarce. One of the few is by Simpson M. Molen, who reported that in 1868 sixty oxen wagons were sent east to meet a large group of Mormons at North Platte. Since the average number of people assigned to one wagon was five, as many as three hundred Saints could have been in that one company. Similarly, references to the Mormons at the Julesburg railhead are scarce. Zebulon Jacobs and John Hardie are two of the few who left accounts of being there.
Alkali

They say that *alquili* is Arabic for wood ash
And denotes hydroxide and carbonate
Salts of sodium and potassium—
And while I've seen the small branches
Of shadscale, scrub oak and cedar
Burned to a fine white ash
That kept the shrunken form of twigs
Until disturbed into powder,
I cannot say it's true.
I only know alkali as the blanched coat
That covers low ground
That has no streams
But only flat dry lakebeds
With hard, bitter soil
Supporting scattered sagebrush
And the poisonous weed halogeton.
Somehow it's not like soil at all—
It's more like salt or quicklime
That makes a white runway
Between the sage for pale jackrabbits.

—John Sterling Harris

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John Sterling Harris is an associate professor of English at Brigham Young University.
Tracks

No one saw it, but after
We read the tracks in the snow,
We knew what must have happened.

He’d left on a gray and balky horse.
A day later we followed his tracks
For ten miles or more
On barren flat through hoof-deep snow
That showed a shuffling gait,
Avoiding occasional sage
Trotting sometimes, as if spurred,
Then dragging back to a walk
And tender on the off hind foot
Where he’d lost a shoe.

Then he’d jumped—perhaps when spurred.
Perhaps the rider’s hands were deep
In his sheepskin pockets for warmth,
Because we found where he fell
Then got up, favoring a leg—
The left I remember—
The rifle must have fallen
On the next jump.
We saw where it had landed
And been picked up.

The man’s dragging trail
Led to the horse’s tracks.
The horse had stopped and turned to watch
Then trotted off and stopped again.
The limping gait approached again,
And again the horse trotted off—
Two thin lines in the snow
To the left of his track showed
He’d held his head to the side
To keep from stepping on the reins.
It went that way for miles—
The man’s steps getting shorter
With marks beside of the rifle butt
Now used as a cane.

Then we found a cartridge case
And another and another
And the mound of a horse

Snug against his belly was the man—
He had tried to save
What diminishing warmth remained,
But even with the saddle blanket
It hadn’t been enough
For a winter night.

We talked of the judgment of fools
And wondered how we’d have done.

—John Sterling Harris
Grasshoppers

I walked a yellow field an August day
In bright and arid heat
That sucked the moisture from the skin
And stilled the birds—
Deterring every motion of any living thing
But grasshoppers.

They buzzed and snicked their wings
And rose in waves ahead and popped
Like corn in a heated pan.

I crossed my field again
In the low sun of January
Through blue and crusted snow that covered up
The stubble, but shrunk away
From protruding sunflower stalks,
Attesting last week’s thaw.

On nearly every stalk
A grasshopper—a husk
With dry dead legs that wrapped
Around the flower base—
There since some October night
When seeking some reprieve
From autumn cold,
It climbed the highest thing
And clung to plant and life—
Like an old man gripping
Rocker arms or property
Or office to ward off coming frost.

—John Sterling Harris
The Great Florence Fitout of 1861

William G. Hartley

Despite what historical markers, history books, and local Saints say, the story of Mormonism in Florence, Nebraska, does not end by 1860. Most versions of the trek west emphasize the Winter Quarters experience—and overemphasize the tragic elements; a quick postscript usually adds that after 1852 the area had but slight importance to the Saints, being only a place Latter-day Saint emigrants, including the handcart pioneers, passed through on their way west. But a large chapter is missing, a chapter which might be called the Florence story, as opposed to the Winter Quarters story. The Florence story covers the years 1859–63, when Florence became a busy outfitting center each May, June, and July for crowds of LDS travelers. The Florence story involves nearly ten thousand Saints, thousands of tons of supplies, at least fifty-five skillfully organized wagon companies, one thousand wagons, thousands of cattle, corrals, LDS boweries, stores, storage buildings, river docks, and steamboat arrivals. In contrast to the troubled Winter Quarters story, the Florence story speaks positively of careful planning and successful LDS ventures. The following account of the 1861 outfittings should demonstrate that the Florence story deserves mention in tourist literature and history books, as well as its own markers and monuments.

FLORENCE

On 30 April 1861, a fifty-year-old Vermonter, Elder Jacob Gates, stepped down the gangplank from the riverboat Westwind at Omaha, Nebraska Territory. Elder Gates, four months earlier, had received written orders while in England to sail to the United States and go to Florence, Nebraska, to supervise the frontier outfittings for the 1861 LDS emigration season. By early February Elder Nathaniel V. Jones,

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assigned to be LDS emigration agent in New York City, and Jacob Gates reached New York. By March they had negotiated railroad contracts with the New York and Erie Railroad to carry LDS passengers that spring to Florence. Jacob Gates left Nathaniel Jones and traveled to Chicago, where he called on Peter Schuttler, a wagon manufacturer who had supplied Mormons with wagons in previous seasons, and ordered 111 Schuttler wagons for $7300, or about $65 per wagon. Then he contracted with the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad to freight the wagons, unassembled, from Chicago to Florence. Gates then rode to Omaha by train and riverboat. Without home, office, or clerk, he walked into Omaha, intent on creating an outfitting camp at Florence, six miles upriver, from which thousands of Latter-day Saint emigrants could load into hundreds of covered wagons and depart for Utah Territory in May, June, and July.¹

During his first two weeks in Nebraska, Gates shuttled between Omaha, Florence, and Bluff City (Council Bluffs, Iowa) making arrangements to purchase supplies. On 13 April, he interrupted his errands to pay a heart-hurting visit to a special spot in Florence where fourteen years before he had buried his wife Caroline and daughter Mary Elizabeth—two of hundreds of Mormons who died there in early 1847.

Since those dark Winter Quarters days when the bluffs and shorelands had buzzed with Mormon activities, the place had not prospered. A ghost town soon after Mormons moved out in 1848, Winter Quarters in 1856 had received new energy and a new name—in honor of Florence Kilbourn, niece of a land promoter—when land speculators had sought in vain to have the tiny village named Nebraska’s capital city and the terminal city for the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. During the late 1850s, only Mormon immigration had pumped seasonal summer life into the town. Handcart companies had rested and repaired carts there in 1856. Florence was the main LDS outfitting point from 1857 to 1863. Census takers in 1860 counted 1,158 Florentines, many of them Mormons waiting to move west. Omaha City, with 1,883 residents, was barely bigger. Elder Gates probably saw in Florence four stores, the Florence House and the Willard House hotels, the post office, and the doctor, lawyer, and druggist offices which, records tell, the town claimed in the late 1850s. More apparent to Gates, however, were several deserted

¹Jacob Gates, Diary, microfilm of holograph, entries for late 1860 and early 1861, Library–Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.
buildings with broken windows—roofs which could shelter many travelers without cost.\(^2\)

Much more vibrant than Florence was Bluff City, a ferryboat ride east seven hundred feet across the churning, muddy Missouri River. The 1859 Pikes Peak gold rush had funneled approximately fifteen thousand people through Bluff City, triggering a boom in hotel and business openings. In 1860, steamboat traffic had increased, bringing nearly one thousand immigrants per week to the city, from which about fifty wagons per day pulled out and crossed the Missouri on two steam ferries—each of which often hauled twelve wagon outfits per trip during twenty to thirty trips a day. Gates soon discovered as 1861 progressed that the 1860 Bluff City traffic patterns resumed. Stores there would receive much business that season from Gates and other LDS outfitters.\(^3\)

Florence replaced Iowa City, outfitting site for the 1856 handcart companies, because, LDS agents discovered, travel by train across Missouri and by boat upriver to Florence was easier than traveling overland from Iowa City. That 275-mile stretch of Iowa "in point of toil and hardship, was by far the worst part of the journey, owing to its being a low wet country, that in the opening of the year was subject to heavy and continued rains" that made clay soil and roads "almost impassable."\(^4\)

Gates, while looking east for immigrants to arrive and west for Utah wagon trains, looked southeast at growing war clouds and worried. With the election of Abraham Lincoln as United States president the previous November, southern states seceded from the Union. Lincoln's inauguration in March escalated Southern belligerence, until on 14 April South Carolinian forces captured federal Fort Sumter—the shooting war had started. Gates, who heard about Fort Sumter's fall while he was in Missouri on his way to Omaha, carried a copy of Joseph Smith's 1832 prophecy about a civil war starting in South Carolina. Gates had read that prophecy to a Wall Street lawyer friend on 9 February while in New York City. But he wondered if the prophecy's promise about "war being poured forth upon all nations"


\(^4\)Andrew Jenson, "Church Emigration, III: 1860," typescript, LDS Church Archives.
might occur while LDS immigrants were trying to reach Florence during the ensuing weeks.5

War news helped Elder Gates and William Martindale and James Wareham, two Utah elders working in the Bluff City area, warm up local Mormons to the idea of ‘fleeing to safety’ in Utah. "I have been quite astonished to find so many people who once belonged to the church," Gates wrote to Utah friends on 12 April. The two elders, he noted, ‘‘have gathered up the remnants, which has been left from England, Scotland, Wales, Denmark, Sweden, and from almost every other place,’’ and ‘‘have organized several branches of the church, forming a conference numbering several hundred souls, who are anxious to gather to the valleys of Utah.’’6

Among the ‘‘remnants’’ were Mercy and Charles G. Keetch, newlyweds in December 1860. She had emigrated from England in 1860 but stopped to winter in Florence.7 Edwin Stratford, who had dropped out of the 1856 handcart companies, became a woodchopper and the branch president in Iowa City. He joined the 1861 emigration. Rebecca Sanderson, another 1856 emigrant, had stopped in Florence while her husband filled a mission. He had returned in 1859, but they were too poor to travel on to Utah. He worked in St. Louis until the spring of 1861. She continued to work at the Pacific House Hotel in Bluff City, as did her daughters.8

William E. Jones, who had worked in the area since 1855 and was president of the Crescent City Branch, wrote in his diary before joining the 1861 migration to Utah:

I hope to go to the valley this year. I shall have to go with the Church teams as I have none of my own. I have a wagon and a cow and flour enough to last me across the plains. I have been trying for many years to get a team to go on my own means but I am tired of waiting although it seems very probable that by waiting another year I might be able to go, but I do not like to risk it as I have been disappointed so often.9

1Joseph Smith, while pondering the troubles America was having regarding slavery in the southern states, received a vocal revelation ‘concerning the war that will shortly come to pass,’ beginning with a rebellion in South Carolina, after which ‘‘Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States.’’ War would cause ‘‘the deaths and misery of many souls,’’ so Saints were warned to ‘‘stand in holy places.’’ Note contained in early editions of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants (now section 87), the revelation circulated in handwritten copy form until printed in England in 1851. Joseph Smith reiterated the prophecy just before his death in 1844 (see Gates Diary, 9 February 1861).

2Gates to Editors of Desert News, 12 April 1861, copy in Journal History, entry that date, MS, LDS Church Archives.

3"They Came in 1861," Our Pioneer Heritage (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1962), 5:32-33.

4Ibid.

5William Ellis Jones, Diary, 28 June 1861, typescript. Utah Historical Society, Salt Lake City.
The "Down and Back" Plan

In 1860 Brigham Young decided to create a new, less expensive method for moving people and freight to Utah. That year, as an experiment, he sent his nephew, Joseph W. Young, with Utah wagons and oxen down to Florence to pick up passengers and freight and bring them back to Utah. Joseph’s trip proved that Utah oxen could make the round trip "down and back" without difficulty and that they hauled better on the return trip to Utah than did Missouri oxen unused to trail travel. In June 1860 Brigham told Utah bishops the "down and back" idea "promises to be very beneficial.”10 That August he predicted the plan would be a "good policy" for 1861 emigration.11 When the year 1861 opened, Brigham called Utah Territory legislators into a meeting at his new schoolhouse and explained the detailed workings of the plan.12 Then, in February, in order to launch Utah trains by April, he sent a detailed printed circular letter to all LDS bishops.13

Three related problems produced this innovation, each caused by Utah’s cash-poor situation: the high cash cost of annual immigration, the high cash cost of buying imported necessities from gentile merchandisers, and a surplus of Utah cattle that could not be turned into cash locally. The "down and back" wagon trains, therefore, had three purposes: (1) to bring west poor immigrants at low cost, (2) to bring west goods purchased cheaply in the East, and (3) to move surplus Utah oxen and flour east to Florence to be sold or traded for goods.14

Since Nauvoo days, Church leaders had labored to fulfill a promise made in the temple that they would "not cease our operations until we gathered the [poor] Saints." To aid the poor, a revolving loan fund—the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF)—had been created in 1849. Then, lacking loan funds by the mid-1850s, leaders had created a handcart scheme as a cheap way to move people to Utah. By 1860, however, the PEF was still low, and the handcart method had unpopular drawbacks. Lacking wagons, the handcart pioneers could not bring many cherished belongings with them; handcart pullers and walkers

10Brigham Young to Edward Hunter and Utah Bishops, June 1860, Brigham Young Letterbook, LDS Church Archives.
11Brigham Young to John Van Cott, 9 August 1860, Brigham Young Letterbooks.
12Brigham Young Talk, 14 January 1861, Brigham Young Sermons, typescript, LDS Church Archives.
13First Presidency to Bishop Hunter and Utah Bishops, February 1861, Circular Letter, Brigham Young Letterbooks.
who became weak suffered unnecessarily by not being able to ride; and the handcart people lacked sufficient food, clothing, and shelter. But to purchase wagons, oxen, and food near the Missouri was too costly for the Church. The average cash cost per emigrant head from Liverpool to New York, Brigham Young told Utah legislators early in 1861, was $20; from New York to Florence, $15; and "the transportation from Florence involves the cash outlay of $50 per person for cattle, wagon, and outfit."\(^5\)

In the new plan, "down and back" wagons would be provided at practically no cash cost to the Church. Wards in Utah would raise the outfits—wagons, teamsters and their provisions, yokes, oxen, chains—and "loan" them to the Church for a down-and-back trip to Florence. In return, wards would receive tithing labor credits of about $450 per outfit. The wagons would not travel "down" empty; instead, they would haul sacks of flour to be deposited at storage cabins on the way down and then picked up on the way back to feed the immigrants. The flour, too, would be donated by Utah wards in return for tithing credits. To balance out the loss of tithing revenue thus credited, poor immigrants would be charged a small fee for the trip to Utah, on credit as a loan from the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company.\(^6\) President Young felt the new plan would move the poor from Liverpool to Salt Lake City "for about one half the usual cash outlay." The plan, he said, would "increase our immigration" and "place most of the burden here [in Utah] to the great relief of the poor Saints abroad." Being a realist, he doubted the poor would repay their debts once in Utah. "I do not suppose we have gathered one cent to a thousand dollars in money that we have paid out," he said, referring to previous PEF loans; "it is almost impossible to get anything back." However, tithing credit rates for Utah outfits did not overly concern him: "Our object is to gather the people together, and establish the Kingdom of God, we do not care how it works."\(^7\)

"If all who are able, who are generally the great majority, will walk across the plains," Brigham predicted, "each wagon can haul the bedding, groceries, meat, clothing, and other requisite articles, for from 8 to 10 persons, to the amount of from 150 to 200 pounds to each person, exclusive of bread stuff except sufficient to last from station to station, as it is contemplated to forward flour by the train

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\(^5\)Brigham Young Talks, 14 January 1861.  
\(^6\)Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, Church Team Accounts, 1861, LDS Church Archives.  
\(^7\)Brigham Young to Nathaniel V. Jones and Jacob Gates, 20 December 1860, Brigham Young Letterbooks; Brigham Young to John Van Cott, 9 August 1860; Brigham Young Talks, 14 January 1861.
on its way down, to be deposited at the most suitable safe points on
the route.” 18 No longer would emigrants “idly tarry” on the frontier
for lack of teams to reach Utah, unless unwilling to do “leg service.” 19

Besides transporting the poor, the Utah trains, as a second purpose,
would provide a low-cost freighting system for importing machinery
and products purchased at cheaper, eastern prices. Brigham listed for
Utah bishops some cost differences between items purchased in
St. Louis and in Salt Lake City. Rice, he said, was ten times more
expensive in Utah, sugar three times, lard oil six to eight times,
linseed oil eight to eleven times, soap six to ten times, stoves eight
times, factory cloth three times, and other goods “in like proportion.” 20

While wagons loaned by wards for the “down and back” trip would
haul passengers, President Young urged wards and individuals to
send extra outfits loaded with flour or accompanied by oxen to sell,
the proceeds of which could purchase low-cost goods to import. Such
goods, even with transportation costs tacked on, would require no
cash outlay by cash-poor Utahns and would arrive at cheaper costs—
no gentle retail markup added.

In addition to transporting immigrants and eastern goods, the
Utah trains, as a third purpose, would allow Utah cattle to be herded
with the trains and sold in the Florence area. Knowing many, if not
most, immigrants would travel with their own outfits in “independent”
LDS companies—not Utah trains—leaders worried about the high
costs in cash to obtain enough cattle for the independents. For
Jacob Gates and others to purchase wagons for them ahead of time or
when they arrived would be expensive enough—some cash as well as
credit was required by Schuttler and others. But one good ox cost
almost as much as one wagon, so four oxen per wagon was a sizable
cash outlay. If Utah could not send down cash for agents to use to
buy cattle, surplus Utah cattle could be herded to Florence and sold
to immigrants wanting to purchase teams. In this way Utahns could
turn their cattle into cash and buy articles at reasonable rates and
freight them to Utah—using four unsold oxen and a wagon purchased
by proceeds from the sale of surplus oxen. Brigham Young expected
Utahns could sell ten to thirty thousand dollars’ worth of stock at
Florence in 1861. “People can gather to themselves mines of wealth,
if they will do it,” he promised. 21

18 Brigham Young to Hunter and Bishops, June 1860.
19 Brigham Young to Erastus Snow, 21 March 1861, Brigham Young Letterbooks.
20 Brigham Young to Hunter and Bishops, June 1860.
21 Brigham Young to Hunter and Bishops, February 1861.
President Young liked the new plan and what it promised to accomplish. It was the best possible system, he said, "at least until money is much plentier in our hands, for which we see no immediate prospect." "More of the poor and more machinery and other useful articles can be brought from the frontiers, with a given amount of money, by this method than by any other now within our reach." Overall the endeavor "is easy on the whole of us," even if immigrants failed to pay their loans back. Sensing bishops, to whom he explained the plan, liked it as much as he did, he asked them: "Does it feel soft to their gizzards or does it grind on them and give them pain?" The plan, he told bishops, was "fraught, in our judgment, with general benefit."22

The February 1861 circular letter contained very specific instructions to bishops.23 Regarding wagons, it called for "the best Chicago make," with two-inch iron axletrees, bows, and good covers. Oxen should be unshod but sent with eight thin ox shoes per team and the requisite number of nails. Each of the four projected companies needed four mounted men to manage, graze, and water the unyoked animals. Teamsters should be skilled men responsible for a ward's outfit—the Church would not be responsible for it. For hauling flour, wards would receive $10 per hundred pounds to Florence and $15 from Florence. To be properly outfitted, the circular continued, ward teams should have for each wagon a tar can, one gallon of grease, a five- or ten-gallon water keg, and two good whips. Teamsters should be supplied with two hundred and fifty pounds flour, forty pounds bacon, forty pounds dried beef, ten pounds sugar, four pounds coffee, one pound tea, some butter, four quarts beans, one bar of soap, four pounds yeast cake, salt, a good buffalo robe, two good blankets, one gallon vinegar in a stone jug, pickles, two good pairs of boots or shoes plus boot grease, three pairs good pants, six shirts, five pairs socks, three overshifts, coats as needed, needles and thread, and a good gun—preferably a double-barreled shotgun—with sufficient powder, balls, and shot. For each wagon, wards were told to give $10 to the train captain for "necessities" at Florence and for ferriage fees.

To set a proper example, Brigham Young volunteered ten teams himself. He told Salt Lakers in February: "I want this city to raise fifty wagons with four yoke of oxen to each."24 In March he praised

22Brigham Young to Hunter and Bishops, June 1860; Brigham Young Talk, 14 January 1861; Brigham Young to Hunter and Bishops, February 1861.
23Brigham Young to Hunter and Bishops, February 1861.
24Brigham Young Talk, 3 February 1861, Brigham Young Sermons, typescript, LDS Church Archives.
city Saints: "We got all we asked for and more." He also cautioned that "if you grudgingly put forth your means to help gather the Saints, it will be a curse to you." 25

By 16 April, ward teams began to arrive in Salt Lake City—four teams from Parowan and Tocquerville came that day. Some wagons carried wheat for city mills to grind into flour for the trip. On 20 April, ox teams from Ogden and Grantsville started for the rendezvous point at the mouth of Parley’s Canyon. The next day, a Sunday—the day when news reached Utah of the fall of Fort Sumter and the outbreak of the Civil War—Brigham Young instructed local bishops to send repair crews into Parley’s Canyon to improve the road for the ox trains. On 22 April, several teams from city wards joined the encampment. 26 "The town has been alive for a few days with wagons and teams neatly and substantially fitted up," a leader noted on 23 April. 27 The "cheerfulness, liberality, and alacrity with which so many teams are furnished and so many men sent forth" pleased the First Presidency. 28

On 23 April, the Presidency visited the encampment, installing four wagon train captains: Joseph W. Young, Joseph Horne, Ira Eldredge, and John R. Murdock. These were seasoned trail men, "leaders of the right stripe . . . men who had crossed the Plains, understand camp life and the Indians, and are not afraid of the devils." 29 Young, age thirty-two, had led the experimental "down and back" ox train the year before; Horne, forty-nine, was an 1847 pioneer and experienced colonizer; Eldredge, forty-one, had been an 1847 pioneer; Murdock, thirty-four, was a Mormon Battalion veteran who had carried mail for the Brigham Young express company to Missouri in the 1850s and helped with the handcart rescues in 1856. The four trains began their trek "down" to Florence that afternoon. 30

After the outfitting dust settled, the First Presidency received the following figures concerning the four trains: 31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Companies</th>
<th>Public wagons</th>
<th>Private wagons</th>
<th>Public oxen</th>
<th>Private oxen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,375</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

194 23 16–18 136,000 lbs. 34,348 lbs.

25 March 1861, Journal History.
2620, 21, and 22 April 1861 entries, Journal History.
27George A. Smith to John Smith, 23 April 1861, Historian’s Office Letterbook, LDS Church Archives.
28First Presidency to W. H. Hooper, 18 April 1861, Brigham Young Letterbooks.
30Ibid.
31Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, 9 May 1861, Brigham Young Letterbooks.
A different total, 185 teams rather than 183, comes from the Perpetual Emigrating Fund tithing credit ledgers for 1861, which name each teamster sent by each ward. Table 1 (on page 351) shows that seventy-five communities sent at least one team—nearly every ward in the Church. The list proves what historian Richard Jensen observed concerning the "down and back" system: "For the first time, the Mormon community as a whole became effectively involved in promoting immigration from Europe."33

The First Presidency gave the four captains letters of instructions which set rules for their companies. Swearing, drunkenness, gambling, contention, and unreasonable whipping or abuse of cattle were not to be allowed. Troublemakers should be "turned out of the company." Guards should be provided with sleeping facilities in wagons during the day, and their riding animals should not be ridden during daytime except for "necessity." The four companies should stay within a few hours' distance for mutual security. At Florence the companies should camp on high ground three or four miles above the Missouri River and near good running water. Teamsters were required to give their captains receipts detailing kind and weight of freight loaded into their wagons at Florence. All men in the companies should keep their guns and ammunition "in good conditions for use at a moment's notice."34

Through some rain, snow, and mud, the companies rolled through Utah and Wyoming mountains eastward towards Florence. Instructed to select "three or four safe places" to deposit flour between South Pass and Wood River in Nebraska, the companies unloaded flour sacks at or near Rocky Ridge Station, the North Platte Bridge (present Casper), and Deer Creek, all in Wyoming, and at Wind River Center in Nebraska.35

EUROPEAN EMIGRATION

The year 1861 was the twenty-first emigration season for European Latter-day Saints. Saints there were taught in late 1860, and earlier, "that emigration should directly follow faith, repentance, baptism, the laying on of hands, and tithing, so soon as the way consistently

32PEF, Church Team Accounts, 1861.
34First Presidency to Joseph W. Young, 15 April 1861, Brigham Young Letterbooks.
35Flour drop points are identified in 1861 entries in the following diaries at the LDS Church Archives: Samuel A. Woolley, Thomas Griggs (Horne Company), Frederick W. Blake (Eldredge Company) and Zebulon Jacobs (Young Company).
| TABLE ONE |
| UTAH AND IDAHO WARDS AND NUMBER OF WAGONS SENT FOR 1861 EMIGRANTS |

| SOUTHERN UTAH | 8 | Provo Valley | 2 | Herriman |
| 4 | Beaver | 1 | Santequin | 1 | Millcreek |
| 1 | Cedar City | 3 | Spanish Fork | 1 | South Cottonwood |
| 1 | Harmony | 4 | Springville | 4 | Sugarhouse |
| 2 | Parowan | | SALT LAKE VALLEY | | Union |
| 27 | CENTRAL UTAH | | First Ward | | West Jordan |
| 4 | Ephraim | | Second Ward | 2 | |
| 5 | Fillmore | | Third Ward | 1 | |
| 4 | Manti | | Fourth Ward | 1 | |
| 3 | Mt. Pleasant | | Sixth Ward | 1 | |
| 4 | Moroni | | Seventh Ward | 1 | |
| 6 | Nephi | | Eighth Ward | 2 | |
| 1 | Springtown | | Ninth Ward | 2 | |
| 38 | UTAH COUNTY | | Tenth Ward | 1 | |
| 1 | Alpine | | Eleventh Ward | 1 | Box Elder |
| 1 | American Fork | | Twelfth Ward | 2 | Franklin (Idaho) |
| 4 | Battle Creek | | Thirteenth Ward | 5 | Hyde Park |
| 1 | Cedar Fort | | Fourteenth Ward | 4 | Hyrum |
| 1 | Goshen | | Fifteenth Ward | 2 | Logan |
| 2 | Lehi | | Sixteenth Ward | 2 | Mendon |
| 5 | Payson | | Seventeenth Ward | 2 | Paradise |
| 4 | Pleasant Grove | | Eighteenth Ward | 1 | Providence |
| 1 | Pondtown | | Nineteenth Ward | 3 | Richmond |
| 1 | Provo | | Twentieth Ward | 2 | Smithfield |
| 8 | | | Big Cottonwood | 1 | Wellsville |
| | | | | | Willard |

| WEBER–DAVIS COUNTIES | 30 |
| | 4 |
| 3 | Centerville |
| 1 | East Weber |
| 2 | Farmington |
| 2 | Kaysville |
| 11 | Ogden |
| 4 | North Kanyon |
| 1 | North Ogden |
| 1 | North Willowcreek |
| 1 | South Willowcreek |
| 1 | Weber Valley |

| NORTHERN UTAH | 26 |
| | 4 |
| 1 | Box Elder |
| 1 | Franklin (Idaho) |
| 1 | Hyde Park |
| 1 | Hyrum |
| 5 | Logan |
| 1 | Mendon |
| 1 | Paradise |
| 2 | Providence |
| 3 | Richmond |
| 2 | Smithfield |
| 3 | Wellsville |
| 2 | Willard |

| GRAND TOTAL | 185 |

Source: PEF 1861 Tithing Credit Accounts, LDS Church Archives.
opens." Some converts, like William Jefferies, felt "a burning in my very bones" that they should emigrate in 1861. Charles Penrose, who penned the hymn "O Ye Mountains High" in 1854 despite never having seen Utah, in 1861 very much "longed to your bosom to flee," and did. Others longed to leave but could not afford the trip. "Many have been quite a number of years in the Church and are weary to go home to Zion," George Teasdale said regarding Scottish Saints in February 1861, but were too "poor in their circumstances." In England, a leader noted that "the poor are in quite straightened circumstances on account of being more or less thrown out of employment through the stringency of the times." 36

During the winter of 1860–61, hundreds in the British Isles, Scandinavia, and on the continent signed LDS emigration lists and deposited ticket money hoping to emigrate that season. They expected to pay their own fares to Utah. "Down and back" teams, they had heard, were possible, but certain word the teams were coming did not reach Europe in time for many to make plans to use that aid.

Three LDS chartered emigrant companies sailed in April and May from Liverpool in 1861:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ship</th>
<th>Est. LDS Passengers</th>
<th>Leave Liverpool</th>
<th>Arrive New York</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>16 April</td>
<td>15 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwriter</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>23 April</td>
<td>22 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monarch of the Sea</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>16 May</td>
<td>19 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1959</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An analysis of 1,779 of the passengers on which there is data shows that 53 percent were females and that 59 percent were age twenty or older.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>% M</th>
<th>% F</th>
<th>% Total age</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 20 plus</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 10–19</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 1–9</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>840</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>1779</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Brigham Young to Amasa Lyman, et al., 25 September 1860, Brigham Young Letterbooks; William Jefferies, Journal, reminiscences of 1860, typescript, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, British Mission, Manuscript History, 20 February 1861, LDS Church Archives; Brigham Young to Walter M. Gibson, 2 April 1861, Brigham Young Letterbooks.*
LDS agents in Liverpool tried to schedule the three vessels so the companies could reach New York in time to travel to Florence to meet the Utah wagons. The *Monarch*, delayed because 580 Scandinavian Saints were late leaving Copenhagen, docked in New York almost too late to allow the Saints to meet the Florence schedule.  

EASTERN UNITED STATES EMIGRANTS

During the winter of 1860–61, Apostles Erastus Snow and Orson Pratt labored in the eastern United States to fire up lukewarm members. They baptized "probably a couple hundred or more," most of whom "are old hangers on, children of Saints and apostates returning to the fold, a few fresh recruits from Babylon and they, chiefly foreigners, resident in the States." The preaching helped, Elder Snow said, "though by far the loudest sermon is being preached by Him who long ago said He would come forth from His hiding place to vex the nation"—referring to the eruption of the Civil War.  

Diary entries by Lucius Scovil, a missionary in the New York area, tell how he and others reacted to day-by-day news about the outbreak of war. On 15 April, he "learned that the Confederate States had taken Fort Sumter by bombardment" and that President Lincoln had "ordered out 75,000 troops to defend the country great excitement prevails here." Pondering how literally this event fulfilled Joseph Smith's 1832 prophecy, he tucked a copy of that prophecy into letters he wrote to non-LDS relatives. On 25 April, amid news reports of ship sinkings and casualties, he wrote: "The utmost consternation prevails throughout the country here. War! War and blood is the cry." The next day he recorded that an anonymous letter with threats against the Saints prompted Elders Pratt and Snow to cancel public LDS meetings in the New York City area. Elder Scovil advised local Saints on 28 April "to wind up their business and leave Babylon, which they all intend to do this spring."  

In the New York City area, Prussian-born Bernhard Schettler, baptized in 1860, converted a cluster of German families—the Bitters, Schlesselmanns, Bluemells, Schneider and others. Schettler then prepared his flock to emigrate to Utah that season.  

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37Typescripts of the three vessels' passenger lists are in the British Mission, Manuscript History, 1861 entries.
38Erastus Snow to George A. Smith, 26 June 1861, Journal History.
39Lucius Scovil, Diary, 28 April 1861, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church Archives.
40Bernhard Schettler, Memorandum Book, photocopy of holograph, entries for 1860 and 1861, LDS Church Archives.
the conference president, John D. T. McAllister, also readied several hundred Saints for the upcoming emigration.\textsuperscript{41}

The Apostles instructed eastern Saints to join into one emigration company. On 11 June, a rainy day, about sixty Boston Saints reached Manhattan and spent the day crossing the Hudson River on steam tugs. New York Saints also ferried over to the Jersey City depot of the New York and Erie Railroad. About 10:00 P.M. nearly seven hundred eastern Saints began their ten-day train trip towards Florence.\textsuperscript{42} At Elmira, New York, the next day, Elder McAllister and about three hundred Pennsylvania Saints joined the Eastern Company.\textsuperscript{43}

Their was the third of four large train companies of Saints that season. Previously the Manchester and Underwriter companies had traveled the same New York to Quincy, Illinois, tracks. Later, on 20 June, nearly nine hundred Europeans, the Monarch Company, would follow the same route. According to Apostle Snow, the Eastern Company’s departure left branches in the East as “but skeletons of what they were a few weeks ago.”\textsuperscript{44}

OVERLAND AND UPRIVER

Thomas Griggs, an England-born teenager from Boston, kept a detailed diary of the Eastern Company’s trip to Florence. He described well both the inconveniences of the travels and the evidences of war which the train travelers found.\textsuperscript{45} During the first night, he wrote, friction caused wheels on the fast-rolling train to catch fire, and several fires were bucketed out. The next night, near Hornellsville, New York, a Brother Slack from Boston wrestled with a man disturbing Sister Slack, and both men fell from the train. Brother Slack later died from head injuries. At Dunkirk, near Cleveland, Ohio, the Eastern Company split up. One group loaded into fifteen cars and left. The other group waited overnight for another train. Both groups reunited at Toledo and headed for Chicago on a train of two engines, eight freight cars, and twenty passenger cars. At Chicago they put their luggage in a large warehouse for a short layover. In the Illinois countryside, the company’s travel stopped suddenly when the train engine malfunctioned. The next day at Quincy, Illinois, the train tracks ended, stopped by the broad Mississippi River. Travelers

\textsuperscript{41}John D. T. McAllister, Journal, microfilm, 1860–61 entries. LDS Church Archives.
\textsuperscript{42}Thomas C. Griggs, Diary, 11 June 1861, typescript, LDS Church Archives.
\textsuperscript{43}McAllister Journal, 12 June 1861.
\textsuperscript{44}Erastus Snow to George A. Smith, 26 June 1861, Journal History.
\textsuperscript{45}Griggs Diary; a condensed and revised version of his diary is found in Journal History, 15 September 1861.
boarded the river steamer *Black Hawk* and floated down twenty miles and across to Hannibal, Missouri.

While waiting for a Missouri train, the company rested, bathed, and straightened out ticket and money problems. Some passengers, short of funds, received loans from Church agents. Missouri was a war zone, and in Hannibal, young Griggs saw home guards protecting a cannon captured from local secessionists. He learned that a secessionist leader was locked in the train depot. He heard troubling reports about Confederate troops in the countryside firing into trains and burning railroad bridges.

Despite war dangers, the company boarded a train and rolled due west for St. Joseph, on Missouri's west border. Griggs said they passed many towns, nearly all guarded. Main bridges had guards, too. At Chillicothe, Missouri, they stopped. "The place presented the appearance of a captured city, all business being entirely suspended and the street patrolled by armed men of every conceivable character of drunkenness. Profanity and obscene songs seemed to be the order of the day." The Missouri ride, Griggs reported, was "over one of the roughest railroads I believe in existence. The jolting almost caused some to strike their heads against the roof of the cars, and causing the boxes to move around in the liveliest manner imaginable." At St. Joseph, the Eastern Company transferred to the river wharf and saw the Missouri River, "a large deep dirty swift running stream carrying along a great number of old trees, logs and brush!" In St. Joseph, "the spirit of secession was prevalent, and a great spirit of distress, suspicion and antagonism seemed uppermost." Secessionist and American flags, Griggs said, took turns going up and down a flagpole there.

From St. Joseph, the Mormons journeyed for two days and two nights up the Missouri River on the *Omaha*, one of the few boats still running despite the war dangers. "The boat was densely crowded and every available spot was occupied by men, women, children, and baggage." One evening a storm forced them to tie up to the shore. On Friday, 21 June, the *Omaha's* paddles churned to a halt at Florence, and the weary eastern Saints looked for places to lodge for a few days in the busy Mormon wagon-and-tent village.

**FLORENCE OUTFITTINGS: JUNE AND JULY**

Meanwhile, in Florence, while Utah trains were rolling east and European Saints traveling west, Jacob Gates prepared for their
arrivals. On 10 April, he contracted with an Omaha merchant named Rodgers for stoves and tinware. On 14 April, he surveyed possible campsites north of Florence. On 24 April, in Omaha, he saw soldiers from Fort Kearney, Nebraska, heading east. "The war spirit is up," he noted; "the people seem anxious and a fear seems to creep over the nation and a dread of something to come."46

In early May, Gates learned about the Manchester Saints arriving in New York. He sent David H. Cannon—brother of Apostle George Q. Cannon, newly arrived from England, and soon to be a wagon train captain—down to St. Joseph to shepherd the Manchester group to Florence. On 4 May, Gates contacted a Brother Bird to repair the Church corral in Florence.47 That day he received a letter dated 11 April from Brigham Young informing him to expect two hundred wagons from Utah in late June and instructing him not to buy cattle: "Presume there will be enough driven [from Utah] to nearly, if not quite, supply the demand. Of course, yokes, chains, and wagons will have to be bought for the extra cattle sent for sale."48

On 11 May, Gates contracted with a Bluff City supplier for 426 sacks of flour and 7,000 pounds of bacon.49

On 24 May, Gates's first emigrant group arrived by riverboat—the three hundred Mormons from the Manchester, led by Elder Claudius V. Spencer.

Among the English was William Jefferies, whose clerking skills Elder Gates needed and whose diary describes the June outfitting days at Florence. Jefferies wrote that his company reached Florence about noon and "some houses [were] hired for the accommodation of the company. We got our luggage to houses." The next day, 25 May, he collected firewood and bought provisions. Elder Gates hired him that day to be a clerk in Gates's outfitting store, which was stocked with "some hams, bacon, flour, etc. to sell to the Saints."50

Elder Gates received a request from Mr. J. J. Creighton, desperate to complete construction of his telegraph lines to Utah in 1861, to hire seventy-five men. Gates contracted to supply the men, who would receive half salaries in advance to aid the men's families and half in November in Utah.51 (After the Florence outfittings, LDS

46 Gates Diary, April 1861 entries.
47 Ibid., May entries.
48 Brigham Young to Jacob Gates, 11 April 1861, Brigham Young Letterbooks.
49 Gates Diary, 11 May 1861.
50 Jefferies Journal.
51 In Our Pioneer Heritage, 5:32. The western stretch of the telegraph reached Salt Lake City on 24 October, and Creighton's eastern line on 18 October.
wagon trains rolling west across Nebraska and Wyoming passed telegraph construction crews, some with LDS men who eagerly visited friends in the passing wagons.)

With the arrival of the Manchester Saints on 24 May, Gates's workload increased. On 25 May, he made purchases in Omaha, on the twenty-sixth he conducted Sunday meetings, and on the twenty-seventh he spent his day purchasing and "answering a thousand and one questions." Wanting to forward those immigrants who could afford their own teams, Gates organized them into a wagon company on 29 May, appointed David H. Cannon as captain, and selected four captains of ten, a sergeant of the guards, a chaplain and a clerk. On 30 May, the Cannon train—225 people in fifty-seven wagons—moved about two miles from Florence to be clear of the general outfitting grounds.52

In the Cannon train, Brother S. A. Wilcox had ninety loose cattle, some of which the local sheriff claimed were stolen. When the sheriff confiscated the animals in question, Brother Wilcox demanded a trial. So on 31 May, Wilcox and several witnesses trooped into Florence for a hearing. The accuser reduced his claim to just one heifer and then dropped the charges. By 1 June, the cow was back in the Cannon camp—"She knows her owner quite as well as the law," company clerk Bartlett Tripp noted. The Cannon train, joined by a few additional wagons, did not start west until 6 June.53

Meanwhile, on 3 June, Elder Milo Andrus led his company of 629 Saints, the Underwriter passengers, to the Florence outfitting grounds. At dusk the riverboat docked at Florence. One of the new arrivals, William Blake, recorded that "a host were on shore prepared to greet old friends." Blake, the company's clerk, counted up the passengers and found that seven had not obtained tickets. "Darkness came on quickly," so most luggage was left on the ground and guarded. Wagons—probably Schuttler wagons from Chicago that Gates and Florence campers had assembled—conveyed the new arrivals to tents or to hotels ("at least such they were called," Blake wrote).

Before sunrise Blake began to sort baggage. When rains struck, some newcomers stood under umbrellas, some rushed to tents, and others picked through luggage piles unprotected. Later Blake went "to town" where he bought bacon and eggs. He searched for a baker's shop and found one, but it had no bread. He moved into the

52 Gates Diary, May 1861 entries; D. H. Cannon, Camp Journal, 1861, holograph (kept by Bartlett Tripp, company clerk), LDS Church Archives.
53 Cannon Camp Journal, 6 June 1861.
Florence Hotel—evidently one of the empty buildings without glass in its windows—where rains that night nearly flooded the occupants.

On 4 June, Blake, like William Jefferies, became a store clerk for Gates. He posted accounts that morning and then he joined a 2:00 P.M. meeting in Gates's tent where the poverty of the Saints was discussed and temporary bishops appointed to look after the poor. In subsequent days Blake was busy approving orders for wagons, supplying wagons with chains and other equipment, and endorsing orders for provisions.

On 7 June, Captain Job Pingree led his train of thirty-three wagons and three carriages from the Florence campsite, with perhaps two hundred Saints, mostly from St. Louis. On 8 June, the steamer Omaha brought Schuttler wagons, so Blake spent most of the day landing, checking, and assembling parts of wagons.

At a 9 June church meeting "on the green" behind the store, Blake learned that Florence was sacred to Mormons' memory because it was the site of Winter Quarters and of the calling of the Mormon Battalion. On 10 June, Blake dealt out wagons and covers. He spent 14 June weighing boxes at the store and packing. A steamboat, the Sunshine, arrived that day, bringing about thirty Saints, most from Pittsburgh and St. Louis. They bedded for the night in covered wagons.44

Captain Joseph W. Young rode into the Florence camp from Utah on 16 June, several days ahead of the "down and back" wagons. With his arrival, the outfitting work mushroomed in size and complexity. Elder Gates continued to supervise the outfittings of the independent wagon companies and passengers, and Captain Young took charge of the "poor Saints" camped at Florence, preparing them for the Utah wagons. Wanting the four Utah trains to spend a minimum of time in Florence before heading back, he labored hard to have provisions and passengers ready for them. Apparently he quickly realized that emigrant numbers were higher than had been expected. He therefore required that people intending to travel in Church teams donate all their cash to the general fund. Englishman William Jefferies handed over "every cent I possessed, and the Saints, generally, I believe, did the same. I was collector." New York German Traugott Bitter surrendered his last $40. Perhaps many could not donate because they were like Dane Lars Larsen, who reached Florence with "only

44F. W. Blake, Diary, holograph, June 1861 entries, LDS Church Archives; and Job Pingree summary, Journal History, 31 December 1861, Supplement. The Mormon Battalion was enlisted in 1846 across the river at Council Bluffs, not at the Florence site.
about ten cents in his purse, Danish coin.’’ More important than small donations, however, Captain Young received during the next several days large sums forwarded from the eastern branches’ tithing funds.55

Because credit was at the heart of the ‘‘down and back’’ system, Captain Young had to keep detailed, accurate account books. To help, he retained William Jefferies, Gates’s former store clerk, as chief accountant. Young’s ‘‘Frontier Account Books’’ tell with numbers a complex story of interaction between people, equipment, commodities, and credit.56

Captain Young, probably operating out of Gates’s store, first opened a ‘‘sundries’’ account. His ledgers list several hundred small credits—less than a dollar to six dollars—for individuals needing food every few days. Jefferies, for example, received what most of the others did—five pounds of sugar at ten cents per pound, 1.25 pounds of coffee at twenty cents per pound, and 2.5 pounds of apples at eight cents per pound, for an initial ‘‘sundries’’ debt of ninety-five cents. Charles Penrose, for his large family that included in-laws, received on 24 June about seventy pounds of flour, fifteen pounds of bacon, seven pounds of sugar, two pounds of coffee, one pound of tea, and four pounds of apples, for $6.07 credit. Nearly daily, from 16 June until early July, Young’s staff issued such commodities on credit.

Using cash and credit, Captain Young sent agents on purchasing trips to Bluff City, Omaha, and the countryside to buy provisions. One aide, Milo Andrus—unaware that he soon would be a wagon train leader—described on 19 June how busy he was with ‘‘the hurrying and incessant labour that always exists at an outfitting point.’’57

Mass quantities of provisions had to be obtained to supply the campers and to load into the Utah wagon trains. Young’s ledgers show the immensity of the supplies effort—both receiving and apportioning. For example, he procured for the four companies no less than the following quantities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>13,000 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apples</td>
<td>3,186 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coffee</td>
<td>3,707 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tent cloth</td>
<td>6,155 yds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hams</td>
<td>3,300 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bacon</td>
<td>15,121 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>side meat</td>
<td>6,700 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shoulder meat</td>
<td>2,900 lbs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smaller quantities of a variety of items had to be obtained, too. Ledgers list expenditures for such things as bar soap, candles, kegs of

55Wilhelmina Bitter, Biographical Sketch, typescript, copy in author’s possession; Jefferies Journal; Lars Larsen, Autobiography, typescript, 6, LDS Church Archives.
56PEF Frontier Account Book, General Accounts and Personal Accounts, LDS Church Archives.
pickles, baking powder, lubricants, corn, rice, yeast, bed ticking, rope, twine, needles, thread, and tobacco. Other miscellaneous expenses involved "ferriage when going to the Bluffs after bacon," hotel bills, clothes and boots for teamsters, a funeral, and damages to a local cornfield. Meanwhile, Jacob Gates procured similar quantities for the independent companies. To procure, warehouse, and distribute the mountain of provisions, Gates and Young must have recruited dozens of men to assist them.

Hardly noticed by the Florence campers, on 20 June Peter Ranck led a twenty-wagon train with Mormon immigrants through Florence. It outfitted in Iowa, crossed by steam ferry from Bluff City to Omaha, rolled into Florence, and camped a mile west. It continued towards Utah the next day.

Also on 20 June, the Eastern Company stepped ashore at Florence from the *Omaha*, nearly doubling the town's population. Diarist Thomas Griggs noted his reaction to the outfitting scene that greeted him and to the many "deserted and unfurnished houses" in the vicinity:

Landed, found large numbers of church teams from the valley, into which we put our traps and removed to a fine well ventilated mansion at the summit of a hill commanding a view of Florence, and from where you could obtain a sight of a number of airy looking buildings similar to our own, and which were of the greatest convenience to travellers in our situation, and the liberal minded owners had not even ticketed them as being "To let."  

(A few days later Griggs was less enamored by his free lodgings; on 27 June a thunderstorm drove him into a building with glass in its windows.)

Griggs spent a full day in Florence buying provisions. The next day was a Sunday, 23 June, so to attend church he changed his clothes—for the first time since he left Boston thirteen days before. The next day, like others wanting to use Church teams, he visited the bowery and surrendered his last cash.

On 25 June, the Homer Duncan independent wagon train took 264 Saints on their first day's journey towards Utah. Duncan, 46, was a returning missionary. He had led a wagon company to Utah in 1857, including 1,300 head of cattle. Except for 44 United States citizens, the Duncan train was filled with *Underwriter* emigrants—

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60Summary of Peter Ranck Train, Journal History, 31 December 1861, Supplement.
61Griggs Diary, 23 June 1861.
62Ibid.
32 from Africa, 119 from England, 18 from Scotland, and 49 from Wales.62

Thomas Griggs's summary of the last week of June captures well the essence of daily life in Florence.63 He wrote that the days were "spent by the emigrants, teamsters, and presiding officers in arranging the details of the company organization, purchasing supplies, oxen, wagons, manufacturing tents, breaking in cattle, collecting such cash from the emigrants that they could advance to purchase needed groceries, bacon, &c." He added he hiked two miles for firewood and found the "country very destitute of wood of any kind"—evidently picked clean by hundreds of wood gatherers like himself.

Griggs reported that some Utah wagons had reached Florence by 20 June. On 27 and 29 June, the last "down and back" trains arrived. All four camped a mile or two outside of Florence and created temporary corrals for their cattle. On 1 and 2 July, the last company of emigrants reached Florence—the nine hundred or more Saints who crossed the Atlantic on the Monarch of the Sea—led by Apostle Erastus Snow. At that point, Florence—a tent-and-wagon city with a few permanent buildings—held its largest population of the year, exceeding 2,500 Mormons. They were a rich mix—Germans, Swiss, Italians, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Scots, Welsh, English, Irish, Canadians—new converts like the Bittets, old-guard Mormons like Jacob Gates who had known Joseph Smith, and youthful teamsters reared in Utah. At least one European, Englishman Frederick W. Blake, was poorly impressed by the Utah boys after hearing them address a church gathering: "The American Boys evidently have had no practice in speaking and seem deficient of thought upon the facts of Mormonism, a few simple anecdotes are related by them about their chat with leading men, but for the control of a people and for the enlightenment of mind they are far behind the times."64

During early July, four independent trains and the four "down and back" trains were fitted out. The fitout routine for the Eldredge, Horne, Murdock, and Young trains from Utah was the same. First, people waiting in Florence received wagon assignments, a half-dozen people per wagon. As much as possible, the outfitters tried to group nationalities in the same trains and in shared wagons. Then, people took their baggage to the bowery where a "weighing machine" told them how much extra baggage they had. Costs for the overage, at

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62Homer Duncan, Journal, 1861, holograph, LDS Church Archives.
63Griggs Diary and also Griggs summary, Journal History, 13 September 1861.
64Blake Diary, 7 July 1861.
twenty cents per pound, were added to their PEF loan accounts. Fares for the Utah trip, also charged, were $41 for adults and $20.50 for children under eight. Adults could take fifty pounds of baggage free, and children half that.65

Following weigh-in, the Utah boys brought company wagons from the camps outside Florence into town so that assigned passengers could load their baggage. "Loading wagons efficiently," an expert has explained, "demanded both experience and patience. Everything had to be packed tightly and secured to minimize jostling and breakage on the trail."66 A carelessly packed, top-heavy wagon was particularly dangerous. Wilhelmina Bitter, a New York German who joined the Joseph Young train, described how her wagon was loaded. Items not used daily, she wrote, "were stacked up in the middle of a wagon, as high as the bows. They made two departments in the wagons." Two families were assigned to the front of her wagon and two to the back. "One tent for two wagons," she continued, and "the necessary camp kettles were tied under the wagons." Her husband, Traugott, drove the wagon every other day, apparently spelling off the Utah-sent teamster—or else they received a wagon which Captain Young had to purchase in Florence to accommodate extra passengers.67

The baggage loaded, teamsters drove passengers and packed wagons back to the company camps outside of Florence. There the emigrants received "their first lesson in camp life, such as getting water, fuel, and cooking with camp fires." They also became accustomed to nature's whims. July heat and Missouri River valley humidity generated three consecutive evening thunderstorms which proved that tents were not "hurricane" or waterproof.68

Captain Ira Eldredge's was the first Church train to load up and move to Florence's outskirts. Organized on 2 July with the usual officers—chaplain, clerk, sergeant of the guards, and captains over ten wagons each—the train stopped at Spring Creek, about 1.5 miles from Florence. The next day it rolled eight miles west to Big Papilion Creek. For the next nine days it hardly moved. Captain Eldredge waited for the other three Church trains to outfit and also for needed kettles. During the halt, diarrhea plagued some passengers, forcing Captain Eldredge to move camp one-quarter mile on 7 July to solve sanitation problems.69

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65Jefferies Journal, 26 July 1861.
67Bitter, Biographical Sketch.
68Both Griggs accounts; Zebulon Jacobs, Diary, July 1861 entries, Journal History, 22 September 1861.
69Blake Diary, July 1861 entries.
Information about the outfitting of the Samuel A. Woolley train, an independent company, comes from passenger Peder Nielsen’s diary and from Captain Woolley’s own diary. On 3 July, Samuel Woolley was appointed captain, to his surprise, and was told his train would carry mostly Danes. That day Peder Nielsen “drew lots” for a wagon assignment and then was appointed a captain over ten wagons. New to America, and not speaking English, he did his amateur best to organize the ten wagons under his care. One day he “tried to get everything in order, but it takes long time for the agent.” The next day he went “down to receive oxen; the day passed by yoking and marking them.” Two days later he received oxen for his wagon and drove it outside of Florence to the Woolley camp. A new driver, he had to learn how to make oxen go, stop, and turn, and also how to yoke and unyoke them. As one oxen expert put it, hitching even well-broken cattle could be “casual or hellish.” In camp on 8 July, Nielsen wrote down a roster of his ten wagons’ passengers, turned in a list of needed provisions to his superior, and then “had a lot to do to arrange all the necessary details for our trip.”

Meanwhile, Captain Woolley tried to finish his train’s outfitting and his own. On 3 July, he bought a wagon for $85. The next day he went to Omaha for another wagon. “Business” occupied him for two days. On 7 July, he was “at work fixing out the Danish company with oxen, afternoon fixing my wagons.” The next day he ferried over to Bluff City to buy a span of mules but found none large enough. The next day he bought a pair of mules for $300 and then worked to load his wagons. On the tenth he finished loading and moved out to his company’s camp. He returned to Omaha the next day to trade horse collars for mule collars. On the twelfth he led his Danes on their first travel day on the trail, to “the springs” eight miles out. The next day he moved the company across Little Papillion Creek, and he then returned to Florence to buy a yoke of oxen for $60. Marking time waiting permission to move west, he welcomed Apostle Snow into camp on 15 July. The Apostle completed the company’s organization and sent it on its way.

While the Church trains and Samuel Woolley’s company outfitted, two independent trains left Florence; information about them is lacking. Captain Milo Andrus’s train of sixty-four wagons and 620 passengers,

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70Peder Nielsen, Diary, trans. Orson B. West, typescript, July 1846 entries, Utah Historical Society; and Woolley Diary, July 1846 entries.
71Nielsen Diary, July 1846 entries; Lass, From the Missouri to the Great Salt Lake, 9.
72Nielsen Diary, 8 July 1846.
73Woolley Diary, July 1861 entries.
which seems to have included Captain William Martindale’s company of twenty-eight wagons, left on 3 July. Captain Thomas Woolley, apparently not related to Samuel, led a small party of about thirty wagons and 186 people from Florence on 8 July.74

In Florence and the wagon camps, the emigrants celebrated the Fourth of July, probably with serious thoughts about the future of the threatened republic. In the Eldredge camp, according to diarist Frederick Blake, at daybreak guns were fired and then the Utah boys roused people in their tents and wagons. At midday they organized a dance but, the weather being extremely hot, they could not entice the girls to dance.75 At Florence, diarist Thomas Griggs wrote that cannons fired to honor the day, and at night there was “a prairie ball in camp.”76

Captain Horne’s Church train left on 9 July and traveled ten miles. They camped near “Reed’s ranch” and waited for Captain Young’s train. Evidently Captain Murdock’s train stayed near and kept the same schedule as the Horne Company.

Zebulon Jacobs, a teenage teamster in the Young train, detailed his outfitting labors. According to his diary, on 5 July he left the train’s camp on Mill Creek and drove two miles to Florence “after a load of Saints.” During the next two days, he made similar trips. While in Florence on 6 July, he “saw a number of emigrants stowed away in every nook and corner.” Two days later he “drove up cattle, and we moved the camp a short distance” and then picked up more emigrants in Florence. On 10 July, he “hailed up another waggon and prepared for starting westward.” The next day “we got everything redy and moved half a mile westward, and got the waggons in shape for starting the next morning. That night we had the first death in camp. It was one of the sisters.”77

By mid-July the Church team trains had started on the “back” trip to Utah. Murdock’s company started on 8 or 9 July, the Horne train on the ninth, and the Eldredge and Young wagons on the twelfth—the same day Samuel Woolley’s independent train started. Church trains could have started sooner, but they lacked some cooking utensils. Young’s PEF ledgers show as last transactions in Florence the assigning of kettles to the four trains. Eldredge received twenty-seven, Murdock twenty-eight, and Young twenty-one. Captain Horne’s order included

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74Historian’s Office Journal, 14 September 1861 entry, says that Wm. Martindale arrived in Utah the day before in charge of a division of the Andrus company.
75Blake Diary, 4 July 1861.
76Griggs Diary, 4 July 1861.
77Zebulon Jacobs, Diary, July 1861 entries, LDS Church Archives.
twenty camp kettles, a dozen fry pans, and ten- and six-quart pans, as well as a dozen cups, six coffee pots, eighteen dozen plates, eighteen dozen spoons, one chamber pot, one scoop, one skillet, one wash pan, and a set of knives and forks. 78

A few days after the Church trains left, the last Mormon wagon company left Florence—Sixtus Johnson's independent train of fifty-four wagons and two hundred people, mostly "European and Swiss" people. 79

Several Mormon freight companies also outfitted at or near Florence in 1861, but details about them are unavailable. The identified trains are 80

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Captain Asper</th>
<th>11 wagons</th>
<th>Captain Tanner</th>
<th>11 wagons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bishop Miller</td>
<td>11 wagons</td>
<td>Godbe, Wright</td>
<td>20 wagons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Reid</td>
<td>20 wagons</td>
<td>Livingston,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bell, Kimball</td>
<td>26 wagons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Captain Young's Church train was part freight train, carrying much material for Brigham Young and other leaders. Among other items, the train hauled two dozen stoves, twenty-eight number three ovens, twenty-two number two ovens, and six number one ovens. One of the freight companies hauled $14,000's worth of goods, which Henry Lawrence had purchased in St. Louis for the First Presidency. Someone also hauled 100 feet of "8 x 10 German glass" on Utah orders. 81

On 17 July, one day after the Johnson wagon train took the last of the emigrants from Florence, Jacob Gates, his store empty and his account books brought current, left Florence with Claudius V. Spencer and Nathaniel V. Jones, the New York emigration agent. Meanwhile, New York missionary Lucius Scovil and his traveling companion, Apostle Orson Pratt, tried to reach Florence before the last wagons left but found their way blocked. At the Mississippi River they learned that secessionists in Missouri had burned railroad bridges, unspiked tracks, and undermined track timbers. The two thought of going to St. Louis and boarding a riverboat there for Florence but were told that militia were firing into riverboats. So, with little other choice, on 15 July, they boarded stagecoaches, Orson Pratt for Bluff City and Lucius Scovil for Nebraska City. On 19 July, Scovil outfitted himself for a trip across the Plains, shod his mule team, visited Florence to

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78Information about the Murdock train is found in several entries of diarists in other wagon trains. 79Journal History, 31 December 1861, Supplement. 80Ibid. 81PEF, Frontier Account Book, Personal Accounts.
pick up a trunk, and then rolled west at the fast pace of about forty-five miles per day to overtake the emigrating Saints.\textsuperscript{82}

With Scovil’s departure, Florence’s 1861 Mormon outfitting days were over. Its empty, open-windowed houses on the hill once more fell silent, until another emigration season would bring visitors who needed them again.\textsuperscript{83}

\textbf{ASSESSMENT}

The 1861 LDS emigrating season was unusual because it occurred against a backdrop of the outbreak of the Civil War and because it inaugurated the new “down and back” method for moving poor Saints west. Both developments worked together to make 1861 emigration numbers larger than Church leaders had predicted earlier that year. Evidently, many Saints living in the United States worried about the war’s impact on their lives and jobs, and decided they had waited long enough to move to Utah. The war encouraged some to emigrate, and so did the availability of the “down and back” wagons for those unable to afford the trip across the Plains.

How many Mormons emigrated to Utah in 1861? No precise answer is possible. For the twelve wagon companies, only two full passenger rosters and two partials have been found. William Jefferies, chief clerk for Utah train outfittings in Florence, carefully wrote out rosters for the four trains and sent them by mail coach to Utah. Those lists, which perhaps never even reached Utah, have disappeared. For most trains, however, contemporaries noted wagon totals, passenger totals, or both. The Deseret News, on 2 October 1861, estimated that between four thousand and five thousand emigrants came that year.\textsuperscript{84}

A conservative estimate, based on available records, is that 3,924 Latter-day Saints emigrated from Florence to Utah in the twelve 1861 companies, as shown in Table 2 (on page 367). Approximately 2,900 of those emigrants—1,900 from Europe and 1,000 from the eastern United States—reached Florence in organized LDS companies on chartered trains and riverboats. Another 1,000 reached Florence on their own.\textsuperscript{85}

The major purpose for the “down and back” trains was to assist poor Saints to reach Utah from Florence. The plan succeeded well. “Every Saint who reached Florence and desired to go home this

\textsuperscript{82}Gates Diary, 17 June 1861.
\textsuperscript{83}Scovil Diary, July 1861 entries.
\textsuperscript{84}Jefferies Journal, 26 July 1861.
\textsuperscript{85}Erastus Snow to George A. Smith, 26 June 1861, Journal History.
TABLE TWO: LDS EMIGRANT WAGON COMPANIES IN 1861

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPART FLORENCE</th>
<th>ARRIVE S.L.C.</th>
<th>DAYS</th>
<th>COMPANY</th>
<th>TYPE OF COMPANY</th>
<th>WAGONS</th>
<th>PASSENGERS</th>
<th>SOURCE OF PASSENGERS</th>
<th>DIARY ACCOUNTS</th>
<th>ROSTER OF PASSENGERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 June</td>
<td>2 September</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Job Pingree</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>204*</td>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>Partial in Journal History, 8/24/61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 June</td>
<td>8 September</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Peter Ranck</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>20 est.</td>
<td>124*</td>
<td>Outfitted at Iowa City</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 July</td>
<td>12 September</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Milo Andrus, and Wm. Martindale</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>England (Underwriter) and misc.</td>
<td>Andrus Company Journal; Geo. Ottinger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 July</td>
<td>15 September</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Thomas Woolley</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>186*</td>
<td>Europe (ship, Monarch of the Sea)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 July</td>
<td>12 September</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>John R. Murdock</td>
<td>Church Team</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>460**</td>
<td>Company Journal; F. W. Blake</td>
<td>Partial in Company Journal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 July</td>
<td>15 September</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Ira Eldredge</td>
<td>Church Team</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>Company Journal; Thomas Griggs</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 July</td>
<td>13 September</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Joseph Horne</td>
<td>Church Team</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>453**</td>
<td>Zebulon Jacobs; Wm. Jeffries</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 July</td>
<td>23 September</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Joseph W. Young (split—Amiel Harmon and Heber P. Kimball)</td>
<td>Church Team</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>292****</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 July</td>
<td>22 September</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Samuel A. Woolley (and Joseph Porter)</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>Europe (ship, Monarch of the Sea)</td>
<td>S. A. Woolley; Peter Nielsen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 July</td>
<td>27 September</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Sixus Johnson</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Some Swiss</td>
<td>George Teasdale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>(averaged)</td>
<td></td>
<td>624</td>
<td>3924</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

*Estimate based on 6.2 passengers average in other independent companies.
**Estimate based on 7.3 passengers average in Eldredge Church team.
***Same as ** but cut 50% due to being a freight company, too.
season," Elder McAllister reported on 30 July, "has had the privilege. The sending down of waggons from Utah to Florence is a grand scheme." Of Scandinavians who came to Florence, according to Niels Wilhelmsen, "not one soul of Danes was left there."

Apostle Snow estimated that perhaps one hundred out of two thousand European Saints who reached America in 1861 on the three LDS charter ships stayed behind in New York. But many other Saints who thought they would have to stop at New York City were helped west to the Florence outfittings by others. "A general willingness to divide and help each other seems to prevail among all," Snow said after leaving New York. Utah's Congressional delegate, William H. Hooper, as one benefactor, "donated $150 to help forward the poor of a previous company who landed at New York while he was there."

More "poor" Saints showed up at Florence than leaders had expected. In late June, a few days before reaching Florence, Apostle Snow estimated that perhaps three hundred wagons would handle the season's emigration, of which one hundred fifty would be provided by emigrants themselves. He misjudged by three hundred wagons. Also, his estimate of emigrant numbers was five hundred short. Nevertheless, Jacob Gates and Captain Young, the outfitting supervisors at Florence, found enough wagons for the extra arrivals. To the four "down and back" trains they added more than seventy-five wagons in Florence, wagons perhaps part of Gates's purchase of 111 wagons from the Schuttler firm in Chicago.

Perpetual Emigrating Fund accounts show that, prior to reaching Florence, hundreds of emigrants paid their own rail fares in four Church-organized companies. The equivalent of 1,917 adults (two children equalled one adult) paid LDS agents $25,995.14 for tickets. The tickets, however, cost only $23,895.92, generating a surplus of $2099.22 which became income the Church counted on, according to Apostle Snow:

There will be some funds saved by sale of surplus provisions from the several ships, a small profit on transportation between New York and Florence, and on teams and outfits which will go far towards supplying that which is lacking for sustenance and outfits for the poor. This you perceive is but an indirect way of taxing those who have means for the benefit of those who lack and in a way that is not felt by many.

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87Niels Wilhelmsen to John Van Cott, 19 August 1861, Skandinavien Stjørne 11 (October 1861): 9-10.
88Erastus Snow to George A. Smith, 26 June 1861, Journal History.
89Ibid; also see Table 2.
90PEF, Frontier Account Book, Personal Accounts
91Erastus Snow to George A. Smith, 26 June 1861, Journal History.
Without the wagons, teamsters, and flour provided by Utahns, the cash outlay for 1861 emigration would have been prohibitive for the Church. While the Utah donations were "free" in the sense they did not cost the Church any sizable cash payments for services rendered, nevertheless, on paper at least, labor tithing credits "paid" by the Church were sizable. Those Utah men whose daily work involved wagons and teams were expected to donate one working day in ten for the Church—labor tithing—using their wagons and teams. Therefore, if men chose to donate their labor, teams and wagons for the "down and back" trip, they could receive labor tithing credits that freed them from labor tithing obligations in the near future. Ledgers show that nearly two hundred Utah teamsters received an average of about $450 in credits each, as payment for hauling freight and passengers and to reimburse them for such trip expenses as rations, ferriage fees, wagon grease, and tobacco. Tithing credits for the teamsters alone amounted to more than $80,000. In addition, the Church credited wards and ward members for 136,095 pounds of flour donated for the "down and back" trips; at six cents per pound the flour "cost" the Church about $8,000 in credits. About sixteen Utahns served as guards for the four trains, for which they received about $100 credit each.92

Loan obligations incurred by emigrants who used the "down and back" wagons and provisions fell short of the repaying of the labor tithing credits extended by the Church. When the Young, Horne, Eldredge, and Murdock trains approached Salt Lake City, Church agents stopped them so that passengers could sign loan notes. Diarist Thomas Griggs wrote on 12 September that family heads were called into a tent where agents "took our notes. Mother and I signed something for some amount of which I had but little conception."93 The promissory notes, ranging from $.76 to $390, committed the signers to repay the loan amount plus ten percent interest from the date of signing. Of the 1861 notes in the LDS Archives—apparently many are missing—337 borrowers agreed to repay $38,285.39, an average of $113.62 each, to cover their wagon and food expenses at Florence and on the Mormon Trail.94

But, as Brigham Young predicted, much of the 1861 debt was not repaid by the emigrants who incurred it. In 1877 the Church published a list of debtors who had not repaid their loans to the

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92PEF, Church Team Accounts, 1861.
93Griggs Diary, 12 September 1861.
94PEF, Promissory Notes, 1861, LDS Church Archives.
Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company. A tally of the 1861 borrowers shows that 597 had not paid off their promissory notes fifteen years after agreeing to do so.\textsuperscript{95}

Although the “down and back” account showed a large deficit, it was a paper loss more than a cash loss. The primary purpose of the “down and back” scheme was to save the Church from cash outlays, and it achieved that purpose. Besides bringing emigrants cheaply to Utah, the scheme had two other purposes. One was to freight cheaper eastern goods into Utah in Utah wagons. Except for Church leaders, however, few Utahns sent extra wagons down to Florence to haul back commodities purchased there. Only twenty private wagons accompanied the Utah trains to Florence. However, it is possible that the six freight companies might have included some wagon loads of goods sent for by Utah citizens who were not merchants. The third purpose, to sell surplus Utah cattle at Florence, likewise fell short. Utahns sent only 124 surplus oxen to Florence with the “down and back” trains. Possibly some private cattle herds, now lost to history, followed them to Florence. However, Elder Gates did not have enough Utah oxen to supply the emigrants’ needs and had to purchase no less than forty-one oxen for $2,522 cash—cash that could have gone into the hands of Utah cattle owners had they sent down more oxen.\textsuperscript{96}

LDS emigration in 1861 was a smooth and successful process. The ship, train, and wagon companies were well managed and supplied. Illness, death, and misfortunes were minimal. The Utah oxen plodded down and back in good condition and within a time frame that brought the emigrants to Salt Lake City well before the snow season. “This season’s immigration has been signally blest all the time from their departure from their former homes to their new homes in our peaceful vallies,” Brigham Young pronounced that fall.\textsuperscript{97}

“Down and back,” because of its 1861 success, was repeated during six of the next eight emigration seasons, involving 1,956 Utah teams, for an average of 326 wagons per year.\textsuperscript{98}

Florence proved to be an acceptable outfitting point because of its access to Missouri River steamboats; its nearby streams, grasses, and woods that allowed for wagon camps, corrals, and pastures; its easy access to the Mormon Trail; its proximity to merchandisers in

\bibitem{95}Names of Persons and Sureties Indebted to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company from 1850 to 1877 (Salt Lake City: Star Book and Job Printing Office, 1877).
\bibitem{96}PEF, Frontier Account Book, General Account, 1861.
\bibitem{97}Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, 18 September 1861, Brigham Young Letterbooks.
\bibitem{98}Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 208.
Bluff City and Omaha; and its location far enough north and west so that Civil War actions did not cut off all routes to it from the East. Florence enjoyed two more outfitting seasons in the Mormon sun, 1862 and 1863. In 1864, because transcontinental railroad tracks had pushed west from the Missouri River, the outfitting site changed to Wyoming, Nebraska, for the 1864, 1865, and 1866 seasons. In 1867 LDS companies started from North Platte, Nebraska, which was the rail terminal that year, and in 1868 Laramie and Ft. Benton outfitted the Mormons. After serving Mormon emigrants as an outfitting center for seven years, 1857 to 1863, Florence reverted to being a town that never boomed. The 1870 census taker counted but 395 Florentines—800 less than he found there in 1860.99

Breathings

Summer comes to that end
inspired
from the beginning.

While a bubble from a hiding trout
sky rises slow
as the silky spill of milkweed,

a pit splits a plum
hymen-quiet
before the morning yield

and a vessel breaks
in brain bathings,
the mouth of the man open
round with vowels
final silent and wise.

—Loretta M. Sharp

Loretta M. Sharp teaches at the Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen, Michigan, where she established the writing program in 1976.
Parley P. Pratt in Winter Quarters and the Trail West

Stephen F. Pratt

Much has been written about the Mormon pioneer company that went to the Great Basin in 1847. Little has been written about the large immigration group that followed, organized principally by Parley P. Pratt. Returning from England in April 1847, Apostle Pratt, together with John Taylor and Orson Hyde, successfully closed the Joint Stock Company, an ill-fated English trading company started by Reuben Hedlock, Thomas Ward, and Wilford Woodruff.1 Arriving in Winter Quarters just when Brigham Young and the pioneers were leaving for the West, Parley, and to a lesser extent John Taylor, reorganized and enlarged the companies for emigration west, negotiated with the Omaha and Otoe Indians and the U.S. government Indian agents to protect the Mormons' cattle from Indian attack, and tried to make Winter Quarters more economically efficient. They also dealt with difficult problems concerning plural marriage and wrestled with the question of leadership and authority in the absence of Brigham Young.

THE INDIAN PROBLEM

When Parley arrived at Winter Quarters on 8 April 1847, he found the Mormons in conflict with the Omaha and Otoe Indians and the Indian agents. The Mormons had received permission from the government to stay on Potawatomi lands on the east side of the Missouri River but had failed to gain government permission to stay on Omaha lands on the west side.2 The Mormons had entered into agreements with the Indians themselves to haul corn to the Indians

A descendant of Parley P. Pratt, Stephen Pratt is in Germany with the U.S. Armed Forces.
1Parley P. Pratt, Speeches, 8 and 11 April 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes, in Library–Archives, Historical Division, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.
and to provide protection in exchange for the use of their land. But, because there was a land dispute between the Omaha and Otoe, the Mormons were not sure which group they should deal with. In addition, the Indian agent wanted the Mormons out of the area because of the precarious situation of the Omaha, who had been reduced to poverty by attacks from the Sioux, by a lack of timber and game, and by the impact of Mormons living on Omaha land. In truth, the Omaha were killing the Mormons’ cattle to keep from starving, but this caused agitated feelings on both sides. Brigham had told the Saints in Winter Quarters not to kill any Indians stealing the Mormons’ cattle but to whip those they caught.3

On 4 April 1847, Brigham sent a letter to John Miller, the Indian agent, asking him to come to the 6 April general conference to encourage the Omaha to help themselves "by farming the present season, so that they may have sustenance and the necessities of life; and prevent the necessity of their plundering to sustain themselves."4 Miller replied he could not attend the meeting or enter into any agreement with the Mormons without authority from the Department of Indian Affairs. He further said that he felt a farm would be useless as the land was in dispute between the Omaha and the Otoe and that the government was planning to erect forts to protect the Omaha and Otoe from the Sioux. He then stated his views on the Mormons occupying Omaha and Otoe lands:

I will respectfully suggest, as the Council Bluffs agent to you & your people that the best service you can render the Omaha’s in my opinion, will be as soon as practicable to leave the Indian country, as you are well aware that the longer your people remain here the greater will be the destruction of timber, Range Game &C which to the Indians is a serious loss, & their chiefs complain to the agent on all these points and are further aware that the Indians in all probability will still continue their depredation on your stock &C.5

Brigham, who joined the pioneer group on the Elk Horn on 14 April 1847, wanted the Indians’ depredations against the Mormons’ cattle to stop but otherwise did not want to follow John Miller’s advice. Brigham sent a letter dated 16 April 1847 with Jesse Little and Porter Rockwell advising the Mormons to increase the guards on

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4Brigham Young to John Miller, 4 April 1847, National Archives and Records Service, Record Group 75, Letters Received, Office of Indian Affairs, Council Bluffs Agency (microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah); hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, Council Bluffs.
5John Miller to Brigham Young, 4 April 1847, Office of Indian Affairs, Council Bluffs.
the cattle and to herd them together for protection.⁶ When the letter was received by Parley P. Pratt, John Taylor, and the High Council, they called a meeting on 18 April in John Taylor’s house. After reading Brigham’s letter, Parley helped form a committee to negotiate a treaty with Big Elk, the Omaha chief, so that the depredations could end.⁷ This discussion came just in time; that night some Omaha attacked the cattle again, causing several men to go to Parley’s house to complain about the situation. Parley spent the whole night consoling the men and promised that he was going to stop the problem and that he would hold another council the following day for that purpose.⁸

On 19 April 1847, Parley P. Pratt, John Taylor, John Smith, W. W. Phelps, and the High Council met in Samuel Russell’s house to discuss the Indian problem. Parley began the meeting by stating that the Mormons would face starvation unless the Indians stopped their malicious attacks. He reported that when he had talked to John Miller about the agent’s 4 April letter, Miller had said his letter was not to be construed as harsh but that it expressed his concern the Mormons would face more depredations from the Indians unless the Saints left as soon as possible. Agent Miller, according to Parley, knew the Mormons could not leave immediately. The Indians, meanwhile, were actually afraid the Mormons were going to leave without fulfilling their commitment to the Indians to haul corn, build schools, and make other improvements.⁹

The High Council now appointed Alpheus Cutler, Daniel Spencer, W. W. Phelps, and Cornelius P. Lott as the committee to talk to the Omaha chiefs. Parley instructed them not to beg but to refuse to haul corn unless the Mormons’ cattle were returned. If the Omaha continued their depredations, the Mormons would put the ‘‘whip to them.’’¹⁰ John Taylor then advised the committee to take a count of all stray cattle the Indians had taken and have a minute book kept of their meeting with Big Elk. Several others in the High Council felt they had paid the Omaha enough for timber and game with the cattle already stolen, and they did not want to do anything more for the

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⁷Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 247-50; Campbell, Journal, 18 April 1847.
⁸Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 250-51; Campbell, Journal, 19–21 April 1847.
⁹Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 290-31; Campbell, Journal, 19–21 April 1847; Meeting, 19 April 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes.
¹⁰Meeting, 19 April 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes.
Indians. This feeling was not countenanced by Parley nor the other leaders.\textsuperscript{11}

One of the problems the Saints faced was control of their cattle. The High Council decided to involve the bishops, notifying them to meet with the leaders on 20 April. At the meeting, Parley told the bishops that the cattle needed to be herded, tended, guarded, and counted; the count to include those lost. W. W. Phelps then proposed that Hosea Stout be authorized to appoint ten men to bring back the stray cattle. Immediately after the council meeting, Hosea Stout left with his men but was unsuccessful in returning any stray cattle.\textsuperscript{12}

Early on 21 April, Alpheus Cutler, W. W. Phelps, Daniel Spencer, and Cornelius P. Lott headed for the Omaha camp on the Papillon River. After meeting with John Miller, they entered the Omaha camp. Once the council was called, Daniel Spencer spoke thirty minutes on the Mormons' grievances. Old Elk, the Omaha chief, responded for one hour. He admitted the young braves had killed the Mormons' cattle but felt that the Mormons were not keeping their promise of protection and that they had destroyed the Omaha's timber: "You can't raise up our timber, can't raise up our dead men; so, you are the aggressors," the chief said. Old Elk continued with his fear that the Mormons had no intention of leaving but were putting up permanent settlements. Daniel Spencer responded that the government call for five hundred men for the Mormon Battalion had forced the Mormons to stay longer than they had planned, but Old Elk angrily retorted: "If your father the great president implo[y] 500 men to fight his battle let him appropriate your lands. We don't pay his debts." John Miller then told the Mormons that their settlements were hindering the sale of Indian lands. He advised the Omaha that when the Mormons did not deliver the corn they had promised, the Omaha were within their rights to kill the Mormons' cattle. After this, the Indians said that the Mormons could stay if they hauled corn to them and that Old Elk would stop his braves from stealing the stock. The Indians felt there was plenty of land close by on which the Mormons could settle without settling on Omaha land.\textsuperscript{13}

At the High Council meeting the next day Parley asked the members, "Will we haul the corn or not?" Given no answer, he

\textsuperscript{11}ibid.
\textsuperscript{12}Meeting, 20 April 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes; Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 251; Campbell, Journal, 20 April 1847.
\textsuperscript{13}Minutes of Council, 22 April 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes.
informed the group their cattle were still left unattended and vulnerable to attack. Parley wanted a more effective herding procedure for the cattle and a peaceful solution to the Omaha question, if possible. If not, harsh measures would be needed.

At this point, a group of Otoe chiefs met with the Saints, saying that they were upset over the Omaha situation, that the Mormons had some rights as the land in question was really Otoe land. After the Otoe left, the High Council discussed the options. Most members felt they should haul corn to the Omaha. Hosea Stout closed the meeting with the thought that if the lands belonged to the Otoe the Mormons should deal with them, not the Omaha; but the majority wanted to wait and counsel with John Miller before making a final decision. ¹⁴

Two days later, three Otoe Indians made their way down the streets of Winter Quarters and on to the Council House. They brought two letters, one to Parley and the other to Daniel Spencer. Robert Campbell, the clerk, carried the letters to each man. Once the meeting began, Big Caw, the Otoe chief, stated that the Omaha were deceiving the Mormons, that the land was Otoe land. Big Caw wanted to know how long the Mormons were going to remain on the land. Daniel Spencer, appointed by Parley as a spokesman, told the Otoe that the Saints could not leave as soon as they had planned and that the Omaha had been killing the Mormons’ cattle. Spencer explained to the chief that the Omaha corn-hauling proposal was to keep the depredations from continuing and asked Big Caw how the Saints could stay in peace for a while longer. Big Caw responded that as the land was actually Otoe land the Mormons should give the Omaha a good whipping to solve the problem. If the Mormons hauled corn to the Otoe in twelve days, the Mormons could stay as long as they pleased. Parley P. Pratt and Daniel Spencer felt that they would go along with the Otoe claims but told the chief the Mormons would have to counsel together that night and give a decision the next morning. After the chief left, the group voted to haul corn to both the Otoe and the Omaha, agreeing that “$60 to $80 is nothing to get peace for we lose that amount in two or three days by their killing our cattle!!” ¹⁵

The following morning Parley and the High Council met with Big Caw and told him that the Mormons would haul the corn but that

¹⁴Ibid.
¹⁵Campbell, Journal, 24 April 1847; Meeting of Council, 24-25 April 1847; Miscellaneous Minutes; Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 252.
they needed to meet with John Miller to receive permission to make
the arrangements. The High Council then voted to send Agent Miller
a letter telling of the conflicting claims to the land and informing him
of the Mormons' decision to defer action until Miller returned with an
answer. After the meeting, John Taylor presented the Indians with
some calicoes, and Daniel Spencer gave them a sack of crackers. The
Otoe departed satisfied.16

On 25 April 1847, Parley addressed the Saints, telling them of
the Indians' conflicting claims of land ownership. He also reported
the decision of the High Council the day before, advising the Saints
that if the Omaha attacked their cattle to "whip the Indians with a
hickory but don't kill them." Parley told them that he did not want
the corn to be hauled only to have the depredations continued. He
said those who were able should go west.17

Part of the reason Parley was concerned with the Indian problem
was that many Mormons were panicking and scattering across the
Missouri River to settle in farms in Missouri and Iowa and not preparing
to go west.18 Others joined major dissenter such as George Miller,
James J. Strang, Lyman Wight, or McGarvey, the Indian prophet.19
The Mormon leaders had to find a way to hold the people together
while making sure the Indians did not kill the remaining cattle.
Parley pled for unity:

The Lord had called us to gather & not scatter all the time except
when counselled to do this is the object of God. He would have
gathered his ancient people but they would not, but he does not say
to us he would not. But in effect says he will if he should take a few
Omahas to do it or some body else. We have Bro going West as
Pioneers, we have soldiers West and we are also Westward bound & if I
have crossed the River to go West I will rather perish on the plains
Westward if I know my own heart than cross the River without Council.
Ye who want to scatter go and scatter to the four winds for the Lord can
do without you and the church can do without you for we want the pure
in heart to go with us over the mountains. If people want to follow
Strang go, . . . follow a new thing hatch it up for we have only the old
thing. It was old in Adams day it was old in Mormons day & hid up in
the earth & it was old in 1830 when we first began to preach it. Strain
every nerve to go on in the Spring. Wake up & go if you possibly can.
Those who remain don't farm one here & one there, for union is needed

16Ibid.
17Meeting at the Stand, 25 April 1847. Miscellaneous Minutes: Campbell, Journal, 25 April 1847: Stout,
Diary of Hosea Stout, 252.
18Ibid.
19Ibid.
20Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 27 April 1847 to 1 May 1847, 252-53; Lee, Journals of John D. Lee,
7 May 1847, 162.
& we are weak having so many men drawn from among us. So be united & my cattle should go to the mountains this year rather than have them killed off rather than have this and theirs or sell them to my Brethren & buy again when we go, for we dont need many here & I would have none to stay here but who were absolutely needed here, and a few cows for our support other than this have them over the mountains.20

To slow down the flight from Winter Quarters Parley ordered that all must get a certificate from Isaac Morley or they could not cross on the ferry. The enforcement was being carried out by Hosea Stout and the police, who counselled the ferryman not to allow any to cross without the needed certificates. This seems to have been effective, for the majority rallied behind the leadership of Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor and stayed in the Mormon settlement.21

By early May, Parley was again pleading with the Saints to protect their cattle and to prepare to go west by 25 May.22 This warning came when the Indians again committed depredations on the Mormons' cattle. On 7 May, the Omaha attacked seven or eight head; the Saints seemed not to be following Parley's herding policies. That night, at 10:00 P.M., word came to Winter Quarters that the Omaha were on the river bottom near town. Hosea Stout ordered the bishops to raise men to guard the south end of town against the Omaha's approach. No disturbance happened that night.23

Still, the Mormon position was precarious. Even though the Mormons had agreed to haul corn to the Indians, the superintendent of Indian Affairs felt the Mormon presence was causing problems.24 Thomas Kane tried to plead the Mormon cause to the superintendent and the War Department, but government officials feared that the Mormons were setting up a permanent way station and wanted them out as soon as possible.25 Parley tried to relieve the government of their fears by having as many Saints as possible go to the Rocky Mountains that spring.

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20Meeting at the Stand, 25 April 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes. I have introduced minimal punctuation and capitalization.
21Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 252–53; Lee, Journals of John D. Lee, 7 May 1847, 162.
22Meeting, 2 May 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes; Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 2 May 1847, 253; Campbell, Journal, 2 May 1847; Mary Haskin Parker Richards, Journal, 2 May 1847, LDS Church Archives.
23Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 7 May 1847, 253–54.
24Thomas H. Harvey to William Medill, 17 May 1847, Letters Received, Office of Indian Affairs, 1824–81, St. Louis Superintendency (microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University), hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis; John Miller to Thomas H. Harvey, 10 September 1847, Office of Indian Affairs, Council Bluffs.
25Thomas L. Kane to William Marcy, 20 April 1847; Kane to Medill, 21 April 1847; Medill to Marcy, 24 April 1847; Kane to Medill, 24 April 1847; all in Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis.
On 9 May, Parley spoke, expressing his feeling that full agreement between the Mormons and the Indians was being prevented by the agents. Parley explained his frustration:

I'll tell you what is the law of man. There is no man in the states of America to compel me to lay still & be robbed or authorize anybody to rob me—but the law is that no emigrants shall stay & settle on Indian lands on their journey Westward. The frontier settlers would overrun & oppress the Indians were it not that agencies were established on the frontier & it was a wise thing & I thank God for it. If we were farther Westward we could keep the Indians perhaps, at bay & make them do right but here we have to hold still for there is [a] third power to act. But Westward if an Indian come upon you to rob you or murder you you can resist him on equal terms for there is no third party.26

Parley went on to criticize the Saints for not resisting the Indians who took cattle the previous Thursday.

In the days that followed, the Otoe came to town on more than one occasion; the Saints fed them. Mormon leaders took these occasions to encourage the Otoe and to convey a message to the Omaha that the Mormons were guarding the cattle and would resist if attacked.27 Parley's program was being fully implemented to repel the Omaha threat.

Parley now began to adopt measures to insure the future of the Winter Quarters settlement. First, he sent Alpheus Cutler to talk to John Miller to obtain a firm answer on the Mormons' request to stay.28 We have no direct account of the reply, but we do know the agent did not want them to stay; however, he did not force them to leave.29 Next, Parley told the Mormons that harsh measures would have to be taken against the Omaha because the Indians were still taking cattle. He forbade any Omaha from entering the town, feeling they were doing so only to learn the location of the expanding Mormon herds.30

This policy was tested when the Omaha made overtures of peace to the Mormons, asking for a feast in exchange for the return of some stray horses. Once the Indians arrived, Hosea Stout disobeyed Parley's orders and brought Big Elk's son, Young Elk, and six other braves into town. When Hosea approached Parley and reported to him of the Indians' desire to present offers of peace and live more

26Meeting, 9 May 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes; Campbell, Journal, 9 May 1847; Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 9 May 1847, 254; Mary Haskin Parker Richards, Journal, 9 May 1847. Minimal punctuation introduced.
27Ibid.
28Thomas H. Harvey to William Medill, 17 May 1847, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis; John Miller to Thomas H. Harvey, 10 September 1847, Office of Indian Affairs, Council Bluffs.
29Medill to Marcy, 24 April 1847, Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis.
30Meeting, 20 and 23 May 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes.
Parley P. Pratt in Winter Quarters

friendly with the Mormons, Parley became angry, telling Stout he would have nothing to do with the situation. He advised Stout to consult the local leaders to obtain an answer to the Omaha proposals. Stout consulted John Taylor and Cornelius Lott with little success. Finally, after John Smith was consulted, a meeting with the Omaha was arranged for outside of town. Cornelius Lott, a reluctant spokesman for the Mormons, angrily told the Indians they had not kept their promises. Young Elk responded with a conciliatory tone, saying they wanted peace with the Mormons as evidenced by their returning of the stray horses. He then appealed to the Mormon sense of guilt by saying, “If the ‘Big Red headed’ chief [Brigham] had been here,” this would not have happened. The tactic worked, and Lott mellowed, telling the young chief the High Council would give him an answer as soon as possible.31

On 30 May, Parley addressed the Saints and denounced “the Guard & those who owned horses held by the Omahas [who] were to meet the Omahas & not let them come in here, but they obeyed my council so far they brought some chiefs here but I did not shake their hands nor go near them.”32

This did not dissuade Hosea Stout and C. W. Langley from going to Bellevue to give Young Elk the answer that the Mormons wanted peace.33 Parley felt contented to let Orson Hyde and the local leaders handle the problem as they were not following his advice in the matter anyway. Parley left for the West on 5 June.34 Later, the local leaders changed their minds and sent a posse after the Omaha when a group of them killed Francis Weatherby, a Mormon.35 The problems continued until January 1848 when the Mormons left Winter Quarters.36

Parley’s Indian policy was shaped largely by his fear that the U.S. government would attempt to force the Mormons from the land. At that time, such action was not practical for the government; the nation was at war with Mexico and it would have been politically embarrassing to force the Mormons off Indian land. Parley felt his hands were tied by the Indian agents. He decided to take the matter into his own hands. The Omaha depredations on the Mormons’ cattle, coupled with the dissenter problem, delayed the move west and even

32Meeting, 30 May 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes.
33Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, 1 June 1847, 238.
36Stout, Diary of Hosea Stout, January 1848, 290–300.
threatened the future of Winter Quarters. When negotiations failed to stop the killing of cattle, Parley called for harsh measures. The local leaders did not fully heed his policies, trying several times to gain a peaceful solution. Even this failed, and eventually the Mormons abandoned the settlement.

REORGANIZATION OF THE DIVISIONS

When Brigham Young took the pioneer group to the Great Basin in 1847, he left explicit instructions as to how the Saints in the subsequent emigration should proceed:

It is our wish and council that the emigration company now formed shall follow the Pioneers as soon as the grass is sufficient to support the teams and the presidents and captains will examine and know that every soul that goes in said company is provided with from 3 to 500 lbs of bread stuff or a year and half and as much more as he can get, for we know not whether we can raise corn this summer, as we anticipate, at the place of location. Let the first emigration company take with them as many of the sisters where husbands are in the army as can fit themselves out or can be conveniently fitted out.

It is wisdom that all the men in the emigration company shall be organized into a military body, under their respective captains of Tens, Fifties and Hundreds with Chas C. Rich as their commander in chief, who will see that every man is properly armed and ready to meet any savage encountered at a moments warning, taking care that caps and priming of all fire locks are so secured as to admit of no accidents; that John Scott supervise the artillery under Charles C. Rich. Horace S. Eldredge be marshall. Hosea Stout captain of the guard on the journey and that the guard watch during the night and sleep as they have need during the day.

The first company will carry the Temple bell, with fixtures for hanging at a moments notice, which will be rung at day light or a proper time and call all who are able to arise to pray, after which ringing of bell and breakfast, or ringing of bell and departure in 15 minutes, to secure the cool of the day, till breakfast time, etc, the Bell may be needed, particularly in the night, if Indians are hovering around, to let them know you are at your duty and if any member acts disorderly punish him severely.

Whenever a company of 75 men who do not belong to the present organized company shall be organized so as to carry out the principles of the Word and Will of the Lord and these instructions according to the pattern, with or without families, and provisions enough for to sustain each other 18 months they may come on till the 1st of July; but in all cases the brethren must run their own risk for food, and not depend on the Pioneers, or any company in advance for support in the least, either for their teams or themselves or families for we are credibly informed
that thirty Saints of the original emigrants perished in the mountains with hunger the last season, and 100 bushels of corn can easier be raised near Winter Quarters, than 50 bu. at the foot of the mountains.

If a man of the first emigration company, who is going to stop at this place for the time being should go forget his covenant in the Temple and his more recent obligation and agreements as to retain his wagon or team from the necessities of the Journey it will be the duty of the presidents to instruct the captains to take the same and apply it where necessity requires, and thus compel the owner to do what he has previously agreed to for as some were compelled to come in ancient days, others must be compelled to remain in the latter days, and men who are taken at their word have no reason to find fault.

For the Council

Brigham Young, president
Pioneer camp of Israel

Brigham Young gave careful instruction as to how the body of Saints should be organized under priesthood authority. Brigham envisioned all members of the second group of migrants being formed into "adoption" families where the Saints were to migrate and settle in the Great Basin in "family" units. Brigham had asked John D. Lee, an adopted son, to stay behind in Winter Quarters to supervise his farm. Isaac Morley, the leader of Brigham's family emigration division, was to come that season to the mountains with part of Brigham's adopted family.

But implementation of Brigham's adoptive family program became difficult for Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor as their large emigration group took shape, because several designated leaders of the divisions were not prepared to go that season. Parley felt that he could make changes in Brigham's plans since he believed he held equal authority with Brigham when Brigham was not physically present. John Taylor agreed, explaining to a group of Saints on 6 June 1847:

That when the Twelve are present they lead. Every man ought to respect another man's authority. Here is the High Council, you must respect their authority & Elder Hyde must be respected by you & by the

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37Brigham Young to Brethren at Winter Quarters, 16 April 1847, Brigham Young Papers.
38Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 502-24; The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1966), 254-56; Stout, Diary of Hoesa Stout, 14 June 1847, 227-29; Lee, Journals of John D. Lee, 44-57.
40Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 538-43; Lee, Journals of John D. Lee, 130-36.
41Campbell, Journal, 13 June 1847.
High Council. Elder Young, some say, said so & so. But I tell you
Bro. Young never set up stakes that cannot be drawn up according to
circumstances. When Elder Hyde is here he is Elder Young. If
Bro Pratt is here he would be Elder Young. If 2 or 3 of the Twelve were
here the oldest would preside. But are all one and the Lord Jesus
acknowledged the same Savior of the others. If the Twelve assembled,
sent an Epistle here & council the people they would be bound to
receive it & Elder Hyde would be governed by it & so would all the
councils & when Elder Young comes back he will be Elder Young.
Well, let Israel rejoice & respect the authorities. Don't let us falter
in the race but let us go on & we will rejoice & shout Hosanna, Hosanna to
our God.42

This concept of Parley P. Pratt, John Taylor, Orson Pratt, and
others of the Twelve stemmed from Joseph Smith's organization of
the Twelve in 1835 wherein all members of the Quorum held equal
authority. The oldest or longest-serving member was president, and
presiding was sometimes designated on a rotational basis.43 With the
expanded authority of the Quorum during the Nauvoo days, once a
Quorum member was placed over a certain area such as England or
the eastern states, he held jurisdiction to make policy subject to the
direction of the majority of the Quorum or the First Presidency.
After Joseph's death, the Quorum's role was expanded because of the
lack of a First Presidency. The Quorum took over the presidency of
the Church, and Brigham Young by virtue of his position as President
of the Quorum became President of the Church.44 During the period
from July 1844 to December 1847, many questions arose concerning
the authority of the Quorum. Some of the questions were—Who
calls the Quorum of the Twelve members to account, the majority or
the President? Could the majority of the Quorum of the Twelve
overrule the decision of the President? Based on circumstances, could
one or two members change decisions of the Quorum? For example,
in England in November 1846 Orson Hyde rebuked Parley P. Pratt
for teaching plural marriage when he was specifically told not to by
Brigham prior to leaving Winter Quarters. Parley responded to
Orson Hyde, even though the latter was his superior in the Quorum:

42Minutes, 6 June 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes. Minimal punctuation introduced.
43Kirland High Council Minute Record, January–March 1835, LDS Church Archives; Minutes of
Quorum of Twelve, 1835, Miscellaneous Minutes of Quorum of Twelve, LDS Church Archives.
44D. Michael Quinn, "The Evolution of the Presiding Quorums of the LDS Church," "Journal of Mormon
499-536; Milennial Star, vols. 1-9; The Prophet, ed. Parley P. Pratt; New York Messenger; William Smith to
Brigham Young, August 1844. Brigham Young Papers.
You, Elder Hyde, do not hold the keys of sitting in Judgement upon my head, by your dreams, visions, whisperings of the Spirit, doubts or fears, or by any other means. This belongs to a united quorum and they can only do it by testimony according to the laws of the Kingdom. 45

Parley elaborated on his view of priesthood authority:

They come to me to ask who is the President & his two councillors—for some of this people have a little Strangism and a little Rigdonism in their hearts. I don’t know anything about 3 except those dead, but I do know about 12 men who hold the keys of this kingdom & are President & one of them by reason of age is the President of the Quorum and of the church, but I know of no 3 save those who are dead. I never said anything about Rigdonism or Strangism; I left Bro Hyde & others who are good at it to do it. God may govern this church by 3 men or 12 men or seventy men & the reason I never said anything about it is because I saw this in the Covenants that there was 3 quorums in the Church who are equal & whose decisions were an end of controversy on the matter of church government in heaven & on earth. All the 12 are alike in keys, power, might, majesty and dominion and the Seventy are equal, every one in his place, and so are all who have the fulness of the Priesthood, they are entitled to your faith & prayers and there is no middle nor higher nor lower family than those are who have the fulness of the Priesthood. Some say I will go into Bro Taylor’s family or some a little higher into Woodruffs or Hebers or Orson Hydes. There is no Rigdonism, Strangism & every other ism. We are one, we are equal so far as our conduct is equal. You are not higher nor lower in one family than another. My mind is Brighams mind and my mind is the same as Hebers. 46

Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor at this time were of the opinion that in appropriate circumstances they could change the decisions of the President or the majority of the Twelve without seeking approval. 47

As the Saints prepared from April to June 1847 to go to the West, Parley began organizing the 1,561 people somewhat differently from the model proposed by Brigham Young on 15 June 1847. Instead of maintaining the two divisions along adopted family lines, Parley set up, under his and Taylor’s direction, a president and two counselors over temporal affairs and one leader over spiritual affairs supervising each division of five hundred. 48 When questioned on the changes, Parley spoke on the circumstances with which the companies were surrounded:

45Parley P. Pratt to Orson Hyde, 9 November 1846, Parley P. Pratt Papers, LDS Church Archives.
46Meeting, 25 May 1847, Minutes, Miscellaneous Minutes. Minimal punctuation introduced.
47Campbell, Journal, 15 June 1847.
Captains of hundreds, of fifties &c appointed last winter, are not here, some coming on, some on. Now I think it is best to act according to our circumstances. Or shall we stay here and theorize and alter for a week or two & copy again & again to get the captain of hundred or captain of fifties in this or that place. J. M. Grant was captn of 1st hundred. Now I council not think to wait any longer & proceeded to complete the organization of the 1st hundred. But because Bro Grant was not here I have appointed a Captain [which was Daniel Spencer]. Some say there are not 2 grand Divisions, which division are we in? The time is now when we have to go & the theory is not what we will see now so much as the practical. Now if you belong to Heber or Brigham, shall you not belong to them if you do not go in certain Divisions. Uncle John may be in Heber's family & I may be in Brighams, but because we both go in the same company or the same fifty will that alter us any? I have not horns in my head nor corns on my feet so I shant hook or kick him, neither will he abuse me. Now act in cooperation & union with us & we will deliver you up to those whom you belong. You will not be hurt any nor loose any rights of yours. I want the boys to be organized. Every man who is not older than 50 & no boy younger than 12. I don't want the fifties & hundreds to be scrupulous when we change the places of the fifties but the 1st hundred will be known and designated the 1st hundred whether they are first last or in the middle & with the fifties the same. I want the fifties & hundreds to be governed by the Priesthood, and not by their number. But if we have to go in 2 grand Divisions, it will not hurt you if Heber's are put beside Brigham's for a little while. You will still be Brighams or Hebers.49

John Taylor supported Parley in this view, saying:

Some people seems to be ignorant of church government & confound family government with church matters. Some connected to various families, & some think they are not bound to the council of any but those unto whose family they may be attached. In what relationship does a man stand to a family? He is a son. In what relationship does a man stand to the church when he is a member? He is subject to the councils of the church. Uncle John has two sons; are his sons only subject to him? No, if they are in the 70's they subject to the 70's council, High Priests to High Priests council, if The Twelve to the councils of the Twelve, & they are subject to the authorities of the church. Some throw this mantle over them & say they have chosen such a man to be their councillor, & their council they would obey. If this mantle is the only cover they have they will find it too narrow & they will be bare. Is this so, Bro Pratt? PPP: Yes, it is, Father Morley. Yes, with this exception that if their father told them to plant corn &c they have to do it. John Taylor: I will go farther & maintain my opinion if a man was councilled to plant corn by his father & the council say Go to England & preach, he would have to do it.49

49Campbell, Journal, 15 June 1847. Minimal punctuation introduced and brief hand expanded.
49ibid.
Once the groups were fully organized, they departed on 21–22 June. While some administrative difficulties arose, by September 1847 the large five hundred wagon company was well on its way to the Salt Lake Valley, spread over a hundred-mile radius from the first group to the last.31

On 4 September, when the returning Brigham Young and the Quorum met the Pratt–Taylor group, Brigham said he was not satisfied. Wilford Woodruff related Brigham’s negative reaction, saying

that Brother Parley P. Pratt & J Taylor had been to England & done a good work, had returned to Winter Quarters, & there done wrongly disorganizing the two divisions & companies that the quorum of the Twelve had spent the whole winter in organizing & which was also governed by revelation. Br. Parley took the lead in the matter & entirely disregarded our organisations & mixed the companies all up. Br. Young chastized him for his course & taught us principle. Said that when we set apart one or more of the Twelve to go & do a certain piece of work they would be blessed doing that & the quorum would back up what they did. But when one or more of the quorum interfere with the work of the majority of the quorum they burn their fingers & do wrong. When the majority of the quorum of the 12 plant stakes of Zion & establish a President over the stake & appoint a High Council there, has the minority of the Twelve, one or more, any right to go & interfere with those councils? Not unless they should get corrupt & do wrong. Then it would be the duty of any one of the quorum of the Twelve to show them their error & teach them what was right. And should the majority of those councils get corrupt & try to lead astray the people it would then be the duty of any one of the Twelve to disannul thos councils & call upon the people to sustain him & appoint a new one. But while the councils are trying to do right it would be the duty of the Twelve who might be with them to assist them in carrying out those views that the majority of the Twelve had established.32

The Quorum members voted unanimously that Parley had committed an error in carrying out his organization. Parley was at first angry but then mellowed, “confessing his fault.” Brigham stated he would “chastize Br. Parley or any one of the quorum as much as he pleased when they were out of the way & they could not help themselves. But he done it for their good & only done it when constrained to do it by

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32Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 4 September 1847, LDS Church Archives. Minimal punctuation added.
the power of God."’ Brigham felt that the Quorum held the best men on earth but that they must be chastened to maintain their loyalty.\(^{33}\)

As Brigham traveled among the various companies he became more convinced that Parley especially was out of line and reinforced this in talking to John Taylor on 7 September and Jedediah Grant on 8 September.\(^{34}\) Later, when Brigham arrived in Winter Quarters and meetings were called to set up a First Presidency in November—December 1847, he became adamant that Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor had made grave errors, that when mistakes were made he had the right to call Quorum members to account and thus to regulate the Quorum. Orson Pratt on that occasion felt at first that a majority could overrule the decision of the President, but Brigham quickly countered him, saying that there needed to be one head, not seven heads, of the Church to avoid confusion, and since Joseph had vested in Brigham the keys to sealing power, Brigham had jurisdiction over the Twelve by revelation. Most of the questions were resolved during the one month of meetings with the Quorum wherein Brigham Young, Willard Richards, and Heber C. Kimball were sustained as the First Presidency.\(^{35}\)

CONCLUSION

Parley P. Pratt’s role in Winter Quarters was one of organizing the largest group to depart from Winter Quarters and successfully leading them across the Great Plains. The Indian and dissenter problem produced a larger group than anticipated, but Parley was able to keep the large majority of Mormons together. Coming into conflict with Brigham’s policies and with no clear definition of authority within the Quorum of the Twelve when Brigham was absent, both Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor felt justified in making changes in Quorum policies when circumstances dictated. This confusion was resolved by Brigham in a series of meetings. Even though Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor were not present at these meetings, they supported Brigham Young once the ‘‘final’’ decisions were made.

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\(^{33}\)Ibid.; Thomas Bullock, Journal, 4 September 1847, LDS Church Archives; Horace K. Whitney, Journal, 4 September 1847, LDS Church Archives.

\(^{34}\)Woodruff, Journal, 5–8 September 1847; Whitney, Journal, 5–8 September 1847.

\(^{35}\)Meetings, 16 November–3 December 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes of Quorum of the Twelve, Brigham Young Papers.
Book Review


Reviewed by Richard H. Cracroft, professor of English and dean of the College of Humanities, Brigham Young University.

He is still bigger than life, and at stage center. Orrin Porter Rockwell, acting in his many roles—as distant relative of Joseph Smith, one of the first converts to Mormonism, feared “Danite Chieftain,” bartender, bodyguard, accused assassin of two handfuls of men (and women), Indian fighter, herdsman, guerrilla, mail rider, innkeeper, lawman, army scout, temple worker, barroom brawler, and missionary—springs to life once more in Harold Schindler’s excellent revision of his 1966 biography of Porter Rockwell.

But now there is more. In this 1983 revision, Schindler has not only expanded the bibliography, increased the index, and added recently acquired information about such varied events as the Battle of Crooked River, the Haun’s Mill attack, and the shooting of Frank Worrell of the Carthage Greys, but he has also pumped a great deal of interesting though generally supplemental detail into the rich plethora of footnotes which bless the text and, indeed, deserve to be read by themselves.

While this is as near as we shall likely come to a definitive biography of Rockwell, Schindler leaves the door open for further research. For example, he has been able to identify Samuel D. Serrine as “Achilles” (xi, xv), Rockwell’s sensational defamer, but he has been unable to uncover, except for the appearance of Serrine’s name on sundry lists or committees, any further facts about him. (I noted, as well, that Schindler continues to dismiss the surgical treatment of young Joseph Smith’s leg as a “botched” job, despite evidence to the contrary offered by Dr. Roy Wirthlin in his Spring 1979 BYU Studies article on the renowned surgeon, Nathan Smith.)

Rockwell’s fascinating life is a kind of cross-section of Mormon experience through much of the nineteenth century. He was there;
he participated in most of it. Like many of his generation, Rockwell was unable to read or write. A loyal servant of the first two Presidents of the Mormon church, Porter Rockwell was involved in the Missouri persecutions; he served as one of the Sons of Dan (Schindler is excellent on the Danite movement, and it is from the alleged initiation ceremonies for the Danites, wherein the initiate was permitted to "become a man of God and a son of Thunder" [35], that Schindler takes part of the title of the book); he smuggled tools to the captives in Liberty Jail; he was implicated in the attempted assassination of Governor Lilburn W. Boggs (and allegedly told Colonel Patrick Edwin Connor, years later, "I . . . thought I had killed him, but I had only wounded him. I was damned sorry that I had not killed the son of a bitch!" [332–33]); he rowed Joseph Smith across the Mississippi River the night before the prophet went to Carthage; he was a messenger for Joseph at Carthage Jail (Joseph said of Rockwell, "He is an innocent and a noble boy . . . , and my soul loves him" [79]); he brought to Nauvoo the news of the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum; he was a scout and buffalo hunter for the Saints at Winter Quarters and on the Plains; he acted in Pizarro at the opening of the Social Hall; he met with and impressed such VIPs as Schuyler Colfax, Fitz Hugh Ludlow, Jules Remy, and Richard F. Burton; he brought to Brigham Young and the Saints assembled at Brighton's Silver Lake the news of the pending invasion of units of the U.S. 5th and 10th Infantry; he was a guerrilla and stampeder of government mules in the Utah War; he fought the Indians as a scout and guide for Colonel Connor's troops; he sought out Brigham Young (in Southern Utah) and accompanied him on a fast ride to Salt Lake City to meet a trial date which had been suddenly scheduled to embarrass Brigham and cause him to forfeit his bond; he was implicated in the murder of several men and women; he was involved in the legal hunting down and killing of several outlaws; and at his 1878 death, from heart failure, he was awaiting trial on a grand jury indictment for his alleged involvement in the 1857 killing of five of the six members of the Aiken party.

Described in his later years by George Alfred Townsend, a well-known journalist, as "a fat, curly-haired, good-natured chap, fond of a drink, a talk, and a wild venture" (359), Porter Rockwell was the subject of many accounts—though not all true—that have come together to produce the paradoxical and controversial Rockwell portrait. Certainly he was accused, especially by the Salt Lake Tribune, of most of the unsolved murders in the territory. Schindler is unable to dispel the uncertainty surrounding these sensational crimes. Even
the question of whether or not Rockwell shot Lilburn W. Boggs remains hidden in such Rockwellian statements as, “If I shot Boggs, they have to prove it” (72). In the matters of the deaths of the Aiken party, of an unidentified female gossip in Nauvoo (105), of Henry Jones and his mother (accused of incest), of John Tobin, Dr. John King Robinson, Thomas Colbourn (a black), Joachim Johnston, Myron Brewer, Kenneth and Alexander McRae, and John Gheen, and even in the unexplained deaths of Mormon outlaws John P. Smith and Moroni Clawson, killed after they were captured, Schindler must leave the details hidden in the folds of history; and he likewise leaves the reader not only to conjecture as to Rockwell’s guilt or innocence but also to agree that Rockwell was “utterly incapable of exorcising the specter of violence” which dogged his life.

Despite these historical blanks, Schindler neatly and capably ties up most of the loose ends (though one wishes for more connubial detail—about why Porter’s first wife left him; why his first plural wife disappears from history after Nauvoo; and what happens to the later wives and children), and leaves a very human portrait of a doggedly loyal man capable of great selflessness and devotion, of whom Joseph F. Smith could say at his funeral, “He had his little faults,” but his life “was worthy of example, and reflected honor upon the Church” (368).

Schindler’s thorough research, sustained good writing, and remarkable subject, as well as his ability to set the events of Rockwell’s life in a richly detailed historical setting, combine with a pleasing format and fine pen-and-ink illustrations by Dale Bryner to make Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder in the 1980s, even more than in the 1960s, a welcome volume for Mormon, Utah, and western historians and buffs.
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