

We Also Marched: The Women and Children of Zion's Camp, 1834

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"All victory and glory is brought to pass unto you through your diligence, faithfulness, and prayers of faith" (D&C 103:36). On February 24, 1834, Joseph Smith received this promise for the members of the Zion's Camp expedition. Further, the assurance came that "my [the Lord's] presence shall be with you. . . . Let no man be afraid to lay down his life for my sake; for whoso layeth down his life for my sake shall find it again" (D&C 103:26–27). Certainly the expedition to Missouri in 1834 held terrible possibilities for danger, sickness, and violence. Nevertheless, spiritual blessings were promised to those who offered their lives, safety, comfort, and worldly goods. Most often associated with the more than two hundred men who volunteered to march with Zion's Camp, spiritual benefits also enriched the women and children who accompanied the expedition.

While considered a failure in its ultimate goal of reclaiming lost lands and relieving the heavy persecutions in Missouri, Zion's Camp has been seen as a historical turning point for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. From the members of Zion's Camp, Joseph Smith drew a majority of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the whole of the First Quorum of the Seventy. The hardships of the 1834 Missouri expedition provided important enduring legacies: uniting its members in a stronger loyalty to Joseph Smith and other leaders; solidifying the participants' dedication to the Church's cause; and schooling young leaders in the organizational skills necessary to move masses of people. Much focus has been placed upon how the above-mentioned factors influenced male Church leaders. According to J. Karl Wood,

While those lands [Missouri] were not redeemed at this time, the effort made by Zion's Camp was of great value to the church. It helped train leaders for a later trek across the Great Plains; it challenged the attention of the world with a striking example of faith, unity, and unselfish purpose manifest by members of this new and much maligned Christian denomination; and finally, it brought to light latent qualities of strength as well as hidden weaknesses in a group of men from whom leaders in God's church were to be chosen.¹

These same qualities and cultural legacies have yet to be applied to the camp's lesser known participants. Little attention has been paid to the women and children who marched with Zion's Camp in 1834. Two major works on

Zion's Camp have devoted brief focus to the female and minor-age participants. Roger Launius's *Zion's Camp: Expedition to Missouri, 1834* (published in 1984) contains one incomplete list of the women and children of Zion's Camp, along with a few anecdotal references to the women.² James L. Bradley, in *Zion's Camp 1834: Prelude to the Civil War* (published in 1990), claims that "little attention, before this study, has been given the women and children of Zion's Camp," and further suggests that "these forgotten but important members of the camp should be remembered along with the men."³ He attempts to remedy this omission by providing a complete and fairly accurate summary of all available primary lists of female and child members but does not move beyond a listing of the women's names, which are placed in appendix B.

In recent years, historians have dedicated more attention to the contributions of women to Mormon history. The role of women in military expeditions received some attention in *Women of the Mormon Battalion*, by Carl V. Larson and Shirley N. Maynes. That work has shown the role of women as cooks, "nurses, laundresses, and companions to their husbands during the long march." It has also recognized that hardships were shared by both men and women.⁴ A similar study can be applied to the women who marched with Zion's Camp. Beyond that, broader interpretations of the cultural and spiritual legacies of the expedition may be ascertained. This essay will examine the impact of the Zion's Camp experience on twelve women and several children who also marched to Zion in 1834.

Very little primary documentation exists about the specific activities of the women and children of Zion's Camp. No journals, diaries or letters from the pens of the women have survived, if they ever existed. The male diarists and recorders have provided us with lists of names, a few anecdotes, and some descriptions of illness and death as these hardships affected the women. Only two husbands, Jacob Gates and Joseph Holbrook, wrote about the activities of themselves and their wives on the expedition. Information about the women of Zion's Camp must be pieced together through later sources, genealogical records, and second-hand accounts.

Historical Background

On February 22, 1834, two days prior to Joseph Smith's revelation discussed above, Lyman Wight and Parley P. Pratt arrived from Missouri with the news of devastating persecutions against the Missouri Saints. In late fall of 1833, atrocities against the Jackson County Saints were so severe that the Saints were forced to relocate to Clay County in November and December 1833. When Joseph received word of the troubles in Jackson County, he

resolved immediately to organize an expedition to Missouri to relieve the Saints and reacquire their lands. At the Sunday meeting on February 24, the Prophet called for volunteers to offer supplies, money, and personal service. Within a few days, recruiters left Kirtland to find more volunteers, money, and supplies in the East. By the end of March, finances were still scarce and recruits were arriving slowly.

The need for more recruits prompted Joseph to send Hyrum Smith and Lyman Wight north to Michigan and Illinois to find volunteers among the northern Saints. Smith and White left Kirtland on April 21, 1834. From Michigan, they were to lead their detachment to a rendezvous point on the Salt River in northern Missouri, where they would meet the main body of the camp. Joseph's larger detachment would depart from Kirtland and travel west through Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to the point on Salt River, where a sizable branch of the Church was led by James Allred. Women and children participated in both the Michigan and Ohio detachments of Zion's Camp.

In late April, Hyrum Smith and Lyman Wight arrived in Pontiac, Michigan, where there was a small branch of the Church. They accepted recruits, most of whom intended to travel to Missouri to settle permanently. A few families took advantage of the opportunity to accompany the expedition, and approximately nine men, three women, and three boys left Pontiac with Smith and Wight on May 5, 1834.⁵

Joseph's group had been collecting recruits since February. He determined the departure point as New Portage, Ohio. A few families also joined Joseph's detachment with the intent of settling in Missouri. The detachment left Kirtland on May 5, coincidentally the same day as Hyrum's departure. With Joseph's group traveled eight or nine women, one girl, and at least five small children.

One woman played a role in the financing of Zion's Camp. Joseph and the other leaders worried greatly over money, as the Church had a great deal of debt and few resources. Only small amounts of money trickled into Kirtland. While fretting over finances, Joseph declared, "I want some money to help fit out Zion and I know that I shall have it." Wilford Woodruff recorded that the next day, "Brother Joseph Received a letter from Sister Vose of Boston, containning \$250. He took the money out of the letter and showed it to the brotherin present and said. 'Did I not tell you last night that I should soon have some money and here it is.'" ⁶ Sister Vose was Ruth D. Vose of Massachusetts, later a plural wife of Joseph Smith and still later, in Salt Lake City, wife of Edward Sayers.⁷ Although not a member of the camp, Sister Vose contributed the largest cash donation received by the Prophet and thus provided the means for the final provisioning of the camp.

Who Were the Women and Children of Zion's Camp?

The exact number and the identity of the women and children are not definitely known. Many discrepancies exist among the various lists of participants, and few primary sources have provided an exact account of the nonadult, nonmale camp members.⁸ List keeping even by those who were present was difficult due to the fluid nature of camp participation. Individuals joined and left the expedition periodically as the groups moved to Missouri. Many of the available records originated not from Zion's Camp but from the reunions that were held in Salt Lake City in 1864, 1869, and 1870.⁹

Joseph Smith's Detachment

Joseph's contingent left Kirtland in early May 1834 and marched through Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois before meeting Hyrum's group at the Salt River in Missouri on June 6. The group of over 180 people included eight women and six children.

Sarah Ripley. Sarah and her husband, Alanson Ripley, traveled with Joseph's detachment. Records of Zion's Camp list her simply as "Mrs. Ripley," but other records of the time reveal her first name. Sarah was thirty-two years old at the time of Zion's Camp. She is mentioned in Heber C. Kimball's record of his experience at Salt River as he attempted to wash his clothes, mentioned below.

Alanson Ripley served as bishop in Iowa Territory from 1839 to 1841. Records indicate that Sarah and Alanson Ripley later attended the Nauvoo 4th Ward, along with George, Maria, and Milo Ripley, presumably their children.¹⁰ Sarah and Alanson were endowed in the Nauvoo Temple on January 23, 1846.

Thomas Bullock's record of the October 12, 1864, reunion listed "Alanston [*sic*] Ripley and wife" as living in California.¹¹ They attended none of the Zion's Camp reunions in Salt Lake City.

Diana Drake. Diana is included in B. H. Roberts's list, Thomas Bullock's list, and Launius's list reprinted from the *History of the Reorganized Church*. She is not included in either Joseph Holbrook's or Solon Foster's lists. The *Historical Record* gives the name of a "Diantha Drake," born December 15, 1815, in Vermont, of Daniel and Patience Perkins Drake.¹² If this person accompanied Zion's Camp, she would have been eighteen years old, and most likely unmarried: no men with the surname Drake appear on any Zion's Camp lists. Diana Drake probably remained loyal to the Church and traveled to the West with the Saints; she is one of three women who attended the Zion's Camp reunion on October 9, 1869.¹³

Jane Clark. Jane appears on Joseph Holbrook's 1864 list as a participant in Joseph Smith's detachment.¹⁴ Unfortunately, because many Jane

Clarks can be found in Church genealogical records, it is currently impossible to determine which Jane Clark may have marched in Zion's Camp. Like Diana Drake, Jane's single status can be assumed from the absence of any men with her surname.

Ada Winchell Clements. Ada Clements's life is well documented, but unfortunately her participation in Zion's Camp is not. Only the list of Zion's Camp participants recorded in the *History of the Church* indicates that she traveled to Missouri in 1834,¹⁵ and she did not attend any Zion's Camp reunions.

Ada (Aidah) Winchell was born December 24, 1801, in Hebron, New York. She married Albert Clements on January 21, 1821 or 1822. The couple joined the Church after their marriage and later traveled with the Ripleys from New York to Florence, Ohio, in 1833.¹⁶ The Clements endured persecution in Missouri and even lost a son, Paul, in the Missouri violence. The couple continued loyal to the Church and proceeded with the Saints to Nauvoo, Illinois. After Joseph Smith's martyrdom, Ada attended the August 8, 1844, meeting at which the Saints chose the new leader of the Church. Ada received a witness of Brigham Young's authority, but Albert, who was not at the meeting, aligned himself with Sidney Rigdon's claim to Church leadership.¹⁷ A rift developed in the marriage, and Ada made plans to accompany the main body of saints to the West without her husband. She received her temple ordinances by herself on January 27, 1846.¹⁸

Ada resolved to "go with the Saints and share their fate even unto death"¹⁹ and proceeded to the Salt Lake Valley with four young children, arriving there in October 1852. She and Albert divorced a few years later. Both remarried and were widowed. Sometime in the 1870s, the children arranged a surprise meeting between their parents. Both granted forgiveness to the other and decided to remarry.

Mary Chidester. Mary Chidester appears on most of the Zion's Camp lists. Born April 2, 1809, in Vernon, New York, Mary Parker married John Madison Chidester on December 28, 1830. In the spring of 1832, they joined the Church and moved to Ohio, where they joined Zion's Camp in 1834. They brought their two small children, John, age 2, and Eunice, age 1.²⁰ Surely the difficult conditions of the expedition were augmented by the necessity of caring for two small children. The Chidesters continued with the Saints through the difficulties in Missouri and Illinois and settled in Utah, where they were called to settle Dixie in 1862. They attended the October 10, 1864, reunion of Zion's Camp, and their residence was given as Washington, Washington County, Utah.²¹ Mary died on February 3, 1879, in Washington.

Mary Snow Gates. Born July 30, 1813, Mary grew up in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, and developed a lifelong love of astronomy.²² She married Jacob

Gates on March 16, 1833, and joined the Church in June 1833. She was twenty years old when they left Vermont along with two of Mary's brothers, Zerubbabel and Willard, to join Zion's Camp in the spring of 1834.²³ Presumably they learned about Zion's Camp from one of the pairs of messengers that Joseph Smith had sent to the East. When they finally met the main camp, Jacob saw "the face of our beloved Prophet Joseph Smith," an experience he remembered and recorded almost sixty years later.²⁴ Jacob also noted that Mary "was present during the time of the cholera when 14 or 15 of our Brethren were slain by its ravages."²⁵ Mary and Jacob moved to Nauvoo with the Saints and migrated to Utah in late 1847.²⁶

Jacob served the Church in many capacities, including a call as one of the First Seven Presidents of Seventy; his responsibilities often took him away from home. Mary's life included much sadness and difficulty. Plagued by continual marital problems, Jacob and Mary separated, and she settled into a house in St. George, Utah. In a letter to Mary's brother Erastus, Jacob related Mary's history of personal problems:

I am aware that she has long since been an unwelcome visitor to her brothers and all of your family & everybody else & it is a miserable condition for any one to be in. You know she has been insane one half of her life & the spirit she has cherished has produced but little comfort to her self or me but with all her faults I never harbor bitterness in my heart toward her for I believe her naturally to be a good woman.²⁷

Childlessness and anguish over her husband's polygamous marriages caused Mary great mental anguish in her later life, but the earlier hardships of Zion's Camp and life in Missouri may have contributed to her emotional difficulties. Jacob recognized the severity of Mary's experiences in Missouri, as "she was left alone in the midst of enemies." Years later, Mary and Jacob set aside their difficulties briefly in order to attend two Zion's Camp reunions, one in 1864 and the other in 1869.²⁸ Obviously, her emotional and spiritual connection to the expedition was important enough to desire reunification with the group. Mary Snow Gates died February 9, 1891, in St. George, Utah.²⁹

Nancy Lampson Holbrook and Eunice Holbrook. Sisters-in-law by marriage to brothers Joseph and Chandler Holbrook, Nancy and Eunice traveled with their husbands to Missouri with Zion's Camp. These women shared many hardships on the expedition, including sickness, harsh weather conditions, and the care of small children.

Nancy Lampson Holbrook, born August 14, 1804, showed extreme concern when her husband, Joseph, began studying Mormonism in 1832. She was hesitant and even hostile to Joseph's curiosity. He remembered that "my wife became alarmed and thought I had better be at work than spending my time reading such deception."³⁰ She began staying away from

the house for long periods and listened to the opposing views of local ministers. In spite of these forces, "which kept her in much fear," Nancy eventually "became convinced that Mormonism was true."³¹ Nancy was baptized January 7, 1833, shortly after her husband's baptism. Joseph's brother and sister-in-law, Chandler and Eunice, chose to join the Church in the early spring of 1833. Chandler and Eunice, ages twenty-five and twenty-three, had been married two years earlier in the same community of Weathersfield, New York.

The two couples immediately felt much opposition to their religious choice from family and friends, but they remained loyal to the Church. In April 1834, Nancy and Joseph, with two baby girls in tow, and Chandler and Eunice, with one baby girl, left Weathersfield for Kirtland, Ohio, to join the Saints traveling to Missouri with Zion's Camp.

Along the way, the sisters served as helpers in the laundering chores of the camp. Heber C. Kimball recalled his experience:

My first attempt at washing my clothes took place at Salt River. My shirts being extremely dirty, I put them into a kettle of water and boiled them for about two hours, having observed that women who washed boiled their clothes, and I supposed by so doing they boiled out the dirt; I then took them and washed them, endeavoring to imitate a woman washing as near as I could. I rubbed the clothes with my knuckles instead of the palm of my hand, and rubbed the skin off so that my hands were very sore for several days. My attempts were vain in trying to get the dirt out . . . and finally gave it up, and wrung them and hung them out to dry. Having no flat irons to iron them, I took them to Sisters Hollbrook and Ripley to get them ironed. When they saw them they said I had not washed my clothes. I told them I had done my best, and although I had boiled them two hours before washing, and had washed them so faithfully that I had taken the skin off my knuckles, still I had not been successful in getting the dirt out. They laughed heartily, and informed me that by boiling before washing I had boiled the dirt into them.³²

Hopefully, the Zion's Camp experience gave the men a stronger appreciation for the toilsome domestic responsibilities of nineteenth-century women.

Both Nancy and Eunice contracted cholera during the epidemic. Joseph Holbrook described the outbreak: "About this time the cholera began to make its appearance in our camp and my wife was one of the first that was taken down with it but she recovered from it in a few days, being administered to by Brother Bugetts [Brother John Burkett] below Liberty."³³ Soon after, Eunice contracted the disease, but her suffering was more acute:

In the morning my brother's wife, Eunice, was very sick with cholera. We therefore thought it best to get some place as soon as possible so we removed to the stable and corn crib although it was raining. By the middle of the forenoon, my brother's wife was cramping with most violent spasms for life but Brother Cyrus Daniels and Carlos Granger took her into the house and nursed her with the greatest attention so that in a few days she had escaped the hands of the destroyer.³⁴

The two couples continued to reside in a “stable and corn crib” for ten weeks, until a small house was built.

Both Nancy and Eunice remained active and loyal to the Church, even in the midst of extreme persecutions in Missouri. Nancy “suffered much,” remembered her husband. In the early spring of 1839, when Mormons fled Missouri to Quincy, Illinois, Nancy carried her infant daughter and guided her other three young children across the Mississippi River. The families settled in Nauvoo, where Nancy died of cholera on July 16, 1842. Nancy’s suffering was exacerbated by continual hardships, illness, and exposure since she participated in Zion’s Camp in 1834. Nevertheless, through all of her difficulties, Nancy remained loyal to the movement that required so much personal sacrifice. Joseph Holbrook described his wife’s courage and endurance:

Thus I had in an unexpected moment been deprived of one of the best of wives and the best of mothers. She had stood with me in six troubles through the Missouri troubles with death with fortitude, all the attendant evils with sickness and her faith had always been firm and unshaken in the cause of the Lord in these last days without a murmur or a reflection. She had firm hope in a glorious resurrection for which she had obeyed the gospel and lived and spent her life, for we had lived together in the most perfect understanding for almost twelve years.³⁵

The Holbrook family members showed devotion to their cause and continued loyal to the Church throughout their lives. Joseph Holbrook and his second wife, Hannah, continued to Utah with Joseph and Nancy’s three surviving children, including Sarah Lucretia and Charlotte, who had traveled with Zion’s Camp in 1834. Nancy’s legacy lived on through her daughters; they remained faithful to Mormonism in Utah.

Eunice and Chandler Holbrook also continued west and settled in Utah. They attended the reunion of Zion’s Camp in 1864 and listed their residence as Millard County, Utah. Their daughter, Diana, who was only an infant when she traveled with her parents to Zion, attended the 1870 reunion of Zion’s Camp members, indicating the strength of the bonds that were formed with the group.³⁶

Betsy Parrish. Little is known about Betsy Parrish except for the circumstances surrounding her death. Betsy appears on all of the lists of Zion’s Camp members. She and her husband, Warren,³⁷ joined Joseph’s group somewhere in Ohio. On or about June 24, 1834, the group reached Rush Creek, about two and a half miles from Liberty, Missouri, and cholera overtook the camp. George A. Smith recalled that “Sister Parrish and several others were taken with the cholera.”³⁸ From June 24 through early July, cholera raged through the camp. Many in the group felt that it was a punishment from God for the sins of murmuring and discord that had occurred in Joseph’s detachment.

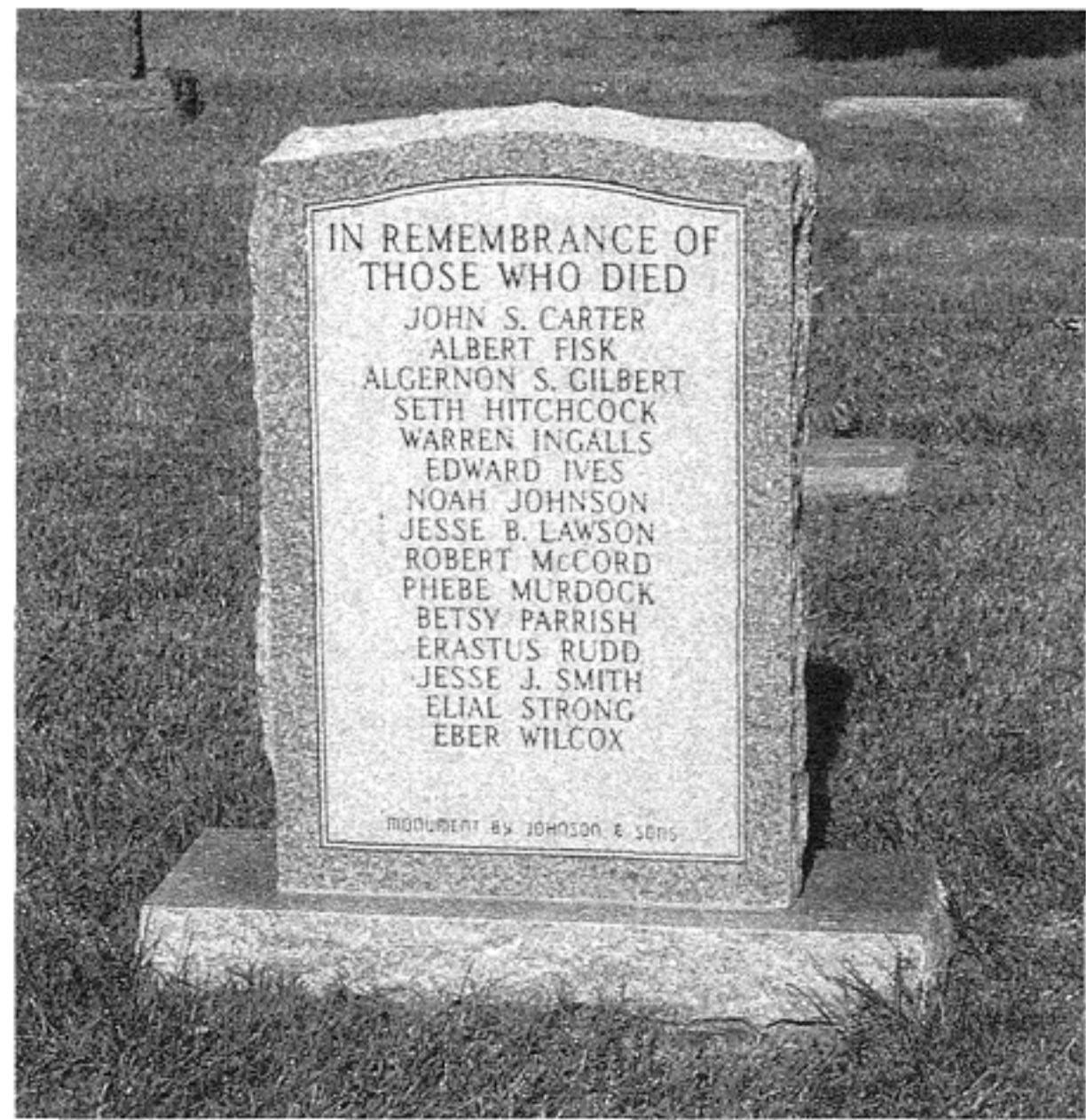
The cholera outbreak created a memorable impression in the minds of the camp members. Many diarists noted the circumstances of suffering and death with much sympathetic feeling. Cholera was very contagious and quickly caused violent spasms of vomiting. On June 24, Wilford Woodruff remembered that "our ears were saluted with cries and moanings and lamentations on every hand."³⁹ As a treatment for the disease, the victim was doused with cold water or dipped in a stream, then fed a concoction of "whiskey thickened with flour to the consistence of starch."⁴⁰ According to Woodruff, about sixty-eight members suffered from the malady. Of the women, at least Nancy Holbrook, Eunice Holbrook, and Betsy Parrish became ill. Betsy Parrish was the only female member of Zion's Camp who died.

Amasa Lyman adequately summarized the effect of watching his brothers and sister die:

There were some half dozen of the brethren stricken down, and all lying on the floor in a small apartment. This was a scene that can be more easily imagined than described, to see men stricken down in a moment, and in a short hour the ruddy glow of health displaced by the palor of death. To see the human form divine, that at the dawn of morning was stately and erect, in all the perfections of manly beauty, to see its perfections and beauty of form melt away in the death struggle of a few short hours.⁴¹

To Lyman, these were not just nameless, faceless deaths. He continued:

And to think the sufferers, who are they? The question reaches to and stirs the fountain of feeling within us for they are no strangers that are writhing at our feet, these are the forms of the loved, the faithful and the brave, with them we had labored—with them we had rejoiced together in the truth; they were endeared to us by the tenderest ties that bind heart to heart and soul to soul. . . . Ere I left, I gave a parting look, breathed a hasty prayer, and tore myself away from the scene of death.⁴²



Courtesy Alexander Baugh

Zion's Camp Marker. This monument honors the fifteen Saints who died of cholera at Rush Creek, Missouri, in June and July 1834. All but two (Algernon Sidney Gilbert and nine-year-old Phebe Murdock) had come to Missouri with Zion's Camp. Betsy Parrish was the only female member of Zion's Camp who died. The monument was erected by the Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation in 1997 at the Mound Grove Cemetery, Independence, Missouri, where remains unearthed in 1958 at Rush Creek were reburied. The obverse of the marker is shown on page 138.

Records of Betsy Parrish's death provided proof of the burial site of some cholera victims. In 1958 in Missouri, cattle on a farm at Rush Creek unearthed three skeletons there. Scientists from the University of Missouri at Columbia studied the remains and determined the age and gender of the individuals. One was a woman who had probably died "between 25 and 35 years old."⁴³ Because of the gender identification and the location of the remains, scientists identified them as belonging to members of Zion's Camp: "The bones are all good and with one of them being a woman it looks pretty authentic. It's quite likely those were the people because everything balances out."⁴⁴ This finding matched Joseph Smith's description of the 1834 burial: "As it was impossible to obtain coffins, the brethren rolled the corpses in blankets, carried them on a horse-sled about half a mile, buried them on the bank of a small stream, which empties into Rush Creek."⁴⁵

Hyrum Smith and Lyman Wight's Detachment

On assignment from the Prophet Joseph, Hyrum Smith and Lyman Wight traveled north to Michigan for more recruits. From Pontiac, Michigan, the group of twenty marched southeast and met Joseph's division in eastern Missouri. Elijah Fordham recorded the daily workings of this camp, including the prayers and religious services conducted by its leaders. This detachment seemed to run more smoothly than Joseph's group and had fewer conflicts than its larger counterpart. The leaders assigned specific responsibilities to each of the men; the three women assisted with laundering and cooking.⁴⁶ The camp took on the appearance of a small family unit, unlike Joseph's detachment, which had more of a military character with its smaller group divisions. The Michigan band also benefited greatly from the assistance of members along the route and never lacked for food. Fordham noted a relative scarcity of illness and tension in the camp, but they still endured suffering, often walking with bloody and blistered feet. The group included three women.

Aurelia Houghton. Louisa Aurelia Curtis Houghton was born January 12, 1819, in Canatee, Pennsylvania.⁴⁷ She and her husband, Osmon (also identified as Ornon, in various spellings), left Pontiac, Michigan, with other members of the Huron Branch traveling to Missouri. Osmon worked as a woodchopper and often gave the opening prayer for the camp, and Aurelia served in various capacities with the other women as a cook and laundress. The only documented case of discord within the group arose concerning the Houghtons. A spirit of conflict emerged because members of the branch felt that the couple did not carry their full workload. Fordham remembered that

as som of the brethren had thoughts that Bro. & Sister Hou[gh]ton had not done their duty, and we had cast reflections and hints, we were astonished at the consequences when we were informed of them by Bro. Smith. We saw the Evil, felt humble, and readily confessed to each other and to God and with uplifted hands covenanted to forget and forgive all that had passed and do so no more.⁴⁸

After this experience, no other occasions of conflict occurred in Hyrum's group, and the Houghtons returned to full fellowship with the group. Fordham celebrated that "truly the Lord is with us all things go smoothly and we are rejoicing." Aurelia became ill during the trek, as the group neared Quincy, Illinois in early June 1834.⁴⁹ Aurelia and Osmon continued with the Church to Nauvoo, where Aurelia died on March 10, 1845.⁵⁰

Sophronia Curtis. Sophronia joined Hyrum's group with her husband, Mecham, and his brother Lyman Curtis.⁵¹ James Bradley's *Zion's Camp* gives Sophronia's age as 24 and Mecham's age as 17 at the time of the expedition. Bradley also states that they died active in the Church, but gives no location of death.⁵² Another record suggests that Mecham died in 1887, but no mention is made of Sophronia.⁵³

Charlotte Alvord. Charlotte Alvord was born September 25, 1815, at Lockport, Niagara County, New York. A member of the branch at Pontiac, Michigan, in 1834, the eighteen-year-old was one of two or three single women who traveled to Missouri with Zion's Camp.

A misconception connected with Charlotte began in 1983, when Milton V. Backman listed some of the children in Hyrum's group as being "four sons of Charlotte Alvord."⁵⁴ This error stems from the grammatical nature of George A. Smith's and Elijah Fordham's lists of members. Charlotte's name appears sequentially last in the grouping of women: "Sisters Aurelia Houton, Sophronia Curtis, Charlotte Alvert and 4 Boys George Fordham Lyman Littlefield, David D. Dart, Josiah Littlefield."⁵⁵ Somehow the statement has been interpreted as "Charlotte Alvert and her four boys." In truth, the "4 Boys" are George Fordham, Lyman Littlefield, and Josiah Littlefield; David D. Dort was forty-one years old at the time of Zion's Camp. The "4 boys" are not some nameless sons of Charlotte. Besides misrepresenting Charlotte's marital status, this error also caused an overestimation of the number of children in the camp.

Charlotte was single during the trek, but her marital status soon changed, possibly as a result of her participation in Zion's Camp. She drew the attention of another member from the branch at Pontiac: Lyman Curtis, a twenty-two-year-old man traveling with his brother, Mecham, and sister-in-law, Sophronia. Whether the romance grew before, during, or after the expedition is unknown, but the couple was married either in late 1834 or February 1835 in Missouri.⁵⁶

Lyman and Charlotte Alvord Curtis had eleven children between 1835 and 1860. The couple followed the Saints through the Missouri and Nauvoo experiences. Together they received their temple endowments in Nauvoo on February 7, 1846. On the overland trek, Lyman left Charlotte and six children at Winter Quarters. He continued to the Great Salt Lake Valley with Brigham Young's advance company and was one of the first to enter the valley on July 22, 1847. He returned to Winter Quarters with President Young in the fall of 1847, and the family continued to Salt Lake together.

Charlotte Alvord Curtis established her home in Salt Lake City. As a polygamist, Lyman Curtis probably had various residences but listed his own permanent home as Pondtown, named after Salem Pond, in present-day Salem, Utah. They both attended the first reunion of Zion's Camp in Salt Lake City in 1864, but their names were listed separately as Lyman Curtis and Charlotte Alvord, as they had been listed on the original camp lists, before their marriage. Charlotte gave her residence in 1864 as the "19 Ward G. S. L. City" whereas Lyman's residence was "Pondtown, Utah."⁵⁷ Charlotte and Lyman attended the 1869 reunion, and Charlotte attended again in 1870 by herself, where she was finally listed as "Charlotte Curtis."⁵⁸ Charlotte died September 9, 1879, in Salt Lake City.

The Children of Zion's Camp

The number of Zion's Camp children is still debated. Interestingly, Joseph Holbrook gave no children's names in his list even though the two Holbrook couples had three daughters between them.

Joseph Smith's Detachment. Joseph and Nancy Holbrook had two daughters that accompanied the camp: Sarah Lucretia Holbrook was born January 21, 1832, in Weathersfield, New York, and Charlotte was born November 26, 1833. Neither Sarah, two years old at the time of Zion's Camp, nor Charlotte, six months, would have any recollection of the march. However, their association with the camp remained important all of their lives. When Charlotte died in Utah at age thirty-two, her father made a particular mention that she "went to Missouri with her father's family in Zion's Camp 1834."⁵⁹ Cousin to Sarah and Charlotte, Diana Holbrook was the daughter of Chandler and Eunice. Born October 27, 1833, she was only a few months old as her family traveled to Zion. Diana attended the Zion's Camp reunion of 1870, showing that despite being an infant during Zion's Camp, she felt a connection with the marchers.

John and Mary Chidester brought their two small children, John, age two, and Eunice, age one. Neither ever attended a reunion.⁶⁰

Ten-year-old Bradford Elliott accompanied his father, David. The only mention of Bradford is that he fired off a gun, which "went through a tent and lodged in the axle tree of a wagon." Charles C. Rich further recorded

that “two [unidentified] young men were playing with a pistol, it went off, when one was shot in the thigh, cut it some, [and] the bullet lodged in his shirt.”⁶¹ Bradford Elliott is often counted among the male adults on camp lists. He died in Salt Lake City in 1852.⁶²

Some lists include Sarah Pulsipher, who would have been nine years old in 1834. The *History of the Church* lists Sarah Pulsipher as the “daughter of Zera Pulsipher.”⁶³ Zera Pulsipher was not a member of the camp, so Sarah might have been traveling with another family.

An unnamed child appears on some lists: a daughter of Alvin Winegar. This seems unlikely, as Alvin was an unmarried eighteen-year-old traveling with his father, Samuel.⁶⁴

Hyrum Smith and Lyman Wight's Detachment. Like Bradford Elliott, two members of Hyrum's detachment could be considered children but are sometimes listed as adults: George Fordham, age nine or ten, and Lyman Littlefield, age thirteen or fourteen.⁶⁵ George Fordham traveled with his father, record keeper Elijah Fordham, as part of the Smith-Wight detachment. Lyman Littlefield and his brother Josiah (age unknown, but probably in his late teens) accompanied their father, Waldo, also with the Michigan group. George Fordham and Lyman Littlefield continued to Utah with the Church.⁶⁶

Zion's Camp had a great impact on the lives of these young men. Lyman Littlefield provided some understanding of this impact in his “Recollections,” written near the end of his life. He claimed to have been “thirteen years and six months” at the time of the march. He regretted that “he was not a man in stature so that he might participate more in the performance of camp duties, as was the privilege of the men.” More important than his physical contribution to the camp was the opportunity Littlefield had to see the Prophet. He recalled:

As the camp was making ready to depart I sat tired and brooding by the roadside. The Prophet was the busiest man of the camp; and yet when he saw me, he turned from the great press of other duties to say a word of comfort to a child. Placing his hand upon my head, he said, “Is there no place for you, my boy? If not, we must make one.” This circumstance made an impression on my mind which long lapse of time and cares of riper years have not effaced.⁶⁷

Littlefield's experience with Joseph Smith during Zion's Camp instilled in the young man a great loyalty to the Prophet. The same can be said for most of the people who worked closely with Joseph during those few weeks. The opportunity to hear Joseph's teachings firsthand was an irreplaceable process of promoting faith and allegiance. Any number of Zion's Camp participants could have echoed Littlefield's words of testimony:

I was a mere boy, between thirteen and fourteen years old, when I first met the Prophet. His appearance as a man won my reverence for him; but his conversation and public teaching—all attended by a power truly Godlike—established

me in the faith and knowledge of his prophetic mission which strengthened with the lapse of years until he sealed his testimony with his blood in the jail at Carthage in 1844.⁶⁸

The Zion's Camp experience contributed to Lyman Littlefield's conviction about Joseph's leadership.

Women and the Zion's Camp Experience

Much like the women of the Mormon Battalion and other military expeditions, the Zion's Camp women contributed in various ways to the overall character of the group and its success and helped prepare for later mass migrations to the West. The women helped with the traditional domestic duties of cooking and laundering and caring for children. They also provided a civilizing influence on the camp.

Men, women, and children all suffered from inclement weather, shortages of food and shelter, and difficulties of epidemic illness. Perhaps seventy people, or 35 percent of the camp, suffered from cholera, which then killed thirteen camp members. That a woman, Betsy Parrish, can be included among its martyrs is an important statement about the sacrifice that women were willing to make. Those that did sacrifice their lives were promised many eternal and spiritual blessings.

The unifying aspect of social interaction left a lasting impact on the Zion's Camp veterans. In spite of the difficulties, camp life ran smoothly much of the time. These people prayed together, sang together, and communed together. Responsibilities for overall camp productivity were shared equally, thus encouraging cooperation among members. Humor and socializing represented the lighter side of these interactions. The laughter, play, and mischief of young children and teenage boys must have had a cheering effect on the serious atmosphere surrounding the camp. Even romance and courtship were present—one can only suspect at what point Charlotte Alvord and Lyman Curtis began to notice one another. Although Zion's Camp was a pseudo-military expedition, it also had the makings of a mass familial migration with all of the social, spiritual and civilizing qualities associated with men, women, and children traveling together. The attendance at the reunions of 1864, 1869, and 1870 shows how important both male and female veterans considered the friendships they had made while marching to Missouri.

Even more important than the social unity of Zion's Camp was the spiritual unity. Much has been studied about the impact that the 1834 march had on creating a Church membership and leadership that was loyal, faithful, and devoted to Joseph Smith and the Church. Firsthand observations of Joseph Smith taught the members important leadership skills. As Lyman Littlefield explained, his witness of Joseph's sermons

“established me in the faith and knowledge of his prophetic mission.” Direct interaction created a strong tie among the early members and between the members and leaders.

The sisters and children of Zion's Camp had testimonies that were powerful and individual. The event that most adequately summarizes this faith building among the women is told by Joseph Holbrook.

After joining with Hyrum's group at the Salt River Branch in Missouri with the purpose of continuing to Jackson County, Joseph Smith anticipated possible violent altercations with Missouri mobbers. He wanted to protect the women and children and asked the men who had brought families to acquire cabins for them. They were to leave them there at Salt River until any military actions were concluded. Joseph Holbrook began to obey this counsel: “I provided a house for my family as directed and was about to leave my family as was the rest of the brethren who had wives with them.”⁶⁹ Either the women protested at this arrangement or the Prophet simply had a change of heart, for he then declared that “if the sisters were willing to under go a siege with the camp they could go along with it.”⁷⁰ Truly it was a revolutionary notion for the sisters to accompany the men into a possible military skirmish. The women said they would like to go and “they liked Brother Joseph better than before for the privilege he gave them of continuing in the camp.”⁷¹ This statement captures the important legacy of Zion's Camp on its women participants, as they gained powerful faith and lasting devotion to the Church.

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1. J. Karl Wood, *The Church, Its History and Mission* (Salt Lake City: LDS Department of Education, 1952), 331, quoted in James Bradley, *Zion's Camp: Prelude to the Civil War* (Salt Lake City: Publisher's Press, 1990), xvii.

2. Roger D. Launius, *Zion's Camp: Expedition to Missouri, 1834* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1984).

3. Bradley, *Zion's Camp*, 265.

4. Clark V. Johnson, review of Carl V. Larson and Shirley N. Maynes, *Women of the Mormon Battalion*, in *BYU Studies* 37 (fall 1997): 237.

5. See Craig K. Manscill, “‘Journal of the Branch of the Church of Christ in Pontiac, . . . 1834’: Hyrum Smith's Division of Zion's Camp,” in this issue of *BYU Studies*, 171.

6. Wilford Woodruff, "The History and Travels of Zion's Camp . . .," [1882], holograph, microfilm, 3-4, Archives Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives).

7. Andrew Jenson, *The Historical Record* (Salt Lake City: By the author, 1889), 8:1104.

8. According to James Bradley, there are seven lists of the members of Zion's Camp, provided by B. H. Roberts (1902 and 1947), Andrew Jenson (1889), Thomas Bullock (1864), the *Deseret News* (1864), Joseph Holbrook (1864), Solon Foster (copied by Thomas Colborn in 1879), and James Bradley (1988). Bradley, *Zion's Camp*, 263. An eighth list might be added: Roger Launius's reprinting of the list in Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith's *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*.

B. H. Roberts's list in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* (published in 1902 and 1947) is the most comprehensive and inclusive. It lists "Charlotte Alvord, Sophronia Curtis, Mary Snow Gates, Nancy Lambson Holbrook, Betsy Parrish, Ada Clements, Mary Chidester, Diana Drake, Eunice Holbrook, Mrs. Houghton, ——— Ripley." Other lists differ only slightly from this one. The most significant difference is Roberts's inclusion of Ada Clements. She and her husband, Albert, appear only on this list. Joseph Holbrook, in his history of 1864, includes neither Ada Clements nor Diana Drake but does include Jane Clark.

The participation of some of the women can be presumed from a comparison of the various lists. The identities of the women who traveled with Hyrum Smith and Lyman White are recorded in Elijah Fordham's journal: "Sisters Aurelia Houton [*sic*], Sophronia Curtis, [and] Charlotte Alvert [*sic*]." Elijah Fordham, "Journal of the Branch of the Church of Christ in Pontiac Michigan Territory," holograph, microfilm, [May 5, 1834], LDS Church Archives; Manscill, "Journal of 1834," 176. George A. Smith's report noted the arrival of Hyrum's detachment on Salt River and his list of camp participants included Charlotte Alvord [*sic*], Sophronia Curtis, and "Ornon Houghton and wife." George A. Smith, "History of George Albert Smith," holograph, 43, 44, 45, 49, LDS Church Archives.

The women who traveled with Joseph's detachment are less easily identified, Mary Snow Gates, Nancy Holbrook, Eunice Holbrook, Betsy Parrish, Mary Chidester, and Sarah Ripley all appeared on enough lists to be considered definite members of the camp. Those who are less certain are Diana Drake, Ada Clements, and Jane Clark.

9. The participant lists that were made after the Zion's Camp reunions are: Joseph Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," typescript, microfilm, 10, LDS Church Archives; Thomas Bullock, "Zion's Camp," Historical Notebook, 1864–1872, holograph, microfilm, 82, LDS Church Archives; "Festival of the Camp of Zion," *Deseret News [Weekly]*, October 12, 1864, 13; "The Zion's Camp Party," *Deseret News Semi-Weekly*, October 12, 1869, 2; "Party at the Social Hall," *Deseret News [Weekly]*, October 19, 1870, 1.

10. Susan Easton Black, comp., *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1848*, 50 vols. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989), 36:957, 958, 960, 962, 964, 965; Paul F. Smart, comp., *Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974, 1983), 190.

11. "Zion's Camp," Historical Notebook, 1864–1872, holograph, microfilm, 82, LDS Church Archives.

12. Jenson, *Historical Record*, 8:1104.

13. "The Zion's Camp Party," *Deseret News Semi-Weekly*, October 12, 1869, 2; and Bradley, *Zion's Camp*, 277–78.

14. Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," 10.
15. *History of the Church*, 2:185. Andrew Jenson states that the Clements desired to move to Missouri, so they "joined Zion's camp at Mansfield, Ohio, May 10, 1834, and became a member of Orson Hyde's company." Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Memorial Association, 1901–36), 4:688.
16. Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:688.
17. Lynne Watkins Jorgenson and BYU Studies Staff, "The Mantle of the Prophet Joseph Passes to Brother Brigham: A Collective Spiritual Witness," *BYU Studies* 36, no. 4 (1996–97): 133–34, 189–90.
18. "Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register," Family Land and Records Center, LDS Visitors' Center, Nauvoo, Illinois.
19. Mina Blain Watson, "The Lonely Trail," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958–77), 3:111.
20. *History of the Church*, 2:185, and AncestralFile.
21. "Festival of the Camp of Zion," *Deseret News [Weekly]*, October 12, 1864, 13; Bradley, *Zion's Camp*, 276.
22. Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), 11.
23. Jacob Gates recorded that on April 11, 1834, he departed Vermont "with my young Wife for the land of Zion in fulfillment of a Revelation given Feb. 24, 1834 in regard to the redemption of Zion." Jacob Gates, "Items of History of the Life and Labors of Jacob Gates," holograph, microfilm, 1, Jacob Gates Collection, LDS Church Archives.
24. Gates, "Items of History," 1.
25. Jacob Gates, Obituary of Mary Snow Gates, February 11, 1891, typescript, microfilm, Jacob Gates Collection, LDS Church Archives.
26. Larson, *Erastus Snow*, 178.
27. Jacob Gates to Erastus Snow, May 15, 1885, typescript, microfilm, 1, Jacob Gates Collection, LDS Church Archives.
28. "Festival of the Camp of Zion," 13; "The Zion's Camp Party," 2.
29. Larson, *Erastus Snow*, 734.
30. Joseph Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," typescript, microfilm, 10, LDS Church Archives.
31. Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," 11, 12.
32. Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball: An Apostle, The Father and Founder of the British Mission* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967), 50.
33. Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," 17.
34. Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," 17–18.
35. Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," 28.
36. "Party at the Social Hall," *Deseret News [Weekly]*, October 19, 1870, 1.
37. After Betsy's death, Warren married Martha H. Raymond on December 3, 1835, Geauga County, Ohio. Milton V. Backman Jr., comp., *A Profile of Latter-day Saints of Kirtland, Ohio, and Members of Zion's Camp, 1830–1839: Vital Statistics and Sources* (Provo, Utah: n.p., 1983). Warren Parrish became the personal secretary to Joseph Smith for a season. He eventually left the Church. Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 219–20, 287.
38. Smith, "History of George Albert Smith," June 24, 1839.

39. Woodruff, "History of Zion's Camp," 76.
 40. Woodruff, "History of Zion's Camp," 86–87.
 41. Journal History of the Church, June 25, 1834, LDS Church Library, Salt Lake City, Utah; microfilm copy available at Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
 42. Journal History of the Church, June 25, 1834.
 43. F. G. Spiers, quoted in *Kansas City Times*, January 17, 1959. A copy of the newspaper clipping is appended to a letter from Parley Rhead Neeley to Leonard J. Arrington, July 19, 1972, LDS Church Archives.
 44. J. Mette Shippe, quoted in newspaper article "Clay County Skeletons Were Mormon 'Army'" that is appended to a letter from Parley Rhead Neeley to Leonard J. Arrington, July 19, 1972, LDS Church Archives. Shippe was a University of Missouri archaeologist-in-residence in Clay County.
- The remains were reburied at the Mound Grove Cemetery, Independence, Missouri, which belonged to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation dedicated a monument to the cholera victims at the Mound Grove Cemetery on October 11, 1997. See "Zion's Camp Monument," *Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation Newsletter* (summer 1997): 1–3; "Zion's Camp Cholera Victims Monument Dedication," *Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation Newsletter* (fall 1997): 1–6; "Monument Commemorates Zion's Camp Victims," *Saints Herald* 144, no. 11 (1997): 33.
45. Journal History of the Church, June 26, 1834.
 46. Fordham, "Journal," May 26, 1834; Manscill, "'Journal of 1834,'" 180.
 47. AncestralFile.
 48. Fordham, "Journal," May 13, 1834; Manscill, "'Journal of 1834,'" 178.
 49. Fordham, "Journal," May 18 and June 3–5, 1834; Manscill, "'Journal of 1834,'" 179, 181.
 50. Black, *Membership of the Church, 1830–1848*, 23:996–97.
 51. In addition to being listed in Elijah Fordham's journal, Sophronia and Mecham Curtis are listed in Thomas Colborn, "Muster Roll of Members of Zion's Camp . . . 1879," LDS Church Archives.
 52. Bradley, *Zion's Camp*, xxiv.
 53. Temple Index Bureau, cited in Black, *Membership of the Church, 1830–48*, 12:747.
 54. Backman, *Heavens Resound*, 380. Roger Launius repeated this error in *Zion's Camp*: "One widow, Charlotte Alvord, with her four boys joined the camp for the purpose of settling in Zion." Launius, *Zion's Camp*, 94. James Bradley also made no attempt to correct or investigate this error, stating that "Whether both [Jane Clark and Charlotte Alvord] were married has not been determined." Further, "Charlotte Alvord is listed by Milton Backman as having four sons whose names are not included." Bradley, *Zion's Camp*, 265.
 55. Fordham, "Journal," May 5, 1834; Manscill, "'Journal of 1834,'" 176.
 56. Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:689.
 57. "Festival of the Camp of Zion," 13; "Zion's Camp," Historical Notebook, 1864–1872, 70, 72.
 58. "Party at the Social Hall," 1; Bradley, *Zion's Camp*, 278.
 59. Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," 89.
 60. Some researchers have mistakenly assigned the Chidester children to Hyrum's division while they assign the parents to Joseph's division.
 61. Charles C. Rich, "Journal of Travel to Redeem Zion," holograph, June 23, 1834, LDS Church Archives.

62. Bradley, *Zion's Camp*, xxv.

63. *History of the Church*, 2:185.

64. *History of the Church*, 2:185.

65. Lyman Littlefield lists his birthday as November 22, 1819, in his book *Reminiscences* but later estimates his age during Zion's Camp as thirteen or fourteen years old in another source. Lyman O. Littlefield, *Reminiscences of Latter-day Saints* (Logan, Utah: Utah Journal Co., Printers, 1888), 26.

66. Bradley, *Zion's Camp*, xix, "Statistics."

67. George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 344.

68. Lyman Littlefield, "Recollections," July 27, 1892, 65, Family Land and Records Center, LDS Visitors' Center, Nauvoo, Illinois.

69. Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," 16.

70. Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," 16.

71. Holbrook, "History of Joseph Holbrook," 16.