

PEOPLE TO KNOW

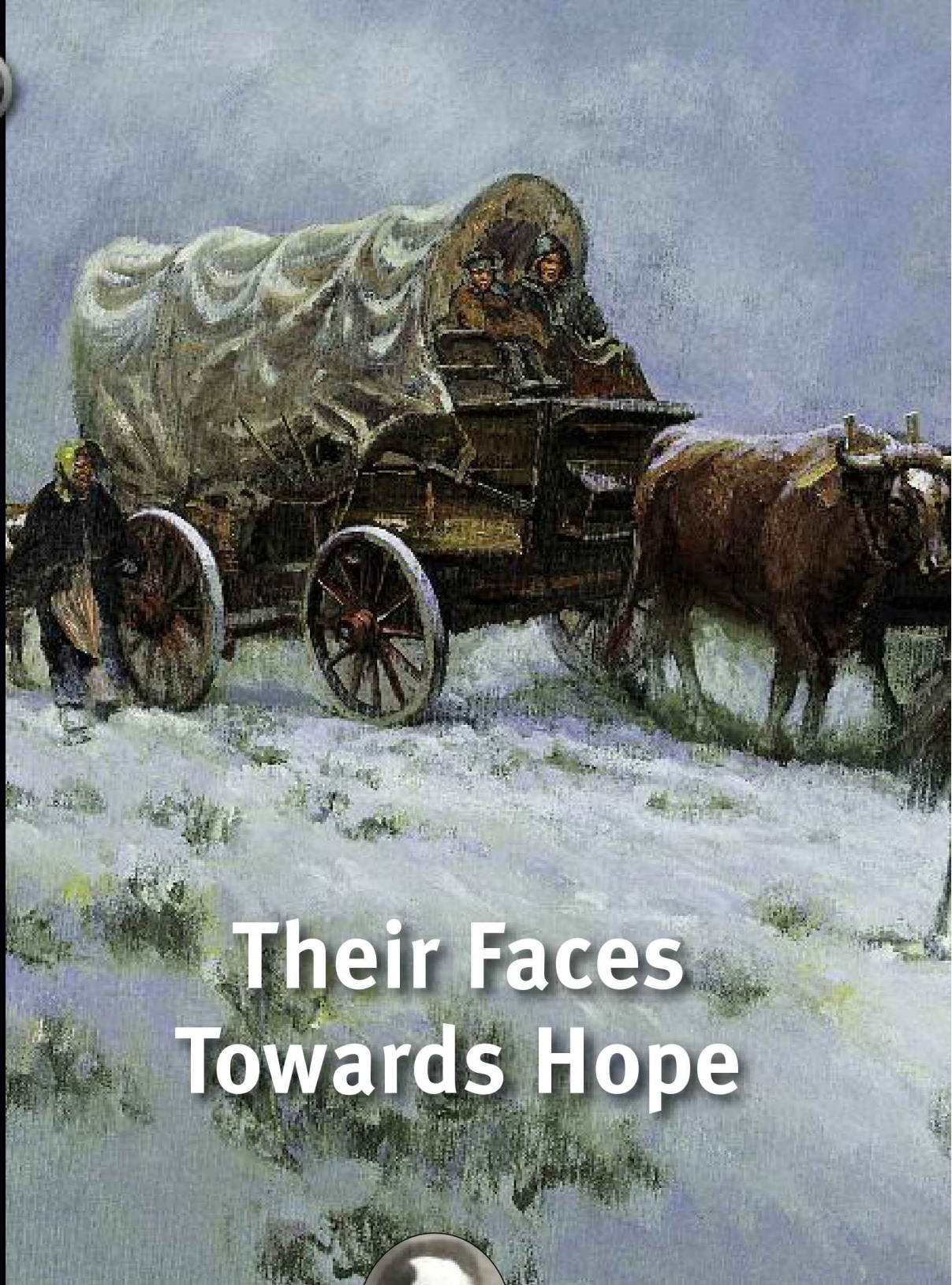
Lilburn Boggs
Samuel Brannon
Thomas Bullock
William Clayton
Oscar Crosby
Green Flake
Appleton Harmon
Jane Manning James
Hark Lay
Orson Pratt
Patty Sessions
Joseph Smith
Eliza R. Snow
Erastus Snow
Brigham Young

WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

colonize
communal
convert
exodus
extermination
libel
martyr
persecute
polygamy
revival

Over and over again, the Mormons abandoned their homes and moved to start over in a new place. If they had a choice, they traveled in the spring or summer. If they were forced to leave, they forged through winter snow.

(Painting by Glen Hopkinson)



Their Faces Towards Hope



1830
Joseph Smith organizes the Church of Christ in New York.

1838
Governor Boggs issues the "Extermination Order."

1830

1832

1834

1836

1838

1831-1838

Most Mormons live in Ohio and Missouri.



Digitized by Atlantic Ocean

Timeline of Events

Chapter

SETTING THE STAGE

While other people were passing over the Great Basin for more attractive lands in California and Oregon, a large group of people fleeing religious persecution settled the Utah region. They believed they would be safe to live their unique way of life in the desert land next to the shimmering salty lake.

The members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were well prepared for their role as settlers of the West. They had practice in moving large groups of people. They had built cities and governed themselves before. They had strong leadership and were united in their goals. Their first migration in 1847 was a great success.



1840

1842

1844

1846

1847

July 22 A few men of the advance party explore the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

July 24 Brigham Young and the rest of the advance party enter the valley.

1839

Mormons move across the Mississippi River into Illinois and begin building a city.

1846

Mormons leave Illinois and gather in Iowa and Nebraska for the winter.

Sam Brannon takes over 200 Mormons to California by ship.

1848

Thousands of other pioneers travel from Nebraska to Utah.

A Journey for Religious Freedom

Settlement for religious reasons was an American tradition. The Pilgrims and the Puritans had come to this land to practice their religion away from the **persecutions** in Europe. In the East, Protestants and Catholics had founded colonies on religious principles. Religious freedom and tolerance are part of the American ideal. Even so, many people then, as now, were often not tolerant of the beliefs of others.

During a time called the Great Awakening, which lasted from 1820 to 1840, thousands of people in the East were caught up in a religious **revival**. The Smith family in New York was part of this group.

The Kirtland, Ohio, temple was built despite the Mormons' extreme poverty. One man sold his 2,000-acre farm in New York to provide \$3,000 to buy supplies. All the men worked on the two-story stone temple. Women donated precious china and glassware to be crushed and mixed with plaster to make the outside walls glisten in the sun.



Joseph Smith was the first leader of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Beginnings

Many people believe the LDS, or Mormon, Church began in Utah, but it really started in New York. At first, "Mormon" was a nickname given by their enemies to people who gathered around Joseph Smith, their leader, in the early 1830s. They were called Mormons because Smith said he had translated the Book of Mormon from gold plates of ancient American writing he had found buried in a hill near his home.

Smith organized a church he called the Church of Christ. Later, he changed the name to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Today the church is often nicknamed the "LDS Church" or the "Mormon Church." The members are called "LDS" or "Mormons." The early members of the church often referred to themselves as "Saints."

Why were people willing to follow Joseph Smith? He said he had received a vision from God at age fourteen. Over a period of years he told of visits from other heavenly beings who instructed him. Smith wanted the followers of the new religion to join together in "a gathering place," or "Zion." Zion was to be a place where people would live together in peace and purity.

Hundreds of **converts**—men, women, and children—came to join the gathering. The converts were often tormented. Men and boys threw stones at them during the baptisms in the rivers, beat up Joseph Smith, and tried to steal the gold plates from him.

Moving from Place to Place

It was clear the LDS people needed to leave New York. The first gathering place was in Kirtland, Ohio. Within the same year, many gathered in Missouri and started once again to clear land, plant farms, and build homes. In the meantime, hundreds of converts joined the Mormons as a result of missionary efforts to other states, Canada, and Great Britain.



Another Gathering Place

The people in Missouri didn't like so many people moving in, especially outsiders of a "strange new religion" who did not believe in slavery. The Mormons kept coming. They started new communities in several counties. Finally, as the years went on, the situation got so bad, with accusations on both sides, that Missouri's Governor Boggs gave an **extermination** order. He said all the Mormons must leave or be killed. Mobs began attacking Mormon settlers, beating and killing some and burning homes. Smith and other leaders were arrested and taken to jail.

Finally, several thousand men, women, and children left Missouri during the winter. They traveled in wagons or on foot across the snow to Illinois.

Mobs forced the Mormons to leave their homes in Missouri. What do you see in this painting by C.C.A. Christensen?

What do you think?

Freedom of religion is guaranteed in the Bill of Rights—the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Do you think the LDS people should have been allowed this freedom? Why or why not?

“I left our house and home, and almost everything that we possessed excepting our little children, and took my journey out of the State of Missouri.”

—Emma Smith,
wife of Joseph Smith

Linking the Past to the Present

The “extermination order” that forced Mormons from Missouri was not officially ended until 1976, when the governor of Missouri apologized for the actions of Governor Boggs. Then, in 2001, the new governor of Missouri traveled to Utah to apologize for his state's actions back in 1838.

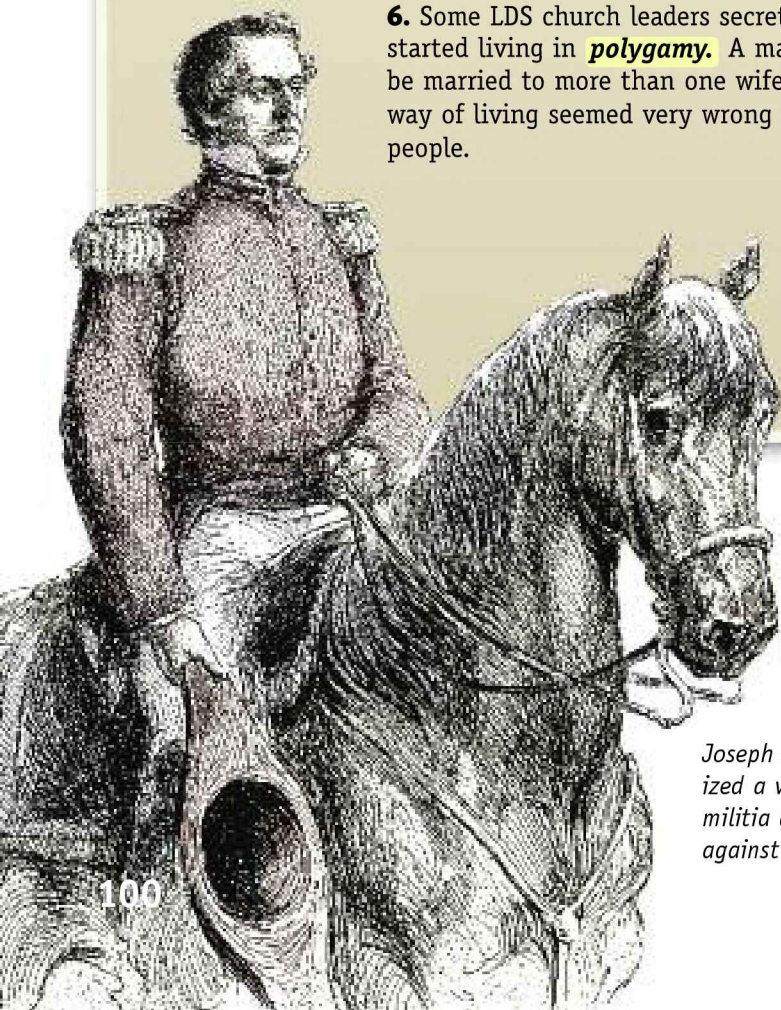


Misunderstanding and Conflict

Why were there so many problems between the LDS people and their neighbors? The differences were mostly about religion, politics, and economics. People felt very strongly about all of these issues.

1. The Mormons said their church was God's only true church. They accepted Joseph Smith as a modern prophet who had talked to God and had translated the Book of Mormon as scripture from ancient gold plates. This upset people of other religions.
2. The LDS belief in a gathering place meant thousands of new settlers moved into a region. They often outnumbered their neighbors.
3. In elections, all of the Mormons usually voted as a block for the same people. Their neighbors were worried that Mormons could take control of state and local politics.
4. The Mormons in Ohio at first lived a **communal** economic lifestyle, which meant everyone gave what they had to the church for the good of the group. This gave church leaders a lot of power.
5. In Missouri, slavery was an important issue. Many of the Mormons were from England and the northern states. They were against slavery. Missouri settlers, however, were mainly from southern states. They had grown up with the idea that slavery was necessary and acceptable.

6. Some LDS church leaders secretly started living in **polygamy**. A man might be married to more than one wife. That way of living seemed very wrong to other people.



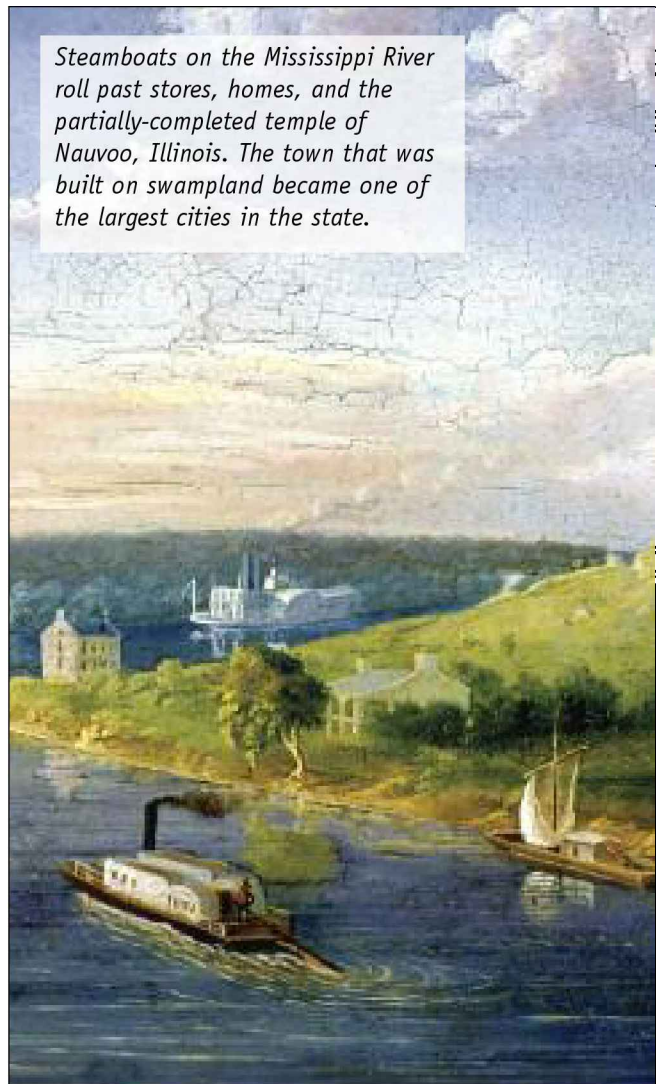
Joseph Smith organized a volunteer militia as a protection against persecution.

Nauvoo, Illinois

As the Mormons fled Missouri, they found refuge in the small community of Quincy, Illinois, across the Mississippi River. The people of Quincy felt sorry for the cold and hungry group and took them into their own homes to care for them. In the spring, the group gathered again on some swampland farther north along river. At once, many started getting deathly sick. Others died. It was all the well could do to take care of the sick. Today, we know they got malaria from swamp mosquitoes.

As many men as could get up off their beds drained the swamps, built homes, and planted crops. The people called the new town Nauvoo. Meanwhile, missionaries continued to preach to people in the states and overseas, and converts continued to come. For a time, Nauvoo was the largest city in Illinois.

Steamboats on the Mississippi River roll past stores, homes, and the partially-completed temple of Nauvoo, Illinois. The town that was built on swampland became one of the largest cities in the state.



The people lived in peace in Nauvoo for several years. Then, as in other places, settlers in nearby towns grew uncomfortable with the large number of Mormons living nearby. There were problems within the city, too. Men who disagreed with Joseph Smith left the church. A group of them started a newspaper called the *Nauvoo Expositor*. They printed stories about young girls being taken against their will to be polygamous wives of Joseph Smith. They printed what Joseph Smith said were other lies about him.

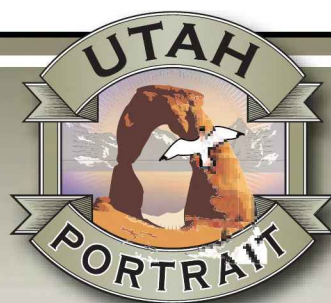
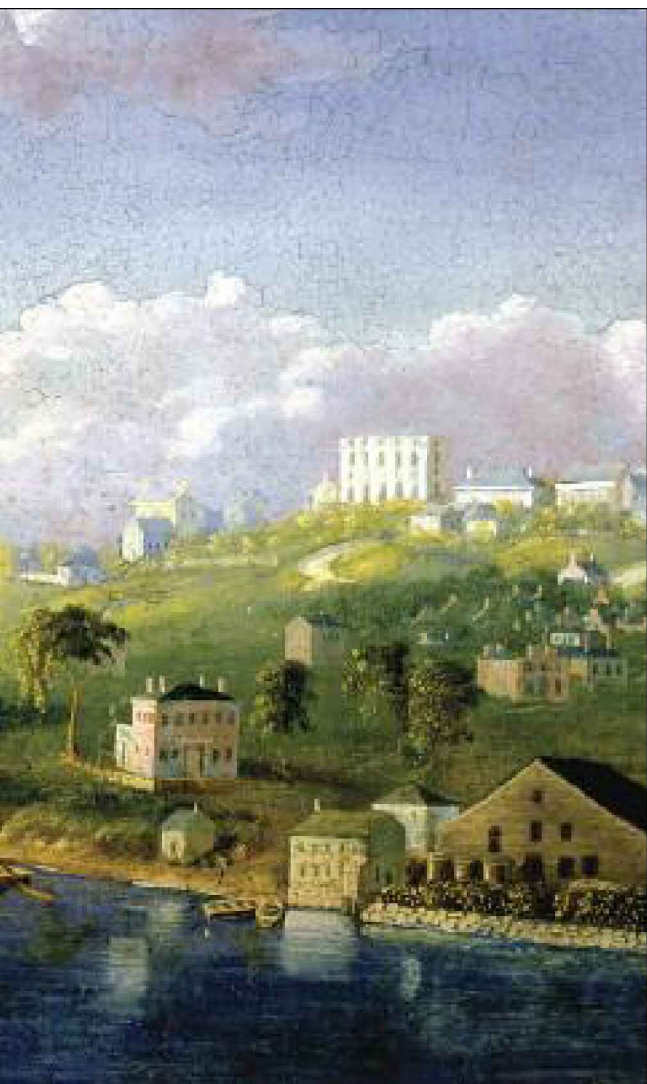
The angry city council met and decided the paper was guilty of *libel*, (maliciously reporting untruths to cause damage to a person or group) and asked Smith, as mayor of Nauvoo, to order the destruction of the press. That night, the press was thrown in the street, and all the papers in the building were burned. In

nearby towns, people accused the Mormons of going against America's freedom of the press.

Things got worse. Angry mobs of men from nearby towns burned haystacks and homes. Joseph Smith and others were arrested but promised protection by Governor Ford. The men were taken on horseback to jail in the nearby town of Carthage. The next evening, a mob of angry men, their faces blackened with gunpowder, attacked the prison and shot and killed Joseph and his brother, Hyrum. Each man left a wife and four children. The Mormons were greatly saddened by the deaths. To them, the men were *martyrs*, unjustly killed for their religion.

“ The news flew like wildfire through the house. The crying and agony . . . and the anguish and sorrow that were felt . . . will never be forgotten by those who were called to pass through it. ”

— Teenage daughter of Mary and Hyrum Smith

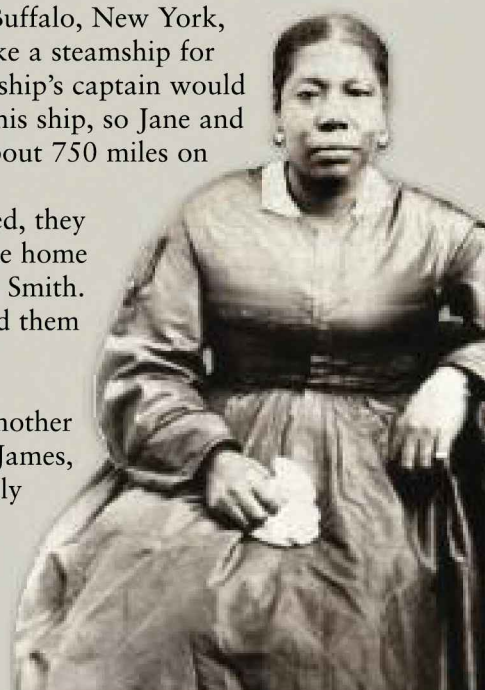


Jane Manning James

1820–1908

Jane Manning was born a free black in Connecticut. Like other converts, Jane Manning wanted to gather with the Mormons. With a company of other Mormons, she left her home with her young son, mother, brothers, and sisters and made her way to Nauvoo in 1843. When they reached Buffalo, New York, the group tried to take a steamship for part of the trip. The ship's captain would not allow blacks on his ship, so Jane and her family walked about 750 miles on foot to Nauvoo.

When they arrived, they made their way to the home of Joseph and Emma Smith. The Smiths welcomed them and helped each find employment. Jane eventually married another black convert, Isaac James, in Nauvoo. The family traveled with other pioneers to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847.





This painting shows the forced exodus of Mormons from Nauvoo, the city they built on the winding Mississippi river. How did the freezing weather prove to be an advantage?

*An **exodus** is the departure or emigration of a large group of people.*

Exodus from Illinois

Once again, the people were forced by threats of mob violence to leave their homes. About 12,000 people were living in the city, and another 2,000 to 3,000 Mormons lived in nearby towns. To move that many women, men, and children in the middle of winter seemed like an impossible task. Brigham Young, the new leader after the death of Joseph Smith, carefully planned to lead the people out of Illinois in the spring. He directed them to make strong wagons and buy extra teams of animals. They were to start preparing extra food and gather tools, seeds, and other supplies for the long journey.

Young and other church leaders studied about the West. They read Fremont's Report and Hastings' Guide. They learned about irrigation methods they would need in the desert lands of the

Great Basin. They sent men to check out several places where the Mormons might settle. At the time, the Great Basin was ruled by Mexico. If they traveled there, they would be leaving the United States.

In the meantime, mobs started burning homes and fields on Mormon farms outside of Nauvoo. More threats came. Young decided the people should not wait for spring, but leave sooner, even in the middle of winter. Would they be ready?

In February, the Shumway family was the first to arrive at the Nauvoo ferry crossing. As they waited in the cold, the oxen pulled their wagon onto a flat-bottomed ferryboat and began to cross the Mississippi River. Others followed.

Later in the month the river froze solid, and the people were able to walk across it—oxen, wagons, and all—for several weeks until the ice melted. About

Brigham Young • 1801–1877

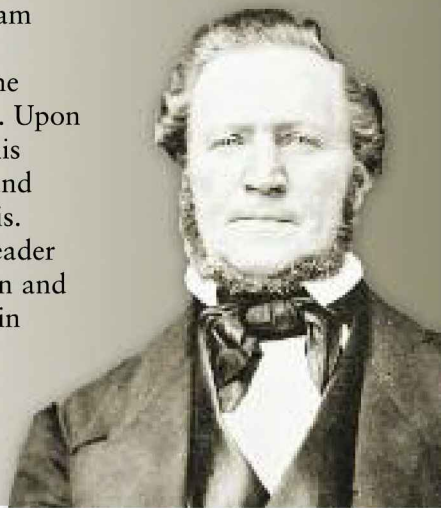
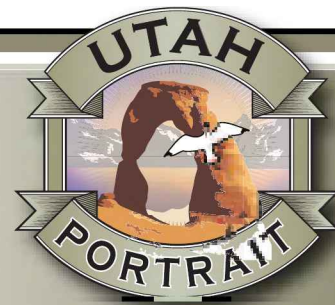
Brigham Young was born in Vermont to a strict Methodist family. The family moved to western New York State. They were very poor—once Brigham was so hungry he killed a robin for food. Except for a few days as a young boy, Brigham Young did not attend school.

Brigham's mother died when he was fourteen years old, and soon he was on his own. He helped his father farm and later became a fine craftsman, making beautiful furniture and building many homes. He married Mariam Angeline Works, and the couple had two daughters.

Young was introduced to the Book of Mormon and the leaders of the church. He converted to Mormonism and went on a mission to Canada. Upon his return, tragedy struck the family, and his young wife died. Leaving his home with many of the other Mormons, he married Mary Ann Angell and followed Joseph Smith to gathering places in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois.

At the time of Joseph Smith's death, Brigham Young was a valued leader in the LDS Church. He led the Mormons from Illinois to the Great Basin and established more than 300 settlements in the western United States and in Canada and Mexico.

Many historians recognize Brigham Young as the greatest town-builder and **colonizer** in western U.S. history. One historian called him "the most commanding single figure" of the American West.



3,000 Mormons and 500 wagons left that winter and camped across the river in Iowa. Others stayed behind in Nauvoo, trying to get the supplies they needed or waiting for ill family members to get well. A large group left in the spring and others followed that summer. The last group left Nauvoo in September. Some, including Joseph Smith's mother, brothers, wife, and children, stayed in Nauvoo and never moved west.

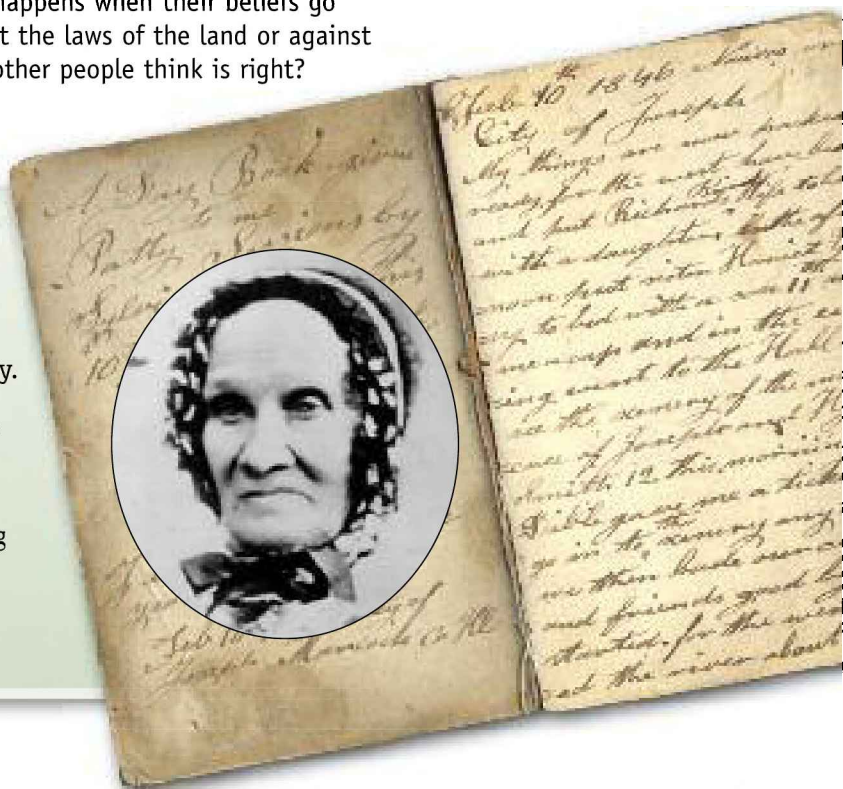
What do you think?

- Can you think of groups today who want to be left alone to live their beliefs?
- What happens when their beliefs go against the laws of the land or against what other people think is right?

Patty Sessions' Diary

Patty Sessions was a midwife in Nauvoo. Then she delivered babies along the pioneer trail. See how much of her handwriting you can read from the diary.

I am now fifty-one years old. February 10, 1846 . . . My things are now packed ready for the west, have been and put Richards wife to bed with a daughter. In the afternoon put sister Harriet Young to bed with a son. 11th made me a cap, and in the evening went to the Hall to see the scene of the massacre of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. February 12 . . . started for the west . . . February 14 This morning it snows.





The Mormons built a temporary community at a place in Nebraska they called Winter Quarters. It was a place of much suffering from cold, disease, and starvation. Why do you think conditions were so hard there?

Moving West— A Difficult Task

Different groups of Mormon pioneers traveled across Iowa that winter, spring, and summer. They followed an old road and American Indian trails. The trek in the winter was long, cold, and miserable. Children cried, babies were born in wagons, and the sick and old had to be helped along the trail. Everyone missed the comfortable homes left behind in Nauvoo.

Sometimes the people stopped near settlements so the men could work in towns to get food. In a few places the

Go West by Sea with Sam Brannon

Ten people died on the long trip, but two babies were born. One baby was named Atlantic and the other Pacific.

While the Mormons in Illinois were preparing to go west by land, other Mormons who were still living in the East wanted to join the migration. About 70 men, 68 women, and 100 children left New York City on the ship *Brooklyn* under the direction of Samuel Brannon. It was a long trip. They sailed around the tip of South America, up the west coast, and on to the Hawaiian Islands. The group got supplies and spent ten days on land. It was a paradise compared to life on the ship, and many did not want to leave.

In July of 1846, after almost six months of traveling, the ship landed at the little Mexican village of Yerba Buena. It later became the city of San Francisco, California. When the ship docked, the people learned that the United States and Mexico were at war. California had been taken by American troops.

The people scrambled to find places to live. Brannon traveled east to meet Brigham Young, who was still heading towards Utah. Brannon tried to convince Young to settle with him in California, but Young instructed Brannon to have his group move to the Great Basin and join with the rest of the Mormons. Angry, Brannon returned to California. Most of his group left and moved to Utah. A few, however, including Brannon, stayed in California and started a Mormon settlement there.



travelers made their own new communities. Some of the people stayed, and others moved on. Brigham Young led a large group of the pioneers to the Missouri River. In September they established a large community of log cabins across the river in Nebraska. They called the place Winter Quarters.

By spring, there were over a thousand cabins and sod homes in Winter Quarters. However, life in Winter Quarters was no reward for the long trip from Illinois. There was much disease and cold and not enough food and warm clothes. Many people died. The rest were anxious to move west.

The Mormon Battalion

In 1846 Mexico still owned much of western North America, including today's Utah. During the Mexican-American War, the president of the United States declared war on Mexico and sent troops to fight along the borders. The U.S. Army saw the Mormons, then camped in Iowa, as a group who could provide soldiers. A request for soldiers helped the pioneers because the soldiers' pay would go a long way in paying for the wagons, oxen, food, and other supplies the families needed for the trip west.

Over 500 Mormon men volunteered to join the battalion, even though they would have to leave their families behind.

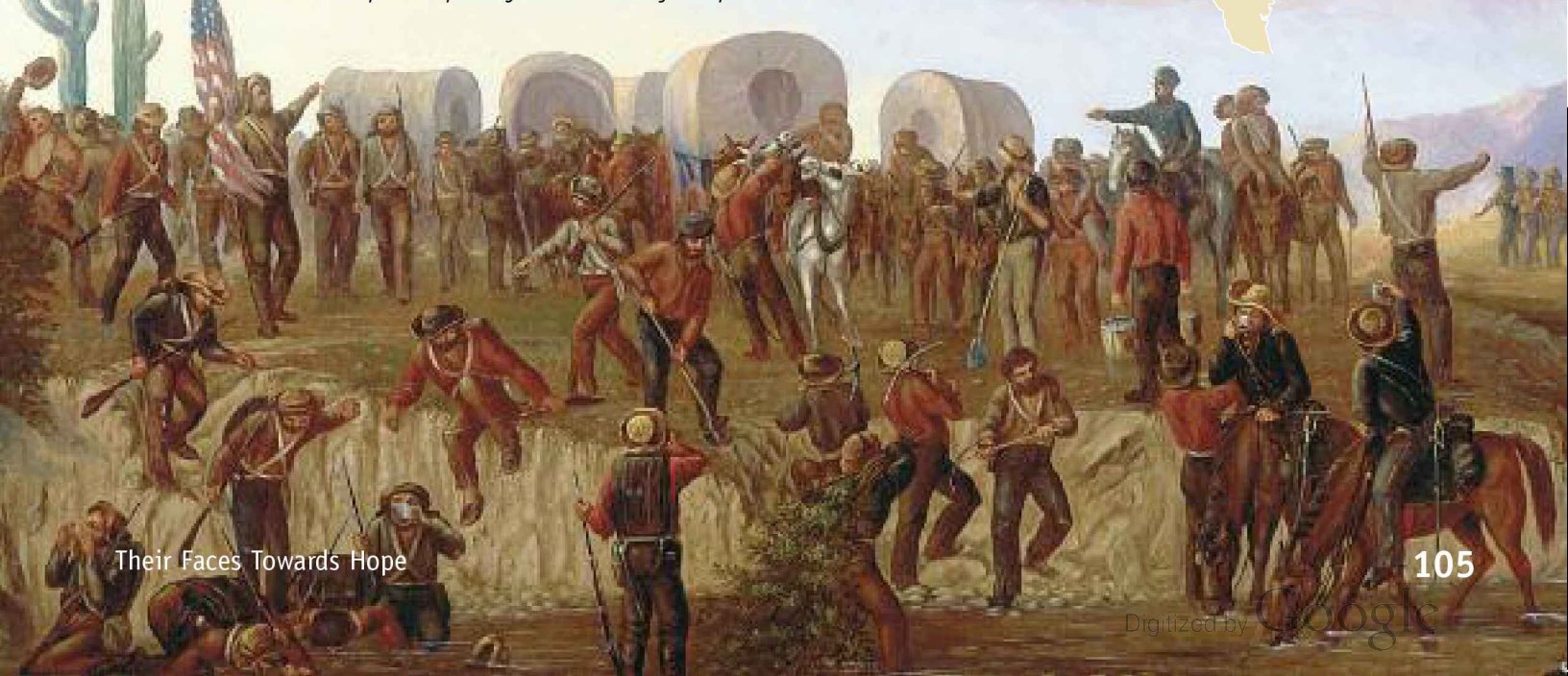
Some of their wives were in despair about how they would move to the Great Basin without the men. About thirty-five women, in fact, went with the soldiers for part of the trip, taking forty-two children along. The women cooked and did laundry for the men. Most of the women, all of the children, and some of the men who were sick were later asked to leave.

The soldiers never fought in any battles because the war ended before they could arrive in Mexico. They were assigned to protect California. When their duty was over, some reenlisted in the army. Some joined Sam Brannon's group in San Francisco. Some of the men were involved in the discovery of gold at Sutter's Fort. You will read more about this in Chapter 7. Later, most of the soldiers joined their families in the Salt Lake Valley.

Upon arriving in San Diego, Lt. Colonel Philip Cooke said the battalion "exhibited some high and essential qualities of veterans."



The Mormon Battalion built a wagon road from Santa Fe to San Diego. It was later used by pioneers and miners headed to California. How does the picture portray the climate of the place?



Their Faces Towards Hope

The Advance Pioneer Company

In the early spring of 1847, Brigham Young led a small company across the prairies of what are now called Nebraska and Wyoming, over the mountains, and into the dry region of the Great Basin. They realized that the distance from Iowa to the Salt Lake Valley would be too long for everyone to complete the journey in one summer. The "Pioneer Company," as Young called it, would go first and fast to prepare the way for thousands of other Latter-day Saints who would soon follow.

The company improved the trail by clearing trees and rocks from the path and marked the trail. They also wrote guides to help people know where they could find campsites with fresh water, fuel, and places to feed the animals.

The advance company was mostly men. However, there were three women, two young boys six and seven years old, and teenage boys. Two or three of the group were not Mormons. There were

also three black men who were called "servants." They were actually slaves. Their names were Green Flake, Oscar Crosby, and Hark Lay.

Official Diary

Thomas Bullock's diary was the official record of the advance pioneer company. His journal listed the names of each member. He also noted items and animals: "1 cannon, a boat, 71 wagons, 93 horses, 66 oxen, 52 mules, 19 cows, and 17 dogs."

Friday, 30 April 1847

Attended to cattle, hitched up & started . . . traveling over an uneven Prairie & with little grass on it. . . a very Strong North Wind blowing, & being dark, caused the Camp to halt for the night at 6 p.m. under small Bluff without either Wood or Water. . . President Young gave liberty for the brethren to have a dance & enjoy themselves, as they had neither wood to warm, nor good water to drink.



Green Flake • 1828–1903

At age ten, Green, born into slavery in the South, had been given as a birthday present to James Flake. James Flake was a wealthy Mississippi planter who later converted to the LDS Church. Young James was baptized in the Mississippi River.

The Flake family moved to Nauvoo, Illinois. When the Mormons left Nauvoo, the Flakes were with them. After Brigham Young announced the trip of the advance pioneer company, Flake sent sixteen-year-old Green with supplies to assist the group. He was also directed to build a home for the Flake family in the Great Basin and have it ready for when they came with a later group. Green's grandson later said it was Green Flake who first drove Brigham Young into the valley.

Green later traveled back east to help more pioneers come to the valley. He married Martha Crosby, also a slave of Mormon pioneers. Green Flake, his wife Martha, and their children, Lucinda and Abe, farmed their own property south of Salt Lake City and also were paid to work for others. At some point after the death of James Flake, Green was freed.



River Crossings

It could take as many as two days to get all the wagons and animals across a river. The longest delay of the entire trek was when the group crossed the wide North Platte River, swollen by spring rains. The men made log rafts and took their own wagons over. Then they started a booming business, charging a small fee for ferrying other companies going to Oregon across the river. Five days were spent at the river. When the people were safely over, nine men stayed to operate the profitable ferry and help future travelers.

The Rocky Mountains at Last

The advanced company finally reached and crossed the Sweetwater River in Wyoming and then began to travel through the Rocky Mountains. They crossed the Continental Divide, a high ridge of land where rivers begin to flow west instead of east. They took several days to cross the Green River. Once on the opposite shore, they were in what was loosely defined as "California Territory." John Taylor, another church leader, is credited for writing this song about the place:

The Upper California

*The upper California,
Oh that's the land for me!
It lies between the mountains
And the great Pacific Sea.*

*The Saints can be supported there,
And taste the sweets of liberty.
In upper California,
Oh that's the land for me!*



Continuing their long march, the advanced company finally arrived at Fort Bridger, Wyoming, in early July. They remained two days to rest, repair wagons, and do some trading. The final 116 miles after Fort Bridger were the most difficult because of the mountains they had to get through. The people were weary, and the horses, cows, and oxen were weak from almost 1,000 miles of walking.

Jim Bridger, a well-known mountain man, spent a night with the group. Most of the talk was about the valley of the Great Salt Lake and its possibilities as a home for the Mormons. Bridger advised them not to settle in the Great Basin. He said it was too dry, the water was too cold for seeds to germinate, and food wouldn't grow there. Brigham Young thought otherwise and proved Bridger very wrong.

Only three women and two young boys traveled with 143 men in the advance pioneer company. The women were Harriet Wheeler Young, wife of Lorenzo D. Young; Clarissa Decker Young, wife of Brigham Young; and Ellen Saunders Kimball, wife of Heber C. Kimball.

Fort Bridger, Wyoming, was a welcome resting place for the members of the advance pioneer company. You can see the location of the fort on the map on page 112.

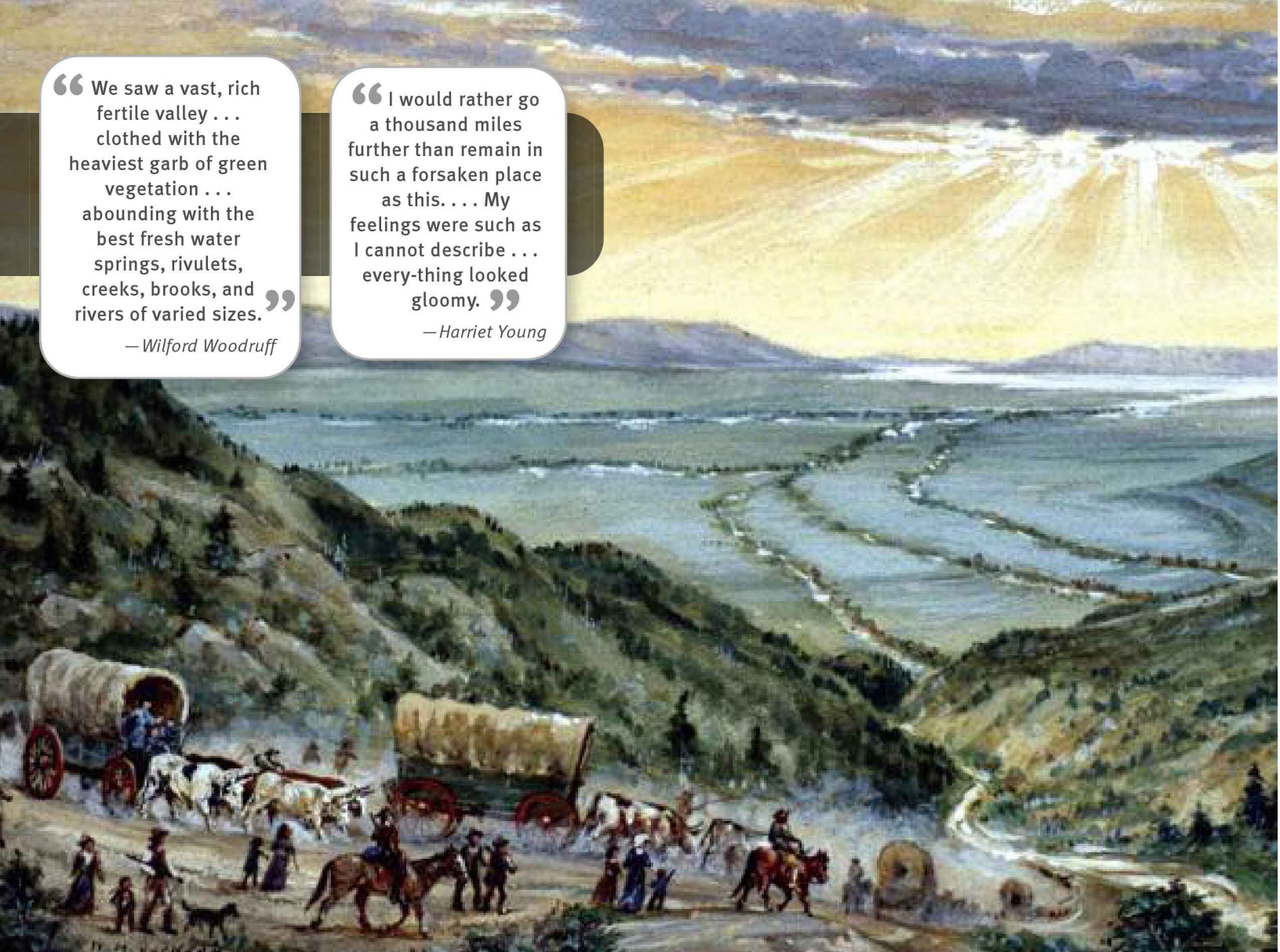


“ We saw a vast, rich fertile valley . . . clothed with the heaviest garb of green vegetation . . . abounding with the best fresh water springs, rivulets, creeks, brooks, and rivers of varied sizes. ”

—Wilford Woodruff

“ I would rather go a thousand miles further than remain in such a forsaken place as this. . . . My feelings were such as I cannot describe . . . every-thing looked gloomy. ”

—Harriet Young



William Henry Jackson painted this view of the pioneers' first view of the Salt Lake Valley. Why might the artist have painted the sun's rays shining down over the valley? What sources of water did Jackson paint?

Into the Valley

Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow led a scouting group ahead of the main group. They worked on removing brush and rocks from the trail cleared by the Donner party the year before. Pratt and Snow left a few men working on the trail, and then they rode to the top of Big Mountain and looked out over the Salt Lake Valley for the first time. It was July 22, 1847. Upon viewing the wide valley for the first time, both men shouted, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna!” and threw their hats into the sky.

Brigham Young, who had probably been bitten by a tick, was ill and so did not enter the valley for two more days.

Tradition says that when he rose up from his sickbed in the back of a wagon and looked over the Salt Lake Valley for the first time he said, “It is enough. This is the right place. Move on.” He later said that he had seen the valley in a dream and recognized it when he saw it.

When Young and the rest of the party entered the valley on July 24, the scouting party had already begun planting a crop and digging irrigation ditches. Young was pleased with what he found.

After staying in the valley only six weeks, Young and several other men left the Salt Lake Valley and returned to Nebraska. They wanted to help organize plans and prepare the rest of the group, including their own families, for the long journey to the Great Basin.

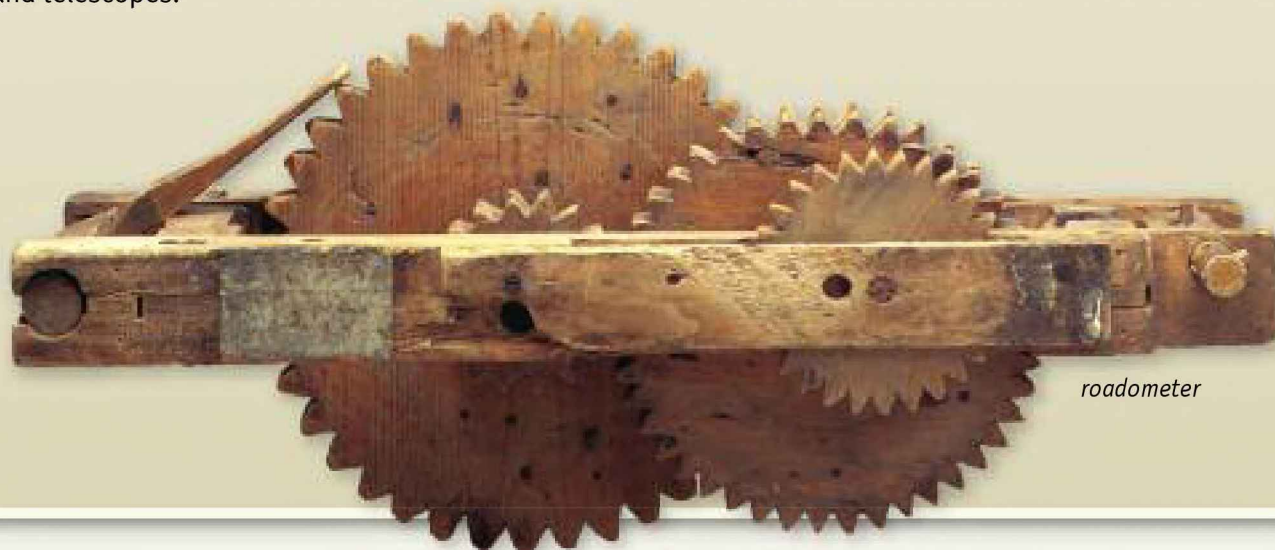
Traveling Tools

Appleton Milo Harmon, along with Orson Pratt and William Clayton, devised a “roadometer” to help track the daily distance traveled by the group. They made a wooden wheel that revolved once in 10 miles, showing each mile. It was a happy day for Clayton when he could stop counting the rotations of a red rag tied to a spoke of a normal wagon wheel.

The leaders of the advance company took along some interesting items. Orson Pratt kept track of the weather and measured the location of the group with barometers, sextants, and telescopes.

The brethren fixed up a tent for [a Sioux chief and wife] to sleep under; Porter Rockwell made them some coffee, and they were furnished with some [food]. The old chief amused himself very much by looking at the moon through a telescope. . . .

—William Clayton, 1847



roadometer

Watched by Indians

When the first Mormon pioneers arrived in the Great Basin, they established “Great Salt Lake City” in the neutral buffer zone between the territorial grounds of thousands of Shoshone and Ute peoples. Not many Indians lived in the Salt Lake Valley at the time, but some had watched the pioneers coming through the mountains and knew when they arrived in the valley, as this report by a modern Shoshone woman explains:

Making Peace with the Past

By Stacey Kratz, *Standard-Examiner*, June 15, 1997

To the Mormon pioneers who bumped their wagons down Emigration Canyon in late July 1847, the valley of the Great Salt Lake looked like a clean slate ready to be filled with prosperity and posterity. But the land they took possession of was already full of generations of people living an abundant life.

“The Indian people watched the pioneers come in,” said Mae Parry, a modern Clearfield resident and member of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation. “They were lying in scrub oak and bushes. I don’t know that the settlers knew they were there,” she added with a smile, “but they were.”

Later Pioneer Companies

In September, 1847, the first large group of Mormon pioneers after the advance company reached Salt Lake Valley. In that company were 1,540 people with 580 wagons, 124 horses, 9 mules, 2,213 oxen, 887 cows, 358 sheep, 35 hogs, and 716 chickens!

Daily life for the later Mormon pioneer companies was about the same as in the advance company, except there were many more women, children, and teenagers. There were families from the United States, Canada, England, Scotland, Wales, and Scandinavian countries.

A horn blew to signal the beginning of a new day on the trail. Quickly, older children began their morning tasks. They looked for fuel. When wood was not found they looked for dried buffalo droppings or "buffalo chips." The chips made a clean, hot fire, with little smoke or smell. In the mountains, dead sagebrush was used for fuel.

Pioneers gathered "buffalo chips" along the trail. Why was the sun-dried dung important to the survival of the pioneers?



“ When we wanted a fire, everyone would go out to gather buffalo chips, and some of the daintier sex, instead of picking them up with their hands, used tongs. . . . Before we had gone very far, they got very brave over this, and would almost fight over a dry one. ”

—Edwin Alfred Pettit,
13 years old

Usually the women and girls cooked a breakfast of soda biscuits or cornmeal johnnycakes. Beans, greased with a slab of bacon and slowly simmered through the night, were popular. The people rarely drank water since it was usually muddy. It tasted so disgusting that sometimes even the animals refused to drink it. Coffee and tea were the all-purpose drinks.

“Roll the wagons!” The first wagon moved out of the camp, and soon the whole company spread out across the trail in a growing cloud of dust. Wagon drivers, said one observer, “were of both sexes, and comprised young and old.” Wagons had few passengers. He said, “The people who could walk did so, and many were engaged in driving loose animals.”

At midday the group usually stopped. The term “nooning” was used for the stop no matter what time it was. The animals rested and the pioneers ate a cold lunch.

Sometimes wagons traveled late into the night before reaching a suitable place. Then the men unyoked the oxen and drove them to pasture near a water hole. After eating, teenagers read books, wrote letters, sang, talked, and danced. Others went fishing or hunting. Finally, they helped set up tents in which some family members slept. Others slept outside in the open air or under the wagons.

Like many other pioneers on the western trails, the Mormon pioneers tried to keep life on the trail much like life back home, including religious activities. They tried to have regular Sunday services and morning and evening prayers.

Buffalo!

Fresh meat was always a welcome change from the bacon, bread, and beans pioneers ate on the trail. The people were constantly on the lookout for buffalo, deer, elk, and waterfowl. American Indians also depended on animals for food and skins and were angry when travelers killed the buffalo.

Some people traveling on the Oregon Trail killed the buffalo for sport. Brigham Young did not want the Mormons to do that. He said, "There should be no more game killed until such time as it should be needed, for it [is] a sin to waste life and flesh. . . . If we do slay when we do not need, we will need when we cannot slay."



“ All the sights of buffalo that our eyes behold [this] was enough to astonish man. . . . The face of the earth was alive and moving like the waves of the sea. ”

— Wilford Woodruff, 1847

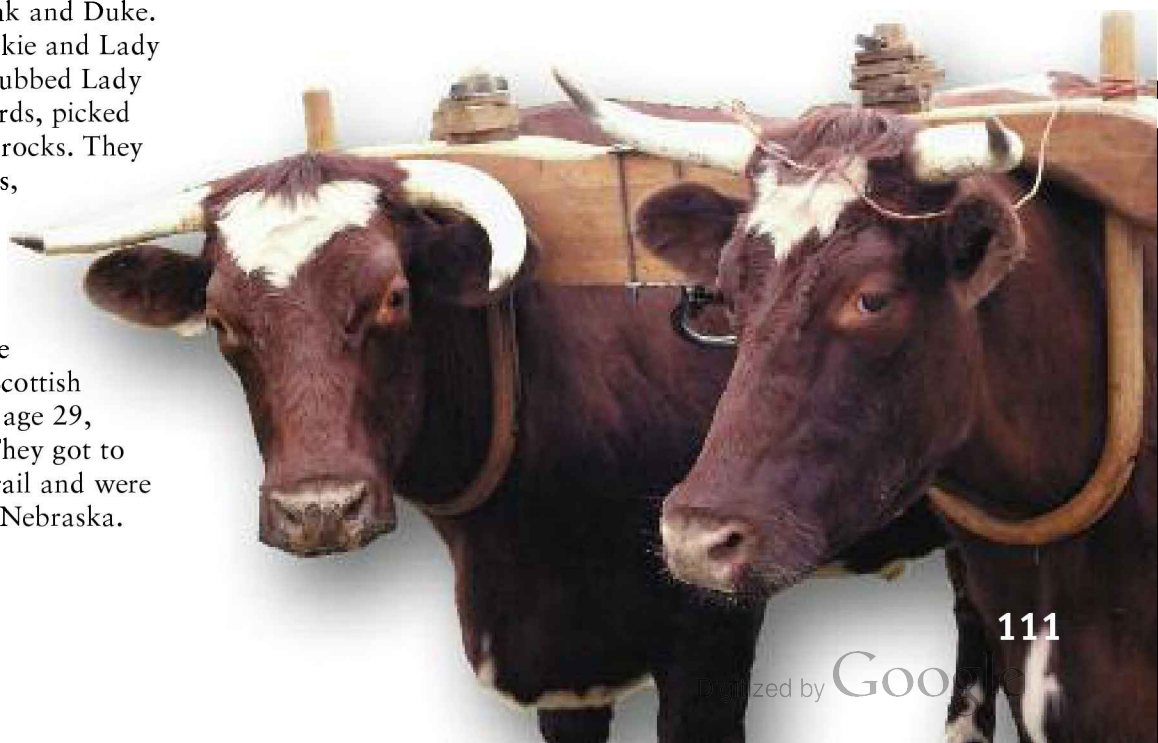
Linking the Past to the Present

- Does Utah still have herds of buffalo? Where are they?
- How and why are wild animals protected today?

Children and Teens on the Trail

Children found ways to amuse themselves while walking along the trail. They treated their oxen like pets, naming them Bright and Buck, or Pink and Duke. Cows were named Lady Blackie and Lady Milky. One mean cow was dubbed Lady Lucifer. Children ran after birds, picked flowers, and collected pretty rocks. They played games such as marbles, checkers, and tag.

Sometimes young men and women walked together or rode double on a horse. Bouquets of wildflowers were often given. In one group a Scottish convert, Richard Ballantyne, age 29, met Huldah Clark, age 21. They got to know each other along the trail and were married at Winter Quarters, Nebraska.





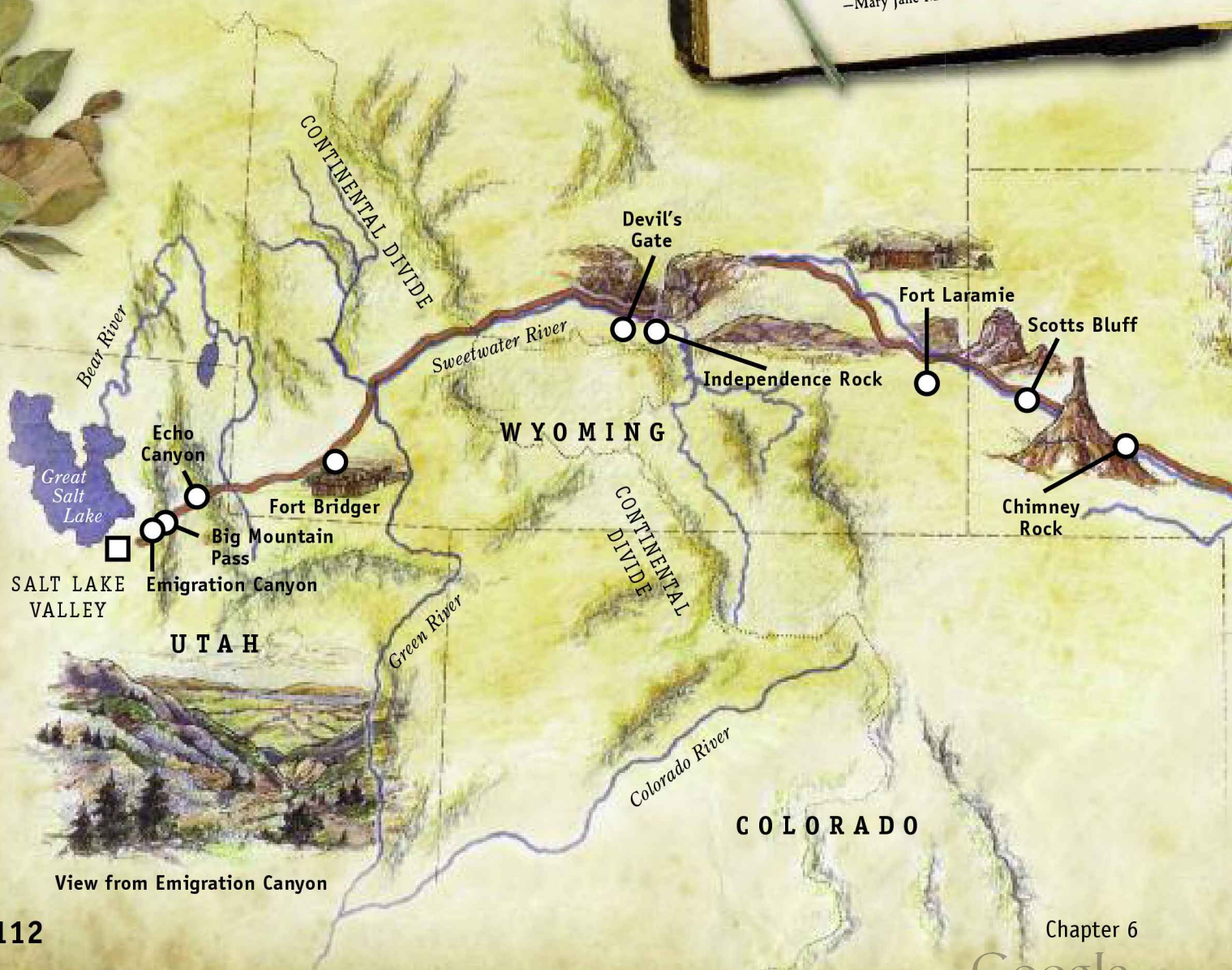
From 1846 to 1869, more than 70,000 Mormon pioneers traveled along the Mormon Trail on the north side of the Platte River. At the time, thousands of other pioneers were traveling on the Oregon Trail on the south side of the same river.

The Mormon Trail

I took my departure from Winter Quarters.
It commenc'd raining soon after our start. . . . I felt
a loneliness for awhile after parting with my friends.
—Eliza R. Snow, June 1847

On the move again, by mid-April the travelers
saw prairie grasses sprouting, trees leafing out,
[and] rattlesnakes slithering around.
—Brigham Young

Another favorite pastime consisted of walking
far enough ahead of the train to get a little time
to play, when we would drive the huge crickets
. . . that abounded in some sections of the
country, and build corrals of sand or rock as to
put them in, calling them our cattle.
—Mary Jane Mount Tanner, age 10 in 1847



The Platte River . . . is a rapid stream, yet in many places a person can wade across . . . Horses and cattle can walk down to the edge of the river and drink . . . sometimes a man or horse will suddenly sink into the quicksand. . .
 —Wilford Woodruff, 1847

They [buffalo] run tolerably fast, but a good horse will easily gain on them. Their meat is very sweet and tender.
 —William Clayton, 1847

The teams begin to fail for want of water; a very heavy show'r revives them & turns our sandy road to mud.
 —Eliza R. Snow, July 1847

There are many antelope in these mountains and the country is lovely enough but destitute of timber.
 —William Clayton

We heard so much of Independence Rock, in Wyoming. . . It is an immense rock with holes and crevices where the water is dripping cool and sparkling. We saw a great many names of persons that had been cut in the rock, but we were so disappointed in not having a dance.
 —Rachel Emma Woolley, age 10

When I jumped into the river I was astonished at the strength of the current, for it was all I could do to stand on my feet.
 —Heber Kimball, 1847

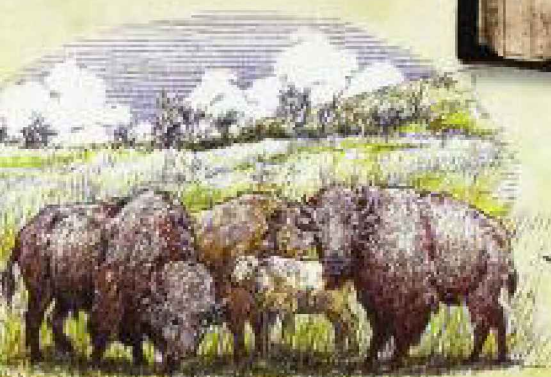
In advance of us at a great distance can be seen the outlines of mountains, loftier than any we have yet seen, the settling sun throwing its glancing rays at their summits . . . covered with snow.
 —Horace Whitney

There were a great many ant hills along the road raised to a considerable height, where we often found beads which were, no doubt, lost by the Indians and collected by those . . . little workers along with gravel. If we were hardy enough to risk a bite now and then, we found much amusement in searching for the beads to string into necklaces.
 —Mary Jane Mount, 10 years old

Fort Bridger was two double log houses joined by a pen for horses . . . constructed by placing poles upright in the ground close together, which is all the appearance of a fort in sight.
 —Brigham Young

As we came down and out of Emigration Canyon . . . we all . . . came together to look and . . . thrill at what our eyes beheld. At last, we could see our journey's end.
 —Anna Clark

I trust I can have command over my feelings to speak with a childlike spirit, yet with the confidence and courage of a man . . . having to guard every moment to keep from bursting into tears . . . We are here!
 —Brigham Young, 1847



Sometimes Indians tried to get the pioneers to leave the area by burning the prairie grass. When this happened, the animals had nothing to eat.

“The Indians had set all on fire except here and there a spot. The blackness of the prairie . . . presented a dismal sight. We found the grass mostly burned . . . and we had to stop because of the fire and smoke ahead.”

—Levi Jackman

Trouble on the Trail

The heat, cold, dust, bad water, unusual food, accidents, insects, and snakebites often caused health problems. Accidents were common. Archibald Gardner left with his family. His small son, Neil, got “caught between the wheel.” Another son, Robert, age five, was at a Pawnee village when he had a “wagon wheel run over his bowel.” He lingered for several days before he died. At Fort Bridger another son, William, only five months old, “was jostled off the top of the load. He tumbled under the wagon drawn by three yoke of oxen. He was all right in a few days.”

Disease caused problems, too. Measles struck the Canadian Company. All of Clarissa Wilhelm’s children had whooping cough and “not one of them could sit up in the wagon.” A Mr. Stillman was so sick he had to drive the wagon by lying on his stomach and holding reins with one hand.

A New Home at Last

For most travelers the trip was not harder or more life-threatening than working a year on a farm. Still, it was a very long trip, and most people had a hard time moving from the moist climates of Europe and the East to the desert land of the West.

These words, expressing her feelings as she arrived in the valley, were written by Eliza R. Snow:

Friday, October 1, 1849

I rode on the black wagon . . . very, very dirty, thro’ brush and timber. . . where we met [J Taylor] who ask’d me if I had lately seen my face, his own being behind a black mask (the soil having chang’d).

Saturday 2nd October, 1849

Crossed a stream 19 times—which is dry in some of its beds. . . . About four we come in view of the Valley looking like a broad rich river bottom—it rains and a [hole] made in the side of our wagon cover torn by the brush admits both rain and dust, but being in sight of home we make our way to the Fort—I am too sick to enjoy the scenery but a good cup of tea prepared by Sister P. refreshes me, also a visit from Sister Sessions. Traveled 14 miles.

One boy was worried when he arrived in the valley because he had no family, no clothes, and nowhere to go. Then a stranger took him home and offered him a job.

The people seemingly all had friends to go to, but me. I seemed to be a stranger in a strange land. Perhaps my outward appearance was so repulsive that no one felt disposed of to offer me a home. [My only shirt] was so filled with dust and dirt, had been torn, patched, and re-sewn while on my body that I could not get it off.”

—Samuel Roskelly, age 16



Fifty years after the famous event, many of the pioneers who came to Utah in 1847 gathered to have their picture taken.



Memory Master

1. Explain the two common nicknames given to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
2. Who was the first leader of the new church in New York?
3. Summarize some of the reasons for misunderstanding and conflict between early LDS church members and their neighbors.
4. Describe some of the ways Brigham Young helped prepare the people for the move west.
5. What did Brigham Young learn about the Great Basin from previous explorers?
6. How and why did Sam Brannon bring Mormons to California?
7. Why did the Mormon Battalion agree to fight in the Mexican-American War?
8. What was the purpose of the advance pioneer company?
9. What date did the advance company enter the Salt Lake Valley?
10. Describe the reactions to the Salt Lake Valley by the first Mormon pioneers.



Activity | Use Primary Sources—Songs

The pioneers often sang to pass the long hours and ease their worries. Some creative pioneers made up their own songs. Since these songs were written about their own experiences, they are good primary sources. Read the first song (#1) and answer the questions below.

Note: Governor Ford was the governor of Illinois who had promised Joseph Smith and the Mormon people protection. He finally gave into pressure from anti-Mormons; Joseph and his brother were murdered.

1. What is the general tone of song #1 (happy, sad, longing, bitter, encouraging)? Which words give it that tone?
2. Now read song #2. What general tone does it have?

#1

Now in the spring we'll leave Nauvoo,
And our journey we'll pursue.
Bid the mobbers all farewell,
And let them go to heav'n or hell.

Old Governor Ford with mind so small,
He has no room for a soul at all.
If heaven or hell should do its best,
He neither could be damned or blessed.

From Kaufman, William J., ed. *The Mormon Pioneer Songbook*. Theodore Presser Company, 1980.

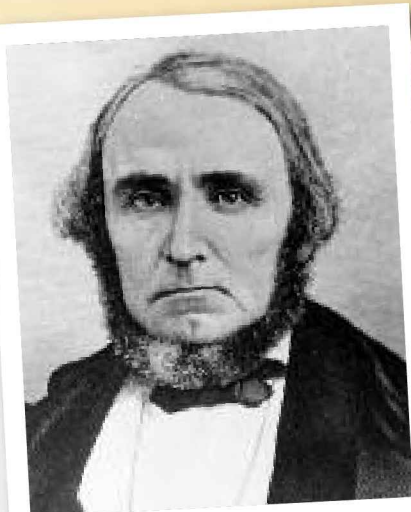
#2

Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear;
But with joy wend your way.
Though hard to you this journey may appear,
Grace shall be, as your day.
'Tis better far for us to strive,
Our useless cares from us to drive;
Do this, and joy your hearts will swell—
All is well! All is well!

From "Come, Come, Ye Saints," by William Clayton, LDS Hymns

Go to the Source

William Clayton's 1848 Emigrants' Guide



In 1847, William Clayton traveled with the advance pioneer company from Winter Quarters, Nebraska, and assisted Thomas Bullock in keeping an official record of the trip to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake. At first only guessing at distances traveled each day, Clayton was later able to track more accurate distances with a newly-invented odometer made by some of the party.

After arriving in the Great Basin, Brigham Young asked Clayton to immediately travel back to Winter Quarters and again measure the distances, which he did. "I have succeeded in measuring the whole distance from the City of the Great Salt Lake to this place," he wrote in his journal.

In 1848, Clayton published his work in a guide for other travelers to the West. He hoped to make a profit by selling the guides and help emigrants at the same time. While the guide was used mainly by many groups of Mormon pioneers, it also became the most popular guidebook among the California gold seekers. Gold had been discovered in California the same year.

THE
LATTER-DAY SAINTS'
EMIGRANTS' GUIDE:
BEING A
TABLE OF DISTANCES,
SHOWING ALL THE
SPRINGS, CREEKS, RIVERS, HILLS, MOUNTAINS,
CAMPING PLACES, AND ALL OTHER NOTABLE PLACES,
FROM COUNCIL BLUFFS,
TO THE
VALLEY OF THE GREAT SALT LAKE.
ALSO, THE
LATITUDES, LONGITUDES AND ALTITUDES
OF THE PROMINENT POINTS ON THE ROUTE.
TOGETHER WITH REMARKS ON THE NATURE OF THE LAND,
TIMBER, GRASS, &c.
THE WHOLE ROUTE HAVING BEEN CAREFULLY MEASURED BY A ROADOME-
TER, AND THE DISTANCE FROM POINT TO POINT, IN
ENGLISH MILES, ACCURATELY SHOWN.

PROMINENT POINTS AND REMARKS.	Dist. miles.	From W. Qrs. miles.	From Cul. 0.8 L. miles.
Old Pawnee village, south side the road. On the banks of the Leap Fork, but mostly destroyed.	54	127	904
Road descends from the bluffs.	1	127 1/2	903 1/2
After descending here, you cross a creek twelve feet wide, and one foot deep—banks soft, but not difficult. You then travel through high grass and small bushes.	3	127 3/4	903 3/4
Road ascends the bluffs.			
After traveling about four miles, then crossing high from the road, so as to strike the timber you see ahead, where it meets the river, the road can be shortened at least a half mile.	6	133 1/2	897 1/2
Upper ford of the Leap Fork.			
You will find the water in many places, near 3 feet deep, and will have to travel down the river about half a mile, to avoid deep holes, and find a good place to get out. (See Note 3.)	5 1/2	139 1/4	891 1/4
Road ascends the bluffs.			
After ascending the bluffs you will find a heavy, sandy road for five or six miles.	18	157 1/4	873 1/4
Prairie creek, 12 feet wide 14 feet deep.			
Plenty of water and grass, but no timber. Banks, somewhat and mry. By taking a south-west course from this creek, you would strike Wood River six or eight miles above the old crossing place, and thence crossing to the Point, by a course a little west of south, the road may be shortened at least two miles.	1	158 1/4	872 1/4
Dry creek.	1/2	159	872
" "	6 1/2	165 1/4	865 1/4
Main Platte river.			
You do not cross within two miles of the river, until you arrive at Wood River.	3 1/2	169 1/4	861 1/4
Wood river, 12 feet wide, one foot deep.			
Plenty of timber, and a good place to camp. Banks descending, steep, and some soft—but good going out. The road now generally runs from one to two miles distant from the main Platte.	14	183 1/4	847 1/4
Road descends to lower land.			
The road now runs near the timber for two miles. The grass is high, and a good chance to camp, without tending of the road.	2	185 1/4	845 1/4
Road ascends to higher land.			
You will probably have to turn off the road some, for the next camping place.	22 1/2	208	828
Deep ravine—steep descent.	1/2	208 1/2	822 1/2
" "			
Two and a quarter miles beyond this, is a good place to camp, there being plenty of grass and water, on a low bench, about twenty rods south of the road. There is, however, no timber, but willow.	3 1/2	211 1/4	819 1/4
Deep dry creek.			
No timber on it.	1 1/2	213 1/4	817 1/4
Creek or slough, south side the road.	1 1/2	217 1/4	813 1/4
Plenty of willows and grass, but doubtful for water.			
Deep, dry creek.			
The head of Grand Island is about opposite to this point, but the road now runs so far from the river, we could not ascertain exactly.			

TRAVELER'S GUIDE.

POINTS AND REMARKS.	Dist. miles.	From W. Qrs. miles.	From Cul. 0.8 L. miles.
at 41° 15' 53"			1031
crossed, following the ridge at mountain of hills and flat			
high banks.	18	18	1013
sk, but it is difficult to water is cracked and uneven to the			
wide, three feet deep.	9	27	1004
not very pleasant to travel. (See Note 3.)			
steep banks.	1	27 1/2	1003 1/2
the river is, but little timber with post, erected near the			
by Pole.	11 1/2	39	992
will probably have to select a portion of a mile water to reach the east			
south side the road.	3 1/2	42 1/2	988 1/2
close to the road.	2	44 1/2	987 1/2
instead of this, the road will follow, or pass, to the river, lat. 41°			
the river, lat. 41°	9	52 1/2	978 1/2
back of the river runs west of timber. Not much to be seen, or any thing.			
The road.	7 1/2	60 1/2	971 1/2
possibly reach the			
the river.	1/2	60 1/2	970 1/2
Just leaving the road			
Three feet deep.	2	62 1/2	968 1/2
with a few rods a place for this you will probably find a good camping place.			
the road.	5 1/2	68	963
passage, but now is over 16, 200.			

Go to the Source

1. After reading the title page of the guide on 116, how would you summarize the guide's purpose?
2. What are the headings at the top of the columns? Can you figure out what the abbreviations mean?
3. Many of the entries describe good places to camp. What natural features did Clayton think made good camping spots?
4. How would the guide help travelers?