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The Closedown of LDS Iowa Settlements in 1852 That Completed the Nauvoo Exodus and Jampacked the Mormon Trail

William G. Hartley

In the Mormon Trail's twenty-three-year history, a handful of years merit special attention because of their historical importance: 1846 for the exoduses from Nauvoo, 1847 for the first companies to Utah, 1849 for the Gold Rush, 1856 for the first handcart companies, and 1861 for the first down-and-back wagon companies.¹ To that list, the pivotal year 1852 needs to be added and its story told.

A vigorous Church campaign closed down about forty lingering LDS settlements in Iowa in 1852. Branches transformed into wagon trains, whose pullouts terminated what had been a strong Mormon presence in the Midwest for five years, and brought to completion the Nauvoo exodus process. This Church-ordered evacuation completed a covenant

1. Wallace Stegner's *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964) is the only book-length study of the Mormon Trail's twenty-three-year history. Andrew Jenson published yearly summaries of LDS emigration years 1840–60 in twenty-three "Church Emigration" articles in the LDS magazine *The Contributor*, vols. 12–14, between June 1891 and September 1893. Also see Gustive O. Larson's useful but dated *Prelude to the Kingdom* (Francetown, N.H.: Marshall Jones, 1947); William W. Slaughter and Michael Landon, *Trail of Hope: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 1997); Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Journey to Zion: Voices from the Mormon Trail* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997); and John W. Welch and James B. Allen, comp., *Coming to Zion* [articles from *BYU Studies*] (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1997). Trail expert Stanley R. Kimball's *Historic Resource Study: Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail* (Washington, DC: Department of Interior/National Park Service, 1991) is invaluable. Kimball, William E. Hill, Greg Franzwa, and I have published guides to Mormon Trail routes and sites.

that Saints made in Nauvoo to help all go west who needed assistance. It produced the Mormon Trail's heaviest traffic in any year before or after. It terminated six years of Winter Quarters and Kanesville being the outfitting point for LDS emigrating companies. It planted handcart seeds that sprouted four years later. And it let Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF) assistance shift from Nauvoo exiles to European Saints.

The Nauvoo Covenant and the Perpetual Emigrating Fund

After Utah became Mormonism's new gathering place, Church leaders diligently tried to fulfill a covenant Saints made in the Nauvoo Temple in October 1845 to assist those needing help to move west.² In 1849, the Church created the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF) for that purpose. "Shall we fulfil that covenant, or shall we not?"³ asked First Presidency Counselor Heber C. Kimball when presenting the PEF plan in general conference. "We are under obligation by covenant, firstly to apply the Perpetual Funds gathered in this country, to bring home the poor Saints who were driven from Nauvoo," the First Presidency stipulated, "and as soon as this shall be accomplished, we shall be ready to extend our exertions to other places and countries."⁴ Immediately, Bishop Edward Hunter headed east, carrying PEF funds, which he used the next year, 1850, to bring the first PEF-assisted Nauvoo refugees to Utah. Orders said the funds should buy oxen, not wagons, to be resold in Utah, generating replacement funds for the PEF.⁵

2. William Clayton and Thomas Bullock, Conference Minutes, Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 6, 1845. This resource is available at <http://eadview.lds.org/findingaid/viewer?pid=IE289574>, image 390.

3. Minutes of the General Conference Held at Great Salt Lake City, in Journal History, October 6, 1849. Thomas Bullock was the clerk of the conference.

4. "Fourth General Epistle of the Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," September 27, 1850, in *Frontier Guardian*, December 11, 1850, 1, reprinted in *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833-1964*, comp. James R. Clark, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 2:60-61. The First Presidency members were Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards.

5. Edward Hunter Company summary, 1850, available online via The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*, <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companydatelist>. See also "Letter to Orson Hyde," October 16, 1849, in *Frontier Guardian*, December 26, 1849, 2.

Back in 1846, up to 15,000 Saints left the Nauvoo region, most of them intent on going west to some wilderness home. To survive that first winter, the refugees hunkered down in the Mormon settlements of Winter Quarters, Garden Grove, Mt. Pisgah, and Ponca Camp; in southeastern Iowa villages like Keosauqua, Bonaparte, Bentonsport, and Iowaville; in scores of camps dotting southwestern Iowa Territory; and in St. Louis. When spring came in 1847, a paltry 1,500 headed for the Rocky Mountains. In 1848, when Winter Quarters had to close down, only perhaps half of its residents headed west, while the others relocated east across the Missouri River in and around what became the LDS town of Kanesville, Iowa (today's Council Bluffs).

Also in 1848, British LDS emigration, halted during the Nauvoo evacuation period, resumed. Those emigrants were told to reach America and, if necessary, stop and work in Iowa or elsewhere before pushing on to Utah. As a result, between 1848 and 1851, when Mormon wagon trains left from Kanesville each spring, newly arriving Saints from Europe and "the States" took over farms and homes of those leaving. During these yearly population rollovers, a sizeable pool of former Nauvooers remained in the area.⁶

Kanesville and Its Surrounding LDS Settlements

After Winter Quarters shut down in 1848, Kanesville (formerly Miller's Hollow) grew and became the central community, the hub, for Saints not yet westbound.⁷ Ringing it were "heavy settlements in all directions on the good land that abounds in the country."⁸ Most were small clusters of families settled near a grove or stream, who adopted such place names as Council Point, Carterville, McOlney's Branch, Zebriskie's Hollow, Macedonia, Big Pigeon, Upper Keg Creek, Harris Grove, Six Mile

6. Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846–1852: "And Should We Die . . ."* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987). Bennett estimates that between 1846 and 1852 some 2,000 members disaffected in the Missouri River areas (227).

7. William G. Hartley, "Council Bluffs/Kanesville, Iowa: A Hub for Mormon Settlements, Operations, and Emigration, 1846–1852," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 26 (2006): 17–47; William G. Hartley, "Pushing on to Zion: Kanesville, Iowa, 1846–1853," *Ensign* 32 (August 2002): 14–23.

8. Nelson Whipple, Journal, Spring and Summer 1848, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

Grove, Walnut Grove, and Plum Hollow. At least three score of these settlements have been identified, some but short-lived.⁹

Kanesville and those other places were meant to be temporary because “abandonment, not establishment, was the watchword.”¹⁰ For four years, 1848 to 1852, Kanesville served as the Church’s headquarters for “the States,” most often with Apostle Orson Hyde presiding. Hyde published there an LDS newspaper, the *Frontier Guardian*.¹¹ Council Point, near Kanesville, was the arrival port for Mormon emigrants coming up the Missouri River. Kanesville served as a stopover place for Saints unable to continue west, an outfitting point for crossing the plains, and a transfer station for people from Utah heading to or through the States. Federal census takers in 1850 tallied 5,058 residents for the Kanesville precinct, and 7,828 for all of predominantly Mormon Pottawattamie County.¹² In and after 1849, because of the discovery of gold in California, Kanesville saw more gold seekers outfit there than in any other Missouri River jumping-off point.¹³ Those argonauts purchased food, supplies, and services, boosting Iowa Saints’ incomes while fueling the Saints’ reluctance to head for Utah.

As of 1852, Kanesville stood fourth in importance among LDS cities in Church history, behind Kirtland, Nauvoo, and Salt Lake City. As of mid-April 1852, Kanesville had 300 houses, 16 mercantile establishments, 2 drug stores, 2 printing offices, 5 hotels, 4 groceries, 8 wagon shops,

9. Gail Geo. Holmes, “The Middle Missouri Valley,” in *Mapping Mormonism: An Atlas of Latter-day Saint History*, ed. Brandon S. Plewe, S. Kent Brown, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard H. Jackson (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2012), 76–77; “Elder Benson’s Appointments,” *Frontier Guardian*, November 28, 1851, 3.

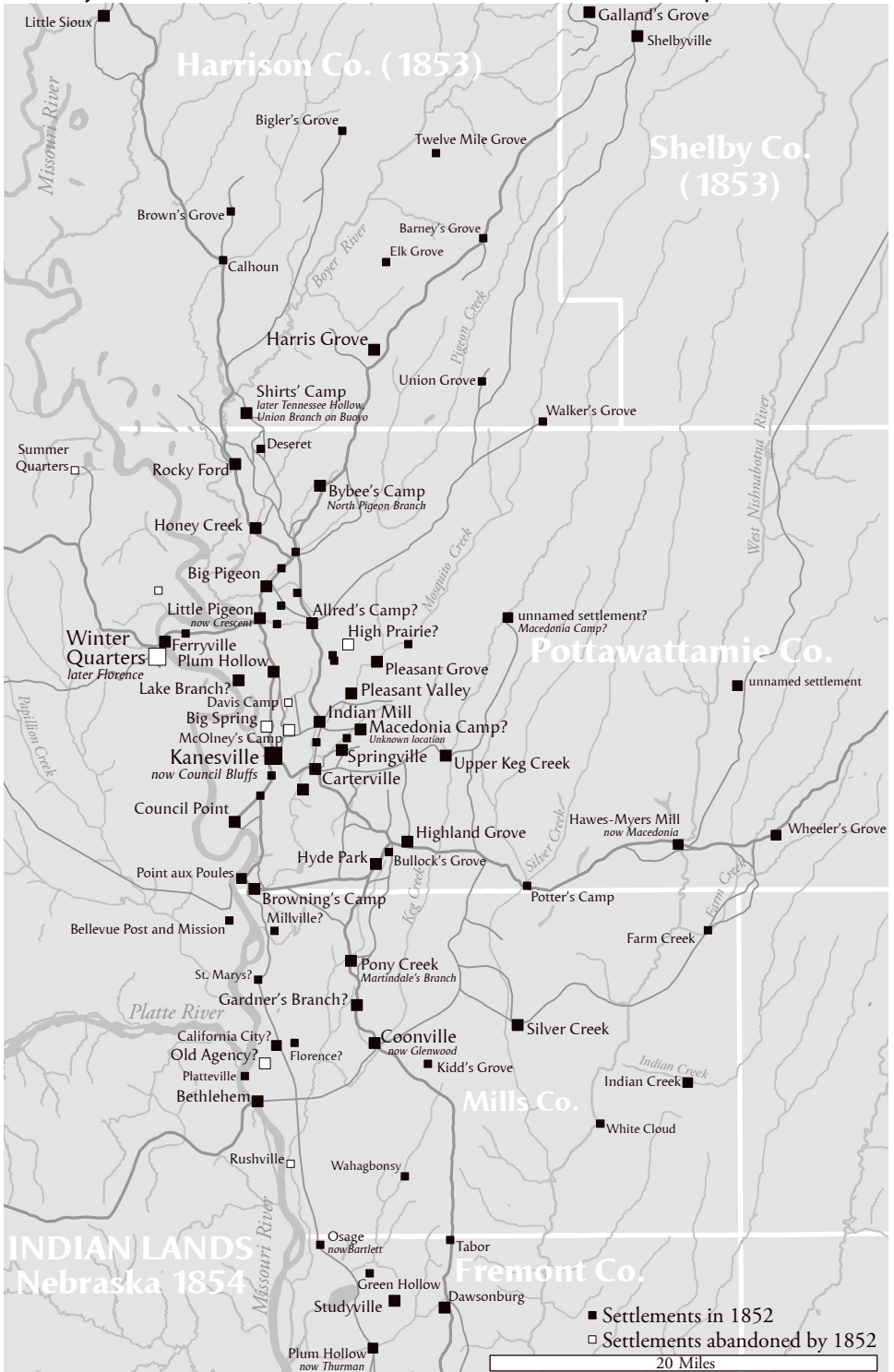
10. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 215.

11. Myrtle Stevens Hyde, *Orson Hyde: The Olive Branch of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Agreka Books, 2000). Hyde launched the *Frontier Guardian* in 1849 at Kanesville. Published biweekly, it continued publication until early 1851. Susan Easton Black, ed., *The Best of the Frontier Guardian* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies; Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2009), contains a CD with a complete run of the *Guardian* and a searchable typescript.

12. *Statistical View of the United States . . . Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census [1850]* (DC: Superintendent of the United States Census, 1854), 236; Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 217; Gail Geo. Holmes, “LDS Heritage Tour,” brochure (N.p.: n.d.), in author’s possession; Pottawattamie [Iowa] Manuscript History, Church History Library.

13. “By 1852 [Kanesville] had become the dominant jumping-off point,” according to John Unruh Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840–60* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 72.

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Settlements around Kanesville, Iowa, in 1852. © Brandon S. Plewe.

5 boot- and shoemakers, 5 physicians, 9 attorneys, 7 blacksmith shops, and “about 1200 to 1500 inhabitants.”¹⁴

Orders to Evacuate

Four letters and two Church envoys sent to Kanessville in 1851 made the 1852 closedown happen. The 1851 letters, their dates when written, and their dates when published in Kanessville’s *Frontier Guardian* newspaper are as follows:

Letter	Date written	Date published in <i>Frontier Guardian</i>
First Presidency’s Fifth General Epistle ¹⁵	Apr. 7	May 30
Bishop Hunter and eight others ¹⁶	June 8	Aug. 22
First Presidency to Pottawattamie Saints ¹⁷	Sept. 21	Nov. 14
First Presidency’s Sixth General Epistle ¹⁸	Sept. 22	Nov. 14

The first letter, the Presidency’s Fifth General Epistle, counseled Saints in the United States and Canada to “arise as one man, and come to Deseret, where they can do more for Zion in one year than they can in many years where they are.”¹⁹ Then on June 8, newly sustained Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter and eight other leading Utahns penned a letter directly admonishing Iowa Saints to “sell your farms and houses, and let Kanessville be in the hands of strangers . . . let the cry be that a saint cannot be found, the cities are vacated.” The writers advocated “that there will not be a man who once lived in Nauvoo, and has had five years already to make an outfit, but will have energy of character to fit himself, and some poorer family who have been sick or unfortunate.”²⁰

14. “Western Iowa,” *Frontier Guardian and Iowa Sentinel*, April 15, 1852, 2.

15. First Presidency, Fifth General Epistle, April 7, 1851, in Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 2:62–73, and addendum April 16, 74–75; also in *Frontier Guardian*, May 30, 1851, 1.

16. Joseph Cain and others, “To the Saints, Scattered Abroad through the Eastern States,” June 8, 1851, in *Frontier Guardian*, August 22, 1851, 2.

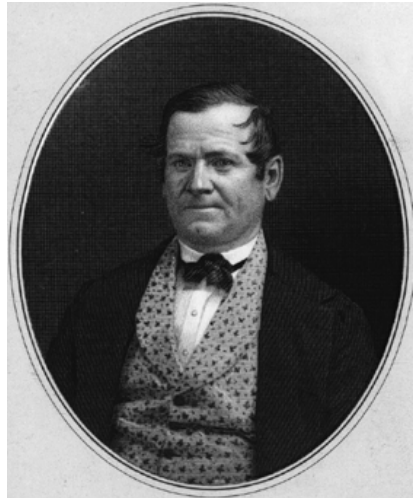
17. First Presidency, “To All the Saints in Pottawatamie,” September 21, 1851, in *Frontier Guardian*, November 14, 1851, 2.

18. “Sixth General Epistle of the Presidency of the Church . . .,” September 22, 1851, in *Frontier Guardian*, November 14, 1851, 1–2. Also see Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 2:76–91.

19. First Presidency, Fifth General Epistle, April 7, 1851.

20. Cain and others, “To the Saints, Scattered Abroad through the Eastern States,” *Frontier Guardian*, August 22, 1851, 2.

Either because of or independent from the two first letters, two major Iowa branches decided in 1851 to close down. Garden Grove Saints, some 140 miles east of Kaneshville, moved as a company of sixty wagons, one threshing machine, and twenty-one families to Utah in 1851, and a few who had remained departed in 1852. Then in October 1851, the Harris Grove settlement posted a “selling out” ad in the *Frontier Guardian*. “The Mormon population of HARRIS GROVE wishing to emigrate in mass to the Salt Lake next season offer to sell out their interest to this beautiful section of Iowa.” The settlement, well supplied with water and timber, consisted of twenty farms, each with between five and twenty acres fenced and cultivated and between 160 and 320 acres claimed. They offered to “sell this fall at cost of improvement. Also a part of the crop on the ground. They will take cattle, store goods and money in exchange.”²¹



Orson Hyde, the presiding Church authority in the Kaneshville area in 1852. Engraving by Frederick H. Piercy. Courtesy Church History Library.

Unlike the first two 1851 letters, which *urged*, the last two letters *ordered*. Of influence in this change of tone had to be Elder Hyde’s quick visit to Utah. On June 28, he left Kaneshville and reached Salt Lake City on August 17. He attended meetings, gave speeches, and “spent hours in discussions with other Church leaders.” He attended a Council of Fifty meeting on August 25 where members “agitated” the question of “bringing all Pottatattamie Saints who wish to come” next spring. Elder Hyde explained that because he had a great deal to do in order to close down his affairs, someone else needed to be sent to direct that mass evacuation. The council then approved sending Elders Ezra T. Benson and Jedediah M. Grant “to gather up the people of Pottatattamie, all who can

21. “Claims! Claims!! In the Boyou Country,” *Frontier Guardian*, October 3, 1851, 2.

fit themselves out and send them on here next spring.”²² Their mission was to close down the Iowa settlements.²³ During the general conference held September 7–10, the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company officers were sustained, and Elders Hyde, Benson, and Grant were specially sustained to be agents of the PEF “to gather the poor to this place.” On September 11, the PEF Company officers met “and deliberated upon matters pertaining to the next season’s emigration” and how to help the poor. We lack records of that meeting. After Elders Benson and Grant spoke in the bowery on September 21, President Young told attenders that the two men would “take up every Saint, man, woman and child . . . every officer and every member and bring them here,” and if Saints don’t do it, “soon they will wish they had.”²⁴

The third letter, the First Presidency’s September 21 letter to Pottawatamie Saints, announced that Apostle Benson and Seventy Grant were sent to herd Pottawattamie Saints to Utah. “We desire you to come . . . to this place with them next season; *and fail not*. . . . We wish you to evacuate Pottawatamie, and the States, and next fall be with us.” The letter instructed that “if you can get one good wagon and team to five families, and five teams to 100 souls; or no teams at all, more than cows and calves to your handcarts, you can come here with greater comfort and safety than the Pioneers came here. . . . *Arise and come home*.”²⁵ The Presidency took seriously an idea to use handcarts and wheelbarrows (back in April 1850 the First Presidency had advocated that those with sufficient faith could come to Utah using just a wheelbarrow).²⁶

The Presidency reinforced the handcart and wheelbarrow idea the next day in their September 22 Sixth General Epistle, the fourth 1851 letter. In it they issued a “thus saith the Lord” command that the “voice of the good Shepherd” was to “gather yourselves together, come home; and more especially to the Saints in Pottawatamie, the United States, Canada, and the British Isles; *come home! come home!*” Families could start from the Missouri River, they said, “with cows, hand-carts, wheel-barrows,

22. Research Notes from Council of Fifty Minutes, August 25, 1851, Church History Library.

23. Journal History, September 5, 1851; First Presidency, “To All the Saints in Pottawatamie,” September 21, 1851.

24. Loose minutes, September 21, 1851, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library.

25. First Presidency, “To All the Saints in Pottawatamie,” September 21, 1851.

26. First Presidency to Elder Orson Hyde, April 13, 1850, published as “From the Presidency,” *Frontier Guardian*, July 24, 1850, 2.

with a little flour, and no unnecessaries, and come to this place quicker, and with less fatigue, than by following the heavy trains, with their cumbersome herds.”²⁷ On September 23 and 24, two dozen men, including Elders Hyde, Benson, and Grant, headed for Kanessville, carrying the two new letters containing the evacuation orders. They reached Kanessville early in November.²⁸

Why the Closedown

Why such urgency to close down Iowa residences and complete the Nauvoo exodus in 1852? The above letters and their Utah contexts identify five factors:

1. **Lingering Time Had Expired.** Rather than ask why 1852 became the deadline year, the real question is, why didn't a deadline come sooner? Gathering to Zion “as speedily as possible” was “the commandment of the Lord.” That Saints *must* gather to Zion as quickly as possible was a standing commandment, not a suggestion.²⁹ Ideally, all of those from Nauvoo still committed to the Church should have gone west in 1847, or at least in 1848 when Winter Quarters had to close down. But a lack of wagons, teams, and food kept most back. In mid-1850, the LDS First Presidency, feeling that Saints who had stopped temporarily in Iowa were becoming too comfortable, instructed Elder Hyde to “push the Saints to Zion, and persuade all good brethren to come, who have a wheelbarrow, and faith enough to roll it over the mountains.”³⁰ Yet the February 1851 *Frontier Guardian*, when giving counsel for that year's upcoming emigration, lacked urgency and sounded not pushy but wishy-washy: “It is the wish and counsel of your brethren in the Valley that you should emigrate there as fast as possible; and consequently, it is our wish and counsel also. But those who cannot go this year, had better begin to repair farms, fences, and to make preparations to go as largely

27. “Sixth General Epistle of the Presidency of the Church.”

28. Orson Hyde, “Home Again,” *Frontier Guardian*, November 14, 1851, 2; Ezra T. Benson to Pres. Brigham Young and Council, in *Journal History*, November 15, 1851.

29. Wilford Woodruff to Jesse C. Little, in *Frontier Guardian*, November 13, 1850, 2.

30. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards, “From the Presidency,” *Frontier Guardian*, July 24, 1850, 2.

into agricultural pursuits as possible in this county. Every farmer ought to put in a spring crop, whether he goes west or not.”³¹

So the First Presidency blew the whistle. “We have been calling to the Saints in Pottawatamie ever since we left them to come away,” the First Presidency said in their September 21 letter; “but there has continually been an opposing spirit, whispering; as it were—Stay another year, and get a better fit-out.”³² Lingered now was unacceptable.

2. Labor Needs in Utah. Unlike in Nauvoo, where the doctrine of gathering caused major problems due to job shortages, Utah needed manpower to develop its agricultural base, natural resources, and building projects. Late in 1849, the Presidency had pleaded with Elder Hyde about Utah’s “need of more laborers, for more efficient help, and multiplied means of farming and building at this place. We want men; brethren come from the States, from the nations come!”³³ In April 1850, the Presidency hoped that year’s emigration would bring a “host of Saints” because “the labors of the valley are great, compared to the number of laborers.”³⁴ They noted that “the public works are languishing for help, and we want the Saints at home,” and “we shall need double the hands at harvest we have now.”³⁵ Late in 1850, President Young told a Sunday audience in Salt Lake City, “We want to plant colonies from here to the Pacific Ocean.”³⁶ The nine writers of the June 8, 1851, epistle bluntly said, “It is as much a duty binding on every saint to build up the vallies of the mountains, as it is to be baptized for the remission of their sins, or any other commandment given the servants of God to his people.”³⁷

Early in 1851, just prior to the command to evacuate, President Young directed that construction start in Salt Lake City on a badly needed tabernacle (the Old Tabernacle), and the April general conference voted to build a temple. A newly planted San Bernardino colony drew off some five hundred Saints from Utah. New settlements in and around Cedar

31. “Letters of Inquiry,” *Frontier Guardian*, February 7, 1851, 2.

32. First Presidency, “To All the Saints in Pottawatamie,” September 21, 1851.

33. “Second General Epistle of the Presidency,” *Frontier Guardian*, December 26, 1849, 1.

34. “Third General Epistle of the Presidency,” April 12, 1850, in *Frontier Guardian*, June 12, 1850, 3.

35. Presidency of the Church to Elder Orson Hyde, April 13, 1850, in *Frontier Guardian*, July 24, 1850, 2.

36. Journal History, October 27, 1850.

37. Cain and others, “To the Saints, Scattered Abroad through the Eastern States,” *Frontier Guardian*, August 22, 1851, 2.

City (to develop iron manufacturing) and at Manti needed population.³⁸ In that context, the Presidency's Sixth General Epistle (September 22, 1851), which included a "thus saith the Lord" endorsement, spelled out Utah's "want of laborers . . . which might be avoided, if a few score of thousands of the Saints who are abroad, would rise up in the name of Israel's God and come home, and help us to do what is required at our hands."³⁹

3. Need for Missionaries. The Presidency's April 7, 1851, epistle lamented, "There is enough for all to do who are here to prepare for the coming of others; consequently, it is not wisdom to send many elders on foreign missions at present."⁴⁰ The nine Utahns' June 8 letter pleaded that "there rests on the shoulders of every faithful elder in the church," referring pointedly to those in the Midwest, the call to missionary work: "We ask you to come and . . . let us go to the nations of the earth to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ: for as elders of Israel, we feel the responsibility resting upon us, and the Lord requires it at our hands; *and as long as you hold back our hands are tied.* . . . Come then, brethren . . . for there rests on the shoulders of every faithful elder in the church the burthen of bearing the gospel to the nations of the earth."⁴¹

4. Europeans Needed the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. Church leaders in Europe constantly pleaded for the PEF to assist thousands of European Saints, suffering from hard economic conditions, to emigrate. But that could not happen until former Nauvooers lingering in Iowa had been assisted first. In tandem with the Iowa evacuations in 1852, the First Presidency authorized the first PEF emigrations from Europe.

5. Dangers of Disaffection. It is clear the First Presidency wanted to stanch disaffections that happened when LDS emigrants stopped to work in St. Louis and in Iowa. Pockets of apostates aggressively tried to dissuade those who stopped to not go on, some claiming Brigham Young was not Joseph Smith's rightful successor. Thus, the June 8 Utahns' letter admonished Saints in Iowa and the Eastern States to shun those "who would counsel you not to come to this place as you would

38. In December 1850, close to one hundred people left for the Iron Mission and what became Cedar City, and the Deseret legislature created a name for that Little Salt Lake region, called Iron County.

39. Cain and others, "To the Saints, Scattered Abroad through the Eastern States," *Frontier Guardian*, August 22, 1851, 2.

40. First Presidency, Fifth General Epistle, April 7, 1851.

41. Cain and others, "To the Saints, Scattered Abroad through the Eastern States," *Frontier Guardian*, August 22, 1851, 2.

a rattlesnake; for the gathering of the Saints is as true a doctrine now, as it was when the Prophet Joseph lived.” Anyone lacking the spirit of gathering “is not of us.”⁴²

To reduce disaffections, the evacuation ultimatum included a major emigration policy change. Until then, leaders had designated the “Potawatamie lands” as the best place where Saints could “speedily better their condition for their further journey.”⁴³ At times the Presidency said they wanted European converts to halt in the States for a while so that those who would otherwise apostatize in Utah would do it before coming.⁴⁴ But the First Presidency canceled the stopover option. British Mission President Franklin D. Richards counseled Saints early in 1852 that emigration no longer would be on the old plan, and that during such stopovers “some have lost the Spirit and apostatized, and many, when they get there, become lukewarm and indifferent.” Saints should stay in England “until they can go through to the Valley.”⁴⁵

Related to the problem of disaffections was a concern, minor if not major, to get converts west before plural marriage practices in Utah became publicly announced, which happened in August 1852, two months after the last LDS evacuees had left Iowa.⁴⁶

Elder Benson Spearheads an Organized Evacuation

Elders Benson, Grant, and Hyde arrived in Kanesville on November 5, 1851, after a speedy forty-day trip.⁴⁷ Immediately, Elder Hyde convened a special conference on November 5. Elder Grant was too ill to attend.⁴⁸ “The Elders and friends from the Valley, all spoke freely to a very large

42. Cain and others, “To the Saints, Scattered Abroad through the Eastern States,” *Frontier Guardian*, August 22, 1851, 2.

43. “General Epistle from The Council of the Twelve Apostles,” December 23, 1847, in Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 1:329–30.

44. “An Epistle of President Orson Pratt, to the Saints throughout Great Britain,” Liverpool, July 23, 1850, in *Frontier Guardian*, October 16, 1850, 1.

45. “Minutes of the Special General Council: Closing Address of President F. D. Richards,” London, April 6–9, 1852, in *Millennial Star* 14 (June 12, 1852): 244.

46. No definite connection between the evacuations and the polygamy announcement has been demonstrated; see David J. Whittaker, “The Bone in the Throat: Orson Pratt and the Public Announcement of Plural Marriage,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 18 (July 1987): 293–314.

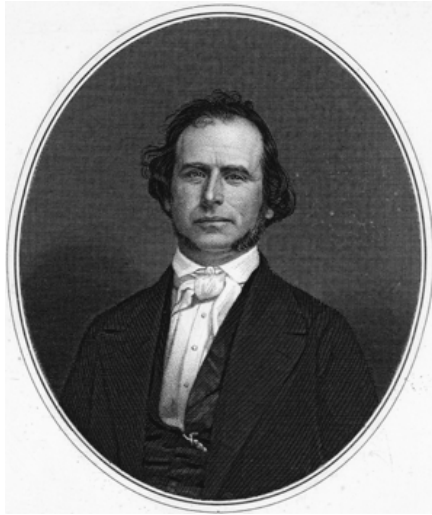
47. *Journal History*, November 15, 1851.

48. Gene A. Sessions, *Mormon Thunder: A Documentary History of Jedediah Morgan Grant* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 90.

and attentive audience” urging all to prepare to emigrate the next spring.⁴⁹ Elder Benson spoke and no doubt read his and Grant’s credentials from the First Presidency: “We have sent Brs. Benson and Grant to bless you, and counsel you and relieve Br. Hyde. Therefore we wish you to evacuate Pottawatomie, and the States, and next fall be with us.”⁵⁰ The Utah arrivals bore “united testimony . . . for the Saints to prepare for emigration to the Valley in the Spring.”⁵¹ They shared sentiments close to if not the same as what the First Presidency said in its September letters:

Have you any good excuse for not coming? No! you have all of you, unitedly, a far better chance than we had when we started as Pioneers to find this place; you have better teams and more of them. You have as good food and more of it; you have as much natural strength as we have had to come; our women and children have walked here, and been blessed in walking here, and bare-foot, too, only as they could occasionally get a skin from the Indians to make a moccasin, and can you not do the same? You can. And we say again, come home!⁵²

Elder Benson told the conference he would spend the winter with them, organizing them into wagon companies. At the meetings’ end, one report said that “every face seemed looking westward.”⁵³ One of those Utah arrivals, Samuel W. Richards, saw a “hearty response” to the call to gather, and “their hearts seem Zion ward.” He noted that “the subject of the hand-carts and wheel-barrow trains, seem to be, by



Ezra T. Benson, organizer of the mass evacuation of the Iowa settlements in 1852. Engraving by Frederick H. Piercy. Courtesy Church History Library.

49. “Special Conference,” *Frontier Guardian*, December 12, 1851, 4.

50. First Presidency, “To All the Saints in Pottawatomie,” September 21, 1851.

51. “Special Conference,” *Frontier Guardian*, December 12, 1851, 4.

52. First Presidency, “To All the Saints in Pottawatomie,” September 21, 1851.

53. *Journal History*, November 8, 1851.



Replica of the Kanesville Tabernacle, once the central meeting place for the Saints in southwestern Iowa. The building was dismantled in 1849. Photo courtesy Kenneth R. Mays.

many, of rather a novel introduction.” That option’s intent was to get the departure fires “well kindled.” But, he added, “In order that the fire may not be crowded too hard at first, the present call or proposition for arrangements only consists of 1,000 wagons, 2,000 hand-carts, and 1,000 wheel-barrows, and measures to be taken immediately for getting out timber for manufacturing purposes.”⁵⁴ Elder Grant left on November 14 to do Church public relations work in Washington, DC, related to the controversies of the “runaway” Utah officials.⁵⁵

Unknown to Elder Hyde, Brigham Young had given Elders Benson and Grant a private, written, sealed instruction. If Elder Hyde hindered or obstructed their mission in any way, they were to read in public the private communication, which authorized the two to assume the presidency of the Church at Pottawattamie and in the United States, removing Elder Hyde from that position.⁵⁶

54. “Extracts of a Letter from Elder S. W. Richards to Joseph Cain,” November 12, 1851, in *Deseret News*, March 6, 1852, 1.

55. Journal History, November 3, 1851, excerpts from Willard Snow’s account covering events before and after that date.

56. “Private Instructions to Ezra Taft Benson and Jedediah M. Grant,” September 22, 1851, draft copy, in Brigham Young Papers.

The postconference issue of the *Frontier Guardian*, published on November 14, promoted evacuation. In it Hyde published the First Presidency's September 21 letter to the Pottawattamie Saints, to which he appended his own advice: "Cease to murmur or repine, and do the best and all you can, and you will be prospered, and the hand of Providence will work for your good."⁵⁷ Under the headline "Pottowattamie County for Sale," another article said in part, "The Mormons are about to make a general move from this place in the Spring; and now is the time for speculation and investment, for all such as wish to increase their wealth. It is the best point for producing, in all the West, and the best market on the Frontier. Now is the time for purchasers:—Strike while the 'Iron is hot' and secure a fortune while you can."⁵⁸

Going on circuit, Elder Benson visited the different branches and preached evacuation.⁵⁹ He "commenced immediately to organize them into companies" to march "enmass," taking their poor with them.⁶⁰ On November 28, he met with and organized the Council Point Branch and made a remarkable observation: "This call for the Saints to come home has been the greatest ever since the Church has been in existence." Those

Pottowattamie County For Sale.
The valuable claims and improvements of that portion of this County owned and occupied by the Mormon population are for sale.
Remember that Kanessville is a valuable point. It is and destined to be the outfitting post on the western Frontier for Oregon, Salt Lake, and California emigrants. The soil is productive, and a home market for every thing that can be produced from the soil.
The Mormons are about to make a general move from this place in the Spring; and now is the time for speculation and investment, for all such as wish to increase their wealth. It is the best point for producing, in all the West, and the best market on the Frontier. Now is the time for purchasers:—Strike while the "Iron is hot" and secure a fortune while you can.

The Frontier Guardian, November 14, 1851, announcing "Pottowattamie County For Sale" as the Saints planned to migrate to Utah.

57. First Presidency, "To All the Saints in Pottawattamie," September 21, 1851.

58. "Pottowattamie County for Sale," *Frontier Guardian*, November 14, 1851, 2.

59. One such visit is recorded in Gibson Condie, *Reminiscences and diary, 1865–1910*, Church History Library. The trail section of this document is excerpted online in Thomas C. D. Howell Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*. By December 20, Elder Grant was in the nation's capital, according to Benson's March 16, 1852, letter to Brigham Young and Counsel, copied into *Journal History*, that date.

60. Ezra T. Benson to George A. Smith, March 12, 1852, in *Journal History*, that date, p. 1.

Elder Benson's Appointments.		
At Cartersville, Monday	10 o'clock, A. M.,	Dec. 1.
At Springville, " "	3 " P. M.,	" 1.
At Macedonia, Tuesday	10 " A. M.,	" 2.
At Pleasant Grove, " "	6 " P. M.,	" 2.
At Pleasant Valley, Wed'y	10 " A. M.,	" 3.
At Indian Mill, " "	3 " P. M.,	" 3.
At Davis Camp, " "	6 " P. M.,	" 3.
At McOlney's Branch Thur'y	10 " A. M.,	" 4.
At Zebriskies Hollow, " "	6 " P. M.,	" 4.
At Brownalls Camp, Friday,	10 " A. M.,	" 5.
At Alfred's Camp, " "	6 " P. M.,	" 5.
At Pigeon Grove, Saturday,	10 " A. M.,	" 6.
At Stanley's Branch, " "	6 " P. M.,	" 6.
At Big Pigeon Tabernacle,	Sunday, 10 o'clock,	A. M., Dec. 7.
At Little Pigeon, Sunday,	3 o'clock, P. M.,	Dec. 7.
At Upper Crossing of Keg Creek,	Monday, 11 o'clock,	P. M. Dec. 8.
Highland Grove, Monday,	6 o'clock, P. M.,	Dec. 8.
Coonville, Tuesday,	6 P. M.,	Dec. 9.

The *Frontier Guardian*, November 28, 1851, publicizing Ezra T. Benson's meeting schedule with Iowa settlements, to reorganize the branches into wagon trains.

wanting to be blessed "must give heed to this call." He left no room for excuses.⁶¹

On November 28, the *Frontier Guardian* published Elder Benson's schedule for meetings in nineteen locations to organize the departures. It listed two or three visits each day from Monday, December 1, through Tuesday, December 9. The visits were scheduled for 10:00 a.m. and either 3:00 p.m. or 6 p.m., depending on distances between the meeting places. At some locations, representatives from more than one branch attended.⁶²

Difficult to Uproot

Elders Benson and Hyde's crusade worked. By late 1851, according to Mormon Jonathan Layne in Iowa, "nearly all of our people in Pottawatamie County prepared to go the next year to Salt Lake Valley."⁶³ But emigrating was not easy or cheap. For Saints to head west meant giving up jobs, selling or trading farms and homes, procuring wagons, obtaining teams to pull the wagons, collecting clothing and provisions sufficient for the hundred-day trek, and in some cases regaining health.

On March 16, Elder Hyde advised Saints not to dispose of their farms and cabins "for trifles," but to "try for a good price in cash or its equivalent."⁶⁴ Two months later, Elder Benson reported that the uprooters were selling a "goodly number" of their farms and improvements and

61. "Council Point Emigrating Company, Journal, 1851 Nov.-1852 Sept.," Church History Library, excerpted online in John Tidwell Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*. Its heading reads, "A Journal of the Emigration Company of Council Point, Pottawatamie County, Iowa, from the time of their organization until their arrival into the Great Salt Lake Valley in the summer of 1852."

62. "Elder Benson's Appointments," *Frontier Guardian*, November 28, 1851, 3.

63. Jonathan Ellis Layne, Autobiography, 1897, 10-18, Church History Library, excerpted online in Benjamin Gardner Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

64. Benson to Young and Counsel, March 16, 1852.

“some are getting pretty good prices.”⁶⁵ Albert Dickson said that in the spring of 1852 he “sold his place and bought 2 yoke of oxen and 2 yokes of cows” in order to go west.⁶⁶ Young marrieds Lewis and Susan Whitesides traded their 160-acre farm for an ox team in order to be able to leave.⁶⁷

This mass pullout created great demand, and hence shortages, for wagons, cattle, and provisions. That winter witnessed large-scale wagon constructing in the branches. A typical outfit consisted of a wagon, two yoke of oxen, two cows, and provisions. Early in 1852 the cost for a yoke of oxen was \$60 to \$75, “and still advancing.”⁶⁸ Add to that about \$75 for two cows, and \$125 or more for provisions, and the expense neared \$350 (equivalent to roughly \$8,000 to \$10,000 in 2013 dollars).⁶⁹ The Macedonia Branch records provide a rare insight into what the wagons carried. Member David Bowman’s load weighed 2,069 pounds and included beds (weighing 67, 32, and 37 pounds each), a bucket (12 pounds), a stove (89), a boiler (22), pots (23), flat irons (11), soap (21), containers of meal (23, 76, 87, 115, 103), boxes (88, 46, 47, 21, 120, 53), sacks (75, 75, 26, 32, 42), and iron (36). His wagon also carried bacon, crackers and cheese, sugar, and ginger, but weights were not stated.⁷⁰

People obtained outfits or else tried to go with others who did. By 1852, Zadock and Sarah Bethers, who had known Joseph Smith well, had lived in the Kanesville area for six years. They left for Utah (as a family of nine) on June 4 with three yoke of cows, three oxen, and three new wagons.⁷¹

65. Ezra T. Benson to President Brigham Young and Council, May 13, 1852, Journal History, that date.

66. Albert Douglas Dickson, Reminiscence [c. 1911], 2–5, Church History Library, excerpted online in John B. Walker Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

67. William G. Hartley, *To Build, to Create, to Produce: Ephraim P. Ellison’s Life and Enterprises* (Layton, Utah: Ellison Family Organization, 1997), 89–90.

68. Benson to Smith, March 12, 1852.

69. “James Ririe—1827–1905,” in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958–77), 9:357–58. For dollar value conversion, see Samuel H. Williamson, “Seven Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1774 to Present,” <http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/>.

70. “Macedonia Branch, Iowa, Record 1847–1852, fd. 2,” Church History Library, also excerpted online in Henry Bryant Manning Jolley Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

71. Mary Jane Bethers York, Autobiographical Sketch, Mormon Biographical Sketches Collection 1–2, Church History Library, excerpted online in Joseph Outhouse Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

Mary Ann Frost Pratt headed out in 1852 with two children and with Mary Ann Stearns, age 19, in a wagon that Hiram Winters gave to them—"one of the best that has been made in our shop," Winters told them. The family had lived in Nauvoo and at Winter Quarters.⁷²

As late as April 20, 1852, a report said that "the Saints are generally poor, and the way looks dark and gloomy."⁷³ Sellers and traders became desperate. Oren Jefferds "staid on my place this summer [1851] and prepared for gitting toem [team] and outfitt for the Mountains." He sold an old ox, a mare, and a one-horse wagon and bought "one more cow." That fall he went into Missouri and bought two yoke of steers. He "broke them and my cows" and in June 1852 started west.⁷⁴ The George B. Hicks family sold their home for a "song," and on June 5 "we bade adieu to our home where we had toiled for 5 years preparing for the journey." They had but one ox team, a couple of cows, and "great faith."⁷⁵ The Gibson Condie family could not sell their farm, and, Condie said, others could not either, so they just "left their places."⁷⁶

Those with oxen but no wagon agreed to hook up, literally, with a wagon owner who needed more oxen. Those with outfits and space took others with them in return for labor on the plains, such as cooking, tending children, being teamsters, or driving cattle. The Isaac and Adah Phippen family had participated in the Nauvoo exodus, stayed two years at Winter Quarters, and then moved back to the Iowa side and farmed. Through "hard work and economy," they came up with two wagons for the 1852 move. Then, to help the poor, "my father had a widow and three children in one of his wagons," a Phippen child recalled. The family "never got one cent" for their farm and its contents, and they "left everything only that which they could put in two wagons."⁷⁷ Former

72. Mary Ann Stearns Winters, *Reminiscences*, 22–30, Church History Library, excerpted online in Harmon Cutler Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

73. Ezra T. Benson, April 20, 1852, *Journal History*, that date.

74. Oren Jefferds/Jeffords, *Reminiscences and Diary, 1856–64*, 49–50, Church History Library, excerpted online in David Wood Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

75. George Armstrong Hicks, *Family Record and History of Geo. A. Hicks*, 10–11, Church History Library, excerpted online in John B. Walker Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

76. Condie, *Reminiscences and Diary*.

77. Isaac Phippen, "History of Isaac Phippen," 2–3, Church History Library, excerpted online in Harmon Cutler Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*; Ada Louisa Phippen Mahoney, Autobiographical sketch, in *How*

Nauvoosers John and Alice Ellison spent five years in St. Louis, and then in 1851 sent two cows, two yoke of oxen, a wagon, and tools up to Kaneshville. They arrived too late to emigrate that year, so John rented a farm at Pigeon Grove. A neighbor's boarder who had a team but no wagon joined his team to the Ellisons' wagon and journeyed with them.⁷⁸

Organizing the Mass Migration

In each branch or group, Elder Benson appointed "the best financier" as captain, with two counselors. He said he "lost no time night or day until [he] had ridden all over this section of the country and organized forty companies." When he met with the Lake Branch in November, the branch agreed that its president, Joseph H. Tippetts, should be their wagon company captain. Elder Benson gave Tippetts orders to organize the company and inventory the members' livestock.⁷⁹ On November 25, Elder Benson met with the Buoye/Rocky Ford Branch and nominated branch president William Meeks to take charge of making wagons and preparing for the exodus.⁸⁰ He visited the McOlney Branch on December 4 and organized it with a president and two counselors.⁸¹ By the end of 1851, "some [of the companies] were prepared and some were not, and the latter class I instructed to get out their timber and make all necessary preparations for the journey."⁸²

Captains or representatives of forty branches gave readiness reports to Elder Benson during March 6 and 7, 1852, meetings at the Big Pigeon Tabernacle.⁸³ In a March 16 letter, Elder Benson provided the following tallies drawn from eight branch/company reports:⁸⁴

Beautiful upon the Mountains: A Centennial History of Wasatch County, ed. Wm. James Mortimer [1963], 417–18, Church History Library, excerpted online in Harmon Cutler Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

78. William G. Hartley, "St. Louis and the Nauvoo Exodus: The Experience of the John Ellison Family." *Nauvoo Journal* 10 (Fall 1998): 39–48.

79. Lake Branch, Iowa, Records, Church History Library.

80. Buoye Branch Record, Church History Library.

81. McOlney Branch Record, Church History Library.

82. Benson to Smith, March 12, 1852.

83. Near where Crescent, Iowa, now is, about eight miles north of Council Bluffs (Kaneshville).

84. Benson to Young and Counsel, March 16, 1852.

Big Pigeon	230 people	20 wagons	46 yoke of oxen
North Pigeon	241	45	41
Rocky Ford	113	20	25
Lake	116	18	41
Council Point	202	32	48
Welsh	137	21	36
Kanesville	588	117	92
Harris Grove	167	22	35
Totals	1794 people	295 wagons	364 yoke of oxen

His sampling shows an average of six people and just over one yoke of oxen per wagon. Big Pigeon Branch reported it had twenty surplus wagons for sale. Harris Grove had ten new wagons for sale. Rocky Ford had twenty-four other wagons being constructed, and Kanesville had ten “being built by subscription expressly for the poor.” Each of the eight branches said they could take their poor with them, although Council Point had forty people who needed help to complete their outfits.⁸⁵ Elder Benson said that “from all appearances there will be about ten thousand of our people cross the plains this season,” a projection that other wagon estimates support.⁸⁶

This report meeting, he felt, was a “good meeting” with “not a dissenting spirit in the house,” and the branch reports were “beyond my most sanguine expectations.” However, the reports do show that in the North Pigeon Branch one or two families offered “excuses for tarrying,” and in the Welsh Branch one or two families were “rather indifferent about going.” Overall, however, those willing to leave “rejoiced in prospect of the day when we shall rise up en masse together and leave the gentile nation.”

That winter President Young sent at least two letters containing names of Iowa Saints to be helped with Church PEF funds, for whom Utahns had paid the travel expenses.⁸⁷

In Utah, meanwhile, during the April 1852 conference, President Heber C. Kimball voiced concerns about Saints who would cross the plains that year using wheelbarrows and handcarts. In response, ninety-three men volunteered to donate their services “to go out with their teams to carry provisions and assist them on the road.”⁸⁸ On May 3, President Willard Richards wrote that “several hundreds are coming across

85. Benson to Young and Counsel, March 16, 1852.

86. Benson to Smith, March 12, 1852.

87. Brigham Young to Elder Benson, Draft, November 30, 1851, and Brigham Young to Hyde, December 30, 1851, both in Brigham Young Outgoing Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

88. General conference minutes, April 8, 1852, Journal History, that date.

the plains with hand carts and wheel barrows and Pres. B. Young intends to go out and meet them.”⁸⁹ That day Richards wrote to Elder Benson urgently requesting a count of how many were coming with handcarts and wheelbarrows, “so that we could know what to do in regard to giving assistance” and so that President Young could know if he was to go out to meet such nonwagon emigrants.⁹⁰ The May 3 mail brought the First Presidency word from Elder Benson “giving glorious accounts of the prosperity of the saints in removing” but no handcart count.⁹¹

In Kaneshville, relations with “Gentiles” passing through or living in southwestern Iowa became testy at times. In September 1851, several federal appointees in Utah Territory had chafed at Church control of territorial operations and deserted their posts. In the States, they were spreading “highly colored” stories about the Mormons. Their reports triggered “a tirade of abuse and falsehood that is going the rounds of eastern newspapers” and newspapers in St. Louis and St. Joseph.⁹² “Our situation has been critical indeed and we were forced to walk as though we were treading on eggs,” Elder Benson admitted on March 16. “The report of the returning officers raised a storm that for a while threatened to burst with fury upon our heads, but the Lord has helped us; the storm has been stayed.” He discerned that “we shall now be allowed to enjoy a calm long enough to get away from our enemies.”⁹³

By mid-March, Elder Hyde had sold his *Frontier Guardian* press, its building, and features for \$2,000. Indications were that “emigration to the land of gold” would be greater that season than in 1851.⁹⁴ On April 7, during Kaneshville’s final LDS conference, Elder Benson “spoke to the Captains of Emigrating companies,” saying “the word from the mountains was to all to come along, if they had to come 100 souls to 5 wagons.”

89. Willard Richards to Robert Campbell, May 3, 1852, Journal History, that date.

90. Willard Richards to Ezra T. Benson, May 3, 1852, Journal History, that date.

91. Thomas Bullock to Jedediah Grant, April 28, 1852, Journal History, that date. Bullock added a May 4 footnote to the letter because eastern mail arrived the day before.

92. Gustive O. Larson, *Outline History of Utah and the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1958), 88; “Signs of the Times,” newspaper clipping in Journal History, February 7, 1852.

93. Benson to Young and Counsel, March 16, 1852.

94. Benson to Smith, March 12, 1852. The last issue of the *Frontier Guardian* was February 23, 1852. New owner Jacob Dawson then printed its successor, the *Frontier Guardian and Iowa Sentinel*. See Hyde, *Orson Hyde*, 284–85.

He promised those who went that they would be blessed “in the name of Israel’s God, but if they remained here and turned away from God and forgot their covenants woe! woe! be to all such.” Elder Hyde also spoke and said he would not counsel which side of the Platte River to travel, but “to get ready to start as early as possible.”⁹⁵

The Emigration Season Opens

On May 1, the first of the Church-organized Iowa wagon companies ferried across the Missouri. Others followed when ready and as fast as flatboat ferries could transport the wagons, oxen, horses, sheep, dogs, cats, men, women, and children. Crossings primarily were at the Upper or Mormon Ferry connecting to where Winter Quarters once was. But some used a Middle Ferry near Kaneshville or the one farther downriver at Bellevue. After the ferry crossings, wagons followed trails that converged about twenty-seven miles into Nebraska, north of where the Elkhorn River flows into the Platte River. From there they followed the same general route the 1847 Mormon Pioneers took, along the Platte River’s north side. However, five companies that year did cross south of Iowa and Nebraska and use other routes to Fort Laramie (see below). A May 13 newspaper report said Kaneshville was “literally crowded with emigrants from all parts of the Globe, who are wending their way to California, Oregon, and Utah.”⁹⁶ By then, seven or eight different steamboats had brought passengers to Kaneshville, including about two hundred Saints, with more expected daily.⁹⁷ That day, Elder Benson estimated that from three-fourths to seven-eighths of the Saints in the “Pottawattamie Purchase” would leave that season.⁹⁸ On May 19, Elders Hyde and Benson told those who had not sold their properties or who had been unable to buy wagons and teams to prepare to use wheelbarrows and handcars.⁹⁹ By May’s end Hyde and Benson had appointed Joseph E. Johnson as a general agent in Kaneshville for handling the departing Saints’ properties and claims.¹⁰⁰

95. Conference minutes, *Journal History*, April 7, 1852.

96. “Emigration,” *Frontier Guardian and Iowa Sentinel*, May 13, 1852, 2.

97. Ezra T. Benson to President Brigham Young and Council, May 13, 1852, *Journal History*, that date.

98. Benson to Young and Council, May 13, 1852.

99. Orson Hyde and Ezra T. Benson, “Attention, the Hand Cart Trains,” *Western Bugle*, May 19, 1852, 3.

100. Orson Hyde and Ezra T. Benson, “Claim and Property Agent,” *Western Bugle*, May 26, 1852, 3.

“The Oregon and California Emigration is beyond calculation. The like was never known before,” Elder Hyde wrote to Brigham Young on May 27. “The tens of thousands of head of cattle, aside from the teams that are swarming on the plains, are truly alarming. . . . I fear that the trip may be disastrously ruinous to many for lack of grass. . . . The plains are literally covered and crowded with emigrants and their wagons and stock. For the last six weeks, and even eight weeks, the streets of Kaneshville have been regularly blockaded by the throng and multitude.”¹⁰¹

Kaneshville clogged with traffic. Early in June the *Frontier Guardian and Iowa Sentinel* reported that “our streets are still thronged with emigrants bound for Oregon, California and Salt Lake. Although thousands have crossed the river at this point, still thousands are yet remaining to be crossed.”¹⁰² On July 1, Elder Benson wrote to Brigham Young to report that he had organized 18 companies with 50 to 75 wagons in each, some 1,200 wagons total, and all were then across the Missouri and taking up their line of march. They were “well rigged out” with teams, clothing, and provisions—as well fitted out, with a few exceptions, as any who had crossed the plains. He still had two or three companies to start, containing a number of the poor that probably would have weak teams. He urged President Young to send relief teams and provisions to meet and help those last companies. He said he would get to Utah as fast as a horse could carry him, but he would check on every company along the way. “Miracles have been wrought here in getting off the Saints, and this to my astonishment,” he exulted. “I never took more satisfaction in my life on a mission, than I have in this.” He would travel west with Elders Grant, John Taylor, Erastus Snow, and Franklin D. Richards. He estimated the Pottawattamie companies already included 6,000 souls and 1,200 wagons, and he believed that the total would reach 10,000 Saints headed to Utah. None were handcart or wheelbarrow companies, he noted, because “before we could get one started, they would turn into wagons and teams.”¹⁰³

When the recruiting and organizing dust settled, twenty-one LDS companies of “fifty” (meaning about fifty wagons) left Pottawattamie County, each one specifically numbered. Elder Benson had organized at least eighteen of them.

101. Orson Hyde to Brigham Young, May 27, 1852, *Journal History*, that date.

102. *Frontier Guardian and Iowa Sentinel*, June 4, 1852, 2.

103. E. T. Benson to Prest. B. Young, July 1, 1852, Ferryville, Missouri River, in *Deseret News*, August 7, 1852, 3, copy in *Journal History*, July 1, 1852.

The 1852 LDS Emigrating Companies

<i>Company Number & Name</i>	<i>Number of People</i>	<i>Number of Wagons</i>	<i>Departed Iowa</i>	<i>Arrival in Salt Lake City</i>
1. James W. Bay/ John S. Higbee	190	—	5/30	8/13
2. James J. Jepson	*225	*32	5/29	9/10
3. Thomas C. D. Howell	293 +10 fam	*65	6/7	9/2
4. Joseph Outhouse	*230	50	6/10	9/6
5. John Tidwell	*340	*54	6/4–9	9/15
6. David Wood	*288	*58	6/6	9/20
7. Henry B. M. Jolly	*340	*64	6/4	9/15
8. [No company name, probably same as #17]				
9. Isaac M. Stewart	*245	*53	6/19	8/28
10. Benjamin Gardner	241	45	6/2–10	9/24
11. James McGaw	239	54	6/24	9/20
12. Harmon Cutler	262	63	6/27	Sept late
13. William Morgan	—	—	6/22	9/25
14. John B. Walker	*258	—	6/26	10/2
15. Robert Wimmer	*230	—	Early July	9/15
16. Uriah Curtis	*365	51	6/28	9/29
17. Isaac Bullock	*175	40	*7/4 Platteville	9/21
18. James C. Snow	250	*55	7/5	10/9
19. Eli B. Kelsey	*100	—	7/4	10/14
20. Henry W. Miller	*229	63	7/8	9/10
21. Allen Weeks	*226	—	7/13	10/12
Smaller Companies from Iowa				
Wm. Morley Black	—	*20	late May	10/2
Joel Edmunds	53	12	6/10 Platteville	9/8
William West Lane	*34	*15	6/24	9/24
Crandall Dunn (quit McGaw)	32	*10	6/23	9/8
_____ Betz	—	10	—	—

Warren Snow	*33	—	—	—
James Holt	*10	—	7/27	10/27
Companies Leaving from Points South of Iowa				
John Parker	31	11	4/14 St. Louis/ Leavenworth	8/28
Udall family and others	—		4/27 St. Louis/ Leavenworth	9/5
Thomas Marsden	—	10	6/4 Independence	9/2
Abraham O. Smoot	*250	*33	6/1 Kansas City	9/3
Philip De La Mare (freight)	80		7/4 Leavenworth	11/10

* indicates estimated

Case Study: The Council Point Branch (Fifth) Emigrating Company

Not without patience, pain, disagreements, and hard work did branches transform into wagon companies properly equipped to convey everyone, including those lacking outfits and necessities. Excellent records for the Council Point Branch, located near the steamboat landing two miles from Kanesville, document the difficulties.¹⁰⁴ On November 28, Elder Benson visited the branch to organize it. All should fit up their wagons, he said, and “those that could not get wagons was to get hand carts, and those that could not get hand carts was to get wheelbarrows or a cow to carry a pack upon and so make their way unto the Valley.” Members approved branch president John Tidwell to be the company president/captain. He chose John M. King and Thomas Robins as counselors. During the next weeks, the presidency polled the members and drew up lists of those who were going, the wagons and teams that were available, and those who needed assistance. They sent men to find lumber and to

104. “Council Point Emigrating Company, Journal.” All quotes and information used in this case study, unless cited otherwise, are from this source and not henceforward footnoted.

construct wagons. Tidwell cautioned that the poor must not expect the others to haul loads with more than what the haulers were taking. He struggled to learn who “wants assistance and how much they want.” On March 2, thirty-four families reported they could go on their own, ten needed “whole assistance,” and two needed some assistance. “Some say it looks dark and that they will stay another year to be better prepared,” counselor John M. King said, then called such thinking wrong. Grumbling caused Tidwell to request a vote of support, which he received.

He tallied wagons, teams, supplies, those who needed help, those who could take an extra person or extra baggage, and those still figuring out their situations, person by person. For example, Telemachus Rogers said he could take one person, John Andrews needed to sell his things in order to go, William Watts said it would be a “pretty good push” for him to get away, Sarah Allen needed to “join teams” and lacked some provisions, and Andrew Whitlock needed help transporting some of his family of ten but disliked having their names “on the poor list.” Tidwell calculated that “we shall be under the necessity of deviding families in different wagons” and hoped not to hurt the feelings of any involved. Members pledged to donate items for the poor, including whips, lathes, gloves, blacksmithing, groceries, corn, potatoes, and small amounts of cash ranging from fifty cents to a dollar. No one would take one sister because of her “spirit of contention,” but she repented in time. Tidwell noted that “in this branch there is a portion that is willing to do right and there is others that is eternally fault finding complaining and barking like a dog.” He asked for and received a renewed sustaining vote for his presidency.

On April 27, Tidwell grouped his branch into four companies of “ten,”¹⁰⁵ each with a captain. In May the branch agreed to sell its schoolhouse to raise travel funds. His company waited at the North Ferry “untill the crowd of Californians have passed over.” On June 8, Elder Benson visited the company’s campsite near the upper ferry and organized them as the Fifth Company. According to the company’s clerk,

105. A “ten” was a group of roughly ten wagons. This unit was the workhorse in the pioneer company organization. A captain of ten knew everyone in his group, and they camped together; the whole company did not camp as one. A group of ten dealt with problems such as breakdowns, illness, or death. A captain of fifty was an “executive director” and kept track of how his five tens were doing. Often, after passing Ft. Laramie, companies with two fifties would split and travel separately for the last weeks of the journey. In rare cases, the term “ten” refers to ten people.

George Bowering, it contained 329 people, 61 wagons (or 5.4 people per wagon), 217 oxen (or 3.6 per wagon), 164 cows, 25 sheep, 14 horses, and 77 men fit for duty. Elder Benson read rules for the company to observe on the trail: prayers night and morning, a meeting each Sabbath, no swearing, guards kept every night who called out every half hour, horses corralled at night for safety, but cattle kept outside, not corralled. No one could leave the camp without the captain's permission, every man needed to have a "good gun and ammunition," and guns must be put in the wagon "with a cap on to avoid accident, and put a piece of leather over the tube." They were also instructed to treat their animals "with the utmost kindness."

Aggravated by high winds and drunk ferry operators, the Tidwell tens needed five days to cross the river, June 11–15. Then, when they tried to start west, heavy rains fell, a blacksmith died of cholera, and an elderly woman's runaway horses crashed her wagon and killed her. Finally, on June 16, the season's Fifth Company started its journey.

Other Branches as Companies

In preparation, the Lake Branch Company paid men to haul lumber and construct wagons and voted that "every man shall give his tenth days labour untill we start for the valley or all the poor supplied." They agreed that "any requiring help of teams wagons or provisions etc. shall give his promisory note to pay as soon as he is able to return the property with interest on his or her arrival at the Valley."¹⁰⁶ They joined Henry Jolley's Seventh Company. Elder Benson organized that Seventh Company for the Macedonia Branch nineteen miles east of Kanessville. Some unsuccessfully voted against Jolley as captain, wanting Washington Lemmons instead. Passengers included residents from the Six-Mile Settlement (Barney's Grove).¹⁰⁷

In November 1851, Elder Benson organized the North Pigeon Branch, with Benjamin Gardner as captain and with two counselors.¹⁰⁸ Some

106. Lake Branch, Iowa, Records, Church History Library.

107. On Macedonia, see "Macedonia Branch, Iowa, Record"; Ronald O. Barney, *One Side by Himself: The Life and Times of Lewis Barney, 1808–1894* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2001), 132; William Reynolds Terry, Journal, photocopy of holograph, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Contemporary sources sometimes spelled Jolley's name as "Jolly."

108. Benjamin Gardner, Notebook, 1851–62: History of the North Pigeon Company, Church History Library.

disaffected members stayed behind and on July 11 organized their own branch. In that meeting, one spoke “harsh things” about Brigham Young, and another said Young was the “beast Daniel saw,” while a third called Brigham Young a usurper of authority. The stay-backs continued to meet in the North Pigeon tabernacle.¹⁰⁹ The Plum Hollow Branch chose Louis Zabriskie as their captain, organized into tens, and traveled in the small Warren Snow (unnumbered) Company.¹¹⁰ The Welsh Branch (Thirteenth Company), located on bottomlands between Kaneshville and the Missouri River, had 113 or more members, most of whom had arrived there in 1849. In late June 1852, the branch, augmented by new arrivals from St. Louis, formed a “fifty” that included some English and French. Branch president William Morgan served as captain.¹¹¹

Members of the McOlney Branch (Fourteenth Company), a few miles north of Kaneshville, made up most of the two hundred passengers in the John B. Walker Company. In an unnamed branch, George Mason recalled that ten or twelve families, location not stated, “all started together” and became part of the Henry Miller (Twentieth) Company on July 8.¹¹² The bishop of the Harris Grove Branch organized it into tens, and with assistance from the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, they traveled with the Allen Weeks (Twenty-first) Company.¹¹³ Bishop William West Lane of the Church’s “Poor Farm,” or Lanesborough Branch, far north of Kaneshville, led his members across the Missouri but died soon after, causing the company to merge into another one (unidentified).¹¹⁴

109. North Pigeon Branch Record, Church History Library.

110. Plum Hollow (Iowa) Branch, Historical Record and List of Members, Church History Library.

111. William Morgan, “A Letter [June 22, 1852] to Presidents W. S. Phillips and John Davis,” in Ronald D. Dennis, *The Call of Zion: The Story of the First Welsh Mormon Emigration* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1987), 233. Earlier in the book the author describes the Welsh wagon company’s beginnings and journey (66–77).

112. George Mason, Autobiographical Sketch [c. 1883], 2–3, Church History Library, excerpted online in Henry W. Miller Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

113. Harris Grove Branch Records, Church History Library; Fanny Parks Taggart Autobiography, 24, Church History Library, excerpted online in Allen Weeks Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*. The Allen Weeks Company site also lists as sources the roster in the *Harris Grove Branch record* and a *William B. Adams report* in the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company general files.

114. Davis Clark, Autobiography, in Erol Clark Wiscombe, *The Descendants of Maria Burr, John Clark and William West Lane* [1975], 12–14, Family

In 1852, the Mt. Pisgah settlement, about 100 miles east of Kanesville, broke up, and its people headed west.¹¹⁵ Late in May, a William Morley Black wagon group from Burlington, Iowa (on the Mississippi River), linked up with the James C. Snow Company, then traveled alone. Later, twenty wagons from the Wimmer Company joined them, making forty wagons total.¹¹⁶

Hundreds from St. Louis, including newly arrived European emigrants, journeyed up to Kanesville and joined the Iowa companies.¹¹⁷ The Eli B. Kelsey (Nineteenth) Company consisted of many newly immigrated Europeans who had left St. Louis on the steamboat *Saluda* and survived its deadly explosion at Lexington, Missouri (see below).¹¹⁸ As the table above shows, at least five groups of Saints went partway up the Missouri River from St. Louis, then crossed through Kansas to reach Fort Laramie, rather than go up to Kanesville.

Elder Hyde, one of the last to leave Kanesville, gave a Fourth of July address there, then left the next morning. His family group, three wagons, and two teamsters traveled in the Henry Miller (Twentieth) Company.¹¹⁹

History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, excerpted online in William Lane West Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

115. "Mount Pisgah," in Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1941), 547.

116. William Morley Black, "Sketch of the Life of William Morley Black," Church History Library, excerpted online in William Morley Black Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

117. William Lang, Autobiographical Sketch, 3–4, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, excerpted online in William Lang Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*. Regarding St. Louis people, see Charles Sansom, Diary, in History of Charles Sansom, 1907, 12–80, in Charles Sansom, Autobiography and journals, 1873–1907, Church History Library, excerpted online in John Tidwell Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*. Harrison Peck's family of six was in the Tidwell Company. John Woodhouse, Autobiography, [1916,] 22–25, Church History Library, excerpted online in James Jepson Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

118. William G. Hartley and Fred E. Woods, *Explosion of the Steamboat Saluda: A Story of Disaster and Compassion Involving Mormon Emigrants and the Town of Lexington, Missouri, in April 1852* (Salt Lake City: Millennial Press, 2002). Identified LDS passengers are in a chart on pp. 73–78.

119. Hyde, *Orson Hyde*, 293, 297.

The Mormon Trail's Largest Traffic Year

Diary and reminiscent accounts by people who traveled the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails in 1852 describe extra dust, regular competition for campsites, grass and buffalo chips being already used up, and other wagon trains often being in sight. John Unruh, in his landmark study *The Plains Across*, estimates that in 1852 on the overland trails 50,000 people went to California, 10,000 went to Oregon, and 10,000 went to Utah, making that year the trails' busiest traffic year of all time.¹²⁰ Elder Benson estimated 10,000 LDS emigrants, and so did east-bound traveler Thomas Margetts. Margetts and five men with him traveled from Fort Laramie along the north side of the Platte, the Mormon Trail side, and passed "one perfect camp from starting in the morning till we stopped at night" and also saw "as many wagons" on the south side. By mid-Nebraska they encountered westbound LDS companies "nearly every day" and met in total "about one thousand four hundred 'Mormon' teams, and not less than ten thousand Saints on their way, that is, including those waiting to cross at the ferry" near Kanessville.¹²¹ Although the LDS Church's constantly updated *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel* website currently identifies by name only 5,659 LDS 1852 trail travelers, its lists are admittedly very incomplete. But even its undercount is the largest yearly total in any Mormon Trail year before 1852 or after. More LDS emigrants crossed the plains in 1852 than in any other year.

Iowa LDS wagon companies rarely saw travelers bound for Oregon or California because those wagon trains, having farther to go, left earlier than those going to Utah. But they regularly passed, camped with, or were passed by their fellow westbound Mormon companies. Companies 10 (Gardner), 11 (McGaw), and 12 (Cutler) "traveled together for several hundred miles for mutual protection," Ada Phippen later recalled, often leap-frogging each other in July.¹²² On August 19, the McGaws passed the Gardners and two days later passed the Stewart (9th) Company. Near

120. Unruh, *Plains Across*, 120. Judge W. T. Smith, whose company arrived from California in Kanessville on July 15, said that between South Pass and Kanessville they had passed nearly 15,000 teams and 40,000 people, "the greater part of them on the north route." See "Highly Important from California and the Plains," *Frontier Guardian and Iowa Sentinel*, July 23, 1852.

121. From "Intelligence from the Western Plains: Extract of a Letter from Elder Thomas Margetts, Kanessville, July 4th, 1852," *Millennial Star* 14 (September 11, 1852): 460–61.

122. Phippen, "History of Isaac Phippen."

Chimney Rock, on August 20, the Kelsey (19th) and Weeks (21st) trains camped about ten miles apart, and near Fort Laramie the Kelseys passed the Weekses on August 26. On August 28, the Snow (18th) Company's clerk noted that "for the past week we have passed and repassed several companys," including the Wimmer (15th) and Curtis (16th) companies, and two "tens" from other companies.¹²³ Beyond Pacific Springs, the Kelsey Company traveled with or near Captain De La Mare's big Deseret freight wagon train. On October 6, the Kelsey Company overtook the Weeks train again, and the next day both companies crossed the Bear River and headed down Echo Canyon, nearly home.¹²⁴

Cholera, rampant on the trails in 1849 and 1850, also plagued the 1852 companies, most of which suffered cholera outbreaks mainly between the Loup Fork and Fort Laramie. Several had rather high death tolls, such as Smoot's European PEF train from St. Louis that lost eleven to cholera.¹²⁵ Trail scholar Mel Bashore estimates that ninety-nine Mormon emigrants died of cholera in 1852, making it perhaps the Mormon Trail's worst cholera year.¹²⁶

Most of the 1852 LDS emigration left Kaneshville in June and for about three months progressed an average of two miles per hour, ten to twelve miles per day. They arrived in Great Salt Lake City between mid-August and November. The twenty-one companies averaged 98 days to reach Salt Lake City, or twelve weeks. By contrast, the famous first 1847 pioneer company took 111 days; in 1856, the first three handcart companies

123. James Chauncey Snow Emigrating Company, Journal, 1852 July–Oct., Church History Library, online in James C. Snow Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

124. Based on individual wagon train accounts as posted on *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel* website for 1852. Citing each specific one I drew from to show these connections is too complicated to include here.

125. Abraham O. Smoot to Brigham Young, July 7, 1852, Church History Library, online in Abraham O. Smoot Company, 1852, *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*.

126. Melvin L. Bashore to the author, email, February 21, 2002, copy in author's files. See also Patricia Rushton, "Cholera and Its Impact on Nineteenth-Century Mormon Migration," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 123–44; Roger P. Blair, "'The Doctor Gets Some Practice': Cholera and Medicine on the Overland Trails," *Journal of the West* 36 (January 1997): 54–66; Shane A. Baker, "Illness and Mortality in Nineteenth-Century Mormon Immigration," *Mormon Historical Studies* 2 (Fall 2001): 86; and Robert W. Carter, "'Sometimes When I Hear the Winds Sigh': Mortality on the Overland Trail," *California History* 74 (Summer 1995): 146–61.

needed 65 days and three wagon trains required 77 days (from Florence); and in 1861 the thirteen LDS wagon trains averaged 73 days.¹²⁷ According to the First Presidency's Eighth General Epistle, dated October 13, 1852, many of the companies "were late in their emigration this year" such that "for the last two or three weeks, have suffered from occasional snow storms in the mountains, which retarded their progress." Because delays and snow "helped to make them short of provisions . . . some two hundred or more teams and wagons went from the Valley to their assistance, taking to the various camps some forty or fifty thousand pounds of flour, and large supplies of vegetables, which enabled them to come in, in safety."¹²⁸

Because Utah became a territory late in 1850, it took that year's federal census count late, completing it on April 1, 1851. It showed 11,354 inhabitants.¹²⁹ That year, 1851, trail emigrants added perhaps 5,000 to Utah's population. Thus, in 1852, the arrival of between 6,000 and 10,000 newcomers increased Utah's population by nearly 50 percent.¹³⁰

Successful Evacuation Campaign

On August 20, 1852, Elders Benson, Grant, Taylor, Snow, and Richards reached Salt Lake City. One company had arrived before them. Eight days later, President Young conducted a special conference for more than one hundred men called on missions, the biggest wave of missionaries yet sent out from Utah. To these men he praised the Iowa evacuations that now made it possible to boost missionary numbers: "There are a great many coming; bro. Benson says all are coming, even the great grand daddies, and great grand mammies; uncles and aunts, all are coming, and I am glad of it; I rejoice for it puts us in a position that we can send out elders from this place into all the world; whereas, before, our circumstances needed all the men we had here to prepare for the gathering of the saints."¹³¹

127. William G. Hartley, "The Great Florence Fitout of 1861," *BYU Studies* 24, no. 3 (1984): 367.

128. "Eighth General Epistle of the Presidency," October 13, 1852, in Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 2:104.

129. "Historical Notes," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (April 1960): 189–92.

130. Thomas Bullock estimated that by April 1852 Utah had perhaps 20,000 residents. Bullock to John M. Bernhisel, April 28, 1852, in *Journal History*, that date.

131. Conference minutes, *Journal History*, August 28, 1852.

That same day, President Young wrote to John Bernhisel, “We are now prepared to send out Elders to the nations.” The next day in the special conference, August 29, Elder Orson Pratt publicly announced for the Church its practice of plural marriage, which announcement the missionaries would take with them to their fields of labor.¹³²

The Presidency considered the orchestrated 1852 emigration effort a success. They rejoiced that “Israel is coming home in crowds, like doves to their windows.” They explained to readers churchwide that “Elders Ezra T. Benson and Jedediah M. Grant returned . . . from their mission to Pottawatamie, which they left almost entirely vacated by the Saints, who are now in the Valley; many of whom began to prepare to come over the plains, with hand-carts and wheel-barrows, but when the Lord saw they were determined to come home, at all hazards, He opened their way to have wagons and teams, even to the last family that wanted to come.”¹³³

As fast as the emigrants arrived, the *Deseret News* noted, they were “generally desirous of obtaining information concerning their friends, and the settlements and locations in these valleys.” Newcomers received advice from several specially appointed bishops: Nathaniel H. Felt at the Public Works, Abraham Hoagland of the 14th Ward, Seth Taft of the 8th Ward, Devid Pettegrew of the 10th Ward, Alfred Cordon at the Pottery, Abraham O. Smoot of the 15th Ward, and John Banks in Battle Creek in Utah County.¹³⁴

On August 22, Apostle John Taylor, who had just returned from a mission to Europe, told a Salt Lake audience, “It gave me great joy, on my way home, to find the Saints leaving Kanessville. It seemed as though they were swept out with a besom [broom] almost.” While there, between May 28 and July 4, “I rode out in my carriage one day to a place called Council Point. I thought I would go and visit some of the folks there, but, when I got there, behold, there were no folks to see.” He found a stranger who had just come to town. “And the people have all left?” he asked the stranger. “Yes.” Taylor saw three people total. “When I first reflected upon this removal,” he said, he felt amazed that the poor and decrepit also were gone. “Thank God, they are coming, nearly all, old and young, rich and poor.”¹³⁵

132. Brigham Young to John M. Bernhisel, August 28, 1852, *Journal History*, that date.

133. First Presidency, Eighth General Epistle, 101, 104.

134. “The Emigrating Saints,” *Deseret News*, September 18, 1852, 3.

135. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 1:18, August 22, 1852.

During the October 1852 general conference, President Young called for one hundred families to go to Iron County to assist with the iron works there, and one hundred families to go to Millard County, the territory's new capital. This invitation was open to all, including those fresh from Iowa. He told newcomers that Salt Lake Valley was pretty much taken up with farms, and the wood used up, so they should, as Elder Hyde said, "go where neighbors are few and get the best places for farms. . . . The word is, go south and fill up the vallies."¹³⁶

Nauvoo Covenant Fulfilled

When set up in 1849, the Perpetual Emigrating Fund's primary purpose was to fulfill the Nauvoo covenant to help "bring home the poor Saints who were driven from Nauvoo."¹³⁷ How much PEF help the 1852 emigrants received cannot be determined because surviving PEF records for the early 1850s are of mixed types, are not filed together by year, and are very incomplete. However, the PEF was deeply involved. Included in Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company documents are several passenger lists and scraps related to most of the 1852 companies (but lacking PEF accountings), and two PEF promissory notes signed by 1852 emigrants upon reaching Utah.¹³⁸ Evacuation directors Benson and Grant were PEF officers. Historian Gustive O. Larson observed that when the 1852 emigration season closed, "all the exiles from Nauvoo who wished to come had been removed to Zion," which meant that "the obligations of the Nauvoo pledge of 1846 had been faithfully discharged."¹³⁹ After that, PEF funds were directed to helping European Saints.

136. [General Conference] "Minutes," *Deseret News*, October 16, 1852, 2.

137. *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847-1850*, ed. William S. Harwell (Salt Lake City: Colliers, 1995), 335.

138. William Davies, bishop of the Welch branch, signed a note promising to "pay on demand" \$100 "on account of the Perpetual Emigration fund," and Mary A. Pratt signed a note to pay the PEF \$59.87 for "said company assisting myself and three children from Kanessville Iowa" in 1852. The Davies (Morgan Company) and Pratt (Tidwell Company) notes are in Perpetual Emigrating Fund, Bonds and Promissary Notes, 1852-56, Church History Library. Passenger lists or other items related to companies 1, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21 and the Edmund, Lane, and Dunn small companies are found in the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, General Files, 1849-98, Church History Library. It is possible these companies' documents were given to Elder Benson and he brought them to Utah.

139. Larson, *Prelude to the Kingdom*, 113.

Historians lack the thorough demographic research necessary to do more than guess how many ex-Nauvooers did *not* go to Utah. Possibly 2,000 Nauvooers never participated in the exodus across Iowa. Of those Saints who spent time by the Missouri River, which includes non-Nauvooers, Richard Bennett has estimated that about 2,000 might have disaffected between 1846 and 1852.¹⁴⁰ In southwestern Iowa, among the LDS “remnants” who remained and the “go backs” who left Utah, many became receptive to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS, now called the Community of Christ) message by and after 1860. In 1870, at least thirty-seven RLDS branches dotted southwestern Iowa.¹⁴¹

Other 1852 Emigration Developments

With authorization from the First Presidency, Apostle Franklin Richards sent from Liverpool in 1852 the first two European emigrant ship companies funded at least partially by the PEF. Of the 700 passengers, the fund helped 251, of which 226, as prearranged, joined the Smoot wagon train (see chart above). Captain Smoot’s 33 wagons, 24 of which were PEF wagons, and 55 yoke of PEF oxen received a warm welcome in Utah for being the first European PEF emigrants.¹⁴² That year also saw the first LDS party from Scandinavia, some twenty-eight souls, come to America. They joined the Kelsey Company.

When Saints pulled out of Kanesville, remaining residents renamed the place Council Bluffs. After 1852, LDS wagon trains no longer outfitted in that Winter Quarters–Kanesville region, ending a five-year practice, but instead outfitted in Keokuk (1853); the Kansas City area (1854); Mormon Grove, Kansas (1855); and Iowa City (1856).

As already noted, after 1852 the Church adopted a new “straight-through” emigrating policy whereby emigrants had to “accomplish the entire journey to the Valley without detention.”¹⁴³ This change required

140. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 227.

141. Regarding the early RLDS presence in the region, see Pearl Wilcox, *Roots of the Reorganized Latter Day Saints in Southern Iowa* (Independence, Mo.: Pearl G Wilcox, 1989); and Barbara J. Bernauer, “Gathering the Remnants: Establishing the RLDS Church in Southwestern Iowa,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 20 (2000): 5–33.

142. Smoot to Young, July 7, 1852. Also see several entries in *Journal History*, September 3, 1852.

143. Jenson, “Church Emigration, IX, Emigration from 1852 to 1855,” *Contributor* 13 (January 1892): 131–38; “Sixth General Epistle of the Presidency of the Church.”

that ships be booked to leave Liverpool in January and February instead of in the fall.¹⁴⁴

On April 9, 1852, the Missouri River steamboat *Saluda*, carrying nearly one hundred Saints, exploded at Lexington, Missouri, killing twenty-nine Mormons on board. Many survivors reached Kanesville and went west in the Kelsey wagon train.¹⁴⁵

Also notable in 1852 was the near-use of handcarts, a plan that came to fruition between 1856 and 1860 when ten handcart companies rolled west and one (of missionaries) went east.¹⁴⁶

Rebecca Winters's Grave: An 1852 Trail Memorial

Other than Elders Orson Hyde and Ezra T. Benson, perhaps Rebecca Winters is the best known 1852 Mormon Trail traveler, because of her grave. A convert to Mormonism in 1833 and an ex-Nauvooer, in 1852 she and husband Hiram and family left Kanesville in the Snow (Eighteenth) Company. On August 15, near Scotts Bluff, Nebraska, cholera killed her. A friend chiseled her name and age on an iron wheel rim. Later, Burlington Railroad surveyors discovered her grave and, to not disturb it, relocated the tracks. As one of but few surviving marked graves of all who died crossing the plains, the "Rebecca Winters Grave" is a major site that all trail guidebooks laud.¹⁴⁷ Her wheel-rimmed 1852 marker serves as a quiet memorial to the Mormon Trail's busiest year.

Conclusion

With the arrival of the last Iowa company on October 16, a notable case closed of a difficult assignment given and a difficult assignment capably fulfilled. Had the First Presidency held a "mission complete" celebration, several who made the successful evacuations happen could have been honored. The four 1851 letters that provided orders and encouragement deserve a "motivators' award." Elder Benson's individual work

144. Minutes of the Special General Council, London, April 5–9, 1852, in *Millennial Star* 14 (June 12, 1852): 243–47.

145. Hartley and Woods, *Explosion of the Steamboat Saluda*.

146. LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion, 1856–1860* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1976); and Karen Ann Griggs, "Handcarts Going East: The 1857 Missionaries," *Journal of Mormon History* 35 (Spring 2009): 191–237.

147. For example, see Gregory M. Franzwa, *The Mormon Trail Revisited* (Tooele, Utah: Patrice Press, 2007), 126–28. Her grave is two miles east of Scotts Bluff, Nebraska, via U.S. 26.

with branch after branch, appointing company leaders, insisting that the poor be assisted, and then overseeing the wagon train departures, merit an “outstanding leadership” honor. The Iowa Saints’ willingness to respond deserves accolades, too, because so many, in order to obey the Presidency and Elder Benson, sacrificed cabins and good farms, struggled to come up with wagons and teams, and reached out to assist those unable to go on their own resources. Finally, toasts and ovations hardly do justice to the men who changed their branch president hats for “wagon captain” boots. Despite no such celebration, the arrival of the last Iowa company let Church emigration history close one vital chapter and turn the page to a new one, the large-scale emigration from Europe that characterized the 1850s and 1860s.

William G. Hartley (who can be reached via email at byustudies@byu.edu) retired in August 2009 from BYU, where he spent twenty-nine years with the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History and the History Department writing LDS history and teaching. He received BA and MA degrees in history from BYU and completed doctoral course work in history at Washington State University. His research specializes in three arenas: the historical development of organizations and priesthood offices in the LDS Church, nineteenth-century LDS emigration, and writing family biographies.

He has been a board member and president of the Mormon History Association and founding president of the Mormon Trails Association. He has served on the editorial boards for the *Journal of Mormon History* and *Mormon Historical Studies*. He is a coeditor of three forthcoming Joseph Smith Papers volumes, and serves as the history consultant for the KSL-TV weekly Sunday documentary program *History of the Saints*.

He has authored fourteen books and more than 120 articles and chapters dealing with LDS history and biographies, and is recipient of five best book awards and four best article awards from the Association for Mormon Letters, Utah Historical Society, Mormon History Association, and the John Whitmer Historical Association.

Bill’s interest in Mormon Trail emigration began with studies he did as a member of Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington’s History Division (1972–1980), aided by Mormon Trail guru Stanley B. Kimball, who helped turn Bill into a “trail junkie.” Bill assisted the National Park Service in locating and mapping the Iowa Mormon Trail. He and Susan Black coedited *The Iowa Mormon Trail* (1997). He has published numerous articles and book chapters related to Mormon Trail history, several of which focus on particular emigration seasons (1846, 1847, 1848, 1849, 1856, and 1861–1865). His current projects include a book dealing with the Mormon Trail and its emigrants for the entire time the trail was in use, 1846 through 1868.