JOHN C. FREMONT'S EXPEDITIONS INTO UTAH:
AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EXPLORER'S CONTRIBUTIONS
AND SIGNIFICANCE TO THE REGION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

John C. Fremont's Significance as an Explorer

John Charles Fremont has been celebrated as one of the most noted explorers of the American West. During a period of some twelve years (1842-1854) he personally led and directed five western expeditions. But Fremont's renown as an explorer does not lie in the fact that he was the first on the scene. On the contrary, almost three quarters of a century prior to his expeditions trappers and mountain men such as Joseph Walker, Jedediah Smith, William Sublette had traversed the West. In addition, numerous western explorations had already been undertaken by such notables as the Spanish Fathers Dominguez and Escalante (1776), Meriwether Lewis and William Clark (1804-1806), Zebulon Montgomery Pike (1806-1807), the Astorians led by Wilson Price Hunt and Robert Stuart (1811-1812), Stephen H. Long (1819-1820), and Benjamin L. E. Bonneville (1832-1835), to mention a few. Since there were so many "pathfinders" who went before him, Allan Nevin's has labeled him as America's great "pathmarker." Although such a title is appropriate one for Fremont, it does not entirely nor adequately portray
the real reason for his significance as an explorer.

John Charles Fremont's distinction as being an esteemed explorer of the American West stems from his education and scientific training and background. During his formative years he was privileged to be schooled in the finest private institutions, and tutored by the best educators in Charleston, South Carolina. By the age of sixteen he had not only mastered the subjects of botany, mathematics, and chemistry, but he was also allowed to enroll in the prestigious Charleston College. In 1835, at the young age of twenty-two, he turned down an appointment to be a professor of mathematics in the navy in order to assist in a railroad survey from Kentucky to South Carolina under the direction of Lieutenant Richard M. White. This marked the beginning of his exploration career. The following year in the autumn of 1836, he participated in his second survey under Captain W.G. Williams. This expedition ascertained the boundaries of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia, and gave the government some idea concerning the region in case troops needed to be sent against the disgruntled Cherokees who were about to be relocated.

Fremont's future as an explorer took a turn for the better when he was assigned to be the chief assistant to the famous French scholar and scientist, Joseph Nicolas Nicollet, on an expedition to the upper Mississippi in 1838, and to the Dakota region on the Missouri in 1839. The association he had with Nicollet while on these two
expeditions marked the beginning of a close personal and professional friendship between the two men. During the years 1838-42, Nicollet personally trained John Charles in surveying, botanical and geological observation, and topographical work. By 1841, Fremont had become so proficient at this type of work, that when Nicollet was too ill to personally lead the survey of the Des Moines River, Fremont went in his place. Then, in 1842, the government allocated funds to the U.S. Army Topographical Corps of Engineers to proceed with a survey to South Pass. Once again, the corp's leaders had hoped Nicollet could lead the western expedition, however his health continued to worsen until it became obvious he would never recover. Fremont was subsequently selected in his place, and it was the events associated with the 1842 expedition which brought him his initial fame as an explorer. As expected, Nicollet died in September of 1843, but had he recovered, more than likely he would have led the expeditions which brought Fremont his notoriety. In the years that followed, John Charles recognized his former teacher by giving him much of the credit for the success he experienced as an explorer.

Fremont's historical prominence lies in the fact that that he was the first thoroughly trained scientist-explorer to accurately map the Far West region, and it was from this standpoint that he approached his explorations—that of gathering quality new-found data. For example, during his 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions he made
scientific calculations such as longitude and latitude measurements based upon daily astronomical calculations (in order to determine precise location), wind movements, temperature readings of the atmosphere as well as streams, springs, and major bodies of water, and barametrical readings. He also employed cartographers to compose meticulous topographical maps and drawings of the major geographic landmarks. In addition, he collected countless rock, flora, and animal specimens along the trail. Prior to Fremont, the West had never been explored in such a manner. With the completion of his second expedition in 1844, the scientist-explorer had set an exploration standard, one which western explorers who subsequently followed him modeled and patterned. With a few exceptions, the West was no longer explored by the untrained and uneducated. John C. Fremont set an important precedent for future western exploration.

While Fremont's contributions as a scientist-explorer cannot be underestimated, his greatest influence may have been on the entire American populace. Following the completion of his second expedition, John Charles returned to Washington where he labored for several months, along with his wife Jessie who acted as scribe, to compile his field notes, scientific calculations, and personal observations of the West into a smooth-flowing, day-by-day narrative. Written in a somewhat romantic style characteristic of the early nineteenth century, the Report,
which combined the narratives of his 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions, was so inclusive and detailed that it was published by the authority of an act of Congress. Portions of Fremont's narrative also found their way into the printing offices of hundreds of the nation's newspaper editors who subsequently published excerpts of his travels in their columns. With such widespread publicity about Fremont's expeditions, news of them reached much of the average citizenry. Although it is difficult to determine, John C. Fremont may have been the most publicized figure in the United States in the mid-1840's, and his writings about his discoveries and adventures in the Far West are often credited with igniting the flame of westward expansionism.

While Fremont's most celebrated and most scientifically acclaimed expeditions were in 1842 (to the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming), and in 1843-44 (which brought him into the interior of the Rockies as well to the Pacific Coast), he also conducted three subsequent explorations to the West in 1845, 1848-49, and 1853-54. While the latter three expeditions were not as significant in influencing the American public, and perhaps were undertaken for political reasons, still, Fremont approached them from a scientific standpoint. He was first and foremost a scientist, and each of his journeys, regardless of their intent, were pursued with scientific objectives.
Fremont in Utah

The explorer’s connection with the area now known as Utah makes for both an informative and fascinating narrative, which is the main focus of this paper. Fremont was indeed impressed with Utah’s unique geologic features and diversity and he realized settlements were definite possibilities in numerous locations where water was plentiful. While most of the American populace in the 1840’s viewed California and the Pacific Northwest as the most desirable area that their nation should acquire, Fremont realized that the Rocky Mountain interior should not be overlooked in the quest for a nation stretching from sea to sea. While it is clear that the arid area known as the Great Basin (the title given to the region by Fremont) was inferior in terms of agricultural productivity to that of the Atlantic or Pacific regions, the explorer still concluded that within the basin "an element of individual and national wealth may be found." Although the exploration of the Utah region was never Fremont’s main objective, perhaps it was his keen personal interest in the region that caused the great pathmarker to spend a considerable amount of exploration time in the area on four separate occasions during three of his western expeditions.

Fremont’s first entry into the state occurred during the late summer of 1843 while on his second expedition—his final destination being Oregon and California. In company with a small contingency of the
expeditionary force the group penetrated as far south as the Weber River near the present site of Ogden. The main objective of the exploring company was to examine the Great Salt Lake and surrounding territory.

During the spring of 1844, John Charles and his men entered Utah a second time while on the return trip from the West Coast. The objectives of this "last leg" of the expedition was to define the boundaries of the Great Basin and to obtain a clearer understanding of the relationship between the Great Salt Lake and its tributary Utah Lake. The expedition entered Utah in the extreme southwest portion of the state, following the Old Spanish Trail northward. Leaving the established trail in the central portion of the state, the group proceeded as far north as the southern end of Utah Lake, then headed east to Brown's Hole on the Utah-Colorado border by traversing the region known today as the Uinta Basin.

Upon the completion of his second expedition, John Charles went to Washington where he, in collaboration with his wife Jessie, wrote the report of his 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions. The treatise, more simply known as Fremont's Report, was initially published as a Senate document, therefore no copyright was issued and the Report was reprinted by various independent publishers and newspaper editors. Records indicate that Mormon leaders in Illinois were able to obtain copies of the Report, and were profoundly influenced by reading the explorer's favorable
reports about the region.

As soon as John Charles Fremont had completed the manuscript and publication of his Report, he was off on yet another expedition (his third) in 1845. His final destination was California, but in getting there he once again went through Utah. Nearly retracing his eastward trek through the eastern portion of the state of the year before, Fremont entered Utah traveling west through the Uinta Basin and descended into Utah Valley by following the Provo River. His stay in the vicinity of the two largest lakes in Utah was lengthy, approximately two weeks. Heading west along the southern edge of the saline lake, the explorer marked a path westward through the Utah-Nevada deserts. This trail came to have a profound effect on future western travelers who were seeking a shortcut to the glitter and gold of California.

In 1853-54, Fremont led his last expedition to the West. With the backing of his father-in-law, Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, it was hoped that an expeditionary force would be able to locate a central railroad route from Missouri to the Pacific. His experiences within Utah's confines on this occasion were less than desirable. Determined to prove that a central railroad route was the most logical course for the nation's transcontinental railroad, the explorer led this expedition through the southern Colorado Plateau during the dead of winter. After traveling for several weeks in terrible inclement weather
with little food, the party might very well have met an untimely death had it not been for their arrival at the southern Utah Mormon community of Parowan.

In doing research on this topic, the primary areas of focus has been the following: (1) to determine, where possible, Fremont's course of travel while in the confines of the state; (2) to historically reconstruct the significant events of each expedition into Utah, using primary sources which have not been included in previous research, thereby providing greater insight into Fremont's "Utah connection;" (3) to determine to what extent the Mormon's were influenced by Fremont's expeditions; and (4) to examine the historical, geographical, and economical influence the expeditions had on the state.

Bibliographical Review of Literature Surrounding Fremont's Activities in Utah

In reviewing the secondary source materials about Fremont, the writer has come to the conclusion that the three expeditions he conducted into Utah (1843-44, 1845, and 1854) have been noted in only a small degree by a relatively few number of historians, and much more could be written. For example the best Fremont biographies such as Hildegarde Hawthorne's Born to Adventure: The Story of John Charles Fremont (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1947); Alice Eyre's The Famous Fremont's and Their America (Santa Ana: Fine Arts Press, 1948); Allan Nevins' Fremont, Pathmarker of the West (New York: Longmans, Green, 1955); and the most
recent and conclusive being Ferol Egan’s *Fremont, Explorer for a Restless Nation* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977); include only a scant portion of material about the explorer’s activities in Utah. However, the writer understands the problems associated with biography, and the limited portions of Fremont-Utah material found in these narratives can only be considered as being acceptable and practical for biographical writing.

A twenty year project conducted by two thoroughly trained historians culminated in the production of the most comprehensive work about Fremont’s expeditions, simply entitled *The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont*, edited by Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970, 1973, and 1984). In this three volume set, Jackson and Spence were able for the first time to compile all of the known and available personal papers and correspondence associated with Fremont’s expeditions. It should be noted that the majority of the material included in Jackson and Spence’s compilation has already been published previously. For example, volume one is essentially a reprint of Fremont’s 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions. Usually known simply as Fremont’s *Report*, this document has been published and republished (under various titles) many times since its initial printing in 1845. Thus, the bulk of what they published is not necessarily "new." However, the editors have included with the Fremont narratives previously unpublished letters and correspondence
of the explorer. It is the inclusion of these documents in the three volume work which makes this publication of such great worth.

Another contribution by Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence was their use of footnotes to identify geographic locations of the routes of each of the five expeditions. The researchers traced virtually every step of the journeys of the explorer in order to know the precise routes he followed. Footnotes were also used by the editors to give biographical and historical commentary where needed. All of the research provided by Jackson and Spence proved helpful in providing some additional information concerning Fremont’s Utah connection, but their work is broad; and by using other sources, such as the journals of his companions, newspaper accounts, and Mormon documents, the writer was able to secure a wealth of additional source material.

William H. Goetzmann has published two major historical works with considerable information included about Fremont under the titles Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), and Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in Winning the American West (New York: Knopf, 1966). Since John Charles Fremont was a commissioned officer in the Army Corp of Topographical Engineers during his first three expeditions (1842, 1843-44, and 1845), the explorer plays a major part in Goetzmann’s reconstruction of western exploration. However, in reviewing Goetzmann’s
treatise of John Charles in *Army Exploration in the American West*, it was discovered that the historian examines Fremont's expeditions in relationship to westward expansion and the "manifest destiny" theme, with only a brief mention of Fremont's activities in Utah. And, since Fremont's last expedition into Utah in 1853-54 was a private venture and not government-sponsored, Goetzmann makes no mention of this exploration.

The latter work, *Exploration and Empire*, is a broad yet definitive study which examines the entire scope of both private and government-sponsored western explorations during the nineteenth century. Goetzmann includes a considerable amount of material about Fremont's expeditions, but once again, his inclusion about the pathmarker is treated in somewhat general terms. The strength of this work is Goetzmann's model wherein he divides the era's of western exploration into three phases or periods, namely; (1) "Exploration and Imperialism: 1805-1845," or the period in which exploration was part of the international competition for occupancy of the West; (2) "The Great Reconnaissance and Manifest Destiny: 1845-1860," the period during which the explorers assisted in the emigration and development of western lands; and (3) "Exploration and the Great Surveys: 1860-1900," or the period which was characteristic of expeditions conducted with the intent of accomplishing more intensive scientific reconnaissances and detailed inventories. It is the opinion of the writer that Fremont's
five expeditions can be properly classified into Goetzmann’s first two categories of his theoretical model, with only a slight clarification. Since Fremont’s first three expeditions (1842, 1843-44, and 1845) were conducted during the closing years of the first phase (1805-1845) and the beginning of the second (1845-1860), there are elements of both imperialism and manifest destiny in his motivation for exploration and discovery. The last two expeditions (1848-49 and 1853-54) fit nicely into Goetzmann’s "Manifest Destiny" category and time frame. These expeditions were railroad surveys and were conducted during the period when the U.S. had ownership of essentially the entire western region. Both were undertaken in hopes that a suitable route could be located that would tie the East and West together by an effective communication and transportation system.

There have also been several authors who have published their research about the explorer’s associations with the Beehive state and area. The earliest article to appear about Fremont in Utah was Andrew Love Neff’s "John C. Fremont" in the Utah Educational Review 21 (1928):432-33, 458-61, 496-97, 538-51. Neff’s main weakness was his exclusive use of the Fremont Report, with no outside source material.

Twenty years after Neff’s article appeared, David E. Miller published an article entitled "John C. Fremont in the Great Salt Lake Region," Historian 11 (1948):14-28. Like Neff, Miller relies heavily upon Fremont’s Report in
his narrative. Miller’s significant contribution in the article was his personal investigative research which led to his finding exactly what happened to the Fremont’s spy glass cover which the explorer mentioned as having accidently left on Fremont Island. Miller also does not detail Fremont’s visit to Utah in 1845 or in 1853-54.

In 1973, Nevada W. Driggs published the only article which deals exclusively with Fremont’s visit to Utah during the 1853-54 expedition. Entitled "When Captian Fremont Slept in Grandma McGregor’s Bed," Utah Historical Quarterly 41 (Spring 1973):178-81, this article deals simply with an incident which supposedly occurred upon Fremont’s arrival in the southern Utah settlement of Parowan which continues to be "remembered by [the McGregor] family," but gives very little detail about his stay in the community.

The most recent article to appear about Fremont’s Utah activities was written by Mary Lee Spence, coeditor of the study The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont which was previously cited. In her research, written under the title "The Fremont’s and Utah" in the Utah Historical Quarterly 44 (Summer 1976):286-302, Spence summarizes only briefly the explorer’s activities in Utah, but indicates that her focus is not so much on John Charles as it is his wife Jessie. Spence states that she is writing merely to "touch on the expeditions that penetrated Utah and note how Jessie, the waiting wife, viewed them from afar." The only real weakness of this article is that Spence occasionally seems
to stray from her "Fremont's and Utah" theme.

Lewis Clark Christian, in conducting research for his masters thesis entitled "A Study of Mormon Knowledge of the American Far West Prior to the Exodus, 1830-February 1846," (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972), discusses in some detail the extent to which Mormon leader's in Illinois read Fremont's Report. But Fremont is in no way the primary focus of his study. Christian's thesis is a broad look at a specific topic. His greatest contribution is his analysis of the factors which led to the Mormon's decision to settle in the Great Basin, and exactly how and when that decision was eventually reached. Fremont's writings were only one of many factors upon which they based their decision. However, in conducting the present research for this study, the writer has been able to locate additional source material which sheds further light on the extent to which the Mormon's made use of Fremont's Report prior to their departure from Illinois.

Finally, B. Gene Ramsey's dissertation entitled "Scientific Exploration and Discovery in the Great Basin From 1831-1891," (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1972), spends only six pages on Fremont and calls his achievements in the Great Basin "noteworthy, but not extraordinary." The writer hopes to discredit such a statement. Perhaps the reason Ramsey came to such a conclusion is that his narrative focuses primarily upon Fremont's botanical and geologic contributions to the area,
but here again, it is apparent that his contributions in these areas were more than just noteworthy.
CHAPTER II

FREMONT'S 1843-44 EXPEDITION INTO UTAH

Background and Objectives of the 1843-44 Expedition

On 10 March 1843, Lieutenant John Charles Fremont received official notice from Colonel J.J. Abert, Chief of the Army Topographical Engineers, that he was to head a second expedition to the Far West. Fremont's orders from Colonel Abert concerning the government's intended directions and objectives of the expedition were defined, but only in general terms. Abert's main instructions were for Fremont to map and survey the headwaters of the Arkansas on the boundary between the Mexican and American borders in Colorado, then to do the same for the territory lying west of the Wind Rivers in Wyoming to the Columbia on the Pacific.¹ The fulfillment of these objectives would provide the government with a more accurate definition of the boundary between the U.S. and Mexico; and when Fremont's 1842 survey of the area between the Kansas River and the Wind River Mountains was combined with the projected 1843-44 survey of the area west of the Wind Rivers to the Columbia, Fremont would thereby provide a detailed description (along with maps) of the entire route from the Missouri to the
Pacific. It must be noted however, that Fremont took the liberty to expand the scope and mission of the expedition to include at least three more objectives which he subsequently accomplished. First, he proved that the Sierra Nevada's could be crossed during the middle of winter. Second, he determined the agricultural and economic potential of central California. And finally, he examined, named, and more clearly defined the boundaries of the Great Basin. According to his father-in-law, Senator Benton, Fremont had these additional objectives in mind before embarking on the expedition. Benton wrote that the only orders Fremont received were to "travel between the State of Missouri and the tide-water region of the Columbia," but, added the Senator, this was "only a small part... of what he [Fremont] proposed doing."² It was the final objective, that of clearly defining the boundaries of the Great Basin, which brought Fremont and his expedition into Utah during the late summer of 1843, and once again in the spring of 1844.

Fremont in Utah in 1843

Fremont and thirty-nine men, consisting of Americans, Frenchmen, and two Delaware Indians, left Westport Landing (situated in present-day Kansas City) on 29 May 1843. The party traveled west up the Kansas River until reaching the Republican. Here, Fremont went on an overland journey along the tributaries of the Republican through what is today
eastern Kansas, southwest Nebraska, and northeast Colorado. The party eventually reached the South Platte River and followed it upstream where it arrived at St. Vrain's Fort on the fourth of July. Fremont was not content to stay long and two days later he left the fort and continued to proceed up the South Platte, southward towards the village of Pueblo on the Arkansas River. Reaching the Arkansas from this direction was one of the objectives of the expedition. Arriving at Pueblo, Fremont was satisfied with his observations and calculations and returned to St. Vrain's Fort arriving on July 23. During this second stay at the fort, John Charles decided to take part of the expedition and proceed on a northwest route through what is today the Roosevelt National Forest in Colorado and the east side of the Medicine Bow Mountain Range in Wyoming. Traveling from this direction the expedition eventually reached the North Platte, the Sweetwater River, and South Pass on the well-traveled Oregon Trail. By August 21, the expedition had followed the Big Sandy River downstream, crossed the Green, Blacks Fork and Hams Fork, followed the Muddy upstream, and had reached the banks of the Bear River.

In order to accomplish the objective of exploring the Great Basin (the name Fremont gave to the region in May of 1844 on the return leg of the expedition), the explorer realized that the Great Salt Lake must be explored, and wrote that "An examination of the great lake which is ... the principal feature of geographical interest in the basin,
was one of the main objects in the general plan of our survey. 

Fremont considered the exploration of the Great Salt Lake so important to the success of the entire expedition that upon the party's arrival at the big bend of the Bear River, he left the Oregon Trail for a period of twenty-four days (from August 26 to September 18) in order that the lake might be explored.

It is evident that Fremont was very curious about the Great Salt Lake and the numerous legends and reports which had been circulated about it. Upon his arrival at the Bear River in western Wyoming, the lieutenant knew he was on the river which would eventually lead his expedition to the lake and wrote:

We are now entering a region which for us possessed a strange and extraordinary interest. We were upon the waters of the famous lake which forms a salient point among the remarkable geographic features of the country, and around which the vague and superstitious accounts of the trappers had thrown a delightful obscurity which we anticipated pleasure in dispelling, but which, in the mean time, left a crowded field for the exercise of our imagination.

Hitherto this lake had been seen only by trappers who were wandering through the country in search of new beaver streams, caring very little for the geography; its islands had never been visited; and none were to be found who had entirely made a circuit of its shores; and no instrumental observation or geographical survey, of any description had ever been made anywhere in the neighboring region. It was generally supposed that it had no visible outlet; but among trappers, including those in my own camp, were many who believed that somewhere on its surface was a terrible whirlpool, through which its waters found their way to the ocean by some subterranean communication. All these things had made a frequent subject of discussion in our desultory conversations around the fires at night; and my own mind
had become tolerably well filled with their indefinite pictures, and insensibly colored with their romantic descriptions, which, in the pleasure of excitement, I was well disposed to believe, and half expected to realize."

Fremont and his men caught their first glimpse into the Utah area while following the Bear River to where the river makes it course just a few miles north of Bear Lake. Although the lieutenant made no mention of seeing this expansive lake in his narrative, one member of the expedition, Theodore Talbot, described the picturesque body of water and valley. Talbot's words suggest he was well aware of the valley's beauty and reputation for tasty fish. He wrote, "On descending, we found ourselves in a long valley with hills on either side. At the far southern extremity of this valley we could see the waters of the 'Little Lake'. . . it is nearly encompassed by mountains and is celebrated for its beautiful scenery and fine mountn [sic] trout."

The expedition continued to follow the course of the Bear northward until reaching the landmarks of Beer and Steamboat Springs, near what is today Soda Springs, Idaho. Fremont was fascinated by these two natural springs, so named because the acid taste of the water at Beer Springs reminded travelers of beer, and the sound of the water coming from the openings in the ground at Steamboat Springs sounded like a steam engine. Near this location on August 26, instead of proceeding on towards Ft. Hall, the pathmarker left the Oregon Trail in order to explore the
inland sea.

Fremont took several men with him, followed the Bear River southward, and camped just west of where Preston, Idaho is today. Those men in the expedition not going with the lieutenant went on to Ft. Hall and stayed there until their leader returned from the Utah area. The expedition could have followed the Bear all the way to the Great Salt Lake and thus entered Utah by way of scenic Cache Valley around August 29. Instead, Fremont left the Bear near Preston and proceeded west until coming to the Malad River, which he called the Roseaux or Reed River. Following the Malad southward, the expedition crossed the 42nd parallel into Utah on September 1, and camped three-hundred yards above where the Malad flows into the Bear.

At the mouth of the Malad, a rather large rubber boat was unpacked. Perhaps it was intended to use this craft to assist in ferrying equipment across rivers and streams, but up to this point on the expedition, no mention is made by Fremont of having used the boat. It seems the major reason such an unusual item as this was brought along was for the purpose of exploring the Great Salt Lake. Without such a boat, unless a make-shift one was constructed on the site, a thorough exploration of the lake would have been impossible. John Charles described in detail the boat’s characteristics:

Among the useful things which formed a portion of our equipage, was an India-rubber boat, 18 feet long, made somewhat in the form of a bark canoe of the
northern lakes. The sides were formed by two air-tight cylinders, eighteen inches in diameter, connected with others forming the bow and stern. To lessen the danger from accidents to the boat, these were divided into four different compartments, and the interior space was sufficiently large to contain five or six persons and a considerable weight of baggage.  

Fremont thought that perhaps the lake was close enough that a day's paddling would bring him to its shores, so he and Basil Lajeunesse proceeded down the Bear in the boat while the rest of the party went overland. While quietly paddling down the Bear, John C. and Lajeunesse came across several families of Indians which the lieutenant called "Root Diggers." They were either Southern Shoshone Snake Indians or members of the Goshute tribe. Fremont seems to have been fascinated by the primitiveness of these Indians and he described them as being almost entirely naked, having rather large heads with matted hair, and looking as if they had little knowledge of anything. He also must have felt some empathy towards them because he promised he would send men back with goods to trade with them. After several hours of paddling, the two men cached the boat and its effects in some nearby willows after having discovered that the winding course of the Bear River had only brought them a "few miles in a direct line." By evening Fremont and Lajeunesse had walked some fifteen miles and caught up with the rest of the party. Two days later several men were sent back to retrieve the boat and the cached goods. When these men returned they brought with them a small quantity of roots and some meat which the "Root
Diggers" had exchanged with them. The Indians told the men the meat was bear meat.  

The pathmarker's narrative is silent concerning the date of September 2, however, his writings of September 3 clearly indicate the company was on the Bear River Delta and had passed what is today the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Charles Preuss, cartographer of the expedition, reported that he had "never seen so many birds together. It sounds like distant thunder when they rise... most of them by far are small, good-tasting ducks and a kind of snipe or plover." Fremont echoed what Preuss recorded about how the birds sounded like thunder and added that the area was "animated with multitudes of water fowl, which appear to be very wild--rising for the space of a mile round about the sound of a gun." Even before leaving the Oregon Trail at the northern bend of the Bear the expedition's provisions were low. The men feasted on the abundance of ducks and geese, which proved to be timely nourishment.

By September 5, Fremont had left the Bear River Delta and proceeded on a southward course east of the lake somewhat parallel to the Wasatch Mountain Range. His travels during the day brought him to a small stream of "pure and remarkably clear water" which he appropriately named Clear Creek (now Willard Creek). This was the first geographic feature the explorer named in the Utah region. During the same day, near the present Box Elder-Weber County line, the company noticed ten or twelve hot springs. The
temperature of two of the springs was measured and calculated to be 136° and 132.5° respectively. The party continued on and by evening the expedition arrived at a location on the Weber River about a mile south of what is now Plain City and made camp for the night. Although they had been on the perimeter of the lake for several days, the men had still not seen the lake due to the fact that they had traveled in the low lying areas where much of the view of the lake had been obscured by plant life, or, they were just not on high enough ground to see the lake.

Fremont’s first view of the lake occurred on the morning of September 6. The expedition left the camp on the Weber River and John Charles directed his men to a butte (now called Little Mountain) where he saw for the first time the object of his search. Fremont compared himself to Balboa as he recorded his impressions of seeing the vast sheet of water before him:

... [after] ascending to the summit, immediately at our feet [we] beheld the object of our anxious search—the waters of the Inland Sea, stretching in still and solitary grandeur far beyond the limit of our vision. It was one of the great points of the exploration; and as we looked eagerly over the lake in the first emotions of excited pleasure, I am doubtful if the followers of Balboa felt more enthusiasm when, from the heights of the Andes, they saw for the first time the great Western ocean. It was certainly a magnificent object, and a noble terminus to this part of our expedition; and to travellers so long shut up among mountain ranges, a sudden view over the expanse of silent waters had in it something sublime.

From this same location atop Little Mountain a monument measuring sixteen feet in height was erected and dedicated
on 3 October 1933 in commemoration of Fremont’s explorations of the lake¹⁷ (see photograph on page 27).

September 7 was spent outfitting a company of five men consisting of Fremont, Charles Preuss, Kit Carson, Baptiste Bernier, and Basil Lajunesse. These men were the actual members of the expedition who explored the lake. Francis Badeau, Baptiste Derosier, and Jacob Dodson (a free black man) remained behind at the main camp. The conversation around the campfire during the evening centered on many of the legends which had been circulated by Indians as well as white men about the lake. Such a conversation seemed to heighten the fears and anxiety of the men who were to explore the lake the following day.²⁰

Before their departure on the morning of September 8, the men equipped the rubber boat with a sextant, telescope, spy glass, thermometer, barometer, blankets, and three air-tight bags each holding approximately five gallons of fresh water. Fremont expected to reach the mouth of the Weber River and then explore the lake during the day, but because they "loitered so much on the way" combined with the fact that "two of the cylinders leaked so much as to require one man constantly at the bellows, to keep them sufficiently full of air to support the boat," the party only made it to within one mile of the lake.²¹

September 9 was an eventful day. Fremont had spent fifteen days traveling to the Great Salt Lake after leaving the Oregon Trail, and he probably never projected he would
Photograph of the monument erected atop Little Mountain in Weber County in honor of John Charles Fremont by the Utah Pioneer Trails and Landmark Association. Unveiled and dedicated by Mormon Apostle George Albert Smith on 4 October 1933. Fremont Island can be seen in the background. Photograph courtesy of the Utah State Historical Society.
have to use so much time in trying to reach the lake. Upon
their arrival at the mouth of the Weber River, the
lieutenant directed his crew’s course to an island some five
miles distant to the west. The journey across the lake in
the boat to the island took several hours. Of particular
concern during their sojourn was the seams of the air
compartments which kept the rubber boat afloat. Halfway
across, two "of the divisions between the cylinders gave
way, and it required the constant use of the bellows to keep
in a sufficient quantity of air." However, in spite of
the boat’s faulty construction, the party made it safely to
the island’s shores.

Arriving at the island, Fremont’s attention centered
on an accumulation of dark brown substance, some ten to
twenty feet wide and seven to eight inches thick, deposited
on the shore. He described this accumulation as being the
larvae of an insect or worm which had been washed ashore by
the water. He was probably actually describing the larva
of the brine fly. Two species of the brine fly and one
specie of the brine shrimp are known to be the only visible
forms of life that exist in the lake. When the
government explorer Howard Stansbury explored the lake seven
years later in 1850, he also encountered the fly larvae,
only his words reveal he had a much more unpleasant meeting
with these pests. Stansbury reported:

In wading to the shore, we struggled through a deep,
soft, dark-colored mass of what at first appeared to be
ooze and slimy mud, but which, upon examination, proved
to consist almost solely of the larvae of insects upon the bottom, producing, when disturbed, a most offensive and nauseous odour. The mass was more than a foot in thickness and extended several yards from the shore. A belt of soft, black mud, more than knee-deep lay between the water and the hard, rocky beach, and seemed to be impregnated with all the villainous smells which nature's laboratory was capable of producing.25

In the afternoon, the lieutenant and his men ascended a bare, rocky peak on the island. Scientific calculations were taken and the peak was determined to be eight-hundred feet above the surface of the water.26 From this location, the expedition's cartographer, Charles Preuss, drew a detailed and highly accurate topographical map of the Great Salt Lake (see map on page 30). While atop the peak, Fremont expressed an almost irresistible desire to explore the lake further, but because of the lateness of the season and the frail conditions of the boat, he decided he would explore the lake no further.27 On his third government expedition conducted in 1845, John Charles spent some two weeks in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake indicating he had more than merely a passive interest in the remarkable dead sea.

Following the party's descent from atop the island peak, Fremont realized he had left the cover to his spyglass somewhere on the mountain. The explorer was apparently content to leave it behind rather than attempt another ascent to recover it for he wrote, "I accidentally left on the summit the brass cover to the object end of my spyglass; and as it will probably remain there undisturbed by Indians, it
1845 Topographical Map of the Great Salt Lake

Topographical map of the Great Salt Lake made by the expedition's cartographer Charles Preuss. The map was published in 1845 with Fremont's Report of the 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions.
will furnish matter of speculation to some future traveller." In 1850, Stansbury made a search for the cover while his party was on the island, but he was unable to find the missing piece. During the years to follow, other island visitors who were familiar with Fremont's story about losing the cover piece must have searched for it as well. The piece was subsequently found by a Mormon rancher, but its present whereabouts is again unknown.

Another item of interest surrounding the visit to the island by Fremont and the four other men is a cross which is carved in a rock also located near the summit. For years speculation existed concerning just who carved the cross. Early reports circulated which suggested Catholic Priests may have visited the island prior to Fremont and the cross was carved by them. Still other reports suggested that perhaps the mark was made by some Mormon who visited the island soon after the Mormons arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. Although Fremont made no mention of the cross in his Report, the famous Kit Carson, one of the four men who accompanied the lieutenant to the island, reported that it was he (Carson) who carved the cross. Carson said, "We ascended the mountain, and under a shelving rock [I] cut a large cross, which is there to this day." The "large" cross is actually only seven inches high and is still clearly visible (see photograph on page 32).

Prior to departing for the mainland, Fremont took another barometrical measurement on the shore and calculated
Photograph of the Cross Carved by Kit Carson on Fremont Island

Photograph of the seven-inch cross made by Kit Carson on a shelving of rock atop Fremont Island while in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake in 1843. Photograph courtesy of the Utah State Historical Society.
the lake to be 4200 feet above sea level. He also named the
island "Disappointment Island,"\textsuperscript{32} because, as Charles Preuss
stated it, "he expected game there but did not find
it."\textsuperscript{33} This was the second geological feature John Charles
named in the Utah region, although the island was not known
by the name of "Disappointment Island" very long. With the
arrival of the Mormons in the valley they renamed the island
"Castle Island" because its geologic formation resembled
something like that of an ancient castle. However, this
name did not last many years either. When Howard Stansbury
visited the island in 1850, he renamed the island in honor
of Fremont.\textsuperscript{34} The island still bears Fremont's name (see
photograph on page 34).

The five men spent only one night on the island,
safe and secure from Indians or predators. Fremont recorded
that "the strangeness of our situation, and the excitement
we felt in the associated interests of the place, made this
one of the most interesting nights I remember during our
long expedition."\textsuperscript{35}

Leaving the island the next day (September 10)
proved to be more difficult than in coming to it. Strong
headwinds not only caused their forward motion to be slowed
considerably, but the waves put added stress on the already
weakened boat. Kit Carson said "Fremont urged us to pull
for our lives, saying that if we did not reach the shore
before the storm commenced we would surely all
perish."\textsuperscript{36} Much of the day was spent in paddling back to
Photograph of Fremont Island which was visited by the explorer in 1843. Fremont named the island "Disappointment Island," however, when the government explorer Howard Stansbury visited the island in 1850, he renamed it in honor of the Fremont.
the mainland because of the conditions, and the men gave a shout for joy when the boat finally reached shallow water. Upon reaching the shore, Fremont sent two men back on foot to the main camp to bring back horses to haul back the boat and equipment. Before proceeding to the main camp the explorer-scientist took a sample of the water from the lake which he used to analyze the lake's contents the following day before beginning the return trip. He boiled approximately five gallons of the lake water down over an open fire, which, when evaporated, yielded fourteen pints of salt. Fremont then did an analysis of the salt and determined it to be 97.80 parts per hundred of chloride (common salt) and concluded that the lake was a saturated solution."

On 12 September, late in the day, the party began its return trip to Ft. Hall where the main body of men in the expedition had been waiting. Fremont recorded that the party returned "by nearly the same route which we had travelled in coming to the lake." Approximately on September 14, four days after having departed from the lake's shores, the expedition crossed the northern Utah border into Idaho, and on September 18, arrived at Ft. Hall. All total, John Charles spent approximately two weeks (September 1-14) within the present confines of the northern portion of the state of Utah (see map on page 36).

It can be concluded that at this point in time, Fremont could well claim the distinction of having done more
A portion of the 1845 Fremont-Preuss map of the 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions. The dark solid line indicates the route of the expedition while in the northern Utah region in 1843.
than any previous explorer or traveler who had traversed the northern Utah region in bringing to light the geographical and physical descriptions of the Bear River and Great Salt Lake regions. Historian David E. Miller has summarized well the contributions Fremont made as a result of his visit to Utah in 1843:

 annoying he was the first white man known to have visited any of the Great Salt Lake island; he was the first to compute the altitude and geographic location of the lake and other points; he was the first to map the lake more or less accurately; he was first to analyze its waters; he was the first to name any of its islands; he was the first to make official soundings of its depth. The survey stimulated further exploration of the Great Basin. And finally, he was the first to give accurate, reliable information concerning the whole region.  

Fremont in Utah in 1844

Fremont departed Ft. Hall on September 22 and followed the Snake River until reaching Ft. Boise, which was situated on the junction of the Snake and Boise Rivers (the present border of Idaho and Oregon). About two weeks later, after proceeding on an overland journey through the Blue Mountains of Oregon, the government men arrived at Marcus Whitman’s mission near Walla Walla, Washington. Reaching the Columbia, Fremont’s next destination was The Dalles where they arrived on November 5. From here, the lieutenant and a handful of men caned down the Columbia to Ft. Vancouver where Fremont arrived on November 8. Here he met John McLoughlin, head of the Hudson Bay Company in the Northwest. With his arrival at Ft. Vancouver, Fremont
fulfilled the orders of Colonel J.J. Abert and from here, he could have simply retraced his steps and returned to the East. However, the explorers intentions were otherwise.

At The Dalles Fremont traveled due south along the eastern slope of the Cascade Mountains. Near Klamath Lake the expedition headed south-southeast into northwestern Nevada. After making almost a complete circle along the eastern slope of the Sierra’s in central Nevada and California, Fremont finally chose to proceed to cross the formidable mountains slightly south of Lake Tahoe. It took the expedition from the middle of January to the first part of the month of March to travel through the Sierra’s to Sutter’s Fort. Leaving the fort during the latter part of March, Fremont journeyed through the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. Upon striking the Mojave River the explorer was on the Old Spanish Trail and enroute to Utah once again.

Within eight months after his first visit, John C. came once again into the Utah area on the return leg of the 1843-44 fourteen month long expedition. Fremont entered the state for the second time approximately on 10 May 1844, while following the Virgin River upstream in the extreme southwest portion of the state. Near where the community of St. George is today, the lieutenant recorded that his men immediately began to display a more lively spirit because of the noticeable change of the country’s surroundings. The greener terrain of southern Utah was a welcome sight after
having traveled for several weeks through the dry, bleak, and barren territory of eastern California and southern Nevada. Fremont wrote: "we seem to have entered a different climate. . . . the country is no longer so distressingly desolate." By May 12, the company had advanced northward up the Santa Clara River into a pastoral area in low lying mountains, which, in 1857, became the scene of the bloody massacre of emigrants passing through Utah on their way to California. Commonly known as "Mountain Meadows," the area was the last resting spot for travelers on the Old Spanish Trail before proceeding on through the southern Nevada desert regions. Although Fremont was traveling in the opposite direction, the meadows also served his expedition's needs as a place for rest and recuperation. He wrote:

... we found here an extensive meadow, rich in bunch grass, and fresh with numerous springs of clear water, all refreshing and delightful to look upon. It was, in fact, that las Vegas de Santa Clara, which had been so long present to us as the terminating point of the desert, and where the annual caravan from California to New Mexico halted and recruited for some weeks. It was a very suitable place to recover from the fatigue and exhaustion of a month's suffering in the hot and sterile desert. The meadow was about a mile wide, and some ten mile long, bordered by grassy hills and mountains. . . .

After leaving the meadows, Fremont descended into the broad Escalante Valley. Viewing the vast expanse to the west, Fremont realized the chain of mountains to the east; namely, the Southern Colorado Plateau and Wasatch Mountain Ranges, formed the east rim of the basin. During the winter of 1843-44, when the lieutenant explored and crossed
the Sierra's, he accurately concluded that these mountains formed the western boundary. In his Report, Fremont appropriately designated this geographic region the "Great Basin," the name which this region continues to be known by. Gloria Griffen Cline in her book Exploring the Great Basin, clearly defines what Fremont had, in part, a limited understanding of. She defines the Great Basin as follows:

The Great Basin deserves in many ways the name John Charles Fremont applied to it in 1844. The adjective "great" is appropriate in that the basin encompasses an area of approximately 210,000 square miles; it measures 880 miles in length from north to south and nearly 572 miles in width at its broadest part. In spite of the implication of its name, however, the Great Basin is not a single cup-shaped depression surrounded by mountains. Instead, it is a series of more than 90 basins separated from each other by more than 160 ranges which have a north-south trend and vary in length from thirty to about one hundred miles.47

An examination of the map he and Charles Preuss produced following the 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions shows relatively little information about the interior of the basin, but it is obvious that Fremont clearly understood the relationship of the Wasatch and Southern Colorado Plateau Ranges and the Sierra Nevada's in forming the eastern and western boundaries of the land of interior drainage. However, in 1848, when he and Preuss combined to produce yet another topographical map of the western United States region, the two inaccurately placed two mountain ranges running east and west at both the northern and southern extremities of the basin. John Charles was obviously under the assumption that since the area had no outlet to the sea, and since the basin
clearly had an eastern and western boundary, it must also be bordered by a northern and southern range of mountains (see map on page 42).

By designating the area between the western Rockies and the eastern Sierra’s as the Great Basin, Fremont also dispelled the myth which had persisted for decades of there being a river which flowed from the Rockies to the Pacific. This mythical river, usually known by and referred to as Buenaventura, began to appear on maps following the Dominquez-Escalante expedition of 1776. During this expedition, the Spanish Fathers, upon emerging from the Wasatch Range, believed they were on the western slope of the continental divide, the waters of which, they assumed, flowed into the Pacific. From their observations in Utah Valley, Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, the cartographer of the expedition, drew a large river flowing towards the west from the body of water known as Lake Timpanogos (a lake which Miera depicted as being the Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake as one lake). Although Miera entitled the mythical river the Rio Timpanogos, he also included another river on his maps called the Rio San Buenaventura (this was actually the Green River). Since the trans-Rocky Mountain West was the last part of the continent to be thoroughly explored, numerous American and European cartographers from 1776 until the publication of Fremont’s 1845 map continued to depict the river. Some maps showed the river flowing from the Rockies to the Pacific, some depicted it flowing from a lake (the
A portion of the Fremont-Preuss map of 1848 which was presented to Congress with the explorer’s *Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California*. Arrows point to the east-west mountain ranges which Fremont presumed formed the northern and southern boundaries of the Great Basin.
Great Salt Lake) to the coast, while still others had the river flowing to the Pacific by means of a subterranean passage. Cartographers' maps also varied concerning the name of the waterway. The names Timpanogos and San Beunaventura were both used almost equally, however, by the time Fremont arrived on the scene during the 1840's, the name most commonly used was Buenaventura. 47

Although there were mountain men, guides, explorers, and mapmakers who did not believe in the fabled river prior to Fremont's 1843-44 expedition, the pathmarker must be given the credit for dispelling the myth of a river flowing from the Rockies to the Pacific. First and foremost, John Charles was the first person to travel almost the entire circumference of the Great Basin, declaring it to have no communication with the sea. Second, although there were some cartographers prior to Fremont who did not include on their maps the mythical river, most of their knowledge of the area between the Sierra's and the Rockies was based upon second-hand information, whereas Fremont personally explored the region for himself. And finally, following the publication of Fremont's 1845 map, subsequent maps which were published no longer included the western waterway because of Fremont's findings and conclusions. In short, the Buenaventura (and Timpanogos) River virtually disappeared from the maps.

From a reading of the Report, it appears that Fremont may have believed that the Buenaventura actually
existed. The lieutenant's father-in-law, Thomas H. Benton, said Fremont believed the river existed. The senator even went so far as to record that while at Ft. Vancouver John McLaughlin made a map for the explorer showing the approximate location of the river and that John Charles intended to reach it before the dead of winter and make an encampment upon it. Freeman made mention of the mythical river on at least seven occasions in his Report. His first four entries leave the impression that he had every intention of finding the river and that he was indeed searching for it. The last three entries reveal that the explorer eventually abandoned the idea of the existence of such a river. The seven entries appear in the narrative while Fremont was in the vicinity of Sierra Nevada's, indicating this is where he no doubt thought the river would find passage, if it indeed existed. Since his narrative is silent about the river while the expedition was in the northern Utah region and in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake in 1843, he apparently believed the river originated in a location other than on the Wasatch Front.

Even though Fremont produced conclusive evidence that the Buenaventura did not exist following his circumference of the Great Basin, he was not without his skeptics. One such doubter included James K. Polk, who was elected president the year the explorer returned from his second expedition. In the early spring of 1845, John Charles had an interesting meeting with Polk concerning his
recent explorations. Fremont's memories of that meeting were as follows:

After the change of administration in March I accompanied Mr. Benton to visit the President, Mr. Polk. In speaking to him of the interesting facts in the geography of the West I mentioned that I had shortly before, at the Library of Congress, drawn out from the map-stand one giving the United States and Territories, and found on it the Great Salt Lake represented as connected with the Pacific Ocean by three great rivers; one discharging into the Columbia River from the northwestern end; another from the southwestern end into the head of the Gulf of California; the third from the middle of the western side of the lake running westward, breaking through the Sierra Nevada and discharging into the Bay of San Francisco. Bearing in mind the account given me at Vancouver of the Buena Ventura River, the known fact of the Great Colorado, and the existence of large streams flowing into the lake, it is easy to see how the reports of trappers scattered over that region, who had seen it only in widely separated parts, might be connected together in the compilation of maps so as to give the lake these outlets.

The President seemed for the moment sceptical about the exactness of my information and disposed to be conservative. He evidently "respected that ancient chaos" of western geography as it existed on the old maps. Like the Secretary, he found me "young," and said something of the "impulsiveness of young men," and was not at all satisfied in his own mind that those three rivers were not running there as laid down. Fremont was no doubt confident of his conclusions about the mythical river. It seems he was also not too concerned about the relatively few non-believers, even if one was the President of the United States. Time has a way of bearing out truth, and the very fact that the Buena Ventura literally vanished from the maps following his 1843-44 expedition, illustrates that the men who explored the West after Fremont agreed that his findings concerning the river were correct and accurate.
Upon emerging into the Escalante Valley, Fremont's next objective was to reach Utah Lake by proceeding northward on a parallel course with the mountains to the east. The lieutenant's journey through southern and central Utah generally followed much the same course which Interstate 15 follows today. Near present-day Newcastle, in southern Utah, the famed mountaineer Joseph Reddeford Walker joined the expedition and was hired to act as a guide along with Kit Carson. Fremont placed the date of Walker's arrival as being May 12, whereas Preuss states it as being May 14. Regardless of the date, Walker was a welcome addition to the company. Walker had spent most of the 1820's and 30's in the West where he had participated in the fur trade, acted as a guide for explorers (such as Bonneville) and emigrants, and had done some exploring on his own. His knowledge and familiarity of the remote West was a great aid to Lieutenant Fremont during the remainder of the expedition. Ironically, on May 20, the expedition encountered Walker's namesake, Chief Walker (anglicized from Wakara) and a band of Ute Indians near present-day Fillmore. Fremont was perhaps more fortunate than most other travelers along the Spanish Trail because Chief Walker was known to plunder passing parties; however, Fremont's expedition was able to pass without serious incident, and in fact, left on quite friendly terms. The lieutenant recorded his meeting with the chief:
May 20—We met a band of Utah Indians, headed by a well-known chief who had obtained the American or English name of Walker, by which he is quoted and well known. They were all mounted, armed with rifles, and use their rifles well. The chief had a fusee, which he had carried slung, in addition to his rifle. They were journeying slowly towards the Spanish trail, to levy their usual tribute upon the great California caravan. They were robbers of a higher order than those of the desert. They conducted their depredations with form, and under the color of trade and toll for passing through their country. Instead of attacking and killing, they affect to purchase—taking the horses they like, and giving something nominal in return. The chief was quite civil to me. He was personally acquainted with his namesake, our guide, who made my name known to him. He knew of my expedition of 1842; and, as tokens [sic] of friendship, and proof we had met, proposed and interchange of presents. We had no great store to choose out of; so he gave me a Mexican blanket, and I gave him a very fine one which I obtained at Vancouver.56

Charles Preuss' account of the Fremont-Walker meeting adds a bit of flavor to the incident:

"You are a chief, and I am one too," said the Utah Indian to Fremont as they exchanged gifts of woolen blankets. "It would be bad if we should evaluate exactly the price of one or the other. You present me with yours, and I present you with mine. Fine!"55

With the arrival of the expedition at the Sevier River on May 23, the government party reached its last major river crossing before proceeding on to Utah Valley. Dominguez and Escalante named the Sevier River and lake on their expedition in 1776. Fremont was well aware of the names given to these two water sources by the Spanish Fathers and refers to them as such in his Report, as well as on his 1845 map. However, upon his return from the 1843-44 expedition, John Charles learned that in September of 1843, Joseph Nicolas Nicollet, the man who had trained and tutored
him in the field of scientific exploration, had passed away. By 1848, Fremont obviously desired Nicollet's name be attached to some geographic landmark in the West, so when he presented his Geographic Memoir Upon Upper California to the U.S. Senate in that year, he "renamed" the Sevier River and lake in honor of his friend and teacher Nicollet. Unfortunately for Fremont, the names Nicollet River and Nicollet Lake were either short-lived or more than likely never caught on, since both the river and the dry lake bed continue to be known by the name Sevier. It was also at the Sevier that a fatality occurred to one of the expedition members. One of the men, Francois Badeau, was killed instantly when his gun accidently discharged. He was buried on the banks of the river.

On the morning of May 25, two days after having crossed the Sevier, the expedition arrived in Utah Valley where they camped for two days on the Spanish Fork River before departing the valley on May 27. Fremont encountered numerous Utah Indians who were near the lake and from one tribe he was able to obtain fresh fish which he called "salmon trout." The lieutenant was especially impressed with the fertile Utah Valley and the numerous streams which flowed into the Lake. He wrote:

... the lake is bordered by a plain, where the soil is generally good, and in greater part fertile; watered by a delta of prettily timbered streams. This would be an excellent locality for stock farms; it is generally covered with good bunch grass, and would abundantly produce the ordinary grains.
Almost sixty years prior to Fremont's arrival, Fathers Dominguez and Escalante also visited Utah Valley. A reading of Escalante's journal reveals he too was particularly impressed with the agricultural potential of Utah Valley. Escalante's description of the area surrounding Utah Lake are strikingly parallel to that of Fremont's. Although the Father's description is more detailed than that of the lieutenant's, both explorers mention in their narrative the abundance of water from the mountain streams, the fertile valley's ability to produce sufficient crops, and the land being suitable as pasture for herds and livestock. Escalante described Utah Valley in these words:

... [it is] surrounded by the sierra's heights from which four medium-sized rivers that water it emerge, flowing through it until they enter the lake that it has in the middle. From the southwest to the northeast the valley floor... is flat and, with the exception of the marshes along the lake's edges, of very good farmland quality for all kinds of crops. ... it has plenty of firewood and timber from the adjacent sierra which surrounds it—many sheltered spots, waters, and pasturages, for raising cattle and sheep and horses.

After spending two days in Utah Valley, Fremont had seen all that he desired of the Utah region for at least that year and he wasted no time in proceeding through eastern Utah. Fremont's account of his travels through the eastern part of the state are somewhat uneventful, and his narrative merely describes the route which the expedition traversed. The government force exited Utah Valley through Spanish Fork Canyon on May 27, and exactly one week
later they arrived at Fort Uinta (also called Fort Winty or Fort Robidoux, named after Antoine Robidoux) on the Uinta River.\textsuperscript{66} Charles Preuss mentions during the week it took to reach the fort, Kit Carson bought a Ute Indian boy of about twelve to fourteen years of age for forty dollars. Carson’s intent in purchasing the boy was not a good one since he hoped that with a few years training he would be "capable of stealing horses."\textsuperscript{67} Preuss also mentioned that trying to cross the swollen mountain streams was extremely difficult due to the high runoff. The water was so rapid at the Lake Fork River that the men and animals would lose their footing and would receive a cold baptism. One pack animal was swept away by the swift current. Preuss notes "The water was so rapid that day and night one can hear the rumbling of the rocks which it carries down with it."\textsuperscript{68}

The expedition arrived at Fort Uinta on June 3, and stayed for a day-and-a-half. Leaving the fort on June 5, the company traveled some twenty-five miles in a northeast direction and camped on Ashley Creek. Two days later, on the afternoon of June 7, Fremont crossed the Green River and arrived at Brown’s Hole near the present-day Utah-Colorado border\textsuperscript{69} (see map on page 51). All total, during his 1843-44 expedition, Fremont spent some forty-two days within the confines of Utah, fourteen days (September 1-14) exploring the northern portion of the state in 1843, and twenty-eight days (May 10-June 7) traversing the southern, central, and eastern portions in 1844.
A portion of the 1845 Fremont-Preuss map of the 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions. The dark solid line indicates the route of the expedition while in the southern, central, and eastern Utah regions in 1844.
After leaving the Utah region, the pathmarker was not content to return to the east over familiar territory. From Brown's Hole he explored the North, Middle, and South Park regions of central Colorado before arriving at Pueblo on June 28, and Bent's Fort on June 30. Leaving Bent's Fort five days later, Fremont followed the Arkansas eastward until reaching the northern bend. From here, the expedition journeyed overland to the Smoky Hill River. Following the Smoky downstream subsequently brought the company to the Kansas River and the well known Santa Fe Trail. By August 6, fourteen months after the expedition officially began, Fremont and his weary men landed in St. Louis.

Summary

Fremont's entries into Utah in 1843 and 1844 while conducting his second expedition were by far the most historically significant of the four visits he made to the region. In summary, several factors contributed to its importance:

(1) A thorough exploration of the Great Salt Lake was one of the main objectives of the 1843-44 expedition.

(2) The exploration of the Great Salt Lake was of sufficient importance that a period of 14 days was spent in order to accomplish the exploration.

(3) Fremont gave an accurate description of Utah's geography. He also named several geographic features, namely: Clear Creek (Willard Creek), the Nicollet River
(Sevier River), Nicollet Lake (Sevier Lake), and "Disappointment Island" (Fremont Island). Although none of these features continues to bear the names given to it by the explorer, the latter was renamed in his honor.

(4) Fremont gave an accurate description of the various Indian tribes of the Utah area.

(5) Fremont was the first explorer to take scientific readings of the region.

(6) Fremont made the first known visit to one of the islands in the Great Salt Lake.

(7) The expedition left physical evidence that it had been in the area (the spy glass cover and the cross inscribed on Fremont Island).

(8) Fremont was the first explorer to scientifically analyze the Great Salt Lake’s contents.

(9) Fremont understood the relationship of the Wasatch and Southern Colorado Plateau Ranges and the Sierra Nevada’s, and appropriately named the region the Great Basin. At the same time, he inaccurately assumed that east-west ranges existed on the northern and southern extremities of the basin. By clearly defining the eastern and western borders of the Great Basin, the explorer also dispelled the existence of the mythical Buenaventura River.

(10) Fremont’s description and evaluation of the region in the vicinity of Utah Lake was similar to that of
previous expedition parties such as Fathers Domínguez and Escalante.

In short, by 1844, Fremont knew more about the Utah region than any previous government explorer, having traversed the northern, southwestern, central, and northeastern regions of the state.

Upon the completion of the expedition, the lieutenant continued on to Washington D.C. where he and his wife Jessie diligently labored for several months to prepare the manuscript copy of his Report. When published in 1845, it was hailed by many as being the greatest document of western exploration ever produced. One particular group which was interested in the western regions explored by Fremont was the Mormons in Illinois. Almost at the very time Fremont was completing his second expedition, the Mormon people were seeking a place of refuge, free from religious persecution. Church leaders were subsequently able to obtain Fremont’s Report. At that time in America, perhaps there was no other group of people as profoundly influenced by Fremont’s observations and writings of the West as the Latter-day Saints.
Notes to Chapter II


3. A memorial marker has been erected near Evanston, Wyoming commemorating the site where the expedition made the encampment on the Bear River.

4. John Charles Fremont, Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-44 by Brevet Captain J.C. Fremont of the Topographical Engineers, Under the Orders of Col. J.J. Abert, Chief of the Topographical Bureau, Printed by Order of the Senate of the United States (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1845), p. 139. The Report was initially published as a Senate document (28th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Executive Document 174, Serial 461). No copyright was issued for the Report and numerous publishers reprinted the document under various titles.

5. Ibid., pp. 132-33.


8. Ibid., p. 147.

9. Ibid.

10. See James Hervey Simpson’s, The Shortest Route to California, Illustrated by a History of Exploration of the Great Basin of Utah With its Topographical and Geological
Character and Some Account of the Indian Tribes. By Brevet 
Brig-General J.H. Simpson (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott and 

12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 149.
14. Charles Preuss, Exploring With Fremont: The 
Private Diaries of Charles Preuss, Cartographer for John C. 
Fremont on His First, Second, and Fourth Expeditions to the 
Far West, trans. and ed. Erwin G. and Elisabeth K. Gudde 

15. Fremont, Report, p. 149.
16. Ibid., p. 150.
17. Ibid. Since the late 1860's, these springs have 
usually been known as "Utah Hot Springs." In 1880, Ranson 
H. Slater purchased the site from the territorial receiver 
of Utah for $400 and built a bathing resort. In 1889, 
Slater sold the resort and property to the "Ogden & Hot 
Springs Railway and Health Resort Company." The hot springs 
were sold in 1892 and again in 1901. It continued to be 
visited and enjoyed by patrons for years. The springs have 
since fallen into disuse. See Milton R. Hunter's Beneath 
Ben Lomond's Peak: A History of Weber County, 
236-37.

19. See "Throng Gathers For Unveiling of Fremont 
Marker" in The Salt Lake Tribune, 4 October 1933. Mormon 
Apostle and future President of the Church, George Albert 
Smith was the master of ceremonies. At the time he was 
president of the Utah Pioneer Trails and Landmarks 
Association.

22. Ibid., p. 154.
23. Ibid.
24. Dale L. Morgan, The Great Salt 
Lake (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 
p. 376.


27. Ibid. Kit Carson's account of the exploration of the lake is similar to that of Fremont's. Carson recalled "... [I] rejoined Fremont at the upper end of the Salt Lake. We traveled around the east side of the lake about twenty miles till we could get a fair view of it. In front of us was a large island which Fremont determined to examine. We arranged the India rubber boat, and myself and four others accompanied him. We landed safely on the island, which is about fifteen miles from the mainland. We took fresh water for cooking, and remained part of one day and a night. We found nothing of any great importance. There were no springs and the island was perfectly barren." See Christopher Carson, *Kit Carson's Autobiography*, ed. Milo M. Quaife (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1935), p. 76. Carson is inaccurate on two points. Fremont's estimation that the island was approximately five miles from the mainland is correct, not fifteen as Carson indicates. Carson also mentions that the island had no springs. Had the exploring party made a more extensive examination of the island they would have discovered that there were at least two fresh water springs on the island. The most recent editor of Carson's memoirs is Harvey Lewis Carter's *Dear Old Kit*: The Historical Christopher Carson With a New Edition of the Carson Memoirs (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968). Carter uses a unique style in his editing and for this reason the author prefers the Quaife edition over that of Carter's.


30. For many years, speculation surrounding the idea that the cover had never been found continued until David E. Miller, a noted authority on early government explorers in the west, was able to identify who actually found the cap and approximately when it was located as well. During the 1860's, a man by the name of Jacob Miller, a resident of Farmington, Utah, and his brothers were using the island as a sheep ranch. Miller found the cover near the summit and scratched Fremont's name on the cap and kept it in his home for several years as a souvenir. However, in 1930, Miller's
belongings were destroyed by a flood and the cap was never recovered. See David E. Miller's, "John C. Fremont in the Great Salt Lake Region," Historian 11 (Autumn 1948):21-22.


32. Fremont, Report, p. 156.


34. Stansbury, Exploration and Survey, pp. 159-60. Dale Morgan states that Fremont Island "... is 5 miles long and 2 miles wide with an area of 2,945 acres. ... there is a seepage of brackish water near the waterline on the north coast, and two artesian wells provide an additional supply for sheep which are pastured on the island." See Morgan, The Great Salt Lake, p. 25.

35. Fremont, Report, p. 156.


38. Ibid., p. 157.

39. Ibid., p. 158.

40. Theodore Talbot, one of the members of the expedition who waited at Ft. Hall while the smaller expeditionary force explored the lake recorded Fremont's arrival at the fort as being September 18. See The Journals of Theodore Talbot, p. 50.


42. Fremont, Report, p. 270.


44. Fremont, Report, p. 270.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., p. 270.

48. In 1848, John C. Fremont presented his description and characterization of the Great Basin to the United States Senate in his *Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California, in Illustration of His Map of Oregon and California*, by John Charles Fremont (Washington: Wendell and Van Benthuysen, 1848), pp. 7-14. The *Geographical Memoir* was initially published as a Senate document (30th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Miscellaneous Document 148, Serial 511). His 1848 map was also presented at that time. Concerning the hypothetical east-west mountain ranges which Fremont supposed formed the northern and southern extremities of the basin, Clifford L. Stott, in his book *Search for Sanctuary: Brigham Young and the White Mountain Expedition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), comments on p. 10 that: "It was Fremont’s misconception of the [east-west] mountain structure of the Great Basin’s interior (which he had not visited) that enticed pioneers, gold seekers, and explorers into the region for over a decade. . . . The Death Valley company of 1849, the backers of the central railroad route to the Pacific, and the White Mountain Expedition of 1858 were all mislead by Fremont’s Great Basin theory."

49. The best material for information on the Buenaventura River is C. Gregory Crampton and Gloria G. Griffen’s "The San Buenaventura, Mythical River of the West," *Pacific Historical Review* 25 (May 1956):163-71. The reader is also referred to the first two volumes of Carl Irving Wheat’s *Mapping the Transmississippi West, 1540-1861*, 6 vols. (San Francisco: Institute of Historical Cartography, 1957-63). Volume one covers the time frame from the Spanish Entrada to the Louisiana Purchase (1540-1804). Volume two spans the period of Lewis and Clark to Fremont (1804-1845). In these two volumes Wheat includes the maps of such men as John Hamilton Robinson (1819), Chevalier Lapie (1821), Henry S. Tanner (1822), A.H. Brue (1834), Aaron Arrowsmith (1834), Hall J. Kelly (1839). All of these cartographers and numerous others depicted the mythical river on their maps of the west.


52. Ibid., pp. 221, 226, 255-56.

53. From the evidence presented, the author is firmly convinced Fremont actually believed in the existence of the Buenaventura prior to the 1843-44 expedition. However, the most recent editors of Fremont’s expeditions, Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence are of the opinion that the explorer "deliberately introduced the element, [namely that of the Buenaventura River], to add continuity and suspense to the

This expedition through the valley lying between the Rockies on the east and the Sierra Nevada on the west opened up a country unknown except to Indians and trappers, and disproved the idea, which had hitherto been accepted as fact, that a great waterway led directly westward through the Sierra to the Pacific Coast." Such a statement indicates that regardless of whether or not Fremont believed in the mythical river prior to his second expedition, one of the contributions of the expedition was that he indeed dispelled the myth. The writer believes that he has produced considerable evidence to show that Fremont did not merely introduce the element of Buenaventura in his narrative "to add continuity and suspense" as Jackson and Spence suggest.

54. John Charles Fremont, Memoirs of My Life by John Charles Fremont, Including in the Narrative Five Journeys of Western Exploration, During the Years 1842, 1843-4, 1845-6-7, 1848-9, 1853-4, Together With a Sketch of the Life of Senator Thomas Hart Benton, in Connection With Westward Expansion, by Jessie Benton Fremont. A Retrospect of Fifty Years Covering the Most Eventful Periods of Modern American History . . . (Chicago and New York: Bedford, Clarke and Company, 1887), p. 418-19. Fremont intended his Memoirs to be a two-volume overview of his life, however, only the one volume was ever published. It covers the story of Fremont's life up through the year 1847. His wife Jessie attempted to chronicle the remaining forty-three years of her husband's life in a manuscript she entitled "Great Events During the Life of Major General John C. Fremont," but the manuscript was never published.

55. In researching Fremont's 1844 trek through southern and central Utah, I have purposely excluded recounting the day to day encampments of the expedition following their camp at Mountain Meadows until their arrival at Utah Lake. I have excluded this information from the main narrative because I felt it was not entirely pertinent there. Jackson and Spence in their editing of The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont list the locations of Fremont's encampments between Mountain Meadows and Utah Lake as follows: May 13-14, Pinto Creek near Newcastle; May 15, Iron Springs north of the Antelope Mountains; May 16, Enoch; May 17, southwestern end of the Little Salt Lake; May 18, Buckhorn Springs; May 19, north of Beaver River; May 20, Pine Creek or Cove Fort; May 21, Chalk Creek at present Fillmore; May 22, Round or Scipio valley; May 23 Sevier River; and May 24, Salt Creek at Nephi. See The Expeditions...
of John Charles Fremont 1:694-95n.

57. Preuss, Exploring With Fremont, pp. 131-32.
59. Preuss, Exploring With Fremont, p. 133.
60. Fremont, Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California, p. 9.
62. Ibid., p. 273.
63. Ibid., p. 274.
65. Once again I have excluded Fremont’s day-to-day encampments after leaving Utah Valley until their arrival at Fort Uinta. Jackson and Spence place the evening encampments during this part of the expedition as follows: May 27, on the Spanish Fork River up Spanish Fork Canyon; May 28, on the Price River; May 29, on the Strawberry; May 30 on Red Creek; May 31, on the Duchesne River; June 1, on the Lake Fork River; June 2, between the Lake Fork and Uinta Rivers; and June 3, arrival at Fort Uinta on the Uinta River. See The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont 1:705n.
66. See Fremont’s Report, pp. 277-79. For information about Fort Robidoux, see Albert B. Reagan’s "Fort Robidoux and Kit Carson in Northeastern Utah," New Mexico Historical Review 10 (April 1935):121-32. Fremont was fortunate that he was not at the fort during the winter of 1844-45, since a band of Ute Indians attacked the fort, killing the men and taking the women captive. When Fremont was preparing his report in Washington D.C. news of the attack on Fort Uinta had reached him since he made a footnote of the incident in his narrative (see p. 279).
68. Ibid., pp. 134-35.
69. Fremont, Report, p. 279.
CHAPTER III

FREMONT'S 1842 AND 1843-44 EXPEDITIONS AND THE MORMONS IN ILLINOIS

The Mormons Look to the West

On 26 April 1834, the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith told a group of Saints gathered in Kirtland, Ohio that:

it is only a little handful [sic] of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America--it will fill the world. . . . it will fill the Rocky Mountains. There will be tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints who will be gathered in the Rocky Mountains. . . . This people will go to the Rocky Mountains; they will there build temples to the Most High. They will raise up posterity there. . . . The Son of Man will come to them while in the Rocky Mountains.¹

Although Joseph Smith made private mention about the Saints eventual removal of the Church to a location in the West as early as 1832, this is the earliest known public statement by the Prophet. Between 1832 and 1844 numerous Latter-day Saints left record of both public and private statements uttered by Joseph Smith about the eventual settlement of the Saints in the Rocky Mountains.²

Because of persecution, perhaps no other religious group relocated more times in the space of less than two decades than the Mormons. Within nine months after the organization of the Church in Fayette, New York in April 1830, the headquarters of the Church was moved to Kirtland,
Ohio. During 1831, another church center was established in Jackson County, Missouri, although the headquarters of the Church remained in Ohio. From 1831 until 1837 Joseph Smith used Kirtland as the base of Church operations. During the winter of 1837-38 opposition forced the Prophet to leave Kirtland, whereupon he located in Far West, Missouri.

However, the headquarters of the Church in Missouri was short-lived. During 1838-39, the leading Church officials were placed in Missouri jails while thousands of Latter-day Saints fled across the Mississippi River to the state of Illinois where a new church center grew up almost overnight with the building of the city of Nauvoo. Continual persecution of the Church in Illinois into the 1840's caused the Prophet and other Church leaders to begin to investigate relocating the main body of the church once again.

Following the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith at Carthage, Illinois in 1844, persecution continued to intensify. His successors realized that the only way to escape persecution was to relocate in a region no one else wanted—a remote, uninhabited area somewhere in the West. After 1844, Church leaders began an intensive study about the regions in the West. At the same time, they no doubt kept in mind the statements Joseph Smith had made previously about removing the Church to the Rocky Mountains. It was during this period that Fremont's writings played a significant role in the decision by Mormon leaders to settle in the Great Basin region, and more specifically, to
establish the main settlement in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake.

The Mormons Acquire and Publish Fremont’s Writings

In Nauvoo in the 1840’s, the Latter-day Saints established two newspapers, the Times and Seasons, and the Nauvoo Neighbor (prior to May 1843 this paper was known as the Wasp). Whereas the Times and Seasons, a bi-monthly publication, was devoted principally to expounding Mormon doctrines and Church-centered activities, the Nauvoo Neighbor, a weekly publication, usually included more of the general news of the day. An examination of the newspapers operated by the Mormons during the 1840’s often reveals the attitude and thought pattern of the people, and it is interesting to note the extent to which Fremont’s western travels were included in several issues of the Neighbor.

Fremont’s writings about his 1842 expedition to the Wind Rivers were read by Mormons as early as 1843. Extracts of the first expedition came into the hands of the publishers of the Nauvoo Neighbor and were published in October of 1843. Exactly how and when the Mormons obtained extracts of Fremont’s first expedition so as to be able to publish portions of it in October of 1843 is not entirely known, but a complete copy of the 1842 expedition was received by Church leaders sometime in the early part of 1844. In April 1844, Apostle Orson Hyde was in Washington, D.C. engaged in petitioning the government about matters
concerning the Mormons and the possibilities of securing a place for the Church in the West. Hyde wrote to Church leaders in Illinois concerning how he received a copy of Fremont’s 1842 expedition:

Judge [Stephen A.] Douglas has given me a map of Oregon, and also a report on the exploration of the country lying between the Kansas and great Platte rivers, by Lieut. J.C. Fremont, of the corps of Topographical Engineers. On receiving it I expressed a wish that Mr. Smith could see it. Judge Douglas says “It is a public document, and I will frank it to him.” I accepted his offer, and the book will be forthcoming to you. The people are so eager for it here that they have stolen it out of the library. The author is Mr. Benton’s son-in-law. Judge Douglas borrowed it of Mr. Benton. I was not to tell any one in this city where I got it. The book is a most valuable document to any one contemplating a journey to Oregon."

The narrative and map of Fremont’s 1842 expedition to the Wind Rivers apparently arrived in Nauvoo before the death of the Prophet, because Mosiah Hancock said he heard Joseph Smith speak to the Nauvoo Legion just prior to his death, and pointing to Fremont’s map he said, "Now I will show you the travels of this people. . . . Here you will make a place for the winter; and here you will travel west until you come to the Great Salt Lake Valley.” Even though Fremont did not come into Utah on his first expedition in 1842, it is significant that the Mormons were interested in Fremont’s western travels as early as 1843.

Upon completion of his second expedition and arrival at St. Louis on 6 August 1844, Fremont returned to Washington, D.C. to report to government leaders and to prepare for publication the account of his travels in the
Rocky Mountains and the Pacific. By 1 March 1845, Fremont’s narrative was ready for publication and ten-thousand copies of the 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions were ordered to be published by Congress.

Interpolated portions of Fremont’s second expedition were printed in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* even before the completion of the published volume which was being printed and bound in Washington, D.C. As early as 29 January 1845, an article appeared in the *Neighbor* which contained a brief sketch of Fremont’s 1843-44 expedition, including his reaching the Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake (spelled Euta). Less than two months later, on 19 March 1845, another article about the 1843-44 expedition appeared in the *Neighbor* with notably more space devoted to a description of the Utah region. During the month of September 1845, three issues of the *Neighbor*, September 10, 17, and 24, included information on both the 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions. However, by this time, the publishing of the ten thousand bound copies of Fremont’s *Report* had been completed and released for public sale. This is significant, since all three of the September 1845 issues of the *Nauvoo Neighbor* included actual excerpts from the *Report* and not merely interpolated articles. This also suggests that by September of 1845, a copy of the *Report* was in the hands of the Mormons. The September 17 issue of the *Neighbor* contained extracts from Fremont’s *Report* under the dates of 21, 23, and 25, August 1843, the period of time
when the explorer was following the course of the Bear River into the Utah area. The September 24 issue of the Nauvoo Neighbor, which was the last issue in which there was information about Fremont, included some four-and-one-half columns filled with extracts from the Report under the dates of 29-30 August, and 6, 8, and 9 September 1843. These were all dates in which Fremont was in the vicinity of Utah and the Great Salt Lake. The closing paragraphs in the September 17 issue of the Neighbor reveal the extent to which the Mormons were interested in the Great Basin region by September 1845.

The Great Salt Lake, one of the wonders of nature, and perhaps without rival in the world, (being a saturated solution of salt, of a hundred miles in diameter,) is for the first time revealed to our view, by one who has surveyed its shores and navigated its waters.—The Bear River valley, with its rich bottoms, fine grass, walled up mountains, hot springs, mineral springs, soda fountains, volcanic rock, volcanic crater, and saline efferencences, and four thousand five hundred feet above the sea, is for the first time described. ... Of the Geographical discoveries and descriptions, the most striking is that of the Great Basin or vast interior plane [sic] which lies between the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains east and west, and between the blue mountains and the Wahsatch [sic] on the South, and embracing an area of five or six hundred miles in diameter. The elevation of the Sierra Nevada being more lofty than the Rocky Mountains accounts for the formation of the Great Basin, as Lieutenant Fremont calls it, and of which he is the first to announce its existence to the world. A basin which may hold such a kingdom as France, and which has for its rim a circle of mountains whose summits penetrate the regions of eternal snow, is certainly a new and grand object to be revealed.

The reason why the Nauvoo Neighbor in September 1845 included so much material about Fremont and the Utah area is clear when considering the fact that by the last of August
of that year, Mormon leaders had decided that the Great Salt Lake area would be the most probable location for the main settlement of Saints. And further, by September 9, Church officials had decided to send "a company of 1500 men. . . to go to the Great Salt Lake Valley." 10

There are no known details concerning exactly how or when Mormon leaders obtained the 1845 published edition of Fremont's Report. A short article appeared in the Deseret News in 1869 which reported ". . . a gentlemen was here [in Salt Lake City], who stated that it was through his loaning Joseph Smith a copy of Fremont's work that caused Salt Lake Valley to be thought about as a point possessing the advantages and needed faculties for such a settlement as we wanted." 11 This report is obviously erroneous since Fremont did not enter the Salt Lake Valley until his second expedition which was not completed until 1844, and the Report was not published until 1845, one year after the Prophet's death. Regardless of how or by whom Mormon leaders were able to obtain a copy of Fremont's Report, is not nearly as important as the fact that they indeed procured one prior to their exodus. As was discussed previously, by September 1845, the Nauvoo Neighbor included actual excerpts from the Report, whereas previous to this time, the newspaper only included interpolated articles about Fremont's adventures in 1843-44. This leads to the conclusion that by September the editors of the Neighbor were reprinting Fremont's narrative directly from
the published *Report*.

During the closing days of 1845, mention of Fremont's narrative was recorded by Church leaders. While engaged in business in the Nauvoo Temple on 20 December 1845, members of the Quorum of the Twelve listened to Franklin D. Richards read portions of Fremont's journal. Heber C. Kimball wrote a few more details concerning this reading:

Pres. Young having slept in the Temple last night was early at his post, and dictating in relation to the business of the day, and arranging the workmen in order. . . after which he listened to a reading from Capt. Fremont's journal by Franklin D. Richards in the east room. . . . Amasa Lyman came in during the reading, also Heber C. Kimball, at a quarter to 10. The reading was finished at 10 o'clock.  

A week and a half later, on 29 December 1845, Parley P. Pratt read once again from Fremont's narrative to Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball. After this reading, President Young stayed up for nearly an hour to continue to read the narrative by himself. 

It is interesting to note that Brigham Young was misled by Fremont's record. After reading the *Report*, the Mormon leader was of the opinion that the Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake were in fact one lake. When Fremont was in the vicinity of Utah Lake for two days during the latter part of the month of May 1844, he explored only the southern portion of Utah Valley before exiting through Spanish Fork Canyon. Since he did not explore the region between the two lakes, the explorer-scientist made the following conclusion
about the relationship of the two bodies of water:

It [Utah] is a lake of note in this country, under the
dominion of the Utahs, who resort to it for fish. Its
greatest breadth is about 15 miles, stretching far to
the north, narrowing as it goes, and connecting with the
Great Salt Lake. This is the report, and which I
believe to be correct; but it is fresh water, while the
other is not only salt; but a saturated solution of
salt; and here is a problem which requires to be solved.
... The Utah is the southern limb of the Great Salt
Lake; and thus we have seen that remarkable sheet of
water both at its northern and southern extremity. ...

Fremont's conclusions about the two lakes are definitely
inaccurate and it is easy to see how Brigham Young was
misled by the explorer's reporting.

Some years after the Mormons settled in the Great
Salt Lake Valley, a man by the name of Eli Perkins
interviewed Brigham Young. During the course of the
interview, Perkins recorded that Brigham Young received the
impression after reading Fremont's Report, sometime in 1845
or 1846, that the northern portion of the Great Salt Lake
was salt water, and the southern part was fresh. Determined
to prove himself accurate in his description of the two
lakes, Fremont submitted a portion of the Perkins-Young
interview (Perkins had sent Fremont a transcription of his
interview with President Young) to the New York Times along
with an explanation concerning his own opinion of his
alleged inaccuracies. A portion of the Perkins-Young
interview is as follows:

"How came you to think of Utah?" I asked.
"Well, we had read an account of General Fremont's
travels—how he found a large salt lake in the interior
of our continent, in the middle of a fertile plain. We
read the account of his rowing to an island in the middle of the lake in and India-rubber boat, and how the south end of the lake was fresh and the north salt."

"But the south end of Salt Lake is not fresh, is it?" I asked.

"No, Fremont made a mistake. In going to the south of Salt Lake he struck Utah Lake--another lake--and thought it was a continuation of the same lake."

In the Times article, Fremont insisted he did not err in his reporting, but from reading his description contained in the Report, it is clear the explorer did not understand the true relationship of the two lakes--at least in 1844. Two pieces of evidence support this conclusion. First, on the map of his 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions, Fremont and cartographer Charles Preuss joined Utah Lake and the Great Salt Lake with a rather large channel, essentially making them one lake (see map on page 72). And second, in his expedition through Utah the following year (1845), Fremont spent some two weeks in the vicinity of both Utah Lake and the Great Salt Lake. On this occasion he investigated the northern shore of Utah Lake and clearly saw what is today the Jordan River flowing some forty miles northward into the Salt Lake. It was at this time that he clearly understood the relationship between the two bodies of water. This is evident from Fremont’s 1848 map, since he made the necessary correction and showed the two lakes being connected with the Jordan River (see map on page 73).

By 1846, Mormon converts living in the British Isles could also read about Fremont’s adventures in the American West, and more specifically the Great Basin region. When
1845 Fremont-Preuss Map Showing the Channel
Fremont Incorrectly Assumed Connected
Utah Lake With the Great Salt Lake

A portion of the 1845 Fremont-Preuss map of the 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions. Upon completing his survey of the Utah Valley in 1844, Fremont incorrectly assumed the Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake were one body of water, connected by a channel (see arrow).
A portion of the Fremont-Freuss map of 1848 which was presented to Congress with the explorer's Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California. Following Fremont's expedition into Utah in 1845, he clearly understood that the two lakes were not one body of water connected by a channel and made the necessary changes in the map showing that the two were connected by a river, not a channel. The arrow points to the correction Fremont and Preuss made in the 1848 map.
Congress ordered that the Report be printed, there was no copyright attached to the document. This meant publishers were free to reproduce the Report without restrictions, and numerous publishing companies subsequently reprinted the document under various titles. By 1846, Wiley and Putnam Publishers of London completed a printing of Fremont's narrative. With the completion of the Wiley-Putnam edition of the Report, Orson Hyde, editor of the Mormon owned Millennial Star (published at Liverpool), began including excerpts of Fremont's 1843-44 expedition in the paper. On 1 March 1846, the first passages of Fremont's Report appeared in the Star. In this issue, Hyde indicated the Wiley-Putnam edition of the Report was being used as the source for the Fremont narrative. Accounts of the explorer's second expedition appeared in the Star until 15 October 1846. Elder Hyde's purpose for publishing Fremont's expeditions in Great Britain can be understood when considering the fact that since the early 1840's, Mormon leaders encouraged converts of the new faith to unite themselves with the main body of the Saints. With the decision to settle in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake in 1845, Hyde no doubt hoped that upon reading about Fremont's favorable description of the newly proposed Mormon place of settlement, British Mormons would be more inclined to "gather to Zion." In short, Hyde published Fremont's narrative to stimulate emigration by the Saints in the British Isles.
Although the Mormons had obtained a copy of the map and narrative of Fremont’s 1842 expedition by 1844 (according to Orson Hyde’s 26 April 1844 letter to the Council), and the published Report sometime probably in September 1845, they apparently did not obtain Fremont’s 1845 map until 1847. From Brigham Young we learn that on 27 March 1847, just a few days prior to leaving Winter Quarters for the trek west, a map was received from General Atchison who was currently serving as a U.S. Senator from Missouri. Upon the completion of the second expedition, Fremont and Preuss combined to produce a rather large lithograph map of both the 1842 and the 1843-44 expeditions. Like the Report, the map was also completed in 1845, but it was published independent of the Report. This explains how the Saints could have obtained a copy of the Report in 1845, but not the map. There can be little doubt that the map given by Atchison to the Saints was Fremont’s 1845 map since eight days after receiving the map Brigham Young recorded that "T. [Thomas] Bullock made a sketch of Capt. Fremont’s topographical map of [the] road to Oregon for the use of the Pioneers."20

It seems clear that the Report was in the hands of Mormon leaders by late 1845 and read at one time or another by Brigham Young and other leading Church officials. But their intent in reading it was not necessarily to assist them in knowing the route which they were to travel to arrive at the Great Salt Lake, although the Report and maps
gave them assistance in this area. Of greater importance and concern to the Church leaders was in knowing the agricultural and geographic characteristics of the region. These leaders used the Report primarily to assess whether or not the region would meet the needs of the vast number of people they envisioned as someday settling in the heart of the Intermountain West. Such assessments as the following by Fremont must have played an important part in the decision by the Church's leadership to settle near the Great Salt Lake.

Taking leave at this point of the waters of the Bear River, and of the geographical basin which encloses the system of rivers and creeks which belong to the Great Salt Lake, and which so richly deserves a future and detailed and ample exploration, I can say of it, in general terms, that the bottoms of this river, (Bear) and some of the creeks which I saw, form a natural resting and recruiting station for travellers, now, and in all time to come. The bottoms are extensive; water excellent; timber sufficient; the soil good, and well adapted to the grains and grasses to such and elevated region.**

And another:

I can only say, in general and comparative terms, that, in that branch of agriculture which implies the cultivation of grains and staple crops, it would be inferior to the Atlantic States, though many parts are superior for wheat; while in the rearing of flocks and herds it would claim a high price. Its grazing capabilities are great; and even in the indigenous grass not there, and element of individual and national wealth may be found.**

In 1848, when he presented his Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California to the United States Senate, Fremont was no doubt pleased to report to the lawmakers that the Mormon people had settled in a location of the Great Basin
he had observed in 1843 and 1844 as being habitable by man. Although he consents to the fact that "the general character of the Great Basin is that of a desert," he also adds, "but with great exceptions, there being many parts of it very fit for the residence of a civilized people; and of these parts, the Mormons have lately established themselves in one of the largest and the best." 23

Summary

In summary, Fremont’s writings had a definite and profound impact on the Mormons. A copy of the map and narrative of the 1842 expedition to the Wind Rivers in Wyoming was sent from Washington to Nauvoo by Orson Hyde in April 1844, and the Prophet Joseph Smith made reference to the 1842 map and narrative prior to his death. On two occasions in the winter and early spring of 1845, two issues of the Mormon newspaper Nauvoo Neighbor contained interpolated articles focusing exclusively on the explorer’s activities in the Utah region. Later that year, during the month of September 1845, three more issues of the Neighbor included actual extracts of the Report, suggesting that by this time a copy of the Report was in the hands of the Mormon leaders. Lewis Clark Christian’s conclusion that Mormon leaders had made the final decision to settle the main colony of Saints in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake by late August or early September 1845, 24 suggests why the September issues of the Neighbor included extracts from the
Report which focused almost exclusively on the Utah area. During the closing months of 1845, numerous sources were cited which indicate that Mormon leaders frequently read and referred to Fremont’s writings to assist them in knowing the characteristics of the region, as well as its agricultural and economic potential. Evidence was also presented to show that upon reading Fremont’s Report, Brigham Young was misinformed and misled by the explorer’s inaccurate conclusion concerning the relationship between the Utah and Great Salt Lakes. Finally, it should be noted that the lieutenant’s writings did not necessarily persuade the Mormon leadership to settle in the Great Basin. Rather, his writings helped to confirm their decision.

During the year of the Mormon exodus from Illinois, apostle Orson Hyde, the presiding authority of the Church in Great Britain, published from Liverpool, selected portions of Fremont’s Report in the Mormon publication known as the Millennial Star. Using the British Wiley-Putnam edition of the Report, for a period of some seven and one-half months, Hyde included in the Star exclusively only those portions of the explorer’s narrative which dealt with Utah. In publishing portions of the 1843-44 expedition, Hyde intended not only to inform the British Saints of the new place of Mormon settlement, but also (and of greater importance) to stimulate the English converts to emigrate to the United States and subsequently join the main body of the Church in the Salt Lake Valley.
It is clear, however, that although the Mormon's were able to secure a copy of the Fremont Report in 1845, a copy of the map of the 1843-44 expedition was not secured by Church leaders until just prior to their departure from Winter Quarters in 1847.
Notes to Chapter III

1. Wilford Woodruff, Conference Report, April 8, 1898, p. 57.

2. The best discussion concerning the prophecies made by Joseph Smith about the Latter-day Saints eventual removal to a location in the Rocky Mountains, is Lewis Clark Christian’s "A Study of Mormon Knowledge of the American Far West Prior to the Exodus" (Masters thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972), pp. 65-75; and, "A Study of the Mormon Westward Migration Between February 1846 and July 1847 With Emphasis on and Evaluation of the Factors That Led to the Mormons' Choice of Salt Lake Valley as the Site of Their Initial Colony" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1976), pp. 22-30. Christian includes written statements of some twenty individuals who at one time or another left record of Joseph Smith’s prophecies and statements about the Saints gathering to the Rocky Mountains.

3. See Nauvoo Neighbor, 25 October 1843. The account of Fremont’s 1842 expedition was first published as an independent document. Later, it was reprinted in 1845 along with the account of the 1843-44 expedition as part of Fremont’s Report.


7. By September 1845 it seems copies of Fremont’s Report were also in the hands of other newspaper editors. In nearby Springfield, Illinois, editors of the Sangamo Journal, a weekly publication, also published numerous reports about Fremont’s 1843-44 expedition. See the following issues: September 18 and 25, and October 1, 9, and 16, 1845.


9. Council to Addison Pratt, 28 August 1845. Located in the LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
10. **History of the Church** 7:439. Lewis Clark Christian presents substantial evidence to conclude that sometime around late August or early September Mormon leaders had made the decision to settle in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake. See Christian's "A Study of the Mormon Knowledge of the American Far West Prior to the Exodus, p. 111; and "A Study of the Mormon Westward Migration Between February 1846 and July 1847 With Emphasis on and Evaluation of the Factors That Led to the Mormons' Choice of Salt Lake City as the Site of Their Initial Colony," p. 34.


12. **History of the Church** 7:549.

   Located in the LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

14. **History of the Church** 7:556.


17. *New York Times*, 5 June 1877. The Perkins-Young interview was also included by Fremont in his *Memoirs of My Life* 1:415-16. In reporting the remarks of Mormon Apostle George A. Smith to the Saints in Brigham City, Utah, E.L. Sloan wrote a letter, dated 12 May 1865 to the editor of the *Deseret News*. The letter appeared in its entirety in the *Deseret News* on 17 May 1865. In George A. Smith's remarks to the Saints on this occasion, Sloan reported Elder Smith "alluded to the explorations of John C. Fremont, who with men furnished to him, and at the expense of some $40,000 to the government, had made a wonderful discovery that the Great Salt Lake and Utah lake were one sheet of water, propounding the startling proposition, how the north end of the same lake could be salt and the south end fresh!"


19. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 27 March 1847. Located in in the LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah. General or Senator Atchison was in fact David R. Atchison, a long-time friend of the Mormon people. Following the expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Atchison was one of the four attorneys chosen to help the Saints reclaim their lands. As a general in the state
militia during the years 1838-39, he vigorously sought to help secure the Saints' rights in spite of opposition from his superiors. In 1847 he was serving as a U.S. Senator from Missouri, and it appears he still had sympathetic feelings for the Saints in his gesture of making sure Mormon leaders had a copy of Fremont's 1845 map to assist them on their trek west.

20. Ibid., 4 April 1847. To what extent Fremont's Report and 1845 map were referred to and used on the trek west is not known, but an entry in the Journal History of 2 June 1847 implies that the explorer's calculations were referred to on occasion. The entry states, "By his astronomical instruments, Orson Pratt determined the latitude of Fort Laramie to be 42 degrees 12 minutes and 13 seconds, and longitude 104 degrees 11 minutes and 53 seconds, differing from Capt. J.C. Fremont only three seconds or 18 rods."


22. Ibid., p. 277.


CHAPTER IV

FREMONT'S 1845 EXPEDITION INTO UTAH

Background and Objectives of the 1845 Expedition

Returning from his second expedition to the West in August 1844, John Charles and his wife Jessie labored in Washington to prepare the narratives of the first and second expeditions. Charles Preuss, the cartographer of the two expeditions, prepared the maps for government issuance. It was also upon his return that President John Tyler saw to it that Fremont received the rank of captain. At the same time he was working to prepare his Report, the pathmarker was making arrangements with his army superiors to conduct yet another expedition to the West--his third in four years. We are informed of the explorer's intentions to lead a third expedition from a letter he sent in January 1845 to John Torrey, a botanist residing in New York City, appraising him of his upcoming exploration plans. Fremont explained to Torrey that "this year I shall visit the same localities in order to examine as closely as I am able the interesting geology of that country."¹

On February 12, the captain received official orders to conduct the expedition. An examination of these orders
reveals that Fremont's instructions were quite specific.

Colonel Abert wrote:

> He will strike the Arkansas as soon as practicable, survey that river, and if practicable survey the Red River without our boundary line, noting particularly the navigable properties of each, and will determine as near as practicable the points at which the boundary line of the U.S. the 100th degree of longitude west of Greenwich strikes the Arkansas, and the Red River. It is also important that the Head waters of the Arkansas should be accurately determined. Long journeys to determine isolated geographical points are scarcely worth the time and the expense which they occasion; the efforts of Captain Fremont will therefore be more particularly directed to the geography of localities within reasonable distance of Bent's Fort, and of the streams which run east from the Rocky Mountains, and he will so time his operations, that his party will come in during the present year.²

Taking a strict interpretation of these instructions, Fremont was to proceed no further west than to "the streams which run east" from the Rocky Mountains, and he was also to return "during the present year." However, in preparing his Memoirs, Fremont wrote that he was also ordered "to complete the examination of the Great Salt Lake and its interesting region; and to extend the survey west and southwest to the examination of the great ranges of the Cascade Mountains and the Sierra Nevada."³ Exactly when Fremont received these additional instructions is not known. While there can be little doubt that he received additional orders to proceed further west, it is clear they did not come from his military superiors. The evidence suggests that the additional orders came from his father-in-law, Senator Thomas Hart Benton, with unwritten approval being granted by none other than the President of the United States.
Three weeks after Captain Fremont received his orders to conduct his third expedition to the West, James K. Polk was inaugurated as president. Polk entered office with the threat of U.S. conflict between Great Britain over territorial rights in the Northwest, and Mexico in the West and Southwest. Since the signing of the Nootka Sound Treaty in 1791, the U.S. and Great Britain had held joint occupancy of the Northwest. By the mid-1840's the "Manifest Destiny" theme had worked its way into the minds of politicians and most Americans, which to them justified the U.S. government's exclusive ownership of the Oregon region. Tension with Mexico had been mounting, especially after annexation proceedings began on 28 February 1845, which Mexico refused to acknowledge. But the disputation over the status of Texas was secondary to both the U.S. and Mexican government's interests in California. Political expansionists were "drooling" over this north Mexican province, and like Oregon, most American's considered the territory as most rightfully belonging to the Union. The West was the number one issue of the day.

Immediately upon taking office, President Polk made the acquisition of California the first priority of his administration. Fremont no doubt knew of Polk's expansionistic objectives in the West, probably once again as a result of his father-in-law's close association with the president due to his position as chairman of the Senate Military Committee. Fremont wrote:
President Polk entered on his office with a fixed determination to acquire California, if he could acquire it in an honorable and just manner.

The President . . . held it impossible for Mexico, situated as things then were, to retain possession of California; and therefore it was right to negotiate with Mexico for the acquisition of that which to her could be of no use. This it was hoped to accomplish by peaceful negotiation; but if Mexico in resenting our acceptance of the offer of Texas to join us, should begin war with us, then, by taking possession of the province.*

Fremont was no doubt included in the president's plans for the acquisition of California. The explorer stated that these plans were "talked over fully during the time of preparation for the third expedition," and that "in arranging this expedition, the eventualities of war were taken into consideration."\(^\ast\) Continuing, he reported that "no distinct course or definite instruction could be laid down," but he was "given discretion to act."\(^\ast\) In putting together the historical puzzle, it appears that Fremont undertook his third expedition with plans to complete the geographical survey to the headwaters of the Arkansas as assigned to him by Colonel Abert, and then permission was given him by political leaders for him to proceed to examine the Great Salt Lake, and the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Ranges. Upon his arrival at the Pacific seaboard, he was to be prepared for "the eventualities of war." Simply stated, this was first to be a scientific expedition, then a military one.
Fremont in Utah in 1845

The expedition party included several members of Fremont's two previous journeys, the most noted being Thomas "Broken Hand" Fitzpatrick, Theodore Talbot, Jacob Dodson, and Fremont's good friend and companion Basil Lajeunesse. The cartographer Charles Preuss was consigned to remain in Washington. He was replaced by a man every bit as artistically gifted, Edward (Ned) Kern. During the latter part of the month of June, the party headed west out of Westport Landing.

The expedition party traveled through the central part of Kansas for some 200 miles before reaching the Arkansas River. By the August 2, they had followed the Arkansas upstream and arrived at Bent's Fort in eastern Colorado. Here, Fremont waited until Kit Carson, who was somewhere on the Cimarron River, could join the company. The captain did not report how many men were with him in the expedition upon its initial departure, but upon their departure from Bent's Fort on August 16, he reported that his expedition consisted of "a well-appointed compact party of sixty." Fremont continued his course to the headwaters of the Arkansas located in the high central Rockies of Colorado. Surmounting the Continental Divide, the explorer crossed the headwaters of the Colorado which led him to the upper White. While on the White, Theodore Talbot recorded that Fremont and his men encountered Joseph Walker, who, for the second time in two years joined Fremont's
Walker had met Fremont in southern Utah the year before where he hired on as a guide for the last leg of the journey east. On this occasion, he offered his assistance to open up a new route going west. Continuing downstream on the White, the expedition subsequently came into the Utah region.

The Captain left very little record of his travels through the highlands of Colorado and eastern Utah. He justified his lack of recording by writing, "The character of the mountain country has been so fully given in previous journeys, that it does not need to be longer dwelt upon here." However, Kit Carson gave a semi-detailed account of the journey through eastern Utah. Carson wrote that the expedition "went down [the] White River almost to its junction with [the] Green River, crossed the latter stream and went on to the Winty [now the Duchesne], then up the latter almost to the mountains, which we crossed to Provost [Provo] Fork. . . . We traveled down the Provost to Little Utah Lake and followed it almost to Great Salt Lake." According to the captain's timetable, the party had arrived at the headwaters of the Provo on October 2. Given the distance of approximately 125 miles which the explorer would have had to travel from the Utah border to the headwaters of the Provo River, Fremont's entry into the Utah region occurred approximately one week earlier around September 26. Fremont wrote that he reached Utah Lake on October 10, the outlet of the Utah Lake on the 12th, and the
shores of the Great Salt Lake on the 13th.  

Fremont's course of travel into Utah in 1845 is significant. During his first entry into northern Utah in 1843, his party proceeded only as far south as the mouth of the Weber River on the shores of the Great Salt Lake. A year later, while traveling north through the southern and central portion of the state on the return leg of the 1843-44 expedition, the explorer penetrated only as far north as the southern end of Utah Lake. It was upon his arrival at the southern shores of Utah Lake that Fremont calculated that the Utah Lake stretches "far to the north, narrowing as it goes, . . . connecting with the Great Salt Lake. This is the report, and which I believe to be correct; but it is fresh water, while the other is salt . . . and here is a problem which requires to be solved." Fremont's route through Utah on the third expedition brought him to the area which he had not seen during the previous two years, that of the region between the two lakes. By simply following the course of the forty-mile Jordan River from Utah Lake to the Great Salt Lake, the explorer was able to correctly distinguish the true relationship between the two bodies of water. Had his course through Utah in 1845 been by some other route, he may not have corrected his geographic mistake of the previous year. In 1848, Fremont presented to Congress his Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California. This report included information he had obtained from the 1845
expedition. Accompanying the Geographical Memoir was yet another map drawn by Charles Preuss under Fremont's direction. It was on this map that the explorer had Preuss make the necessary changes, showing the two lakes being connected by a river and not a channel. Thus, Fremont corrected or "solved" his previous error.

The captain recorded in his narrative that he remained in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake "for two weeks in the month of October, from the 13th to the 27th." During this time he made scientific measurements and calculations around the southern shores of the lake. His arrival at the lake during the fall season coincided with the annual receding of the lake's waters. The recession of the water often leaves interesting salt crystalline formations. Fremont's interests in these salt coagulations around the lake are reflected in his writings:

The rocky shores . . . were whitened by the spray which leaves salt on everything it touches, and a covering like ice forms over the water which the waves throw among the rocks. This seems to be the dry season when the waters recede; and the shores of the lake, especially on the south side, are whitened with incrustations of fine white salt. The shallow arms of the lake, under a slight covering of briny water, present beds of salt extending for miles. Plants and bushes blown by the winds upon these fields are entirely incrusted with crystallized salt. The stem of a small twig, less than the size of a goose-quill, from the southeastern shore, showed a formation of more than an inch thick of crystallized salt.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the captain collected the small crystallized twig referred to by him in the above cited quotation, and that he was able to retain it...
through the rest of the entire 1845 expedition. In 1848, when he presented to Congress his *Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California*, Fremont recorded that at a location on the southeastern side of the lake he took a "specimen . . . formation of more than an inch thick of pure crystallized salt on the stem of a small twig." The explorer's wording in the *Geographical Memoir* is almost identical to his narrative from his personal memoirs, suggesting that the salt formation was the identical specimen mentioned as being collected while on the 1845 expedition. So unusual and unique was this specimen that it was subsequently put on display in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.¹⁶

Five days after the expedition's arrival at the great inland sea, Captain Fremont journeyed to the largest island in the lake. Two years previous, he used a large "India-rubber boat" to transport a company of five men to the second largest island in the lake, which he named "Disappointment Island," but which was subsequently renamed by Howard Stansbury, "Fremont Island," in honor of the captain. The explorer was informed by some local Indians that a boat would not be necessary for the excursion since the water level of the lake was at its low stage and the island could be reached on horseback. Accordingly, on October 18, Fremont, Carson, and several additional men left the main encampment on the southern end of the lake and rode on horseback through shallow water a relatively short distance to the island. Because of the low water level, the
explorer reported that the island seemed to him to be more like that of a peninsula rather than an island. The company guided their animals along a relatively high sandbar which extended from the shore to the island. In wading to the island, the water never rose above the saddle-girths, however, the horses feet sunk to their fetlocks in the soft floor of the lake, which was covered with a sheet of salt resembling softening ice. Once on the island, Fremont reported that there was an abundance of grass, water, and several bands of antelope. "Some of these [antelope] were killed," wrote the explorer, "and, in memory of the grateful supply of food they furnished, I gave their name to the island" (see photograph on page 93). Officially known today by Fremont's title of "Antelope Island," during the latter half of the nineteenth century, it also became known as "Church Island," so named because beginning in the 1850's stock owned by the Mormon Church was transported to the island to graze there. Antelope Island is the largest island in the Great Salt Lake, extending 15 1/2 miles in length, an 5 1/2 miles in breadth, and covering an area of some 23,175 acres. The extent to which Fremont and his company explored the island must have been minimal, since Carson recorded that their stay on the island was only two days, the same amount of time spent exploring Fremont Island two years previous. However, Fremont made mention of the fact that he ascended the highest point on the island in order to take a meridian altitude measurement, so some
Photograph of Antelope Island, the name given it by Fremont. The explorer visited the island with several members of his expedition while in the Utah region in 1845.
degree of scientific exploration was conducted while on the island.

Upon returning to the mainland on October 18, John Charles had a most interesting and somewhat humorous encounter with an old Utah Indian. The Indian was apparently aware of the explorer's activities on the island and was determined to make a profit on the exploits of the expedition. The captain recounted the experience as follows:

Seeing what game we had brought in he promptly informed us that the antelope which we had been killing were his—that all the antelope on that island belonged to him—that they were all he had to live upon, and that we must pay him for the meat which we had brought away. He was very serious with us and gravely reproached me for the wrong which was had done him. Pleased with his readiness, I had a bale unpacked and gave him a present—some red cloth, a knife, and tobacco, with which he declared himself abundantly satisfied for this trespass on his game preserve. With each article laid down, his nods and gutturals expressed the satisfaction he felt at the success of his imaginary claim. We could see, as far as an Indian's face lets expression be seen, that he was thinking, "I went to the White Chief who killed my antelope, and made him pay for it." There is nothing new under the sun."

The old Indian's insistence that he be compensated influenced the expedition's artist Edward Kern to sketch a portrait for the company's record, underscoring the drawing with the inscription, "The Claimant.""

During the latter part of the month of October Fremont and his party continued their westward course around the southern end of the Great Salt Lake. From the explorer's narrative, and from camp positions drawn on his 1848 map, it appears that on October 23, he rounded the
Oquirrh Mountains, the western boundary of the Salt Lake Valley, and camped at a spring in the Tooele Valley. Here, the expedition met a Piute Indian family, one member of which, the captain was able to persuade to guide the company for a short time through the unknown stretch of barren land to the west. Two days later, the expedition passed through the present-day Stansbury Mountains into Skull Valley, and saw stretched out before them the broad, barren Great Salt Lake Desert. At this point, the wilderness which lay before him caused Fremont some concern. He recorded that "Some days here were occupied in deciding upon which direction to be taken for the onward journey." The Indians informed him that no one had ever been known to cross the salt desert. Even the hired guides Joseph Walker and Kit Carson knew nothing about this remote region.

In surveying their desired course of travel, the captain took notice of what appeared to be a somewhat fertile "peak-shaped" mountain some fifty to sixty miles west on the opposite side of the desert. With the hope that water could be found somewhere near the base of the mountain, and recognizing the difficulty of attempting to cross sixty miles of desert without any guarantee of locating water and pasture for their animals, Fremont sent an advance party made up of Kit Carson, Auguste Archambeau, Lucien Maxwell, and an unnamed man in charge of a pack mule loaded with water and provisions to make an attempt to reach the peak. Fremont instructed the four that upon their
arrival at the peak, they were to make a signal by smoke fire if water was found.

The advance party set out during the night, whereupon the captain and the rest of the men followed the next day. Fremont found the desert entirely "destitute of any vegetation except sage-brushes, and absolutely bare and smooth as if water had been standing upon it." It is obvious he was describing the salt flats which exist in the desert and which have become world famous as a location for land speed racing. Continuing, his party traveled the entire day and into the night. The Indian guide, distraught over being taken so far from his established territory near the lake, became so "alarmed that his knees gave way under him and he wabbled about like a drunken man." The captain realized that he could be of no further use to the expedition so he renumerated him for his services and allowed him to return to his family. Humorously, Fremont wrote that "He was so happy in his release that he bounded off like a hare through the sage-brush, fearful that I might still keep him."  

The expedition made camp in the middle of the desert just before daybreak. As camp was being made, Archambeau rode in with news that the advance party had arrived at the peak and found water, grass, and wood to be plentiful. The company wasted no time in breaking camp and moving on, "which was done quickly," wrote Fremont, so that by afternoon:
we reached the foot of the mountain, where a cheerful little stream broke out and lost itself in the valley. The animals were quickly turned loose, there being no risk of their straying from the grass and water. To the friendly mountain I gave the name of Pilot Peak.27

Upon his arrival at the base of this landmark, Fremont and his company achieved the first known successful direct central crossing of the Great Salt Lake Desert. However, two known parties had previously surmounted the arid salt desert region, but by different routes. Early in the spring of 1827, in order to participate in the rendezvous being held in the Bear Lake Valley, mountain man Jedediah Smith passed over the extreme southern end of the desert upon his return from California.30 And just four years prior to Fremont's arrival at Pilot Peak, John Bartleson led a small band of California bound emigrants. Bartleson's company left the Oregon Trail at the big bend of the Bear River near Soda Springs, Idaho, and took an untraveled alternative route with hopes of finding a route located on a more direct line to California. This party came into the Utah area by way of Cache Valley. Traveling overland, they journeyed west through Box Elder County above the northern shores of the inland sea, then skirted the western borders of the Great Salt Lake Desert by traveling south somewhat parallel to the desert's western ranges (Raft River Range), arriving at the yet unnamed Pilot Peak on 13 September 1841.31 Although Smith and Bartleson gained a victory over the salt desert prior to Fremont, the government explorer
must be credited for conquering it head on.

Pilot Peak (sometimes also referred to as Pilot's Peak) is situated just over the Utah-Nevada border and has continued to be known by the name given it by the explorer in 1845. The captain's arrival at the mountain also marked a new beginning in westward excursions. The peak not only represented the terminating point of the Great Salt Lake Desert, but it also became the geographic landmark which guided future western travelers bound for California (see photograph on page 99).

In the early 1840's, emigrant companies began taking "detours" on the established Oregon Trail, usually soon after leaving Ft. Hall on the Snake River in Idaho. Approximately fifty miles west of Ft. Hall the Raft River enters the Snake. Companies following the Raft through northern Utah emerged into the vicinity of Mary's or Ogden's River (renamed the Humboldt by Fremont during his 1845 expedition). The Humboldt could be followed through most of north-central Nevada before literally disappearing into the Humboldt Sink. Then, after a short overland journey, California emigrants could pick up the Truckee River, which could be followed into the center of the high Sierras. Crossing the divide of the Sierras, the American River could be reached and followed to Sutter's Fort. The route along these four main rivers (Raft, Humboldt, Truckee, and American) quickly became known as the California Trail. However, several alternative routes, or shortcuts on the
Photograph of Pilot’s Peak, situated near the present Utah-Nevada border and named by Fremont during his 1845 expedition. The peak became a geographic landmark for western travelers on what was known as "Hasting’s Cut-off." Photograph courtesy of the Utah Historical Society.
California Trail emerged as the route became more well known and traveled. One such shortcut emerged as a result of Fremont's success in crossing the Great Salt Lake Desert in 1845. This route became known as the "Salt Lake Desert Cutoff," or the more prominent name of the "Hastings Cutoff."

In 1845, Lansford W. Hastings, published An Emigrant's Guide to Oregon and California, which he hoped would "lure" Americans to the West Coast. In 1846, Hastings was in northern California making preparations to return to the East on the California Trail to assist emigrant companies coming west. Fremont arrived at Sutter's Fort in December 1845, and one month later in January 1846, the two men met each other and conversed about Fremont's successful crossing of the salt desert. During the spring of 1846, Hastings, his comrade James M. Hudspeth, guide James Clyman, and several others, consisting of 16 men, 3 women, and 3 children, returned east via the California Trail. On 16 May 1845, near the big bend of the Humboldt (Winnemucca, Nevada), Hastings decided to divide the company permanently so he could push ahead. Six men, an Indian, one woman and a child made up this advance party. At a location about three quarters of the way up the Humboldt near present-day Elko, Nevada, Hastings and his group decided to leave the California Trail leading to Ft. Hall to strike the more direct route blazed by Fremont the previous year. Guide James Clyman recorded the groups decision:
May 21] . . . at 14 miles we encamped this being the point where Mr Fremont intersecte the wagon Trail [California Trail] last fall on his way to california and Mr Hastings our pilot was very anxious to try this route by my beleef is that it [is] very little nearer and not so good a road as that by fort Hall . . . .

May 22] after long consultation and many arguments for and against the two different routes one leading Northward by fort Hall and the other by the way of Salt Lake we all finally tooke Fremonts Trail by the way of Salt Lake Late in thee day

After their arrival at Pilot Peak on May 28, the Hastings company retraced Fremont's trail of the year before through the Great Salt Lake Desert, Skull Valley, Tooele Valley, and Salt Lake Valley, arriving at the Jordan River on June 2. Here, Hastings diverted from Fremont's expedition route of the year before and crossed through the Wasatch range by heading east up Parleys Canyon, north over Big Mountain and East Canyon, then heading east once again through Echo Canyon. With his subsequent arrival at Ft. Bridger, Hastings laid claim to opening a new route to the West—the Hasting's Cutoff.

After his arrival at Ft. Bridger, Hastings continued to proceed east on the Oregon Trail at a location several miles east of South Pass on the Sweetwater to await the arrival of emigrant companies going west. Here he also sent letters east on the trail with a man by the name of Wales B. Bonney, an eastbound traveler, advising anyone going west of his proposed route and offering his and Hudspeth's services, claiming it would save hundred miles of overland travel. With his letters going east, Hastings went back west to Ft.
Bridger where he hoped his offer would be accepted.
Hastings subsequently was able to influence the emigrant
companies of Edwin Bryant and William Russell
(Bryant-Russell party), George W. Harlen and Samuel C. Young
(Harlen-Young party), Heinrich Lienhard (Lienhard company),
and George Donner (Donner party).

As the wagon companies arrived at Ft. Bridger,
Hastings and Hudspeth made arrangements with the company’s
leaders to guide them on the cutoff. As things turned out,
the two men led the parties through the Wasatch Range on
different routes than the one through which they had come on
their trek east to the fort. The Bryant party, which
consisted of no wagons, was led by Hudspeth to the present
site of Evanston, Wyoming, where they traveled overland
until reaching Lost Creek which subsequently brought them
into and through Weber Canyon. Being on horseback, the
Bryant company made the trek through Weber canyon without
much difficulty. From the canyon’s mouth, the company
turned south, rounded the southern shores of the inland sea,
and headed west through western Utah on the pathmarker’s
1845 expedition trail.

Hastings personally directed the Harlen-Young and
Lienhard companies. Their route through western Wyoming ran
some miles to the south, but nearly parallel to Hudspeth’s
course. Crossing a low divide, the Harlen-Young party
entered Echo Canyon. The Lienhard party soon followed. The
two groups essentially followed the Weber River through
Weber Canyon, but it was not without backbreaking effort since the narrow canyon made wagon movement at times almost impossible.

The Donner party was several days behind the other three groups. Hastings, who continued on ahead of the Donner party, left a message at present-day Henefer, Utah, wherein he discouraged them taking the route through Weber Canyon, and recommended a course through the Wasatch range similar to the route through which he and Hudspeth had come east on to Ft. Bridger. The only exception was that he recommended the Donner party descend into the Salt Lake Valley through Emigration Canyon rather than Parleys. At Henefer, one member of the party, James Reed, rode on ahead to overtake Hastings with the hope that the emigrant guide would come back to lead them over the proposed route. Hastings did return, but only as far as the top of Big Mountain in East Canyon where he indicated to Reed the recommended course of travel. The difficulty the Donner-Reed party encountered on this route, combined with the difficulties experienced while traveling on Fremont’s 1845 route through western Utah, contributed to their ill-fated encounter with death, starvation, and eventual cannibalism in the high Sierra’s.

The majority of the routes explored by Fremont cannot be credited to his discovery. However, he could lay claim to the the 125 mile route west from Salt Lake to Pilot Peak. For once, he was not only a pathmarker, but a
pathmaker as well. Unfortunately for his sake, because of Hastings' bad judgment which resulted in the disaster of the Donner party, his name also gets attached to the incident. It also did not take long for the word to spread concerning the difficulties experienced by the emigrating companies of 1846 on the Hastings Cutoff. Although other routes were more widely used and better suited for wagons, the Hastings cutoff, or portions of it, continued to be used for years to come. The Mormons, no doubt, were the greatest users of at least the eastern arm of the cutoff, but the western arm, the one discovered by Fremont, was also used, only to a lesser extent. Eventually, most emigrants who took the eastern arm of the cutoff to Salt Lake City, continued west by going around the northern part of lake, eventually joining the California Trail near the Raft River (known as the Salt Lake-California Connection). But Fremont's rough route west of Salt Lake had some considerable use.

Historian George R. Stewart, an expert on the California Trail and its appendages, wrote that "Little record is available of what happened on [this part] of Hastings Cutoff, and who took it, or why," but adds, "it was more traveled in '49, [since] the conditions on the desert seem to have resembled those of '46, so that the emigrants suffered much hardship, but escaped disaster." 

John Charles recorded that after a one-day rest at the base of Pilot Peak, his company left the mountain oasis on November 1. Since the landmark lies just over the
borders of Utah and Nevada, November 1 would mark the date of his departure from the Utah region. Accepting the writer's approximation that Fremont entered eastern Utah around September 26, and according to Fremont's historical record stating that he left Pilot Peak on November 1, his stay in Utah during 1845 was about five weeks (see map on page 106).

Shortly after leaving the Utah region, the expedition continued on to California, but by two separate routes. Fremont led ten men on a southern course through central Nevada, while Theodore Talbot was put in charge of the expedition which followed the Humboldt on the California Trail to the Humboldt Sink, and then continued south until meeting the captain at Walker Lake. After a short reunion, Fremont made the decision to once again form two companies for the trek through the Sierra's. Taking Carson and a few additional men, the path marker rode north to the Truckee where they followed the California Trail through to Sutter's Fort. Talbot and Joseph Walker directed the remaining men through a southern pass in the Sierra's named after Walker. Following a successful crossing, this company traveled up the San Joaquin Valley. Eventually, the two groups rejoined just south of Monterey. In order to carry out his initial orders of the expedition, during the spring of 1846, Fremont led his men on a short expedition to the Klamath region of Oregon. Upon its return to California, the expedition was officially over, but by then, the political tension between
A portion of the Fremont-Preuss map of 1848 which was presented to Congress with the explorer’s Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California. The dark solid line indicates the route of the expedition while in the region of Utah in 1845.
the Americans and Mexican officials had reached a breaking point. Perhaps justifying his actions upon his commission as an officer in the U.S. Army, Fremont for the next year became involved in the Bear Flag Revolt and other military conflicts against Mexico which resulted in the U.S. conquest of California. 37

Summary

John C. Fremont’s 1845 expedition through Utah was significant in at least four ways. First, his expedition and course of travel into the area enabled him to see clearly the true relationship of Utah Lake with the Great Salt Lake. In 1844, he had incorrectly assumed, based upon his explorations, that the two lakes were actually one body of water, and on his 1845 map he connected them with a large channel. It was during the 1845 expedition that he was able to explore the region between the lakes. It was on this occasion that he saw his error and made the necessary changes on the next map he produced in 1848. Second, Fremont made a second exploration and analysis of the Great Salt Lake. Third, two geographic landmarks, Antelope Island and Pilot Peak, were named by him, and each has retained the name given to it by the explorer. Fourth, as a direct result of the explorer’s successful crossing of the Great Salt Lake Desert, and the locating of a water supply on its western border (Pilot Peak), a portion of a new route west was opened. Though the route was not the most recommended
nor accommodating for wagon companies, it was nonetheless subsequently used by western travelers for decades to come.
Notes to Chapter IV


5. Ibid., p. 423.

6. Ibid., p. 422.

7. Ibid., p. 423.

8. Ibid., p. 428.


11. Carson, *Kit Carson's Autobiography*, pp. 88-89. Theodore Talbot recalled much the same route as Carson. He said the expedition followed the White River to where it "empties itself into the Colorado of the West [actually the Green] nearly opposite to the mouth of the Vinty [now the Duchesne] which as you remember we explored last season. We took up the Duchene Fork of the Vinte reaching the Lesser Youta [Utah] Lake by way of the Timpanoga [Provo] River. We then went north camping on the southern side of the Great Salt Lake into which the Youta Lake empties itself: this was early in October." See Theodore Talbot's *Soldier in the West*, p. 36.


15. Ibid., p. 430.


17. Fremont, Memoirs of My Life, p. 431. Kit Carson’s account of exploring Antelope Island parallels that of Fremont. He reported: "In our front was a large island, the largest in the lake. We were informed by the Indians that there was an abundance of fresh water on it and plenty of antelope. Fremont went to explore it, taking me and a few more men along. We found good grass, water, and timber, and plenty of game. We remained there two days, killing game and exploring the island, which was about fifteen miles long and five miles in breadth. In going to the island we rode on horseback over salt from the thickness of a wafer to twelve inches." See Kit Carson’s Autobiography, p. 89.


19. Ibid., p. 25.


22. Ibid.

23. Fremont included a lithographed drawing of the old Utah Indian in the publication of his Memoirs of My Life, located between pages 430 and 431.

24. This information comes from a Fremont biography written by John Bigelow. In 1856, Bigelow was employed to write Fremont’s campaign biography, and using information contained in the captain’s journals (which existed in 1856, but had been burned by the time Fremont published his own Memoirs in 1887), as well as information related personally to him by Fremont, Bigelow wrote, Memoir of the Life and Public Services of John Charles Fremont, Including an Account of His Explorations, Discoveries, and Adventures on Five Successive Expeditions Across the North American Continent; Voluminous Selections From His Private and Public Correspondence; His Defense Before the Court Martial, and Full Reports of His Principal Speeches in the Senate of the United States . . . . (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1856). Bigelow recorded on pages 124-25, that the "eastern shore [of the Great Salt Lake] was frequented by large bands of Indians, but here they had dwindled down to a single family, which was gleaning from some hidden source enough to support life, and drinking the salt water of a little stream near by, no fresh water being at hand. . . . [One of the Indians] volunteered for a reward to be their guide to a spot where
he said there was grass and fine springs. . . ." See also Fremont, *Memoirs of My Life*, p. 432.


26. The region being referred to as never having been previously crossed is the central region of the Great Salt Lake Desert, not the entire area between the Great Salt Lake and the Sierra Nevada's. Fremont was no doubt aware that the Nevada region had been traversed by mountain men since the late 1820's and in the early 1840's by emigrant companies bound for California.


28. Ibid.

29. Ibid. In comparing Fremont's account with that of Carson's the two are in almost complete agreement concerning the facts of the events. Fremont did fail to mention who the fourth man was who set out with Carson, Maxwell, and Archambeau. Carson said the fourth man was Basil Lajeunesse. Carson also said that some of Fremont's pack animals died during the crossing. The guide's narrative of the excursion across the Great Salt Lake Desert is included here for examination: "... Fremont sent Maxwell, Archambeau, Lajenesse, and myself to cross the desert, which I have often heard had never before been crossed by white men. Old trappers would speak of the impossibility of crossing it, saying that water could not be found, nor grass for the animals. But Fremont was determined to cross. Nothing his explorations required was impossible for him to perform. Before we started it was arranged that at a certain hour of the next day he would ascend the mountain near his camp with his telescope, so that we could be seen by him, and if we found grass or water we should make a smoke as a signal to him to advance. We traveled about sixty miles, found neither water nor grass, nor a particle of vegetation, with the ground as level and bare as a barn floor, before we struck the mountains on the west side of the lake. There we found water and grass in abundance, and kindled the signal fire. Fremont saw it, and moved on with his party. Archambeau went back and met him when he was about half way across the desert. He camped one night, and the next evening at dark he completed the crossing, having lost only a few animals." See Kit Carson's *Autobiography*, pp. 89-91.

31. This emigrant company is usually referred to as the Bidwell-Bartleson company. John Bartleson being the leader of the group, and John Bidwell the company’s diarist. David E. Miller has contributed an excellent historical account of the Bidwell-Bartleson company’s overland journey in an article entitled "First Wagon Company to Cross Utah," Utah Historical Quarterly 30 (Winter 1962):41-51.

32. The full name of Hastings’ publication was An Emigrant’s Guide to Oregon and California, Containing Scenes and Incidents of a Party of Oregon Emigrants; a Description of Oregon; Scenes and Incidents of a Party of California Emigrants; and a Description of California; With a Description of Different Routes to Those Countries and All Necessary Information Relative to the Equipment, Supplies, and the Method of Traveling (Cincinnati: George Conclin, 1845).

33. The Journal of James Clyman, May 21–June 7, 1846, published in the Utah Historical Quarterly 19 (1951):28-30. Such a statement supports the conclusion that Hastings and Fremont met at Sutter’s Fort where Hastings was informed of the explorer’s 1845 western course through Utah and Nevada.


37. The reader is referred to volume two of Jackson and Spence’s The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont for primary information pertaining to Fremont’s activities in the Pacific West. The vast majority of the volume deals with Fremont’s participation in the Bear Flag Revolt and participation in the subsequent conquest of California.
CHAPTER V

FREMONT'S 1854 EXPEDITION INTO UTAH

Background of the 1853-54 Expedition

After the completion of his third expedition in 1845, a period of some nine years elapsed before Fremont again entered Utah. These intervening years were filled with notoriety and honor, as well as humiliation and tragedy. The explorer's participation in the Bear Flag Revolt as well as his military involvement in the army's conquest in California over Mexico led to his promotion to lieutenant-colonel and a later appointment by Navy Commodore Robert F. Stockton on 16 January 1847, as California's territorial governor. While Stockton felt it was within his authority to make such an appointment in a recently conquered region, General Stephen Watts Kearny, commander of the U.S. Army in the West, saw otherwise. Subsequently, Kearny and Fremont had several confrontations which eventually led the army commander to place Fremont under arrest and return with him to the East, where a nationally publicized court-martial was conducted. Although the explorer was actually caught in the middle of a power struggle between Kearny and Stockton, following a
three-month hearing he was found guilty and court-martialed on 31 January 1848. Americans were not only stunned, but outraged by the verdict. Such a public outcry led to President James K. Polk’s official pardon two weeks later. The pardon was issued based upon the explorer’s past distinguished accomplishments in western exploration and military service to the United States. Fremont adamantly refused to accept the presidential pardon.¹

Although he was embittered over the unjust and unfair accusations brought against him in the trial, Fremont labored to wrap up the loose ends of his 1845 expedition. Once again, with the assistance of his wife Jessie and Charles Preuss, the cartographer of his first two expeditions, John Charles prepared the official report of the third government expedition. Drafted and presented to the United States Senate in 1848, twenty thousand copies of the sixty-seven page Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California, in Illustration of His Map of Oregon and California was published by the authority of Congress. Although after 1845 John Charles was through with any further association with government explorations, the fall of 1848 found him heading up a privately funded exploration team.

With the territorial acquisition of California, the nation was essentially established on the Atlantic and Pacific seabords. However, the late 1840's and 1850's also saw the country divided by social issues (such as slavery
and states rights), as well as geography. The two coasts
were separated by the fertile Great Plains, the rugged
Rockies, the vast Great Basin, and stately Sierra's.
Communication and travel between the East and the West was
primitive at worst, slow at best. For these reasons, the
nation still had not achieved its goal of "manifest
destiny." Little wonder that the late 1840's ushered in the
era of interest in establishing a suitable railroad route
through the remote interior heartland of America to the West
Coast.

After the trial and court-martial of his son-in-law
in 1848, Senator Thomas Hart Benton saw a means by which
Fremont's services could be put to use, and he wasted no
time in making known his political interests in a central
transcontinental railroad route. The senator felt that his
home state of Missouri could benefit from such a project and
desired to prove the best all-weather route to the West
Coast was from St. Louis. Through the financial support of
three St. Louis businessmen, Robert Campbell, Thorton
Grimsley and Oliver D. Filley, Benton employed Fremont to
head a relatively small expeditionary force to locate a
suitable central route west. In order to prove the route as
being feasible, the expedition was to be conducted in the
dead of winter. Their route across the plains to Bent's
Fort in Colorado was completed with relative ease. From the
fort, the expedition was to continue up the Arkansas,
"ascend the Rio del Norte [Rio Grande] to its head, descend
to the Colorado, and across the Wahsatch mountain and the
Great Basin country, somewhere near the 37th parallel. ..
"2 Unfortunately, due to a number of unforeseen and
undesirable factors, weather being the most significant, the
expedition met an untimely ending in the snow-covered San
Juan Mountains of Colorado. Of the thirty-three who
comprised the expedition, ten men died (among which
cannibalism was practiced) and 120 pack animals perished due
to the lack of food and exposure to the severe elements
before the party arrived at safety in Taos, New
Mexico.3 Had this expedition been completed, Fremont would
have entered Utah for a fourth time sometime during the
latter part of 1848 or early 1849. Five years later during
the winter months of 1853-54, after having served as
California's first Congressional Senator, the pathmarker
embarked on his fifth and last expedition over the same
route he had hoped to traverse on the fatal fourth
expedition. And once again, this was an attempt to locate
the transcontinental route he had proposed, but had not been
able to complete in 1848-49.

On 2 March 1853, the Pacific Railroad Survey bill
was passed by Congress. It allowed federal funds to be
appropriated to the U.S. Army Topographical Corps of
Engineers to conduct surveys on various routes to the West.
As with most government issues of the day, sectional
interests played an important factor in the surveys.
Politicians and entrepreneurs from the Northern states who
hoped to promote their interests, were desirous of a northern railroad route. Southerners felt the Pacific railway should be connected to their region. Added to the northern and southern interests were the states in the middle, such as Senator Benton’s Missouri. Benton was outspoken in his desires that a central route to the Pacific was the most suitable and feasible for the nation. In order to accomodate each particular section of the country, the Pacific Railroad Survey bill allocated government funds for four major expeditions to be conducted in 1853-54 to the Pacific along a northern, central, southern and extreme southern route. Isaac I. Stevens was selected to survey the northern route between the 45th and 47th parallels from St. Paul west along the upper Missouri to the West Coast. Amiel W. Whipple was placed in charge of the southern survey which was conducted near the 35th parallel from Ft. Smith in Arkansas west to Alberquerque, through central Arizona and into southern California. Two explorers, John Parke and John Pope surveyed the extreme southern route along the 32nd parallel. Parke’s company started at Ft. Yuma and headed east to the Rio Grande, where Pope completed the survey east to Ft. Washita just above the Red River.

Senator Benton was the leading promoter and advocate of the central route, and while the Pacific Railroad Survey bill was being channeled through Congress, he prepared for publication his views concerning the route. In fact, the day following the passage of the bill, the senator issued a
24-page pamphlet entitled "Letter from Col. Benton to the People of Missouri." The pamphlet was reproduced partially and in full in leading newspapers of the day with the purpose of promoting the central transcontinental route. Two weeks later on 16 March 1853, Benton addressed a letter to Secretary of War Jefferson Davis. In the letter he stated to Secretary Davis that he had written a letter to Fremont, who was residing in Europe, and suggested he return to the States so as to be able to finish the 1848-49 survey which comprised the central railroad route proposed by Benton. In the letter to Davis, the senator also suggested that Fremont and another seasoned transcontinental traveler by the name of Edward F. Beale, who had recently been chosen as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California, be selected by the army to head up the central survey. Benton informed Davis that the route which most needed to be explored was "from the mouth of the Huerfano river on the upper Arkansas [in southern Colorado] to Los Vegas de Santa Clara [in southern Utah]." Benton believed his son-in-law and Beale were the best men for such an expedition since "both ends of [the central] route [had been] explored by Fremont [west of the Santa Clara, and east of the Huerfano], and most of it traveled over by Mr. Beale, and reported by Mr. Fremont to be not only practicable but easy and presenting singular facilities for making and preserving a road." From Benton's letter it is clear that the senator felt the most largest portion of the proposed central
railroad route which still needed to be surveyed was in the region of Utah.

Upon receiving word of the impending surveys, John Charles returned from Europe with the hope that he would be selected as the leader of the central survey. He had every reason to expect such an appointment based upon his knowledge of the West, the success of his previous expeditions, and the fact that Senator Benton was campaigning in his behalf. However, when the final decision was made, the Army Corps selected John W. Gunnison and appropriated him $40,000 to lead the central survey between the 38th and 39th parallels over the route proposed and only partially traveled by Fremont on the ill-fated 1848-49 expedition. There can be little doubt that the decision to select Gunnison over Fremont was based upon the fact that pathmarker had previously tried and failed in his attempt to traverse and map the central route. The fact that Gunnison was also serving as an officer in the army corps and Fremont was not, may have also had some influence upon the selection.

In spite of the fact that Fremont and Beale were not selected to head up the government's central survey, Benton proceeded on his own to make arrangements for Beale and Fremont to head separate expeditions along the 38th parallel. Thus, during 1853-54, three expeditions were conducted along the central route. Beale was appropriated $250,000 from the federal government to oversee his
operations as the Indian Superintendent in California and through the persuasion of Senator Benton, he used a portion of the appropriated funds to finance an overland expedition to the West Coast by way of the central railroad route rather than journey by sea. Beale’s party, consisting of pack animals rather than wagons, was the first of the three exploration parties to head west over the central route, leaving Westport Landing on 10 May 1853. The Beale expedition subsequently traversed the route with considerable success. Gwinn Harris Heap, Beale’s cousin, was the journalist of the expedition. His account about the exploration was first printed in serial form in Washington’s National Intelligencer, and later in 1854 was published as a book. Such publicity provided Benton with even greater support for the central route.

Lieutenant John W. Gunnison and his company—the official government expedition—left from Ft. Leavenworth six weeks after the Beale party. The expedition basically followed Benton and Fremont’s proposed central route through Colorado, but then proceeded on a more northerly route west to a point on the Sevier River in central Utah. The expedition’s fall arrival was untimely since it corresponded with a period of time during which Indians, inspired by the Ute Chief Wakara or Walker (the same chief whom Fremont had met in 1844 while on his northward journey through the state) were uprising against the white men in that region. Gunnison and six other members of the expedition, along with
a Mormon guide, were killed on the morning of 26 October 1853, by a band of Pahvant Indians caught up in the hostility of the Walker War. The remainder of the survey was completed by E.G. Beckwith the following year from Salt Lake City west through Nevada to California along the 41st parallel.  

Through the efforts of eastern capitalists and using his own personal funds, Fremont raised sufficient money to conduct a private expedition between the area of the 38th and 39th parallel. But Fremont had no desire to lead the survey under normal weather conditions like Beale's and Gunnison's parties. He knew the course could be traversed during the seasons of good climate. The true test of the route's merit was to travel it during the winter. Accordingly, the explorer selected a relatively small company consisting of ten Americans, the most noted being Solomon Nunes Carvalho (artist and daguerreotypist), F. W. Egloffstein (topographer), Max Strobel (assistant topographer), Oliver Fuller (assistant engineer), and W.H. Palmer (passenger). Also in the company were two Mexicans and ten Delaware Indians who acted as guides. Once again the expedition embarked from Westport, Missouri. However, the actual beginning point of the expedition was at the second of two forts built by William Bent on the Arkansas which the company arrived at in late November.
Fremont in Utah in 1854

John Charles and his men left Bent’s Fort on November 26. Most of the month of December was spent crossing the San Juan Mountains in Colorado. As in 1848-49, Fremont again left the Arkansas by following the Huerfano River upstream which brought the party in the vicinity of Saguache Creek. By following this river upstream, the party arrived on December 14 at Cochetopa Pass situated on the Continental Divide, the very pass Fremont had hoped but failed to locate on his tragic fourth expedition. Descending from the pass, the party struck the Gunnison and Uncompahgre Rivers which brought them into the vicinity of present-day Grand Junction on the Colorado which river they crossed under freezing conditions.

Solomon Nunes Carvalho is the lone primary source for the events which surround the 1853-54 expedition. It is well documented that the pathmarker kept journal notes of the expedition. It is believed however, that these notes were destroyed along with numerous additional records and letters of the explorer while being housed in a warehouse which caught fire. For some unknown reason prior to beginning the expedition, Fremont requested no journals be kept, but apparently Carvalho secretly kept one contrary to Fremont’s wishes. Although he failed to date the day-to-day locations of the survey party, some form of a time frame can be established based upon his record. For example, Carvalho records secretly eating a New Year’s Day dinner consisting
of "Alden's preserved eggs and milk." Later in his narrative, he records crossing of the Colorado near Grand Junction.* Based upon the assumption that Carvalho related the information as the events occurred, the expedition could not have entered the Utah region before the close of 1853 since the crossing of the Colorado took place after January 1. Considering the fact that on December 14, the company crossed the Continental Divide through Cochetopa Pass, and their distance of travel from that geographic point to where the Colorado River flows into Utah is in the vicinity of 175 miles, the expedition more than likely entered central-eastern Utah during the first week of January 1854.

After the crossing of the Colorado, Fremont and his men traveled some distance in a southwest direction, somewhat parallel to the river in what today is known as Grand Valley. The title "Grand" is indeed an appropriate one, for if Carvalho's account is correct wherein he states that the expedition traveled forty miles across "the divide [plateau] between the Grand [Colorado] and Green River," the company would have passed almost directly through what is today Arches National Park, situated just north of Moab, Utah. Exactly what features of this region were seen by this group is not clear, but Carvalho states seeing a "sandstone formation," and described the area as being comprised of "dangerous projections of different strata of rock, thrown into its present state by some convulsion of nature." 18
Upon their arrival at the Green, the party crossed the freezing river to the west bank where they were met by a company of Ute Indians who were quite friendly and who escorted them into their camp. At this point it was approximately mid-January, and the company had been traveling in harsh winter conditions since leaving the vicinity of Bent's Fort in late November. Being "much exhausted for the want of wholesome food," their arrival at the Indian camp brought hopes that perhaps some of their food stores could be resupplied to some degree. In this they were disappointed, but the Utes were able to part with a small quantity of food which made up their main food source—seeds. Carvalho wrote that these Green River Indians:

... lived on nothing else but grass-seed, which they collected in the fall. Their women parch it, and grind it between stones. In this manner it is very palatable, and tastes very much like roasted peanuts. This, their only article of food, was scarce, and we could procure only a small supply. I parted with everything out of my daguerreotype boxes that I did not require, and several articles of necessary clothing, for about a quart of it. It is very nourishing, and very easy of digestion. The quantity I had, lasted me for three days. I made a hearty meal of it the night we camped among them.

To the sustaining properties of this cereal, I firmly believe, I owe the strength which enabled me to undergo the physical exertion that was required to reach the settlements.

The journey from the Green River to the Mormon community of Parowan, a distance of approximately 175-200 miles, occupied some three to four weeks. Under normal traveling conditions the route could have been traversed in
ten days or even less, but due to the fact that Fremont was determined to examine the area between the 38th and 39th parallel during winter, their travel was slowed considerably. It was during this portion of the trek that the expedition suffered extreme physical hardships due to the severe weather conditions of central Utah. First, there was the bitter cold. On some mornings the thermometer read a chilling 20-30° below zero. But the temperature did not complicate things so much as the snow which slowed their travel considerably and made foliage for the pack animals difficult if not impossible to find. Snow levels ranged anywhere from a few inches to four feet at some of the mountain passes. Snow would also frequently bury the camp during the night, and when the men would awaken, eight to ten inches of the white powder covered them.

Exposure to the elements also contributed to their hardships. By the time the expedition was in Utah Carvalho wrote that "none of the men had shoes . . . . Some of the men had raw hide strapped round their feet, while others were half covered with worn out stockings and moccasins; Col. Fremont's moccasins were worn out, and he was no better off than any of us." Such little protection caused the men's feet to not only suffer cold and frostbite, but they also became lacerated from walking on the sharp flinty mountain rocks. Repose was found each night around the campfire where their chilled extremities could be warmed. Night time was also welcomed since rubber blankets and
buffalo robes kept the men relatively warm and insulated from the weather. Fremont had at least one privilege not shared by the rest of the company. At each camp, a "lodge" or tepee-like structure was erected and a fire was built in the center which provided the explorer with some comfort not afforded the other men.

While in the Utah region, the company's food stores were also exhausted, so the procurement of any type of food for both man and animal was always the first objective. Nutritional substance for the men became meaningless, since the daily victuals consisted singly of meat. The expedition lived on horse and mule victuals for some fifty days and each animal killed had to last for six meals. Since the winter conditions made it almost nearly impossible for their pack animals to find any pasturage, they were driven until the animal was lame or useless, would go no further, would drop dead, or have to be shot for food for the company. Carvalho recorded that an animal in such a condition hardly provided any tasty victual for eating, let alone a nutritional meal since "the animal after it is almost starved to death, is without any flavor; you know you are eating flesh, but it contains no juices--it serves to sustain life, [since] it contains but little nutritive matter, and one grows poor and emaciated, while living on it alone." By the time the expedition arrived at Parow, Carvalho also reported twenty-seven animals had been killed for food.
Occasionally, other wildlife also served to temporarily satisfy the men's hunger. A thirty-pound porcupine and even a coyote were killed and consumed, the latter causing severe cramps and vomiting to those who indulged. A large raven was also shot in the head by a member of the expedition who obviously was a skilled marksman. Although it too was intended for food, the bird remained undeveloped. Such privations no doubt weighed heavy upon Fremont's memory of the disaster he experienced during the winter of 1848-49 in the San Juan mountains of southern Colorado in which due to the lack of food, cannibalism was practiced by a few of the men. Such memories and the harsh winter conditions they were experiencing stirred the explorer to tell these men about the incident:

Col. Fremont came out to us, and after referring to the dreadful necessities to which we were reduced, said "a detachment of men whom he had sent for succor on a former expedition, had been guilty of eating one of their own number." He expressed his abhorrence of the act, and proposed that we should not under any circumstances whatever, kill our companions to prey upon them. "If we are to die, let us die together like men." He then threatened to shoot the first man that made or hinted at such a proposition.

Although the mules and horses were vital assets to the expedition's survival, under the harsh winter conditions they were not as cooperative. Because the animals were also hungry, they would continually wander and stray in search for food, causing a loss of both time and energy expenditure in order to search out the strays. And although water was plentiful in the form of snow, many of the animals would not
eat it. In order to keep them alive, the snow had to be melted in kettles and served to the mules and horses by the men. In spite of the attention and care which had to be given them, Solomon Nunes Carvalho came to appreciate the endurance level of the mules, especially the Mexican mules which were:

...faithful beasts of burthen, on which a great deal of dependence can always be placed. I consider them much preferable for travelling over the plains and mountains; they possess greater powers of endurance under privations. A mule will thrive on provender that would starve a horse. If a mule gives out from exhaustion; with a day’s rest, and a good meal, he will start on his journey, and appear as fresh as he ever was; but if a horse stops and gives up, it is over with him, he is never fit for travel again. I suppose the noble and willing spirit of the horse, incites him to work until he is incapable of further exertion. 16

The route Fremont traveled after leaving camp on the Green River until his arrival at Parowan should be noted. The explorer first proceeded upstream on the San Rafael River, but turned back when he realized that such a course through the mountains would extend above the 39th parallel and out of the region proposed for the central railroad route. Turning back, he next traveled in a southwest direction along the base of the San Rafael Reef located in present-day Emery County for a distance of some 30-40 miles. Here he headed west and proceeded on a course which led through Thousand Lake Mountain. Descending the mountain on its west side brought the party to the headwaters of Fremont River and very near where the town of Fremont, Utah, in western Wayne County, is today. Continuing west
approximately twenty miles brought the expedition into a small valley known as Grass Valley. Otter Creek runs directly through this little valley and Fremont followed this river upstream, crossed the east fork of the Sevier River into Circle Valley, and camped between the confluence of the Sevier and its east fork. The community of Kingston, in Piute County, is located here. After following the Sevier in a southwest direction upstream approximately twenty-five miles through Dog Valley, the expedition crossed the last range of the eastern border of the Great Basin through a pass which bears Fremont's name, and descended into beautiful Parowan Valley (also known by the name of the Little Salt Lake Valley at that time). Continuing in a southwest direction, the expedition traveled the last twenty miles with relative ease since it was part of an established road which connected Parowan to the communities in the northern part of Utah territory. 17

Several incidents of note occurred during the three to four week journey from the Green River en route to the community of Parowan. In order to conserve the strength of the mules and horses, after departing from their encampment at the Green River, Fremont made the decision that all of the men travel on foot. While such a decision may have extended the physical strength of the animals, it had its effect on the physical stamina of the men. With the expedition's arrival at Grass Valley in Piute County, a distance in the vicinity of one hundred miles away.
Green, in order to spare the men's strength, Fremont made a decision to cache all of the clothing, baggage, equipment, and supplies and mount the men on the animals. From this point on, if a horse or mule gave out, the man riding it was consigned to walk since there was no hope of procuring any additional animals. The items were cached for with the intent that they would possibly be retrieved at a later time. Carvalho again reported:

A place was prepared in the snow, our large buffalo lodge laid out, and all the pack saddles, bales of cloth and blankets, the travelling bags, and extra clothes of the men, my daguerreotype boxes, containing besides, several valuable scientific instruments, and everything that could possible be spared, together with the surplus gunpowder and lead, were placed in it, and carefully covered up with snow, and then quantities of brush to protect it from the Indians. . . . A main station was made at this place, so as to be able to find it if occasion demanded that we should send for them.¹⁸

On the evening of February 4, while probably encamped at a location along the Sevier River in northeast Iron County, Fremont took Carvalho to an open spot to assist him in making astronomical observations. During the night the pathmarker made some calculations based upon the astronomical findings and the following morning reported to his men the distance and direction of of the community of Parowan, and determined they would arrive there in three days. Carvalho was surprised that the company arrived "on the very day and hour previously indicated by Col. Fremont." Such preciseness in the explorer's calculations amazed Solomon, who considered the feat to be "without comparison in the [scientific] records of the past," since in the
snow-covered mountains of a remote wilderness there is no room for:

. . . chance work—no guessing—for a deviation of one mile, either way, from the true course, would have plunged the whole party into certain destruction. An island at sea may be seen for forty miles; a navigator makes his calculations, and sails in the direction of the land, which oftentimes extends many miles; when he sees land, he directs his course to that portion of it where he is bound; he may have been fifty miles out of his way, but the well-known land being visible from a great distance, he changes his course until he arrives safely in port.

Not so with a winter travel over trackless mountains of eternal snow, across a continent of such immense limits, suffering the privations of cold and hunger, and enervated by disease.17

On the evening of February 5, for the first time in his exploring career, the great pathmarker almost succumbed to mother nature. In each of his previous expeditions, particularly in 1848-49 when he and his men were almost completely snowbound, the thought that he might not survive never entered his mind. And, in spite of the fact that just the day before he calculated the Mormon settlement to be within so many miles, the elements began to take a toll on his bodily processes. After their arrival at safety he wrote about this occasion when he almost gave in. He recorded it happened while he was trudging up a mountain, "hunger overcame me," he wrote, "so completely that my strength vanished and I almost fell. I told no one of my condition, but merely said that this was an excellent spot to camp and turned in at once. The next morning I was able to continue."32 Even though the physical effects of the journey at that moment began to operate on the seasoned
explorer, three days later when he and his men entered Parowan, one citizen of the community described him as being the best physically of any in the party and indicated that he was "tough as a knot."  

Entering Parowan Valley on February 7, the group was met by some Indians under the leadership of the Ute Indian Ammon, brother of the Ute Indian Chief Walker (or Wakara). Luckily, their meeting passed without serious incident or confrontation since just a little over three months previous to this time, Gunnison and six other men had been massacred by a band of Indians while on the Sevier River. This encounter turned out to be a peaceful one, probably due to the fact that Fremont recorded one of the Indians in the band recognized him. This Indian had been in the company with Chief Walker in 1844 when Fremont met the chief and exchanged greetings and gifts in southern Utah. Perhaps Ammon and his party also felt some degree of sympathy for the hungry, haggard looking group of white men who had been in the remote mountain wilderness of snow for nearly ten weeks, since they gave the explorer and his men a dog and fifty pounds of flour to feast on in exchange for blankets and some ammunition. Ammon and his men also conducted the exploring company to a camp on Red Creek Canyon. A year previous to this time, the Mormon community of Paragonah was located at this site, but because of the events associated with the Indians, the community was abandoned and most of the settlers had moved to Parowan.
situated about five miles south.

The group suffered one casualty during this leg of the expedition. He was Oliver Fuller, the company's assistant engineer. After the expedition cached the spare equipment and supplies near Otter Creek (Grass Valley) in Piute County and mounted the remaining animals, Fuller's horse was the first to give out, thus causing him to have to walk. He wore out his last pair of moccasins and his feet soon became almost "wholly exposed." Such exposure caused him to lag far behind the main group of men. Carvalho and Egloffstien would frequently purposely stay behind so as to render assistance to Fuller. Finally, Fuller's legs became paralyzed and he could go no further. Not desiring to leave him alone in his condition, the two healthier companions remained with him until he insisted they continue their journey so as to stay up with the main body of men. After the two men wrapped Fuller warmly in some blankets, promising him they would send back assistance, Carvalho and Egloffstien left him and were able to find their way to the expedition's encampment late that night. The following day, two of the Delaware Indians returned to where Fuller had been left on the trail, and rescued him. By this time his feet and ankles were black and completely frozen. Had he survived, he would no doubt had to have had both feet amputated. From this time until his death each man in the company rendered every possible means of personal assistance to him. He died on February 7, just one day before their
arrival at Parowan. The day after their arrival at the Mormon community, Fremont penned a letter to Senator Benton and among other things noted Fuller’s death. "He died like a man, on horseback, in his saddle," wrote the explorer, "and will be buried like a soldier on the spot where he fell." Nearly forty years later, Fremont’s wife Jessie erroneously reported that Fuller was brought into Parowan "fastened on a horse, and a Christian burial was given him." However, Joseph Fish, who was a fourteen year-old teenager and resident of Parowan when Fremont arrived, remembered more vividly the events surrounding Fuller’s death. He recalled that after meeting Ammon’s band of Utes, Fuller ate some of meat which was given to them (possibly the dog?). The meat immediately "physicked" which caused his death. After his arrival in Parowan, in order to remain true to his word, Fremont saw to it that Fuller received a proper burial. A small contingency consisting of two Mormons, a Simeon F. Howd [Howard?] and a Mr. Davis, and quite possibly Fremont and Carvalho traveled to a point some twenty-two miles northeast of Parowan and interred the body.

The Expedition’s Arrival and Stay at Parowan

On the morning of February 8, Fremont and his weary party journeyed the last few miles from their camp at Red Creek (site of the present-day community of Paragonah) to Parowan. Although nearly frozen, exhausted, half-starved,
and travel-weary, they arrived alive. Their arrival marked
the end of perhaps one of the most difficult winter
excursion of any known expedition up to that time. In 1856,
George S. Burleigh wrote a series of poems about events and
experiences in the life of Fremont, and using the episode of
the explorer's trek through the eastern and central Utah
mountains, the poet composed a poem which appropriately
depicts the vaunted courage and snowy scenes surmounted by
the pathmarker and his men. Burleigh entitles his poem,
"Crossing the Wahsach:"

Snow! snow! snow!
Before, behind, above, and below,
On rock and mountain and forest tree,
   In a valley and canon, pit, and rift,
   And through the air in a merciless drift,
   A powdery smoke, that seemed to sift
To the very bones that none could see
Whither they went, nor where might be
   The wallowing path of the Leader's feet,
   Right up the mountain barrier, beat.

Snow! snow! snow!
"To the council, hardy warriors! ho!
What word, my Braves, of the better way
   To scale the Wahsach's perilous edge
   And through the gulfs of the looming ledge
   To cleave our path, like a rending wedge?
'Tis deadly to go and death to stay--
Speak, my Delawares! shrewd to say
What path is best in a dubious track,
   Where the hungry wolf would turn him back."

"Snow! snow! snow!
My brave Commander, we can not go!
Pits under pits in the white-dark lie,
   Gale upon gale is the tempest's shriek,
   Cliff upon cliff is the mountain's peak,
   And the ridges beyond are sharp and bleak,
The treacherous gulfs will cheat the eye,
   Where the struggling hunter will sink and die--
   And none shall find his bed in the snow;
   My brave Commander, we can not go."
"Snow! snow! snow!
Its terrible barrier well I know,
I see but that in its whirling dance—
   But—'can not?'—where did my warrior learn
   That woman's word? or how to turn
   His back to a peril dark and stern?
We can, we must, we will advance,
And the Father above shall guide our chance—
   Come on! and follow the forward beat
   Of my tireless club and my naked feet!"

Snow! snow! snow!
Around, behind, above, and below,
In a whirling cloud of fireless smoke
   Over drift and chasm and looming crag,
   Where a mountain goat would fail to drag
   His powerless feet—ashamed to lag,
They climbed the cliffs as the measured stroke
And tramp of the dauntless Chieftain broke
   A path to life, and led them on
   To the Home-like fires of the Parawan. 29

Parowan was in its fourth year of existence and had a total population of about four hundred when the pathmarker and his men staggered into the community. The sources for Fremont's date of arrival at Parowan differ, however he and Carvalho reported their arrival as being on February 8. 29 One piece of evidence helps to confirm this date.
During the latter part of the month of February 1854, John C.L. Smith, President of the Parowan Stake, journeyed to Salt Lake City and reported to the Deseret News some of the events surrounding the arrival of Fremont and his party in the community. President Smith wrote:

On the 6th of February the man on the lookout at Parowan reported a company, supposed to be Indians, coming into the north end of the valley, twenty miles distant from Parowan. About eleven o'clock on the morning of the 7th, Colonel John C. Fremont, with nine men and 12 Delaware Indians, arrived in Parowan in a state of starvation; one of his men had fallen dead from his horse the day previous, and several more must...
inevitable have shared his fate had they not had succor that day...  

* * * * * * * * * *

The Honorable Secretary A.W. Babbitt arrived here on the evening of the 7th, and left on the 8th, having been out five days and a half. Your brother in the gospel covenant, J.C.L. Smith

Based upon the information in Smith's letter it would appear that the party was seen by the lookout on February 6, they arrived on the 7th, as did Almon W. Babbitt, and Babbitt left on the 8th. However, from an examination of two documents, it appears that President Smith was off on each of the dates by one day.

During the month of February 1854, Almon W. Babbitt, Secretary of the Territory of Utah, was enroute to Washington via southern Utah, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. President Smith recorded Fremont's party arrived in the morning, Babbitt in the evening, and then the territorial secretary continued on his journey the following day. Before his departure however, Fremont drafted letters to Jessie and two letters to his father-in-law Thomas Benton. These letters were personally taken by Babbitt and delivered to his wife and the Senator upon his subsequent arrival in the nation's capital in April two months later. The two letters to Senator Benton are dated February 9, 1854, and since Babbitt left Parowan with the letters upon his person, his departure from the community had to have been on February 9 rather than February 8, as
Smith states. Such reasoning indicates that Smith’s dating of the above cited events actually occurred one day later than that which he stated. Fremont and his men therefore, were seen by the lookout on the 7th, they arrived in the settlement on the 8th, as did Babbitt, and the explorer drafted the letters before Babbitt’s departure on the 9th.

Smith’s 1 March 1854 letter also dispels the validity of two accounts which have been published about him and his initial meeting with Fremont upon his arrival at the Mormon community. Since the letter was written less than a month after the event occurred, it must be considered as the most credible for the information it contains. The two accounts in question, however, appear to have been passed on as being factual when in actuality both are tainted with pieces of what appears to be Smith family folklore. The first of these erroneous accounts of the explorer’s arrival was published by Leuella Adams Dalton in History of the Iron County Mission and Parowan, the Mother Town. Her account is as follows:

The month of February, 1854, was a very cold, gripping month. On one of these cold winter evenings as President John Calvin Lazell Smith sat by a cozy fireplace, listening to his wife read, they heard someone calling for help from outside. President Smith blew out the light and stepped out of doors to see what was wanted. He thought it might be an Indian trick, but it was a white man in the snowdrift at the side of his house. He was very weak from hunger and almost frozen. President Smith and his wife helped him into the house and took care of him, but not before he told them that he was John C. Fremont and that his party of men were back in the hills starving. One had already died.
President Smith sent some Parowan men in search of his party, and by morning all 21 of them, Indians and whites, were located in the homes of the good people of Parowan.  

Dalton footnotes this entry and indicates that it is taken from the "John C. L. Smith Journal." This hardly seems the case since it does not read as if it were written by Smith. The writer has also been unable to locate any journal by Smith in the possession of the LDS Church and is therefore of the opinion that the quotation could not have been written by Smith since it contradicts his 1 March 1854 letter on several points. First, in his letter, Smith states that Fremont's party could be seen approaching Parowan. Dalton's source however states that Fremont straggled in and rescuers were sent out for the rest of the men. Second, Smith's letter also stated the company arrived at the settlement at 11:00 a.m. This is in harmony with the evidence which the writer has produced which indicates that the last camp of the expedition was near present-day Paragonah, located some five miles northeast of Parowan. If Fremont and his men left their last camp in the morning, they could have easily arrived at Parowan around 11:00 a.m. On the other hand, Dalton's source gives an embellished account of the explorer approaching at night, by himself, etc. Carvalho's account of entering Parowan gives every indication that the party arrived together and during the day. The second account in question was published by Nevada W. Driggs, a descendant of Sarah F. Smith, wife of
John C.L. Smith. Although too lengthy to be included here, her reporting is almost identical on many points to Dalton's account, and for reasons similar to Dalton's, the writer also considers it to be in error concerning the Fremont's arrival.

Upon their arrival at Parowan, the men were taken into various homes to be cared for and nursed back to health. Fremont was invited into the home of the stake president John C.L. Smith and his wife Sarah. Carvalho was taken in by the William Heap family and upon entering their home, he was so overjoyed to see three beautiful children who reminded him of his own, that he wept for joy to think that he would yet be able to embrace his own. Their appearance was anything but favorable. Carvalho described himself:

I was mistaken for an Indian by the people of Parowan. My hair was long, and had not known a comb for a month, my face was unwashed, and ground in with the collected dirt. ... Emaciated to a degree, my eyes sunken, and clothes all torn into tatters from hunting our animals through the brush. My hands were in a dreadful state; my fingers were frost-bitten, and split at every joint; and suffering at the same time from diarrhea, and symptoms of scurvy. ... I was in a situation truly to be pitied, and I do not wonder that the sympathies of the Mormons, were excited in our favor, for my personal appearance being but a reflection of the whole party, we were indeed legitimate subjects for the exercise of the finer feelings of nature.

In his letter to his father-in-law written from the southern Utah settlement, John Charles somewhat overstated the physical health of his men. He first reported the men to be in "general good health," but subsequently admitted that the
"Delewares all came in sound, but the whites of my party were all exhausted and broken up, and more or less frost-bitten."

Later during the day of February 8, the men submitted to having their faces and hands washed and their hair combed. Fremont also agreed to pay the Mormon families one dollar and fifty cents a day for their board. Careful attention was provided so that the men could be nursed back to full health and strength gradually so as to not upset their bodies delicate nature. With some of the men, this proved to be a difficult task. Joseph Fish reported that some of the men in the party were "so nearly famished on reaching the fort, ... that some were confined under lock and key to prevent them from eating too much at first. The citizens no doubt displayed what might be termed "Mormon hospitality" towards the expedition company. Jessie wrote that the men were placed in homes, given warm rooms and comfortable beds. "Mr. Fremont letters could not say enough of the gentle, patient care of these kind women."

In the years that followed, Jessie Fremont took great pleasure recounting what she considered to be a strange but real psychic revelation concerning her husband's safety with his arrival at Parowan. Following the evening dinner on the day he arrived in Parowan, Fremont was shown to his room in the Smith home. There, around 11:30 p.m. he opened his notebook and wrote, "If I could only tell ..."
that I am safe now, tell her how happy I am that we have all been saved." Jessie claimed that during the midwinter of 1854 she received the impression her husband was starving. The feeling continued to haunt her for two weeks until it began to have an affect on her appetite and sleep, and her physical constitution was broken up. Then, late one evening she had a spiritual phenomenon occur. On a sudden she claimed to have felt a hand resting on her shoulder whereupon she heard John Charles whisper her name. This experience calmed her and she sensed that he was all right and had reached safety. From that moment on, she immediately began to recover. With the completion of the expedition to the West Coast and and her husband’s return to Washington, the two shared what had happened to each other during the interim. In the course of one of their conversations, Jessie rehearsed to her husband the account of her hearing his voice whisper her name and feeling the touch of an unseen hand. To their amazement, the couple discovered Jessie’s experience had occurred on the very day of John’s arrival at Parowan. Probing deeper into what she experienced the explorer asked her, "What time of the night was it that you heard me speak to you?" Jessie recalled that it was at about 2:00 a.m. She then asked him what time it was when he made his entry in his notebook at the Smith home in Parowan:

"My notes say eleven-thirty."
"Then your message reached me, but it took two and a half hours to get here. I suppose I shouldn’t.
complain; even Samuel Morse's telegraph couldn't do better."
John shook her face in her hands. "You are a good
good
wife, but a poor astronomer. Utah is two and a half
hours earlier in time than Washington. The message I
wrote to you in my journal was flashed over a quicker
and more accurate wire than a Samuel Morse could ever
invent." 40

As stated previously, on February 9, the day
following his arrival, Fremont drafted letters to his wife
and Senator Benton so Almon W. Babbitt, who was passing
through the territory enroute to Washington via California,
could carry the letters to the east. However, before
Babbitt's departure on the 9th, Fremont made arrangements
with him and the Mormon leaders in Parowan to purchase
needed animals and supplies in order to continue the
expedition to California. When Babbitt arrived in
California, a letter of his was published by the San
Francisco Daily Herald which gave details as to the
transaction between the explorer and the Mormon leaders in
the southern Utah community. A portion of the letter reads:
The Colonel was out of ready money, but had evidence
that he could draw on Palmer, Cook & Co., and other
responsible banking houses in this city, for any amount.
This would not buy horses and mules at that place
[Parowan], it being only a small settlement, having no
storekeeper or other business man there. I knowing the
reputation of the banking houses in this city and at the
same time being well acquainted with the Bishop of the
Mormon Church at that place, made arrangement that he
could furnish the horses and mules to Col. Fremont for
the journey, and pay it out of tithing money in hand,
and take a draft on Palmer, Cook & Co., for the whole
amount in favor of Gov. Young. 41

Apparently, the Mormons were never reimbursed by the
explorer although they were told by him that full payment
would be given them once he reached the coast. The horses and supplies he procured from the Saints were said to have totaled over one thousand dollars.** The mayor, John Steele, reported Fremont took from him "$20 worth of maps that I had loaned him to copy from... We fitted him out and he went on his way to the West."*** This evidence leads one to believe the families who boarded the weary travelers were also never compensated the $1.50 promised them by the colonel as well.

During the expedition's stay in the Mormon settlement most of the men must have spent time enjoying needed rest and recuperation, as well as making the necessary preparations for the rest of the journey. The men no doubt saw first-hand the activities of Mormon worship and family living. Carvalho saw what Mormon polygamy was like. His boarder, William Heap was the community shoemaker, and he noticed that the his wives who performed all the household chores. One wife saw to the meal preparations of milking the cow, churning the butter, and baking the bread. The second wife made, washed, and ironed the clothes, and attended to the children. He also observed countless numbers of "miserable" Indians, begging from the women for anything edible.**** The Colonel was also able to see a military drill of the Parowan contingency of the Utah Nauvoo Legion instructed by James H. Martineau, a veteran of the Mormon Battalion who participated in the Mexican War.

Martineau was somewhat ashamed and apologetic to Fremont
that such a distinguished ex-military officer as he would have to observe the battalion's unmilitary-like appearance during the drill. The explorer rebuffed the apology and praised their performance saying, "Mr Martineau, if I had five thousand men like those I saw on drill today, I could march through Mexico, and with ten thousand, I could conquer Mexico." 

While recovering at Parowan, the evidence is not entirely clear whether or not Fremont sent messengers back to the location on Otter Creek in Piute County to retrieve the cached instruments and extra baggage. In his letter written from Parowan to his father-in-law he stated they had deposited the items at distance of about one hundred miles from the community, and indicated he would not send anyone back to retrieve the stored goods. However, in a letter to the editor of the Deseret News 20 July 1854, George Peacock related how he had learned from some Indians about the deaths of two Spaniards who had been sent back by Fremont to locate the cached items. The two messengers were able to find the cache and while taking the articles a band of Indians rushed upon them, killed them, took the valuable property, and scattered the mail bag and destroyed the surveying instruments. Neither Fremont nor Carvalho ever made any mention of the incident. It is entirely in the realm of possibility since two Spaniards were among the members of Fremont's company. Also, the records do not indicate exactly which members of the expedition continued
on to California with Fremont, or who were released to return home, once they were totally recovered. Jessie recalled most of the party were unwilling to go any further however, the only two known members of the company who did not proceed on were Carvalho and F.W. Egloffstien. These two men remained in Parowan until February 21, when at that time they were transported by a large company of Mormons to Salt Lake City who were on their way to attend conference at the Church headquarters.

After a stay of some twelve days in the Mormon settlement, Fremont felt the need to continue west in order to finish the objectives of the survey. Accordingly, he and his men left Parowan on February 20 or 21. Accompanied by Samuel Lewis, a resident of Parowan, the Mormon guide took them in a southwest direction to Cedar City, then west to a location near present-day Enterprise, Utah, where they arrived three days later on February 23 or 24. From this location, Fremont could see the broad Escalante Valley and Desert. These surroundings were familiar to him since ten years previous to that time he had descended into the Escalante Valley while traveling upstream on the Santa Clara River through the extreme southwest portion of Utah. At this point a decision was made to head due west in proximity of the 37th parallel rather than to head southwest in a course down the Virgin River. The reason for this decision was once again due to the fact that Fremont had explored that route in 1844. A day's travel from the encampment near
present-day Enterprise, brought the company to a location near present-day Uvada, Utah, situated just east of the Utah-Nevada border. The following day, February 25 or 26, Fremont crossed into Nevada, making his total stay in Utah on this occasion approximately seven weeks, namely, from the first week of January to February 25, or 26 (see map on page 148).

With a few exceptions, Fremont's course through Nevada was due west in the area between the 37th ad 38th parallels. Upon striking the east side of the Sierra's, instead of attempting to find a direct pass through the rugged range, the explorer turned southward and entered the San Joaquin Valley south of Walker Pass by way of the lower Sierra Nevada mountains which form the range's southern rim.

With the completion of the expedition, Fremont returned East to home and family. In spite of the difficulties and hardships encountered on the journey, especially in the Utah region, he and Benton continued to promote the central route as being the most favorable. Concerning the region which he traversed in Utah, the pathmarker saw this as being particularly suited to the railroad line since the mountains contained a "great storehouse of materials--timber, iron [and] coal," all of which were essential for railroad construction and maintenance. Because of civil strife facing the nation during the late 1850's, and the Civil War and reconstruction in the early 1860's, the establishment of the
A portion of Fremont's 1887 map included with the publication of his Memoirs. On this map Fremont did not identify the route in its entirety. The dark solid line indicates the portions he indicated as being part of the route.
transcontinental railroad was delayed. When the decision was finally made to move ahead with the project, politicians and Washington bureaucrats decided upon a route west from Council Bluffs and Omaha. The line actually ran north of Benton and Fremont’s proposed central route, and south of the initially proposed northern route, essentially making it a north-central route. Had the central route been adopted, the southern Utah region could have become the hub of the territory, with the most established and populated communities located along the railroad line.

A Parowan Postscript

Within a few days after his arrival in the nation’s capital, Fremont sought out Utah’s lone congressional delegate John M. Bernhisel, to thank him "for the kindness he had received from [the Mormon] people." In 1888, two years before the explorer’s death, he was honored at a floral fair sponsored by the city of San Jose. On this occasion a gentleman approached Fremont and said, "Colonel, you don’t remember me, but I shall never forget you!" After pausing a short while to think, the pathmarker replied, "I met you at Parowan in '54!" And finally, a short while after the festival in San Jose, Fremont was in Los Angeles. While there, Kate Field, one of the most brilliant female journalists in the country came to the city to deliver a lecture against the Mormons and their practices. She asked Fremont if he would introduce her at the public meeting. He
told her, "I cannot do it. The Mormons saved me and mine from death by starvation in '54 . . . ."  

Geographic Locations and Features Named After the Explorer

While in the Utah region in 1854, the explorer did not name any geographic features, landmarks, or sites, such as he did on his previous two expeditions. However, a community, a river, and a mountain pass, all of which are located in the southern Utah area traversed by Fremont while on his fifth expedition, have since been given the name of the explorer. First, there is the small community of Fremont, Utah, in northwest Wayne County. Then there is the Fremont River, which has its headwaters in the high mountains of the Fishlake National Forest in Sevier County. Most of this seventy-five mile long river flows through the middle of Wayne County before it diminishes into Fremont Creek, a tributary of the Dirty Devil. And finally, the pass through which the expedition crossed over in order to enter present-day Parowan Valley in eastern Iron County, is frequently referred to as Fremont Pass or Fremont Canyon.

Summary

Fremont's expedition into Utah in 1854 marked the last time in which he entered the region. In summary, the following aspects of this expedition stand out:

(1) Fremont had intentions of exploring the east-central and southern portions of the state while on his fourth expedition in 1848-49. However, due to the harsh winter
conditions, he experienced while in the mountains of southern Colorado, he was forced to abandon his plans.

(2) Even though he was not selected by the federal government in 1853 to head the central railroad survey, Fremont chose to conduct his own private exploration. The main purpose and focus of the expedition was to survey the region from the headwaters of the Arkansas River in Colorado to the Santa Clara River in Utah. Thus, a great majority of the area he desired to survey on the 1853-54 expedition was in Utah Territory.

(3) The explorer entered the Utah region approximately during the first week of January 1854. His exit from the state occurred on February 25 or 26, making his stay in the region in the vicinity of seven weeks. Of his three previous expeditions into the state, he was in Utah the longest on this expedition, twelve days of which were spent with the Mormon people in Parowan.

(4) Previously published accounts of Fremont’s arrival in Parowan (i.e. Dalton’s History of the Iron County Mission and Parowan, the Mother Town, pp. 3-4; and Driggs’ “When Captain Fremont Slept in Grandma McGregor’s Bed,” Utah Historical Quarterly 41 [Spring 1973:178-181]), contain elements of family folklore, and do not accurately portray the historical facts of the explorer’s arrival at the community. This conclusion is based upon the information contained in the letter of John Calvin Lazelle Smith published in the Deseret
News less than one month after the expedition's arrival in Parowan.

(5) In spite of the extreme difficulties encountered while conducting the railroad survey, especially those hardships experienced in the Utah region, after the completion of the expedition Fremont continued to promote the central railroad route as being the most favorable for the line.

(6) And finally, one community and two geographic features in southern Utah were subsequently named after the explorer.
Notes to Chapter V

1. The best information about the court-martial hearings can be found in Jackson and Spence's supplement to volume two of The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont entitled, Proceedings of the Court-Martial.

2. Bigelow, Memoir of the Life and Public Services of John Charles Fremont, p. 360

3. The best single work on Fremont's fourth expedition is Fremont's Fourth Expedition: A Documentary Account of the Disaster of 1848-49, With Diaries, Letters, and Reports by Participants in the Tragedy, edited with introductions and notes by LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen (Glendale: A.H. Clarke Co., 1960). This work comprises volume 11 of The Far West and the Rockies Historical Series, 1820-1875. See also William Brandon's The Men and the Mountain; Fremont's Fourth Expedition (New York, William Morrow and Co. 1955; and Frederick S. Dellenbaugh's Fremont and '49: The Story of a Remarkable Career and Its Relation to the Exploration and Development of Our Western Territory, Especially of California, by Frederick S. Dellenbaugh . . . With Maps and Fifty Illustrations (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1914). In spite of the fact that the fourth expedition failed in its attempt to locate a railroad route through the Southern Colorado Plateau of Colorado and Utah, following the expedition, Fremont continued to promote this route as being the best suited for the railroad. See his letter to the Mississippi and Pacific Railroad Convention published in Stryker's Register and Magazine 4 (July 1850):558-64. The explorer's continued insistence that this was the best route played a major factor in his decision to lead his fifth and last expedition over the route in 1853-54.


6. Correspondence Between Colonel Benton and Gen. Davis, Secretary of War, Washington City, 16 March 1853, published in LeRoy and Ann W. Hafen's The Far West and the
7. The published book form of Heap's journal of the expedition was published under the title, \textit{Central Route to the Pacific by Gwinn Harris Heap, With Related Material on Railroad Explorations and Indian Affairs by Edward F. Beale, Thomas H. Benton, Kit Carson, and Col. E. A. Hitchcock, and in Other Documents, 1853-54} (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, 1854).


9. Solomon Nunes Carvalho, \textit{Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West; With Col. Fremont's Last Expedition Across the Rocky Mountains: Including Three Months' Residence in Utah, and a Perilous Trip Across the Great American Desert, to the Pacific}. By S.N. Carvalho, Artist to the Expedition (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1857), pp. 86-87, 99.

10. Ibid., p. 104. Carvalho also stated that in this area the tracks made by Gunnison's party could still be seen.

11. Jackson and Spence indicate that Fremont crossed the Green opposite the mouth of the San Rafael River. This location would be approximately 20 miles south of Green River, Utah. See \textit{The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont} 3:466-67 n17.


13. Ibid., p. 130.


15. Ibid., p. 101.

16. Ibid., p. 112.

17. This information is based upon Fremont's 1887 map, included in his \textit{Memoirs}, and the findings of Jackson and Spence in \textit{The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont} 3:466-67 n18-23.

19. Ibid., pp. 131-32.


23. This information is based on a reminiscence of James H. Martineau "A Meeting With Fremont," *Deseret News* 17 February 1917. Martineau stated that the dog and the flour was obtained from the Indians at "an exhorbitant price." He also noted that the flour was divided equally among the men and that the dog provided only a "mouthful to each of the party." His recollection is in harmony with that of Elizabeth Benton Fremont, daughter of the explorer who published her *Recollections of Elizabeth Benton Fremont, Daughter of the Pathfinder General John C. Fremont and Jessie Benton Fremont His Wife*, compiled by I.T. Martin, (New York: Frederick H. Hitchcock, 1912). On pp. 68-69, she states that the dog and the flour "made a welcome feast for the well nigh famished travelers." In his letter to Jessie written from Parowan, the explorer wrote that the Indians "gave us a dog" although he made no mention of the flour. See Irving Stone's *Immortal Wife*, p. 292. Fremont biographer Ferol Egan is again in error in his statement of the facts about the dog and the flour. In his text, he indicated that the men exchanged the flour for the dog. See *Fremont: Explorer for a Restless Nation*, p. 502. This seems hardly to be the case since Fremont and Carvalho's records definitively state that they ate only meat for some forty to fifty days.


27. Most of this information is based on the account of Joseph Fish, *The Life and Times of Joseph Fish, Mormon Pioneer*, edited by John H. Krenkel, (Danville: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1970), pp. 46-47. In 1856, while assisting John Bigelow in the preparation of his presidential campaign biography, Fremont used Carvalho's writings to relate the account of the 1853-54 expedition. No doubt with Carvalho's permission, the explorer made some additions to the account of Fuller's death. One such addition indicates that both Fremont and Carvalho were part of the company who went back to bury Fuller's body. The account reads: "After the men rested a little, we went in company with three or four of the inhabitants of Parowan, to bury our deceased friend. His remains had not been disturbed during our absence." See Bigelow's, *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of John Charles Fremont*, p. 441.


29. As cited earlier, while assisting biographer John Bigelow in the preparation of his 1856 presidential campaign biography, Fremont used Carvalho's account as the source for the information about the 1853-54 expedition and took the liberty of inserting material he felt appropriate. Concerning their arrival at Parowan, Fremont added to Carvalho's text, noting that Fuller died on February 7, and the next day "We arrived . . . at Parawan." See Bigelow's *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of John Charles Fremont*, p. 441. See also Carvalho's *Incidents of Travel*, p. 138.

30. Letter of John Calvin Lazelle Smith to the editor of the *Deseret News*, 1 March 1854. The letter appeared in the newspaper on 16 March 1854. It also appears in the Journal History of the LDS Church under the date of 1 March 1854.

31. There can be no doubt that before leaving Parowan Babbit took letters written by Fremont to his wife. The writer has been only able to locate a portion of one of the letters which has been previously cited as being in

32. The first of the two letters addressed from Fremont to Benton was a letter of introduction to the senator concerning Babbitt. The second letter contained information about the expedition up to that point and his plans for proceeding on to California and completing the survey. The day after Babbitt’s arrival in Washington, Benton arranged for its publication. As noted earlier, it appeared in the *Washington Intelligencer* 12 April 1854. Fremont also had his biographer, John Bigelow, publish the letter in *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of John Charles Fremont*, pp. 443-44.


34. See Carvalho, *Incidents of Travel*, pp. 135-36.

35. Nevada W. Driggs, "When Captain Fremont Slept in Grandma McGregor’s Bed," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 41 (Spring 1973):178-81. The portion of Drigg’s narrative which is questionable concerning its historical authenticity is given here for examination. Note the similarities between her and Dalton’s account: "... Calvin had gone to bed tired from his long day at the flour mill. Sarah was setting her bread dough when she heard a cry of distress. She ran and awakened Calvin who said it was probably a coyote or an Indian, but then the cry came again. Calvin quickly dressed, but Sarah begged him not to go out alone, so he went for his neighbors Jesse N. Smith, John Steele, and Edward Dalton. These men wrapped up warmly; one took a gun, and they followed the cry. About a quarter of a mile away they found a man almost buried in a snowdrift. He was completely exhausted, so they carried him to Sarah. She had already built up the fire and heated water. The man was undressed and placed in Sarah’s best, big white bed. When he revived he told them that he was Captain John C. Fremont who had been sent by the federal government to discover a new route to California but had been overtaken by heavy snows. The company of men had been reduced to eating their horses and mules, and their last meal was a dog given them by an Indian. He said his surviving men was huddled in a canyon about five miles back (probably Red Creek Canyon). Calvin told the captain to relax and allow Sarah to nurse him with her remedies for cold and exhaustion—that come daylight they would assemble a rescue group and seek out his men. In the morning ox teams were hitched to sleighs loaded with quilts and food. The half-frozen men were brought to the fort, and each was placed in a home for care."

37. Letter of John C. Fremont to Thomas Hart Benton, Parowan, Utah, 9 February 1854.

38. Fish, *The Life and Times of Joseph Fish*, p. 47.


40. I have used two sources for this information. In her book *Far West Sketches*, pp. 29-40, Jessie revealed her spiritual experience on the night of her husband's arrival at the Mormon community. The second source is from Irving Stone's *Immortal Wife* pp. 295-296 in which the conversation between John and Jessie is recounted. It should be noted that in *Far West Sketches* Jessie stated her husband arrived in Parowan on February 6. Since she claimed her husband made his notes around 11:30 p.m. Parowan time, which would be around 2:00 a.m. in Washington, her experience occurred during the early morning hours of February 7. Since Fremont actually arrived on February 8, it may appear that Jessie's experience did not coincide with the exact time during which her husband wrote his message about her in his notebook. However, in compiling her memoirs, Jessie was probably recalling the events as best as she could remember them. Taking these points into consideration, it is highly possible that the timing of her revelation coincided with Fremont writing in his journal. John and Jessie's daughter Elizabeth also made mention of the incident in *Recollections of Elizabeth Benton Fremont*, pp. 69-72.

41. Letter of Almon W. Babbitt to the San Francisco Daily Herald, 15 March 1854. The letter is also reproduced in Jackson and Spence, *The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont* 3:469. Elizabeth Benton Fremont mentions the Mormons in Parowan "were exceptionally kind . . . even cashing father's draft for him, a courtesy never before extended to a Gentile." See *Recollections of Elizabeth Benton Fremont*, p. 72. Jackson and Spence state the bishop of the Mormon community was Tarlton Lewis who assumed the responsibility of procuring the animals for the expedition, and Jesse N. Smith was placed in charge of supplying the company with food and equipment. The editors do not give a source as to where they obtained this information. See Jackson and Spence, *The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont* 3:475 n1.

43. John Steele Journal, typescript p. 32. Located in the LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

44. Carvalho, Incidents of Travel, pp. 137-38.


46. Letter of George Peacock, 5 July 1854 from Manti, Utah, to the editor of the Deseret News. The letter appeared in the paper on 20 July 1854. It also is located in the Journal History of the LDS Church under the date of 5 July 1854. James H. Martineau also recalled someone being killed in an attempt to retrieve the cached equipment, only he incorrectly identified the man as Carvalho. See Martineau, "A Meeting With Fremont," Deseret News 17 February 1917.

47. Jessie Benton Fremont, Far West Sketches, p. 36.

48. Carvalho, Incidents of Travel, pp. 139-41. Jackson and Spence state that as the party left Parowan it was reduced by at least four persons. I interpret this to mean Fuller, who had died, and Carvalho and Egloffstien, and one unknown person. Once again, the editors do not indicate where they obtained their information. See The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont 3:475 n1. That is why in the text I simply indicate that we do not know who went with Fremont or who remained behind.

49. Fremont left only two reports of the 1853-54 expedition. The first report, "Fremont's Railroad Exploration," was printed in the Daily Alta California 21 April 1854, five days after his arrival in San Francisco. This report was also published in Salt Lake's Deseret News 8 June 1854. In this report he states the group left Parowan on February 21. The second report, entitled "Fremont to the Editors of the National Intelligencer," was printed in the Washington publication on 13 June 1854. In this account he indicates they left Parowan on February 20. Both reports received extensive publication throughout the United States. The latter was subsequently printed by order of the Congress (33rd Congress, 2nd Session, House Document #8).

50. Sources for this information include Jackson and Spence, The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont 3:475-76 n2; Mary Lee Spence, "The Fremont's and Utah," Utah Historical Quarterly 44 (Summer 1976):301; and "Fremont's Letter to the Editors of the National Intelligencer," Washington, 13 June 1854.

51. "Fremont's Letter to the Editors of the National Intelligencer," Washington, 13 June 1854. See also Thomas
Hart Benton's "Discourse of Mr. Benton, of Missouri Before the Boston Merchantile Library Association, on the Physical Geography of the Country Between the States of Missouri and California, With a View to Show the Adaptation to Settlement and to the Construction of a Railroad (Washington: J.J. and Len Towers, 1854).

52. Letter of John M. Berhisei to Brigham Young, Washington, 14 June 1854, folder #9, Brigham Young papers, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

53. Elizabeth Benton Fremont, Recollections of Elizabeth Benton Fremont, 72-73. Jessie also wrote of this experience, though with slight variation from that of her daughter. She identified the man as being John C.L. Smith in whose home Fremont had been cared for during his stay at Parowan. This could not be the case since Smith died in December 1855 at the age of 34. See Far West Sketches, pp. 40-41.

54. Elizabeth Benton Fremont, Recollections of Elizabeth Benton Fremont, p. 73.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

During the three expeditions which brought Fremont into Utah’s borders, he traversed approximately 1,250 miles of the state. During each trek, the pathmarker must have been awed by the region’s diversity, whether it was the almost lifeless inland sea in the north, the red sandstone cliffs in the southwest, the rugged timbered terrain of the Uinta Mountains in the northeast, or the arid Salt Lake Desert in the west. The explorer’s writings also give one the feeling that he was impressed with the fertile Utah Valleys, the fresh mountain streams, and the snowcapped peaks. Perhaps his observations and experiences while in the region led him to believe the Utah region contained some of the most geological diversity of any area through which he traveled.

The pathmarker’s explorations in northern Utah in 1843 focused primarily on the geographic features associated with the Great Salt Lake. He must also be credited with conducting the first scientific analysis of the lake and surrounding region, and his findings and reporting proved to be generally accurate.
Perhaps his most significant discovery while traversing the southern and central regions of the state in the spring of 1844 on the return leg of the second expedition, was that the explorer clearly recognized the Wasatch and Sierra Nevada ranges formed the east and west boundaries of what he appropriately titled the Great Basin. And, although he declared the semi-arid basin as having few major streams and no outlet to the sea, at the same time he declared portions of the Utah region, such as Utah Valley and Bear River drainage lands, to be of valuable agricultural and economic worth.

John Charles Fremont must also be credited with giving his contemporaries of the 1840's, as well as the society of today, a detailed, scientific, vivid, and generally accurate description of Utah before the arrival of modern civilization. Mormon leaders residing in western Illinois during the mid-1840's were particularly influenced by the explorer's narrative of the 1843-44 expedition. However, it should be noted that Fremont's Report of the 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions did not persuade Mormon leaders to settle in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake, but his writings did help to confirm their decision. Mormon leaders also recognized the Report's potential for informing the Mormon populace in both Illinois and Great Britain concerning the Utah region, and they hoped that by reading the explorer's writings about the area the Saints would be more inclined to join the main body of the Church in the
permanent establishment of the Church's headquarters in Great Salt Lake Valley.

Fremont's third expedition, in 1845, was less significant from a scientific standpoint than the 1843-44 expedition. However, the course of travel taken on this expedition enabled the pathmarker to correctly ascertain the true relationship between the Great Salt Lake and its tributary to the south. The saline inland sea and surrounding territory were also once again explored and analyzed by Fremont. Following the completion of its survey of the lake, the government party made a successful crossing of the Great Salt Lake Desert and opened a portion of another route to the West.

While conducting the government-backed expeditions in 1843-44, and in 1845, Fremont felt it within his authority to name several geographic landmarks and features associated with Utah, only three of which continue to be known by the name given to it by the explorer—the Great Basin, Antelope Island, and Pilot Peak. In 1850, Howard Stansbury conducted a second government survey of the lake and renamed Disappointment Island (the island visited and named by Fremont in 1843) to Fremont Island in honor of Fremont being the first known white visitor to set foot on its shores. In the years following Fremont's 1854 trek through central and southern Utah, Fremont River, Fremont Pass (or Canyon), and the community of Fremont, Utah, were also named in honor of the explorer.
During the winter months of 1853-54, personal and private interests persuaded Fremont to attempt to locate a suitable railroad route west from Missouri to the Pacific Coast. For a period of approximately seven weeks in January and February of 1854, his course led him through the central and southern portions of the state. And although he and his men were eventually able to traverse the region, in the course of their travels they experienced severe physical hunger, exposure, and hardships. Had the company not come upon the warm fires and hospitality of the Mormon inhabitants of Parowan, they may have experienced death in the snowy mountains of southern Utah. In spite of the difficulty he encountered in Utah while attempting to locate a central railroad route, Fremont continued to insist the route was the most suited for the transcontinental track.

Perhaps an appropriate conclusion about the explorer's Utah connection is found cemented in granite on the east bench of Salt Lake City. On July 24, 1947, the Deseret News reported an estimated 50,000 people gathered to witness the unveiling of the "This is the Place Monument." Sculptured by Mahonri M. Young, grandson of Brigham Young, the monument was erected in honor of the most prominent individuals who were instrumental in the founding of Utah. In the center of the structure, situated on the highest monolith, stands the bronze figures of Mormon leaders Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards. Positioned atop smaller shafts on the southern and northern
ends of the monument are figures representing the trappers and mountain men such as Jim Bridger, Etienne Provost, and Peter Skeen Ogden, and figures representing the Spanish Fathers Dominguez and Escalante. On the base of the monument facing the east side are the figures of Captain Bonneville, Father Pierre Jean De Smet, and John Charles Fremont (see photograph on page 166). In spite of the fact that Fremont is not considered to be the most singularly important character in the establishment of Utah, the very fact that he was included among only a score of men noted for their historical contributions to the region suggests that his role in the exploration, discovery, and eventual settlement of the area was indeed a major one.
Photograph of Bronze Figure of John C. Fremont on the "This is the Place Monument"

Bronze figure of John C. Fremont on the "This is the Place Monument." Dedicated on 24 July 1947.
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JOHN C. FREMONT'S EXPEDITIONS INTO UTAH:
AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EXPLORER'S CONTRIBUTIONS
AND SIGNIFICANCE TO THE REGION

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ABSTRACT

John Charles Fremont conducted five expeditions to
the West during a period of twelve years (1842-1854). On
four occasions, during three of these expeditions (1843-44,
1845, and 1854), the explorer entered the Utah region. His
explorations in northern Utah in 1843 focused primarily on
the scientific analysis and survey of the Great Salt Lake.
In 1844, Fremont again entered the Utah area and made
scientific observations and calculations about the region,
including accurately defining the geographic region known as
the Great Basin, the name given it by Fremont. In 1845,
Fremont proceeded through Utah while enroute to California
and spent a considerable amount of time in the Utah area,
once again making significant observations. Finally, during
the winter of 1854, the explorer surveyed portions of
central and southern Utah with intentions of locating a
suitable transcontinental railroad route. In this thesis,
each of these expeditions is discussed in detail and
summaries given concerning the implications each had on the
history of the state.

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