Wyoming, Nebraska Territory: Joseph W. Young and the Mormon Emigration of 1864

Craig S. Smith

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq

Part of the Mormon Studies Commons, and the Religious Education Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol39/iss1/3

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in BYU Studies Quarterly by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
Joseph W. Young, nephew of Brigham Young, ca. 1860. Young was the Mormon emigration agent at Wyoming, Nebraska, in 1864.
Wyoming, Nebraska Territory: Joseph W. Young and the Mormon Emigration of 1864

Craig S. Smith

On a mild and pleasant Monday, February 22, 1864, Joseph A. Young in company with Elders William C. Staines, John W. Young, and H. B. Clawson departed Salt Lake City by overland mail stage for the East to organize and direct the year’s gathering of Saints to Zion. Joseph W. Young, also appointed to this task, had already left the city on the preceding stage. After extensive labors ensuring a successful emigration, these untiring servants did not return to their homes and families until late September when the last emigrants were outfitted and on the final leg of their journey.

As agent assigned, Joseph A. Young, the oldest son of Brigham Young, worked with William Staines and John Young. Joseph A.’s letter of appointment stated that he was “to take the general charge and oversight of affairs pertaining to our this year’s immigration in the United States, more particularly in New York City and from said city to this Territory; . . . and to regulate, advise, counsel and control said affairs pertaining to said immigration.” Assisting Joseph A. Young, Joseph W. Young, son of Brigham Young’s brother Lorenzo Dow Young, juggled and oversaw all aspects of the 1864 emigration at the small, insignificant frontier town of Wyoming, Nebraska, on the Missouri River, forty-four miles south of Omaha.1

The monumental efforts of the Church agents in implementing and achieving a successful Mormon emigration are generally not considered in most studies. Stories of the Mormon emigration typically focus on the faith, sacrifices, and hardships of the emigrants themselves during their trek to Zion. What is usually not examined is the tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes organizing, planning, and preparing required for a successful emigration. Each year, Church leaders and agents began their endless labor months before the Saints embarked on their famous journey. This was especially true for the “down-and-back” Church wagon trains of the 1860s, perhaps the most ingenious and productive of the various emigration experiments implemented by the Church, including the earlier handcarts.2

Down-and-Back Wagon Trains

After some experimentation in 1860, the Church successfully employed the down-and-back wagon trains in the years 1861–64, 1866, and 1867 to
facilitate the gathering of the poor Saints. For this innovative scheme, the Church requested that each Utah ward or settlement donate, as tithing credit, wagons, teamsters, and supplies for the formation of wagon companies. These companies left Salt Lake City in the late spring for the outfitting post on the Missouri River. They returned in the late summer and fall of the same year with the season’s emigrants and freight. This program enabled the Church and the Perpetual Emigration Fund, with their limited resources, to continue emigration without large outlays of money to buy oxen, wagons, and other supplies at the Missouri. The opportunity to return with Church and private freight—an added bonus of the plan—contributed to the self-sufficiency of Utah during the 1860s.

Previously, the Church had used a similar system during the 1846 exodus from Nauvoo. After the initial group of weary refugees arrived at the Missouri River in mid-June, they unloaded their belongings, and the men returned with their wagons and teams to retrieve the less fortunate Saints as they evacuated Nauvoo in late summer and fall.

The complexity of implementing down-and-back trains required considerable planning and organizing on the part of Church leaders and agents. The leaders had to request enough wagons and teamsters from each Mormon settlement—ranging from St. George in the south to Cache Valley in the north—and bring them all together at the proper time. The trains had to time their departure from Salt Lake City in order to reach the staging area on the Missouri River at approximately the same time that the emigrants arrived from the East. Passage to the outfitting post for the emigrants had to be arranged on ships, trains, and steamboats. The agent at the outfitting post on the Missouri had to ensure that enough supplies, wagons, and other freight were on hand. He also had to coordinate the incoming emigrants, who arrived in large numbers, with the waiting Church trains to ensure that all emigrants and freight were assigned to one of the companies returning to Salt Lake City.

The Outfitting Post at Wyoming, Nebraska

The outfitting towns on the Missouri played a pivotal role for all these efforts during the emigration. Though much has been written on the Mormon emigration, little has been detailed concerning the down-and-back outfitting towns, especially Wyoming, Nebraska.3 Wyoming was the center of much activity on the frontier between 1864 and 1866 and was the last Mormon outpost on the Missouri prior to the advent of the transcontinental railroad. Today, this town is all but forgotten, and the site where it once stood is now a cornfield.4

An understanding of the complex administrative efforts of emigration agent Joseph W. Young5 and his assistants at Wyoming in 1864 provides
Joseph W. Young and the Mormon Emigration of 1864

a small piece of the picture of the Mormon emigration during the down-and-back decade of the 1860s. The year 1864 was especially important in that it was the first year the Church used Wyoming as the outfitting point on the Missouri. This particular year also proved quite troublesome due to the raging Civil War, which made obtaining supplies and transportation difficult and expensive. Increased Indian-White hostilities along the Platte River route also contributed to the difficulties of the return trip to Salt Lake City.

The first order of business for Joseph A. Young and Joseph W. Young was the selection of a new point on the Missouri River to replace the previous outfitting station in Florence, Nebraska. After leaving Salt Lake City, Joseph A. journeyed on the Overland Stage route to Kearney, where he met Joseph W. on March 3. Early the next morning, the weary travelers were awakened by the famous satirist Artemus Ward, who had just spent a month in Salt Lake City. Ward “expressed great friendship for the Saints, and said we were a slandered and misused people, and that he would do his best to make us better known.”

The Youngs’ next stop was Omaha, where they banked their funds, checked on the remaining stored freight, including an organ, and completed other necessary business. When the merchants of Omaha discovered that the Church was pulling the outfitting station out of Florence, they exerted much effort to persuade the agents to stay, making very generous offers. After concluding their business in Omaha, Joseph A. and Joseph W. boarded the steamboat Denver and traveled to Nebraska City and the town and landing of Wyoming. At the same time, they continued making arrangements for the emigration with the steamboat operators and merchants.

Upon examining Wyoming, they found it “a very desireable place to fit up at, with the exception (if it is an exception) of the scarcity of buildings.” The merchants of Nebraska City and proprietors of Wyoming, because of their desire for the business of the emigration and their intense rivalry with Omaha, quickly agreed to give the Church “complete control of the town plat, the steamboat landing, and fit us up a good warehouse.”

At this time, the town of Wyoming, located about seven miles north of Nebraska City and forty-four miles south of Omaha, consisted of only about a half dozen occupied houses and two unoccupied larger buildings—a warehouse and a hotel. The businessmen of the area resolved to refurbish the buildings for the Church’s use. They also promised to ensure that no license would be issued for the sale of liquor in the town of Wyoming. Except for some expense for adding sheds and corrals, the town was ready for the emigration. The Millennial Star proclaimed some of the advantages of Wyoming as the outfitting point:

It is a very healthy location, and has a fine range for stock in its vicinity. It has a good landing, and, what is very rare on the Missouri River, it is composed
of gravel and rock. The distance from Wyoming to the Valley is about 20 miles shorter than from Florence; and by the Saints landing there, a distance of some 80 or 90 miles of river travel will be saved.\textsuperscript{13}

Of course, this shorter distance would result in a savings for shipping freight and passengers from New York, thereby reducing the cost of the emigration. Joseph W. Young predicted that transportation would be fifty cents less per passenger to Wyoming than to Florence.\textsuperscript{14}

**Travel Arrangements and Supplies for the Emigrants**

With the major task of locating a good outfitting point completed, the Youngs departed Nebraska City on March 9 for St. Joseph, St. Louis, and Chicago to tackle the next chores of organizing the emigration. They had to negotiate steamboat and railroad passage for the emigrants who would be coming west by train from New York City, as well as order wagons and obtain a wide range of other supplies.

As they journeyed south, the signs of the Civil War at first included only “a scarcity of laborers, and a small squad of soldiers in almost every little town,” but as they approached Missouri and St. Joseph, they encountered burnt houses, deserted farms, and partly abandoned towns occupied by “ill-mannered, and still more ill-looking soldiers.” Joseph A. Young recorded that “the whole face of the country from where we crossed the Missouri line to St. Joseph, bears the impress of the judgments of the Almighty.”\textsuperscript{15} More evidences of the war were apparent along the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad, where they saw “every few miles the debris of a ‘wrecked’ train,” and concluded, “were it not that ‘God is with his people’ the thought of the saints travelling over such a road would be almost unbearable.”\textsuperscript{16}

Major effects of the war were the high cost of everything and the difficulty of obtaining the necessary supplies. The Youngs failed to procure wagons at Espenshied’s in St. Louis due to the lack of seasoned timbers and concern over the uncertain state of the currency. Fortunately, they were able to order over one hundred of the badly needed wagons from Peter Schuttler in Chicago—at very high prices. Based on these prices, they estimated that for 1864 the cost of outfitting a wagon with oxen from the frontier would be over $350.00, including wagon covers and tents, and about $150.00 for only a wagon without covers and teams.

After securing the wagons, Joseph A. Young continued his journey on March 15 to New York and Liverpool to focus on other matters of the emigration. Joseph W. Young returned to Wyoming by way of St. Louis to start his labors of the season.\textsuperscript{17}

Upon his return to St. Louis, Joseph W. again wrote to Brigham Young, complaining about the high prices and difficulties arising from the war. He had been able to purchase the necessary “chains, soap, & candles, stoves,
bake-kettles” and make “arrangements with them for all the goods our Emigrants may want, on (what I consider) much better terms, than I could possibly buy of the jobbers,” though he felt it “almost impossible to get up an outfit.” However, he did end his letter on a positive note, stating that “I never saw the fog so thick but what a brisk wind would clear the sky; and it will clear this time.” He concluded with his thoughts on St. Louis and the war:

The Army is all that is thought of here. Mules for the Army. Horses for the [Army,] Beef for the Army, Wagons for the Army. Men for the Army, and women for the Army. Where the feelings of the people are, I don’t know. (and then I do know) I hear men say; “this war has been a splendid thing for St. Louis.” “A splendid thing for Alton.” “The war has made Chicago[.]” “The war has been a great thing for us.” A gentleman showing me a large wholesale house, yesterday remarked, that; “the war has been worth a million to the firm.” I verily believe, there are those who would rejoice at Rivers of blood, if they could make a few dollars in the operations. But I must not morralize.18

Preparations at the Outfitting Post

By the end of March, Joseph W. Young was back in Wyoming, Nebraska, and during April and May, except for a side trip to Omaha to resolve some legal matters, he was busily preparing for the arrival of the emigrants and Church trains. This extensive effort involved setting up office and warehouse space, purchasing lots and buildings, obtaining enough wagons and cattle, buying large amounts of provisions such as bacon and flour, unloading and storing the constant flow of freight, and ensuring the proper shipment of freight, including the organ left at Omaha the previous season. Starting in June, all had to be ready for the massive onslaught of the Church trains from the West and emigrants from the East.

To add to these labors, Joseph W. was constantly worried about the health of his family, and the lack of news was a continuous trial. He typically ended his letters to Brigham Young with a concern, “Have not heard from my family lately, hope they are well. We would be very glad of a Deseret News.”19

Joseph W., assisted by N. S. Beatie, busily readied the town of Wyoming. They spent part of April arranging their office and warehouse, and by April 24, Joseph happily reported to Brigham Young that he was writing from his new office “away from the noise & talk of a Hotel.” They also moved into a boarding house that was “not of the latest Parisian style” and employed a “man and his wife . . . to cook, do chores &c.”20 Other improvements included building sheds, corrals, fences, and a stable. When the opportunity presented itself, Joseph W. purchased lots and buildings in the town. During April and May, he paid $400 for a two-story stone building and lots, $350 for houses and lots, and $170 for a stone warehouse.21
A major question at this time was whether to encourage the growth of the town or leave it in a fairly undeveloped state. Brigham and Joseph W. agreed that the town should definitively not be developed and should be, as Brigham strongly stated, "a quiet, secluded, good, convenient and sufficiently-near-civilization outfitting point for our freight and immigration." For practical reasons, Joseph W. argued that the businessmen of Nebraska City, who owned most of the lots in Wyoming, strongly discouraged the development of a closely located competing town and that he had promised them that the Church wanted "the room more than the town."

Joseph W. also felt it important that the Saints "be some what away from gentile influences" because "it is utterly impossibly [sic] to have a Town in this country without having Beer Salons, whiskey shops, whore houses, and scoundrels all around you. You must fight them and stand guard over the weak minded, but good hearted sisters (and many times brethren) to keep them from being destroyed." Providing insights into his hands-on management style, Brigham Young concluded this discussion with Joseph W. by instructing, "I trust you will always frankly and fully express to me your views upon any and every subject of importance in your official operations, for that gives me a chance to sanction or correct, as my judgement may direct." 22

In addition to the many tasks Joseph W. Young was asked to implement, Brigham Young also suggested, "It will be well to plant some corn, if you have or can readily procure a suitable spot of ground, and employ a good reliable and responsible person." It appears that this request was just too much for the busy Joseph W., who responded in a later letter, "I hardly think we will be able to carry it out; but will see what can be done. Most of the improved & unoccupied farms in this neighborhoods have had the fences burnt up & destroyed. Till they are open prairie, and I don't know of a feild [sic] that is secure that we can get." 23

Of considerable importance to the successful emigration was securing enough supplies and food for the emigrants' rations. Joseph W. Young was continuously on the lookout for good deals. In early April, he was able to secure sixty thousand pounds of bacon at what he considered the great price of "10 cts for side, and 11 cts for hams." By April 24, he gleefully noted that the bacon was worth $1,500 more than he had paid for it. He was equally successful in procuring the necessary flour. On May 12, he explained that he and his associates were "using every exertion to be ready" for the emigrants and were "geting in our flour as fast as two good teams can draw it from the mills and do the other work. Have our bacon now in warehouse." 24

Joseph W. Young received more badly needed assistance in late April when Elders Richard Bentley and Warren S. Snow arrived in Wyoming.
Joseph W. Young and the Mormon Emigration of 1864

from their European missionary efforts. In a letter dated May 15, which was eventually published in the Millennial Star, Bentley stated that he had “charge of the warehouse and store” and was “receiving a very large amount of provisions,” including “2,500 sacks of flour, 70,000 pounds of bacon, 80 sacks of beans, 50 sacks of dried apples, a stock of dry goods and groceries, stoves, etc.”

Due to problems associated with the war, cattle and wagons for the independent trains and for the freight trains proved more difficult to obtain in the necessary numbers at reasonable prices. Throughout April and May, stock prices continued to increase, and Joseph W. Young had trouble purchasing any cattle even at the high prices of $120 to $150 a head. Cattle were so scarce that his four-day trip in mid-April failed to procure any. This scarcity was partly the result of the Army taking “such an immense quantity of beef.” Another factor was the inflation of greenbacks, forcing people to keep their cattle in fear of losing money due to the decreasing value of the currency. Joseph W. found “it is not unusual for farmers to say, ‘I would rather keep my cattle than to keep green backs.’” He had hoped but failed to prevail on Joseph A. Young to transfer gold from Liverpool to buy cattle. By late May, government plans to issue large contracts to freight five thousand tons of supplies to the western military posts increased demand for the already meager supply. The only positive note to these difficulties was the possibility that prospectors returning from the gold mines would sell their cattle cheap at the Missouri, though most of the heavy traffic of the season was heading west to the mines and not returning. Due to the scarcity and high prices, Joseph W. Young had to go as far as Sioux City in late May to acquire the necessary cattle.

Wagons were even more of a problem. The final shipment of wagons originally ordered on March 15 from Peter Schuttler in Chicago did not arrive until the end of July as the emigration season was concluding. This long delay continuously caused Joseph W. great concern. He complained in every letter to Brigham Young that “our wagons are very late in coming” and wrote Peter Schuttler often to determine the problem. Schuttler responded to Young’s many inquiries asking that he remain patient and that Schuttler was “doing all in his power to get them up, but says it is almost impossible to get men and every few days they strike for higher wages.” In addition to the labor problems, shipment of the wagons was slow due to war-related delays along the railroads. To free up the lagging shipments, Joseph W. assigned a Brother Shipp to travel back along the railroads and stay with the wagons until they finally arrived at Wyoming. These long delays forced Joseph W. to buy wagons locally for some of the freighting companies. By July, the frustrated Young protested to Schuttler:

I hardly know what to say to you about the matter. I presume you have had trouble in getting them up, but the loss and inconveniences which I suffer
daily for the want of them is almost greater than the worth of the wagons. Our teams are all here ready to load, but no wagons. Our emigrants are here waiting their wagons, but none for them. If you would be in my place for one day, and I could look on and laugh, I would call it square, and find no more fault, not withstanding we suffer a clear loss of at least $500 for every day we wait here unnecessarily.28

The constant flow of freight into Wyoming kept Joseph W. and his assistants extremely busy with this almost unceasing activity. They unloaded the first freight of the season from the steamboat Calypso on April 22; the next shipment arrived April 26 on the steamboat Denver. From then on, large quantities of freight appeared every few days throughout May, June, and July. In addition to the badly needed provisions and supplies for the emigration, much of the freight destined for Salt Lake City was shipped for firms such as Hooper & Eldridge and Kimball & Lawrence and for individuals such as A. O. Smoot and Wilford Woodruff.29

As with all aspects of the 1864 emigration, the war caused considerable delay in receiving much of the freight. Joseph W. Young complained that "there is no dependance on Rail Roads or Boats. Government takes either whenever it pleases and everybody else has to stand back," and he often sent someone back along the railroads to "pry loose a blockade." The Mormons, however, had "preference over all other passengers & freighters." By July 4, Joseph W. notified Joseph A. Young that there were "mountains of freight so high that we cannot see the tops, and still filling up."30

During these considerable preparations, Joseph W. Young also responded to special requests from Brigham Young. At one point, Brigham instructed Joseph to carefully boat the organ and other equipment and supplies left in Florence down the Missouri to Wyoming for shipment to Salt Lake City. Brigham Young expressed special concern over one of the boxes "some 10 1/2 feet long by some 5 feet wide and some 14 inches deep" and lectured Joseph on the best way to load the heavy box onto a wagon because "you may be at some loss about loading the large box to the best advantage, and I will suggest two ways." The two ways included altering the axle trees of the wagon in various ways to admit the box lying flat. The practical Joseph, always trying to closely follow Brigham's advice, questioned, "Will it do any harm to bring on the edge? If it will not, I can load it fast enough. I presume it has already had harder knocks than it will ever get again. If it will not ride safely on the edge I can load one or the other way that you mention."31

Organization of the Wagon Trains

As Joseph W. Young made preparations in Wyoming, others in the Utah settlements organized Church trains for their journey east, while
Joseph W. Young and the Mormon Emigration of 1864

immigrants and European agents prepared for the voyage across the ocean and North American continent. In late February, Bishop Edward Hunter notified the wards and settlements of their quotas of wagons and personnel required for the 1864 Church trains. Washington County's assignment included "twenty eight ox, mule or horse, teams and wagons and two mounted guards; each team, if oxen, to consist of four yoke of good oxen, of proper age; or four mules or horses and a wagon strong enough to bring thirty hundred; good Chicago wagons being preferable." \(^{32}\)

Of the three hundred wagons requested, Cache Valley's charge was thirty wagons (six from Logan). Three wagons were sent from Kaysville. \(^{33}\)

All other communities were assessed similar numbers. Bishop Hunter also instructed the various leaders to be "as careful as possible to select honest, temperate, good upright and responsible men for teamsters and guards; men who will conduct themselves properly on all occasions, demeaning themselves as they would if on missions preaching the Gospel. For they are called to fill important missions." He thought the teamsters and guards of the previous year were "very good" and preferred the use of the "same list for the outfit of this season." \(^{34}\)

The work of the teamsters and guards during the emigration, which could extend up to seven months, counted toward their required labor tithing. As part of their labor tithing, they each had to supply their own provisions and other necessary articles for the journey. Crediting labor tithing reduced the actual expenditures of the Church for the emigration but limited the number of other projects that could be accomplished. Though the Saints faithfully followed the orders as best they could, their assignments resulted in many hardships, especially in the drier, poorer settlements of the south. Washington County residents expressed concern that "our teams travel, seven hundred miles farther than the teams in and around Salt Lake, for which we have heretofore received no additional compensation. Last year, our teams being compelled to wait seven weeks at Florence for their loading, were seven months making the trip, while some other trains made it in four months and receive the same compensation." \(^{35}\)

By mid-April, many of the teams and wagons started out from their dispersed settlements for Salt Lake City or for the gathering location in Echo Canyon, east of Salt Lake City. As they arrived, they formed six companies of Church trains, each with a captain. The captains for the 1864 emigration were John R. Murdock, William B. Preston, Joseph S. Rawlins, William S. Warren, Isaac A. Canfield, and William Hyde. These companies departed for the East during the first few days of May. On May 10, Brigham Young was able to report in a telegram sent to Nebraska City, "Three trains
Pioneer company encampment at Echo Canyon, 1866. Down-and-back wagons from settlements in Utah gathered in this canyon, where they formed companies of Church trains to travel to Nebraska and then return to Utah with the emigrating European Saints.
passed Bridger to-day, and two are cast of Little Sandy, all making good time.”36 Totals sent to the Missouri for the season included 170 wagons and the means to purchase 94 wagons, 1,717 oxen and the means to buy 80 oxen, 58 horses and 28 mules, 27 mounted guards, and 244 teamsters.37

Travel from Europe to Wyoming, Nebraska

Halfway around the world in Europe, other efforts on behalf of the immigrants were also moving forward. On March 13, 1864, the Millennial Star announced that it was the intention of Brigham Young and the Brethren “to send down teams, this season, from Great Salt Lake City to Florence, to carry up the emigrating Saints” and requested “the names and deposits of those intending to emigrate; also, the orders for oxen, wagons, &c., with the money necessary for their purchase.”38

This announcement kicked off the beginning of the emigration season, and Saints throughout the British Isles and northern Europe began their preparations for the long journey. The raging war of Austria and Prussia against Denmark hampered these efforts in Scandinavia, but “upwards of 800 souls” from Scandinavia managed to travel safely to Liverpool in time to leave on the first ship of the season, with even less disturbance than in previous years. Many young Danish men of the age that required them to serve in the military were also allowed to depart without problems.39

The Church agents in England, under the direction of European Mission president George Q. Cannon, chartered three sailing ships for the 1864 emigration: the Monarch of the Sea sailed from Liverpool on April 28 with 974 Saints and arrived in New York City on June 3; the General McClellan left Liverpool on May 21 with 802 Saints and docked at New York City on June 23; and the Hudson departed London on June 3 with 863 individuals and reached New York City on July 19 (table 1).40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comp. No.</th>
<th>Vessel</th>
<th>Company President</th>
<th>No. of Persons</th>
<th>Departed England</th>
<th>Arrived New York</th>
<th>Arrived Wyoming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>Monarch of the Sea</td>
<td>John Smith</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>June 3</td>
<td>June 15–16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>General McClellan</td>
<td>Thomas Jeremy</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>July 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Hudson</td>
<td>John M. Kay</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>June 3</td>
<td>July 19</td>
<td>August 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Data from Church Emigration Book, 1862–1881, Library Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

After clearing emigration at Castle Gardens, agents rushed the emigrants up the Hudson River to Albany, where they caught a train west. They
continued on trains through Detroit and Chicago to Quincy.41 Many of the emigrants arrived in New York City without money or means to procure food and other necessities. Because of the large number of needy emigrants and the train delays, the railroad distributed biscuits and cheese at some locations during the journey. At Chicago, Judge Kinney, W. S. Godbe, and F. A. H. Mitchell donated fifty dollars to help the poor.42

At Quincy the emigrants had to ferry across the Mississippi River, where they boarded a railroad spur that connected to the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad to St. Joseph. Due to the war and the destructive guerrilla warfare being waged across Missouri, this portion of the eventful trip was often the most trying. Many of the Saints noted destroyed and burned bridges and torn-up track causing delays and forcing them to carry their baggage across streams and creeks. One emigrant recorded the ordeal:

At seven o’clock on the morning of the 28th, we left on the train and after forty miles we came to the burnt bridge. There, it was necessary for us to carry all of our baggage a half mile. Boards were laid across the canal to walk on. We stayed there until all the supplies and baggage were brought across. There stood the soldiers from the North and awaited any minute those from the South.43

Finally, after enduring these problems, the emigrants arrived at St. Joseph for their last leg of the journey up the Missouri by steamboat to Wyoming.

As all components of the emigration were converging on Wyoming, Brigham Young wrote Joseph W. Young informing him of the important decision not to send Church trains to the Missouri for the 1865 emigration season. A letter announcing the decision was later published in the September 17 issue of the Millennial Star. So much had been credited to the labor tithing accounts that the cost of sending Church trains was “hindering the progress of the work upon the Temple.” Many of the emigrants helped by the Church had been negligent in reimbursing the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, and “a large amount of indebtedness had accumulated, which renders it impossible to remunerate for the labor tithing.”44 Church leaders decided to focus the resources of the Church during 1865 on the building of the Temple instead of on emigration.

Arrival of the Church Trains and Emigrants

The first Church train of the season, John Murdock’s mule-and-horse train of about seventy-five wagons, rolled into Wyoming on June 6 (table 2). Accompanying Murdock’s train were Daniel H. Wells and Brigham Young Jr., with their families, on their way to a mission in England.45 Joseph W. Young was so busily engaged with his extensive daily activities supervising the many aspects of the emigration that he “had not the time to spend with them which I would have liked.”46
TABLE 2. Summary of Church Emigration Companies Leaving Wyoming, 1864

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Arrived</th>
<th>Departed</th>
<th>No. of Persons</th>
<th>No. of Wagon</th>
<th>Arrived</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Church Train)</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John D. Chase</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>June 26</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>September 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John D. Murdock</td>
<td>June 6</td>
<td>June 29</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>August 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William S. Preston</td>
<td>June 21</td>
<td>July 8</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>September 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph S. Rawlins</td>
<td>June 26</td>
<td>July 15</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>September 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William S. Warren</td>
<td>July 2</td>
<td>July 21</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>October 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Smith</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>bef. July 15</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>September 25–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>October 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issac A. Canfield</td>
<td>bef. July 3</td>
<td>July 27</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>October 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Hyde</td>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>August 9</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>October 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren S. Snow</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>August 17</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>November 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Data from Church Emigration Book, 1862–1881, Library Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The animals of Murdock's train looked well and would have been ready to start home almost immediately except that the wagons ordered from Chicago still had not arrived. Joseph W. Young made every attempt to start the emigrants out "just as soon as possible after their arrival," but problems due to the war kept mounting. He disappointedly confessed, "We were all in hopes that as the season advanced things would into better shape, but they are getting worse & worse. Gold goes one notch higher every battle that is fought. And owners advance prices to match."47

On June 15 and 16, steamboats from St. Joseph dropped off the first large company of "tolerably healthy" emigrants—those that had crossed the ocean in the Monarch of the Sea. Their arrival added another dimension to the already strained resources of Joseph W. Young and his staff. The first order of business was to shelter and care for the approximately one "thousand Scandinavian Saints and one or two hundred saints of other nationalities" that had disembarked at Wyoming. The rainy weather did not help matters. The agents at Wyoming had few tents, and the emigrants suffered from exposure, but they finally put "most of the women and children into one room of the stone ware house." The emigrants quickly constructed boweries and obtained stoves for their camps while they waited for the Church trains to arrive and organize.48

Joseph W. Young and his assistants had much to organize and prepare. They had to ensure that the emigrants had enough to eat, distributing rations for their stay at Wyoming as well as for the trip across the plains. They had to assign individuals to wagons and Church trains and time the arrival of the trains with the arrival of the emigrating Saints. All of these transactions had to be tracked and recorded in the account books.

The established rate for passage from Wyoming to Salt Lake City for adults was fifty-five dollars, children under ten were half price, and luggage
over fifty pounds each was charged at twenty cents per pound. If individuals paid in advance, the costs were slightly less. In addition to preparing the emigrants, the agents had to continuously deal with the freight that piled higher each day. Much of this considerable freight had to be crammed into the wagons with the emigrants.

Occasional telegrams between Brigham Young and Joseph W. Young facilitated some communication throughout June and early July, though the nearest telegraph offices for Joseph were in Nebraska City and Omaha. Brigham answered some of Joseph’s questions, and Joseph reported to Salt Lake City when a number of Church trains were leaving the town of Wyoming.

Paying attention to the small details and implementing instructions from Salt Lake City was also an important part of the agents’ job. These details included determining the best procedures for handling the extra luggage brought by the emigrants. Probably because of the mounting unpaid debt of previous emigrants, instructions from Salt Lake City requested that all extra luggage of the passengers be sent separately to a warehouse in Salt Lake City, where individuals would obtain it only after payment. Joseph W., aware of the rigors of the journey and trying to be as efficient as possible, argued that the small amount of overweight gear of most emigrants would be needed “after they reach the chilly, and often cold winds of the mountains” and he “would much rather the people, would be responsible for the safe transportation of their clothing than to take that responsibility for them.” He also felt that separating luggage and “giving Bills Lading for same it would very materially add to our already arduous labors.” Instead, he proposed weighing all luggage and “charging overweight in their notes on settlement with them.” With the frustration typical of a manager in the field responding to instructions from the main office, he wrote to Brigham Young:

It is impossible for you, or the brethren in the Office to understand these (apparently) small items only as they are explained. I will work just as near to the letter of instructions, as the nature of cases will allow, believing that you will be satisfied with my judgement where those instructions cannot be fully carried out without taking up to much time.

Departures and Arrivals

The first train to depart with emigrants from Wyoming was John D. Chase’s independent company. This company left for Salt Lake City on June 25 with eighty-five Saints in twenty-eight wagons. Several days prior to their departure, Joseph W. issued instructions introducing Chase, a returned missionary from England, to the emigrants and requesting the following:

It would be necessary for the brethren forming said company to raise sufficient means to purchase Bro. Chase a good riding animal, saddle, etc., which I want you to give Bro. Chase as his individual property. Also, brethren I want you to see that Bro. Chase has a comfortable place to board while on the journey.
After much effort organizing and loading wagons over a two-week period, John R. Murdock’s Church train, the first for the season, was ready to start for Salt Lake City on June 29 with seventy-eight emigrating Saints and large amounts of freight.\(^{53}\)

During the last two weeks of June, as the first trains were readied to head west, the remaining Church trains arrived at Wyoming after a long, tiresome journey from Salt Lake City. William B. Preston’s train approached Wyoming on June 21, Joseph S. Rawlins’s on June 26, William S. Warren’s on July 2, and the final train, William Hyde’s, on July 3.\(^{54}\) Just when the final Church trains were checking in at Wyoming, the next company of approximately eight hundred Saints from the General McClellan landed on July 3. Joseph W. Young and staff were now in the thick of the emigration season. All at once, they were juggling the Church trains as some arrived and others departed; the emigrants, as some just off the boat searched for a dry place to camp while others from earlier companies packed and loaded onto the overloaded wagons; and the freight, which continuously required unloading, sorting, tracking, and reloading. The exhausted and ailing Joseph W. Young, in a letter to Joseph A. Young, gasped, “Gen McClelland’s company came up last night, and, oh! my soul and all that is great, ain’t we rather busy and noisy today. . . . It takes some faith to say ‘Be the remover’ and have it done.”\(^{55}\)

The “confusion and bustle” of assigning and loading the emigrants from the first two companies, as well as the freight, onto Church trains continued throughout an excessively hot July. Joseph W. made every attempt to “start out one company after another as fast as we can load them, until all are gone.” The next Church train, William B. Preston’s company, departed Wyoming about July 8, after the clerks had settled with the emigrants. The train included “380 passengers and their baggage and provisions and 1500 lbs. of freight to each of the 50 wagons.”

Joseph S. Rawlins’s Church train with about 400 Saints in 63 wagons left Wyoming about July 15, followed by William S. Warren’s Church train on July 19 with 329 emigrants in 65 wagons and Isaac A. Canfield’s train on July 27 with 211 people in 50 wagons. Church Patriarch John Smith’s independent train also left in July. By the end of July, all Church trains, except William Hyde’s, were on the trail back to Salt Lake City, but the final emigration company of the season had still not arrived. Exhausted but ever optimistic, Joseph W. Young wrote, “We are very much blessed and prospered. The people are generally well, feeling well in Spirit.”\(^{56}\)

Loading the wagons was not without problems. Much to Joseph W. Young’s continued annoyance throughout July, he had still not received all of the wagons ordered from Chicago. Adding to this difficulty was another problem: “The teams sent this year are very light, and are not capable of
BYU Studies

Mormon pioneer encampment at Wyoming, Nebraska, 1866

taking heavy loads as have been taken in former years. Many of the wagons are old and broken and have to be repaired. Very few of them have covers sufficient to protect the loading.” Though many teamsters considered the loads too heavy to make the journey, Young loaded the wagons with an “average of 1,000 lbs freight and ten passengers to a team, all except about five provision wagons.”\(^57\) These loads required that the emigrants walk most of the way from Wyoming to Salt Lake City, as was the case for most of the gathering Saints.

By the end of July, the last emigration company of the season had still not arrived, and high piles of freight still awaited shipping. Joseph W. Young, now weighing only 112 pounds and under considerable pressure to complete the tasks for the season, worried about the mounting costs and acquiring the additional necessary wagons and teams. He advised Brigham Young, “It takes twice the money twice the worry, and three times the labor to accomplish anything that it ever did before.” He required additional money to “close up,” explaining that “our expenses are enormous. Tents and wagon covers alone make an item of over 5000$ and having to fuel the Emigrants so long while we wait for wagons, makes a very heavy provi- sion.” The constant problem of having to obtain more wagons and cattle added to the already high expenses. One fortunate purchase was “a train of 15 wagons & 60 yoke cattle, yoke chains all complete $11500.00,” which he bought on credit while he waited for money from Brigham Young.\(^58\)

Finally, on August 2, the third and last company of Saints from the ship \textit{Hudson} landed at Wyoming. The party included about 150 Swiss, German,
Dutch, and French Saints docking at about 5:00 P.M. in the steamboat Colorado and about 750 emigrants from Great Britain arriving about 6:00 P.M. in the steamboat J. H. Lacy. Again, preparations for the journey west were in full swing. The agents at Wyoming provided for the emigrants and made them as comfortable as possible. William Hyde’s Church train was quickly loaded with 350 passengers and freight in 62 wagons and was ready to go by August 9.

Because of the large number of remaining people and freight, Joseph W. Young purchased enough wagons to form an additional train captained by Warren S. Snow, one of the returned missionaries who had helped with the emigration at Wyoming. On August 9, Hyde’s train, after lingering over five weeks, finally moved out about fifty miles from Wyoming and waited for Snow’s train. Snow’s company followed about a week later on August 18 with over 62 wagons and 400 passengers. The two companies traveled together for the first portion of the journey “on account of the many Indian depredations being committed on the road.” The Millennial Star reported, “Like it is in the East with the guerrillas, it is now on the journey before us. Depredations, some of them of the most fearful character, are reported having been committed by Indians on defenceless travellers;” however, the Saints “passed through places where these scenes have been enacted without being in the least disturbed or molested.”

The End of the Emigration Season

With the successful completion of the emigration at Wyoming, the weary Joseph W. Young and his assistants left for their homes in Salt Lake City by private conveyance on August 21. Because of the Indian problems, they continued with the Hyde and Snow companies as far as Julesburg, Nebraska. Joseph W. telegraphed Salt Lake City from Julesburg concerning the status of the final two trains of the season:

Left trains yesterday, all well. Expect to be home by the 28th. These are the last two trains. Capts. Hyde and Snow need 50 yoke of oxen to meet them as soon as possible, at the head of Bitter Creek certain. They are coming on that route and several of their cattle have the hoof ail.

Joseph W. and his associates then quickly traveled on to Salt Lake City where they arrived on September 25. The heavily loaded wagons of the Hyde and Snow trains did not appear in Salt Lake City until October 26 and November 2, thus ending another emigration year. The Church agents had facilitated the passage of over 2,600 Saints to their new home in Zion. Joseph W. Young had “proved himself a very capable manager and leader” during the execution of his enormous duties and responsibilities.
Craig S. Smith [crasmth@wyoming.com] is employed as an archaeologist at an environmental consulting firm in Laramie, Wyoming. He has published articles on Mormon history and Mormon emigration of the 1860s in the *Overland Journal* and *Journal of Mormon History*.

1. Joseph A. Young, “*Journal of a Mission to the Eastern States* [1864],” holograph, 1, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City; Journal History of the Church (hereafter cited as Journal History), March 22 and October 12 1864, Archives Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives), microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Joseph W. Young Letter of Appointment, Joseph W. Young Papers, LDS Church Archives.


3. An excellent study of the outfitting town of Florence, Nebraska, in 1861 is Hartley, “Great Florence Fitout.”


5. Joseph W. Young was well aware of the needs of the down-and-back wagon trains, as he had captured the first experimental down-and-back train in 1860 and had also been captain of an 1861 train. Hartley, “Great Florence Fitout,” 345, 349.

6. For an understanding of some of the effects of the Civil War on Mormon emigration, see Fred E. Woods, “East to West through North and South: Mormon Immigration during the Civil War,” in this issue, 6–29.


9. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, March 8, 1864, holograph, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.


11. Jacob Dawson plotted the town in 1856 and named it after his home in Wyoming, Pennsylvania. The town can be reached via Highway 75 south from Omaha or north from Nebraska City. It is 17 miles south of where Highway 34 turns east to
Plattsmouth, 3.6 miles south of where Highway 34 turns west to Union, and 1.5 miles south of the Otoe-Cass County line. “Marker Identifies Point of Departure,” 12. Additional detail on Wyoming, Nebraska, is provided in Stanley B. Kimball, *Historic Sites and Markers along the Mormon and Other Great Western Trails* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

12. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, March 24, 1864, holograph, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.


17. Joseph A. Young, “Journal of a Mission,” 18–21; Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, March 20, 1864, holograph, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives. Hartley, “Great Florence Fitout,” 342, notes that wagons ordered from Schuttler in 1861 cost only $65.00 compared with the $150.00 per wagon price in 1864, indicating considerable inflation due to the war.

18. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, March 20, 1864.

19. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, May 27, 1864, holograph, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.

20. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, April 24, 1864, holograph, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.


22. Brigham Young to Joseph W. Young, May 10, 1864, typescript, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives; Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, April 24, 1864.

23. Brigham Young to Joseph W. Young, May 10, 1864, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives; Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, May 27, 1864.

24. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, April 8, April 24, and May 12, 1864, holograph, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.


26. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, April 8, April 24, May 12, May 24, and May 27, 1864, holograph, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.

27. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, May 17, May 24, May 27, June 12, June 15, July 17, July 22, and July 25, 1864, holograph, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.

28. Joseph W. Young to Peter Schuttler, typescript, July 5, 1864, in information compiled by Andrew Jenson concerning Wyoming, Nebraska, 16, LDS Church Archives.

29. Church Teams Accounts, LDS Church Archives.

30. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, May 12, May 24, May 27, and June 15, 1864; Joseph W. Young to Joseph A. Young, typescript, July 4, 1864, in Jenson, information concerning Wyoming, Nebraska, 15; also in Andrew Jenson, “Latter-day Saints Emigration from Wyoming, Nebraska—1864–1866,” *Nebraska History Magazine* 17, no. 2 (1936): 113–27.

31. Brigham Young to Joseph W. Young, May 10, 1864; Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, May 27, 1864.


34. Journal History, March 6, 1864, Hunter to Snow, February 15, 1864.

36. *Church Emigration Book, 1862–1881*, Library Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Library); William Hyde, Journal, holograph, microfilm, 186, LDS Church Archives; Ballard, Journal; Orley Dewight Bliss, Journal, xerox of holograph, LDS Church Archives; telegram to Nebraska City, Brigham Young to Joseph W. Young, May 10, 1864, typescript, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.


40. *Millennial Star* 26 (1864): 298, 364, and 394; *Church Emigration Book*.

41. The Mormon emigration started using the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad from Chicago to Quincy in 1859 once the construction of the connecting Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad to St. Joseph on the Missouri River was completed. See Stanley B. Kimball, "Sail and Rail Pioneers before 1869,” *BYU Studies* 35, no. 2 (1995): 6–42, for more detail on midwestern railroads used during the Mormon emigration.


We heard of whole towns being ransacked, and the people were robbed of all the money they possessed, as well as of other valuable articles—of bridges being burned, also stores, railway depots and other buildings being totally destroyed, at almost every place we stopped. The country is fast going down to ruin—trade is dull and everything is dear. The inhabitants seem all of them to be anxious about their safety. Neglect is apparent in every place. The Prophet’s words are indeed fulfilling, for desolation at the rate they are going on is inevitable.

Richard S. Brownlee, *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy: Guerrilla Warfare in the West, 1861–1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), discusses the occupation of Missouri by the Union and the guerrilla warfare waged by the Confederacy between 1861 and 1865.

44. “Emigration and the Temple,” *Millennial Star* 26 (1864): 601; Brigham Young to Joseph W. Young, June 9, 1864, typescript, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives. Some discussions of the down-and-back years such as Hulmston, “Mormon Immigration in the 1860s,” 32–48, speculate that the Black Hawk War was the reason for not sending Church trains in 1865. As can be seen here, the decision was made prior to the start of the Black Hawk War.


46. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, June 12, 1864.

47. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, June 12, 1864.
Joseph W. Young and the Mormon Emigration of 1864

48. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, June 15, 1864; information compiled by Andrew Jenson concerning Wyoming, Nebraska, 14.

49. Joseph W. Young to Joseph A. Young, June 16, 1864, in information compiled by Andrew Jenson concerning Wyoming, Nebraska, 11; Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, June 21, 1864, holograph, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives; Church Teams Accounts, LDS Church Archives.

50. Several brief telegrams between Brigham Young and Joseph W. Young, June and July 1864, typescript, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.

51. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, June 21, 1864.

52. Instructions issued by Joseph W. Young, typescript, in information compiled by Andrew Jenson concerning Wyoming, Nebraska, 12–13.

53. Church Emigration Book.


55. Joseph W. Young to Joseph A. Young, typescript, July 4, 1864, in information compiled by Andrew Jenson concerning Wyoming, Nebraska, 15.

56. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, July 6 and July 17, 1864, holograph, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives; Ballard, Journal, 53; Church Emigration Book.

57. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, July 6 and July 17, 1864.

58. Joseph W. Young to Brigham Young, July 22 and 25, 1864.

59. Entry under August 2, 1864, in information compiled by Andrew Jenson concerning Wyoming, Nebraska, 24.

60. Church Emigration Book; Hyde, Journal, 186.

61. “Correspondence,” Millennial Star 26 (1864): 621. On August 7, 1864, the Indians made extensive attacks “upon stage coaches, emigrant trains, freight wagon trains, stations, and ranches” ranging from Julesburg in the west to the Little Blue River in the east. The Indians killed over fifty individuals during these raids, essentially shutting down the trail to Denver. The history of these raids is detailed in Leroy W. Hagerty, “Indian Raids along the Platte and Little Blue Rivers, 1864–1865,” Nebraska History 28, nos. 3 and 4 (1947): 176–86.

62. Church Emigration Book.

63. Church Emigration Book.