

CHAPTER 1

WEST BY

HANDCART





HE SETTLEMENT OF THE FRONTIERS OF THE AMERICAN WEST IS A GRIPPING HISTORY OF HOPE AND HARDSHIP. EXPLORERS, TRAPPERS, MINERS, GUNSLINGERS, AND FINALLY SETTLERS BY THE THOUSANDS CROSSED THE GREAT PLAINS AND THE ROCKIES TO REALIZE THEIR DREAMS. THEY CAME ON HORSEBACK AND WAGON; YET MANY OF THEM WALKED THOSE THOUSANDS OF MILES. AMONG THEM, IN LARGE NUMBERS, WERE THE MORMONS.

The roots of this religion reached down through New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. Time and again early believers, most of them New Englanders and Canadians, had faced starts and stops as the restored Church of Jesus Christ took hold. Their beliefs were radical for the time. They believed their young prophet Joseph Smith had spoken face-to-face

Listen to the call of the Good Shepherd.



EMIGRANT VISION BY MARCUS ALAN VINCENT

Emigrants embarked nearly empty-handed, but with hearts full of hope for a brighter future. In Iowa they left behind most of their precious possessions and steeled themselves for the march ahead. Little did they know the tragedies beyond their vision. Samuel Openshaw reported in late September, "For several days we have crossed through a great many creeks and forks of the Platte which gave us plenty of opportunities to wash our feet." Soon his tone changed. "The cold is increasing upon us," he wrote as they passed Chimney Rock. And then, "We are now seeing the storms increasing upon us in the midst of an inclement and howling desert far away from any human succor."^d



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with God; that their newly translated scripture, the Book of Mormon, provided further witness of Jesus Christ and an account of His ministry in the Americas; that the priesthood of God had been restored to the earth; and that revelation, as in times of old, was again pouring down from the heavens. They believed in the practice of “gathering” to worship the Lord their God.

In 1844, mobs killed the Prophet Joseph hoping that the religion would collapse without him. Not so. Brigham Young, a seasoned Church leader, stepped forward to lead what he considered the work of the kingdom of God on earth. Joseph Smith had prophesied two years before his death, July 2, 1842, that the Saints would be driven to the Rocky Mountains and become a mighty people.³ In 1847, President Young led nearly a whole city of Saints—some 10,000—from the Mississippi River to the desert wasteland of the Utah Territory. It was a dramatic march unparalleled in the settlement of the West. These Saints—by covenant and commitment—were seeking a land where they could be alone, where fellow converts could gather, and where they could prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

By 1856, about 25,000 faithful had crossed the plains and put down roots in a string of settlements. “Listen to the call of the Good Shepherd,” President Young stated in the *Millennial Star* as he counseled the Saints abroad to gather—speedily—to the new Zion.⁴ At the time, there were twice as many members of the LDS Church in England as there were in the Salt Lake Valley.

In 1855, Mormon leaders introduced a new method of emigration to reduce the costs of bringing scores of converts to the valleys of the Great Salt Lake. Instead of sponsoring ox-drawn wagon trains, the Church called for the people to pull handcarts across the plains. “We cannot afford to purchase wagons and teams as in times past,” Brigham Young wrote to Church officials in England. The choice was to pursue the new course or suspend emigration. “Make handcarts and let the [emigrants] foot it,” President Young stated. “They can come just as quick, if not quicker, and much cheaper.” He expected that they could make 15 miles a day, at first. “After they get accustomed to it,” he said, they would travel quickly, making 20, 25, and even 30 miles a day with ease. He expected they could reach the Valley in 70 days.⁵

BRIGHAM YOUNG



c. 1847

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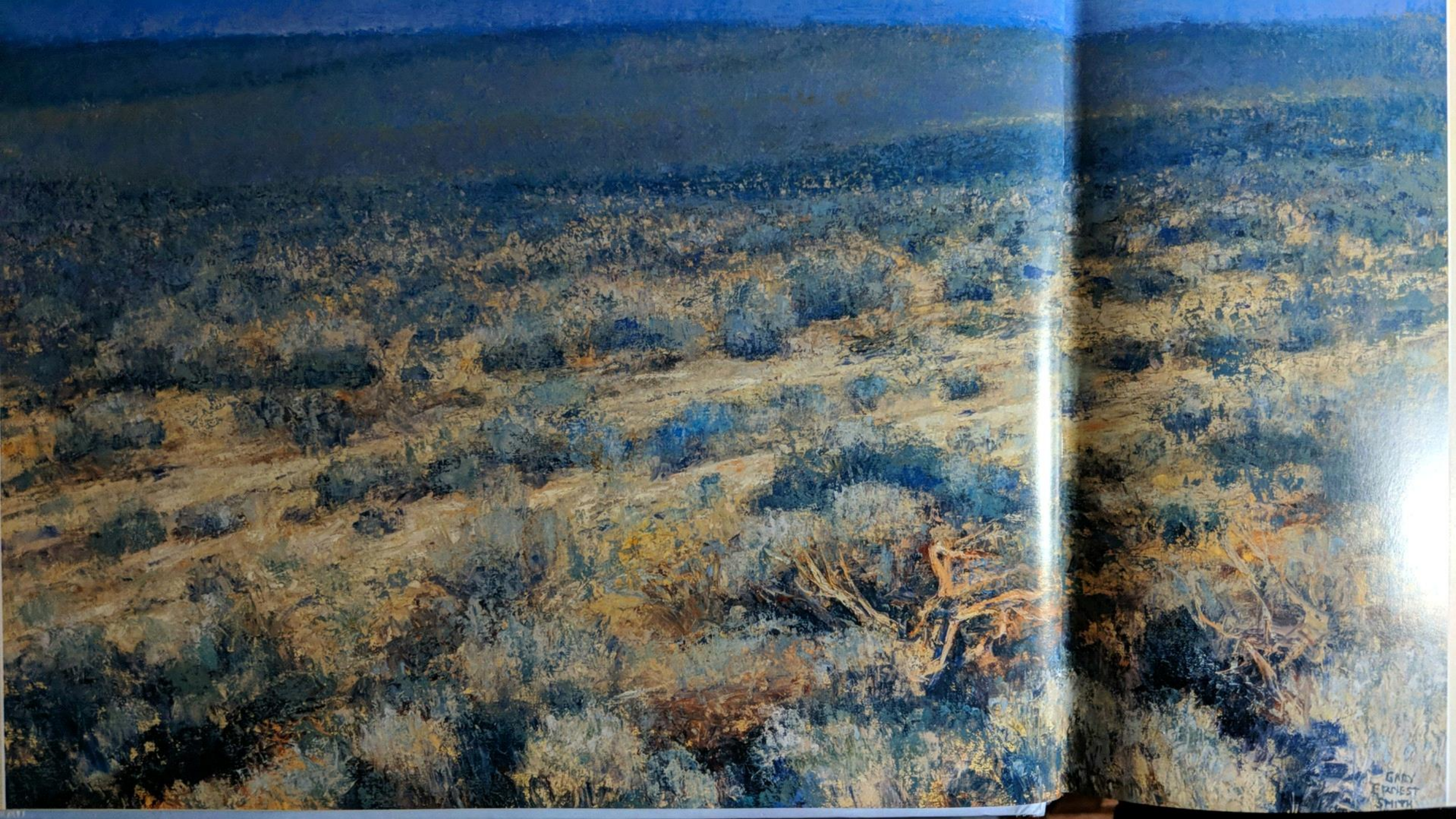




THE HANDCART COMPANY
BY MINERVA K. TEICHERT (*Above*)

HANDCART PIONEERS
BY MINERVA K. TEICHERT

(*Right*) Wyoming artist Minerva Teichert (1889–1976) depicted how the trail landscape initially fascinated the handcart emigrants. Samuel Openshaw wrote in early August: “We started about seven o’clock this morning and traveled through a beautiful country where we could stand and gaze upon the prairies as far as the eye could carry, even until the prairies themselves seemed to meet the sky on all sides, without being able to see a house. Thought how many thousands of people are there in England who have scarce room to breathe and not enough to eat.”^e



The entire plan was based on a trek across the plains during the summer months, with very limited clothing, bedding, and provisions—a requirement for fast movement. Church leaders had warned of the cool weather of late summer. In 1848 an epistle from Church headquarters had called for those on the trail “to furnish themselves with woolen for winter, instead of summer clothing . . . as they will be exposed to many chilling blasts before they pass the mountain heights.”⁶

The Perpetual Emigrating Fund, an organized, cooperative endeavor, initially created with contributions from the Salt Lake Valley Saints, had financed the ongoing exodus of poor members. In the three years from 1852 to 1855, more than 4,000 eager converts had drawn upon the fund. Once in the Valley, they would work to repay their passage, and the money would be deposited back into the fund to bring others. In its forty years of operation, the fund was almost always in debt—the constant subject of appeals for additional cash to finance those coming to Zion.

There were some in England who had the means to pay for their journey and for the journey of others. The few who were wealthy—like Thomas Tennant, who himself later traveled in the Hodgett Wagon Company—became benefactors of the handcart movement.

Converts in England and across the sea in Denmark and Sweden embraced the new opportunity to leave for “the land of God’s appointing—the home of the Saints.”⁷ European mission president



SOUTH PASS BY GARY E. SMITH

The handcart emigrants would follow the pioneer trail up the Elkhorn, the Platte, and the Sweetwater over South Pass, and on to the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Church leaders warned the emigrants to start early enough to take advantage of the summer season in the high plateaus and mountains of Wyoming and Utah.*

THOMAS TENNANT

Well-to-do land owner Thomas Tennant, Esquire, sold his Midlands estate for 27,000 pounds, millions by today's measure, to bolster the empty coffers of the emigrating fund. He, age forty-six, his wife Jane, age twenty-six, and their one-year-old son Thomas made the journey in the Hodgett Wagon Train. His caravan included four wagons and a carriage.

He was one of those whom Elder Daniel Spencer described as starting "with plenty of means to come through." Tennant "divided [his] means to help those that had none and [had] enrolled themselves as pullers of carts."

When President Heber C. Kimball, counselor to Brigham Young, praised the rescuers in an address on November 2 in the Tabernacle, his words were a fitting tribute to those who, like Thomas Tennant, had sacrificed to help others reach the valley. Said President Kimball, "Who has greater love than he that lays down his life for his friends?"

Tennant died a month before reaching the Valley.



TENNANT FARM, ENGLAND BY ROBERT L. MARSHALL

Landowner George Tennant sold his estate and contributed the sum for the good of the Saints. Franklin D. Richards, in charge of emigrations west, was anxious for Brigham Young to meet the distinguished British gentleman. It was not to be. Captain George D. Grant reported to President Young in his dispatch from Devil's Gate: "I am sorry to inform you of the death of Brother [Thomas] Tennant, among those who have fallen by the wayside." Tennant was buried in ground far different from that of his native England—first in Wyoming, and later in Utah where his body was moved to finally rest with the Saints.



MY ANCESTORS KISSED

BY BRIAN KERSHISNIK

Converts were anxious to gather to the “land of God’s appointing—the home of the Saints.”^g They would come to Zion “one of a city, two of a family” as the ancient prophet Jeremiah foretold.^h Lucy Ward, who had worked a year in a millinery shop in New York before braving the trail, took with her a green veil. Rescuer James Barnett Cole had a dream he would meet his future wife among the stranded in Wyoming. He would know her, he told a friend when relating his dream, because she would have a green veil tied around a fur cap to keep it from blowing away in the wind. The two were married at Fort Bridger before riding on to Salt Lake.*

and emigration agent for Europe, Elder Franklin D. Richards, had given the people to understand that the purpose of gathering was to work out their salvation.⁸

Many were simply too poor to pay for transportation. Yet they clamored to join their fellow adherents. They were imprisoned by their social origins, lack of education, and the traditions of hierarchy and power in what would become for them "the old country." These new horizons caused a wave of excitement to spread across Denmark, Sweden, England, Ireland, and Scotland. "The fire of emigration blazes," declared missionary W. H. Kimball, "to such an extent that the folks are willing to . . . toddle off with a few things in a pocket handkerchief."⁹ Most had little to sell, but those who did parceled their possessions out to family and friends.

"The gathering poor, if they are faithful, have a right to feel that the favour of God, angels, and holy men is enlisted in their behalf," stated Elder Richards, who also served in the governing council of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹⁰ Some anxious to board the ships had been in the Church nearly twenty years. They had little concept of the rigors of travel before them. But they were full of faith, taking seriously the words of Moses in ancient times: "Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it . . . ; fear not, neither be discouraged" (Deut. 1:21).

The missionaries had preached by many a fireside to potters, shoemakers, clerks, blacksmiths, carpenters, stonecutters, and farmers. Government sanctions in Sweden had forced the Saints to hold their meetings in secret, mostly late at night. Scandinavian emigrants faced a series of journeys. First they would gather from various regions and cross the Baltic Sea to Kiel, Germany, take a train to the Elbe River, then load in ships and cross the treacherous North Sea, arriving at either Grimsby or Hull on the east side of England. A three-hour train ride would leave them at Liverpool where they would join with British emigrants.

British convert John Jaques wrote, "When [the Lord] calls His Saints to do anything, if they will rely upon Him and do the best they can, He will fit the back to the burden and make everything bend to the accomplishments of His purposes."¹¹ He paid a dear price for the journey. His dear little daughter Flora, two years old, died at Green River, November 23. He and his wife Zilpah Loader brought her body to the Valley and buried her in the Salt Lake Cemetery. Their baby son survived the journey.



JOHN D. T. McALLISTER



Missionary John D. T. McAllister serving in Belfast, Ireland, observed, "The members feel alive in Mormonism, and from the oldest to the youngest, all feel Zionward and are at the present time rejoicing in the anticipation of pulling or pushing a handcart to their home in the west."¹²

Elder Richards appreciated the opportunity ahead for the Saints who were trying to emigrate, but were stranded in their poverty. "When ancient Israel fled from bondage," he wrote in the Church-owned newspaper the *Millennial Star*, March 1, 1856, "they had not even the privilege of taking provisions for their journey, but had to trust to the good hand of the Lord for their daily bread. If the Saints in these lands have not seen such times, the future will reveal them." He continued, "Ancient Israel traveled to the promised land on foot, with their wives and little ones. The Lord calls upon modern Israel to do the same." His words were fulfilled out on the plains, though the conditions met by the faithful were not twenty years of wandering but rather starvation, freezing temperatures, and growing despair.

Some of the proselyting missionaries released from their service were assigned to travel with the emigrants. President Richards encouraged them to be ready to lend assistance and encouragement. He also chose two missionaries, James G. Willie and Edward Martin, to direct the Saints as they crossed the Atlantic. They would later be charged with leading the fourth and fifth handcart trains across the heartland of America to their new home.

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HEADING WEST FROM COUNCIL BLUFFS BY DAVID MEIKLE

Early on the trail and even in good weather, progress was slow, carts collapsed, and the emigrants struggled to keep up, their strength and prowess not enough for the long march across the barren Great Plains. Despite their courage, the handcart pioneers appeared small in scale compared to the vastness of the prairie around them.





THE CAPTAINS

"I will not dwell upon the hardships we endured, nor the hunger and cold, but I like to tell of the goodness of God unto us," Betsey Smith wrote in 1919,

looking back at her journey with the Willie Handcart Company when just thirteen years old. "One day especially stands out from among the remainder. The wind blew fresh, as if its breezes came from the sea. It kept blowing harder until it became fierce. Clouds arose; the thunder and lightning were appalling. Even the ox teams ahead refused to face the storm. Our captain, who always rode a mule, dismounted and stepped into the middle of the road,



JAMES G. WILLIE

bared his head to the storm, and every man, as he came up, stood by him with bared head—one hundred carts, their pullers and pushers, looking to their captain for counsel. The captain said, 'Let us pray.' And there was offered such a prayer! He told the Lord our circumstances, he talked to God as one man talks to another, and as if the Lord was very near. I felt that He was; and many others felt the same. Then the storm

parted to the right and to the left! We hurried on to camp, [and had] got our tents pitched and some fires built when the storm burst in all its fury!" ⁱⁱ

The captain Betsey Smith wrote of was James Grey Willie. He was born November 1, 1814 at Murell Green, Hampshire, England. In 1835, at age twenty-one, he came to America, married, and in 1842 joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Ten years later he returned to his homeland to serve a proselyting mission. Many of those he introduced to the gospel joined the handcart companies in 1856 to travel to Zion.

James G. Willie's company left Iowa City on July 15, crossed Iowa to Florence (Omaha), Nebraska, and then, after a week of deliberations over whether they should press on, headed out onto the plains. The rest is tragic history. Insufficient supplies, cold, wind, and snow took their toll.

Despite their losses, the company members were grateful for all that the rescuers did to save them. Captain Willie wrote of coming into the valley months late: "On our arrival there, the bishops of the different wards took every person who was not provided with a home to comfortable quarters. Some had their hands and feet badly frozen; but everything which could be done to alleviate their sufferings was done." ⁱⁱⁱ Physically recovered from the journey, in 1859 Captain Willie moved north to Cache Valley, Utah, where he operated businesses and a farm. He died in 1895.

In August 28, 1852, five short years after entering the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young in a special conference called approximately one hundred men to preach the gospel in South America, England, China, India, Spain, Siam, Prussia, Australia, Hawaii, and the South Pacific. George A. Smith, member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, informed them: "The missions we will call for during this conference, are generally, not to be very long ones; probably from three to seven years will be as long as any man will be absent from his family." ^{iv}

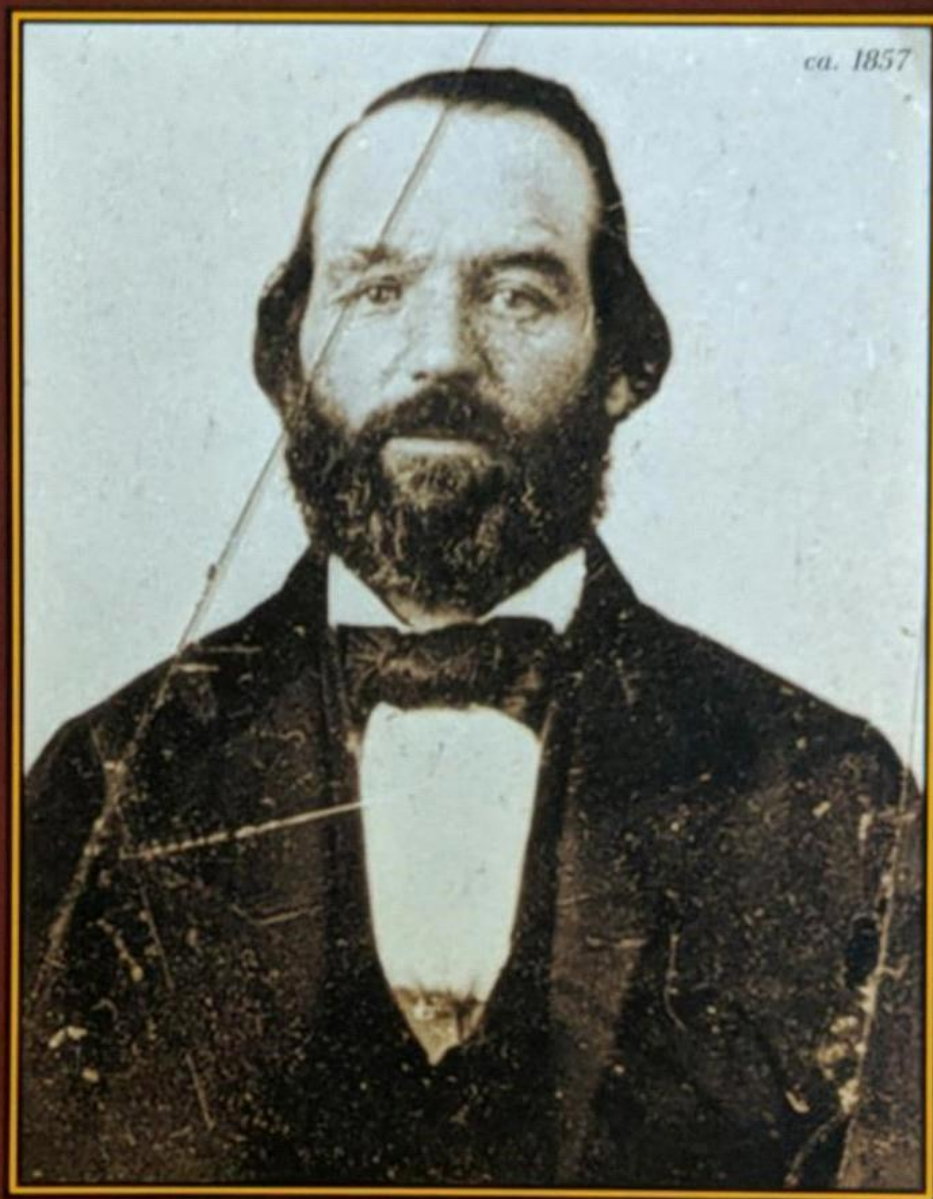
Edward Martin was called to serve, as was James G. Willie. Both would return to their homeland, England, to preach the gospel and then be assigned as captains of the last two handcart companies in 1856.

Martin was born in Preston, Lancashire, England, on November 18, 1818. He immigrated to America with his young wife Alice Clayton, joined the LDS Church, and became a painter on the Nauvoo Temple. He enlisted in the Mormon Battalion as the Saints began the initial trek into the wilds of the West.

Returning from England in 1856, Martin was named captain of the fifth handcart company. At the outset, the Martin Company included 575 individuals, 146 handcarts, 7 wagons, 6 mules and horses and 50 cows and beef cattle. As the journey progressed through biting blizzards, accompanied by below-zero temperatures, the haggard emigrants suffered from starvation, frostbite, exposure, and frozen limbs.

When finally reached by the rescuers, the Martin, Hunt, and Hodgett Companies had taken refuge in a nearby ravine, later fittingly named Martin's Cove. Though sheltered by the northern mountains, Martin's Cove was still a deadly cold refuge. "One night the gusty wind blew over a number of the tents, and it was with

difficulty some of the emigrants could keep from freezing. One afternoon, Captain Martin and two or three other men started to go from the camp to Devil's Gate, but a snowstorm came on and they mistook their bearings and lost their way. After wandering for several hours, they came near perishing. In their exigency they endeavored to make a fire to warm themselves. They gathered some cedar twigs and struck match after match to light them, but in vain. At length, with their last match and [with the] aid of portions of their body linen, they succeeded in starting a fire. This was seen from the handcart camp, from which, after all their anxious and weary wandering, they were only about half a mile distant. Help soon came to the benighted wanderers, and the [valley] 'boys' carried Captain Martin, who was nearly exhausted, back to camp."



EDWARD MARTIN

The Martin Company straggled into Salt Lake on Sunday November 30. After recovering from his journey, Edward Martin spent the next twenty-five years operating a photography business in Salt Lake. He died August 8, 1882.

EMIGRANT VESSEL, BETWEEN DECKS



In the four years from 1856 to 1860, ten companies of about 3,000 men, women, and children jumped at the opportunity to pull handcarts across the plains and mountains. Welsh Saints were among the first to queue up for passage. On February 19, 1856, 130 sailed on the *Caravan* and later traveled to the Utah Territory in the third handcart company, led by Captain Edward Bunker. Other British Saints, some from Denmark and Sweden, followed on the ship *Enoch Train* on March 23, with 534 on board. The *Samuel Curling* departed April 19 with 707 passengers, many of them also Welsh Saints who would eventually make up the bulk of the third handcart company. The last two ships, *Thornton* and *Horizon*, carrying the largest numbers of Saints, were delayed to May 4 and May 25. The *Thornton* carried 764 passengers, mainly English and Scandinavians; the *Horizon* manifested 856 passengers.

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EDWARD BUNKER



James G. Bleak, age twenty-six, kept an almost daily record of the journey after he boarded the *Horizon* with his family. He earlier had noted, “[I] bid farewell to . . . President [Franklin D.] Richards who said, ‘God bless you, Brother Bleak, and give you power, and cause all our efforts to prosper.’” On Sunday, May 25, 1856, Bleak recorded that President Richards came on board and addressed the Saints. “He was accompanied by President Wheelock, Elders Joseph A. Young, William Young, W. C. Dunbar, Carrigan, Turnbull and others.” A few of these missionaries would make up the core of the future rescue effort.

TO ZION—THE *THORNTON*

BY SIMON WINEGAR

The Mormon organization on their chartered ships caught the attention of many. After a visit to one of the ships in the harbor, a select committee of members of the British House of Commons reported, "The Mormon ship is a family under strong and accepted discipline with every provision for comfort, decorum, and internal peace."ⁱ Author Charles Dickens noted, "I went on board their ship to bear testimony against them if they deserved it, as I fully believed they would; to my great astonishment, they did not deserve it. . . . Some remarkable influence had produced a remarkable result which better-known influences have often missed."^j

**ON BOARD AN EMIGRANT SHIP,
BREAKFAST BELL**



John Jaques described the day the *Horizon* set sail: "The brethren and sisters congregated upon the decks, and . . . made the air vocal with their songs of praise and joy to the Lord their God, for the deliverance . . . from Babylon." Fellow Saint Josiah Rogerson, his mother, brothers William, John Edward, and James, and sisters Bridget and Sarah Ann also boarded the ship *Horizon*. His father did not join them on the journey. "Captain Reed sailed out into the river on Sunday morning," he wrote. On Monday the tugboat "hitched to us, leading the ship out to sea. Good-bye to England." Rogerson then wrote a verse:

*Soon out upon the vast expanse
The vessel sped along,
And many took a parting glance,
And sooth'd their hearts with song.*

JOSIAH ROGERSON



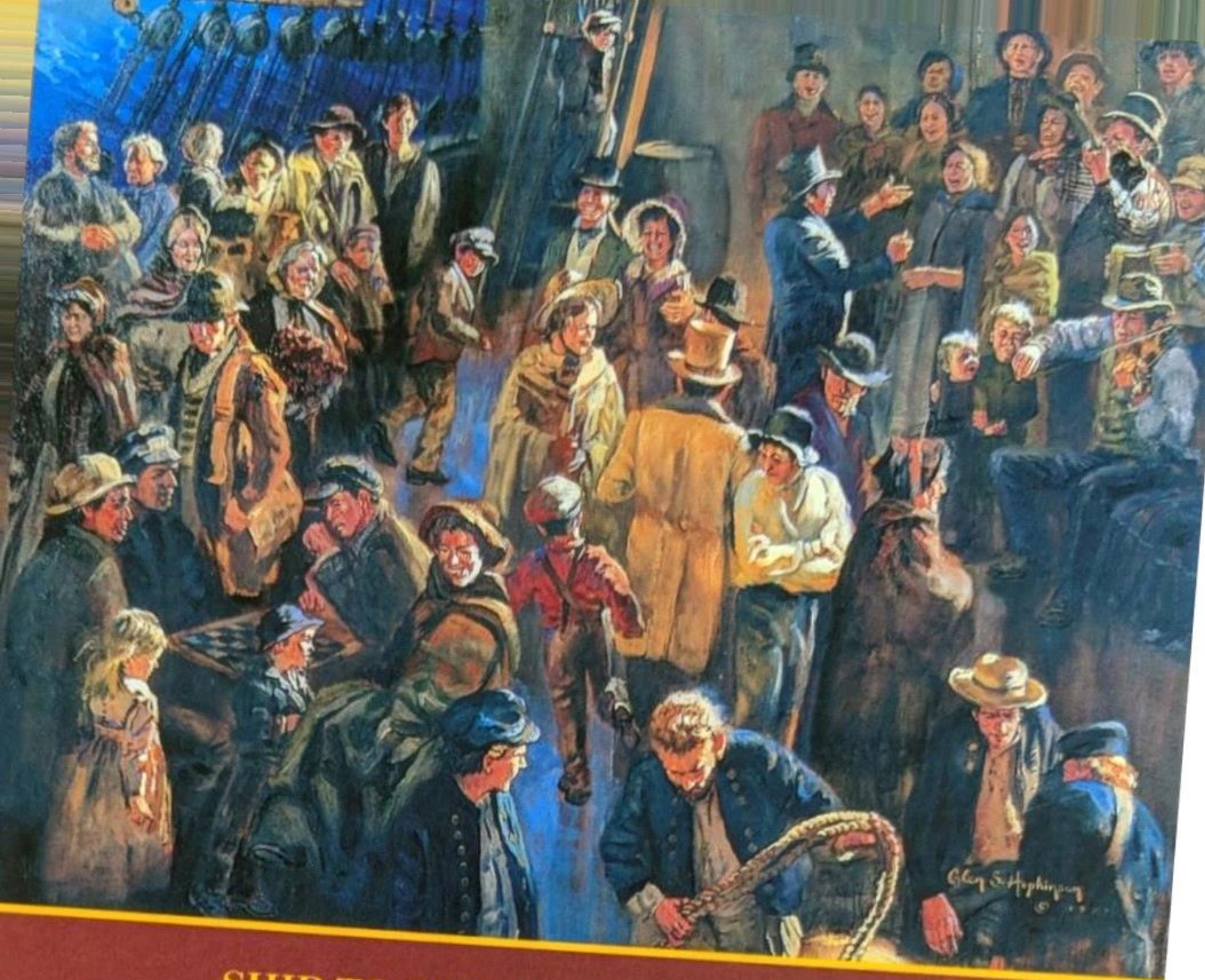
“Cooking for 800 people at one galley is not a trifling affair,” Jaques wrote to Elder Richards, “especially when each family or person has a private pot or dish. Too many pots or dishes at the fire seems as bad as too many irons in it.”

“Let us be an example in cleanliness and order for the English section,” Jacob Ahmanson, Danish convert, who had been named one of the leaders for the journey, counseled the Scandinavian Saints. The mix of different nationalities—Welsh, Irish, Scottish, English, and Scandinavian—spent weeks together at sea developing relationships that would bind them together, which, on the bitter Wyoming* plateaus, helped pull them to Zion.

The voyage across the Atlantic from Liverpool to Philadelphia or New York took from thirty-eight to sixty-five days. Aboard ship, the passengers were



CROSSING THE ATLANTIC

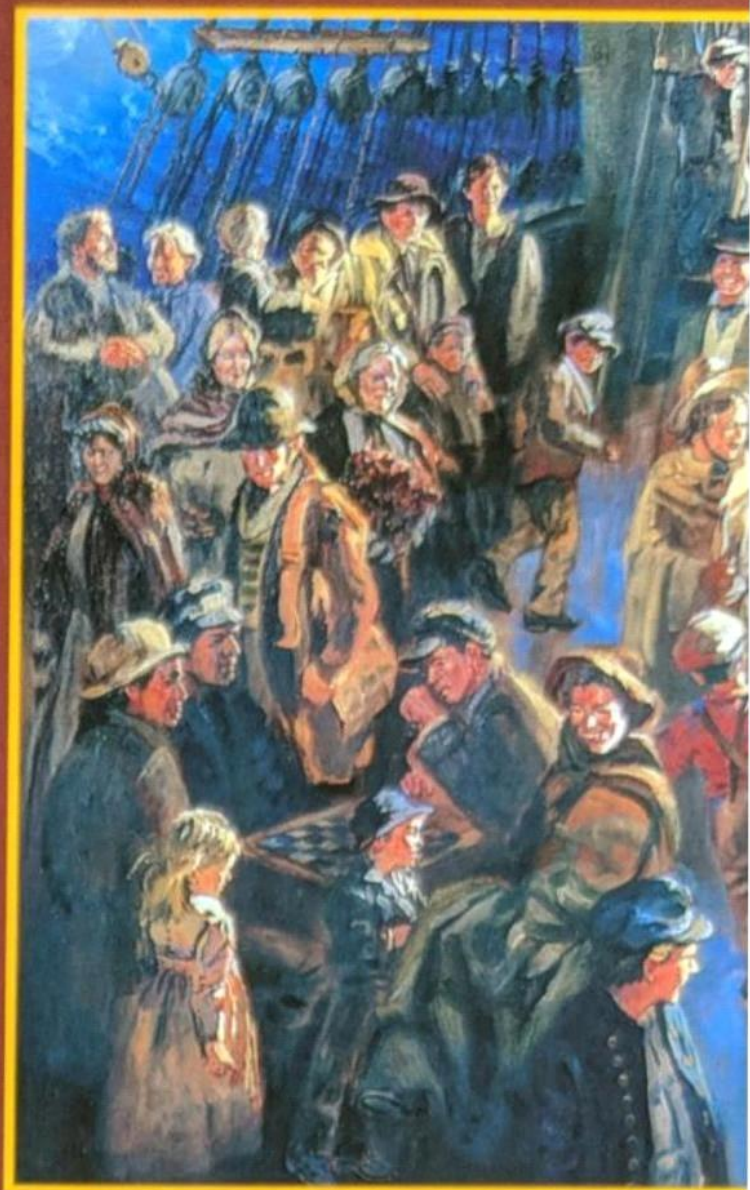


SHIP TO ZION BY GLEN S. HOPKINSON

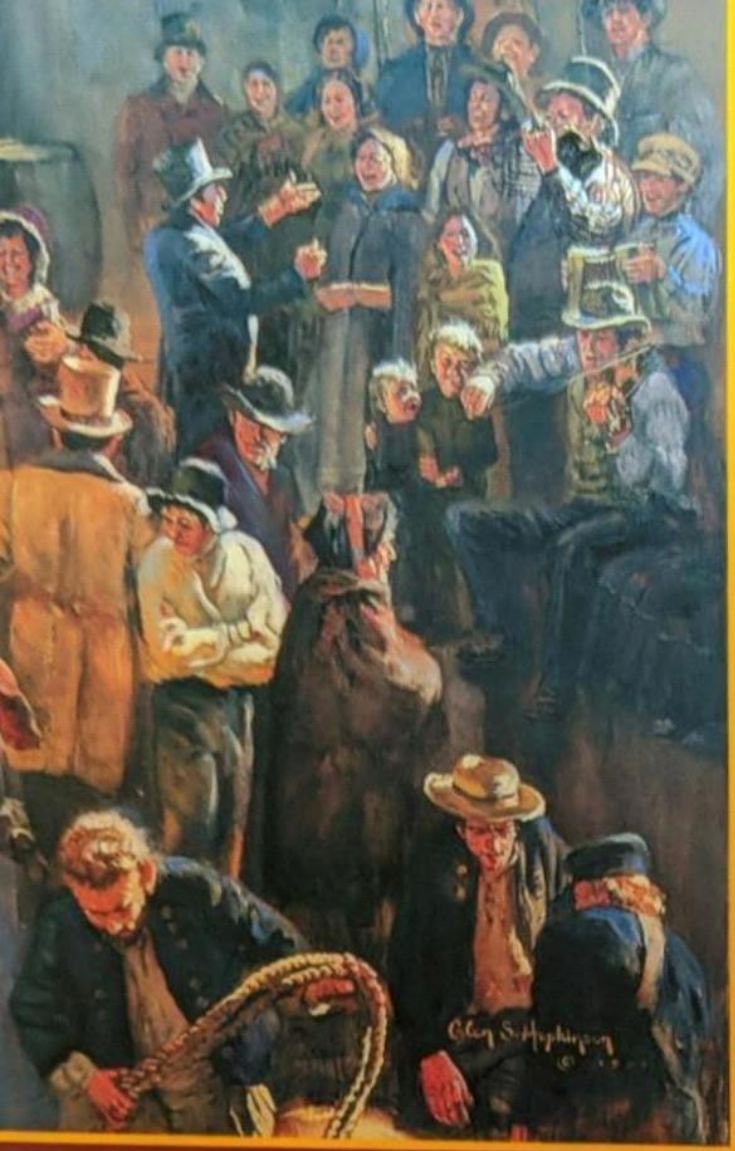
Peter Madsen and 162 Scandinavian Saints departed Copenhagen on April 23; they were bound for Liverpool and then to cross the Atlantic. Madsen, a native of Fredericksborg, Denmark, kept a journal of the voyage:

*“Thursday, May 1, 1856.
Weather: dense air. We joined the company of 608 English brothers and sisters who had gone on board before us.*

*“Saturday, May 3, 1856.
Weather: beautiful. Twelve o’clock, President Richards came on board . . . [and] wished us well and asked the blessings of the Lord. . . . Brother [Jacob] Ahmanson called the Danish division together and informed them that Elder [James G.] Willie had been appointed by Franklin D. Richards as the president for the whole group during the complete trip to the Valley. Elder Ahmanson was chosen as his counselor, and assistant and president of the Scandinavian division of the company.*



SHIP TO ZION BY



GLEN S. HOPKINSON

"Sunday, May 4, 1856. Weather: beautiful. This morning at two o'clock the anchor was hoisted and thereafter the ship was towed out of the river by a steam tug. Ten o'clock, the Scandinavian Saints gathered for worship. Elders Ahmanson, Svensen, and Larson delivered sermons and encouraged us to preserve a good spirit in love and unity. Let us be examples in cleanliness and order for the English Saints. . . . The good weather caused the company to be happy

and they rejoiced in song. Four brethren made music to which there was dancing on the deck.

"Thursday, May 8, 1856. Weather: unstable. An English sister, seventy-five years old, died this morning and was buried on the ocean at twelve o'clock. The body was placed in canvas and decked with the American flag. . . . President Willie gave the funeral sermon, after which Captain Collins read some verses from the Bible. Thereafter the body was deposited in the ocean. At four

o'clock provisions were issued: potatoes, rice, oats, mustard, and vinegar. . . . Rasemine Mortensen, the ten-year-old daughter of Morten Rasmusen [Rasmussen] . . . died of inflammation. She was buried in the same way as the English sister.

"Sunday, May 18, 1856. Weather: unstable, blowing from the west. Twelve o'clock worship. Much was spoken about the importance of caring for one another.



MORTEN R

"Wednesday, May 21, 1856. Ten o'clock, Captain Collins commanded the whole company to go on deck a few hours while the rooms were cleaned and aired. This was a necessity which must take place in order to prevent sickness, such as cholera or other pesky diseases, that could be dangerous to the company.

"Saturday, May 24, 1856. Weather: severe storm. The storm raged all day and night. The waves went over the ship, [and] broke the deck window to pieces, causing water to run down into the rooms.

"Sunday, May 25, 1856. Weather: storm from the north. . . . We held worship at seven o'clock and thanked the Lord that He had preserved us.

"Thursday, May 29, 1856. Weather: beautiful. . . . This afternoon we passed a ship and three icebergs.

"Tuesday, June 3, 1856. Weather: beautiful. . . . Eleven o'clock the Saints were then on deck. They sang and preached about the journey and how it will be when we come to America—which experience will teach us.



RASMUSSEN

"Friday, June 6, 1856. Weather beautiful Eight o'clock prayer gathering where Elder Ahmanson spoke, stating that President Willie had said that he wished the sisters and brothers who had insufficient funds to continue the journey would be taken care of because it would not be good for them to remain behind in the States.

"Sunday, June 8, 1856. Weather: unstable. As a result of the appeal, there are in from Ole Mikelsen 5 dollars, Ane Olsen 1 pound, Lars Madsen 3 pounds, Jens Nielsen 1/2 pound, Paul Jacobsen 1/2 pound, Johanes Svensen 1 dollar; all together 6 dollars and 5 pounds. . . . To date 3 born, 2 marriages, and 6 deaths.

"Wednesday, June 11, 1856. Weather: beautiful. . . . This morning our belongings were put in order and labels were pasted on all trunks and bags with the address: TO IOWA CITY, (AND THE OWNER'S NAME).

"Saturday, June 14, 1856. Weather: unstable. Eight o'clock there came an American steamship (tug) of unique appearance. . . . It took the ship THORNTON in tow. . . . At six o'clock we left the ship THORNTON with a feeling of thanksgiving to the Lord because He had preserved us, transported us over the large body of water, and kept such a blessed, healthy condition among us."

From New York the travelers continued on by train to Iowa City, arriving June 27, 1856.

packed together in narrow bunks. They suffered seasickness when in storms, and boredom when becalmed; they were homesick for their homelands, and anxious to arrive in the promised land. There were a few deaths, births, and even marriages. The captain of the vessel *Thornton* praised the Saints' conduct, saying that no company he had escorted "could compare with them."¹³ From the Atlantic ports they jammed into smoky, overcrowded train cars and watched their new nation roll by on their way to Iowa City. James Bleak noted, "We arrived in Cleveland, Ohio, this morning about five o'clock. It was said we passed [the] Kirtland Temple during the night." The Saints had abandoned the Kirtland Temple nearly twenty years earlier when they were forced to flee Ohio.



PLYMOUTH ENGLAND

The average cost going by sail, rail, and trail in 1856 was about eighty-six dollars. Iowa City, the end of the Rock Island Rail Line, was the beginning of a whole new life. When the first three companies arrived at the staging area, nothing was ready for them. They waited as carts were built, tents constructed, and food supplies assembled. They presented a curious picture. Instead of the hearty adventurers or seasoned settlers accustomed to life on the frontier, they were sallow-skinned, thin, and undernourished—their narrow, thin shoulders and frail limbs reflecting the poverty they'd left behind. They knew nothing of life on the trail—from setting up a tent to cooking over an open fire. At Iowa City, the emigrants camped in tents, bathing in the river and sleeping on the ground. Daily rations included 1 pound wheat flower, 2 1/2 ounces pork, 2 ounces sugar, 2 ounces dried apples, 1/4 ounce coffee, 1/2 ounce tea, soda, and soap. Forty-two-year-old missionary Jessie Haven, who would join the Hunt Wagon Train, recorded: "The weather is hot; the thermometer in the tent stood at 108 degrees between 5 and 6 P.M."

The handcarts looked like those used by street sweepers and porters in big Eastern cities. Ideally the carts were made of well-seasoned hickory, elm, and white oak, with a canvas cover and wooden bed. They measured about the width of a wide track wagon. "The [handcart] was a fragile structure," John Chislett of the Willie Company described, "with nothing to recommend it but lightness."





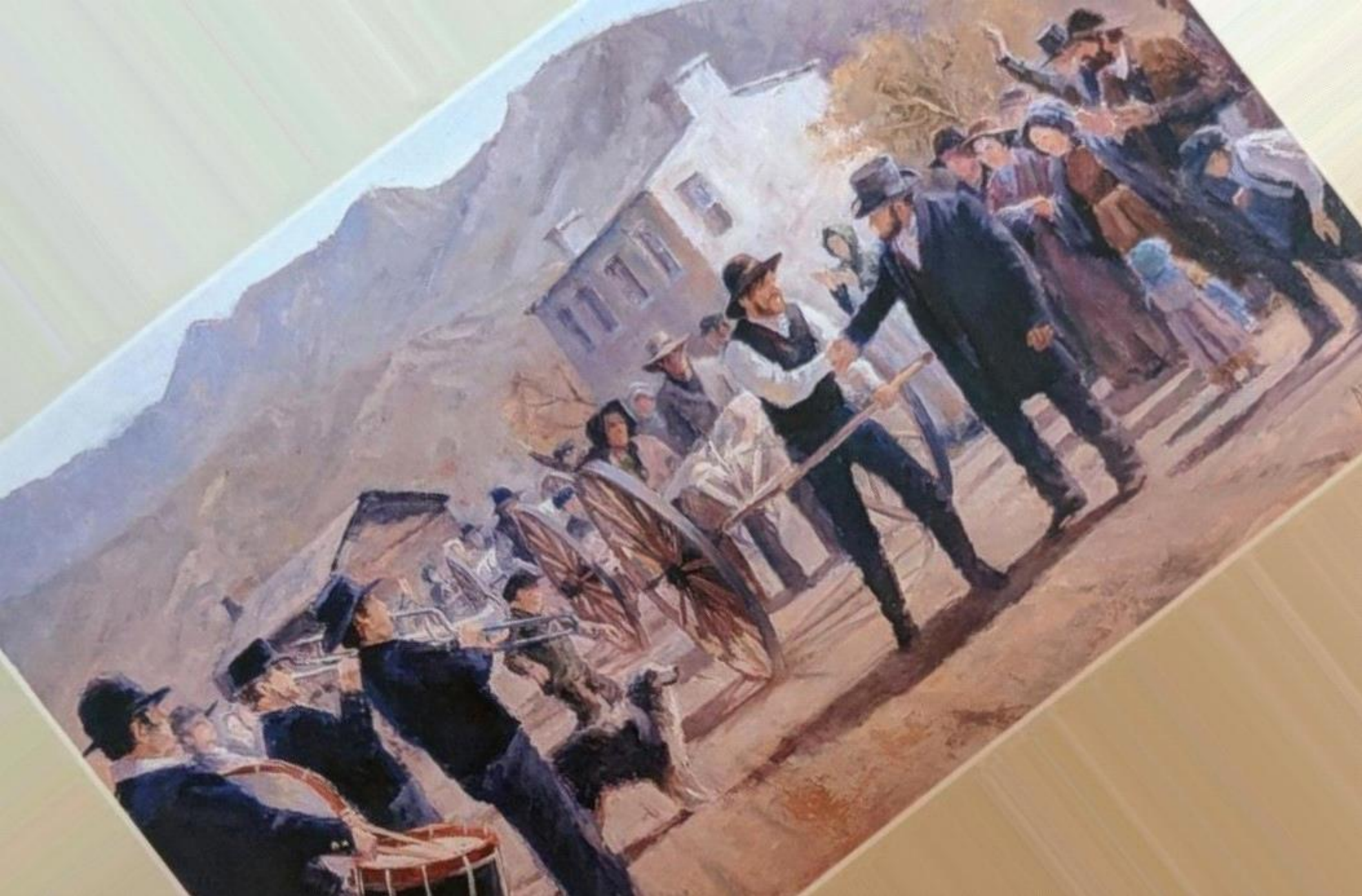
PLYMOUTH ENGLAND DOCK, 1863

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 , 2 ounces sugar, 2 ounces dried
 forty-two-year-old missionary
 rded: "The weather is hot;
 and 6 P.M."
 pers and porters in big
 ned hickory, elm, and
 asured about the width
 icture," John Chislett of
 end it but lightness."

The average cost
 going by sail, rail,
 and trail was
 eighty-six dollars.

JOHN CHISLETT





WELCOME TO THE VALLEY

BY A. D. SHAW

(Below) In 1856, Church officials hailed the arrival of the first three handcart companies, led by Edmund Ellsworth, Daniel D. McArthur, and Edward Bunker, as a successful conclusion to the handcart experiment. Bands played and people lined the streets to greet the successful travelers. The emigrants' scanty trail diet was immediately supplanted with bread, potatoes, melons, and onions. Said Elder Wilford Woodruff, "This sight filled our hearts with joy and thanksgiving to God."^k Amidst the jubilation, little did the Saints realize that two flagging companies would face hardships of greater magnitude.

The first handcart company, under the direction of Edmund Ellsworth, set out from Iowa on June 9; the Daniel D. McArthur Company left two days later. The third, captained by Edward Bunker, left June 28. The emigrants were organized five persons to a handcart and about twenty to a tent. A wagon drawn by three yoke of oxen accompanied the handcart train to haul provisions and tents. At night carts were formed into a circle with the tents pitched in the center and a guard on duty.

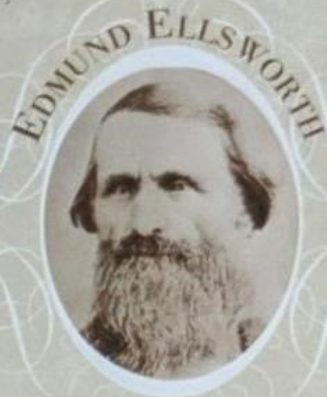
The first two companies to make the trek with handcarts arrived in the Valley together and without serious incident on September 26. Their fellow Saints—all of whom had made the grueling summer trek by wagon train sometime in the previous nine years, welcomed them with great fanfare, parades, and a brass band. Only 27 of the 815 emigrants had died on the trail, about the number expected for general wagon-train travel. The third handcart company arrived on October 2, having exerted the same faith and resilience as those who had arrived just days before.

Captain Edmund Ellsworth announced after his company's arrival, "My heart was in the enterprise, and I showed the Saints that if it was a hard journey they were called upon to pass through, and even should they lay down their bodies in the earth before they arrived in Great Salt

Lake City, it was better to do so, keeping the commandment of God in gathering, than to wear out their bodies in the old countries."¹⁴

Church leader Wilford Woodruff applauded their success. As he gazed upon the scene and looked forward to the future, he commented, "It looked to me like the first hoisting of the floodgates of deliverance to the oppressed millions. We can now say to the poor and honest in heart, come home to Zion, for the way is prepared."¹⁵

But the last two companies—Willie and Martin—were not so fortunate.



AUGUST 1856

**JOURNEY
BY HANDCART**

