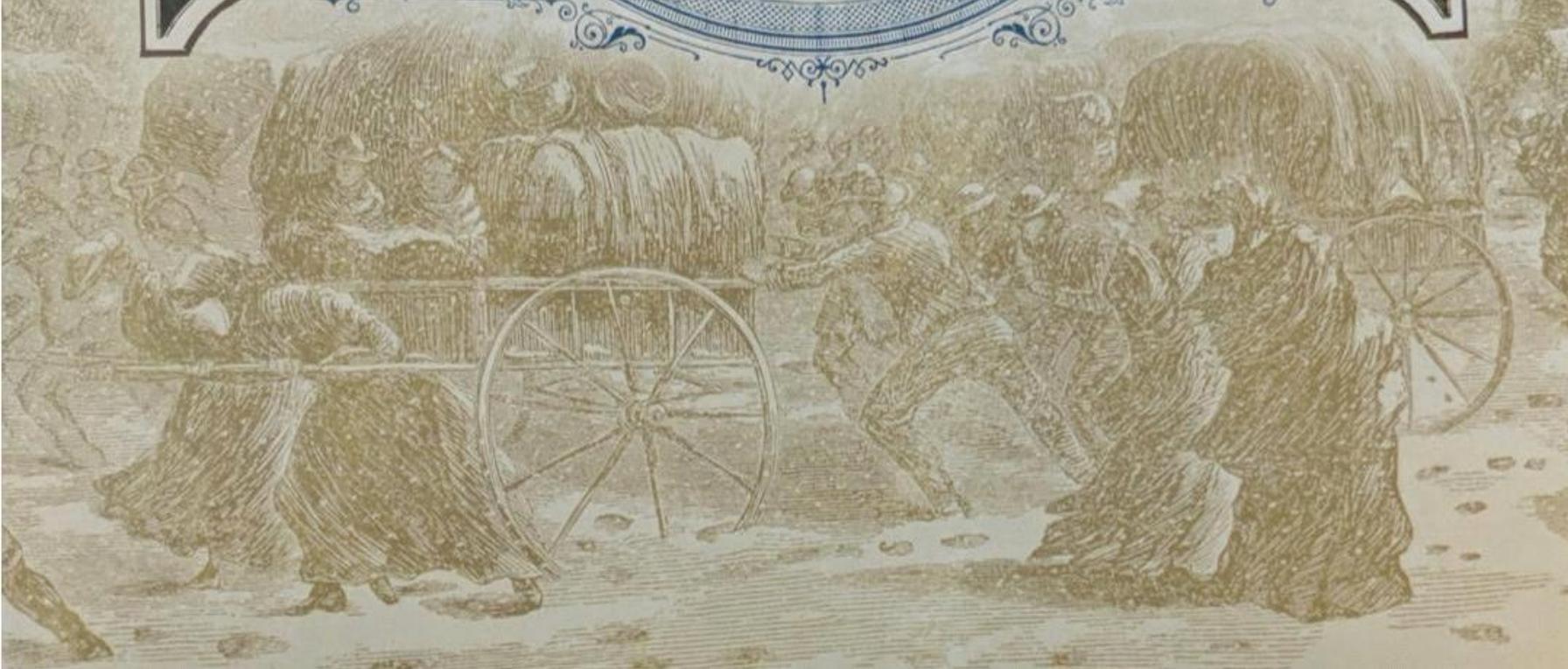


CHAPTER 2

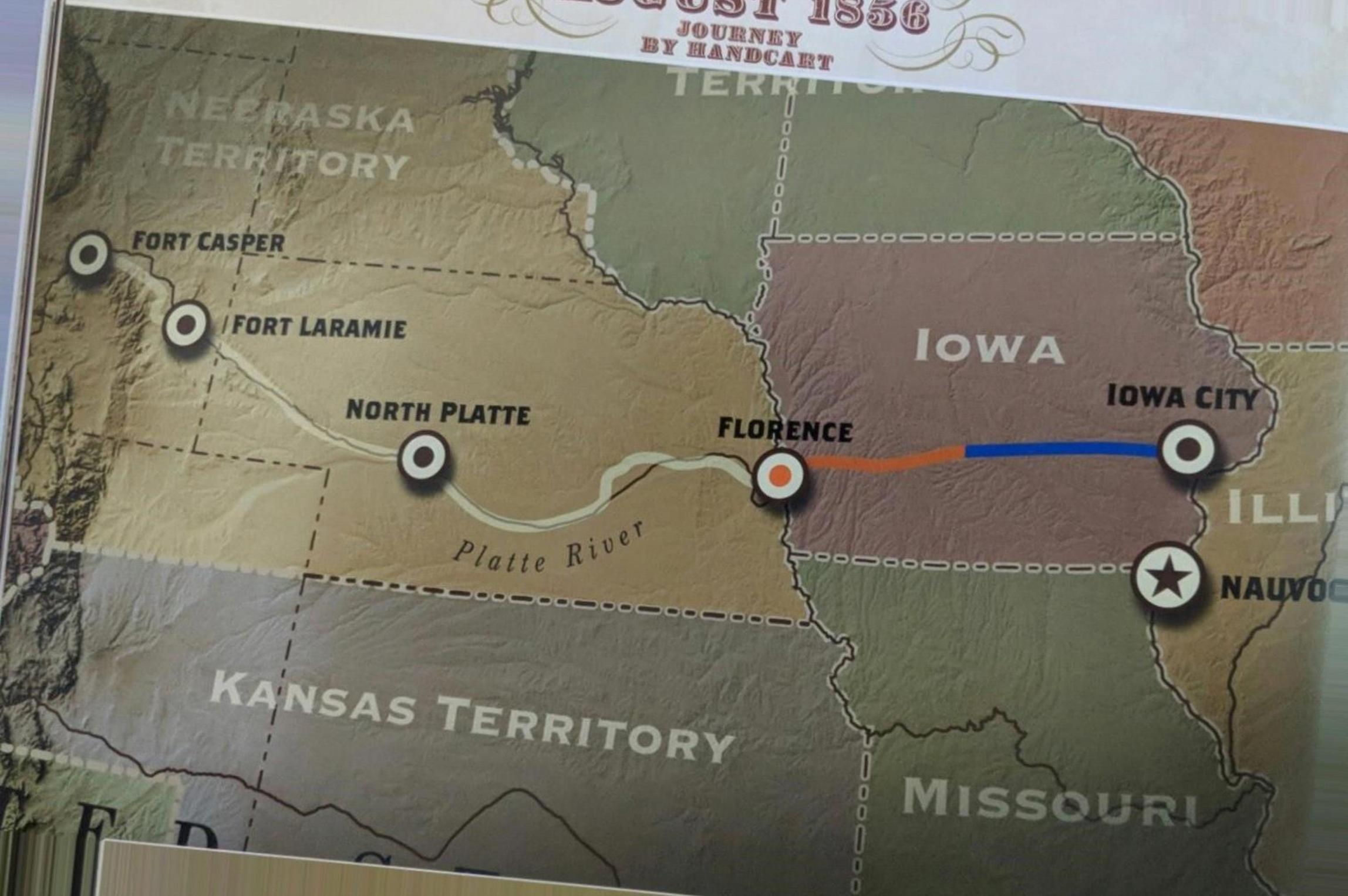
DELAYED AT

IOWA CITY



AUGUST 1856

JOURNEY
BY HANDCART



NEBRASKA
TERRITORY

TERRITORY

FORT CASPER

FORT LARAMIE

NORTH PLATTE

FLORENCE

IOWA

IOWA CITY

Platte River

ILLINOIS

NAUVOO

KANSAS TERRITORY

MISSOURI

F. D.

Our rations

are very short. . .

It is not enough.

T

HOSE WHO WOULD TRAVEL WITH THE WILLIE COMPANY ARRIVED AT IOWA CITY ON JUNE 27; THOSE DESTINED FOR THE MARTIN COMPANY JUST TWELVE DAYS

LATER ON JULY 8. "WE HAVE TRAVELED UPWARDS OF 1,700 MILES BY RAILWAY TO THIS PLACE," JAMES BLEAK, MARTIN COMPANY, WROTE IN HIS JOURNAL. "FOR THE LAST FORTNIGHT, WE HAVE BEEN LIVING IN A TENT IN CAMP."

**Our ratios
are very
It is not**

When they arrived in Iowa City, the Saints, greenhorns to trail life, had a four-mile hike to the campground. "We all started, about 500 of us with our bedding," Elizabeth White, Martin Company, reported. "We had not gone far before it began to thunder and lightning, and the rain poured. The roads became very muddy and slippery. It was late in the evening before we arrived at the camp . . . very wet."

Like those before them, more than 1,000 emigrants had to wait for carts and tents, and they were already dangerously behind schedule. They did not have the time to spare. The three handcart companies ahead of them had depleted the supplies of seasoned lumber in the area, as had a building boom. The men were put to work assembling carts, though most had no skill at carpentry. "We expected to find these vehicles already at hand on our arrival at Iowa City," Elizabeth Jackson, Martin Company, recalled years later. "Thus work consumed between two and three weeks of time, in which we should have been wending our way to Salt Lake City." The men had to build their carts, cobbling together what wood

ELIZABETH WHITE





CARRIED BY THE COVENANT

BY JOSEPH F. BRICKEY

The handcart pioneers had high hopes and dreams for their children. “I have thought often of my mother’s words before we left England,” recalled Mary Goble Pay, a member of the accompanying Hunt Wagon Train. “I want to go to Zion while my children are small, so they can be raised in the Gospel of Christ, for I know this is the true church.”¹

they could find; little well-seasoned hickory, white oak, or elm were available. The women stitched tents and cart covers as the men worked on the carts themselves.

The basic staple for the journey was wheat flour. Supplies planned for one pound of flour per person per day. In addition, meals would include beef from cattle allotted to each company and wild game on the trail. The emigrants would carry the entire supply for the sixty-day journey. Though resupply stations were discussed and even expected by those in Liverpool, Iowa City, and Florence, no arrangements were made—perhaps on the assumption that emigrants would have stayed in the East rather than risk traveling the trail so late in the season. Supply wagons drawn by ox teams were assigned to the companies to carry the many sacks of flour that would have excessively weighed down the carts. The handcart plan called for a pace of 17 miles a day for 60 days, though none of the 10 companies ever matched that rate. The oxen pulling a handful of heavily loaded supply wagons accompanying each handcart company slowed the 1,031 miles to the Valley. With such a difficult journey, when the people needed the energy to face the increasing cold, it wasn't there.

The handcart plan called for a pace of seventeen miles a day for sixty days, though none of the ten companies ever matched that rate.





A concerned Levi Savage, Willie Company, wrote in his journal, “Our rations are very short, 10 ounces flour per one day, 10 ounces pork per 20 days. Short rations of tea, coffee, sugar, rice, and apples. It is not enough.” John Chislett agreed, “Any hearty man could eat his daily allowance for breakfast. In fact, some of our men did this, and then worked all day without dinner, and went to bed supperless or begged food at the farmhouses as we traveled along. I do not know who settled the amount of our rations, but whoever it was, I should [ask] him or them to drag a handcart through the state of Iowa in the month of July on exactly the same amount and quality of fare we had. This would be simple justice.”

THE HOUR IS NOT YET

BY DAVID KOCH

The emigrants' limit of seventeen pounds per person forced many to part with treasures from home.

Everything from feather beds to clothing and dishes were discarded to make room for food supplies. Books and other articles were sold cheaply to local residents or simply left in the sun, rain, and dust, a dead loss to the owners.

Finally, nineteen days after arriving in Iowa City, on July 15 the fourth handcart company set out under the guidance of James G. Willie, age forty-one. The fifth and last handcart company followed two weeks later, leaving July 28, under the direction of Edward Martin, age thirty-seven. “We rolled out and traveled some three and a half, the next day increasing the distance and so on till one day we made twenty-eight miles,” Josiah Rogerson, Martin Company, recorded. “Nothing of any great consequence occurred on this trial trip . . . except that we had some excessive hot weather, [and] very dusty and badly cut-up roads.” The Hodgett Wagon Company departed Iowa City on July 30.

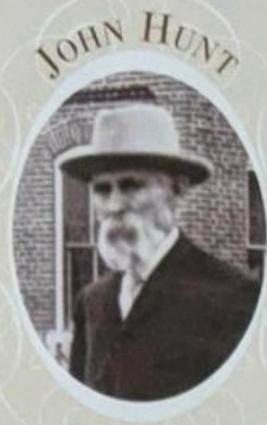
The Hunt Wagon Company followed just two days later. Each handcart company was accompanied by a few wagons hauling the supplies and tents. As a precaution, two wagon companies with 390 emigrants followed behind the handcart trains to provide assistance if there was trouble. John A. Hunt, a twenty-six-year-old missionary returning from England, led fifty wagons; William B. Hodgett, a twenty-four-year-old missionary also returning from England, led the other thirty-three wagons.

Franklin D. Richards reported that the Willie Company consisted of “404 persons, 6 wagons, 87 handcarts, 6 yoke of oxen, 32 cows, and 5 mules”; the Martin Company consisted of “some 576 persons, 146 handcarts, 7 wagons, 6 mules and horses, and 50 cows and beef cattle, also 1 wagon mostly loaded with Church goods”; the Hunt Wagon Company consisted of “240 persons, 50 wagons, 297 oxen and cows, 7 horses and mules, and some 4 Church wagons” and the “majority of this company [had] light loads and good teams, and [were] generally well provisioned”; and the Hodgett Wagon Company consisted of “150 persons, 33 wagons, 84 yoke of oxen, 19 cows, and some 250 head of heifers and other loose cattle.”¹⁶

Both handcart companies had more than their share of infants, widows with large families, the sick and aged, and the poor—the latter being more accustomed to urban ghettos and factory life than walking fifteen miles a day in the sun, rain, and snow. Wagon companies were made up of

THE DAY'S PREPARATION BY JOSEPH F. BRICKEY

(Far Right) The companies were divided into hundreds and tens with their respective captains. Five tents were assigned to each one hundred emigrants, and twenty handcarts assigned to one in every five persons. The more able-bodied young men were distributed among the groups.





INHERITANCE

BY REBECCA WETZEL WAGSTAFF

(Above) The artist explains, "INHERITANCE is a symbolic painting of my daughter, a descendant of pioneers. She is holding a U.S. coin dated 1856, and resting her other hand on an original copy of the Book of Mormon. The shawl is typical of those worn by women converts crossing the plains. This painting reminds the viewer of the great inheritance Church members have received from these pioneers and their example of powerful faith and sacrifice."



those who could afford to purchase a wagon and oxen. Barnard White, his widowed mother Mary Ann, and his sister Elizabeth, would join the Hunt Wagon Train. Mary Ann and Elizabeth arrived in Boston Harbor on the ship *Horizon*; Barnard had emigrated a year earlier and had been working as a farm laborer. His attire when he met the two at the dock was a far cry from the silk suit and top hat he had worn when he left England. He was dressed in rough clothes—his feet in heavy boots typical of the common laborer. Nonetheless, he would later report being glad for the boots as the journey progressed.

At first the march through the brush and across the dusty plains seemed an adventure. “When we started out on the trail each morning there was always something new to see . . . flowers and pretty rocks to pick,” Maryann James, Willie Company, observed. “This land was so different from the one in England that it kept us interested.”



HODGETT WAGON TRAIN AT
THE LAST CROSSING OF THE
NORTH PLATTE BY A. D. SHAW

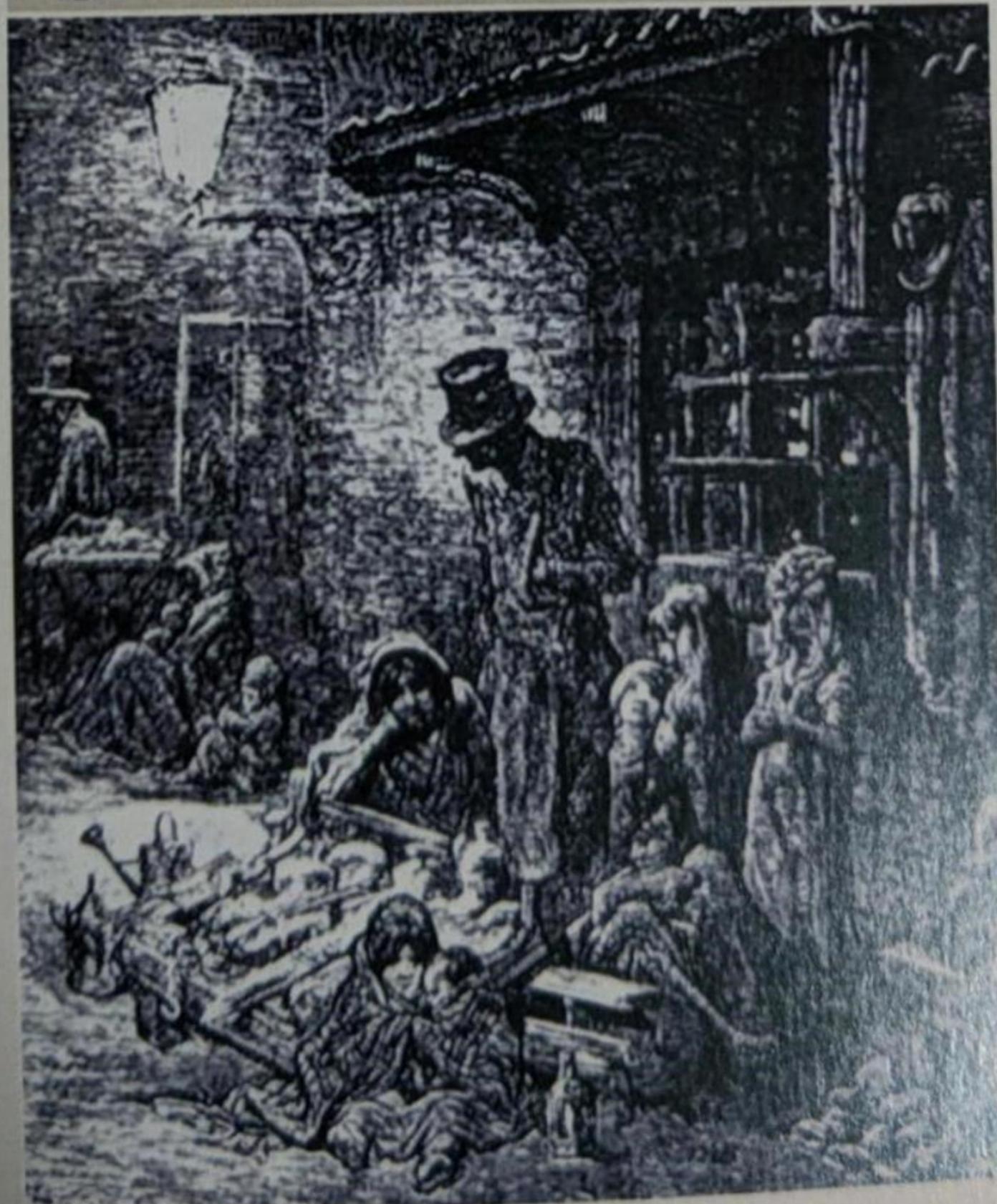
The Hodgett Company, the first of the two wagon trains accompanying the handcart emigrants on the trail, actually leapfrogged all across the Nebraska Territory (modern-day Nebraska and Wyoming) with the Martin Company. Sometimes they were a few miles ahead, sometimes a few miles behind, sometimes they would camp within a mile or two of each other. The Hunt Wagon Company was always behind in case the handcarts needed help—suggesting, perhaps, that in everyone's mind trouble was likely. At the North Platte, with emigrants living on reduced rations and facing blizzard conditions, that trouble had come.

THRILL OF HANDCART TRAVEL

BY LINDA CURLEY CHRISTENSEN

The early weeks on the trail were not as hazardous as those the pioneers of 1847—nearly a decade before—had experienced. The emigrants traveled on what settlers termed “river-to-river roads,” encountering fewer and fewer towns and villages along the way. Children, in particular, found joy in the freedom to run and chase among the grasses. As the season moved from summer to an early winter, many of those on the trail were left in graves in the wilderness.

SLUMS OF ENGLAND





Corley

The threat of Indians was ever
present in the minds of the emigrants.

The Willie Company Journal noted on July 31, 1856: “Crossed on the Flat Boat Bridge and passed about a mile through the town [Fort Des Moines], where we stopped till two o’clock to give the cattle water and grass. We pursued our journey again about four miles, where we encamped for the night. Mr. Charles Good, a respectable gentleman from the city, who seemed very favorable to the gospel, from no impure motive, brought a present of fifteen pairs of children’s boots.”

These pilgrims were a curiosity to many of the settlers and the fledgling villages they passed. Some would venture to the Saints’ evening prayer meetings, but others were less than hospitable to the emigrants. It was their opposing religion that caused the ire. There were threats to rip the tents down in the night; charges from a sheriff that women were being held captive; hints that Indians planned to attack. One California-bound pioneer was quoted as saying, “The poor deluded creatures are Mormons bound for Salt Lake City. . . . Some of them poor, old gray-headed men looked as though they ought to know better.”¹⁷

The threat of Indians was ever present in the minds of the emigrants who had heard accounts of grisly attacks on the plains. “We met several tribes of Indians

[who were] going east to war,” recalled Susanna Stone Lloyd, Willie Company. On August 29 the Willie Party passed the smoldering remains of the Almon Babbit Party who had been attacked by Cheyenne warriors while traveling to the Valley. The Willie Party stopped to cover the dead. Babbit had been a longtime member of the Church since the days in Kirtland. “Colonel Babbit’s teamsters . . . were a day or two ahead of us with a train of goods which was seized by the Indians,” Lloyd recalled. “We traveled on and felt the Lord would protect His Saints.” Nevertheless, the company doubled their guards at night.

“Sunday 31. President Martin said this morning that we were 992 miles from Salt Lake City,” Bleak recorded. “We traveled thirteen miles today.”

The first leg of the journey, 277 miles from Iowa City, Iowa, to Florence, in the Nebraska Territory, took less than four weeks. Willie’s Company arrived August 11. At Florence, given the lateness of the season, the Willie Company leaders faced a decision: Should they continue on or wait the winter in Nebraska. “The emigrants were entirely ignorant of the country and climate—simple, honest, eager to go to Zion at once,” John Chislett noted in his journal.

The threat of Indians present in the minds of

ALMON W. BABBIT



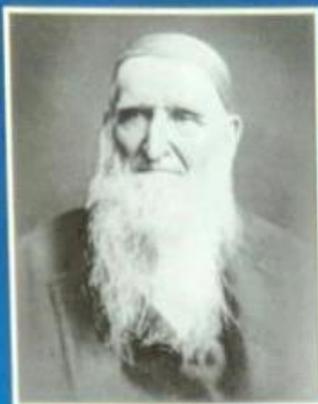
1812-1856



A GIFT OF BOOTS

DOn July 31, Willie Company members started at 6:30 A.M., crossed the river, and moved right through the town of Des Moines, stopping by a stream about one mile beyond the community. Des Moines at the time was newly settled and growing, and had many brick buildings which gave the appearance of a stylish town. Residents totaled about 2,800.

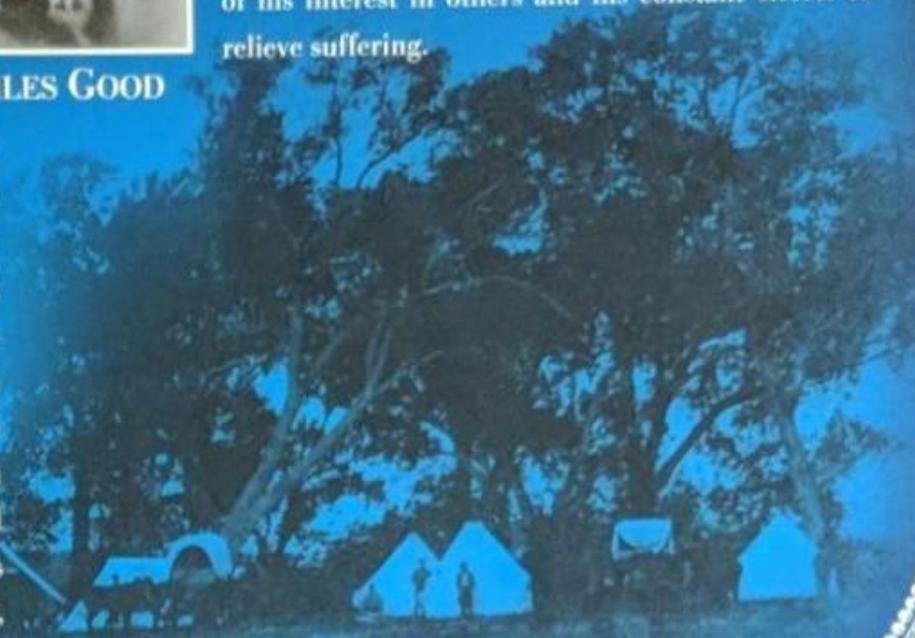
Charles Good was a local druggist and merchant who befriended the Latter-day Saints as they passed through town. The Willie Company included at least eighty-four children ranging in age from three to twelve. Many were barefoot, which was typical for summer weather, but Good recognized these emigrants had a long road ahead of them. "When the Mormons were going through Des Moines, hauling household goods in push-carts, accompanied with their hungry children . . . he gave them shoes and provisions from his store, remembering vividly his boyhood days when he had but a crust for a day, and the sheriff carried away household goods and kitchen utensils his mother so much needed." He was known for his acts of kindness, which earned him the reputation and reference,



CHARLES GOOD

"Good Charles Good." Good was a religious man, and he operated a mission out of an old German Methodist Church in Des Moines.

His obituary stated, "A large portion of his life was given up to religious work."¹⁸ The local history applauded him years later for his kindness, indicative of his interest in others and his constant efforts to relieve suffering.





BEFORE THE SNOW FELL—
CROSSING THE NORTH PLATTE
RIVER BY SIMON WINEGAR

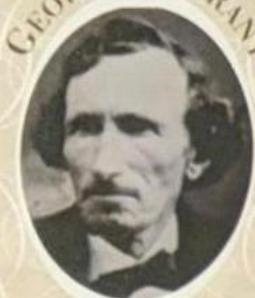
Every individual who traveled the pioneer trail, the young and old, the strong and weak, the simple and educated, faced difficulties and overwhelming trials. Yet their fervent belief carried them when strength failed. Even before the snow fell, the journey had become arduous for many, and the end for some.

CROSSING THE PLATTE (*Below*)



"The elders seemed to be divided in their judgment as to the practicability of our reaching Utah in safety at so late a season of the year," Chislett continued. "The idea was entertained for a day or two of making our winter quarters on the Elkhorn, Wood River, or some eligible location in Nebraska."

GEORGE D. GRANT



Church Emigration agents George D. Grant and William H. Kimball conferred with the Willie Company leaders. Both Grant and Kimball had traveled the trail and knew the hazards of a late start in the season and the rough trek ahead; still they favored pushing on to Zion. Perhaps it was the sheer size of the companies that prompted the fateful decision. If the emigrants stayed, where would they work? For the most part they were city dwellers and factory workers, not farmers. How would they provide shelter and food for themselves through the winter? They had little cash and few belongings for barter. Could they calm the fears of local citizens who were hostile to the Mormons?

PLATTE

Many also believed that a divine hand was sure to temper the weather. However, not all involved in the journey felt going forward was the only option at hand. Levi Savage, a missionary returning to the Valley from India, and a member of the Willie Company, was the sole voice calling for the emigrants in the Willie Company to stay in Nebraska. Having crossed the plains previously with the Mormon Battalion, he stood firm, and in an impassioned appeal stated, "[We are] liable to have to wade in snow up to our knees and shovel at night, lay ourselves in a thin blanket and lie on the frozen ground without a bed." He contended with tears streaming down his cheeks that the company could not cross "the mountains with a mixed company of aged people, women, and little children so late in the season without much suffering, sickness, and death. . . . Wait until spring to make this journey. Some of the strong may get through in case of bad weather, but the bones of the weak and old will strew the way."

(Below)



"I will remember for the rest for my life, and wish we had heeded [what] was said by a Brother Savage," Emma James, Willie Company, would later state. But ignoring his pleas, the emigrants decided to go on trusting the hand of God to temper the elements and shore them up if needed. Only one hundred stayed behind in Nebraska.

Seeing the determination of the majority, Savage then stood before the group, unsettled, certain that disaster awaited them. "Seeing you are to go forward," he said, "I will go with you, will help you all I can, will work with you, will rest with you, will suffer with you, and, if necessary, I will die with you. May God in His mercy bless and preserve us."



LEVI SAVAGE

The image features a decorative title banner for the name "LEVI SAVAGE". The name is written in a bold, serif, all-caps font in a light yellow color, centered within a dark brown rectangular field. This central field is framed by a thin, light yellow border with a fine dotted pattern. On either side of the central field are square decorative panels. Each panel contains a circular motif with a complex, multi-layered geometric pattern in shades of light blue and white. The entire banner is set against a dark, textured background. The ends of the banner are finished with ornate, light yellow scrollwork.

Levi Mathers Savage was familiar with the grueling trek before the handcart company, having marched across the country with the Mormon Battalion in 1847.

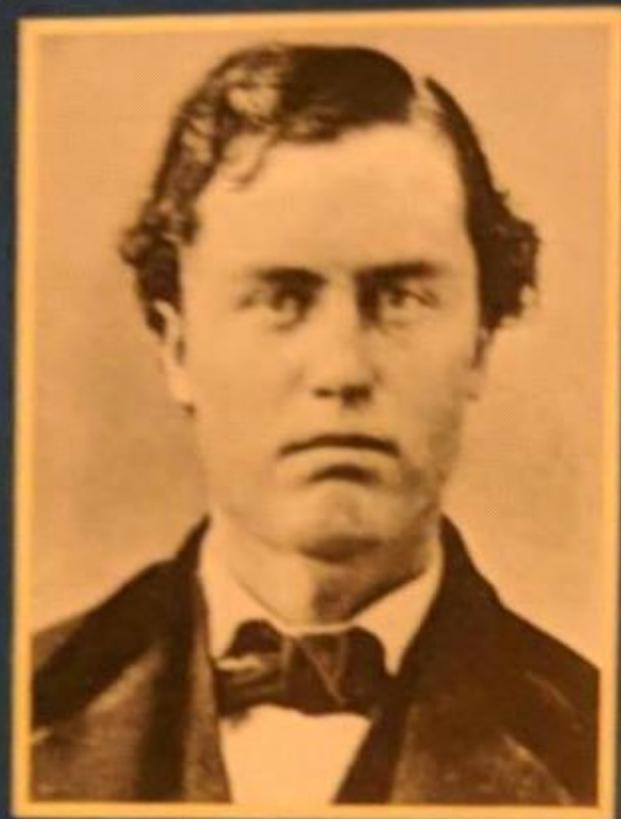
With great sincerity and passion he begged the Saints not to venture out on the trail so late in the season. He recognized that the hodgepodge of inexperienced men, women, and children would flounder under the best of circumstances, not to mention the threat of winter hanging in the air. Yet, when they voted to go forward, he joined them and carried more than his share. He was one of the first in the streams to help others across, and one of the last out of the water at the end of the day.

“No man worked harder than he to alleviate the suffering which he had foreseen,” Chislett wrote in tribute to his fellow traveler.

Savage was born March 23, 1820, in Greenfield, Ohio. His wife died in Salt Lake, leaving him with an infant son. His sister cared for the boy when he was called to serve as a missionary to Siam. Leaving in October 1852, he traveled west on an eighty-six-day voyage from San Francisco. When he met up with the handcart pioneers in 1856, he was returning from his preaching in India and Burma by way of the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa. The civil war in Siam had kept him from preaching in that country. He wrote in his journal June 19, 1856, “I have circled the globe.”

He lived forty-five years in southern Utah's Toquerville, Washington County, where he died December 13, 1910.

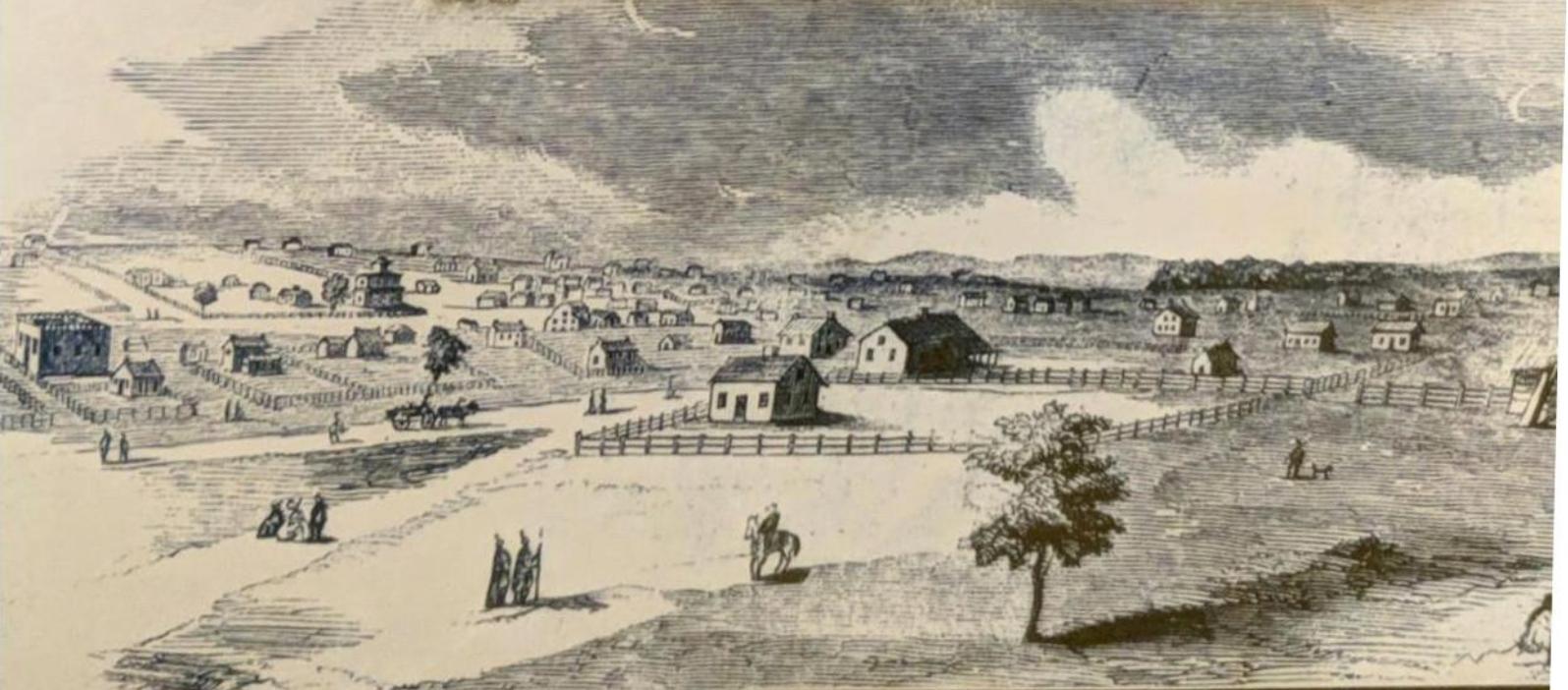
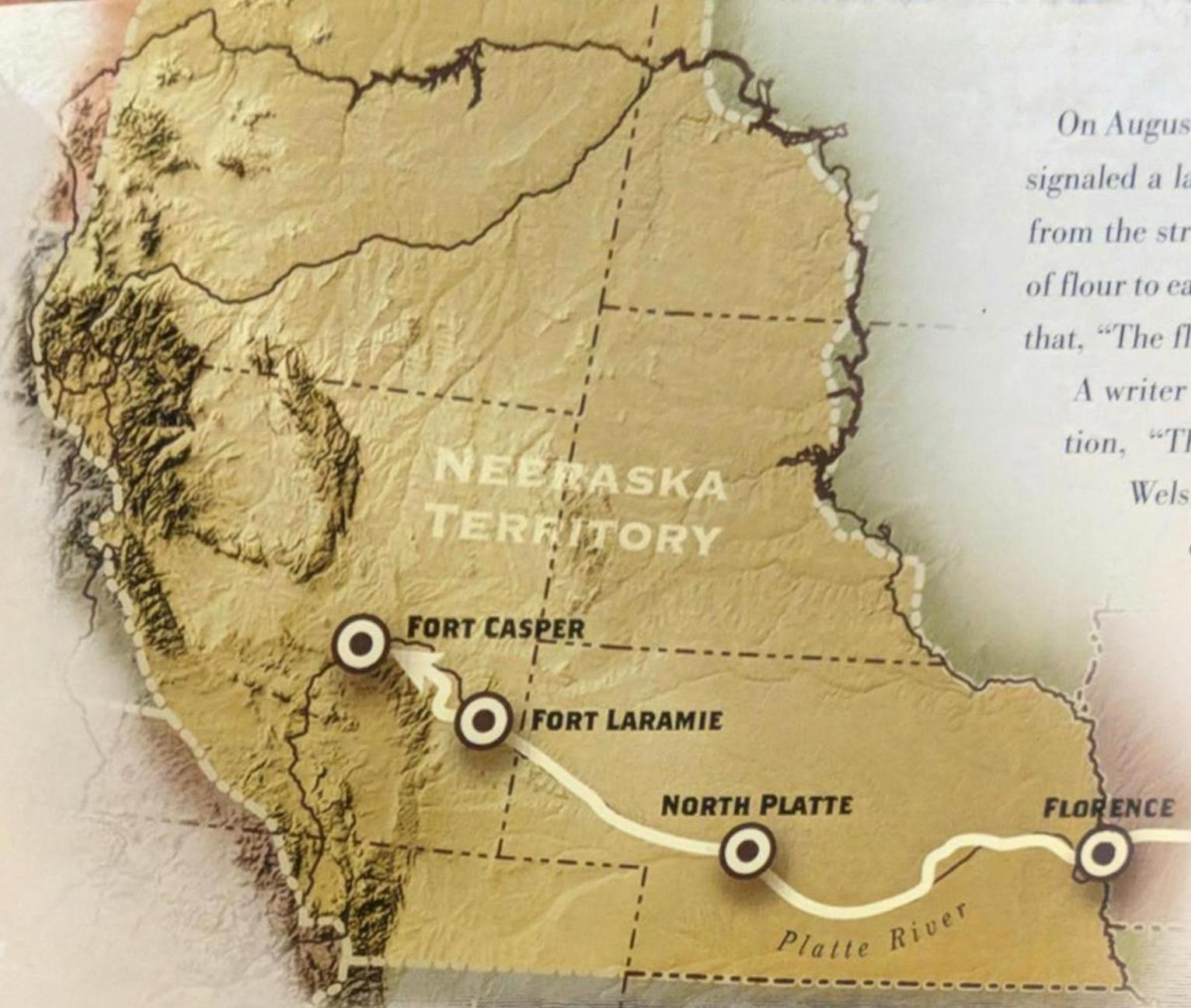
WAIT UNTIL SPRING BY ROBERT T. BARRETT *Levi Savage, responsible for one hundred of the Willie Company, was not in favor of setting out from Florence, Nebraska, so late in the year. He stood before the Saints who*



LEVI SAVAGE

were naïve to the rigors of the trail before them, and pleaded for them to stay back and continue in the spring. He wrote in his journal, "The handcart system I do not condemn; I think it preferable to unbroken oxen and inexperienced teamsters. The lateness of the season was my only objection to leaving . . . for the mountains at this time. I spoke warmly upon the subject, but spoke truth."^m His petition was ignored.

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FLORENCE, NEBRASKA TERRITORY

On August 18, the Willie Company rolled out of Florence. Their departure signaled a late-October arrival in the Valley. They had repaired their carts from the stress of travel, and as a caution added a ninety-eight-pound bag of flour to each one. The weight of the flour soon took its toll. Savage noted that, "The flour on some carts draws very hard."

A writer for the *Council Bluffs Bugle* reported in the August 26 edition, "These trains are composed of Swedes, Danes, Germans, Welsh, Scotch, and English, and the best evidence of their sincerity is in the fact that they are willing to endure the fatigues and privations of a journey so lengthy. . . . This is enthusiasm—this is heroism indeed. Though we cannot coincide with them in their belief, it is impossible to restrain our admiration of their self-sacrificing devotion to the principles of their faith."

The Martin Company arrived in Florence a few days after the Willie Company had departed. They, too, met in council



Warm enthusiasm prevailed over sound judgment.

to determine whether to proceed. Josiah Rogerson recounted, "The vote was called, and with uncovered heads and uplifted hands to heaven and an almost unanimous vote, it was decided to go on." As a fellow member of the Martin Company, John Jaques said of the decision, "Unfortunately, warm enthusiasm prevailed over sound judgment and cool common sense." They left Florence on August 27, nine days behind the Willie Company. The Hunt Wagon Train had left a few days before, and the Hodgett Wagon Company followed September 2. By estimates, arrival in Salt Lake City would be no earlier than November 1.

Franklin Richards and his associates had arrived in Florence by stagecoach a week earlier, August 21, having crossed the Atlantic aboard the steamer *Asia*. They met with members of the Martin Company in Florence between August 22 and 27, and then on horseback and with carriages, headed west in a "swift sure train." They passed the Hunt Company on September 6, the Martin and Hodgett Companies on September 7, and the Willie on September 12.

The Willie Company Journal noted that on September 12 near the North Bluff Fork of the Platte River, "President Franklin D. Richards . . . arrived just before dusk in three carriages and two wagons. . . . He promised . . . that if a Red Sea should interpose, they should by their union of heart and hand, walk through it like Israel of old, dryshod. . . . He promised that though they might have some trials to endure as proof to God, and the brethren, that they had the true 'grit.'" He also promised—if possible—he would leave provisions, bedding, and other supplies at Laramie to help sustain the companies until they reached the Valley.

SOME MUST PUSH AND SOME MUST PULL BY MICHAEL BEDARD

Coupled together with those who could afford transport across the plains were those who could not. "Many of the people that started with plenty of means to come through . . . divided their means to help those that had none, and enrolled themselves as pullers of carts," Elder Daniel Spencer, an emigration agent, noted to a congregation in the Bowery on October 5, 1856. "They devoted all to assist the poor, and they have felt cheerful.""



Each day the trek took the pioneers farther from civilization. "We saw immense herds of buffalo," George Cunningham, Willie Company, noted. "Some places the prairie was black with them." The trail hugged the rivers most of the time, and the landscape grew more arid and the sights for the emigrants more foreign.

No doubt they reflected on how different life was for them than in their homeland. Samuel Openshaw, Martin Company, described the regimen. "It would truly be [an] amusing and interesting scene if the people of the old country could have a bird's eye view of us when in camp; to see everyone busy, some fetching water, others gathering buffalo chips, some cooking and so forth upon these wild prairies where the air is not tainted with the smoke of cities or factories, but is quiet here."

The daily food ration consisted of one pound of wheat flour per person per day, with a supplement of meat provided by beef cattle accompanying each group and whatever the men could shoot in the wild. It was never intended that the flour would hold out to the Valley; resupply along the route was part of the plan.

Soon, carts collapsed. The burden of the extra sacks of flour weighed heavily on the flimsy vehicles. Dust ground into the wood and wore down the axles. Chislett noted, "When a cart collapsed, it was difficult for the owner to see the long line move on without him while he remained behind with a few crude tools, struggling to repair the damage. . . . The fates seemed to be against us."

Peter Madsen, Willie Company, wrote in his journal: "Wednesday, September 3. Four o'clock up, seven o'clock prayer. Eight o'clock departure. We traveled several miles over hill and dale and saw buffalo by the thousands."

As noted, large herds of buffalo filled the prairies, and the companies had never seen such animals. But their enthusiasm for the huge creatures was squelched on September 3 when the Willie Company's livestock was lost in a stampede about 169 miles out of Florence. Emma James described the incident. "One evening, as we prepared to stop for the night, a large herd of buffalo



came thundering toward us. It sounded like thunder at first, then the big black animals came straight for our carts. We were so scared that we were rooted to the ground. One of the captains, seeing what was going on, ran for the carts which were still coming in, jerked some of the carts to make a path for the steady stream of animals, and let them go through. They passed us like a train roaring along." The company's cattle and oxen were caught up in the stampede. The men hunted for their livestock for three days with no success. A horrific rainstorm poured down in torrents at dusk, washing away the footprints; the animals were gone without a trace. "All went to bed wet and cold." The thirty oxen and cattle were lost. The event was an omen of what was ahead.

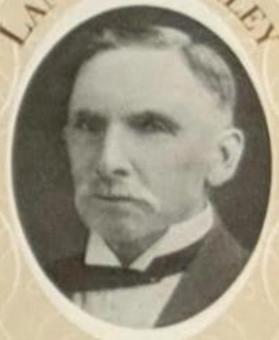
The company had to move on. Peter Madsen recorded, "Sunday, September 7. Weather: beautiful. It was decided that the handcarts should be loaded with sacks of flour and tents from the supply wagons. These, namely five wagons, should then be drawn with twelve oxen and the best cows. This is to be done in order to continue the journey with the strength we have. We can't move too fast, but necessity dictates that we traverse the wild waste, where we are surrounded by wild people and animals, as fast as possible."

"We transferred our provisions from the wagons to the handcarts and hitched the thirty milch cows to the wagons," George Cunningham explained. "We plodded on through the mud with all the courage we could must[er]." Unfamiliar with a harness or a load to pull, the new "teams" wrenched and fought the confinement. The Willie Party lost the supplements to their mostly wheat diet—both meat and milk. The Saints had to add another sack of flour to their loads to lighten the weight of the wagons.

For the Martin Company, the circumstances were similar. Langley Bailey, Martin Company, may have remembered the words of his grandfather when Langley announced he was leaving for America to travel to Zion: "Why go to America where there [are] savage Indians and wild beasts?"

The monotony and rigor of the trail across the 500 miles of Nebraska prairie wore sorely on the emigrants. "We continued our toil day after day, pulling our handcarts with our provisions or rations, our little children, etc., through deep sands, rocky roads, or fording streams. It was a dreary journey," Elizabeth Jackson recalled. "Many miles each day were traveled ere; with tired limbs, we reached camp, cooked supper, ate and retired for the night to rest, to pursue our monotonous course the following day."

LANGLEY BAILEY



Illness slowed the pace
and further weakened those
who were already failing.

Dysentery added to the distress. Illness ravaging the camp slowed the pace and further weakened those who were already failing.

“September 8. We traveled eighteen miles over a very heavy road,” Bleak recorded. “No watering place. . . . Considerable murmuring in camp.”

Campsites needed access to good water, grass for the livestock, firewood, and, if possible, protection from the wind. The Willie Company was camped near the North Bluff Fork of the Platte River on September 12 when Elder Richards and his “swift sure train” overtook the company. With Richards were George D. Grant, William H. Kimball, and Joseph A. Young who had assisted the emigrants at the Iowa staging. Chislett recorded the encouraging words of Richards: “Though it might storm on our right hand and on our left, the Lord would keep open the way before us and we should get to Zion in safety.”

The Willie Company had not traveled far when the nights began getting colder. “The mountains before us,” John Chislett recorded, “as we approached nearer to them, revealed themselves to view mantled nearly to their base in snow, and tokens of a coming storm were discernable in the clouds which each day seemed to lower around us.”

At this point, both companies began to face heavy head winds, and on September 15, frost blanketed the camps. Still the days were warm. Savage described the mounting challenge in his entries during September:

September 15: “We commenced to ascend the bluff. The ascent was sand; it caused hard pulling.”

September 17: “Just before the camp got underway, a cold and strong wind arose from the NW. This,





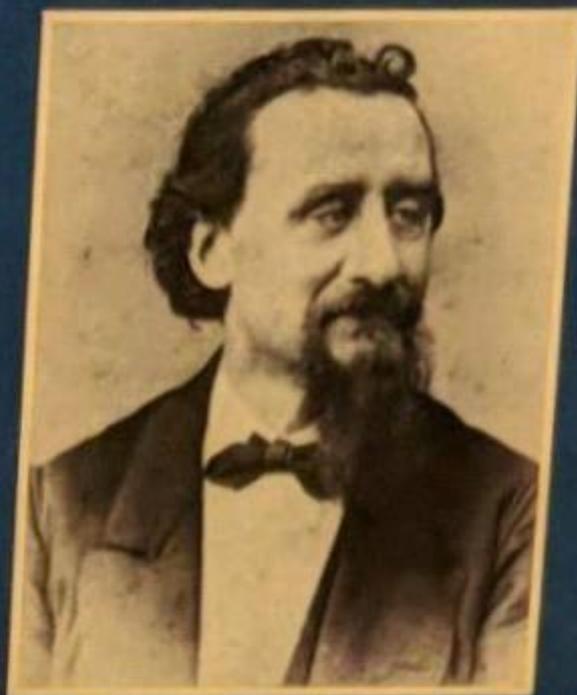
ENDURANCE

BY ROBERT L. MARSHALL

Large, able-bodied men, who seemed at the commencement of the journey to be able to endure anything, failed as they pulled the handcart by day, walked guard duty at night, and gave their rations to their families. By the time the emigrants encountered snow in October, many of the women were pulling the handcarts alone.

JAMES BLEAK

as born in Southwark,
November 15, 1829. His
as a teenager, his father
s mother two years later.
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ed for four years. At age
ore in 1849. Latter-day
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JAMES BLEAK

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James Godson Bleak was born in Southwark, Surrey, England, on November 15, 1829. His parents died when he was a teenager, his father when he was fourteen, his mother two years later.

He determined his own life's path by apprenticing himself to a silversmith where he worked for four years. At age twenty, he married Elizabeth Moore in 1849. Latter-day Saint missionaries converted the two, and they were baptized in February 1851. He became a leader of the faithful in his area, being appointed president of the White Chapel Branch in London in 1854. He was consumed by his work with his fellow Saints and with preaching the gospel.

In February of 1855, he had been petitioning the Lord to open the "way to go to Zion." He felt he had received an answer that he would be supplied with the means. Fellow Saints provided him with a greatcoat and pair of boots. Saturday, April 26, he received notice of his immigration. Wednesday, May 21, he and his little family left London for Liverpool and slept on board the *Horizon* that night. Wrote Bleak as the journey began, "I feel to thank God for His goodness to me thus far. My earnest prayer is that He may inspire my heart to continually do His will that His favor may continue to abide with me."

Despite the harrowing handcart journey, he never wavered. He was steady, full of faith and willingness to submit to the Lord—come what may. Attending conference in the spring of 1857, though now destitute himself from financially assisting others in the journey, he



JAMES



S BLEAK

willingly contributed to fulfill the Church's ongoing needs for emigration and settlement. Since cash was scarce, most donations were precious things that could be bartered for much-needed supplies or other types of assistance for emigrants. Bleak wrote, "A collection was made to raise 125 dollars for President B. Young. As I had no cash, I gave my [wedding] ring. Notice was given in the evening that three rings had been given to the collection, and as Brother Brigham had received the amount he wanted, he wished the owners of the rings to receive them back." Bleak did not reclaim his contribution.

The next day he wrote, "Notice was given from the stand that there was a letter for me. I went to the stand for it. As I was receiving it, President Young said to the clerk, 'If any person applies for the one ring remaining, send them to me.' I, having heard what he said, desired that he would keep it. He asked if it belonged to me. I said, yes, that I had no cash and therefore gave my ring, which I wished him to accept. He blessed me in the name of the Lord, and said he . . . wished me to take back my ring which I accordingly did. He asked the clerk to take my name and residence."

Bleak and his family settled first in Ogden and then moved south when called by Brigham Young to the Cotton Mission. He lived in St. George, served as postmaster, helped complete the St. George Temple, and became its first recorder. He died in 1918 at age eighty-eight.

STORMY HILLS BY HOWARD POST

(Left) Amidst what artist Howard Post viewed as vast and bleak surroundings, not a tree or bush in sight, the emigrants began to mark the trail with their dead. October 1: William Read, from North Crawley, Buckinghamshire, England, aged 63; October 3: Peter Larsen, from Lolland, Denmark, aged 43; October 9, Samuel Gadd, from Orwell, Cambridgeshire, England, aged 42. And so it went day after day.

AT THE END OF A LONG DAY

BY LAURI ESKELSON *(Below) For the most part, the children walked at the sides of the carts, the taste of dust in their mouths when the sun was shining, and mud enveloping their feet on days when it rained.*



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together with the heavy sand, made our progress very slow, and extremely laborious. Several were obliged to leave their carts, and they with the infirm could scarcely get into camp."

The next accounts of the days that followed clearly established a pattern.

September 18: "At dinner Sister Reade . . . was missing . . . She is bound to stay out overnight."

September 21: "Wet and cold today. Many are sick. . . . Sister Season's little boy, two years old, died at eleven o'clock last night."

September 22: "Brother Emphy departed this life at half past 1 P.M. . . . One of his hands and arm was nearly covered with sores . . . but no one thought him dangerous."

September 23: "The Saints [were] slow in rising and getting breakfast early, notwithstanding Brother Willey's [sic.] repeated order to arise at the sound of the bugle (daylight). Apparently not realizing the necessity of our making as much distance as possible in order to reach the Valley before too severe cold weather, some complain of hard treatment, because we urge them along."

September 26: "Today we traveled fourteen miles without water. Sister Ann Briant, who had been ill for sometime, but not thought dangerous, was found dead in the wagon in a sitting posture, apparently asleep. Her age is seventy years next month."

September 27: "The old appear to be failing considerably."

September 29: "Went to the fort Brother Richards has no cattle provided for us here and no other provisions made."

On September 30, Chislett reported arriving at "Fort Laramie, having necessarily expended considerable time in the repair of handcarts up to that point." The fort's shelves were bare of food supplies except for a couple of barrels of crackers, some rice, and a bit of bacon. No oxen were available to replace those lost in the buffalo stampede earlier in the month. Some items were available. Savage sold his twenty-dollar watch for eleven dollars and "purchased a pair of six-dollar boots and other articles."

An inventory revealed that without further cuts in food rations, the Willie Company would run out of food near the crossing of the Platte, about 350 miles from Salt Lake. The emigrants began conserving their inadequate rations. The trail took its toll. In the Willie Company, six had died in September, and at least six more the first week of October.

Journal writers accounted for the distance traveled each day, each mile drawing them closer to the land of promise. Bleak recorded of the Martin Company:

“September 1. We traveled 19 miles and slept without raising our tents as it was very late when we camped.

“September 7. We traveled 16 miles.

“Tuesday 9. We traveled 6 miles to some sand pits where we obtained some water.

“Friday 12. We traveled but 6 miles in consequence of it being discovered that a cripple had been left behind.

“Monday 15. We traveled 22 miles.

“Sunday 21. Thomas 5 years old today. We traveled 5 miles.

“Tuesday 23. We traveled 12 miles. This morning we were 709 miles from G.S.L. City.

“Saturday September 27. We traveled 7 miles. Sand very soft and deep.

“Tuesday 30. We traveled 11 miles. James was 3 years old today.”

Deaths in the Martin Party reflected the growing hunger, sickness, exhaustion, and exposure. Nine had died in September and six more that first week of October. Chislett wrote, “These people died with the calm faith and fortitude of martyrs. Their greatest regret seemed to be leaving their family members behind them and their bodies on the plains or mountains instead of being laid in consecrated ground in Zion.”

They rolled on.