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The Mormon Trails in Iowa

BY

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REPRINTED FROM THE JANUARY 1914 NUMBER OF THE
IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS PUBLISHED AT
IOWA CITY BY THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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THE MORMON TRAILS IN IOWA

LC 14-31058

THE MORMON TRAILS IN IOWA

Rome, it is said, conquered barbarian nations by means of roads no less than by means of well-drilled armies. The nineteenth century conquest of the American West reminds one of this Old World story. A vast wilderness, once the haunt of Indians, the scene of their hunts and intertribal wars, has passed into the hands of hordes of persons impelled by the migratory instinct to forsake their homes in the Atlantic States, in Canada, and in European countries.

Ambitious, enterprising, and irrepressible, these emigrants everywhere cut their way through trackless forests, spanned bridgeless streams, and crossed roadless stretches of prairie. As if by magic they transformed unpeopled regions into prosperous farms and peaceful towns.

The reclamation of the country which constitutes the State of Iowa forms an interesting chapter in this romantic story of the conquest of the West. When the first wave of settlers from the East and South entered the Iowa country in the year 1833, rivers, ridges, and Indian trails offered the best and only means of access to the interior. Then, almost at once, the people's representatives in the legislature of Wisconsin Territory pushed the work of laying out suitable routes of travel across the lands so recently acquired from the Sac and Fox Indians.

Not until the "Iowa District" obtained from Congress a separate Territorial government, however, did the pioneers of this trans-Mississippi region receive proper legislative attention and fostering care. An extensive network of wagon roads then came into existence. When it is remembered that the inhabited portion of Iowa in 1846 consisted

only of the area east of the present city of Des Moines, and that the Territorial legislature authorized the establishment of nearly two hundred roadways by blazing trees in the timber, setting stakes in the prairie, and erecting mile-posts and guideboards, one can get a fairly adequate idea of the emphasis placed by pioneers upon the importance and need of avenues of communication between different parts of the new Iowa country.¹

But most important and most romantic of all the high-ways of Territorial Iowa were the Oregon trail and the Mormon trail — the first thoroughfares connecting the Mississippi and the Missouri banks of Iowa: the result, not of legislative intercession but of "land fever" and of persecution. Of the former trail nothing remains but the fact of its existence, but of the latter much has been written: such a mass of historical material, both fragmentary and misleading, and of local tradition has accumulated, fortified by modern county maps, that it is necessary to investigate and sift apparently conflicting details in order to fix, if possible, the course of the main and original routes of the Mormon hegira.

It was just a few months before Iowa became a member of the Union of States that the exodus of Mormons from western Illinois commenced. Expelled from their homes in Ohio and later from Missouri, these refugees had taken up their abode in Illinois and had built a prosperous community around their temple city of Nauvoo. Across the Mississippi River, in Iowa, they had bought part of the town of Keokuk, the whole of a town called Nashville six miles north, part of a settlement named Montrose four miles farther north, besides several thousands of acres of land in the notorious "Half-breed Tract", all in Lee Coun-

¹ See the *Laws of the Territory of Iowa* from 1838 to 1846, and the writer's article on *The Roads and Highways of Territorial Iowa* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. III, pp. 175-225.

ty. One hundred families of Mormons were said to be living in Iowa in 1840.²

How the Mormons created in the minds of their Illinois neighbors strong feelings of dislike and distrust is a story which requires no repetition here. Scarcely had they completed the building of their Holy Temple at Nauvoo when the storm of hate burst over their heads, involving the death of their prophet, Joseph Smith.

The upshot of the whole strife was that late in the year 1845 the Mormons under the leadership of Brigham Young promised their neighbors to depart "so soon as grass would grow and water run". They asked the citizens of Illinois to help them sell or rent their properties, thus enabling them to secure means to assist their widows, orphans, and poor to move on with the rest. They ventured to hope that "all men will let us alone with their vexatious law-suits". They advertised a willingness, and sent out agents, to exchange property for cash, drygoods, oxen, cattle, horses, sheep, and wagons; and they begged not to be subjected to further house-burnings or other depredations while they remained.³

The winter months were spent in "the most prodigious preparations for removal." Wagon and tent makers, blacksmiths, and carpenters — all were busy: "Nauvoo was constituted into one great wagon shop", and before spring hundreds of wagons were in readiness. Real estate was sold at extremely low prices,⁴ as was the case with all property.

Setting out for a land of promise in the Rocky Mountains

² Bancroft's *History of Utah*, p. 140. In a letter written by Governor Robert Lucas of Iowa these people were described as "generally considered industrious, inoffensive, and worthy citizens."

The article in *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. II, pp. 586-602, is based almost entirely on Bancroft's researches into Mormon sources.

³ *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, Vol. III, p. 159.

⁴ Linn's *The Story of the Mormons*, pp. 339, 344; and *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, Vol. III, p. 161.

— at first they knew not where⁵— the refugees left Nauvoo, even sooner than they had contemplated.⁶ Early in the month of February, 1846, the twelve apostles with about two thousand followers were ferried across the broad Mississippi: wagons and teams in flat-boats and persons in smaller craft. After the 16th of February, owing to a sudden change of temperature, the emigrants could cross the river on ice.⁷ Landing in Iowa, they pushed on about nine miles and pitched camp in the snow, on Sugar Creek in Lee County. Here the company remained two or three weeks, daily receiving accessions, while snow fell heavily, the thermometer dropped to 20 degrees below zero, and supplies grew scarcer.⁸

At the camp on Sugar Creek (every halting-place of the president and twelve apostles was called “Camp of Isra-

⁵ Baneroft's *History of Utah*, pp. 214–217; Ford's *History of Illinois*, p. 412; and Linn's *The Story of the Mormons*, p. 359.

It was calculated that every family of five persons should prepare an outfit of one wagon, three yokes of oxen, two cows, two beef cattle, three sheep, one thousand pounds of flour, twenty pounds of sugar, a rifle and ammunition, a tent and tent-poles, from ten to twenty pounds of seed, from twenty-five to one hundred pounds of farming tools, and a few other items, at a cost of about \$250, including bedding and cooking utensils.

In the historical magazine *Americana* there has appeared a serial history of the Mormon Church by Brigham H. Roberts, Assistant Historian of the Church in Utah.— See Volume VII.

⁶ It is believed that the removal was hastened by the indictment of nine apostles for counterfeiting.— Ford's *History of Illinois*, p. 413. But see *Americana*, Vol. VII, p. 74.

⁷ *Americana*, Vol. VII, p. 72; Hyde's *Mormonism*, p. 142; Lee's *Confessions* in Lewis's *The Mormon Menace*, p. 225; and Baneroft's *History of Utah*, p. 218.

⁸ For details of the march across Iowa the writer is indebted in the main to Baneroft's *History of Utah*, pp. 218–223; Roberts's account in *Americana*, Vol. VII, pp. 172–189; and Linn's *The Story of the Mormons*, pp. 362–370. These historians, together with Charles Negus in the *Annals of Iowa*, are the chief authorities consulted with regard to the Mormon trails. Baneroft and Roberts furnish the reader rough sketches of the route of travel, but make no attempt at exactness.

One should like to know just where the Sugar Creek camp was pitched— whether it was west of Montrose, New Boston, or Charleston.

el") Brigham Young "proved himself a general as well as a commander. He directed everything. Thousands were leaving; many destitute, and all poor". On the 17th of February he addressed his followers from a wagon. On March 1st, the refugees took up the line of march in five hundred wagons: "without confusion, without hurrying or even discord, their long trains rolled by him, while he comforted, inspirited, blessed, and counselled the weeping emigrants."⁹

Only five miles of country were traversed the first day. On the second they reached the eastern bank of the Des Moines River four miles below the village of Farmington,¹⁰ whose citizens, it is said, were delighted with the Mormon brass band. The course then lay along the river and a crossing was effected at "Bonaparte's Mills" on the 5th of March. For the reception and assistance of later followers this vanguard of two or three thousand Mormons stationed a permanent camp at Richardson's Point, fifty-five miles west of Nauvoo, near a branch of Chequest Creek.¹¹ Here the weary travelers rested, working for Iowa settlers in return for provisions and awaiting pleasanter weather, while several men were appointed hunters "as there was much game in the country — turkey, deer, and some elk."¹²

⁹ Hyde's *Mormonism*, p. 142.

¹⁰ Probably on the site of the present town of Croton. See *Journal of History* (Lamoni, Iowa), Vol. II, p. 106.

¹¹ *The Iowa Capitol Reporter*, April 1, 1846, quoting from *The Bloomington Herald*, told of an encampment on the Fox River in Davis County, "about fourteen miles above Keosauqua". This is probably a reference to Richardson's Point.

As to the route, Negus varies from all other authorities, declaring that the Mormons followed the Des Moines River until the western part of Van Buren County was reached. He must have been writing of later companies of Mormons. See *Annals of Iowa*, Vol. IX, p. 578.

¹² *Journal of History*, Vol. II, p. 106. See also Lee's *Confessions* in Lewis's *The Mormon Menace*, p. 226.

Roberts's history in *Americana*, Vol. VII, pp. 178-182, contains a general account and sketch of the route through Iowa.

On the 19th of March the little army resumed its journey, and as the frozen ground of Territorial and county roads thawed out and spring rains began to fall, progress became slower and more difficult. Traversing the central townships of Davis County and crossing the Fox River a little above Bloomfield, they struck an old Mormon trail of 1838 that led from Caldwell County, Missouri, to Muscatine, Iowa. This trail they followed as far as the Chariton River in Appanoose County, where they established their second permanent camp in a large body of timber.¹³ Detained by a swollen river from March 22 until April 1, the pioneer band then went in a southwest direction, camping upon Shoal or Locust Creek in the southeastern corner of Wayne County on the 6th of April. Here it was decided to locate another permanent camp.¹⁴

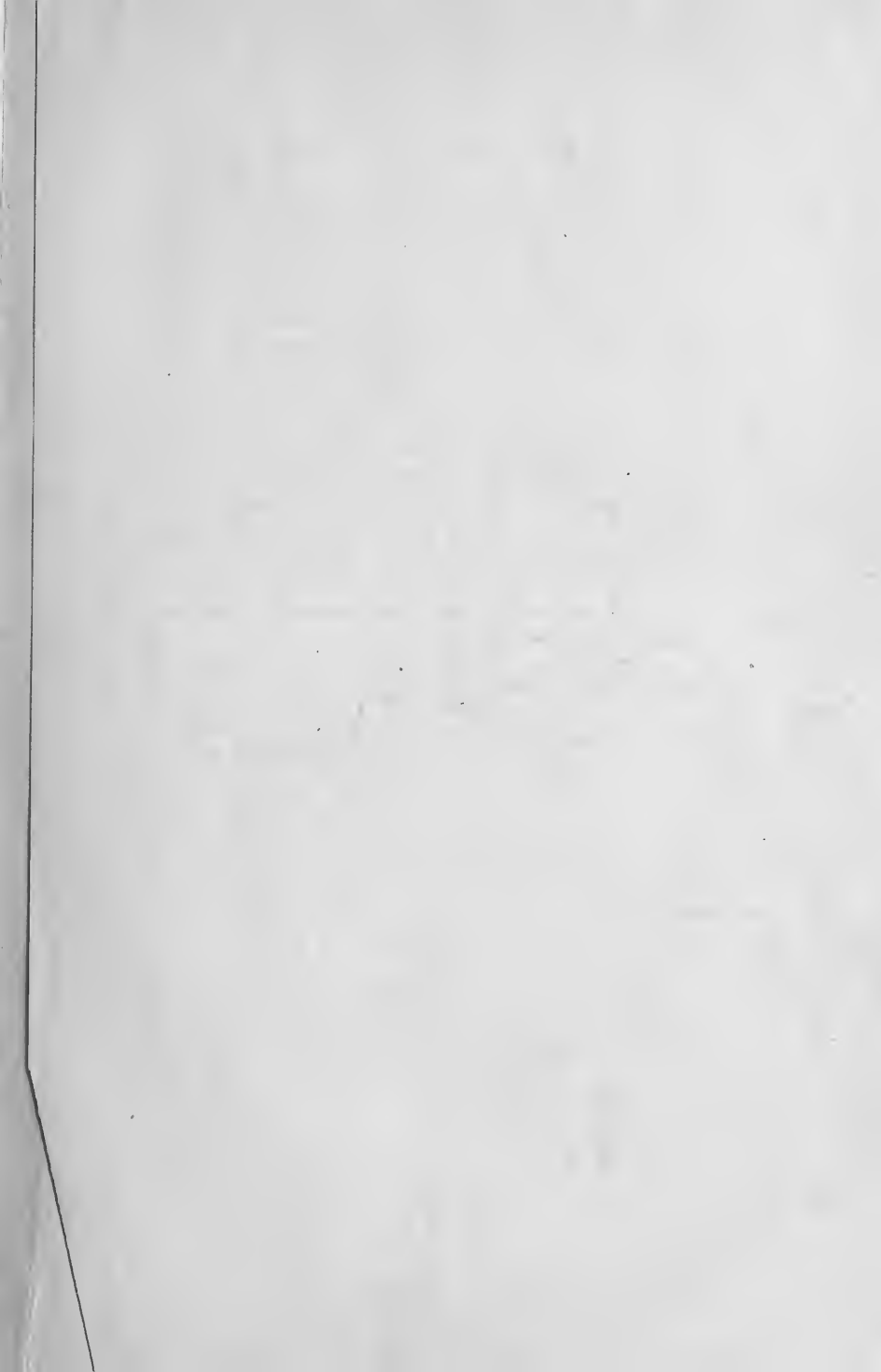
Thus far the exiles had been laboring through the sparsely settled counties of the Territory over more or less well-defined roadways, however bad. Wayne County was the

¹³ The writer is indebted for this information to Mr. Heman C. Smith, historian of the church at Lamon, Iowa. He adds: "I do not know just where to locate the large body of timber, but I think it was a little above Centerville, as the old trail they were following would bring them somewhere near that point."

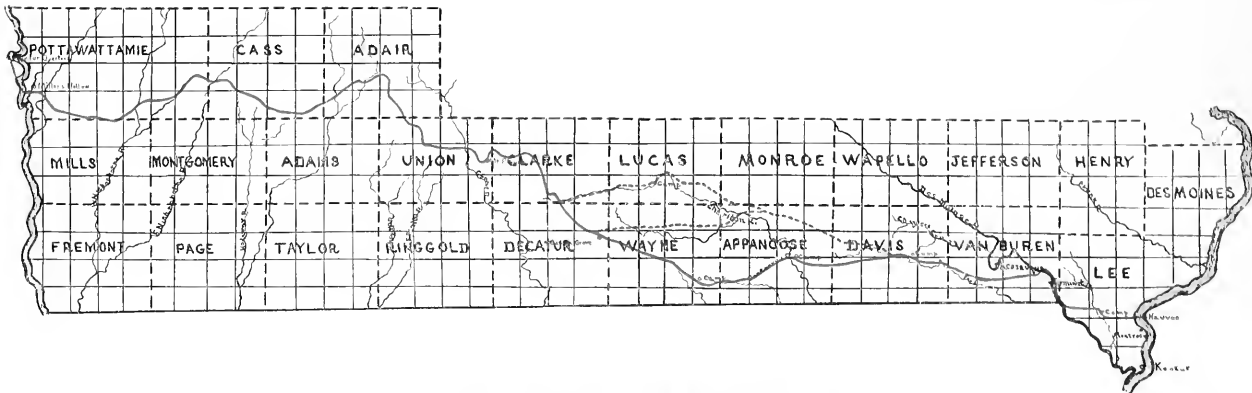
Negus states that the Mormons passed through the northern parts of Davis and Appanoose counties, and then divided and followed the highlands on both sides of the Chariton River. He must have been writing of later bands of Mormons.

On page 273 of the 1904 *Atlas of Iowa*, compiled by the Iowa Publishing Company of Davenport, a writer asserts that the Mormons on their way from Missouri to Illinois "left so well beaten a road that it was known by first settlers, and for years, as the Mormon trail." That there was a well-defined trail in this neighborhood in 1843 is shown by the fact that the legislature appointed three commissioners to lay out a Territorial road from Iowaville to the Missouri boundary "where the Mormon trace crosses the line."—*Laws of Iowa*, 1843-1844, p. 92.

¹⁴ Mr. Heman C. Smith declares that the first Mormons passed through this region and that their marching in a southwesterly direction is accounted for by the existence of the earlier trail. The accounts of Roberts and Bancroft accord, but Negus does not. The former had access to Elder Orson Pratt's observations and diary.







THE MORMON TRAILS ACROSS IOWA

———— Pioneer or "Camp of Israel" Mormon Trail

----- Later Mormon Trails

“jumping off place.”: henceforth the Mormons were going into an unknown, unpeopled, trackless wilderness, the domain of wild animals and Pottawattamie Indians. Bidding farewell to Iowa’s western frontier line of settlements, they journeyed northwestward and entered Decatur County, then but recently surveyed and established. In this newly-opened region stretching to the Missouri River it became necessary to appoint a small party of “pioneers” to go in advance of the main body, to explore the route, blaze the trail, seek suitable camping sites, and make fords and bridges,¹⁵ for progress became exasperatingly slow. On the 24th of April one of the elders jotted down the following entry in his diary:

Yesterday we traveled about eight miles, to-day, six miles. We came to a place which we named Garden Grove. At this point we determined to form a small settlement, and open farms for the benefit of the poor, and such as were unable, at present, to pursue their journey further and also for the benefit of the poor who were yet behind.

Thus, after a toilsome journey through prolonged rains and deep mud, the Mormons established Garden Grove. On the 27th of April, “at the sound of the horn”, the emigrants gathered to organize for labor. One hundred men were chosen to fell trees, split them into rails, and set up zig-zag fences; forty-eight were set to cutting logs for log-houses; several were detailed to build a bridge; others dug wells; some made wood for plows; a few watched the flocks of sheep and herds of cattle; while a small party was despatched on an expedition into Missouri to exchange property for cows, provisions, and other necessities. The remaining members of the party were directed to plant and sow the crops that later comers should reap.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Annals of Iowa*, Vol. IX, p. 578; and *Americana*, Vol. VII, p. 184.

¹⁶ *Journal of History*, Vol. II, pp. 110, 188; Lee’s *Confessions* in Lewis’s *The Mormon Menace*, pp. 229, 230; and *Americana*, Vol. VII, p. 187.

On the 11th of May the pioneers once more set their long wagon trains moving and proceeded northwestward. Game became very scarce, "thinned out by a tribe of Indians, called Pottawattamies, whose trails and old camping-grounds were to be seen in every direction." Near the middle fork of Grand River, in what is to-day Union County, they concluded, on May 18th, to establish another settlement. They all fell to building, ploughing, planting, and fencing, and completed a vast amount of work in a few days' time. On account of the hilly nature of the spot they named the place Mt. Pisgah.¹⁷

Towards the end of May "most of the Twelve, with large companies, proceeded in a westerly direction." In order to get a level road and to avoid the crossing of numerous small streams, they were compelled to bear northward to about the center of Adair County, "passing by what was known, in early days, as Sargent's Grove, in Adair County, and Campbell's Grove, in Cass County." Their course lay through the southern part of what is to-day Cass County, past an Indian village on the East Nishnabotna River, and thence through the southern part of the present county of Pottawattamie, reaching Indian Creek on the 14th of June. Here, within the present limits of Council Bluffs the travel-worn exiles rested for a while, but soon ferried themselves and their animals and wagons across the Missouri: Winter Quarters, on the site of Florence, Nebraska, became their main encampment.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Journal of History*, Vol. II, pp. 189, 190.

The Pottawattamie Indians were not removed from western Iowa until after June, 1846. Although fearing their hostility, the Mormons encountered nothing but good will.

¹⁸ *Annals of Iowa*, Vol. IX, p. 579. The trail as laid down by Negus from Mt. Pisgah westward accords with the trail as described in detail by Edgar R. Harlan, Curator of the Historical Department, who traced the old route over township roads and farmers' fields with the aid of the original surveys of the western counties. The Mormon trail "came to be noted by the first surveyors in the

Such, then, in a general way, was the route of the first or pioneer band of Mormons — it was the trail of the path-breakers. As the slow-moving horse and mule teams and heavy-gaited oxen had drawn their exiled owners across the Territory of Iowa, log-cabin villages sprang up for the accommodation of later Mormon emigrants. To quote from the church historian: "Thus the 'Camp of Israel' had become a veritable marching, industrial column; founding settlements as it marched; planting for others to harvest, and leaving behind them within easy reach bases of supplies that insured their own safety in case of emergency."¹⁹ The life and experiences of the emigrants for five months on that three-hundred-mile stretch of sparsely settled or wholly uninhabited country would supply materials for a separate volume: the description of a journey begun in mid-winter, over snow-covered roads and frozen ground, "with arctic weather and all the inconveniences of ice, rain, and mud until May," must be left to the imagination of the reader.²⁰

During all these months of the year 1846 the roads of eastern Iowa were alive with Mormon emigrants. It was soon discovered that the pioneer or "Camp of Israel" route was unnecessarily circuitous, and so another trail invited

same way that they noted streams or other visible land marks." See an interesting report in the *Twelfth Annual Conference of the Iowa Daughters of the American Revolution*, pp. 29-36. The members of this organization have taken up the commendable work of marking the trails which became important factors as avenues of emigration to the West.

¹⁹ *Americana*, Vol. VII, p. 186.

²⁰ See Linn's *The Story of the Mormons*, p. 364.

Thomas L. Kane, who lectured before the Pennsylvania Historical Society in 1850, presented a lucid picture of the burials along the road. He tells how coffins were made of bark stripped from trees, and adds: "The name of the beloved person, his age, the date of his death, and these marks were all registered with care. . . . Such graves mark all the line of the first year of the Mormon travel — dispiriting milestones to falling stragglers in the rear."—*Journal of History*, Vol. II, pp. 108, 109.

more travel than the first. Later Nauvoo emigrants left the old trail at the crossing of the Fox River in Davis County and bore across the northeastern corner of Appanoose County, following the highlands along the Chariton River through Monroe and into Lucas County. Here, at a point about one and a half miles south of Chariton, they fixed a camp, and then continued westward to a place about six miles south of the present town of Osceola, Clarke County, where they struck and followed the original trail to Winter Quarters.²¹

Even this new trail north of the Chariton River was not exclusively used, for in that event the Mormon settlement at Garden Grove would have served no purpose whatever. Accordingly a third route became established in the northern townships of Wayne County: the main road there to-day is known as "Mormon Trail".²² Modern roads similarly designated in other counties are best regarded as auxiliary routes which perhaps received the name because a small

²¹ Charles Negus, who probably traveled upon this later trail, roughly indicated what Mr. Harlan has presented in detail. Compare their accounts in *Annals of Iowa*, Vol. IX, p. 578; and the proceedings of the *Twelfth Annual Conference of the Iowa Daughters of the American Revolution*, pp. 33, 34. Negus, however, gives one the impression that the pioneer Mormon band of two or three thousand persons divided near the western border of Appanoose County, followed the highlands on each side of the Chariton River, and re-united in Clarke County, when the fact is they proceeded together as has been indicated: later companies of Mormons selected the northern route.

In the proceedings of the *Twelfth Annual Conference of the Iowa Daughters of the American Revolution*, pp. 34, 35, Mr. Harlan lays down a route which traverses the eastern settled counties of Iowa and which joins the Mormon Trail referred to in the land surveys of Monroe County and beyond. He does not, however, ascribe to this road the name of Mormon Trail, but believes it was most frequented by emigrants to the Far West. Mr. Harlan's location of the trail north of the Chariton River is supported by the 1904 maps of Lucas and Clarke counties: in one the modern highway is known as "Mormon Trace Road" and in the other as "Mormon Trail".

²² See map of Wayne County in the *Atlas of Iowa* (1904), compiled by the Iowa Publishing Company.

Mr. Heman C. Smith corroborates this information concerning the northern route.

body of Mormon proselytes happened to pass that way.²³ Indeed, many such went through Des Moines.

In July of the year 1846 fifteen thousand Mormons were said to be encamped or toiling along the Iowa trails westward, with 3,000 wagons, 30,000 head of cattle, horses, and mules, and a vast number of sheep.²⁴ Indeed, at one time no less than two thousand covered wagons could be counted. On the 17th of September the last Mormons evacuated Nauvoo, terror-stricken by the military preparations and threats of their bellicose neighbors. They comprised a miserable remnant of about seven hundred people, physically unfit and poorly equipped, and they lay huddled at a camp north of Montrose until wagons arrived for them from Garden Grove and Mt. Pisgah in October.²⁵

²³ Such as the "Mormon Ridge" in Marshall County. Local traditions have been responsible for much of the confusion incident to a study of the Mormon exodus through Iowa.

²⁴ Bancroft's *History of Utah*, p. 221; Ford's *History of Illinois*, p. 412, where the number of persons who had crossed the Mississippi in May is placed at 16,000; and Linn's *The Story of the Mormons*, p. 365. On p. 345, there is a record "that the ferries at Nauvoo and at Fort Madison were each taking across an average of 35 teams in twenty-four hours. For the week ending May 22 he reported the departure of 539 teams and 1617 persons; and for the week ending May 29, the departure of 269 teams and 800 persons, and he said he counted the day before 617 wagons in Nauvoo ready to start."

The *Nauvoo Eagle*, July 10, 1846, printed an interview with a person who had left the Mormons on June 26th. The advance company including the Twelve, with a train of 1000 wagons, was then encamped on the east bank of the Missouri, the men busily building boats. The second company, 3000 strong, were at Mt. Pisgah, recruiting their cattle for a new start. The third company had halted at Garden Grove. Between this place and the Mississippi the *Eagle's* informant counted more than 1000 wagons. He estimated the total number of teams engaged in this movement at about 3700, and the number of persons on the road at 12,000. It seems that from 2000 to 3000 Mormons had left Nauvoo for other regions, some joining the Strangites at Voree, Wisconsin.—Linn's *The Story of the Mormons*, p. 369. See also *The Bloomington Herald*, May 8, 1846; and Niles's *National Register*, May 30, 1846, Vol. LXX, p. 208.

²⁵ Linn's *The Story of the Mormons*, p. 350; Lee's *Confessions* in Lewis's *The Mormon Menace*, p. 230; and *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, Vol. III, pp. 172, 173, 177, containing an extract from a lecture delivered by Colonel Kane before the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

It was while the Mormons were scattered along the river-to-river trails that James Allen, a United States army officer, arrived at Mt. Pisgah from Fort Leavenworth to enlist volunteers for the Mexican War. Accompanied by Brigham Young, he proceeded to the camp on the Missouri River, opened a recruiting office and secured five companies of one hundred men each. An ex-elder of the Mormon Church asserted afterwards: "Money was needed to enable them to move. Their design they desired to cloak under a sham patriotism. The United States offered \$20,000 bounty money, and Brigham recruited a regiment, persuaded, commanded them to leave their families, many of them perfectly destitute, and join General Scott's Army, then in Mexico, and they obeyed."²⁶

For several years the trail across the State of Iowa guided hundreds of Mormons to the new asylum of their church amid the Rocky Mountains. Mormons in Lee County, Iowa, found no more favor with their neighbors than had their brethren in Illinois. Many were the crimes charged to them, and at a mass-meeting the citizens resolved that the Mormons must depart from their community. In 1847, it is said, "the last of these objectionable people left the county."²⁷

For five years the Mormons were in almost exclusive occupation and control of the present counties of Mills and Pottawattamie. After the camp at Winter Quarters broke up in the spring of 1847, those who did not accompany Brigham Young westward recrossed the Missouri to live at

Kane was an eyewitness of much of the Mormon life in Iowa, but authorities are inclined to think he sacrificed accuracy to word pictures.

See also Bancroft's *History of Utah*, pp. 231, 234.

²⁶ Hyde's *Mormonism*, p. 143; Linn's *The Story of the Mormons*, p. 370; *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, Vol. III, p. 191; and *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers*, Vol. VI, p. 826.

²⁷ *History of Lee County, Iowa*, pp. 470, 477, 479, 481. See also Niles's *National Register*, October 17 and 24, 1846, Vol. LXXI, pp. 99, 124.

“Miller’s Hollow” in Iowa. This place, later called Kaneshville and, after 1853, Council Bluffs, became an important rendezvous for western emigrants, rivalling the town of Independence, Missouri, on the Oregon Trail. Emigrants to Oregon and California who preferred not to go so far south to reach the old Oregon Trail had only one alternative: the Iowa roads which converged upon the Mormon Trail in the western counties. Hence they arrived at the chief Mormon town, halted for equipment and supplies, and then hastened on to find homesteads or gold.

Garden Grove and Mt. Pisgah, little farming and business communities in the midst of an almost uninhabited country, remained in the hands of their Mormon founders until the spring of 1852.²⁸ They were resting-places for emigrating hosts of Mormon converts from eastern States and European countries,²⁹ especially England; for it is a noteworthy fact that from the first the Mormons have been zealous missionaries in foreign lands, spreading no little dismay and alarm among the educated classes. John Hyde, in company with nearly four hundred fellow proselytes, sailed from Liverpool to New Orleans in 1853 and ascended the Mississippi to Keokuk, Iowa.³⁰ There, on a hill overlooking the

²⁸ Though Garden Grove and Mt. Pisgah passed into the hands of Gentiles, the surrounding country is to-day largely in possession of Mormons who disented from the rule of Brigham Young and his polygamous adherents. In 1853 they called themselves the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the original church of Joseph Smith, whose son Joseph has been their president since 1860. At the city of Lamoni in Decatur County they maintain a college, church offices, and a large publishing house.—*Journal of History*, Vol. II, p. 190.

²⁹ *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. II, pp. 596-600; *Annals of Iowa*, Vol. IX, p. 580; and *Journal of History*, Vol. II, pp. 112, 190.

In 1856 a company of several hundreds of men, women, and children — Mormon proselytes from England — arrived at Iowa City and were fitted out with hand-carts, which they dragged westward, with terrible suffering and loss of life.—*Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. II, p. 599; and Paxson’s *The Last American Frontier*, pp. 100, 101.

³⁰ Hyde’s *Mormonism*, p. 19.

city and the majestic river, he found a "camp thronging with life, there being nearly two thousand five hundred Mormons preparing to start for the plains." Indeed, the stream of emigration westward set in with a rush after the Mexican War had ended.

Thus thousands of Mormon refugees, fleeing from persecution in Illinois, passed over Iowa's Territorial roads and highways into an Indian country beyond, and opened up for themselves a thoroughfare which guided hundreds and thousands of later homeseekers to the fertile valleys and plains of Nebraska, Utah, California, and Oregon — indeed to the whole American West. Not only did the Mormons mark the first great Iowa route from the Mississippi to the Missouri, but they founded settlements along the way, the first places of permanent habitation in the western half of Iowa.

JACOB VAN DER ZEE

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