This lithograph depicting the landing in Kansas City in 1854, titled Kansas & Missouri Rivers, first appeared in United States Illustrated by Charles Anderson Dana.
During the nineteenth century, Mormons emphasized the doctrine of gathering to Zion, a concept introduced to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) a few months after it was officially established in Fayette, New York, in 1830 under the direction of the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith. After Smith’s death, his prophetic successor, Brigham Young, established a new gathering place for the Latter-day Saints in 1847, and thereafter the route to their new American Zion in the Salt Lake Valley was altered. 1 Although for the next four years Mormon European emigrants continued to disembark at New Orleans and head up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, instead of continuing north to their previous gathering place at Nauvoo, Illinois, they traveled west on the Missouri River to Winter Quarters, Nebraska, and Kanesville, Iowa (later known as Council Bluffs, Iowa), the frontier outfitting points for Mormons during those years. 2

After the explosion of the steamboat Saluda in 1852, when many Mormon emigrants were killed and injured during a treacherous ride on the Missouri River, church leaders decided to extend travel up the Mississippi River past St. Louis to Keokuk, Iowa, just a dozen miles south of Nauvoo. However, crossing three hundred miles of Iowa Territory overland

1. In Mormon theology, the term Zion is defined as both a righteous people and a place or a land designated for the Latter-day Saints to congregate. The Salt Lake Valley and other Mormon colonies throughout the American West became gathering places for the Saints from 1847 until the end of the nineteenth century. From 1830 until 1846, Mormon gathering places included upstate New York (1830), Kirtland, Ohio, and western Missouri (1831–1838), as well as Nauvoo, Illinois (1839–1846). See A. D. Sorenson, “Zion,” Encyclopedia of Mormonism, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 4:1624–26.

proved to be too costly, both in terms of time and money. Church leaders decided to once again use the Missouri River route that headed west from St. Louis to the Town of Kansas landing on the western Missouri border. At this important point for westbound emigrants, the Saints established outfitting camps in 1854 and they used nearby Westport, an established trading center four miles south of the City of Kansas landing, for some of their outfitting supplies. The journey to these points and from them west to Utah was arduous for a number of reasons, most especially the outbreaks of cholera that infected Mormon emigrants at all stages of their pilgrimage. As they passed through western Missouri they were also traveling through a region that had previously seen strife between Mormons and local citizens. Despite these obstacles, the emigrants persevered, traveled through Kansas Territory, and reached their promised land before the end of the year.

Life on the Missouri-Kansas border had proven quite difficult for Mormons in the past, and it was not without risk that a new wave of emigrants temporarily settled in the region as they waited to complete their journey west. Despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that the area was incredibly important to the Saints—who considered Jackson County, Missouri, home to the City of Kansas, to be the very center of Zion—conflict arose there in 1833 between the Latter-day Saints and other Jackson County citizens. The result was mob violence, and the Mormons were driven from their Jackson County homes. Five years later, on October 27, 1838, Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs, a former Jackson County resident, issued his infamous extermination order stating, “The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated and driven from the state, if necessary for the public good.” Thousands of Latter-day Saints were immediately forced to evacuate the state. Questions remained about how Mormons migrating through Missouri would be treated, therefore, when the Latter-day Saints once again entered the Jackson County region in 1854 and commenced crossing the Missouri-Kansas border to head west.

The potential for conflict and violence was also brewing just across the Missouri River, in the newly conceived Kansas Territory. As the Mormons gathered near the City of Kansas, the debate over and passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act during the spring of 1854 reopened the question of slavery in the territories and brought with it several years of turmoil on the Missouri-Kansas border. This “watershed” legislation was driven by an escalating desire to advance westward migration and to pave the way for a transcontinental railroad. But the bill also encouraged an immediate rush of settlers—free state and proslavery—to the Kansas region, which at that time was still home to thousands of displaced Americans Indians. Historian Nichole Etcheson explained that “in May 1854, fewer than 800 white settlers lived in Kansas Territory. In the nine months after the territory opened, that number would increase tenfold.”

5. Joseph Smith, Jr., History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1964), 1:374–75; 3:175; James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints, 2nd rev. and enlrg. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 94–100. Allen and Leonard wrote that at a public meeting held July 20, 1833, a group of hundreds of local citizens released a document that the Mormons called “The Manifesto of the Mob” (95). The stated reasons for Mormon removal pertained to issues of religion, politics, economics, slavery, and character. According to historian Alexander L. Baugh, “Contrary to popular belief by many Latter-day Saints and even some Mormon historians, the governor’s extermination order was not meant to give authorization to the state militia or its citizens to openly kill or eradicate the Latter-day Saint population. Although Boggs did not like the Mormons, he was not a butcher and did not condone the unnecessary taking of human life. . . . Significantly, the first definition of the word exterminate as defined in Webster’s 1828 dictionary reads, ‘to drive from within the limits or borders.’” Alexander L. Baugh, “The Mormons Must Be Treated As Enemies,” in Joseph: Exploring the Life and Ministry of the Prophet, eds. Susan Easton Black and Andrew C. Skinner (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2005), 292–93. The extermination order was not rescinded until June 25, 1876; at that time Missouri governor Christopher S. Bond offered a public apology “on behalf of all Missourians . . . for the injustice and undue suffering which was caused by this 1838 order.” Copies of the extermination order are housed at the Church History Library, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (MS 4900; hereafter cited as “Church History Library”), and at the Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, under the title “Executive Order of Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, October 27, 1838.” The author has written a chapter on the experience of Mormon transmigration through Missouri (1838–1868), forthcoming in a book published in spring 2010 by the University of Missouri Press that treats this issue on a larger scale.

ergies on their destination rather than on the local politics of the state of Missouri or the territory of Kansas.\(^7\)

The *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, a Mormon periodical launched in England in 1840, published many articles dealing with the theme of gathering to Zion in the nineteenth century, including several in 1854. In fact, the word *Millennial* in the title was tied to the belief among many Latter-day Saints in the mid-nineteenth century that the second coming of Jesus Christ was nigh at hand. In a February 1854 article, “Who are these that fly as a cloud?,” the writer noted, “As doves to their windows are the Saints flocking to the strongholds of Zion in the tops of the mountains, to be organized on heavenly principles, and to escape the fearful judgments which are decreed in these latter days.” The essayist then explained that two motives merged to draw the Latter-day Saints to Zion: first, they sought to establish righteousness on the earth, and second, they desired protection from the divine punishments that would be unleashed upon wicked nations.\(^8\)

In another article, titled “Going Home to Zion,” written the same month, John Jacques asked the rhetorical question, “What is the object of gathering?” Among other things he noted, “the true object of the gathering is to build the Kingdom of God that the honest in heart . . . may be redeemed, and righteousness and immortality prevail upon the earth. This great work cannot be accomplished by gaining the world’s riches, but by unflinching obedience to . . . the Almighty.”\(^9\)

The routes of westbound emigrants varied, yet the Mormons were not alone in choosing the City of Kansas as their landing and nearby Westport as an outfitter for some of their frontier supplies. By the spring of 1854, this area was one of the main crossing points for travelers moving through the plains to the Great

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7. John Unruh, Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Immigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840–1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 120. In an article titled “Release of Elders, Emigration, &c.,” *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, December 2, 1854 (hereafter cited as the “*Millennial Star*”), the writer noted the immense joy of those who gathered to Zion and who were “released from the bondage of Babylon.” Fortunately, the Saints missed the Bleeding Kansas phase of the territory’s early history. Political tensions were high during that first year, but it did not turn especially violent until late in 1855 and 1856. See, among others, Dale Watts, “How Bloody was Bleeding Kansas? Political Killings in Kansas Territory, 1854–1861,” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 18 (Summer 1995): 116–29.

8. "Who are these that fly as a cloud?," *Millennial Star*, February 25, 1854. The imminent return of Christ was not a concept unique to the Latter-day Saints, of course. For example, restorationist minister, Alexander Campbell, used his periodical the *Millennial Harbinger* to aid with his proselytizing efforts during the same period in which the *Millennial Star* was launched.

In 1854 the Saints established outfitting camps at the Missouri-Kansas border near the City of Kansas. The journey Mormon emigrants took to this location and from it west to Utah was arduous for a number of reasons, most especially the outbreaks of cholera that occurred at all stages of their pilgrimage. As they passed through western Missouri they were also traveling through a region that had previously seen strife between Mormons and local citizens, which at times broke out into mob violence and resulted in the expulsion of the Saints from the area. Lithograph of Kansas City in 1855 courtesy of the Missouri Historical Museum, St. Louis.

Basin and the Pacific region.10 After arriving in St. Louis, many church members from Europe and the eastern states outfitted themselves to cross the plains prior to their arrival at Westport. Mormon emigration agents chartered steamboats to ferry LDS converts up the Missouri River. One such agent during the 1853 and early 1854 emigration seasons, Horace S. Eldredge, was appointed to St. Louis late in the fall of 1852 and he began presiding over the local Saints on November 21.11 His journal records that he traveled extensively in his new dual assignment as St. Louis District president (an LDS ecclesiastical office) and general emigration agent for the westbound Saints.

Latter-day Saint church records for this period reveal that church leaders, including Eldredge, emphasized the importance of emigration to the Salt Lake Valley. As the spring of 1853 dawned, Mormon St. Louis clerk James Cantwell recorded that “President H. S. Eldredge spoke on emigration and recommended the Saints to put their means together, forming companies, and by so doing many might go that otherwise could not.” Those lacking the necessary funds to continue west were encouraged to find employment in St. Louis for a season. Luckily, employment conditions in this Mississippi River metropolis proved favorable for waylaid Mormon emigrants. At this time, more than twelve hundred members from a dozen church branches were reportedly living in the area, some making plans for their journey to Salt Lake.12

The same year, Eldredge recorded several efforts he made to obtain wagons from St. Louis German immigrant Louis Espenschied. On February 23, 1853, he noted, “We engaged 14 wagons of Mr. Espenshead [Espenschied] at $58. per wagon.”13 Eldredge handled well the difficult assignment of seeing to the multifaceted needs of the St. Louis Saints. Although diligent in his dual role as district president and general emigration agent, his journal reveals...
During the emigration season of 1854, Mormons and other emigrants heading west used Westport, an established trading center four miles south of the City of Kansas landing, for some of their outfitting supplies. By the spring of 1854, this area was one of the main crossing points for travelers moving through the plains to the Great Basin and the Pacific region. The map above lists in one of its keys Elijah Milton McGee’s land holdings, portions of which were used as campgrounds by Mormons traveling through the area—courtesy of the Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
that he spent the bulk of his time on the latter, providing supplies and arranging the emigration of Saints from the Mississippi River to the Salt Lake Valley. During the emigration seasons of 1853 and 1854, he purchased about four thousand head of cattle and eight hundred wagons. While Eldredge labored diligently to address emigration issues, by the spring of 1854 many Latter-day Saints remained temporarily stranded in St. Louis for lack of funds. As Brigham Young and other church leaders noted, St. Louis would be “a place to which the L. D. Saints might gather with approval who were unable to go directly through to Utah.”

In 1854 Mormon Apostle Erastus Snow was chosen to journey to St. Louis, organize a stake (a large ecclesiastical unit), preside over the region, and oversee general emigration matters in the area.15 While Snow worked from St. Louis to supervise the general operation of the church over a large territory, missionary William Empey received the assignment to shepherd European emigrants who came up the Mississippi to St. Louis on their journey to Westport. When Empey received his assignment on December 23, 1853, he was stationed in England. He responded to his call immediately, crossed the Atlantic, and arrived in St. Louis on February 7, 1854. Empey was no stranger to emigration. While traveling as a member of Brigham Young’s 1847 vanguard company, Empey and eight others were asked by Brigham Young to stay behind and ferry future emigrants across the North Fork of the Platte River.16

Empey not only arranged for steamboat travel, cattle, oxen, wagons, and provisions for the Saints, but at times he was also responsible for purchasing coffins, largely because of the devastating effects amongst the emigrants of cholera, which he called “chollery” or “collery.” His diary entries from the early spring of 1854 note several occasions on which he came in contact with victims. On April 9, he wrote, “Many of the saints were dying with the Chollery. I was oblige to git [sic] coffins for them at the expense of the city, & that made the inhabitance mad.” The following day he wrote, “This day I visited the sick & to behold thoes [those] that were dying with the collery.” On April 20 he recorded, “Oh the awful scene to behold to see the children

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15. The term “stake” began to be used by the Latter-day Saints as early as 1832 in Kirtland, Ohio, to refer to a basic ecclesiastical unit of the LDS Church. A stake was created in St. Louis on November 4, 1854, and there were about 1,320 Latter-day Saints in the St. Louis Stake at this time. St. Louis Record 1852–1856, November 4, 1854, 189–92; James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints, 2nd rev. and enlrg. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 89–90.

16. Horace S. Eldredge to Brigham Young, February 21, 1854, Brigham Young Office Files, Church History Library; 1847 Diary of William Young Empey, HM 52586, William Young Empey Papers, Huntington Library. See also William A. Empey, “The Mormon Ferry on the North Platte: The Journal of William A. Empey,” ed. Dale L. Morgan, Annals of Wyoming 21 (July–October, 1949): 111–67. Mormon historian Maurine Carr Ward noted that William Adam Empey was born in Osnabrook Township (in present Ontario, Canada) on July 4, 1808. He married Mary Ann Morgan in 1829, and they had ten children together. Empey joined the Mormon faith in 1839 and is listed on the Nauvoo, Illinois, census of 1842. Because he was spiritually adopted into Brigham Young’s family, in his later years he used the middle name of Young instead of Adam. (On the Mormon doctrine of adoption see Gordon Irving, “The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830–1900,” BYU Studies 44 [Spring 1974]: 291–314.) After working at the North Platte River ferry in 1847, he and his family moved to Salt Lake City for several years and then he went to England on a mission in 1852. After his service as an emigration agent in 1854, Empey returned to Utah, where he took a second wife in 1855 and a third in 1856. William and his family lived in several places during the latter half of the nineteenth century, including Price, Parowan, and Cedar City, Utah. He spent the remaining years of his life in St. George (where he labored as a carpenter on the St. George Temple and St. George Tabernacle) and died there on August 19, 1890, at the age of eighty-two. Maurine Ward Carr, “1842 Census of Nauvoo Identification of Members Civil Ward One,” Nauvoo Journal 5 (Spring 2003): 29–30.
Mormon emigrant Jens Hansen, pictured here, recalled that “among the great number that died” of cholera in camp after his party’s arrival in Kansas “were also my brother Jorgen and several of his children. . . . Immediately thereafter,” he continued, “we commenced our long journey across the plains with ox teams and wagons, during which I officiated as captain of the camp. My brother Peder Hansen became ill and died a few days after we had commenced our travel through the desert; my wife, also was again attacked by sickness and died on the 29th of July.” Portrait courtesy of the Church History Library, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

or to see a husban[d] mourning for his affectionate wife & to see a woman lamenting for her husband. It would cause the stoutest of man to drop a tear. God be merciful to us & save us from the grasp of the destruction [sic].”17

In 1854 the Millennial Star published a lengthy article on the dreaded disease and noted among other things an average of 207 deaths per week in St. Louis during the month of July.18 The cholera epidemic also stretched across Missouri to the Kansas border. The Liberty Weekly Tribune reported that during this same month there was “a good deal of cholera on the route, [and among] some of the trains, particularly the Mormons suffered severely from this disease.” As early as May of this same year, the Weekly (Columbia) Missouri Statesman reported, “This scourge is again on the river, in some of the towns. We have heard of a number of deaths on different boats among the Mormon emigrants.”19

Those most severely stricken by the ravaging effects of cholera were the groups of emigrants arriving from Scandinavia. The sickness struck one company of Scandinavian Saints under the direction of Hans Peter Olsen as it began its steamboat travel up the Mississippi to St. Louis in the spring of 1854.20 Referring to the deadly effects of the disease, Scandinavian Mormon Johanne Bolette Dalley wrote, “We reached St. Louis about April 1, 1854. A great many died there also.” A member of Olsen’s company, Jens Hansen, recalled that “among the great number that died” of cholera in camp after his party’s arrival in Kansas “were also my brother Jorgen and several of his children. . . . Immediately thereafter,” he continued, “we commenced our long journey across the plains with ox teams and wagons, during which I officiated as captain of the camp. My brother Peder Hansen became ill and died a few days after we had commenced our travel through the desert; my wife, also was again attacked by sickness and died on the 29th of July.”21 Niels H. Borreson, another member of the Olsen Company, recalled that the group was “transferred [sic] to a

19. Liberty (Missouri) Weekly Tribune, July 7, 1854; “Cholera,” Weekly (Columbia) Missouri Statesman, May 12, 1854. “Cholera in Independence,” Liberty Weekly Tribune, June 23, 1854, noted, “This scourge of the human family has been in Independence for some days. About 25 deaths have occurred in this city and immediately around in the country.” And “Cholera,” Liberty Weekly Tribune, June 30, 1854, reported another thirty cases in the area.
21. Reminiscences of Jensen Hansen, typescript, 8–9, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah; Reminiscences of Johanne Bolette Dalley, 3. (Trail excerpt transcribed from “Pioneer History Collection,” available at Pioneer Memorial Museum [Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum], Salt Lake City, Utah.) Due to the threat of diseases such as cholera, in August 1854 Brigham Young directed Elder Franklin D. Richards, stationed in Liverpool, as follows: “You are aware of the sickness liable to assail our unacclimated [sic] brethren on the Mississippi river, hence I wish you to ship no more to New Orleans, but ship to Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, giving preference in the order named.” Brigham Young to Elder Franklin D. Richards, “Foreign Correspondence,” Millennial Star, October 28, 1854.
steamboat and sailed up the Mississippi River to St. Louis. From there we sailed on another steamboat to Kansas City. Many of our dear brethran [sic] contracted cholera and died and were buried there. The rest of us bought oxen and covered wagons and started on the trek across the desert, which took 17 weeks.”

In addition to cholera, the Scandinavians were smitten by another disease. Christian Emil Neilsen remembered that during this time, when these Saints were camped a short distance from Kansas City, “The measles broke out . . . I took them and having no care came near dying. I was bathing in the creek [sic] with the measles broke out on me and was sick all the way over the plains.” Svend Larsen recorded that after the party spent about two months camped some two miles from Kansas City, the journey to the Salt Lake Valley by ox team commenced. He further noted that more than two hundred of about seven hundred Scandinavians died on the way to Utah, including four of his family of seven.23

Plagued as they were by both disease and ongoing worries over how to fund the trek to Utah, Mormon emigrants traveling through Missouri were also keenly aware of the terrain over which they trod. Hezekiah Mitchell, a member of the James Brown Company that passed through the western edge of Missouri in the early summer of 1854, recalled the troubles earlier Mormon emigrants had experienced during their travels in the region. The plight, particularly of the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith and other church leaders who were incarcerated in the western Missouri town of Liberty shortly after the extermination order was issued in 1838, was on Mitchell’s mind as he moved through the state. He “ rejoiced,” he wrote, “at having to pass through the same parts of the country where . . . Joseph the Prophet and others were in prison at Liberty.”24

In other descriptions of his experience at the Missouri-Kansas boundary, Mitchell recorded: “Tuesday June the 27th 1854 Fixed up and traveled to Plat[e] City . . . small town and place for a city, but I suppose they have some privileges [sic] that others have not. A good looking Court House with other substantial buildings. We crossed Plat[e] River on a good bridge.” He added, “Wednesday June the 28th 1854 Got . . . to the ferry, bought a few things at store, got on the ferry boat, and passed over. Paid 2.25 dollars for ferryage, landed on the Nebraska or Kansas [side] of the Missouri about three or four miles from Fort L[eavenworth].” Hezekiah’s brother and traveling companion, eighteen-year-old Frederick Augustus Mitchell, also remembered Mormon emigrants that had made the journey before him. On crossing Clay County, Missouri, where LDS Church leaders had been imprisoned fifteen years earlier, he wrote, “On 25th June, passed through Liberty, Clay County, Missouri. Saddened by the fact that it was here the leaders of the church had been persecuted and suffered. We journe[y]d on toward Platte City and crossed Platte River.”25

The earliest description of Mormon emigrants camping on the Missouri-Kansas border is from a letter by Mormon elder Dorr P. Curtis, dated April 11, 1854, and later published in the Millennial Star. Among other things, the paper explained in its introduction to the letter that Curtis “had selected a sheltered spot, about a mile from Kansas, with plenty of wood and water, for a camping place. Since leaving St. Louis, eight deaths had occurred in the company, who . . . were of the Danish and German emigration. . . . Fare and freight were still very high. . . . Cattle were twenty percent cheaper than they were.” In his letter Curtis noted that “the inhabitants at Kansas


23. Neilsen refers to the city as Westport, whereas Svend Larsen notes that the camp was two miles from Kansas City. Autobiography of Christian Emil Neilsen, 1902, typescript, 10, Church History Library; Svend Larsen, “Extracts from my Autobiography,” English translation typescript, 11, Church History Library.

24. Journal of Hezekiah Mitchell, June 25, 1854, typescript, 3, Church History Library. Not surprisingly, the large movement of Saints passing through Missouri attracted the attention of the non-Mormon residents. “Mormon Emigration—A train of twenty-one wagons belonging to the Mormons from England and Wales passed through this place on Friday last. There were one hundred and six people, men, women and children, and with one hundred and twenty-five head of cattle . . . all bound for Salt Lake City.” “Mormon Emigration,” Weekly Missouri Statesman, May 26, 1854.

25. Journal of Hezekiah Mitchell, June 27–28, 1854, typescript, 3–4, Church History Library. A continuous wave of emigrants crossed the Missouri River in this area. One correspondent noted, “there is almost a constant procession of [settlers]. . . . These, with the flood of Mormons on their way to Salt Lake City, would keep a toll-gatherer—if there was one—quite busy.” Quotation from “Correspondence of the Boston Post, Fort Leavenworth,” June 13, 1854, unidentified newspaper clipping in the Webb Scrapbooks, vol. 1, 1854, 46, Library and Archives Division, Kansas Historical Society by Wm. Philip Pipkin, this ferry was located near Rialto, Leavenworth County, Kansas,” prepared for the Leavenworth County Historical Society, Topeka. According to an “1854 Historical Map of Leavenworth County, Kansas,” prepared for the Leavenworth County Historical Society by Wm. Philip Pipkin, this ferry was located near Rialto, Missouri. The author thanks Kelvin Crow, assistant command historian at Fort Leavenworth, for bringing this document to his attention.

26. This Frederick Augustus Mitchell account was drawn upon by Adelia Horrocks Cameron and recounted in History of Hezekiah [Heze- kiah] Mitchell, 1859, typescript, 15, Church History Library. The James Brown Company was composed of three hundred members and forty-two wagons. This company entered the Salt Lake Valley on December 31, 1854. See Deseret News 1997–1998 Church Almanac (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1996), 171.
The 1854 Mormon Emigration at the Missouri-Kansas Border

The following month, Scandinavian Mormon elder Christian J. Larson wrote, “May 9 [1854]. I was kept busy, by assisting the saints in their preparations for journey across the plains. I administered to many of the sick. . . . We moved in small parties, or by families, to West Port, 8 miles from Kansas City, and when we all had gathered there, then the company was more fully organized by Bro. Empey [William Empey].” Three days later, Larson added, “[I] and some other brethren were made to make trips back and forth to buy provisions for the company to take across the plains. I kept accounts of all this business besides blessing a number of children nearly every day.”

Empey also kept busy purchasing goods for the emigrants who temporarily settled at the Kansas campground before continuing their journey west. An April 13, 1854, receipt records that Empey purchased more than three thousand pounds of bacon and fifteen hundred pounds of beans from St. Louis’s James Ham Wholesale Grocer. This shipment had come in on the steamboat Tropic, which traveled from St. Louis to “the port of Kansas” near Westport, Missouri. Empey’s account book also contains hundreds of financial transactions for livestock, supplies, provisions, and so forth, recorded in connection with emigration matters in 1854. He also retained receipts for lodgings at the Lanlord Mansion in St. Louis and the Union Hotel at Westport where he apparently temporarily housed a few emigrants.

In June Empey wrote the president of the LDS British Mission, Samuel W. Richards, who was overseeing emigration matters from Liverpool, England. He vividly sketched his activities at “The Camp at Kansas”:

I have seized a few moments to give you brief out-line of the state of affairs connected with the emigration of the Saints this season. The Danish company comprising seventy wagons, under the presidency of H[ans]. P[eter]. Olsen, have received their outfit, and they rolled out on the plains yesterday. I have organized other three companies of English, Welsh, and Scotch. Two of these are the P.E. Fund [Perpetual Emigrating Fund] Companies, and one is independent. The independent company consists of about fifty wagons, Elder Job Smith President. The other two companies consist of about thirty wagons each. I have appointed William Carter President of the one, and Dr. Darwin

27. “Foreign Intelligence–Kansas,” Millennial Star, May 27, 1854. An account book, in HM 52587, William Young Empey Papers, Huntington Library, reveals that Dorr P. Curtis was assisting Empey with many emigration financial transactions in the Kansas-Missouri region during the spring and summer of 1854.

28. Journal of Christian J. Larsen, English translation, October 5, 1854, 101–2. Journal History, Church History Library, October 5, 1854, 1, further explains that two Scandinavian companies originally left Copenhagen and merged as one once they reached the Kansas border. One was led by Christian J. Larsen and the other by Hans Peter Olsen. Later, Olsen was designated the company leader for all of these Scandinavian Saints as they crossed the plains from the Missouri River, and Larsen was appointed the chaplain.

29. J. Ham (age eighty), perhaps James Ham, died in St. Louis on June 25, 1854, about two months later. See information on “James Ham” for this date on Missouri Digital Heritage, online at http://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/. Ham’s store was located at 61 Commercial Street, at the corner of Olive. An additional receipt is also evidenced from James Ham to Empey for cheese, salt, hams, etc. for $297.95, dated June 15, 1854. Both receipts may be found in HM 52602 and William Empey account book in HM 52614, William Young Empey Papers, Huntington Library.
Richardson of the other. The three last are on the prairie, and will roll out in a day or two. The health of the Saints in the above companies is good... The other companies have not yet arrived. On account of the immense emigration to California and Salt Lake this season, oxen range from seventy-five to one hundred and ten dollars per yoke, and cows from twenty-five to forty dollars per head. The price of wagons in St. Louis is sixty-seven dollars, and the freightage to Kansas ranges from six to twelve dollars per wagon. This variation in the prices of freights is the result of the different stages of the river... The companies have been detained at the camping ground, one mile from Kansas, three weeks longer than necessary, for want of wagons.30

A week later, Empey also wrote a summary letter to Brigham Young, providing the church president an overview of the emigration situation on the Missouri-Kansas border:

Knowing that you ever have a deep and abiding interest in the gathering of the Saints I wish to give you a brief acct. of the General Emigration this season. The Danish Company under the presidency of H. P. Olsen rolled out on the plains a few days ago, but in consequence of heavy rains & being heavy laden, they are remaining at Big Blue a few miles out on the Prairie unable to proceed further. The President of the company has returned with a note from Elder Orson Pratt stating that I must supply them with what oxen they want. I take security upon their teams for the same, which has been done. A company of fifty wagons under the Presidency of Elder Job Smith started out—last—Saturday. Dr. Darwin Richardson will start with thirty two wagons early in the morning. [William Furlsbury] Carter will start one day behind him with a company of about 32 wagons. I may possibly add to these companies before they start. The latter two companies are P E Fund... There has been considerable mortality among the Saints this season about 200 have died.31

At about the same time, the Independence Occidental Messenger provided an external view of the Mormon camp: “It looks like a great city built up in the beautiful prairie south of town. ... They number now we believe 1200, and still they come—every boat brings more. ... It is the intention of those in charge of them, to ... move in bands, so that they will not impede the progress of each other.”32 There is abundant evidence that as they waited their turn, some Mormon emigrants were temporarily employed on the western Missouri border. Emigrant Christian Fredrick Neilsen Twede made good use of his time while waiting for his plains journey to commence. He remembered that after traveling to “Kansas City, then a small town... I took work in a saddle shop and stopped there about a month. The boss was a German. He was content with my work but did not pay me all it was worth.”33

30. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints established a revolving fund to assist Mormon emigrants gathering to the Salt Lake Valley. “Most converts were poor; indeed, the majority lacked sufficient funds to emigrate. Individuals and families were encouraged to save systematically, and the few who had surplus funds after emigrating were asked to assist fellow converts. In 1849 the Church organized the perpetual emigrating fund (PEF) to solicit donations and provide emigrants with loans, the repayment of which would aid others. Such loans were most often made available to individuals with needed skills, to those whose relatives or friends donated to the PEF, or to those who had been faithful Church members for ten years or longer. From 1852 until 1887 the PEF assisted some 26,000 immigrants—more than one-third of the total LDS emigrants from Europe during that period—with at least part of the journey to the mountain west. In the 1850s and 1860s there were three categories of immigrants: the independent, who paid their own way to Utah; ‘states’ or ‘ordinary’ immigrants, who paid only enough to reach a port of entry or other intermediate stopping place in the United States, hoping to earn enough there to finish the journey; and PEF immigrants, assisted by the Perpetual Emigrating Fund.” Richard L. Hartley, “Immigration and Emigration,” Encyclopedia of Mormonism, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 674. W. Empey, “The Camp at Kansas,” [letter written by Empey June 16, 1854] published in the Millennial Star, July 29, 1854.

31. Less than five months later, Empey received a letter from Brigham Young’s office via treasurer Daniel McIntosh, requesting more detailed information about the emigration season, provisions used by company, and the number of deaths by land and sea. In addition, the name of each emigrant was requested as well as their age and the amount of debt they owed to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. A letter written four days earlier (June 19, 1854) by Orson Pratt to William Empey reveals that Pratt had written a letter from Fort Leavenworth requesting Empey and “Bro Olston [Olsen] to purchase the cattle necessary for his company on credit giving you the notes for the same, but make the company responsible so that you can secure the cattle to meet the payment for the same when you shall arrive in G. S. [Great Salt Lake] City.” Empey to Young, June 23, 1854, in Brigham Young Office Files, Church History Library; McIntosh to Empey, November 16, 1854, Brigham Young Office Files, Church History Library; Orson Pratt to William Empey, June 19, 1854, HM 5292, William Young Empey Papers, Huntington Library.

32. Occidental Messenger, June 24, 1854, cited in Louise Barry, The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West 1540–1854 (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 1221. Herein, the Chicago Tribune, June 6, 1854, is also cited: “A letter ... from Kansas City ... states that the advance guard of the Mormon emigration over the plains this season, is encamped near that town. This body numbers 1,600 persons; they are chiefly Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Welsh and English.”

It was resolved: That Brother Robert Campbell be president of this Company, that Br. Richard Cook be his first Councillor, and Brother J[abez]. Woodard be his second Councillor. That Brother [Thomas William] Brewerton be Captain of the Guard. That Bro. Charles Brewerton be Waggon [sic] Master, and Brother William Kendall[l] to assist him. That Brother Richard Cook be Captain of the first ten. That Brother Thomas Fisher be Captain of the Second Ten. That Brother Baliffe [Serge Lewis Ballif] be Captain of the third ten. That Brother Thomas Sutherland be Clerk and historian of this Company. That no Gun shall be fired within fifty yards of the Camp Under a Penalty of one Nights Guard. That the Captain of each ten shall awaken the head of every Family at four oClock on the Morning and be ready to roll out at seven if circumstances will admit, That all go to bed at nine oClock in the evening. That every man from Sixteen to Sixty years of age be suitable [eligible] to stand Guard! The above resolutions have been afterwards laid before the whole Company in Camp. And have received their Unanimous Sanction. R. Campbell, President Thos. Sutherland, Clerk

Brother Empey prophecied [sic] in the name of the Lord, In as much as the Brethern [sic] act with Unity and Keep humble that we shall go right straight to the mountains. He spoke of the necessity of having a record Kept of every thing that shall occur on the way. He says he Knows Brother Campbell is a good man, Well suited to hold the position that he is placed in! Brother Campbell spoke of the necessity of appointing a committee [sic] of three to enquire into the amount of provisions in each wagggon. Brother Empey Remarked that no [man] should take his gun out of his Waggon without leave from his Captain. And also that every Man Should be careful in taking off the cap in putting [sic] in his Gun in his waggon and also to have buckskin attached so as to put it on the pillar under the cock.34

On Monday, July 10, Peter Sinclair also wrote about his emigration outfitting experience in Missouri and Kansas under the supervision of William Empey. He described paying Empey $12 for two guns he needed for crossing the plains, as well as his experiences drilling in camp, and Empey’s admonition to the Saints to remember their covenants: “drilled at 5 AM. In camp today the bugle sounded for a meeting after sunset by order of President Empey who superintended [sic] the meeting[g]. The particulars of which was for the Independants [sic] to go out as fast as possible—all to remember their God & their Covenants Elder Rob[er]t Campbell. By permission Moved that the Independants should be no longer known by that name but by ordinary passangers [sic]. Carried.”35

Concerning the various types of companies, outfits, and provisions needed for the journey from the Missouri River to Utah, another Mormon emigrant wrote that his

Father bought all the camp outfit and provision to start on our journey but it was six weeks before we started. The families of saints father had brought were all to go to Utah in what they called the ten pound company and then settle with father later. We went in an independent company, or a company that furnished themselves. We had in our outfit to travel across the plains 2 wagons, 12 herd [head] of oxen, 1 yoke of cows and a beautiful riding mare, saddle etc. We had two teamsters. We had all kinds of provisions: bacon, hams, flour, crackers, and everything to eat one would wish. We even had a churn and used to put the milk

34. Robert L. Campbell Emigrating Company Journal, in Perpetual Emigrating Fund General Files, 3–4, Church History Library. This journal contains a very detailed report of this last company to be organized on the Kansas border in 1854. The 397 members of the Campbell Company arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on October 28–31, 1854.

35. Journal of Peter Sinclair, July 10, 1854, 169–70, Church History Library. More than three dozen receipts were written out to specific Mormon emigrants for the purchase of guns; Sinclair’s purchase of two is evidenced in these documents. See also HM 52587, William Young Empey Papers, Huntington Library. Another document titled, “Accounts of expenditures of behalf of the Perpetual Emigration [Emigrating] Fund,” for 1854 provides more evidence of the many emigration transactions made between Empey and the Saints. See HM 52614, William Young Empey Papers, Huntington Library.
from the cows in the churn in the morning in the wagon and by night we would have butter.\textsuperscript{36}

Christian Fredrick Neilsen Twede gave a similar overview of the provisions Hans Peter Olsen’s Scandinavian company was equipped with, as well as the route they traveled as they commenced their trail journey across the Missouri border and headed northwest through Kansas Territory: “Finally we got ready to start. There were 72 wagons in all. Some three hundred milk [milk] cows from four to six oxen to a wagon, We broke a new road for Weston [sic: Westport] six miles from Kansas City. We had pilots to stake the road off for us. We traveled through tal gras [sic] all the time and finally got to Leavenworth by the river. We had to ferry our wagons over at that place. Then we proceeded onward to Fort Kearney. Erastus Snow and Benson met us there.”\textsuperscript{37} Another member of the company, Anders Wilhelm Winberg recalled:

On the 9th of May the Company was ready to cross the plains. There were sixty wagons, which we made into companies, each company having a captain. I was one of the captains. Ten wagons to a company. After traveling for a short distance we found out we did not have enough oxen to pull the loads. Some of the brethren left for more oxen, coming back with 25 yoke. We were then requested to unpack our trunks and do away with all that we could possibly do without. I packed my things in a sack and threw away my trunk as many others did. In hitching some of the wild oxen to our wagons I was run down by one of them but was not hurt very much.

The road we traveled had never been gone over before. We waded in grass knee deep, and every day would have to cut down the banks of creeks. For this purpose a corps of men traveled ahead with spades and shovels. At one time we were led out of our path coming to a steep bluff near the Kansas River. We could go no further, and so went back to the turning point taking the whole of one day. We had many such stops. Many dangerous roads to cross. At one place on the Kansas river our cattle had to swim the stream. Here one of the boys 18 years of age was drowned. We finally reached the old emigrant road on July 22nd. What a change it was after we had traveled such a hard road. Walking now seemed easy.\textsuperscript{38}

The day after the Scandinavians departed from Kansas’s eastern border, the Job Smith Company set out on its journey. One young member of Smith’s group, William W. “Willie” Burton, helped prepare cattle for the journey. His account offers a glimpse into the difficulty of providing livestock for the plains crossing. In order to obtain the animals needed, Burton traveled to a nearby farm in Jackson County, where a Mr. McMurray was taking care of about fifty cows and calves until church agent Empey should request them for the westbound Latter-day Saint emigrants. “Mr. McMurray had purchased the calves, which were to run with the cows until they were taken away,” Burton described. He “remained there about three weeks. All went on smoothly until the time came for separating the cows and calves, which were mostly of the Texas breed, and extremely wild and vicious.” After the cattle were driven to the camp, they were herded into a corral and the following morning, a group of men, including Burton, spent nearly the entire day trying to yoke up the wild beasts. By the time this demanding task was done, some of the oxen had broken horns, others broken necks, and a few had run off into the woods.\textsuperscript{39}

Company leader Job Smith wrote that once the oxen were yoked, the emigrants’ difficulties did not subside: “June 7th . . . with other brethren as captains of ten [wagons or families] the company consisting of 36 families, we made

\textsuperscript{36} Autobiographical Sketch of Ann Lewis Clegg, [ca. 1911], typescript, 2–3, Church History Library. In a front page article titled, “Emigration,” Millennial Star, October 2, 1852, the Latter-day Saint ten-pound emigration plan was announced: “We have proposed that all who can furnish £10 per head emigrate the coming season to the valleys of the mountains; and because of the encouragement given by naming this small sum, many are exerting themselves to go who otherwise would not have thought of going.” For more information on the ten-pound plan, see Fully Aird, “Bound for Zion: The Ten- and Thirteen-pound Companies, 1853–54,” Utah Historical Quarterly 70 (Fall 2002): 300–25.

\textsuperscript{37} Autobiography of Christian Frederick Neilsen Twede, 1886–1897, 5, Church History Library. Anders Wilhelm Winberg recalled, “On the 4th of August we met Erastus Snow, P. P. Pratt and E. T. Benson, of the Twelve Apostles, also a Brother Spencer. They stayed overnight with us, and before parting next day Apostle Snow blessed the Scandinavian Emigrants.” Reminiscences of Anders Wilhelm Winberg, typescript, 2–3, Church History Library. At this time, Elders Erastus Snow, Ezra T. Benson, and Parley P. Pratt were all serving as Latter-day Saint Apostles. The Brother Spencer referred to here is most certainly Orson Spencer who assisted with emigration matters from St. Louis during this period.

\textsuperscript{38} Reminiscences of Anders Wilhelm Winberg, typescript, 3, Church History Library.

\textsuperscript{39} “Willie,” Juvenile Instructor, March 1, 1893.
a start. Our cattle mostly wild with only myself and two others who had ever handled an ox whip in their lives you may guess we had a picnic. We moved a few miles only.”

In a letter written to President Young in August of 1854, as a group of emigrants made its way from Fort Leavenworth towards Utah, LDS Apostle Orson Pratt echoed the challenges of obtaining and maintaining cattle:

You will no doubt be surprised to learn that the Church Train is at this late season so far from Utah, but unavoidable circumstances have detained us. It was found, after proceeding 40 miles upon our journey from Fort Leavenworth, and the scattering fragments of our camp had been collected together, that we lacked some 12 or 15 yoke of cattle for leaders, before we could move all the wagons at once. Capt. James Brown and H. [Horace] S. Eldredge were therefore sent back to Jackson Co., about 75 miles, to procure the required number.

After they obtained the required number, however, the cattle became frightened and stampeded. Some 120 head were lost. A search party was immediately sent out, but to no avail.

Inexperienced drivers and oxen were often the problem. “Our cattle were young, never having been yoked up before,” recalled Elizabeth MacDonald. “My husband had not even seen Cattle yoked up previous to his experience with his recent purchase. He was driver. In stating this I will leave, the reader, to imagine the indescribable evolutions of an utterly inexperienced driver—and of an utterly un-broke cattle. . . . the Oxen were not at all particular to keep the road; for in the first of our experience with them, they several times ran away and upset the wagon.” And John Allen Sutton related: “On the first part of the journey noth-

ing of interest occurred except the running away of cattle, breaking up of wagons, getting stuck in the mud, a great deal of which was in consequence of unskilled drivers.”

Cholera, which had been a devastating problem on the ships carrying Mormon emigrants up the Missouri to St. Louis, again became a problem as the pilgrims waited in the City of Kansas before their journey west. Mormon Welsh convert John Johnson Davies noted after reaching the Kansas landing in 1854, “we camped close to the river . . . The cholera was very bad among us by this time,

40. Autobiography of Job Smith, typescript, 41–42, Church History Library. James Moyle, a member of the Darwin Richardson Company, also had problems with unruly animals used on the journey west: “We started with two yoke of oxen and one yoke of cows. One of the yoke of oxen was Texas cattle, and very wild, with two long sharp horns. When we first yoked them up, one of them knocked a hole in my upper lip and we had a great time with them until they were thoroughly broke, and then they were not worth much.” Reminiscences of James Moyle, 1886, 12, Church History Library.

41. This correspondence is labeled as having been written “250 miles east of Fort Laramie, near the junction of the north & South forks of the Platte River.” Orson Pratt to Brigham Young, August 8, 1854, Brigham Young Incoming Correspondence, Church History Library.

42. Autobiography of Elizabeth MacDonald, 16–17, Church History Library.

43. Autobiography of John Allen Sutton [ca. 1883], typescript, 7–8, Church History Library. Sutton was in the Job Smith Company. In addition, “While crossing a creek at what is called the Catholic Mission, not far from Big Blue, one man got drowned. He was sick and while crossing a log, he fell in and was drowned before anyone knew it.” The Catholic Mission was in Pottawatomie County, Kansas Territory. By 1853, the population consisted of a few traders, five government employees, the Catholic missionaries, several families, and about a dozen individuals. See http://skyways.lib ks.us/genweb/pottawat/book_ks.html.
and in a few days we moved to Mr. Magee’s [Elijah Milton McGee’s] plantation.”44 Watkin Rees described in a similar way his arrival at the landing and the subsequent outbreak of cholera amongst the company led by Daniel Garn:

The landing here was the natural bank of the River it being a new place. There [sic] was here a Custom House and about half a dozen resident houses and it seemed to be a shipping [sic] point for Santa fe Mexico. We ware [sic] landed in the woods about a half a mile above, ware we put up our tents and camped two or thre[e] weeks and ware soon joined by other Emigrants from Denmark. The River bottom here was quite flat and covered with tall timber covered with climbing grapevines so dence [sic] that we had to look straight up in order to see the sky; this place was very unhealthy. The cholera broke out again and many people died here and after camping here about two or three weeks we were moved out to Magees [McGee’s] farm several miles away from the River, and then again soon after, farther out, to a place near Westport on the edge of the pr[a]irie, near which is about 8 miles from Independence Missourie [sic], ware we camped about three Months waiting [sic] for cattle and wagons.45

The camp to which both Davies and Rees referred was owned by Elijah Milton McGee, who offered a portion of the property he held just south of the landing at the City of Kansas as a campground for emigrants waiting for their journeys west to commence. Ann Lewis Clegg, who traveled in the Darwin Richardson Company,46 also remembered spending time at McGee’s camp after disembarking at the City of Kansas: “When we got off the boat we were taken in vehicles out to the edge of [town] to McFee’s [McGee’s] camp ground, where all the saints were camped, preparatory to going to Utah.”47 There is documentation that both Dorr P. Curtis and William Empey were doing business with McGee in Kansas and

44. Journal of John Johnson Davies cited in The Beginning of the West, 1221. C. C. Spalding, Annals of the City of Kansas . . . (Kansas City: Van Horn & Abeel’s Printing House, 1858), 38–39, described McGee’s addition as “a tract composed of 160 acres; extending nine blocks south, and six blocks east and west, with an 80 acre tract adjoining on the eastward, embracing in all 240 acres.” He added that this property was, “on the most level and unbroken ground in or about the city [of Kansas]” and that “sixty acres of the tract are covered with young shade trees, not growing in a forest, but standing in an open woodland, in scattered rows and groves.”
47. Although Clegg writes that the emigrants were taken “out to the edge of St. Louis,” all indications are that she meant “Town of Kansas.” Autobiographical Sketch of Ann Lewis Clegg, [ca. 1911], typescript, 2, Church History Library. Watkin Rees, traveling in the Daniel Garn Company, referred to his company moving out to the property of McGee’s farm. Reminiscences of Watkin Rees, Watkin Rees Papers, [ca. 1880–1905], 7–8, Church History Library.
Missouri during the early summer of 1854. McGee gave Empey a receipt for $222.50 for corn, corn shucking, hauling wagons, boarding a horse, hauling the corn to the prairie, and a blacksmith’s board. 48 Apparently the two men formed a sincere friendship, a surprising relationship since two decades earlier a teenage McGee had taken a very active role against the Saints in the Mormon conflict in Jackson County. 49 The warm relationship between McGee and Empey continued after their business dealings ended, as was evidenced by a letter McGee sent Empey in the spring of 1855, after the latter had moved back to Utah:

Dear old friend the Long looked for came to hand on yesterday I was very [sic] glad to hear that you all got home safe and that you found your family all well you searently [sic] are deserving of much and to take so many given people across the plains without losing [sic] a good number you will be rewarded for your enterprise god will if man does not I am always glad to hear from you but was surprised that I never got any letter from you until [sic] now. I have written time and again but this is the first word from you. 50

48. Receipt from E. M. McGee to Wm. Empey, dated June 24, 1854, HM 613, William Young Empey Papers, Huntington Library. On this same day, Empey wrote to Brigham Young informing Young that “Mr. Ghiie has kindly consented to furnish as many [cattle] as he [Hans P. Olsen, Scandinavian Company leader] wanted on credit.” This amounted to over $2,000. Empey to Young, June 24, 1854, Brigham Young Office Files, Church History Library.

49. McGee was born in Kentucky in 1818, and later “settled in the midst of the wild tribes. . . . In the year 1834 [1833], [McGee] took a very active part in the Mormon [sic] difficulty where he gained some notoriety and being of a ambitious disposition made up his mind that he would be his own man and General Jackson Like.” See, “Our Hero Was,” Papers of Elijah Milton McGee, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Kansas City. (The author thanks the associate director there, David Boutros, for bringing this manuscript to his attention as well as reading his manuscript and providing a better understanding of the geography of the Kansas-Missouri border.) McGee married in 1841 and had six children. McGee became mayor of Kansas City, Missouri, in 1870 and died three years later. George Fuller Green, A Condensed History of the Kansas City Area Its Mayors and Some V.I.P.s (Kansas City, Mo.: Lowell Press, 1968), 63. According to his obituary, Elijah Milton McGee was born May 30, 1818, moved to Jackson County (Kansas City) a decade later, and died February 9, 1873. Among other things, it stated, “The deceased has led a most active and in many respects adventurous life. He was a youth at the time of the Mormon difficulty, in 1834 [1833], in which he took an active part.” “Death of Col. McGee,” Daily Journal of Commerce, February 12, 1873.

50. The letter is signed, “Brother E. M. McGee.” McGee most probably was not a member of the LDS Church at this time, but his use of this friendly term “brother” is further evidence of a close relationship between the two. McGee to Empey, April 29, 1855, HM 52591, William Young Empey Papers, Huntington Library.

Cholera continued to be a problem even after emigrants left eastern Kansas and began the move west. At their camps near Fort Leavenworth, for example, many emigrants contracted and died from the disease. Robert Hodgert of the William Field Company explained that the American Saints who were emigrating from the east to Salt Lake City were told to use the fort as their outfitting point, while the British Saints were to begin their trail travel from Kansas City. He reported that members of both these groups fell ill before and after they met up at the fort:

> On the 11th of June passed Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and camped at Salt Creek, three miles from Fort Leavenworth. This is the campground selected for the saints from the States. On our arrival found them in a hollow on the right-hand side of the road. The health of our camp was good all the way up. Of those who came by the river and camped in the hollow, a great many died, among the number being Elders A. D. Buckland, Jesse Turpin, John A. James, and James Ballinger and wife. One of our company, Sister Harrison died through visiting the other camp, we supposed. The emigration from England was larger this year, conducted by William Empey. Their place of outfit is at Kansas. About one-tenth of the emigrants from England died with the cholera. 51

Thomas Ambrose Poulter, also a member of the William Field Company, “had a good passage to Fort Leavenworth” and “camped in a lovely grove along side of the river [Salt Creek campground]. The main body of the church was camped about three miles outside with a company of saints that came from St. Louis in their own teams about three hundred of them all well fixed. . . . We stayed at this place for six weeks. The cholera had broken out at President Eldridge’s [Eldredge’s] camp so the other camp...
four in one grave as they were dying so fast. The government furnished caskets as long as we were in reach of Fort Leavenworth.”

On June 10, 1854, an East-Coast newspaper reported on the story out west, noting that “the Mormon camp here [at Salt Creek] has had a few cases of cholera resulting no doubt from heavy dews at night and hot sun during the day. The number of wagons and emigrants are increasing daily. The advance party is expected to start on or about the 20th inst. for Salt Lake City.” Less than three weeks later, on June 28, 1854, Hezekiah Mitchell recorded in his journal, “About three or four miles from Fort [Leavenworth], saw Brother Farr. Glad to see us, went on until we got to the Fort, then passed on to Salt Creek about four miles farther where there were a company of Saints. Much sickness has been amongst them. Some 25 or 30 persons have died of the Cholera.” That same month Orson Pratt reported to Brigham Young the impact of the dreaded disease: “Since landing at the Fort [Leavenworth], our small company has lost 41 persons by the cholera. . . . We are now in hopes that the pestilence has ceased and that no more will fall a prey. The cholera is at work among the Emigrating saints from Kansas, but to what extent I am unable to inform you. In Independence, it is sweeping off some 30 a day. Some towns on the Missouri are nearly deserted.”

Newton Tuttle, of the William Field Company, wrote of his daily routine while his wife lay dying at the Salt Creek Mormon campground:

from St. Louis concluded to go on to Zion and not wait any longer.” John Bagley, another member of the William Field Company, later lamented that “there was one sick to every one well in camp. My cousin, a woman with six children, got cholera and died about one o’clock in the morning. Two of her children were dead the next morning and one of her sister’s children also. We buried these

May 2 . . . We arrived at Fort Leavenworth at 12 noon. May 3 I went hunting, shot one rabbit, one dove, 1 Redhead woodpecker, one yellow hammer. May 4” Worked on my wagon cover. May 5” Gathered wood, did our washing, etc. Lucinda still sick. I took care of her best I could. . . . May 10 & 11 I was making yokes and fixing things in wagon. A. W. Babbit[t] stopped here. Got my yokes finished

52. [Journal] of Thomas Ambrose Poulter, in “Utah Pioneer Biographies” (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1964), 44:139. Newton Tuttle, another member of the William Field Company, wrote, “April 3, 1854 I started with my family for this place and on May 14, while in camp at Salt Creek three miles west of Fort Leavenworth, my wife died of consumption, leaving me one little girl.” Autobiographical Sketch of Newton Tuttle in 14th Quorum, Biographies, in Seventy Quorum, Records, 1844–1975, series 14 A, 3, Church History Library.

53. Reminiscences of John Bagley, in History of Bear Lake Pioneers, comp. Edith Parker Haddock and Dorothy Hardy Matthews (Paris, Idaho: Daughter of the Utah Pioneers, Bear Lake County, Idaho, 1968), 53. The June 1854 post returns at Fort Leavenworth note that there were 225 total soldiers at Fort Leavenworth at this time and 257 aggregate. Post Returns for June 1854, Fort Leavenworth, 1851–1869, Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800–1916, roll 611, M617, RG 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C.


56. Orson Pratt to Brigham Young, June 29, 1854, Brigham Young Correspondence, Church History Library.
and finished loading my wagon. I was watchman until 12 o’clock midnight. . . May 12 & 13 Raining. Lucinda is worse, I had to take care of her alone. I went over to Salt Creek and got Horace Gillett[e] to come over to Fort and move us over to Salt Creek as Lucinda is much worse. She was administered to again. Sunday May 14 Lucinda passed away at 6:30 a.m. She was buried just at night, on the right side of the road just before you get to Salt Creek as you come from Fort Leavenworth, in a cluster of walnut trees, to mark the burial spot.57

Thereafter Tuttle continued to labor in the Fort Leavenworth area until his company was well enough to continue its journey west. On May 22 he transported “a load of soldiers” to Weston for “50 cents.” The following day Tuttle “hursed [sic] cattle,” on May 24 he “went out cooning” and “worked on yokes,” and the next day “at night I went over to the Fort to get a coffin for an English woman who died. Then I worked on my wagon.”58

While camped near the fort, the Saints rejoiced with those wishing to be baptized, but they also continued to mourn the suffering and death of so many others. “It pleased the Lord to try the Saints who emigrated this year very hard,” observed Johan Frederick Fechser. “We got namely the colera [sic] among us. Many died and most of the company were sick. Among others who died was my dear beloved wife . . . and my daughter . . . . This was a heavy blow for me; but I will say with Job of old: The Lord gave and the Lord Took, blessed be the name of the Lord. . . . The funeral of all these I attended to with my own hands; they were all buried 15 miles from Fort Leavenworth.” Another emigrant, Willard Carroll, recalled, “I remember . . . the camp ground at Leavenworth where my Mother died of cholera; as did my brother, Frederick and my sister, Emma. They were buried in one grave.”59

When Charles Shelton from New Brunswick arrived in St. Louis on May 24, 1854, he “found Bro. H. S. [Eldredge],” who arranged for the Shelton family’s “passage up the river to Fort Levensworth [sic], the camping ground of the Saints.” On the family’s arrival at Camping Ground the Diarhea just attacked my little son David Booth, finally Cholera carried him off. My wife was also taken with it and our youngest child and both died. So that my wife and two children were buried near the camping ground and as soon as sickness would permit we started forward on our journey, in hopes to get out where a healthier atmosphere pervaded. My little girl died on the way and was buried while on the road with our teams, next my little boy Wm. Slason was taken and the last one Charles Edwin died at big blue and buried there. Thus I left on the way to Zion my wife and five children.60

Following a long and difficult journey to Zion, some of the emigrants expressed mixed feelings as they entered the Salt Lake Valley in the fall of 1854. Charlotte Graehl wrote of the final moments of her long trek as she arrived at the Mormon Mecca:

The last night but one before we entered Salt Lake Valley it had been snowing and it became dark before we encamped for the night. I could find no wood with which to make a fire, so could bake no bread. We retired that night without supper. The following morning we mixed flour with sugar and ate it dry. We arrived in Salt Lake City two days later, October 31, 1854. It was with a sad heart that I parted with many of my traveling companions who had been so kind and obliging to me during that long and troublesome journey.61

Ann Lewis Clegg wrote of the thrill of entering the Valley and meeting with the Saints:

We came through Emigration [sic] Canyon through the valley and on to the public square, where we camped with hundreds of others for a few weeks until we could get located. How lit-

57. Journal of Newton Tuttle, May 2–14, 1854, typescript, 6–7, Church History Library.
58. Journal of Newton Tuttle, May 22–25, 1854, typescript, 8, Church History Library.
59. [Reminiscences] of Willard Carroll, in Daughters of Utah Pioneers Kane County Company, “Histories of Early Pioneers of Orderville and Kane County, Utah,” comp. Hattie Esplin, 1, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. Johan Frederick Fechser, Autobiographical sketch, typescript, in Fechser family histories, 2, Church History Library. Eliza Shelton Keeler recalled: “my sister Martha [Shelton], Louisa [Shelton Obrey], Emily [Shelton], and I were baptized at Fort Leavenworth by Alonzo [Alon-dus D. Lafayette] Buckland on the 24th of June 1854 with some others.” Autobiography and journal of Eliza Shelton Keeler, [ca. 1886–1898], 11, Church History Library. Carroll, Fechser, and Keeler were all members of the James Brown Company. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 430, point out that sometimes church members were rebaptized as “a symbol of rededication. On other occasions the saints were rebaptized as a symbolic gesture related to blessings of their health.”
60. Journal of Charles Shelton, May 24, 1854, 13, Church History Library. Charles was a member of the James Brown Company.
In 1854 the new American Zion in the Salt Lake Valley had not yet become prosperous Salt Lake City. This 1853 lithograph by English artist Frederick Hawkins Piercy, who in 1853 traveled west with a company of Mormon emigrants to record their experiences and whose works were reproduced in A Portfolio of Mormon Trail Engravings, illustrates that those Mormons who survived the trek west in 1854 arrived at a town still being built. Though their journeys consisted of many miles, and hundreds of emigrants lost their lives along the way, the sacrifice for most Latter-day Saints resulted in deep fulfillment and once they arrived they worked hard to build up their desert haven.

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Less than a week later, the Scandinavian company led by Hans Peter Olsen arrived at its destination. Jens Hansen, who traveled in this company and lost brothers, nephews, nieces, and his wife and son along the way, reflected: “I feel and understand by all of this, partly the greatness and power of the Lord by viewing his handy work. . . . we came into the Great Salt Lake Valley and the beautiful laid out City. It was a joy to see and to realize all of the work had already been done in so short a time they had lived in the valley. I felt very thankful to the Lord for his protection and for the comfortable trip we had with the exception of the trial I went through when He called my wife and little son home. . . . But the joy and satisfaction of arriving here in Zion healed these wounds.”

Johanne Bolette Dalley provided what appears to be a composite testimony of the feelings of many Saints from each of the 1854 Mormon companies as they reached the Salt Lake Valley: “I walked every step of


63. Jens Hansen, Autobiographical sketch [n.d.], photocopy of typescript as translated from his diary, 8, Church History Library.
the way, wading rivers, climbing mountains, often tired and weary, but always glad my face was turned toward Zion.”

As the Mormon emigrants passed over the Missouri-Kansas border, though aware of past conflict and potential strife, their minds were fixed on their destination. In the end, the enemy was not Jackson County citizens or western Missouri mobocrats, but rather the deadly cholera that ravaged the Missouri River valley. Although the Mormon extermination order was still technically in effect, it was not enforced and there does not appear to have been any explicit conflict between Mormon emigrants making their way to Utah and the citizens of the cities and towns through which the pilgrims traveled and near which they camped. Rather, cooperation was evidenced through the purchase of goods and livestock and in those instances when Mormons were employed in the area while waiting for their journeys to begin. Furthermore, a former Jackson County rival and future mayor, Milton McGee, even established a friendship with Mormon emigration agent William Empey that continued after the 1854 emigration season.

Though the Mormon journey to Zion consisted of many miles, and hundreds of emigrants lost their lives along the way, the sacrifice for most Latter-day Saints resulted in deep fulfillment. Thousands of converts from Europe and the eastern states crossed over a modern-day Mesopotamia between the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers and reached a desert haven in the West, which they made blossom through their continued hard work and perseverance. [KH]

64. Reminiscences of Johanne Bolette Dalley, 3. (Trail excerpt transcribed from “Pioneer History Collection” available at Pioneer Memorial Museum [Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum], Salt Lake City, Utah.) Dalley was in the Hans Peter Olsen Company.