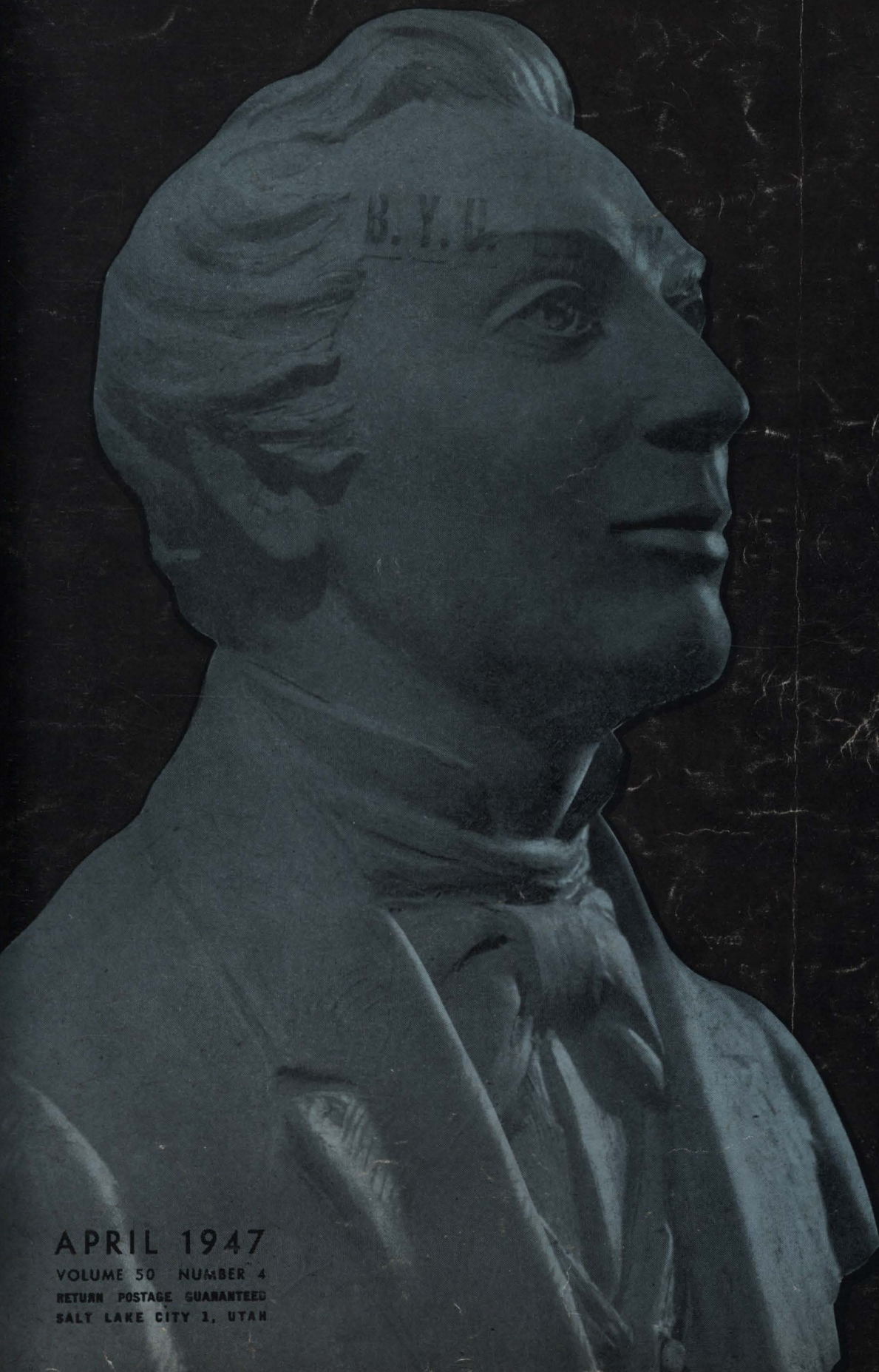


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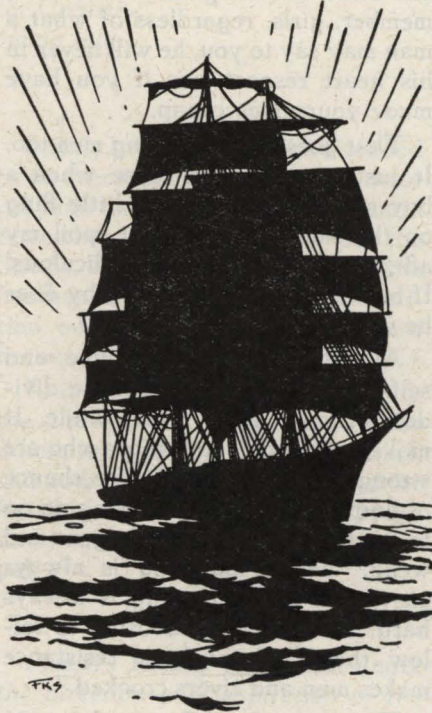
April 6, 1853: A MID-ATLANTIC CELEBRATION

By WILLIAM MULDER

SIX ROUNDS of musketry hailed April 6, 1853, as "an auspicious day" aboard the good ship *International* as, with sails trimmed to make the most of fair weather, she slogged through Atlantic seas toward New Orleans at a satisfying ten knots. She was forty-five days out from Liverpool, where, at Stanley Dock, she had taken on an unusual passenger load: 419 Latter-day Saints from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales bound for Zion. They had come aboard with their boxes and bedding, stood inspection by the government agents, made last-minute purchases, and by the time the vessel was towed into the River Mersey and cast anchor for a fair wind, they had already called a meeting of the priesthood "to counsel for the best means to be employed for the comfort of the Saints."

They had organized themselves into a little community. Under the general presidency of Elders Arthur, Lyon, and Waddington, their eighty-eight berths had been divided into six wards with presidents appointed over them according to seniority to look after cleanliness and conduct, the foremost concerns of body and spirit. Even before the ship stood out to sea, life in the emigrant community had gone full circle: three babies had been born and two of the company had died; and, before they found their sea legs, not a few had been badly bruised when the uncertain lurching of the vessel spilled them down hatchways or sent them stumbling into the cumbersome deck gear that seemed to be everywhere underfoot. Two brethren carrying a barrel of brine up the hatchway had come to near disaster when at the top of the ladder both fell, as well as barrel and ladder, to the steerage landing; but, "marvelous to relate, although the place was crowded with people, none were hurt."

THE company had held daily meetings (three on Sundays) for prayer and fellowship, often at-



tended by captain and crew, where ward presidents made their report; and where, amid testimony-bearing, there was much speaking in tongues and prophesying. Just as often, the exhortation took a practical turn: the lamps would have to be put farther from the berths to prevent fire; dogs would have to be tied up at night; during storm, women and children were not to leave their bunks.

"Four hundred Saints," sang Henry Maiben on this April 6th, to the tune of "Yankee Doodle":

... four hundred Saints
Assembled here together;
Resolved to do the will of God,
Whate'er the wind and weather.

That resolve had not gone untried, for there had been bad days and nights when heavy squalls had turned the vessel nearly on her beam ends, and the company had been closed under hatches to ride out the gale and to battle with luggage broken loose and rolling about in the center of the steerage, knock-

ing down the hapless passengers, smashing pots and pans, and scattering personal gear about, beyond hope of recovery. In storm there had been fasting and supplication; in calm weather, praise and thanksgiving—and opportunity to sew or knit or practise musical instruments or pick oakum, simply to while away the time.

But all the storm had been of the sea: the company itself had been remarkably well-dispositioned. Ward presidents could usually report that "all were in good standing, no sickness, quarreling, nor complaints of any kind." Occasionally someone had been baptized "for his health." Once there had been "much ado about cooking," but the galley dispute had been amicably settled, and Clerk Sims could record, "Quietness after dinner."

TO Captain David Brown (of Massachusetts, and "tarnation 'cute, sir") there had never been such a company. He had crossed the sea many times but had never felt so happy with any people as he had with the Latter-day Saints. The Saints in turn had found the good skipper "a comfortable man," and in the diary of the voyage¹ it was noted that "he felt he should be one of us before he reached New Orleans, as he was convinced that the work we were engaged in was from God." Calle Westerlind, the ship's Swedish carpenter, had already been baptized, as had the captain's cook and several sailors. In his verse composed for the April 6th festival, Henry Maiben cited:

... twenty-five baptisms.
Likewise (to-day) four marriages,
But no such thing as schisms.

It seemed natural for captain and crew to join with the Saints in their celebration.

The musket salute "at half past nine" was only the beginning of a

¹A copy of the "Diary of a Voyage from Liverpool to New Orleans on Board the Ship *International*" may be found in the scrapbook of Joan Lyon, now in possession of T. Edgar Lyon of Salt Lake City, a grandson.

(Concluded on page 254)

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A Mid-Atlantic Celebration

(Concluded from page 216)

day-long festival. Suggestions for a program had been made by one of the counselors, Elder John Lyon of Glasgow, known to all as "the celebrated poet" whom John Taylor had called "Harp of Zion," and whose book of verse had appeared shortly before, "for the benefit of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund." The program was a varied one. The diary entry for Wednesday, April 6th, described it in detail:

A beautiful day; at half past nine o'clock six rounds of musketry were given to hail in the auspicious day; military service conducted by Christopher Arthur, Jun. At half past ten the President and his counselors took their seats with Captain Brown, with their backs to the main mast, upon the poop deck; on the right side were seated 12 young men, on the left 12 young women, and opposite 12 venerable old men, headed by Father Waugh, who acted as chaplain; they held each a Bible and Book of Mormon in their hands. The forenoon was occupied by taking the Holy Sacrament and marrying four couples; in the afternoon we assembled at half past one o'clock, when after the usual services of prayer and praise; songs, speeches, recitations, instrumental music, &c. filled up the time of meeting. After a repast of every delicacy the ship could afford or pastry cooking could invent, they again met on the main deck and went through a variety of country dances; others of the Saints retired to the steerage, where they again renewed their singing and reciting till 10 o'clock p.m. It was a day of great harmony and mirth, such as many of the Saints never before experienced. Each of the authorities had a white rosette upon their left breast, and wore white sashes; the women and the 12 fathers were adorned in the same fashion. Father Waugh read appropriate portions from the Bible and Book of Mormon relative to this latter work. Brother Henry Maiben (from

Brighton) composed and sung a song commemorative of our leaving Liverpool and other circumstances in connexion with our voyage, which brought him enthusiastic bursts of applause from all the company. Elder Finch acted as marshall, to order the ceremonies of the day. A vessel spoken with.

AFTER April 6th, favorable winds and fair weather seemed to follow the *International*. A week later found her sailing by the edge of the Gulf Stream. Meetings could be held in the open air on the quarter-deck, and evenings there was dancing on the main deck and singing in the fore-castle. Now and then someone sighted a whale or some flying fish, and once the company observed a school of herring, "supposed to cover an acre of water," chased by a shark. In another week the vessel lay to at the mouth of the great Father of Waters and was taken in tow by a Mississippi steamboat into New Orleans. By this time the *International* was under the direction of the priesthood from bridge to galley, for Captain Brown had been baptized and ordained an elder; the first and second mates had been ordained priests; and the captain's cook had been made a teacher. Of twenty-six men in the crew, eighteen had been moved to join the Church so ardently served by this exemplary company of Saints.

Following a stopover of four days in New Orleans, with guards duly appointed to protect their belongings and prevent strangers from coming on board, and after going ashore to buy fresh provisions, the company, "amid rejoicing," proceeded in two groups on board the *St. Nicholas* and *Liah Tuna* up the river to St. Louis, where they arrived eight days later. They embarked the same evening on the *Jeannie Deans*, and in twenty-four hours landed in Keokuk, "all in good health and spirit," where they joined the Camp of Israel.

Statistically, Clerk Sims summed the voyage as follows: "Births, 6. Deaths, 6. Marriages, 5. Baptisms, 48, inclusive of rebaptisms." But spiritually, Henry Maiben's lines seemed at journey's end as appropriate as they had been on that April 6th commemorated so gaily in mid-Atlantic:

And who that could but witness now
Our festive, happy faces,
But would obey the Truth, to share
The joy our Faith embraces.



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