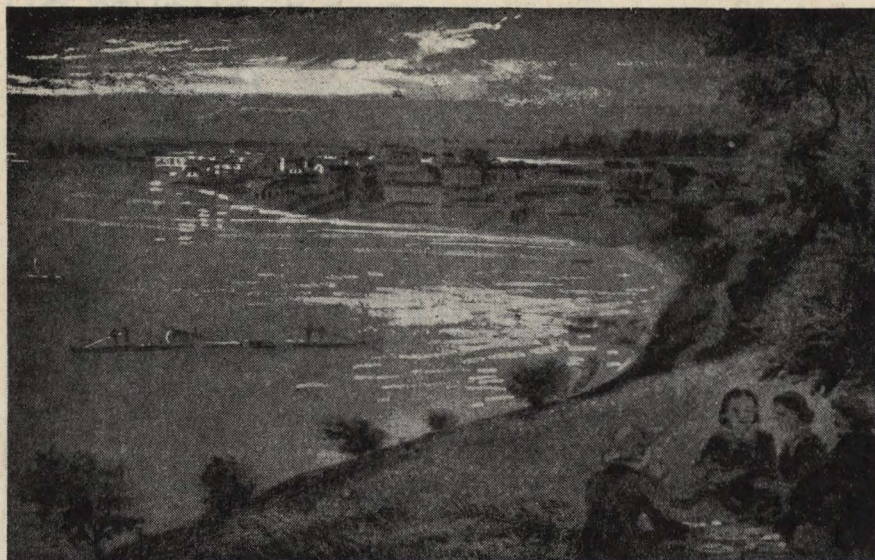


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# *The Improvement Era*

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AN OLD VIEW OF NAUVOO  
IN EARLY DAYS

—This is from a painting  
by David Hyrum Smith,  
posthumous son of the  
Prophet Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith  
contemplated a

## WESTERN MIGRATION

By E. Cecil McGavin  
OF THE CHURCH HISTORIAN'S OFFICE

IT is evident that Joseph Smith did not expect Nauvoo to be a permanent resting place for his people, but entertained hopes of a long journey into the West. Perhaps his opinion was not unlike that of Elder Heber C. Kimball, who prophesied when he first visited Nauvoo, "It is a very pretty place, but not a long abiding home for the Saints."<sup>1</sup> Sidney Rigdon became provoked because of this prediction and exclaimed, "I should suppose that Elder Kimball had passed through sufferings and privations and mobbings and drivings enough, to learn to prophesy good concerning Israel."

Yet Joseph Smith never objected to the prediction or reprimanded Brother Kimball for relating to his friends that Nauvoo was but a temporary abode.

As the enemy became more determined to expel the Mormons from Illinois, the church leaders gave more attention to the unwelcome thought of another exodus. Two years before the martyrdom the Prophet gave expression to the well-known prophecy about his followers becoming a "mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains." An entry in the official history of the church under date of August 6, 1842, bears this information:

Passed over the river to Montrose, Iowa, in company with General Adams, Colonel Brewer, and others, and witnessed the installation of the officers of the Rising Sun Lodge, Ancient York Masons, at Montrose, by General James Adams, Deputy Grand Master of Illinois. While the Deputy Grand Master was engaged in giving the requisite instructions to the Master-elect, I [Joseph Smith] had a conversation with a number of brethren in the shade of the building on the subject of our persecutions in Missouri, and the constant annoyance which has followed us since we were driven from that state. I prophesied that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains, many would apostatize, others would be put to death by

our persecutors or lose their lives in consequence of exposure or disease, and some of you will live to go and assist in making settlements and build cities, and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains.

The diary of Anson Call contains the following references to this incident:

In company with about 50 or 100 of the brethren, we crossed the river to Montrose to be present at the installment of a lodge of the Masonic order, viz., "The Rising Sun." Whilst together, Joseph, who was with us, told us of many things that should transpire in the mountains. After drinking a draught of ice-water, he said, "Brethren, this water tastes much like the crystal streams that are running in the Rocky Mountains which some of you will participate of. There are some of those standing here that will perform a great work in that land"—pointing to Shadrack Roundy and a number of others whom I have forgotten. "There is Anson, he shall go and assist in building cities from one end of the country to the other, and shall perform as great work as has ever been done by man so that the nations of the earth shall be astonished, and many of them will be gathered in that land and assist in building cities and temples and Israel shall be made to rejoice, but before you see this day you will pass through the scenes that are but little understood by you. This people shall be made to mourn. Multitudes will die, many will apostatize."

DURING the last few months of the Prophet's life he gave much attention to this proposed migration. In February 1844 the following entries were made in the history of the church:

I instructed the Twelve Apostles to send

out a delegation and investigate the locations of California and Oregon, and hunt out a good location, where we can remove to after the temple is completed, and where we can build a city in a day, and have a government of our own, get up into the mountains, where the devil cannot dig us out, and live in a healthful climate, where we can live as old as we have a mind to.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

Council of the Twelve met in my office. I insert the minutes:

Minutes of a Council Meeting of the Twelve.

At a meeting of the Twelve, at the mayor's office, Nauvoo, February 21, 1844, seven o'clock p.m., Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, George A. Smith, Willard Richards and four others being present, called by previous notice, by instruction of President Joseph Smith on the 20th instant, for the purpose of selecting a company to explore Oregon and California, and select a site for a new city for the Saints.

Jonathan Dunham, Phineas H. Young, David D. Yearsley, and David Fullmer, volunteered to go; and Alphonzo Young, James Emmett, George D. Watt, and Daniel Spencer were requested to go.

Voted the above persons to be notified to meet with the council on Friday evening next, at the assembly room.

WILLARD RICHARDS, Clerk<sup>3</sup>

A few days later the Prophet journalized as follows:

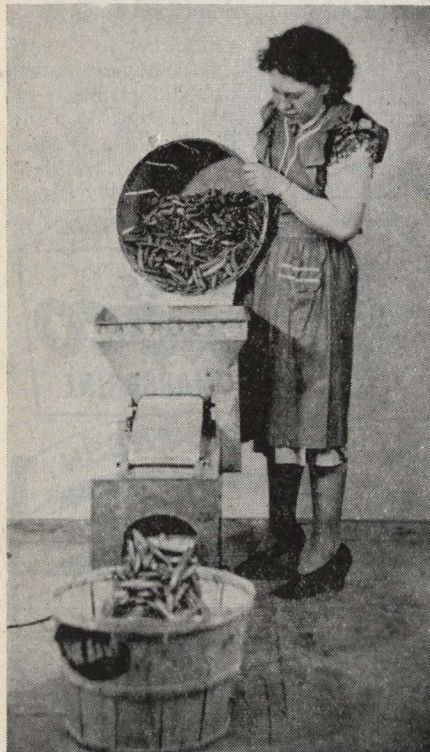
Feb. 23—Met with the Twelve in the assembly room concerning the Oregon and California Exploring Expedition; Hyrum and Sidney present. I told them I wanted  
(Continued on page 388)

<sup>1</sup>Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, p. 268

<sup>2</sup>History of the Church, VI:222  
<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 223



# CAN YOU SHELL a BUSHEL OF PEAS IN LESS THAN 10 MINUTES?



## You Can With a DEAN AUTOMATIC PEA SHELLER

A great time and labor saver for Hotels, Hospitals, Canneries, Mess Halls, Clubs and large Restaurants, etc. Making it possible to have green peas the year round.

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## Just Good Horse Sense

(Short items prepared by the Agricultural Section of the War Finance Division of the Treasury Department)

THE farmer who spends all of his wartime income is spending himself out of business. After the war, he'll have no cash with which to replace and repair buildings and equipment depleted by years of hard war food production.

\* \* \*

NOT all of today's farm income is profit. Much of it represents worn-out buildings and equipment that can't be replaced because of wartime shortages. But this depreciation fund is not savings—to actually save, more money should be invested in war bonds.

\* \* \*

BUY war bonds now and make certain that you are in a buying position when the war is over and goods and services are again available at peacetime values and peacetime prices.

\* \* \*

IF a war bond is lost, stolen or destroyed, just report the serial number, date, and value to the Treasury and you'll get another without charge.

\* \* \*

THERE is money for war bond purchases in the small town and rural

banks of America. As of November 1943, bank deposits in cities under 15,000 population in twenty leading agricultural states were 322 percent of the 1924-29 average.

\* \* \*

NET income to American farmers for 1943 was about two million dollars greater than 1942. If this money were put in war bonds it would go a long way toward insuring the future financial stability of agriculture.

## Forest Trees for Farm Planting

IN a "plant more trees" program, the state of Utah, cooperating with the United States Department of Agriculture through the Utah Extension Service and the School of Forestry of the Utah State Agricultural College, furnishes young trees for farm planting in Utah at nominal prices: among softwoods—Eastern Red Cedar, Ponderosa Pine, and Blue Spruce; among hardwoods—Green Ash, Siberian Elm, Black Locust, Honey Locust, Russian Olive, Siberian Pea Tree, Black Walnut, Lombardy Poplar, and Golden Willow. Trees, priced from one to two dollars a hundred, must be used on farm land and in Utah for woodlot, windbreak, or shelter-belt purposes.

To be eligible for this low-cost service, the purchaser of planting stock must abide by certain conditions prescribed as the terms of the cooperative agreement outlined in Forestry Circular No. 15, obtainable from the School of Forestry, Utah State Agricultural College, Logan, Utah, to which all inquiries should be addressed.

## WESTERN MIGRATION

(Continued from page 382)

an exploration of all that mountain country. Perhaps it would be best to go direct to Santa Fe. . . .

George D. Watt said, "Gentlemen, I shall go." Samuel Bent, Joseph A. Kelting, David Fullmer, James Emmett, Daniel Spencer, Samuel Rolfe, Daniel Avery, and Samuel W. Richards, volunteered to go.

Saturday, 24—At home. Had an interview with Brother Phelps at nine o'clock.

Seth Palmer, Amos Fielding, Charles Shumway, and John S. Fullmer volunteered to go to Oregon and California.

The frequent appearance of such notations as the following in the church records indicate the popularity of the contemplated migration to the West:

Ira S. Miles volunteered to join the mountain exploring expedition. (Monday, 26.)

Almon L. Fullmer and Hosea Stout volunteered to go on the Western Exploring Expedition. (Tuesday, 27.)

Thomas E. Edwards volunteered to join the exploring expedition to the Rocky mountains. (Wednesday, 28.)

At this time letters arrived in Nauvoo from Lyman Wight and George Miller relative to establishing the headquarters of the church in Texas. Soon after receiving this information the Prophet organized a special council consisting of twenty-three prominent leaders for the following purpose:

To take into consideration the subject matter contained in the above letters, and

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 224

also the best policy for this people to adopt to obtain their rights from the nation and insure protection for themselves and children; and to secure a resting place in the mountains, or some uninhabited region, where we can enjoy the liberty of conscience guaranteed to us by the precious blood of our fathers, and denied to us by the present authorities, who have smuggled themselves into power in the States and Nation.

The following notations in the official records of the church are evidence of Joseph Smith's anxiety about the subject:

I got prepared a memorial to his Excellency John Tyler, the President of the United States, embodying in it the same sentiments as are in my Petition to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, dated 26th March, 1844, asking the privilege of raising 100,000 men to extend protection to persons wishing to settle Oregon and other portions of the territory of the United States, and extend protection to the people of Texas.

Sunday, 31—Cold, fine day. At home this morning until nine, when I went over to my reading-room, again heard read and signed my memorial to Congress for the privilege of raising 100,000 volunteers to protect Texas, Oregon, &c., dated 26th instant; and also a memorial to the President for the same purpose, if the other fails.

Also signed an introductory letter to Elder Orson Hyde, who is going to carry the memorials to Washington.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 281



## Western Migration

Mr. John Wentworth of Chicago presented this memorial to the House of Representatives where it received much publicity.

After Orson Hyde became well acquainted with the congressional reaction to this memorial he wrote the following letter to Joseph Smith:

Washington, April 26, 1844

We were last evening introduced to President John Tyler at the White House by the politeness of Major Semple, where we spent an hour very agreeably. The president is a very plain, homespun, familiar, farmer-like man. He spoke of our troubles in Missouri and regretted that we had met with such treatment. He asked how we were getting along in Illinois. I told him that we were contending with the difficulties of a new country, and laboring under the disadvantageous consequence of being driven from our property and homes in Missouri.

We have this day had a long conversation with Judge Douglas. He is ripe for Oregon and California. . . .

Judge Douglas says he would equally as soon go to that country without an act of congress as with, and that in five years a noble state might be formed. . . .

In case of a removal to that country, Nauvoo is the place of general rendezvous. Our course from thence would be westward through Iowa, bearing a little north, until we come to the Missouri River, leaving the state of Missouri on the left, thence onward till we come to the Platte, thence up the north fork of the Platte to the mouth of Sweet Water River in long. 107° 45" west, and thence up said Sweet Water River to the south pass of the Rocky Mountains about eleven hundred miles from Nauvoo, and from said south pass in latitude 42° degrees 28" north to the Umqua and Clamet valleys in Oregon bordering on California is about 600 miles, making the distance from Nauvoo to the best portions of Oregon 1700 miles. . . .

Judge Douglas has given me a map of Oregon, and also a report on an exploration of the country lying between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains on the line of the Kansas, and great Platte rivers, by Lieut. J. C. Fremont of the corps of topographical engineers. On receiving it, I expressed a wish that Mr. Smith could see it. Judge Douglas says it is a public document, and I will frank it to him. I accepted his offer, and the book will be forthcoming to him. The people are so eager for it here, that they have even stolen it out of the library. The author is Mr. Benton's son-in-law. Judge Douglas borrowed it of Mr. Benton. I was not to tell anyone in this city where I got it. The book is a most valuable document to anyone contemplating a journey to Oregon. The directions which I have given may not be exactly correct, but the book will tell correctly. Judge Douglas says he can direct Mr. Smith to several gentlemen in California who will be able to give him any information on the state of affairs in that country, and when he returns to Illinois he will visit Mr. Smith. . . .

I shall write again soon, and let you know what restrictions, if any, are laid upon our citizens in relation to passing through Indian territories.

A few days later Orson Hyde wrote the following message to Joseph Smith:

Washington, April 30, 1844

It is now reduced to a certainty, that Texas will not be admitted into our union,

**THEY FELL IN LOVE**

with

**GLADE'S**



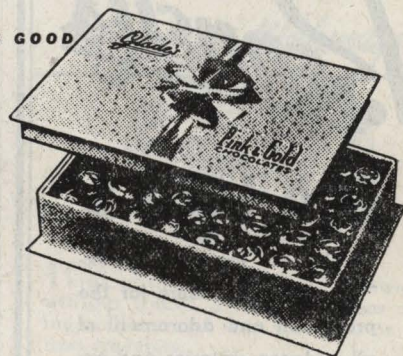
*An open box of Glade's famed Chocolates is*

*cordially welcomed in any company. . . As a gift*

*from a man to a girl, it's a sentimental triumph!*

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SINCE 1853

**LEVI'S**



THERE'S A REASON—  
*No others FIT like LEVI'S!*

A NEW PAIR FREE  
IF THEY RIP

NON-  
SCRATCH CONCEALED COPPER RIVETS ON BACK POCKETS





Crisp, plump vegetables, popped into our kettles fresh from the fields—make Rancho soup taste so good... lower freight costs to your grocer from our farm-kitchens here in the West, make Rancho soup cost you less. So for wholesome, hearty soup always

**REACH FOR  
RANCHO**  
5 delicious kinds

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Utah and Idaho  
and ZCMI Paint Dept.

## WESTERN MIGRATION

(Concluded from page 389)

at present, for Messrs. Clay and Van Buren have both taken a stand adverse to the annexation of that territory to our Republic in their letters received here yesterday. This has given an additional radiance of hope to the Clay men, but has smitten the Vanites with wild confusion. They talk of other candidates. They want someone who will go for Texas and Oregon. . . .

Judge Douglas, who is full of familiarity and good-will, proposes to visit Mr. Smith on his return to Illinois upon the subject of Oregon, Texas and California. Major Semple thinks of doing the same also. Oregon is a good way off, and is not a very good country when you arrive there. I have read something of its history since I left, and have also conversed with gentlemen who have been there. The tax [hardship] upon women and children in removing there, would be very severe indeed. . . .

\* \* \*

Brother Pratt has just returned from the Senate and informs me that Major Semple has not read your Oregon memorial today, as was expected. But General Atchison moved that his bill respecting that country be made the special order of the day on Monday next. This latter bill we have sent you some days ago in print.

We hope there is no juggling in this matter, and shall keep an eye upon it.

Brother Pratt sends his best wishes to you all. As before, ORSON HYDE<sup>9</sup>

A short time before the martyrdom, Joseph Smith received the following letter from a realtor in Texas, which shows how widespread was the impression that the Mormon leaders were at that time considering an exodus from Nauvoo:

Republic of Texas,  
Galveston County, June 3, 1844

Sir: My object in addressing you is to make a proposition which I hope may receive your serious consideration. I have for sale a tract of land lying in latitude 33° extending from the Red River almost to the trinity containing sixty leagues.

\* \* \*

In Texas you will find no dense population to contend with, no bigot to oppress, no overwhelming power to crush you in your infancy, but a new field open to the enterprising oppressive pioneer, as yet free from the civilized needs of superstition, oppression and pride where every hand would be extended to you in friendship. . . .

I will not trespass longer upon your time, should you not deem the subject worthy of consideration. I shall have already wasted sufficient time in writing and you in reading. Should you regard it in a favorable light I will furnish you with a transcript of the titles, and make you a definite proposition.

My address is Galveston City, Galveston Co., Republic of Texas, in care of John D. Groishick.

I have the honor to be yours, etc.

JOHN H. WALTON<sup>7</sup>

Another striking bit of evidence in this connection is the following: At the Jubilee celebration in Salt Lake City in 1897 Brother Stephen H. Goddard, one of the pioneers of 1847, related that he distinctly remembered having heard the Prophet Joseph Smith give instructions to the Saints concern-

ing their removal to the Rocky Mountains. He told President George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith that on one occasion in his presence—

The Prophet Joseph mapped out on the floor in the Masonic Hall in Nauvoo a diagram of what he called the Great Salt Lake Basin or Valley, and said that the Latter-day Saints would go there. The course of travel was mapped out, which afterwards was the route taken by President Brigham Young and the Pioneers. He did not remember the exact date of this prophecy, but as the Masonic Hall was not built until 1843, it must have been after that date.<sup>8</sup>

It is a matter of historical record that on June 22, 1844, Hyrum Smith informed Reynolds Cahoon that "a company of men are seeking to kill my brother, Joseph, and the Lord has warned him to flee to the Rocky Mountains."

Joseph and Hyrum soon made preparation for crossing the Mississippi to a place of safety where they could complete their plans for a secret and hasty retreat toward the West. While waiting for a skiff to take them across the river they instructed W. W. Phelps to take their families to Cincinnati, Ohio. Joseph then added this final instruction:

Go to our wives, and tell them what we have concluded to do, and learn their feelings on the subject; and tell Emma you will be ready to start by the second steambot, and she has sufficient money wherewith to pay the expenses. If you ascertain by tomorrow morning that there is anything wrong, come over the river to Montrose, to the house of Captain John Killien, and there you will learn where we are.<sup>9</sup>

So anxious were these men to cross the river and heed the warning they had received, that they borrowed an old disabled boat instead of waiting longer for a better one, and crossed the river in the night. Orrin Porter Rockwell rowed the skiff.

The next morning Joseph instructed Rockwell to return to Nauvoo and get horses and supplies for the long journey toward the West. It was requested that this equipment be taken across the river under cover of darkness "and be ready to start for the Great Basin in the Rocky Mountains."

The Prophet's wife became greatly alarmed about this hasty retreat and sent a messenger entreating Joseph to return to Nauvoo. When told that he was accused of cowardice he resolved to return to Nauvoo, surrender for trial at Carthage, and go like a lamb to the slaughter.

Though Joseph Smith never lived to lead his people into the West, he had long entertained the thought that Nauvoo was but a temporary wayside station along the trail of destiny that stretched toward the distant West where they would become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains.

<sup>9</sup>Journal History, April 26 and 30, 1844  
<sup>7</sup>Ibid., June 4, 1844

<sup>8</sup>Journal History, July 26, 1897  
<sup>9</sup>History of the Church, VI:547