

Telling the Story of Mormon History

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Nineteenth-Century Latter-day Saint Immigration: Lessons from Sea Trek 2001 for Telling the Story Better

William G. Hartley

Francis Parkman's history of the Oregon Trail is a classic because he went out on the trail and wrote from firsthand experience. Likewise, Samuel Eliot Morrison's study of Christopher Columbus is outstanding because of Morrison's sea experiences.¹ Stanley Kimball is *the* expert on the Mormon Trail because he has walked it, camped on it, flown over it, ridden on it, and searched for its swales and ruts. Parkman, Morrison, and Kimball stand in the front ranks of historians who have demonstrated that, although much history is written from sources in libraries and archives, some histories are best written by those who have "been there" and "done that." Knowing that hands-on experience can enhance histories, and being engaged in research about nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint immigration, I grabbed the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that Sea Trek 2001 provided me to cross the Atlantic on a tall sailing ship—a hands-on workshop to experience something of what those immigrants experienced. My fifty-nine days with Sea Trek gave me several insights that can help us tell the immigration story better.

Before sailing, I had published articles about Latter-day Saint immigrant voyages on the sailing ships *International*, *Olympus*, *Monarch of the Sea*, and *Yorkshire*.² For a book I am writing about Latter-day Saint emigration in 1861, I had done extensive research reading library and archive records—diary, letter, and reminiscent accounts by or about sail-immigrants and Church emigration records and ledger books—and visiting docks in Liverpool and New York City. But, being a Stan Kimball Mormon Trail protege, I knew I needed to go to sea, even if by ocean liner or freighter, to better understand what it meant for Saints to cross the Atlantic. So when I learned that Sea Trek had chartered sailing ships to commemorate that era of sail and was asked to be a teaching historian on board one of those ships, I went without hesitation.

While designed to commemorate—not replicate or recreate—the nineteenth-century immigrant experience, Sea Trek did provide a chance to cross the ocean on a square-rigger similar to ones that carried those immigrants.

The Era of Latter-day Saint Immigration by Sail

Latter-day Saint immigration by sail spans a clearly defined time period from 1840 to 1868, after which Church companies used steamships. Conway Sonne has shown that during that period approximately 50,000 Latter-day Saint immigrants traveled on at least 173 different sailing ships during more than three hundred voyages. Coming from the British Isles, Scandinavia, and western Europe, they sailed primarily from Liverpool to New Orleans (until 1855) or New York (until 1868). Sonne calculated that the average voyage length to New Orleans was fifty-four days and to New York, thirty-eight days.³ Of ships used during the 1840s the average size Latter-day Saint company on board was 157; in the 1850s, 266; and in the 1860s, 424. The largest company, 976 passengers, sailed in 1864 on the *Monarch of the Sea*.⁴ That was the largest ship used by the Saints, measuring 223 feet long and 44 feet wide.⁵ Amazingly, that ship was shorter than one of the three Sea Trek ships that crossed the Atlantic.

Sea Trek 2001: An Overview

To commemorate the European Saints' immigration, the Sea Trek Foundation⁶ chartered eight tall sailing ships and recruited paying passengers (about \$150 per day) to fill them. The ships were training ships used by various countries and companies to teach the basics of sail navigating. Three ships were Norwegian; one, Russian; one, German; and three, Dutch.⁷ These ships, like their nineteenth-century counterparts, had tall masts and yards and systems of square-rigged and other sails, and were built primarily to be

wind-powered. Crews, with help from the passengers (we were officially trainees), unfurled and furled the sails and repositioned the yards by hand and rope. Trainees, not crew members, steered with the on-deck captain's wheel and compass much like crews on old sailing ships did. To meet modern safety standards, Sea Trek's ships had steel hulls, radar, radios, electricity, navigational computers, modern kitchens, simple bathroom facilities, and technology to make drinking water from the sea.

Sea Trek 2001 had two main purposes. First, in European ports it generated publicity and awareness of the historic Mormon migration by sail. Sea Trek sought to prime those countries for the 2002 Winter Olympics by showing their individual connections, through immigration, to far-off Utah. Sea Trek attracted good television, radio, and print media coverage through the stately arrival and departure of the ships, dock displays, dockside concerts, genealogy tents, dignitaries' dinners, presentations of statues, a powerful Sea Trek-commissioned cantata in respected music halls, and spectacular dockside fireworks. For example, some 200,000 Swedes watched Sea Trek's dockside activities at Gothenburg. When our ships sailed into and out of Hull, England, an estimated 10,000 onlookers lined the shores to wave and watch, and some 50,000 toured the docked ships.

Second, Sea Trek provided an opportunity for people to travel on tall sailing ships in order to experience something of what their immigrant ancestors did. About 1,700 people became Sea Trek passengers for one or two days or more. Twenty-two of us made the entire fifty-nine-day journey between August 6 and October 4, 2001.

Sea Trek had two stages. The first, called "The Gathering," lasted seventeen days and involved six ships and seven European ports—Esbjerg and Copenhagen, Denmark; Gothenburg, Sweden; Oslo, Norway; Hamburg, Germany; and Hull and Portsmouth, England. Two other Sea Trek ships went from Gothenburg to Greenock, Scotland, to Liverpool, England, and then to Portsmouth to join the others. Passengers chose a departure port and arrival port, which determined how many days they would be at sea. "The Gathering" stage allowed people to board a sailing ship in a port where perhaps their ancestors had boarded a century and a half ago.

Sea Trek's second stage was "The Crossing." Three of the eight ships (*Statsraad Lehmkuhl*, *Christian Radich*, and *Europa*) left from Portsmouth to cross the Atlantic. For wind purposes, our route made a big U-shape, taking us due south to the Canary Islands (only one or two Latter-day Saint ships took this route in the nineteenth century), west with the trade winds that carried Columbus to the New World, and northwest to Bermuda and New York City. Our "grand entry" into New York harbor, concert, and fireworks, all designed to be a media event in the media capital of the world, turned into a barely noticed arrival and no festivities. This hurt Sea Trek, not only in terms of its PR mission, but financially because events were canceled and sales of souvenirs, soundtrack CDs, and clothing never happened, because of the 9/11 tragedy, which happened while the three ships were in mid-ocean, five days beyond the Canary Islands.

Insights and Lessons from Sea Trek

Before leaving for the voyage, I listed several "realities" those immigrants experienced that I wanted to encounter, at least partially, during my voyage. For example, I wanted to sail into and out of the particular ports of Hamburg and Hull. I wanted to see how passengers, strangers at first, gelled into a company; how a Mormon company interacted with a non-Mormon ship crew; and how weeks isolated at sea, always rocking, impacted people who were not used to sea travel physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Sea Trek corroborated and reinforced many aspects of the immigrant voyages as I understood them from written records. But I gained several new insights that were not explicit in immigrants' records.

Ship Sizes and Riggings Are Historical Clues to Travel Conditions. Our generation cannot appreciate the fragility of some ventures described in diaries without knowing the ship's parts and how ships worked. For example, can the armchair historian grasp what Wilford Woodruff wrote in this 1841 diary entry on board the square-rigged *Rochester*?

May 1st A fine beautiful pleasant May's morning. A fair northeast wind or light breeze. Water smooth. We have 19 pieces of canvass spread. A jib, flying gib, 8 pieces upon the foremast, 5 upon the main mast, & 4 upon the mizzen mast including the spanker. It was truly a beautiful sight.⁸

To verbalize that our immigrants boarded sailing ships and came to America fails to convey the realness of that experience. Once on board they lived in a new and strange world, one of ships, barques, brigs, and brigantines, of foremasts, mainmasts, mizzenmasts, of topgallant sails and jibs, and of buntlines and sheets and halyards.

Reference books provide raw facts about ship lengths and widths and heights. But without being on a ship, we can't know how those dimensions affected the experiences of the immigrants. When full, the Sea Trek ship *Christian Radich* could carry about 100 passengers and crew. It measured 205 feet long and 29 feet wide. By comparison, my ancestor Edward Bunker left Liverpool in 1856 on the *Caravan*, which was ten feet shorter than the *Christian Radich* but carried 357 more Saints.⁹ Being on and below deck, we were amazed how many people those nineteenth-century ships carried, given such small deck and steerage space. Sea Trek's biggest ship on the Atlantic, the *Statsraad Lehmkuhl*, was nearly 100 feet longer than the biggest ship the Saints ever used, the *Monarch of the Sea*, but its passenger maximum was 140 compared to the *Monarch's* 976. I traveled on the *Europa*, and when all forty-eight passengers were topside, the main deck was fairly crowded, so I marvel how the *Caravan's* 457 passengers could move around at all when on deck.

Each Voyage Was Unique. Certainly companies of Saints that sailed weeks or months or years apart had different experiences due to weather, wind, and technology changes. But the three Sea Trek ships that participated in "The Crossing" were not very far apart (although they did not sail near or with each other) on the same days, so that their weather and sea conditions were similar. Nevertheless, how we on the Dutch *Europa* slept, ate, worked, and filled time differed considerably from how passengers on the Norwegian *Christian Radich* and *Statsraad Lehmkuhl* did. Each ship had a unique mix of facilities, crew, passengers, practices, and systems. It is easy for the armchair historian to presume the main differences between the 173 ships used by the immigrating Saints involved size. But Sea Trek demonstrated that each ship was a unique organism and each voyage differed from the rest.

Company Presidents Were More Than Figureheads. Sea Trek assigned me to be the

company or passenger president for the *Europa*. Ship captain Klaas Gaasta had supreme authority over the ship's operations, crew, and passengers. Through the first mate, he informed passengers of the ship rules, but he expected the passengers to have their own officers to organize them and communicate the ship needs and assignments. I was the company president, responsible for the passengers' well-being, group activities, and their Church functions (although I had no authority to handle Sea Trek business matters or policy problems). I was authorized by the European West Area Presidency and by a blessing from my stake president to conduct Church services and prayer meetings and to be an ecclesiastical advisor.¹⁰

I thought that being company president would be a perfunctory assignment, that I would be mostly a token official. But once on board, I discovered that company presidents were essential. I was responsible, personally or by delegation, to make and change work assignments for three watches or work periods daily, to make sure people fulfilled those assignments, to set times for morning devotional, evening social events, and Sunday meetings—which times shifted depending on sea and port situations—and to designate people to be in charge of those events. I chose two counselors, a Relief Society president, and a chaplain, who helped with these activities.¹¹ Passengers looked to us to organize and carry out daily activities to help them pass time and socially interact. Given the many conveniences our generation enjoys, communication on board should have been simple, but it was not. Because we were divided into three groups, each having a different watch or work shift, the company never was all together at the same time, except for the sacrament hour on Sundays. Because people in the same cabin (four to six persons in bunkbeds per cabin) had different watch assignments, I was not able to knock on cabin doors to give messages to anyone. We had no photocopy machine, so I had to hand print any announcements or messages. I posted notices in the main cabin, but not everyone bothered to check the bulletin board. The Captain could ring the ship's bell to communicate—five bells meant "all hands on deck"—but I had no such system. So getting out new information about meals, laundry, special activities, and changes in routine required more work than one public announcement.

If someone had problems with the ship, laundry, food, cabins, work assignments, or a particular crew member, the chain of command required that person to go to me, not to the captain directly. Likewise, if the captain or a crew member had a problem or concern relating to one of the passengers, that person, too, went through me. That system kept order on the ship. I had to settle some complaints and differences among passengers, but not many.

On our first Sunday at sea, the captain wanted the watch groups to do ship maintenance work—varnishing, sanding, painting ropes, cleaning, and other chores. I talked with him about Saints wanting to keep the Sabbath Day holy, so he informed the crew that on Sundays the passengers would do normal watch duties but not maintenance work.

On Sea Trek's two other Atlantic ships, historians Dean May and John Peterson served as Latter-day Saint company presidents.¹² Each of us had our own unique leadership style and passenger matters to deal with, so passengers on one ship had a different group experience from those on another ship. This variety of experience was also the case in the nineteenth century.

The Simplest Daily Activities Became Hard.

Those ship diarists who noted daily activities listed them but rarely reacted to them or assessed how they impacted the passengers. We know they prayed, ate, and used chamber pots. In galleys below or on deck they cooked or had someone cook for them. They congregated in clusters for singing, English classes, talking, playing, walking, sewing, and prayers.¹³ But, how smooth or difficult was it for them to do those activities?

For Sea Trek passengers, and no doubt for nineteenth-century immigrants, the ship's constant rocking and swaying made everything a physical challenge. One day I noted in my diary that everything was hard—standing up, picking something up, going to the bathroom, taking a shower, walking below or on deck, going upstairs and downstairs, getting something in or out of the closet or drawers, getting into bed, sleeping, eating, reading. *Hard* might be too strong a word, but the ship's constant motion made simple actions a challenge. When winds were up or waves were busy, people fell, objects slid off tables and stands, and food and drinks spilled. We

administered the sacrament water in little cups on a flat silver tray, and while men blessed the bread and water, I kept one hand under the tray to raise and lower one edge to keep the tray level when the ship tipped so that the cups did not fall over. When winds and waves were high, even my little muscles became weary by bedtime because of being kept tense nearly all day long.

This reality of being unable to relax, coupled with many nights when the ship's rocking ruined our sleep, made me realize that such a condition must have drained nineteenth-century immigrants and could explain why some of them stopped when they got to port and quit traveling until they stabilized themselves again.

Good Hygiene Was Not Possible. Diaries mention shipboard seasickness, diarrhea, measles, consumption (tuberculosis), and general debility. While noting hygiene problems, perhaps thankfully for us, diarists rarely gave much detail. During Sea Trek, although we were on modernized ships, we had limited laundry facilities, modest toilet facilities, and limited use of showers. Something as simple as getting out a change of clothes and putting away the ones we took off was difficult enough that during the last two-thirds of the voyage many quit changing clothes daily (laundry limitations contributed to this lifestyle change as well). I could not shower when the ship tipped to port side because the shower water then ran away from the floor drain. Our ship produced drinking water from the sea, but at times we had to reduce our water use. During weeks of hot weather, for daily dress we skimmed down to bathing suits and tee shirts. Halfway across the Atlantic, I had good cause to worry that my deodorant stick might wear out before the next port.

So, when considering the jam-packed sail immigrants, we need to recognize that personal cleanliness for everyone, not just the slothful, was next to impossible during those five to eight weeks at sea. Coupled with their unbalanced food fare, the close quarters caused health problems on board the ships and debility and sickness after the voyage during trips upriver on steamboats and in wagon trains rolling west.

Poor Nutrition Probably Contributed to Health Problems Then and Later. Nineteenth-century immigrants ate food provided for them as part of their ticket purchase. They cooked their

own food or arranged for someone to do it. Some Latter-day Saint companies “called” a few men to be cooks at the ship’s cooking galleys, which were located below deck or sometimes on the deck. Passengers brought food with them to supplement the ship provisions. Our situation on *Sea Trek* was similar, in that we ate what the ship’s cooks concocted. They fixed what their tastes and talents said we should have. Our ship was Dutch, and Marianne van der Staay, our cook, fixed food somewhat strongly seasoned. Like anyone else, I have my likes and dislikes, and as the weeks passed, some foods I ate and some I avoided. Even with my own stash of nuts and small candies, I lost about twenty pounds during *Sea Trek*. By the time I landed, I was physically weak.

That experience makes me believe we have underestimated the role that poor diets might have played in the lives of our immigrants, not only during the voyage but during the rest of their lives. An unbalanced diet, by our better understandings of nutrition, probably contributed directly to sickness along the five-to-six-month journey and trek to Zion and to deaths on the journeys upriver to outfitting posts, at the posts, and during the physically taxing trek across the plains, if not after they reached Utah. Historians may need a nutritionist or two to examine what records say about the ship diets and then project what physical problems could or should have resulted from that long-term deprivation. Did eight weeks at sea cause malnutrition that gave the travelers troubles then and later on?

Long Atlantic Voyages Were Debilitating. Halfway through the voyage I discovered I was losing body strength. True, we helped the crew pull ropes to work the sails and yards, but mostly we stood, sat, or laid down. Two of our passengers¹⁴ took up walking, but their only route was a small rectangle of space around the perimeter of the main deck, which one could cover in eighty paces. They walked that tiny route, dodging ropes and crew at work, forty or fifty times daily. But aerobics, calisthenics, and other exercises performed while standing were dangerous because of the ship’s constant motion.

When I reached port in New York City after fifty-nine days, most of them at sea, I was physically weak, mentally dulled, and emotionally discouraged. Clearly, immigrants must have struggled, like I did, with maintaining physical

strength, keeping the mind busy, and enduring long stretches of prison-like confinement. I believe historians need to look hard at how the long voyages might have debilitated people by the time they reached port and how those weakenings worked against them during long and demanding treks from port to Utah.

Distance, Isolation, and Loneliness Probably Caused Depression. As noted, on average the sail immigrants had fifty-four days at sea to New Orleans or thirty-eight days to New York. Such long voyages meant people had many hours to fill. Company officers sometimes provided group activities, but by and large the passengers had to keep themselves busy. On *Sea Trek*, four-hour watch shifts twice daily gave passengers something to do every day. But nineteenth-century immigrants had no such duties to perform. Certainly they spent much time just handling personal needs, such as cooking, cleaning berths, simple personal hygiene, caring for children, and moving about the ship. But when those basics were done, what else did they do to prevent boredom?

It became essential that we five *Europa* company officers provide activities for our passengers and encourage them to participate. We saw it was unhealthy for passengers to stay below in their cabins or just sit around doing nothing. So every evening we held a one-hour program of entertainment in which passengers participated. Even some of the crew joined in—they, too, needed such diversions. We sang, played group games, held readers’ theater and skits, took turns performing dramatic readings and poems, had a quiz show with prizes, and performed musical numbers. Passengers and crew members from European countries told us about their native lands. Nearly every day I taught one or more history classes for anyone interested. And Church Humanitarian Services arranged materials for us to sew school bags for them. I also provided parlor games for passenger use—*Yahtzee*, *Scrabble*, *Battleship*, *Pit*—and dominoes and card games. Except for occasional storms, squalls, or total calm, and for occasional sightings of whales, dolphins, or flying fish, our days and nights developed a sameness. We lost track of what the date was and even what day of the week it was. Mid-ocean we went for days without seeing another ship or anything other than endless ocean and sky and clouds. We saw

no airplanes. Monotony caused some to tire of being at sea and a few to become discouraged.

Slowly crossing that vast ocean we felt isolated, a reality we shared with nineteenth-century immigrants. Unlike the other two Sea Trek ships, ours had no passenger email. We had no way to make telephone calls. Mid-ocean, we thought more and more about loved ones at home. We longed for contact, for news from home. We worried about family situations—babies being born at home, operations, sick relatives. We felt cut off from life. We felt imprisoned with no escape possible. Sociability—talking with others—was our lifeline to sanity. Based on that experience, I feel that when studying nineteenth-century immigrants, we need to find out what psychologists can tell us about the long-term effects of being uprooted and cut off from our normal living conditions and relationships. Clearly, this discouragement factor needs scrutiny, particularly when we look at those immigrants who stopped heading for Zion between the arrival port and the wagon train outfitting posts and especially those who opted never to continue on to Zion.

Latter-day Saint Emigration Agents Played a Major Role. During Sea Trek I got off the ship in seven different countries—five of which were non-English speaking. With less than one day in port I badly needed quick guidance about four matters: (1) where to exchange money so I could buy a few items—an ATM if not a bank, (2) where to buy stamps so I could mail letters, (3) where to find a grocery store, and (4) where to find a phone on which I could make international credit card calls. In most ports, no one from Sea Trek met us and helped us, so we fanned out on our own, wasting much time and energy and even money. On those few times when someone did meet us with a map that had key places marked, our short stops in port were much better. In each country where we docked, the ship's first mate rounded up our passports to gain clearance for us to go ashore.¹⁵ In the Canary Islands, one of my fellow passengers¹⁶ lost her passport, and we had a frightening and rushed scramble to locate a U.S. State Department person to authorize port authorities and ship officers to let her continue. How vital for us, and with that perspective how vital it was for nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint immigrants, to have agents in ports and

transfer points to assist and to solve travel problems for the passengers.

Our immigration studies overlook the crucial work performed by the Latter-day Saint immigration agents in the ports and transfer points. New Orleans is a good example. When a company of Saints arrived there, they had to go through inspections and then disembark. At that point an assigned agent needed to be there to greet them and tell them what to do next. He needed to have made arrangements ahead of time for their tickets on a river steamer and for vehicles to transport their luggage to that steamboat. He had to help those who did not speak English with exchanging currency, shopping, mailing letters, and filling out paperwork. If some had health problems, he needed to find medical help for them. He had to help them reach the proper wharf or dock and then to board the river steamer. He had to be sure the luggage went on board and that boat officers had tickets for everyone. At each transshipping point these agents were vital. But how many of them are noted in our histories? In fact, no one yet has compiled a list of who these Latter-day Saint agents were at the each of the main ports.¹⁷

Money Shortfalls and Numerous Currency Exchanges Were Constant Problems. A few nineteenth-century immigrants wrote in detail about trip costs, but most merely mentioned or listed some of them. However, as anyone knows who travels abroad today, on Sea Trek or otherwise, money is a major challenge during the entire trip. You leave hoping what money you take will last. But unexpected costs can drain the funds away before the journey ends. Some on our ship had to borrow from fellow passengers. Not only must money last, but money, to be usable, must be changed into the currencies of the countries you enter. In the immigrant days, Latter-day Saint Swedes went to Copenhagen, then Hamburg, then England, and then to the United States, requiring at least three currency exchanges. I gained new respect for our immigrants who disembarked in New Orleans or New York City without American currency. Thank goodness Latter-day Saint agents could help them or steer them to where currencies could be traded.

Voyages Became Gospel Workshops. Today's missionaries go to missionary training centers to be immersed in gospel study and discussions. Based

on *Sea Trek*, I now sense that the long sea voyages served nineteenth-century converts in a similar way—providing them a time-out period and groups for gospel study, discussion, and reflection.

On the ship we held Sunday meetings because we were supposed to—that’s what good Latter-day Saints do. Besides, it gave us something to do on Sunday, something to break the monotony of the days of sailing. But the meetings achieved an importance well beyond those perfunctory purposes. Starting with our first sacrament meeting and priesthood lessons at sea, I sensed something very powerful at work. Talks and lessons, while on familiar topics, conveyed new perspectives because they came from Saints not from our own countries. Like nineteenth-century companies, ours was a mix of strangers sharing the same gospel. From Portsmouth to the Canaries, our group included European Saints from Switzerland, Spain, Denmark, and England.¹⁸ Their explanations about Church operations in their countries and challenges to gospel living in them, made us rethink our lives as Saints in our home wards.

Ours was a tiny ship in a vast ocean, with a 180-degree sky in daytime and that same sky blackened at night but bejeweled by thousands of brilliant stars. Day and night, God’s grandeur seemed overwhelming. We had no television, radio, or computer distractions, so our minds had time and freedom to contemplate and wonder. Ocean and outer space were so immense and we were so tiny that it astounded me to realize that during meetings and gospel discussions we could feel the Holy Ghost—that God knew where we were and his Spirit could find us way out there. Feeling that immense love from the Creator caused many of us to reconsider scriptural statements and stories relating to the oceans and seas—Noah’s experience, Lehi’s voyage, the Jaredite barges, Jonah, Jesus calming the sea, and promises that during the Resurrection the sea would yield up its dead. We came to understand how much God loves the ocean and the islands of the sea. While on night watch in pitch darkness except for the canopy of brilliant stars, in the immense quiet, with nothing nearby, I was alone with my thoughts, surrounded by God’s creation, and nothing of man’s except our puny, fragile ship. We could not help pondering what life and cre-

ation was all about. Many serious gospel discussions took place among our passengers, especially during long watch assignments at night or in the privacy of tight cabins below deck.

If we had such time to ponder and stimuli to consider the universe, and felt the touch of the quiet and loving Holy Spirit, certainly those choice nineteenth-century converts immigrating because of religious fervency felt similar impressions and enlargements. People on those voyages had a forced period when, removed from normal everyday concerns about houses and property and jobs and associates, they pondered what gathering to Zion meant, spiritually. Two months at sea provided a valuable training period and setting that, like a mission training center, prepared the immigrants for their mission to settle in and build up Zion in the Rocky Mountains.

At sea we not only beheld God’s wonders and felt drawn to him, but we had occasions to seek his help because we had no other recourse. We had several small storms during those many days at sea and one major one. I didn’t allow our group to sing “Master the Tempest Is Raging” until the big one, and we sang with sincere intensity.¹⁹ Another situation when we wanted divine help came when one passenger²⁰ became violently ill far from port. We had no nurse or doctor on board. The captain had authority to radio the Doctor of the Sea, an international radio-based emergency medical operation, and get permission to prescribe medicines from his locked medicine cabinet, but only if we knew what the problem was, and we did not. On land we could have taken him to a doctor, but at sea we had no such option. Our precarious situation compelled us to reach out to God. Those with faith in God and priesthood power gave him a priesthood blessing, and fellow passengers prayed and fasted for him. He recovered. In nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint immigrant accounts, we read of similar appeals for God’s help. *Sea Trek* underscored for me how pressing such matters must have been for them.

Diarists back then mentioned church meetings and prayer meetings and preaching services on deck. *Sea Trek* showed me that those were more than perfunctory meetings. They were intense learning experiences that produced strong contemplations and deeper understandings of the

gospel. Some of their company presidents, who preached during the voyages, included men who then were, or later became, outstanding Church leaders and teachers.

Conclusion

Telling the story of Mormon history involves diligent research in existing documents and records found in libraries, archives, and people's homes. But some studies require that the historian experience what he or she is writing about, go to where it happened, and to do, when possible, some of the activities written about. Sea Trek gave several historians, including myself, hands-on experience with sailing ships, ports, captains and crews, companies of passengers from a variety of backgrounds, storms and waves, seasickness, currency exchange, and long stretches of isolation at sea, such that we can tell the stories of nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint immigration with more insight and in more informed ways than we otherwise could.

Notes

1. Francis Parkman, *The Oregon Trail* (1849); Samuel Elliott Morrison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea* (1942).

2. William G. Hartley, "Voyage on the Ship *International*," *New Era* 3 (September 1973), 6–9; William G. Hartley, "Atlantic Crossing of the Ship *Olympus*," *New Era* 8 (June 1978), 33–36; William G. Hartley, "Aboard the *Monarch of the Sea*," chap. 19 in *Kindred Saints: The Mormon Immigrant Heritage of Alvin and Kathryn Christenson* (Salt Lake City: Eden Hill, 1982); William G. Hartley, "Broken Sails Off Cuba: LDS Immigrants and the Voyage of the *Yorkshire*," *Mormon Heritage Magazine* 2 (May/June 1995), 9–11.

3. Regarding nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint immigration by sail, see Conway B. Sonne, *Saints on the Seas: A Maritime History of Mormon Migration, 1830–1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983); Sonne, *Ships, Saints, and Mariners: A Maritime Encyclopedia of Mormon Migration, 1830–1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987); Sonne, "Under Sail to Zion," *Ensign* 21 (July 1991), 6–14. For general Latter-day Saint migration studies see Philip A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of Their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966); William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957, reprint co-published with Brigham Young University Press, 2000); Andrew Jenson, "Church Emigration," 30 vols., *Contributor*, vols. 12–14 (May 1891–Sept. 1893); and William G. Hartley, "Coming to Zion: Saga of the Gathering," *Ensign* 5 (July 1975), 14–18.

4. Sonne, *Ships, Saints, and Mariners*, 146–47.

5. Sonne, *Ships, Saints, and Mariners*, 148–159, 168, 169.

6. The Sea Trek foundation was a private, nonprofit organization that had no affiliation with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was funded by generous donors and by ship passenger fees. Its founders were William and DeAnn Sadleir of Salt Lake City. Sea Trek's advisory board included Michael K. Deaver of Edelman Public Relations Worldwide; Larry King of CNN and his wife Shawn Southwick-King; Retired Coast Guard Admiral Paul A. Yost; Jane Clayson of CBS TV; U.S. Senator Gordon H. Smith of Oregon; former Secretary of the Navy James Webb; Stephen J. Solarz, former congressman from New York; David Checketts, former president and CEO of Madison Square Garden; Rick Burns, Director of the Danish Immigration Museum in Iowa; and David Baxter, British Telecom executive.

No history of Sea Trek has been written. Founders Bill and DeAnn Sadleir are helping the author create a Sea Trek archive and assisting him to write a history of the Sea Trek voyage. Participants did, however, receive a handbook that explained much about Sea Trek's organization, purposes, itinerary, ships, and passenger requirements. See Dayna D. Sadleir and Candice Beckwith, *Sea Trek 2001: Participant's Guide Book* ([Salt Lake City]: Sea Trek Foundation, 2001).

7. The eight vessels were the *Statsraad Lehmkuhl*, *Christian Radich*, and *Sorlandet* (Norwegian); *Europa*, *Antigua*, and *Swan Fan Makkum* (Dutch); *Mary-Anne* (German); and *Mir* (Russian). Depending on mast numbers and sail types, sailing vessels are categorized as ships, barques, barquentines, brigs, brigantines, and other categorizations. Sea Trek had three ships (*Christian Radich*, *Mir*, and *Sorlandet*), 2 barques (*Europa* and *Statsraad Lehmkuhl*), 1 brigantine (*Swan Fan Makkum*), and 2 barquentines (*Antigua* and *Mary-Anne*). An excellent coffee-table-type book about present-day sailing ships, with photographs and facts about scores of them, is Thad Koza, *Tall Ships: The Fleet for the 21st Century* (East Hartford, Conn.: Tide-Mark Press, 2002).

8. Wilford Woodruff Account, *Rochester Voyage Accounts*, May 1, 1841, on *LDS Immigration Index* CD ROM (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000).

9. Sonne, *Saints on the Seas*, 36.

10. In Sea Trek communications with Elder Rolf Kerr of the Europe West Area Presidency concerning ship presidencies, he advised that Sea Trek invite individuals to be ship presidents and that those individuals seek a blessing, but not a setting apart, from their stake presidents before departure. DeAnn Sadleir to William G. Hartley, June 10, 2001, copy in author's file.

11. My counselors in the *Europa's* company presidency were Fred Mortensen of Morgan Hill, California, and Paul Toone of St. George, Utah. Becki Toone served as Relief Society president. Neal Southwick, a BYU–Idaho professor, was our chaplain.

12. Dean May, a University of Utah history professor and former Latter-day Saint bishop, was company president on the *Christian Radich*. John Peterson, an instructor at the LDS Institute of Religion at the University of Utah, was president on the *Statsraad Lehmkuhl*. I, too, had been an Latter-day Saint bishop.

13. For generalizations about life aboard ship for Latter-day Saint immigrants, see Sonne, "Under Sail to Zion."

14. Julie Molen and Neal Southwick.

15. To Portsmouth the *Europa's* first mate was Daan Jaeger. His replacement for the Atlantic crossing was Hank Mijnlieff.

16. Bethany Benac.

17. Brigham Young University professor Fred Woods is working on such a list, as part of his studies of the port and transit points of importance in Latter-day Saint emigration history.

18. Passengers included Jean-Michel Gillet-Mahrer (Geneva, Switzerland), Eric Andersen (Denmark), Paul Hector (England), Josef Othmar Kempf (Austria and Spain), Britt-Marie Kempf (Denmark and Spain), Carlos Garcia Hiniesto (Spain).

19. Leaving Bermuda, we dodged storm systems for two days but had high winds and waves of fifteen to twenty feet. When I polled the company later, we found that only fifteen of our forty-five passengers did not get sea sick during that stormy stretch.

20. Neal Southwick.