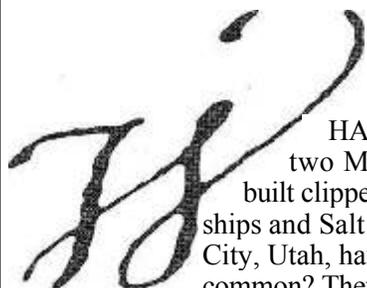


When the Saints Came Sailing In

Mormon Immigration in Mystic-Built Clipper Ships

FRED E. WOODS



WHAT do two Mystic-built clipper ships and Salt Lake City, Utah, have in common? They were key elements in the story of the large-scale migration of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, that first reached the Salt Lake Valley just 150 years ago. While most Americans are aware that the Mormon Trail ended in Salt Lake City, few know where it began. Even today among those of the Mormon faith, not many realize the diverse maritime routes that supplied early immigrant converts to the beckoning westward trail.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that God selected Joseph Smith* to restore the early Christian church on earth in Fayette, New York, in 1830. They are unique among Christian faiths in their belief in both the Bible and The Book of Mormon—Another Testament of Jesus Christ. Also distinct to the Latter-day Saints is their belief in modern-day prophets and apostles.

Joseph Smith led his followers first to Kirtland, Ohio, then to Missouri, and on later to Illinois to establish a community at Nauvoo. When a mob killed Smith in 1844, Brigham Young became leader of the church and determined to settle in the Great Basin, far from persecution. He led the first group of Mormon settlers into the valley of the Great Salt Lake in 1847.

The optimistic faith of the Latter-day Saints had strong appeal for northern Europeans in the unsettled social and economic climate after the 1840s. Between 1840 and 1890, more than 90,000 foreign-born converts responded to an invitation by Mormon leaders and missionaries to cross the oceans and gather with the Saints in Zion (America). Between 1840 and 1868, about 50,000 Mormon immigrants were transported across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Many of the voyages were made in sailing ships, at least 176 of which have been identified. Between 1868 and 1890 almost all of the Mormon immigrants came by steamship, since European steamship companies established a regular business in carrying steerage passengers in their large Atlantic liners. The trek under sail is well represented by the transatlantic passages of two vessels built at Mystic, the clipper ships *Electric* and *Belle Wood*. It is an intriguing chapter in the story of Mormon maritime migration.¹

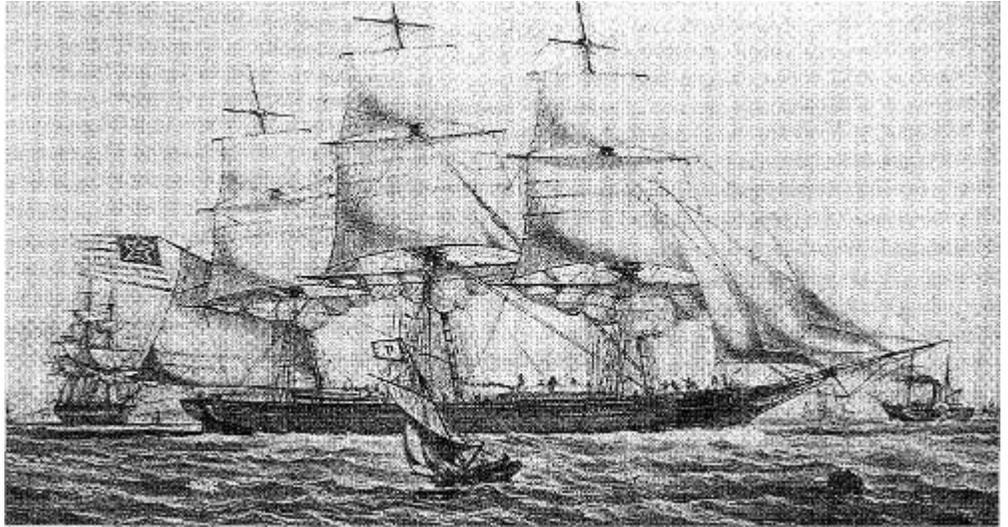
Even as the devout were streaming across the plains to the Mormon State of Deseret, fortune-hunters were rushing by land and sea to the newly discovered goldfields of California. East Coast merchants, seeking to profit by rushing goods to the West Coast, commissioned larger and more extreme versions of the sleek, fast clipper ships developed in the 1840s for the trade in China teas. The expanding shipyards of Mystic, Connecticut, launched their first clipper ships in 1851.

Two years later, Irons & Grinnell launched the clipper *Electric*. Although she was of the extreme clipper model, designed for fast passages at the expense of cargo capacity, demand for these vessels was already declining as California's demand for goods stabilized. So, most of the *Electric's* service was on the Atlantic, sailing between New York and Le Havre, but she did make one voyage around the world on the classic clipper route from New York to San Francisco, to Hong Kong, and on to New York. The *Electric* was sold to German owners in 1860 and entered service as a packet between Hamburg and New York. Throughout her existence she performed many successful voyages until she sank in the North Atlantic in 1872.²

Early in 1862 the *Electric* and the ship *Athenia* were chartered to carry a group of more than 800 Scandinavian Mormon converts to America. The group assembled in Sweden, took a steamship to Kiel, Denmark, and then traveled by rail to the main German port of Hamburg. There, 486 passengers were assigned to the *Athenia*, while 336 boarded the *Electric*, which was commanded by Captain H. J. Johansen.³

Mormon companies of immigrants developed unique and highly effective organizational procedures, which reflected the structure of Mormon society. Before setting sail, the 336 Saints aboard the *Electric* were divided into nine districts, called wards, of 25 to 40

people each, and each ward had a president. In October of 1839, the Saints at Nauvoo, Illinois, had first been divided into the ecclesiastical geographical subdivisions called wards, with a priesthood leader responsible for the temporal and spiritual needs of the people living "within his boundaries. The term *ward* had been used prior to this time in many cities of America to refer to political precincts, and apparently the Saints had this notion of division in mind.



In thU 1854 French lithograph, the Myrtle-bullt clipper dhlp Electric id depicted off Sandy Hook ad dhe approached New York Bay. Like the Scandinavian. Mormon immigrants who would make thld arrival eight year later, paddengerd and dallord watch the padding dpectacle In anticipation of their arrival in America. (M.S.M. 49.5200)

This structured approach was initiated by the American Moses, Brigham Young, -who organized with great precision the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF), which helped more than 30,000 Mormon converts emigrate between 1849 and 1887. Maintained with church funds and private donations, the PEF made loans to emigrants who were otherwise unable to pay for their journey to Utah. Recipients were expected to repay the sums as soon as they were able; although this sometimes took years, and a few never fully repaid the debt⁴, many did.



With such organization, the Mormons were viewed as the model for emigration in the nineteenth century. In Great Britain, a House of Commons select committee reviewed the topic of emigration under the Passenger Acts in 1854 and reported that no vessels "could be depended upon for comfort and security in the same degree" as those used by the Mormons. Charles Dickens confirmed this when he boarded the *Amazon* at Liverpool in 1863 to observe the Mormon emigrants and praised them as "the pick and flower of England" for their behavior and organization.⁵

Before departure, each vessel was officially blessed by a Mormon elder, wards were organized, and assignments were delegated- and monitored by Church leaders. Journals of immigrants indicate

that passengers were to be up at 5:00 A.M., have morning prayer at 7:00 A.M., and to be anxiously engaged in productive work until concluding their day with prayer at 8:00 P.M.

"It took the ship one day to get ready for sailing during which time we were locating and organizing, " reminisced Oluf Christian Larsen, who sailed on the *Electric* as a 26-year-old. He explained:

The sbip wad divided into two decks with a row of single bunks on each side and a double row along the contour. There, were between three and four hundred passengers, mostly Scandinavians....The young unmarried men were in the forepart arid the unmarried ladies in the hind part of the sbip. I wad chosen ad captain of the guard ad we found it necessary to have

a certain number of men on guard at night in the various parts of the ship.

Tbis wad a hard job ad all the able bodied men were enrolled and each sbould have an equal sbare of the time to stand guard. The guard wad divided into four sbifts of two hours each. Some of their duties were to prevent stealing and immorality and to look after the kersin [sic] lights to prevent fire, to help the sick or disable[d], bury the dead and to awaken their successors. My duty wad to see that the guards attend to their duties and to keep strict account of what wad done.

Left: Brigham Young (1801-1877), a native of Vermont, wad an Itinerant painter and handyman in Uptdate New York when he foiled the Mormon Church in 1852. An extremely practical man, with a clear dende of mission and organization, Young derved ad a mlddonary In England before he wad elected predident of the church In 1847. Young conceived and engineered the removal of the Mormond to Utah In 1846-47, and he det up the Perpetual Emigrating Fund to finance the migration of convertd to populate Zion, ad the Latter-day Saintd referred to their doclerty In Utah. (Courtesy LDS Historical Department, Archived, Salt Lake City)

The 19th [of April] we were towed down the Elbe river and anchored at the mouth awaiting a favorable, wind. A returning missionary, Soren Christopherson from Manti [Utah] was appointed President over the Saints. We found that there were several coupled in the company who were engaged and it was deemed advisable that they marry considering the long journey before them. Accordingly on the 20th of April, 1862 there were twelve coupled [who] presented themselves for marriage among whom Emelia and myself were one....⁶

Ole Nilson Stohl, who was 27 years old, recalled that:

On Friday, the 25th We lifted our anchors and had a good sail wind on Nordsjon [the North Sea]. I was assigned to make a list of all the emigrants on our ship, to be submitted to the Captain. I wrote it even though the sea was rough and many were seasick. In the evening we held prayer as usual and I was mouth. We sailed all night.⁷

Within three days, contagious disease in the form of measles appeared among the seasick passengers. "On Monday the wind is still good but sickness breaks out among us," noted Ole Stohl, whose grandfather was kept busy attending to the sick.

Tuesday—April 29—The first death at sea—a little daughter of Brother H. Andersen. Grandfather was there when she died. He lifted her into another bed.

On Wednesday—the little child was put into the sea in her little casket. Grandfather was to assist but was too ill. On May 1st We were now out on the Atlantic. Had good wind.

On the 2nd and 5rd two women died—one left her husband, the other, a 15 year old girl had a throat disease.

Ole Larson commented: "We had a spell of sickness on board and I was necessitated to superintend the burial of seventeen persons before we reached New

York. As there -was no rain -we were unable to get fresh water and our supply became very foul before reaching shore."

Larson pointed Out that during such a journey, "the character of men and women -were brought to the light of day. Some were satisfied under all conditions while others -were never satisfied. Some -with larger families of small children were to be pitied, especially in case of sickness, as there -was no dainty food to be had but the sailor's provisions -was all."

Nevertheless, the group was unified in faith, and the church members were organized to care for each other's physical and spiritual health. "Sunday, May 4—Grandfather is asked to make a, list of all the Priesthood [males ordained to a priesthood office] on board," recorded Ole Stohl.

After evening prayer. Brother Christofferson spoke about sickness that was among the Saints and that he had no doctor on ship and that he felt that someone should be appointed to look after the sick saints and really be a spiritual doctor to them. He nominated Grandfather for the position. He was put in by unanimous votum [vote] to be a spiritual doctor and look after the cleanliness among the Saints. That night he helped with a woman and her daughter from Lolland. The woman died in the night and the daughter in the morning. There are now between 20 and 50 sick. Grandfather is very busy.

His grandfather was following a belief of the Latter-day Saints, both then and in modern times, that their sick should be anointed with a drop of olive oil upon the head, after -which two church elders should administer a prayer of faith for them. This church procedure has its roots in a passage in

the Bible (James 5:14-15).

Nine days later, after two -weeks at sea, the elders called a special meeting that was "very interesting" to Ole Stohl. "The Saints -were instructed to -walk a lot on deck, wash and comb themselves there and do everything to prevent uncleanness down in the ship. Admonished the night -watchmen to look after this very carefully and president should appoint a brother to see that the Saints were up at 5 A.M...."



John Hansen Hougaard considered their Atlantic passage pleasant and agree- able....

We had no storm of any consequence and but little sickness on board the Ship... While, other ships that went with emigrants the same season had out of the same number of people, nearly 4 or 5 hundred had from 20 to 50 deaths [die]. The main cause of this difference in mortality was said to be that we went in a higher latitude on a account of England....The Saints generally feel well and spend the time while on the ship singing praises to the Lord, playing, dancing.⁸

This -was not pointless frivolity. Mormons believed that Brigham Young received revelation at Winter Quarters (Omaha), Nebraska, on 14 January 1847 concerning the Saints' journey to the new gathering place in Salt Lake Valley. In this document the Saints were told that -while on their journey to the West, "If thou art merry, praise the Lord with

Above: Ole Nilson Stohl (1855-1926), a native of Sweden, converted to Mormonism in 1854 and spent six years as a missionary before emigrating on the Electric. His diary preserved details of that transatlantic passage. (Courtesy IDS Historical Department, Archived, Salt Lake City)

singing, with music, with dancing, and "with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving." Transatlantic passengers celebrated their faith in the same way.⁹

On the forty-second day a New York harbor pilot boarded the *Electric* to guide her into New York Bay. The immigrants rushed to clean up and make a good impression on the inspecting doctors who came on board, but they also had time to stand at the rail to admire the landscape of their new country.¹⁰

Upon landing in New York City, the immigrants were immediately ushered into Castle Garden near the Battery. Built as a fort in 1807, and opened to the public as a theater in 1822, Castle Garden had been converted to an immigrant-depot in 1855.¹¹ Here the Mormon immigrants were examined by doctors and were pro-

nounced free from contagious diseases. "Tipping -was in vogue in 1862," noted Ole Stohl. "We gave the police officers some tips that they would not look into our things."

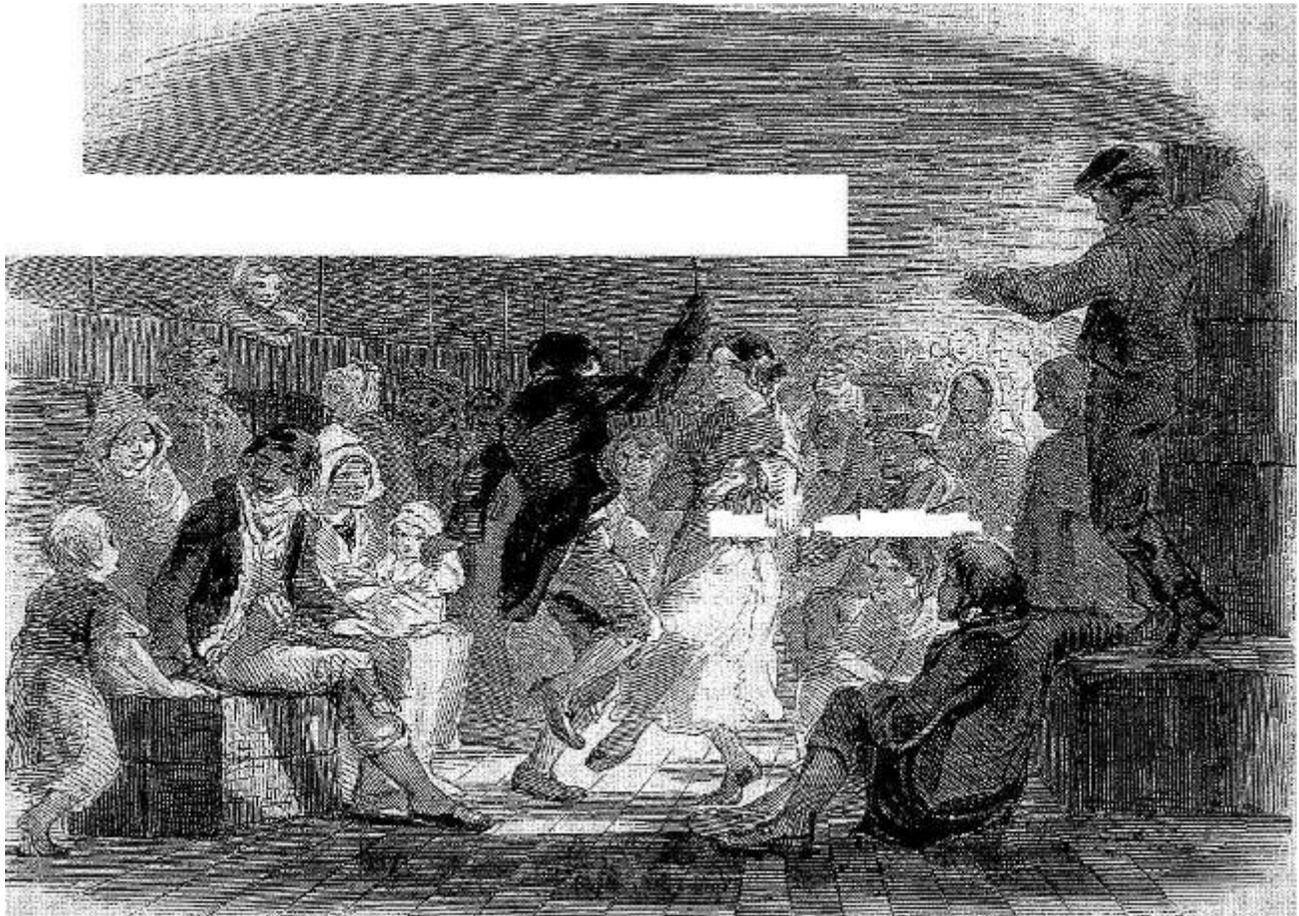
Ole Larsen remembered that:

The next day we boarded the tram and rolled westward. This was during the Civil War and the railroad companies were not very particular what kind of card they furnished. ALL kinds of rolling stock was used for the passengers. There was another trial for grumblers and fault-finders because there were no upholstered seats for our use. When they came into a car they were obliged to stay. Now there were no warm breakfasts nor dinners to be had and there was very little chance to buy anything on the road. We at last reached Quincy, Illinois where we took steamers down the Mississippi to Hannibal where we stopped a day and had a rest. Those who had money could also get a

good meal. There was a train patched up to take us to St. Joseph, Missouri where we again took a steamer to Florence, Nebraska. From here we were to begin our tramp across the plains.

Mormon migration—along the Platte River through the Great Plains, and across the Continental Divide to the Great Basin—was well organized, but the 1,000-mile journey by ox team had to be made largely on foot, and it took longer than the 3,000-mile transatlantic crossing. On 13 July "we set out for the journey across the plains," wrote John Hougard. "We arrived in Salt Lake City

Like Mormon emigrants who celebrated their passage to America with music and dancing, these Irish emigrants dance in the steerage quarters of an emigrant ship. (Illustrated London News, 6 July 1850)



Utah September 23rd 1862," after nine weeks on the trail. The large, orderly, and prosperous community of Salt Lake City, spreading out between the mountains and the Great Salt Lake, must have been a -welcome sight to these Scandinavian pilgrims.

Three years after the voyage of the *Electric*, the *Belle Wood* made a similar voyage from Liverpool to New York. The *Belle Wood* was built in 1854 by George Greenman & Company, on the site of Mystic Seaport, for New-Yorker John McGraw and others, who paid \$44,000 for their new-ship. She -was a "medium" clipper, built -with sharp bow and stern sections, but a mid-section fuller than that of an extreme clipper. Mystic shipyards specialized in these fast and capacious medium clippers, building them right through the 1850s. The *Belle Wood* -was used for six years to transport Southern cotton to England, but with the coming of the Civil War she, like so many other American merchant vessels, -was sold to foreign owners. English investors purchased her in 1863 and rerigged and refitted her as a bark. With the home port of Liverpool she spent another eight years in the Atlantic trades'.¹² ""--

Since the 1840s, Liverpool had been the principal emigrant port for the British Isles. Both regular sail and steam packets, as -well as chartered vessels like the *Belle Wood*, maintained the flow of Irish, English, Scottish, and Welsh emigrants from Liverpool out to the Americas and Australia. The PEF operated a shipping agency in Liverpool that -was responsible for arranging Mormon emigrant passage.¹³

"On April 29, 1865, our family of nine children with father and mother left Liverpool for America on a sailing vessel called the *Belle Wood*," recalled Mary Ann Greenhalgh Mace, -who was 17 at the time she boarded the *Belle*

Wood. "This ship -was in charge of Captain [Thomas W.] Freeman, a large red-headed yankee -who said he had crossed the ocean six times." Elder William H. Shearman -was in charge of this large company of 636 Mormon emigrants. He -was assisted by his counselors Charles B. Taylor and William S.S. Willis. Eleven missionaries, who had just completed their missions in Europe, -were numbered among this large group of Mormon converts.¹⁴

In a letter reprinted in the *Millennial Star*, a Mormon periodical first published in England in 1840, presiding elder WH. Shearman, and his counselors Taylor and Willis, described the departure of the ship to Daniel H. Wells and Brigham Young, -who were leading church officials in England at the time.

*Dear Brethren—After the departure, of yourselves, and the Elders who accompanied you, from your visit to our vessel in the Mersey, we all stood gazing after you, with emotions only known to Saints who have long enjoyed each other's society, until your forms were no longer distinguish able, when we turned our attention to practical duties before us, and proceeded to get the luggage below, and all made secure for the night. We then held a council meeting, at which the ship was divided into nine wards.*¹⁵

The next morning, according to Robert Pixton, "the tugboat took us in tow, and -we set sails and moved past Holy Head. The ship began to leak, and -we had to pump her three times a day."¹⁶

Catherine Hagell Naisbitt of London was just 16 when she set sail. "I -was barely 13 years of age "when my mother died, leaving a family of eight children ranging in age from one week to 14 years," she wrote.

I being the oldest girl naturally felt the loss most keenly. We had planned on emigrating that year, but Mother's

*death prevented our starting on do per-
ilous a journey, especially with such a
young baby. However, the following
year, Father sold out hid business and
we started on what we children thought
to be a plead are trip, but alas, the first
night aboard ship was anything but
pleasant. We begged Father to take us
home, but hid reply was "we have no
home, we are going to make one in*

Elder Shearman reported:

*Most of the people were too dick to
attempt to hold meetings the next day,
and those who were well were buddy
occupied in ministering to the comfort
of the rest. The number of aged, feeble
and dick, rendered it necessary to appoint
some persons whose special business it
should be to attend to them. Accordingly
Elder William Willy, and a Female
Sanitary Committee...were appointed
to that important labor of love...and
faithfully performed the onerous duties
devolving upon them, dispensing sago,
tapioca, arrowroot, hot tea, coffee, soup,
boiled rice, and dried apple sauce, with
other little luxuries, which were carefully
prepared, and proved very grateful to
the invalids. By the kindness of Captain
Freeman in permitting these
nourishments to be prepared at hid own
galley, it enabled us to supply the dick
with a little Light refreshment at an
earlier hour than could have been done
at our own fire, which was a source of
much comfort to many in a debilitated
condition....It was really amusing, if not
interesting, to watch the variety and
number of did bed dent to the galley,
and many on board lived better than they
had before for many years....To supply
the Saints with regular meals, an
organization of brethren for cooking
was formed....The wards cooked in
rotation.*

*Our first Sunday meeting, May 7th, by
the permission of the captain, was held
on the quarter deck, where the mate, Mr
Graystone, had prepared a sort of pulpit
by spreading the union jack on the
harness-cask, and had also arranged
seats for the accommodation of the
Elders. The ship's bell was tolled for half
an hour previous to each meeting. The
captain, officers, and as many*

of the crew as could conveniently do so, favored us with their presence, and paid marked attention.... All the wards had meetings morning and evening, at which prayers were said, and instructing remarks made by their Presidents, and frequent testimony meetings were held.¹⁸

During the 32-day passage, which -was favored "with generally calm -weather and plenty of rain to replenish the fresh water supplies, the grants remained very healthy. A few came down with measles, but only three of the 636 passengers died. One was Catherine Naisbitt's brother. "Shortly after we set sail, the baby, who "was only one "week old when Mother died, took suddenly sick and died soon afterwards. He was buried in the sea when he "was just fourteen months old. We all felt this loss very keenly, especially Father." "It was quite sad to see them put into the ocean," noted Merlin Eastham Kearl, -who -was in his thirteenth year "when he sailed on the *Belle Wood*.

The emigrants paid particular attention to music and literature, as Elder Shearman explained:

Brother Fowler, Palmer and Stonehouse, were appointed a committee to make arrangements for social parties for the recreation of the Saints, at which well selected pieces were recited, and anthems and songs, both spiritual and secular, were executed in a very creditable, manner. A small brass band, assisted by one or two good violinists, also by a flute and clarinet, made sweet melody to beguile the leisure hours of the trip, and filled the air with pleasant strains of music. Among the amusements may be classed the publication of a paper, entitled the Belle Wood Gazette ...in which daily appeared sundry communications from different correspondents, telegrams from various parts of the world, poetical contributions, reports of the board

of health, advertisements for matrimonial alliances, lost property, essays, editorial in. "tion, &c.

The group "was most impressed with Captain Freeman, whom Shearman described as "gentlemanly, courteous and patient in his intercourse "with us, has proved himself a skilful and careful officer, expresses him-

highly pleased with his passengers, and very desirous of carrying our people in [the] future."

With a pilot on board, the *Belle Wood* stood in for New York, and, by custom, the immigrants heaved their bedding and other refuse of the voyage overboard as they entered the bay on 31 May. "The tugboat came for us and we dropped anchor at Castle Garden," Robert Pixton wrote. "At eleven o'clock Brother Taylor came on board to make arrangements to go on shore. The Saints had to do the best they could this night as they had destroyed their beds, expecting to go on shore."²¹

The next day the doctors came aboard to inspect the passengers before they were allowed to disembark. "We experienced no difficulty in passing the doctor and custom house officers, who ■were very courteous and accommodating," William Shearman explained.²²

To insure that Mormon immigration flowed smoothly into America, Brigham Young had established Church agents at ports where the Mormon immigrants arrived in the nineteenth century. During the 1860s almost all Saints "who crossed the Atlantic came into the port at New York. However, a few vessels landed in Boston. During the entire span of Mormon maritime

migration from 1840 to 1890, the Saints used seven ports in North America: New York, Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Quebec for transatlantic immigrants, and San Pedro and San Francisco for those -who crossed the Pacific.

Elder Thomas Taylor, the New York agent, had prepared the travelers for disembarking, but he encountered difficulty in "working out the usual railroad arrangements for them. "In consequence of unwillingness on the part of railway contractors to fulfill their engagements..."we were detained in Castle Gardens between five and six days," Shearman wrote, explaining that there were certain benefits to the delay: ""while detained in New York, -we had some excellent meetings at Williamsburgh, in the Adelphi Hall, at which a great number of the Saints from Castle Garden attended...The food [provided there] -was very acceptable, and refreshing to the bodies of the fatigued Saints, and the kindness that prompted the movement "was still more grateful and invigorating to their [the immigrants'] spirits."²³

Ann Mace remembered that they "found the country in deep mourning over the tragic death of Abraham Lincoln. Everywhere we saw soldiers "who were returning from the Civil War."²⁴

"When we arrived in New York, ■word had been sent from Utah that no "wagons "would be sent from there as had been the custom in the other years," Catherine Naisbitt recalled. Her father could afford to send only one member of

Aim Cutcliffe Bertoch of Devonshire, England, emigrated with her mother and dater on the Belle Wood, arriving in the U.S. shortly before her nineteenth birthday. (Courtesy LDS Historical Department, Arch wed, Salt Lake City)



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Cattle Garden, at the tip of Manhattan, seen here in 1868, served as the nation's principal immigrant portal from 1855 until 1890, after which Ellis Island replaced it. The oldest part of the complex was Castle Clinton, a stone fortification built in 1807, the rounded end of which is visible at right. At Castle Garden, a theater and amusement complex, the site entertained New Yorkers between 1822 and 1855. During the following 55 years, several million immigrants, including thousands of Latter-day Saints, passed through the cramped examination center, offices, and temporary accommodations inside its high wall. (M.S.M. 96.105.8)

the family on to Utah at that time, and his wealthy brother in New Jersey would not assist them unless they renounced Mormonism, so Catherine was chosen to make the trip to Utah. "I will never forget the homesick feeling I experienced when they bade me good-bye," she recalled years later. "We were detained in Castle Garden ten days after this, and I can assure you if it had been possible I would have gone back."

On 7 June the immigrants finally boarded a train and began the railroad portion of their journey, which took them through Albany and Buffalo, New York; Chicago and Quincy, Illinois; and St. Joseph, Missouri. They then boarded a steamboat for a short passage up the Missouri River to Wyoming, Nebraska, where their wagon train would be organized. "There were six hundred of us with no shelter but a storm cellar," wrote Merlin Kears. "There was

not a thing in this cellar and the people made their beds on the dirt floor. We camped there nine weeks and there was thunder storms nearly every day....Some of the men went to Omaha to buy oxen, cows, and wagons for the company to use. This was what took so long."²⁶

"When we were about half way across the plains we found ourselves nearly out of rations with a foot of snow covering the

ground," wrote Catherine Naisbitt. "President Young heard of our predicament and sent a train with provisions to meet us...and [we] moved on to Utah." The group reached Salt Lake City on 7 November 1865.²⁷

Nearly a year later, in October 1866, Catherine was reunited with her father and brothers when they finally reached Salt Lake City, eighteen months after their family set out from Liverpool on the *Belle Wood*. Members of the Bromley family also completed their westward journey in 1866 after arriving in America on the *Belle Wood*. They spent a year with relatives in St. Joseph, Missouri, before embarking on a steamboat for Omaha in July 1866 to join a wagon train. Earlier parties had little difficulty passing through the lands of the migratory Plains Indians, but conflict increased after 1865. When the Bromleys' company came upon the smoking ruins of a stage station, they prepared to defend themselves, and the children and elderly got into the wagons. Seventeen-year-old Celestia Bromley drove her family's wagon while her father and the other men walked alongside with their guns ready. A party of 50 warriors challenged them. "They would come almost to the train, make a circle with their horses, then get under the horses and point their arrows at us." But after the Mormons camped, the Indians approached and made peace when they were given gifts of food. The Mormons then safely completed their long migration.²⁸

These eyewitness accounts of two Mormon immigrant passages aboard Mystic-built clipper ships relate a remarkable story of faith and perseverance that is consistent with other known sailing voyages transporting Mormons in the mid-nineteenth century. Although they called themselves Saints, they expressed their common humanity amidst the hardships of the journey. The immi-

grants struggled as they were separated from loved ones, suffered from seasickness and disease as they battled winds and waves, and at times were resigned to deliver their loved ones to watery graves. In spite of these challenges, the Saints were drawn to gather together in America at the Mormon settlements in Utah Territory.

What was their purpose in gathering? For some it was to seek refuge from persecution, while for many it was to be strengthened in their faith. For the vast majority it was to be obedient to the leaders of the Mormon faith who had issued the call to build holy temples and partake of the blessings therein. One emigrating convert perhaps best expressed the spirit of the gathering by way of personal testimony: "I believed in the principal of the gathering and felt it my duty to go although it was a severe trial to me, in my feelings to leave my native land and the pleasing associations that I had formed there; but my heart was fixed. I knew in whom I had trusted and with the fire of Israel's God burning in my bosom, I forsook my home."²⁹

Their unity, organization, and hygiene were models for seaborne immigration in the nineteenth century. Despite their hardships, together they prayed, worked, sang, and danced their way to Zion. Immigrants poured into Salt Lake City until the close of the nineteenth century, when church leaders encouraged foreign-born converts to remain at home and strengthen Mormonism in their own local areas. However, before the mass migration had subsided, more than 90,000 had traveled over 5,000 rugged miles to Utah. Indeed, prior to the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, there were "few places in the world more difficult to reach than the valley of the Great Salt Lake," claimed American historian Hubert H. Bancroft.³⁰

The journals of these voyages blend into a distinct voice characteristic of thousands of converts who journeyed from foreign lands to America prior to their long march along the Mormon Trail to Salt Lake. Some might find it a bit mystical to discover that two small branches of that trail can be traced back to the busy Connecticut shipyards of a place called Mystic.

Noted

1. *Deseret News*, 1997-98 Church Almanac (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1997), 159-67; B.H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols., (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 2:86; Conway B. Sonne, *Saints on the Sea: A Maritime History of Mormon Migration 1850-1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), xi; Conway B. Sonne, "Sail to Zion," *Eruign* (July 1991): 7. The author has collected journal entries from more than 450 vessels that transported Latter-day Saint converts across the Atlantic and Pacific in the nineteenth century.
2. William N. Peterson, *Mystic Built: Ship and Shipyard of the Mystic River, Connecticut, 1784-1918* (Mystic: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1989), 181; Octavius T. Howe and Frederick C. Matthews, *American Clipper Ship, 1855-1858*, 2 vols. (1926-27; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1986), 1:153-54.
3. For a manifest of the Saints who crossed the Atlantic aboard the *Euclid* in 1862, see the Manuscript History of the Scandinavian Mission ("Skandinaviens Stjerne," 165), under the date of 9 April 1862. This document and several other primary sources that shed light on this study are available in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Historical Department, Library Archives Division, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives. See also James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 177.
4. David F. Boone, "Perpetual Emigrating Fund," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 3:1075.
5. See Sonne, *Saints on the Sea*, 138-39; Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 177; Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller and Reprinted Piece Etc.* (reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 224. While the 85,000 Mormon immigrants who crossed the Atlantic in the nineteenth century did have their share of deaths due to sickness, not one of the vessels they traveled on ever sank. This is in sharp contrast to the fact that at least 59 emigrant ships were lost crossing the Atlantic just between 1847 and 1853. However, on the Pacific, the *Julia Ann* was wrecked in 1855 while bound from Sydney, Australia, to San Francisco, carrying 28 Mormons among her 56 passengers. Two

women and three children drowned, while the rest of the passengers spent two months on an uninhabited island, subsisting on coconuts and fish until they "were rescued by a passing ship. An archaeological team has recently found the wreckage of the *Julia Ann*.

6. Oluf Christian Larsen, "A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Oluf Christian Larsen," LDS Church Archives, MS 1546, 31-32.

7. Ole Nilson Stohl, Diaries for 1861-64, LDS Church Archives, MS 1426, Books D and E.

8. John Hansen Houggard, Autobiography and Journal, LDS Church Archives, MS 8178, 14-20.

9. *The Doctrine and Covenant* of The Church of Jedud Chruft of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), Section 136, verse 28.

10. Stohl, Diary, 5 June 1862.

11. Castle Garden "was the New York immigration depot from 1855 to 1890. It was replaced by Ellis Island. For more information on this depot, see George J. Svejda, *Cad tie Garden Ad An Immigrant Depot, 1855-1890* (Denver: National Park Service, 1968).

12. Peterson, *My*tic Built*, 168.

13. Gustive O. Larsen, "Story of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company!" *Utah Academy Proceeding* 31* (1954):142.

14. Mary Ann Greenhalgh Mace, Autobiography, in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, Kate B. Carter, comp., 20 vols., (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1972), 15:126-27. This concise overview of the trip is derived from "Church Emigration," vol. 3, LDS Church Archives, which covers emigration from 1858 to 1881. For a complete manifest of the 636 immigrants, see the "Manuscript History of the British Mission" under the date of 29 April 1865. Both of these sources are housed in the LDS Church Archives; the official passenger list for the 633 passengers who arrived in New York, filed at the National Archives, is reproduced on National Archives film no. 444 on micro film roll 175,608 of the LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

15. *The Latter-day Saint*Millennial Star* 24 June 1865, 397-99 (hereafter cited as *Millennial Star*). Elder is a title generally used for ordained Mormon male missionaries.

16. Robert Pixton, Journal, m *Chronicles of Courage*, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1990), 1:247.

17. Catherine Hagell Naisbitt, Autobiography, m *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 10:10-11. After 1847, the term *Zion* was used by Mormon converts to refer to America, and more specifically to the designated gathering place of Latter-day Saints in the Utah Territory. In modern times Mormons refer to *Zion* as wherever congregations of Mormons are gathered throughout the world.

18. *Millennial Star*, 24 June 1865, 397-98. Mormons made converts among passengers, captains, and crews during several voyages to America. One notable example was on board the ship *International*, which transported 425 Mormon emigrants from Liverpool to New Orleans in 1853. The Mormon elder who presided among the Saints on this voyage reported: "The good conduct of the saints

[has] had a happy result in bringing many to a knowledge of the truth...we have baptized all on board except three persons. We can number the captain [David Brown], first and second mates with eighteen of the crew, most of whom intend going right through to the Valley...the number baptized in all is forty-eight, since we left our native shores," *Millennial Star*, 4 June 1853, 359.

19. *Millennial Star*, 24 June 1865, 397-99, lists the total number of deaths at three. This is in contrast to the "Church Emigration" record, which notes only one death. See note 14 for evidence that the former number is more accurate. Among other things, *The Millennial Star* published records of the Mormon maritime migrations in the nineteenth century. Naisbitt, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 10:10-11; Merlin Eastham Kearn, Autobiographical Sketch, in *Utah Pioneer Biographied*, 44 vols., (Salt Lake City: Family History Library for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), 17:10-12.

20. *Millennial Star*, 24 June 1865, 399.

21. Pixton, *Characterd of Courage*, 1:247.

22. *Millennial Star*, 22 July 1865, 461.

23. *Ibid*.

24. Mace, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 15:126-27..

25. Naisbitt, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 10:111.

26. Wyoming, Nebraska, was six miles north of present Nebraska City; Kearn, *Utah Pioneer Biographied*, 17: 10-11.

27. Naisbitt, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 10:111.

28. Celestia Clarissa Bromley Buys, Autobiography, in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 10:92.

29. Jane C. Robinson Hindley, Reminiscences and Diaries, LDS Church Archives.

30. *1997-98 Church Almanac*, 159-67; Bancroft is quoted in William G. Hartley, "Coming to Zion: Saga of the Gathering," *Endign* (July 1975): 16.

Dr. Fred E. Woods, a native of Southern California and a convert to Mormonism, teaches at Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho. He has brought students to Mystic Seaport in his capacity as director of Mormon-American Travel Studies. He has spent his sabbatical year developing a database that links passenger lists with voyages made by nineteenth-century Mormon immigrants, which is augmented by more than 1,000 immigrant journal accounts.

A Maritime Minute from Mystic Seaport



An immigrant moment on a Mystic-built packet ship

1 June 1846.

The ship *Niagara* approaches New York, completing her first voyage since her launch at Mystic. Four weeks ago the ship left Liverpool with 288 Irish emigrants willing to endure a hazardous sea voyage and uncertain future in hopes of a prosperous new life in America.

In his journal the ship's carpenter, William Ellery Maxson, writes: "It is beautiful almost beyond description this evening. The ship has 20 sails spread to the wind which looks fine in the moon light. . . shining across the ruffled sea makes it look like a field of diamonds. The decks are covered with passengers some singing, others talking, laughing, sparking while the ship is skimming it for New York without-even a grunt."

It is a moment of peace in a tumultuous journey; a moment now preserved in the collections at Mystic Seaport.

William Ellery Maxson (1818-1895) helped build the Niagara at the Greenman shipyard in Mystic before making the voyage as a carpenter. He was here ca. 1855. His journal is cataloged as Log 865 in the Manuscript Collection of the Museum G. W. Blunt White Library. (Mystic Seaport Photo Archived)