



# The Arrival of Nineteenth-Century Mormon Emigrants in Salt Lake City

*Fred E. Woods*

A number of articles, books, and lengthy essays have been written during the past century and a half on Mormon immigration and emigration by land and sea.<sup>1</sup> However, in nearly every instance, the reader is left to wonder what happened once the Latter-day Saint converts reached their destination in the West. Before steam vessels replaced sailing ships as the most popular passenger carriers, European Mormon converts were propelled by wind across the Atlantic and then traversed the plains by wagon, on foot, or by handcart. During the trail years (1847–68), it took several months to reach the Salt Lake Valley. Often, European converts who left early in the year did not complete their journey until fall. The average time to reach the East Coast from Liverpool was estimated at thirty-eight days, and the journey from Liverpool to New Orleans typically took fifty-four days.<sup>2</sup>

*Fred E. Woods is a professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University.*

Yet regardless of the time it took to reach Utah by sail, rail, or trail, the moment these emigrant converts reached Salt Lake City appears to have been the high point for most of them, the culmination of their journey.<sup>3</sup> Having left the boundaries of Babylon and now reached the borders of Zion, these foreign converts frequently felt a flood of emotions caused by the impact of arrival and the challenge of assimilation. Although assisted in most instances by trustworthy missionaries returning home from their fields of labor, the new arrivals were still on the threshold of a new life in an unfamiliar territory. What were their thoughts when they entered the city of the Saints? What did they experience when the journey came to an end? Where exactly did that journey end, and how did it change during the latter decades of the nineteenth century? Who met the emigrants at those junctures? What did the Church do to aid assimilation? Did the process change during the peak period of Mormon emigration during the trail years (1847–68) and rail years (1868–90)? This study explores these questions and offers an overview of what most Latter-day Saint converts likely experienced upon arrival in the Salt Lake Valley in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

### Arrival at the Old Fort (1847–49)

During the first two years of arrival in the valley, many early Mormon sojourners made contact with the Old Mormon Fort, and a number of them also found lodging in or near there.<sup>4</sup> One major reason this fort had been built was to protect the early pioneers from Native Americans in this desolate region. One week after Brigham Young arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, vanguard camp historian William Clayton noted that Elder Heber C. Kimball proposed that a corral (or fort) be erected and “that the houses form a stockade or fort to keep out the Indians that our women and children be not abused, and that we let Ute Indians alone.”<sup>5</sup>

Less than a week later, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued an epistle which noted, “We are also laboring unitedly to build a

stockade of houses around a ten acre block. This also will be a greater blessing to others." Further, "We are engaged in other improvements here in like manner, but when we come here with our families and the inhabitants begin to spread abroad in the city, we expect that every family will have a lot on which they may build, plant and also farm, as much land as they can till, and every man may be a steward over his own."<sup>6</sup>

Several accounts provide a glimpse of the life of the pioneers as they arrived in the Great Basin from 1847 to 1848, experienced immediate blessings, and soon thereafter prospered. For example, J.C. Ensign recalled, "I drove the first Ox team into the valley under the direction of Daniel Spencer landing on the grounds of old Fort square. September 23rd. 1847."<sup>7</sup> Apparently Ensign, starting his Salt Lake sojourn with very humble beginnings, reached out to others who found themselves in the same situation or worse. His situation a year later is discernible from the account of Rachel Emma Woolley Simmons: "We went to Brother Ensign's who kindly offered us the hospitality of their one room until we could do better."<sup>8</sup> Other early pioneers, not so fortunate on arriving in the Valley, found themselves in a position where rental payment was needed. Ann Cannon Woodbury wrote, "Uncle Taylor rented a room of the old fort from some of the Mormon Battalion boys who got to the valley ahead of some of the pioneers. They build some houses in the pioneer fort and rented them to some of the folks that came later. We got into the fort on October 6, 1847."<sup>9</sup>

When Daniel Davis entered the Salt Lake Valley the following year, he noted, "Went down towards the fort or temple Block & as We drew near the Saints came out to meet us with cheers[,] Bro Brigham Met us to bade Welcome[,] also Parley P Pratt & Bro Jediah [Jedediah] M. Grant."<sup>10</sup> Aroet Lucious Hale remembered that as he came into the Valley the same year, "We camped around the Old Fort that the Poyneers [pioneers] of 47 built." Further, "In the fawl [fall] of 48 all the Saints had liberty to Scatter out . . . and Settle on their City Lots."<sup>11</sup>

### Arrivals at Union Square (1850s)

Journals during the 1850s frequently mention arrivals at Union Square, or Public Square,<sup>12</sup> as it was called. William Goforth Nelson wrote, “We reached Salt Lake City, Sept. 9, 1850, and camped on the public square for two days.”<sup>13</sup> Peter McIntyre recalled, “We arrived in Salt Lake City on Sept. 22nd 1853 and camped on the Public Square.”<sup>14</sup> One distinctive group who entered Union Square during this decade was the Abraham O. Smoot company, arriving in early September 1852. Isaac Brockbank remembered, “On first taking a view of the city, our hearts were filled with gratitude to God that we had been enable[d] to complete our journey. . . . This being the first company that had arrived direct from Europe under the auspices of the Perpetual Emigration Fund Co., considerable interest was taken by the Saints of the City in visiting the company on their arrival on Union Square. Pres. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and others of the leading authorities of the Church visited and counseled the new arrival[s].”<sup>15</sup>

William Woodward recalled his experience of receiving help and guidance from a new acquaintance he met shortly after his arrival in September 1851: “How beautiful Salt Lake City appeared after crossing the plains. Here we met acquaintances and were greeted with kindness. I was now looking for something to do. After my arrival in the city I met an acquaintance on Main Street, who asked what I was thinking of doing.” This person said, “‘Come across the street and see our Bishop.’ This was N. [Nathaniel] V. Jones, of the Fifteenth Ward. He introduced me to Brother Jones and told my business. Said Brother Jones, ‘My brother-in-law, Robert Burton, wants a hand.’ This brother took me to Brother Burton’s and I engaged to work for him, and went there the next day.”<sup>16</sup>

Two years later, Ann Gregory Wilkey would give birth to a little girl shortly before reaching the Salt Lake Valley. Although Ann was tired, hungry, and exhausted, teams and provisions sent from the valley enabled her and her company to successfully reach their destination. Ann wrote, “We were then placed on the public square in Salt

Lake City, with no shelter, but the blue sky above us and the ground beneath[,] no home and nothing to eat and in October. My baby was then ten days old. I was very sick and tired and very weak having had not much food and being sick . . . but dear friends came. Bro. and Sis. Theabald took us to their home. They had been in Utah two years. We remained with them a few weeks.”<sup>17</sup>

During this same year, Joseph W. Young led a company into the valley. Hugh Pugh, who served as the company clerk, is an example of what must have taken place many times as various companies were dismissed from Union Square. Pugh notes that the company had arrived there at 5:00 p.m., October 10, 1854:

Tuesday Oct. 11. This morning the company was aroused by Trumpet Sound at 6 o'clock to prepare for dismissing[.] About 9 A.M. a meeting was called when president J. W. Young spoke well to the saints enjoining upon them faithfulness, diligence &c[.] they were also addressed by President Brigham Young with power and the manifestation of the Holy Ghost, teaching the saints that which was essential for their future destiny, also welcoming them to this delightful vale. By request of the company's Prest. [president] he then broke up the organization, blessed the people in the name of the Lord Jesus and retired. Good counsel was afterwards given by Elders J. C. Haight, Wallace and Lorenzo D. Young.<sup>18</sup>

Ann Lewis Clegg, who reached the Salt Lake Valley in 1854, recalled her memorable entrance into the city of the Saints and expressed gratitude for the splendid reception she and her company received at the time of arrival:

We came through Emmigration Canyon through the valley and on to the public square, where we camped with hundreds of others for a few weeks until we could get located. How little

Salt Lake City seemed to us. The square was full of people to welcome us in. Brigham Young was there first and gave us a hearty welcome. . . . Some were expecting their loved ones in the company and I tell you it was a grand reunion, a time of rejoicing together. I was glad our journey was ended, but I was very lonesome for awhile. We had been 3 months on the road and arrived in Salt Lake Sept. 30, 1854, just in time to attend the great October conference.<sup>19</sup>

Though it was not uncommon for family and friends to meet the incoming emigrants, some who had no one to meet them felt lonely. Watkin Rees and his wife were one such couple who also entered the Valley in 1854 at conference time. "Here on the Public Square many of the emigrants ware met by friends[:] others had places to go to and it was not long befor[e] the whole camp was disposed of[.] it happened that I and the wife and baby was left till last and we felt somewhat Lonesome without money without friend and all gone but us it looked blue."<sup>20</sup>

John Crook, who journeyed by wagon in the Philemon C. Merrill company (1856), recalled his initial impressions of the Salt Lake Valley: "There was the scene before us that we had long looked for, and read and sung about, the city of the Saints. Oh what a joy filled each bosom at the sight. About noon the 15th of August we rolled into Salt Lake City and went into camp on Emigration square."<sup>21</sup>

During most of the handcart years (1856–59), Union Square continued to be used as the arrival point, and Church leaders continued to welcome some of the arriving emigrants. Wilford Woodruff wrote that he was particularly impressed with the behavior of the leader of the first handcart company, Edmund Ellsworth, as Ellsworth returned to Salt Lake from a mission to England with his cart in hand on September 26, 1856. According to Woodruff, "Brother Ellsworth . . . passed by his lovely home and saw his wives and children standing in his door, he made no halt, only gave a passing salute, continuing with his company until he reached the public square and saw them all comfortably

encamped and fed.” Woodruff further recalled, “I felt that his position was far more honorable and lovely in the eyes of God and Angels and good men, than it would have been, had he been mounted upon the best steed that ever trod the earth, clothed with ermine and gold.”<sup>22</sup>

Mary B. Crandal, who arrived the same day as Ellsworth but in the Daniel D. McArthur handcart company, recalled, “Bands came out to meet us, and the First Presidency came. What a beautiful sight met our eyes after our long journey. . . . What cheering and shouting as we came. . . . The streets were thronged with men, women and children. . . . When we got to the Public Square there were plenty of victuals cooked up for the two companies. We were the second company and Brother Edmund Ellsworth’s was the first; but we came into the Valley at the same time.”<sup>23</sup> Such assistance is further evident in individual ways, as attested by Robert McQuarrie, who came into view of the Salt Lake Valley in the early fall of 1857 and recorded the following entry in his journal on September 12: “Robert Baxter met us on the top of the little mountain, we went into Salt Lake City and camped on the public square at 2 O’clock. bro Baxter took us (my fathers family) to his house and kindly entertained us for one week. during which time I went to Ogden and bought a farm of R.G. Golding for \$1000.00.”<sup>24</sup>

### Arrivals at Eighth Ward Square (1859–65)

Commencing in 1859, during the latter part of the handcart era, it appears the emigrants first gathered and camped on what is referred to as the Eighth Ward Square, Washington Square, and Emigration/Immigration Square.<sup>25</sup> Ellen Wasden, then age ten, remembered, “When we came into Salt Lake City, it was a small ‘city’ then, we camped on 8th Ward Square, where the City and County Building now is. We drew our wagons into a circle and the Saints hailed our coming by the band playing, ‘Home, Sweet Home.’ . . . I shall never forget how my tired and weary body and soul responded to that song. We had reached our goal, worn and hungry, with nothing but the

strength of a mighty purpose to support us. There were no comrades we had known before and the solemn primal curse, ‘Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow,’ was upon us.”<sup>26</sup>

Robert Bodily wrote concerning his arrival, “[We] finally arrived on the 5th day of Oct. 1860. We camped on the lot where now stands the City & County Building S L City. The next day we went to Conference and heard that great man President Brigham Young and other good men whom we had never heard before. . . . After Conference my father bought a place in the 6th Ward.”<sup>27</sup>

In subsequent years, Mormon converts continued to record their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley. For example, in 1861, Eli Wiggill came to Zion from South Africa. In his autobiography, he recalled the following about his day of arrival in Salt Lake City: “Found an old acquaintance from Africa by the name of Charles Roper, who lived in the Seventh Ward. . . . Stay at his house untill our Company came into the City who came in the Next day and we camped on the Emigration Square.”<sup>28</sup>

In 1862, Hannah Harrison crossed the plains with the James Wareham company and recalled, “After 13 long weeks on the plains we reached Salt Lake City, September 30, and camped for the night on what was then known as Immigration Square. This was then the camping ground of all immigrant trains.”<sup>29</sup> Arriving the following year, Charles Henry John West remembered, “We were in all 10 weeks on the plains, when we arrived at Salt Lake City on the camping grounds of the 8th Ward Square. The friends and relations of different ones would come and take them away to their homes.”<sup>30</sup>

Although new arrivals were often met by family and friends, many of the newcomers would also need assistance from Church leaders, and of course all appreciated the support of their fellow Church members, especially on the day of arrival in the city of the Saints. World traveler and celebrated writer Richard F. Burton, an eyewitness to one hand-cart company’s arrival in 1860, described from a non-Mormon point of view the impressive Mormon manner for rendering support and



immediate assistance to the joyful newcomers at the public square: "We saw the smoke-like column which announced the emigrants were crossing the bench-land; and people were scurrying from all sides to greet and get news of friends. Presently the carts came. . . . All the new arrivals were in clean clothes, the men washed and shaved, and the girls, who were singing hymns, habited in Sunday dresses. The company was sunburned, but looked well and thoroughly happy." In addition, Burton provided the observant detail that "when the train reached the public square . . . of the 8th ward, the wagons were in line for the final ceremony. . . . On this occasion the place of Mr. Brigham Young was taken by [Edward] Hunter, a Pennsylvanian, whom even the most fanatic and intentionally evil-speaking anti-Mormon must regard with respect. Preceded by a brass band." Finally, Burton observed, "In a short time arrangements were made to house and employ all who required work, whether men or women."<sup>31</sup>

A most impressive report was also published in the *Deseret Weekly News* in the late fall of 1864. A lengthy excerpt from this article, "Home Items," is provided below for its rich detail and keen observations concerning Mormon assimilation and arrival in downtown Salt Lake City:

The last of this season's emigration has arrived, mostly in good health and fine spirits. Cap. Wm. Hyde's train, which reached the Public Square on the afternoon of the 26th ult; was unusually well provided for by the donations of the people through their Bishops. Early on that day brother Jesse C. Little, one of Bishop Hunter's counselors, Bishop John Sharp, together with those appointed at the regular Bishop's meeting viz. Wm. A. McMaster, of the 11th Ward, Samuel Turnbow and Martin Lenzi of the 14th Ward, Father Booth of the 10th and brother Leach of the 2d Ward, got some tents from the General Tithing Store and put them upon the 8th Ward Square preparatory to the reception of the company.

Immediately on the arrival of the train, the brethren and sisters came forward with soup, beef, potatoes, pies, sugar and coffee, to supply the wants of those who had just come in from their long and tedious journey across the plains. The above named brethren saw to the plentiful distribution of the food among the passengers. They also provided for the sick, and had them made comparatively comfortable in the 8th Ward School House. Sister Sluce was on hand to wait upon the sisters, several of whom were in a delicate state of health.

Dr. Hovey was called in to give medical advice and to administer such remedial agents as could best be applied; and, from the arrival of the train to the time that all found places to go to, the best that could be done was done, to alleviate suffering, to comfort, to bless and render happy the poor of God's chosen people, and in this none seemed remiss in their duty to God and their brethren and sisters.

It has always been customary for the Saints to assist the incoming emigration, but this season has seemed to call for an extra and additional effort, because of the lateness of the season before the last two companies got in. This call for assistance, therefore, was made upon every Ward in the city, and, to their praise be it spoken, every Ward, and almost every family freely responded to the Bishops' call. . . . We think great credit is due to Bishop Hunter and his assistants for the promptness and energy with which they have carried out the wishes of our President in providing food and homes for these large companies of Saints. This is



*Donations were provided through bishops such as Bishop Edward Hunter. (Courtesy of Church History Library.)*

the way the Latter-day Saints treat their poor brethren when they come here from distant nations, ignorant of our manners and customs, ignorant of our mode of procuring the necessities of life, and many of them ignorant of the language we speak. Can this be the result of fanaticism? or is it the fruit of that pure and undefiled religion of which the apostle speaks? We ask, can the Christian world show its equal? Our religion teaches this maxim, "By their fruits ye shall know them."<sup>32</sup>

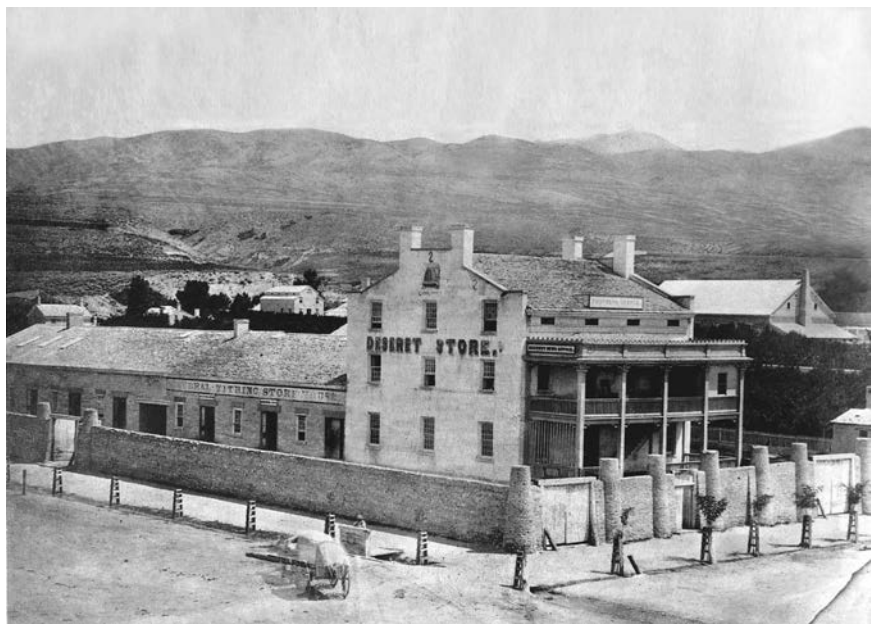
### **Tithing Yard (1866 to the End of the Nineteenth Century)**

By 1866, there is evidence that incoming emigrants were being temporarily housed at the Tithing Yard (located at the northeast corner of South Temple and Main Street), where the Joseph Smith Memorial Building now stands. A *Deseret News* article titled "Commendable" announced, "There is a very comfortable structure erected in the yard of the General Tithing Store, for the incoming immigrants, with other accommodations for their use. Bishop [Edward] Hunter and Counsel have been energetically preparing for their comfort. Bishop J. [Jesse] C. Little aiding, counseling, directing and laboring with his accustomed zeal."<sup>33</sup> Yet, when Hans J. Zobel arrived three years later, it appears there was not enough room in this structure, and evidently the hospitality he longed for in the city of the Saints was also absent. Notwithstanding, he found inner contentment, as surmised from this penetrating account:

We therefore arrived in Salt Lake City on August 11, 1869 and were dumped out in the tithing yard, and made our bed on the ground with high heaven for roof. So this was Zion. We all felt to praise our God for our safe delivery but it seemed that it was Zion in name only, because there were none to welcome or give us a brotherly handshake; no one paid the least bit of attention to us.

We soon found out that we were to be more or less upon our own resources and the familiar words of the song came to me when I was pondering over these things, namely: "Think not when to Zion you arrive that your troubles are over" and so on. I realized at once that my troubles had come to an end—the first end, because I had left a goodly home, with a roof over it to shelter me, a nice soft bed to rest myself, and plenty of food to eat; and here I am in Zion, with no home, no bed, and no food. But still I was happy and my very soul went up in praise to my Heavenly Father because I stood here in Zion, under the stars, with empty hands, a mother, two sisters and a betrothed sweetheart to look after, in a strange land, strange people and customs, and no work of the kind that I was trained in. And still I knew within my heart that I had obeyed the voice of the one who had said: "Get ye up out of Babylon and get ye to the tops of the mountains, where you can walk in my paths and keep all of my statutes," so I felt an assurance that if God had given me the call to come here, he would not leave me here to starve, and to be without shelter. So I was satisfied with my lot.<sup>34</sup>

Just three months earlier, the transcontinental railroad had been completed, which meant the entire journey across America would be by rail instead of trail, and thousands would pour into Utah at a much faster pace. However, several accounts indicate that a number of incoming Saints got off the train at various locations before reaching the Salt Lake Valley. By the 1880s, the Salt Lake Valley was filling up with Saints, and thus a number of converts had dispersed to expand the periphery of Zion's core. For example, in 1882, William George Davis wrote, "We arrived at Evanston in the afternoon and at Echo about dusk. Several of our company left us at these places, they having friends who met them and took them to their homes." He later noted, "We arrived in Ogden about midnight. . . . Many of the Saints left us at Ogden and went with friends who came to meet them. . . . We



*A nineteenth-century photograph of the Deseret Store and Tithing Office. (Courtesy of Church History Library)*

arrived in Salt Lake City about noon and found the depot crowded with friends and old acquaintances.”<sup>35</sup>

Arriving at the edge of Utah’s border in the fall of 1885, Samuel R. Bennion recorded, “Quite a number got off at Evanston.”<sup>36</sup> Anthon H. Lund, who presided over this same company, observed, “At Evanston 14 emigrants left our train.” Another Scandinavian convert wanted to be dropped off soon thereafter, as “he did not like to be oxen.” Still another was asked to leave the train at Uintah.<sup>37</sup>

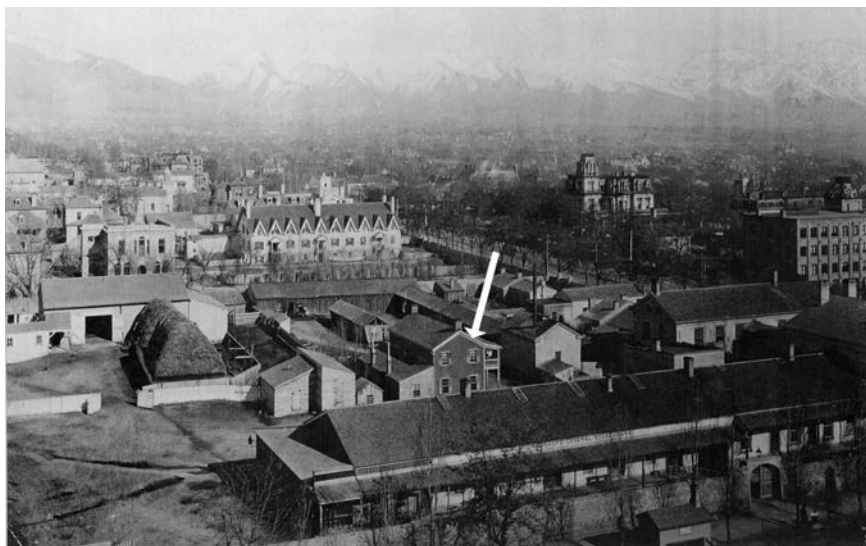
During the late nineteenth century, improved facilities in Salt Lake City were provided for these newcomers, who generally traveled on the transcontinental railroad; on the other hand, a number of companies that passed through New York to Norfolk, Virginia, journeyed on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, heading to Salt Lake City from the South.<sup>38</sup> In the spring of 1873, the *Millennial Star* issued an article titled “For Emigrants,” which announced the following: “A new

and substantial building is in course of erection in the Tithing Office yard [Salt Lake City], which is to be used for the accommodation of emigrants arriving here without any home to go to, until they are in a position to provide for themselves. The building will be 43 by 20 feet, two storeys high, and will have a porch on the south side.”<sup>39</sup>

Just a few months later, Jens A. Weibye, on his arrival in Salt Lake City in late September, wrote, “The Saints scattered to different places. Some of us to the Emigrant House in the Tithing Yard.”<sup>40</sup> About this same time, William Kilshaw Barton recalled, “The Saints who had no relatives or particular friends, went [to] the Tithing yard where they stayed until homes were provided for them in Salt Lake City or in the other towns south.”<sup>41</sup> One company had no one there to meet them when they arrived one fall night in 1880 because news had gone forth that the train would arrive the following morning. James Samuel Page Bowler explained, “We passed the night in the tithing house as best we could, but even that was better than thousands of others who came to this country in early days.”<sup>42</sup>

The Tithing Yard was not just a place of dispersion and a dwelling where incoming converts temporarily lodged at the Emigrant House. The yard was also a place for instruction, and such timely tutorials proved invaluable, especially to those vulnerable foreign converts who did not speak any English. In 1874, company leader Peter C. Carstenson reported, “A meeting was held in the tithing yard, in the afternoon, when Brother [Erastus] Snow gave many good counsels and instructions to the newly arrived Saints, and spoke in the Danish language. After meeting was closed the company separated, the Saints going with their relations and friends to their homes.”<sup>43</sup>

During the following decade, immigrant accounts reveal that the incoming Saints continued to gather to and disperse from the Tithing Yard. For example, James H. Hansen, who reached Salt Lake City in 1882, wrote, “A great many people was at the station to meet their friends and teams came to take all the emigrants up to the Tithing Yard where some provisions were brought for them.”<sup>44</sup> The following



*Image shows the Salt Lake City tithing office and yards. It was located on the corner of Main Street and South Temple where the Joseph Smith Memorial Building is now. In the early years of the LDS church, members would rarely pay their tithing with money. More often, it was paid in livestock, dry goods, or a portion of their crop. This was all stored at the tithing office yards and distributed through the Deseret Store. (Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society. All rights reserved.)*

year, Andrew Christian Nielson arrived and later recalled, “Got to Salt Lake City, stopped in the Tithing Yard, and emigrants scattered.”<sup>45</sup> The front page of the *Deseret Evening News* for November 12, 1883, carried the headline “Immigrants Arrived.” The editor then explained, “Those who came down to the city were met, as usual, by their immediate friends and relatives, conveyed by the teams provided by the Bishops to the Immigrant House in the Tithing Yard.”<sup>46</sup>

Additional articles from the *Millennial Star* provide evidence that the Tithing Yard was used to temporarily house the incoming converts throughout the 1880s. For example, in 1885, C. J. Arthur explained in the *Star*, “Most of the company have left, a few only remain, and they will soon find some friends who will provide them labor and a home for the time being. At present they remain in the Emigrants’ Home,



in the Tithing Yard.”<sup>47</sup> The following year, Edwin T. Wooley reported, “Our company went forward to their various destinations without delay, and by nine o’clock of the morning following our arrival in Salt Lake City but very few were left at the emigrant quarters in the Tithing Yard.”<sup>48</sup> That same year, C. F. Olsen recounted the dispersive activity when his company arrived in Ogden in mid-July: “Those going north remained in Ogden over night, and those bound for Salt Lake City and the south proceeded to the city the same evening, where many received a hearty welcome and warm greeting from their friends and relatives, while those who were going still further were made comfortable at the Tithing Yard.”<sup>49</sup>

In 1889, another *Star* article appeared in which John William Craven also wrote of his company’s safe arrival: “We went to the Tithing Office, and were very soon enjoying the good things which are temporarily provided free of expense to all members of the Church. Before going on to our destination we stayed one week, visiting former friends whom we knew in England.”<sup>50</sup>

### Temporary Lodging in the City of the Saints

Immigrants arriving in the late nineteenth century not only visited friends but on many occasions stayed with fellow Saints until they could be permanently situated. Charlotte Ann Bates, who entered Salt Lake City in the summer of 1871, vividly remembered, “We arrived in Salt Lake City about the 20th of July. It was in the evening after dark. I remember passing on South Temple and looking down Main Street. They had boardwalks and a small ditch on each side of the street with water running down it. They had lamp posts with lamps lit up all the way down the street.” Bates further recalled with gratitude that Milford Bardship, one of the missionaries, “took us to his home for a day or two until we could get located some place. The next day some friends of father’s and mother’s named Smith came to see us and said they had



a house we could live in as long as we wanted it. There was a log room and a lumber room, so we moved in.”<sup>51</sup>

Others were filled with a profound sense of thanksgiving as they entered the city of Zion and met its inhabitants. One who felt this way was Alma Ash, who arrived in Salt Lake City in 1885. As Ash reflected upon this sacred occasion, he remembered with great intensity,

Never shall I forget how our hearts throbbed gratitude filled with emotion as we peered all around us to catch a glimpse of the place and the people as silently our little company trudged long South Temple Street towards the tithing yard where we expected to stay until morning. Oh, how reverently we regarded everything and everybody and so sacred did everything appear to us. . . . We wondered almost how people could be rude or light-minded in such a sanctified city. We gazed up at the temple . . . with the towers just commenced and silently in our hearts we resolved to begin a new life with new ambitions. . . . We spoke in a quiet manner, I may say in a whisper, for fear of appearing boisterous or in any manner unbecoming.<sup>52</sup>

While Ash's company was being kindly fed at the Tithing Yard, he received a message from a friend who had emigrated six years before and desired to take him to his home. Upon arriving at the home of his friend's parents, Ash was surprised to see the prosperity of the family as they comfortably conversed while reclining in their rocking chairs. On this occasion, Ash recalled, “We were received kindly and were soon answering questions about the folks in Birmingham [England] Branch. . . . They invited us to sleep outside and [we] readily consented. . . . This was the first time in my life that I had slept outside. Of course such a thing would hardly be possible in England except upon very rare occasions when a dry spell would occur in the summer time.” Ash

then concluded, "I confess that I enjoy the novelty of sleeping outside in the open air the first night in Zion. . . . My prayer was that I would or might be faithful to God and his people."<sup>53</sup>

### **Church Leaders Meet Rail Pioneering Saints and Assist with Assimilation**

Like the Saints who crossed the plains by handcart or covered wagon, the Saints who journeyed by rail also enjoyed visiting with friends and were impressed with Church leaders who greeted them as they entered Utah. As noted, Apostle Erastus Snow met the Danish Saints and provided needful instructions in their native tongue to help ease them into assimilation, and visits from other Church leaders no doubt helped with the transition into Zion.

The month after the transcontinental railroad was finished, Thomas Meikle Forrest met President Young shortly after arriving at the railroad terminus in Ogden, Utah: "Saturday, June 26, 1869 . . . We had the privilege of seeing Brigham Young this morning at 4:30. He shook hands with all who were awake." Forrest also described Young as "a fine looking man, heavy and tall with gray whiskers."<sup>54</sup>

Just eight months after the transcontinental railroad was finished, the Utah Central Rail, which ran from Ogden down to Salt Lake City, was completed. Commencing in 1870, Church leaders met incoming converts on this route before the newcomers even reached Salt Lake. For example, John MacNeil wrote home to his family in Scotland, "When we were about half way to the City we had shunt to let a train past that came from the City. When they were passing they stopped and let out Brigham Young, George A. Smith & Daniel H. Wells. They stepped into our train and went right through shaking hands with everyone as they went along through the cars."<sup>55</sup> About six weeks later, another company of incoming Saints traveling by train was blessed to meet prominent Church leaders. Jesse N. Smith recalled this memorable event: "At Kaysville we were met by the First Presidency of the Church and



*First train from Ogden at Salt Lake City Depot on January 10, 1870. (Courtesy of Church History Library.)*

some others. . . . The brethren passed through the cars shaking hands with the passengers. At Woods Cross we were met by Bishop [Edward] Hunter. . . . Our train was the largest that had ever come to the City there being in all eleven passenger and five baggage cars.”<sup>56</sup>

George Goddard recalled meeting the Brethren once his party reached the City of the Saints: “We arrived in Ogden after dark, and remained in the cars until morning. . . . [In Salt Lake City] we found Presidents [John] Taylor and [George Q.] Cannon, and a host of warm hearts and cheerful faces, to welcome us as we met them in the street or visited them in their offices.”<sup>57</sup>

### Finding Zion from the Inside Out

The cost to get to the Salt Lake Valley and to settle was significant, especially for the Europeans, who bore the high expense of crossing the Atlantic before their journey across the plains. However, for most the

cost was worth it, and Church leaders had established the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, which provided temporary assistance to the poor. Yet all who partook of the aid knew that inasmuch as it was a revolving loan, they needed to repay their debts as soon as possible after reaching the Salt Lake Valley. The word *perpetual* served as a constant reminder that the Fund needed to be replenished for others. Although some were not able to repay their loans, most did so through a variety of employment opportunities, including labor on public work within the boundaries of Salt Lake City.<sup>58</sup> Others would have opportunities to launch immediately into various colonies. This was influenced in many cases by the skills of the immigrants and the needs of the colonies. For example, Silas Richards, writing from Union, Utah, to President Young in 1860, noted, “As the immigration will begin to arrive soon . . . I wish to employ a Tanner and currier, and a boot and shoemaker that are first-rate workmen. I also want a farmer with a small family that has not the necessary means to carry on the business himself.” Richards further noted that “there are a number of small tracts of land on the creek for sale of good quality . . . also houses and lots in Union very low from one hundred to six hundred dollars. This would be a good location for a black Smith; common laborers can get employment.”<sup>59</sup>

Notwithstanding, for many Europeans it was a trial to find employment to match their skills, as well as to know how best to live. Church leaders were keenly aware of such challenges, which continued over the remaining decades of the nineteenth century, but over time the Saints grew stronger as colonies were established and Zion extended her borders in several directions.

“Knowing how to live” seems to be symbolic of whether the Mormon converts who entered the Salt Lake Valley and vicinity ever really found Zion. Zion is defined in Latter-day scripture as both a spiritual state as well as a temporal or actual place where one dwells. Zion was not only places where the Saints gathered, such as Independence, Missouri (D&C 57:4); Nauvoo, Illinois; or the Salt Lake Valley, but it was also defined as the abode of “the pure in heart” (D&C 97:18)—people who

“were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; . . . [with] no poor among them” (Moses 7:18).

Some immigrants discovered this concept of Zion, yet others did not. It was certainly to be perceived not only with the eyes, but also with the heart—something that was not just talked about but required implementation to be fully realized. Joseph Smith had warned incoming converts who gathered to Nauvoo, “They must not expect to find perfection, or that all will be harmony, peace, and love; if they indulge these ideas, they will undoubtedly be deceived.”<sup>60</sup> There would be those who did not abide this counsel and thus never found the Zion they sought, while others found a promised land by making it so. This concept seems best captured in the experience of a fifteen-year-old Swiss convert named Frederick Zaugg, who asked a penetrating question as he entered the Salt Lake region in August 1885. When he came to the end of his long journey and climbed a hill to view Park Valley,<sup>61</sup> he “drew a long breath” and asked, “Is this Zion?” A wise man named Mr. Hirschi, there to greet and guide him, responded, “Yes, when you make it [so].” Zaugg later wrote, “These words left a deep impression in my mind. ‘If you make it,’ became my mot[t]o. Things we like to live in and enjoy, we have to make. If we want a friend, we must love him. If you want a favor of the Lord, we must serve him and keep his commandments and the blessings will come by going after them.”<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusion

As the Saints reached the Salt Lake Valley, they were often met immediately by Church leaders, family, and fellow members at various locations where immigrants congregated. Although the lodging was varied and improved as the decades rolled on, whether the Saints traveled by rail or trail, there was a steady flow of caring and accommodation that persisted throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. Most immigrants assimilated quickly into the city and scattered communities where they found employment. For those who

did not secure immediate housing with family or friends, there was always temporary shelter at the Emigrant House or in the Tithing Yard. Furthermore, although all Saints did not wear halos, evidence reveals that most appeared to be kind and hospitable to the newest arrivals. And those individuals who came seeking Zion may have discovered it faster by looking in a mirror rather than through a window at the unfinished City of the Saints.

### Notes

1. For a list of publications from 1830 to the present on Mormon immigration and emigration, see the website <http://www.lib.byu.edu/mormonmigration/> under Sources. This website is based on research the author has conducted on this topic for the past fifteen years. See especially Philip A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of Their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1965); William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (2000; repr., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957); and Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail*, American Trails Series (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).
2. Conway B. Sonne, *Saints on the High Seas: A Maritime History of Mormon Migration, 1830–1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 69, 126. With steam power, ocean vessels could reach America in only eleven days, and the transcontinental railroad made it possible to go from coast to coast in about a week and a half instead of six months.
3. For additional sources treating Salt Lake City in the nineteenth century, see Edward W. Tullidge, *The History of Salt Lake City and Its Founders* (Salt Lake City: Edward W. Tullidge, 1886); and Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormons and Gentiles: A History of Salt Lake City*, Western Urban History Series, vol. 5 (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing, 1984). For an outsider's view, see Sir Richard Francis Burton, *The City of the Saints, and Across the Rocky Mountains to California* (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1990).
4. The Old Fort was located about three blocks west and three blocks south of modern Temple Square in what is now known as Pioneer Park.

5. "Diary of William Clayton," August 1, 1847, Church History Library. See also "Letter of Thomas Bullock," written from the "Camp of Israel, Winter Quarters, Council Bluffs, January 4, 1848," *Millennial Star*, April 15, 1848, 118.
6. Cited in Nicholas Groesbeck Morgan Sr., "The Old Fort: Great Salt Lake City, Great Basin, North America: As Constructed by the Pioneers upon Their Arrival in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847," 1950, cartographic material, 14, Special Collections and Archives, Utah State University, Logan, UT.
7. Reminiscences of J. C. Ensign, in Utah Semi-Centennial Commission, "The Book of the Pioneers" (unpublished manuscript, ca. 1897). Most accounts used in this article for the crossing the plains period (1847–68) were first identified from this online resource: <http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompanysearch/1,15773,3966-1,00.html>. It was created by LDS Church senior librarian Melvin S. Bashore and is hosted by the Church History Library, Salt Lake City. However, most of these accounts were also checked against the originals to ensure accuracy.
8. "Brief Biography of Rachel Emma Woolley Simmons," Pioneer History Collection, 11–14, Pioneer Memorial Museum, Salt Lake City.
9. "Autobiography of Ann Cannon Woodbury," in *Cannon Family Historical Treasury*, ed. Beatrice Cannon Evans and Janath Russell Cannon (Salt Lake City: George Cannon Family Association, 1967), 167–69.
10. "Diary of Daniel Davis," September 24, 1848, 101, Church History Library.
11. "Diary of Aroet Lucious Hale," 17–18, typescript, Church History Library. Archivist and Salt Lake City historian W. Randall Dixon noted that the Old Utah Fort was the primary gathering place for the arrival of the Mormon pioneers in the late 1840s and that some Saints continued to settle there until it was torn down in 1851. Dixon also explained that during the 1850s the next arrival place for the incoming emigrants was Union Square, also known as the Public Square and referred to as the Sixteenth Ward. Phone conversation with W. Randall Dixon, March 12, 2010.
12. Dixon also noted that the Old Fort in Salt Lake City once stood at what is now known as Pioneer Park, between Third and Fourth West and Third and Fourth South. He further explained that Union Square was also located near downtown Salt Lake City where West High School now stands, between Third and Fourth West and between Third and Fourth North. The author thanks Dixon, senior

archivist at the Church History Library, for his assistance with this article. Randy is recognized for his expert knowledge of early Salt Lake City. Phone conversation with W. Randall Dixon, March 12, 2010.

13. "Reminiscences of William Goforth Nelson," in *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Church History Library, September 9, 1850, 7.
14. "Autobiography of Peter McIntyre," ca. 1850–1854, 40, typescript, Church History Library.
15. "Autobiography of Isaac Brockbank," in Stephen W. Brockbank, "Isaac Brockbank, Jr., 1837–1927: Autobiography" (unpublished manuscript, 1997), 9–15, Family History Library, Salt Lake City. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830–1890* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 64, explained that the Perpetual Emigrating Company, also known as the Perpetual Emigrating Fund or PEF, was launched in Salt Lake City in 1849, following an economic windfall from the California gold rush, which brought tens of thousands of overlanders through the Mormon mecca. John D. Unruh Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840–1860* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 253, maintains that "at least 10,000 forty-niners detoured via the Mormon oasis." The PEF assisted nearly one-third of the European Mormon converts who gathered to the Salt Lake Valley during this period. See Fred E. Woods, "Perpetual Emigrating Fund," in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, ed. Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard O. Cowan (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 910. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 98–99, also explained that there were three types of immigrants who came to Zion in the nineteenth century. One group was the PEF, who were the poor that needed their entire way paid. Another group was known as "ten-pound companies," who paid a portion of their own transportation. A third group, known as "cash companies," paid all of their own costs to Utah.
16. William Woodward, "In Early Days," *Juvenile Instructor*, July 15, 1896, 415.
17. "Autobiography of Ann Gregory Wilkey," 2, Church History Library.
18. "Joseph W. Young Emigrating Company, Journal," October 10–11, 1853, Church History Library.
19. "Autobiographical Sketch of Ann Lewis Clegg," ca. 1911, 2–3, Church History Library.



20. "Reminiscences of Watkin Rees," 8–12, in Watkin Rees, "Papers," ca. 1880–1905, Church History Library.
21. "[Autobiography] of John Crook," in "Utah Pioneer Biographies," 7:252–56, Family History Library.
22. Wilford Woodruff, "Correspondence from Utah," *Mormon*, November 15, 1856, 3.
23. Mary B. Crandal, "Autobiography of a Noble Woman," *Young Woman's Journal*, June 1895, 427.
24. "Journal of Robert McQuarrie," September 12, 1857, Church History Library.
25. The Eighth Ward Square is located in downtown Salt Lake City. "It is bounded by 4th and 5th South and State [1st East] and 2nd East Streets." E-mail from W. Randall Dixon to the author, January 14, 2011.
26. "[Autobiography] of Ellen Wasden," in "Two Pioneer Stories," 2–5, Church History Library.
27. "Journal of Robert Bodily," typescript, 11, Church History Library.
28. "Autobiography of Eli Wiggill," 484–85, Church History Library.
29. "[Autobiographical sketch] of Hannah Harrison Snow," in Archibald F. Bennett, Ella M. Bennett, and Barbara Bennett Roach, *Valiant in the Faith: Gardner and Sarah Snow and Their Family* (Murray, UT: Roylance Publishing, 1990), 316.
30. "Reminiscences of Charles Henry John West," 7, Church History Library.
31. Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints, and Across the Rocky Mountains to California*, ed. Fawn M. Brodie (New York: Knopf, 1963), 249–50.
32. "Home Items," *Deseret Weekly News*, November 9, 1864, 44.
33. "Commendable," *Deseret News*, August 30, 1866, 309.
34. "Reminiscences of Hans J. Zobell," 73, translated from Danish by Albert L. Zobell, copy in possession of Elgarda Zobell Ashliman, Rexburg, Idaho. It is not known why Zobell experienced this lack of hospitality. However, it is possible that there was an abundance of incoming emigrants, which affected the normal care given in such transitional circumstances. There is also evidence that during the trail years of the mid-nineteenth century, members of a few Mormon companies reported that there was no one to greet them upon their arrival in Salt Lake City or simply did not mention any reception upon entrance into the Valley. See, for example, the "Mormon Pioneer Overland Trail, 1847–1868" website (<http://lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompany>), which notes several such references,

including the following culled from companies who arrived in the early fall of 1850: Tamma D. M. Curtis, who traveled in the Benjamin Hawkins company of 1850, recalled, "The first of September we landed in Salt Lake City without any home or anyone to hunt us one, we were very lonesome indeed." About this same time, the David Evans company arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. Abram Hatch, a member of the company, remembered, "On September 15th, 1850 we entered the Salt Lake Valley. . . . The company disbanded and our three wagons passed on to the banks of the Jordan River." The Warren Foote Emigrating Company recorded, "The first Fifty passed through Salt Lake City in the afternoon of the 26th of Sept [1850] and camped on the Jordan bottom west of the City. Many of the brethren were anxious to get counsel, where they had better locate." Whether arriving by trail or rail, these accounts noted above seem to be the exception to the rule of incoming emigrants being generally welcomed by family, friends, or Church leaders.

35. "Diary of William George Davis," June 3–4, 1882, 48–49, Church History Library. Don Strack, "Railroads in Utah," in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 451, notes, "The growth of a network of railroads in Utah began with the completion of the Utah Central between Ogden and Salt Lake City in January 1870." Thus Davis and those traveling with him would have taken the Utah Central to Salt Lake City in 1882.
36. "Diary of Samuel R. Bennion," November 9, 1885, Church History Library.
37. "Diary of Anthon H. Lund," November 10, 1885, Church History Library. Although Lund recorded the date as November 10 and Bennion noted it as November 9, both also recorded that Tuesday was the day of arrival.
38. High cost of rail travel in 1887 led to route changes. Instead of departing from New York City, incoming immigrants now commenced their rail travel from Norfolk. See Fred E. Woods, "Norfolk and the Mormon Folk: Latter-day Saint Immigration through Old Dominion (1887–1890)," *Mormon Historical Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 72–92.
39. "For Emigrants," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, April 8, 1873, 221.
40. "Reminiscences and Journals of Jens C. A. Weibye," September 29, 1873, Church History Library.
41. "Diary and Missionary Journal of William Kilshaw Barton, Pioneer of 1852," November, 1873, 33, privately printed, Church History Library.
42. "Autobiography of James Samuel Page Bowler," 41, Church History Library.

43. P. [Peter] C. Carstenson to Joseph F. Smith, July 23, 1874, *Millennial Star*, August 25, 1874, 538–39. Erastus Snow was the Apostle who opened up LDS missionary work to Scandinavia in 1850, and therefore he was beloved by the Danish Saints.
44. “Daybook of James H. Hansen,” July 10, 1882, 29–30, Church History Library.
45. Andrew Christian Nielson, “[Autobiography],” *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1968), 11:300–301.
46. “Immigrants Arrived,” *Deseret News*, November 12, 1883.
47. Letter of C. J. Arthur dated November 12, 1885, “The Last Company,” *Millennial Star*, December 7, 1885, 778.
48. E. [Edwin] T. Woolley, letter, May 22, 1886, “Home in Zion—Incidents of Travel—Labors and Experience,” *Millennial Star*, June 21, 1886, 398–99.
49. C. F. Olsen, letter, July 20, 1886, “Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, August 16, 1886, 524.
50. John William Craven, “Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, May 20, 1889, 310.
51. “The Life of Charlotte Ann Bates,” 3, Church History Library.
52. “Autobiography of Alma Ash,” 30–31, Church History Library.
53. “Autobiography of Alma Ash,” 30–31, Church History Library.
54. “Diary of Thomas Meikle Forrest,” 6, submitted to author by Keith Forrest.
55. John MacNeil to David and Ann MacNeil, September 27, 1870, in Frederick S. Buchannan, ed., *A Good Time Coming: Mormon Letters to Scotland* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 100.
56. “Autobiography and Journal of Jesse N. Smith,” August 10, 1870, 262, Church History Library.
57. Elder George Goddard, “Incidents of Travel,” *Millennial Star*, December 15, 1884, 798.
58. See Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 108–12, on public works in Salt Lake City.
59. Silas Richards to Brigham Young, August 11, 1860, Correspondence of Brigham Young, Church History Library.
60. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith, “A Proclamation to the Saints Scattered Abroad,” *Millennial Star*, March 1841, 274.
61. Park Valley is located about seventy-five miles west of Brigham City, near Promontory Point, where the transcontinental railroad was joined together.
62. Frederick Zaugg, “[Autobiography] of Frederick Zaugg,” 33; copy in author’s possession.



*A front view of the Church Administration Building. (© Intellectual Reserve, Inc.)*