



Riser Boot Shop

The Riser Boot Shop is located in Nauvoo, Illinois.

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THE ECONOMIC SACRIFICE OF THE NAUVOO EXODUS

Susan Easton Black

The quaint community of Nauvoo boasts one of the finest historic preservation sites in midwest America. Yet in presentations given at the historic sites, the number of abandoned shops, foundries, mercantile establishments, hotels, mills, and business enterprises is ignored. For example, messages presented at the reconstructed Browning Gunshop, Scoville Bakery, and Stoddard Tin Shop fail to tell that the Mormon sacrifice was more than closing doors to hearth and home and leaving properties for Church trustees to sell in a down-swing market. The story of early Mormon economic sacrifice needs to be told, for by February 1846, Nauvoo's craftspeople, merchants, and milliners were on the cusp of exporting produce and products down the Mississippi to eager customers in St. Louis. They were poised to grasp the prophetic dream of Joseph Smith: "Our city will present a scene of industry, beauty, and comfort, hardly equaled in any place in the country."¹

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Yet, to answer the call of Brigham Young to leave Nauvoo, Mormon merchants in the winter of 1846 closed shops, businesses, and offices without receiving just compensation. To understand the enormity of their economic sacrifice, the story of closing business establishments must be told alongside the story of leaving hearth and home. This added dimension to the saga of Mormon sacrifice is a prelude to our discussion of the famed Mormon Trail. Although this dimension may never be understood in a secular world where financial gain often trumps faith, it is an important discussion of the trail that has been overlooked.

The Economic Culture of Hancock County in the 1840s

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Illinois was touted as the new West—a frontier with unlimited economic opportunity. From 1800 to 1810 promises of economic success attracted 12,282 settlers to Illinois, and by 1820 over 43,000 additional settlers were attracted to Illinois.² As the population continued to grow, dozens of fledgling settlements sprang up on the border of Illinois along the banks of the Mississippi. The proliferation of settlements necessitated the formation of unincorporated land into counties. The county of Hancock, of particular interest to Latter-day Saints, was formed in 1829 with a post office at Venus, the county seat. Although the more centrally located town of Carthage soon took the reins of county government, Venus grew in population but never prospered. To some extent, the same fate awaited Commerce, the struggling successor of Venus.

When Latter-day Saints moved to Commerce in 1839, settlers throughout Hancock County viewed them as little more than a down-trodden people seeking refuge from the storms of Missouri—not as business competitors. At that time, Mormons of Commerce weren't an economic threat to the prosperous neighboring town of Warsaw, which had an association for the economic betterment of its members. To historians Roger Launius and John Hallwas, by the early 1840s

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Warsaw's association was reason enough to dub the community a "microcosm of pluralistic America" and recognize its economic dominance in the region.³ With a population nearing five hundred and a hotel, a brick schoolhouse, and substantial homes in Warsaw, residents were confident that their town had a secure future as a boomtown on the Mississippi. They had reason enough for their optimism, since riverboat captains plied the waters to their port of call, and new settlers arrived weekly to bolster their economy. According to Launius and Hallwas, "The title of Warsaw's first newspaper, the *Western World*, expressed the community's sense of location in the land of mythic American promise—a place of new beginnings and endless opportunity, where the New World was still new."⁴ Warsaw residents had little reason to suspect the beleaguered Latter-day Saints, living a few miles to the north in temporary shelters in Commerce, would soon rival their business prowess on all economic fronts.

Nauvoo: A Prophetic Dream of Economic Industry

"The sound of the ax, the hammer, and the saw, greet your ear in every direction," wrote Don Carlos Smith in spring of 1841.⁵ Orson Hyde added, "The whole time and attention of the Saints in this place since their beginning have been . . . devoted to opening new farms, building habitations, and to supplying themselves with food."⁶ Orson Spencer observed, "Though [early Mormons] had nothing but . . . a little bundle on their back when they came, they have now in many instances a comfortable cottage, a flourishing garden, and a good cow."⁷ Yet Commerce, soon renamed Nauvoo, was more than a start-up village of toiling farmers. "Hills have been leveled, [and] block, streets, houses, shops, gardens and enclosures were now extending in every direction," wrote Parley P. Pratt.⁸ To Joseph Smith, early building efforts were impressive but not more than a first step toward his prophetic dream. Joseph Smith envisioned "hundreds of houses, shops, mills, &c., . . . to go up in the course of the summer" and

concluded, "Our city will present a scene of industry, beauty, and comfort, hardly equaled in any place in the country."⁹ Joseph anticipated a time when Nauvoo would be independent of outside business sources and saw little reason for Mormon businessmen to travel to St. Louis or Cincinnati to acquire goods.

As mayor of Nauvoo, Joseph said, "The fewer foreign goods that are consumed among the saints, the better it will be for home manufactures."¹⁰ Following his lead, the Nauvoo City Council passed ordinances to regulate the sale of imported goods. For example, one city ordinance required hawkers and peddlers to purchase a license to sell "any goods not produced in the city."¹¹ The cost of a license discouraged most traveling peddlers from selling their wares in town.¹² With such government control over sales of outside goods, it is little wonder that local businesses flourished. But Joseph wanted more: "As respects steam engines and mills, we cannot have too many. . . . There is scarcely any limits which can be imagined to the mills and machinery and manufacturing of all kinds which might be put into profitable operation in this city."¹³

Taking a page from the economic success of Warsaw, which had "a voluntary association devoted to the economic and social advancement of its members," Nauvoo businessmen founded eighteen trade unions to advance the production of local trade. They established unions for gunsmiths, botanists, bricklayers, coopers, farmers, carriage makers, shoemakers, tanners, potters, tailors, tinsmiths, and other major trades in town. Each union elected officers to give oversight to the association and to conduct meetings at specific times and places in the Nauvoo business districts. The only union organized solely under female leadership was the Female Association for the Manufacturing of Straw Bonnets, Hats, and Straw Trimmings, or Straw Association, which met at the Concert Hall on Main Street with Nancy H. Rockwood as president and Esther Huse as secretary.¹⁴

Each union set guidelines for the price of products sold. To regulate price points, unions printed weekly notices in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*

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listing products and price points in St. Louis. Association members were encouraged to undercut prices for products sold in the big city. In addition, union leadership established quality standards on products and gave oversight to “blue collar” vocations, for leaders knew that “empty houses are distressing to view, but sadder still is the sight of vacant businesses. A vacant house means only that the owners have passed away or moved on. A vacant business means miscarried plans and broken dreams. Anyone can take over a vacant house, but vacant businesses must await another dreamer, who may never come.”¹⁵

Union leaders were confident that if members adhered to cooperative goals, Nauvoo would become the strong economic center Joseph prophesied or as the Trade Union published in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* on September 23, 1843:

Union walls are high and grand,
Union walls if ably manned,
Union walls are made to stand
Against the strongest foe.¹⁶

Manufacturing, within association guidelines, assured the poor that merchants would provide employment.¹⁷ Bishop George Miller countered the employment notion put forward by association leaders, extolling the virtue of generosity over learned skills to create manufactured wares: “The poor, the blind, the lame, the widow, and the fatherless all looked to me for their daily wants; and but for the fact of some private property I had on hand they must have starved.”¹⁸ When Miller’s attitude changed and his personal funds proved inadequate, he joined Bishop Vinson Knight in conducting a fund drive to benefit the poor.¹⁹ Bishop Daniel Carn turned to gathering wood and encouraged his ward members to get involved: “I take this opportunity of notifying all those that feel an interest in getting Wood for the Poor of these 6th ward, that on Monday, the 5th of February, I shall meet all these at the Upper Steam Mill . . . Come on neighbors, with your

axes and teams, for the ice is good and the weather is cold, and many of the poor are without wood, come on brethren, and don't neglect the poor."²⁰ It wasn't long before these bishops and others united behind the concept that assistance to the poor lay in local manufacturing associations. Bishops, along with editors of the *Neighbor*, encouraged the poor to attend "a course of lectures, on the all important subject of producing, or manufacturing articles for exportation."²¹ Editor John Taylor wrote, "Our calculation is to have the saints manufacture every thing we need in Nauvoo, and all kinds of useful articles to send abroad through the States and bring money here."²² According to historian George Givens, "No city in history had ever turned to the manufacture of . . . product[s] with such fervor."²³

The Nauvoo Agriculture and Manufacturing Association, the first of eighteen associations, or trade unions, organized in Nauvoo, "raise[d] money through the sale of stock to promote agriculture and manufacturing in Nauvoo."²⁴ The stock option proved successful as illustrated by the cultivation of 3,840 acres known as the Big Field. On September 10, 1845, the *Nauvoo Neighbor* reported that in one growing season the field produced "sixty thousand bushels of wheat and corn" plus an abundance of "oats, barley, buckwheat, potatoes, and other vegetables."²⁵ The Trade Union, the last association formed, was to gain approval, funding, and manpower to build a railroad to connect Nauvoo with Warsaw. Joseph Smith foresaw that the proposed railroad, "if carried into operation [would] be of incalculable advantage" to the town.²⁶ The union was also to take the lead in constructing a two-phase dam across the Mississippi to connect Nauvoo with Montrose, Iowa. The first phase was to "consist of the three piers forty feet long, ten feet wide, fifteen feet apart, and twelve feet deep," extending from Nauvoo to an island in the Mississippi. From the island, the second phase was to extend the dam to Montrose, "north to a sandbar, creating a basin with a fall of three feet to power equipment." Estimations of fifty-three wheels on the dam led Trade Union leaders to conclude that Nauvoo would soon open up to exportation and "manufacturing

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on a huge scale.”²⁷ In May 1846, Brigham Young, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote to Reuben Hedlock, president of the British mission: “Could five, six or seven thousand dollars be raised to commence the dam.”²⁸ Alanson Ripley, enthusiastic leader of the Trade Union, penned, “We do not expect the whole [of the Nauvoo shoreline] to be filled up with machinery immediately; but we do expect that one cotton factory, two grist mills of four run of stones each, one saw mill, one paper mill, and one carding machine, which will yield one hundred per cent every year or in other words giving a yearly income equal to the amount paid out for building the dam.”²⁹

Under association leadership, Nauvoo flourished on a variety of economic fronts. This success was most unusual in a society not based on a banking system or paper currency. The reason for this unusual fiscal practice was a strong distrust of financial policies in Illinois—in the late 1830s multiple private-held banks in Illinois failed, including the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company, and official state banks were accused of manipulating deposits.³⁰ Although merchants and customers alike were wary of banks and paper money, Nauvoo businessmen couldn’t ignore the need for ready cash. To solve the problem, association leaders encouraged merchants to look to wealthy friends for funding. Turning to the wealthy led to partnerships in which loans, investments, and inheritances became the backbone of many Nauvoo mercantile establishments.

As for customers, associations and their membership turned to the barter system. Recesses in backrooms and makeshift warehouses were filled with traded goods to be sold for profit. This is not to say that Nauvoo was completely devoid of specie or hard money, for a few enterprising entrepreneurs minted coins and printed paper currency. Such practices led to accusations of counterfeiting and warnings from association leaders not to pass or accept bogus money, no matter the source. Although merchants, shopkeepers, and other blue-collar workers were occasionally stuck with counterfeit specie, stores, shops, mills, and quarries under association leadership proved profitable. Visitor

Samuel Prior noted in 1843 that the business sector of Nauvoo was “alive with business . . . much more so than any [town] I have visited since the hard times commenced. . . . I could see no loungers about the streets, nor any drunkards about the taverns. . . . I heard not an oath in the place, I saw not a gloomy countenance; all were cheerful, polite and industrious.”³¹ Three years later, Joseph Smith’s vision for Nauvoo was still in the distance, but the community had outpaced rival settlements in Hancock County and was positioning itself to challenge St. Louis for dominance along the river.

By 1846 the pioneering effort to acquire a down payment for a one-acre lot, a garden, and a cow was yesterday’s aspiration. The town was now an expansive city with houses in every direction, or, as historian Glen Leonard wrote, “Newcomers had created around two thousand houses in the city and another five hundred nearby.”³² Irving Richman counted the number of houses visible from atop the Nauvoo Temple and concluded, “One half of these were mere shanties built of logs and some poles; others were framed. Of the remainder about twelve hundred were tolerably fit dwellings; six hundred of them at least were good brick or frame structures. The number of buildings made wholly of brick was about five hundred, a goodly portion of them large and handsome.”³³

Main Employers in Nauvoo

Nauvoo business enterprises weren’t confined to a single section or street in town, as the *Times and Seasons* reported: “Business begins to assume a cheering aspect in our city. Everywhere we see men of industry, with countenances beaming with cheerful content, hurrying to their several occupations and scenes of labour. . . . The saints have a great and arduous work before them; but persevering industry and diligence, stimulated by a zeal for God and his cause, will surely accomplish it, and they will reap the full reward of their toil.”³⁴ Of the thirty-one streets that ran east and west, nineteen had one or more

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businesses. Of the twenty-four streets that ran north and south, sixteen participated in the economic infusion in town.³⁵ Although there were business enterprises throughout the city, the more prosperous businesses clustered in three economic centers: Mulholland Street, Main Street, and Water Street. J. H. Buckingham of Boston visited the business centers and wrote, "No one can visit Nauvoo, and come away without a conviction that . . . the body of the Mormons were an industrious, hard-working, and frugal people. In the history of the whole world there cannot be found such another instance of so rapid a rise of a city out of the wilderness—a city so well built, a territory so well cultivated."³⁶

Although few records of business transactions are extant, names and locations of businesses and the principal owners and proprietors are known.³⁷ For example, from advertisements in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, historians learn that attorney Almon W. Babbitt had an office in Joseph Smith's store on the south side of Water Street and an office at the corner of Carlin and Parley Streets. With partner S. Emmons, Babbitt also had an office at the corner of Main and Kimball streets. Proprietor David D. Yearsley had two dry goods and grocery stores, one on the south side of Water Street and the other on Mulholland Street, east of the Nauvoo Temple.

Of the many businesses in town, the Nauvoo Legion was the largest employer.³⁸ By September 11, 1841, Hosea Stout reported, "The official returns of the Legion show the aggregate to be 1,490 men."³⁹ By May 7, 1842, twenty-six companies or "about two thousand troops" were enrolled.⁴⁰ Before the year's end, the Legion numbered between two and three thousand soldiers.⁴¹ By 1843 the Legion was the largest city militia in Illinois: 1,751 were enrolled in the infantry brigade alone. (A count of the cavalry cohort for that year is not available.) In July 1844 the *Warsaw Signal* reported, "Mormons say they have 4,000 well-drilled troops."⁴² Since legion parades, mustering, and drills began in April and did not cease until October, thousands of Legionnaires

were assured financial compensation or Nauvoo Legion script for time spent in military service whether they were called to arms or not.⁴³

The second largest employer was the University of the City of Nauvoo (figure 1).⁴⁴ Higher education classes were held in a loosely knit upper and lower campus with Orson Spencer, Sidney Rigdon, Gustavus Hills, John Pack, and Orson Pratt as professors. Seminary, or the secondary level of education, consisted of grades nine through twelve and was under the direction of Joseph N. Cole and his sister Adelia, who supervised secondary faculty. The elementary or common schools (grades one through eight) were under the supervision of school administrators. Teachers' salaries were based on the number of students enrolled and the number of days each student attended class. On the whole, female teachers received one-half to two-thirds of the salary allotted to male counterparts.⁴⁵

The third largest employer category was tradespeople—carpenters, painters, glaziers, bricklayers, and stonecutters—otherwise known as blue-collar workers. With the number of houses and shops being constructed in Nauvoo, tradespeople were kept busy (figure 2). Although

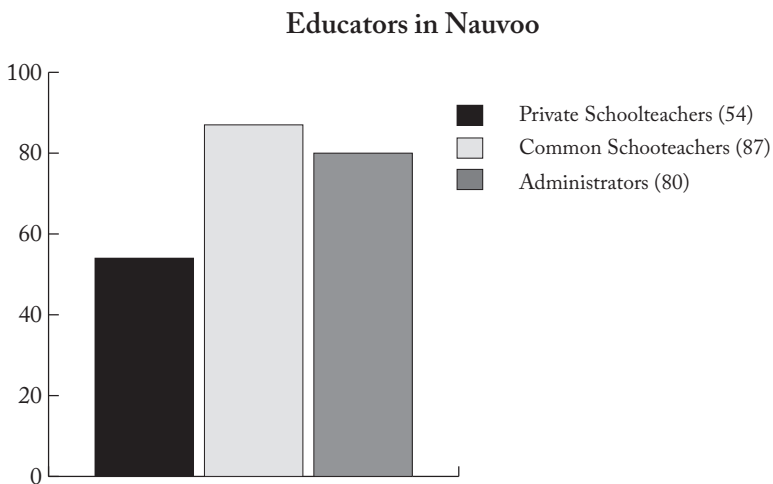


Figure 1. This chart represents the total number of educators employed in Nauvoo from 1840 to 1845.

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they responded quickly to calls for hire, there was nothing quick about their work. For example, creating a brick required that four parts of clay be mixed with one part sand and just enough water to make “brick dough.” The dough was then shaped in molds and greased with lard and tallow. Damp bricks were dried for three weeks and had to be carefully turned each day to ensure uniform drying. Once dry, bricks were fired in kilns heated to 2,100 degrees Fahrenheit for six to eight days. It took thirty-three days from the mixing pond to the kiln before a single brick was ready to be sold for a half-cent.

The typical tradesperson supplemented his craft by working on public works, the most time consuming being the Nauvoo Temple.⁴⁶ Laborer Luman Shurtliff penned, “We labored ten hours a day and got something to take to our families for supper and breakfast.”⁴⁷ As laborers like Shurtliff blasted limestone, other tradespeople went upriver to the Wisconsin pineries to cut and ship lumber downstream for the

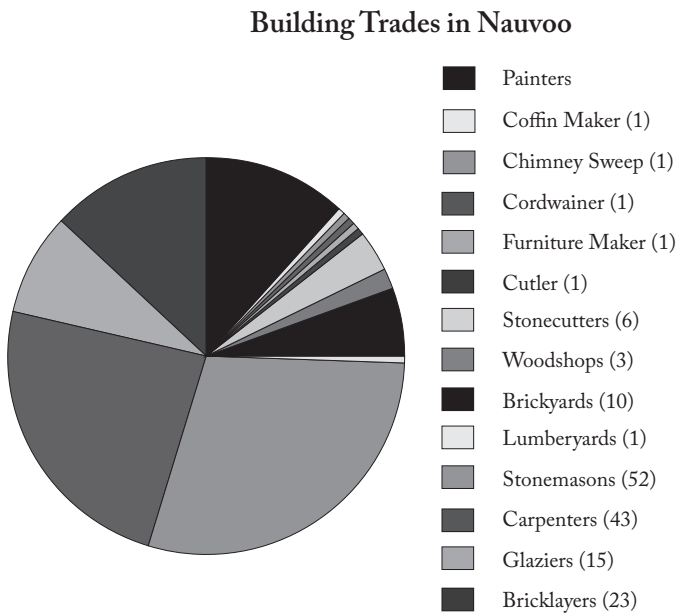


Figure 2. Numbers on the chart represent the known people employed in each trade in Nauvoo.

temple. Meanwhile, architect William Weeks with his sand shaker box and other tradespeople with their chisels, wedges, gauging tools, and wooden mallets worked together to create the beautiful edifice.

Whether looking to purchase a typical item in a dry goods and grocery store or a specialty item elsewhere, customers found what they needed in Nauvoo (figure 3). For example, if a customer wanted a new rifle, gunsmith Jonathan Browning could make a custom gun. But the customer needed patience, for it took Browning two weeks to shape the metal and form the lock, stock, and barrel. Browning sold a handmade gun for twenty-four dollars with his trademark inscription etched on the cache box: "Holiness to the Lord, our Preservation." If a customer wanted a tin pan, Sylvester Stoddard could make a simple ten-cent pan using smoldering irons, flanges, and other tools in twenty minutes. George Riser could create a pair of custom two-dollar shoes using cowhide, wooden pegs, lasting tacks, and rawhide in less than eight hours.

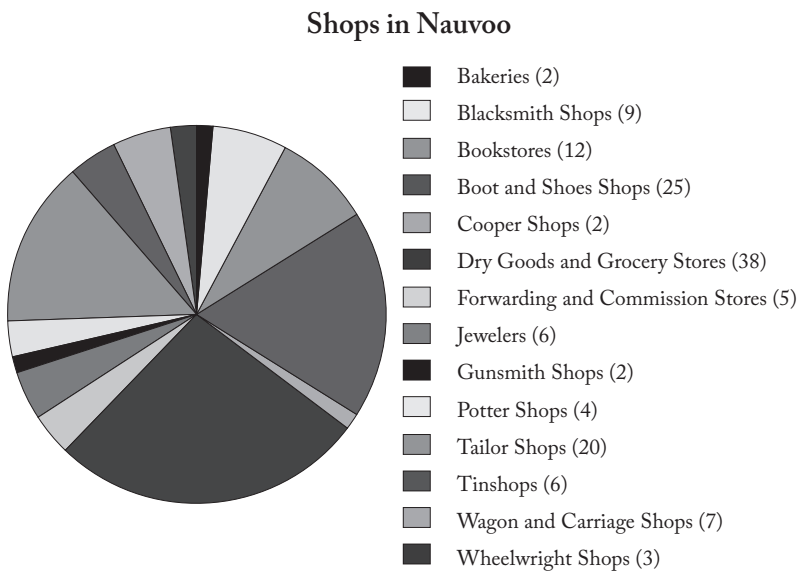


Figure 3. Numbers on the chart represent the known shops in Nauvoo from 1839 to 1846.

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Jonathan Browning Gunsmith Shop in Nauvoo, Illinois.

The most profitable establishments in Nauvoo were factories located near the Mississippi—mills, quarries, slaughterhouses, tanneries, and asheries (figure 4). However, Almon W. Babbitt's Nauvoo Coach and Carriage Manufactory, Joseph Hammar's Nauvoo Comb Manufactory, Leonard Schussler's brewery, and Hiram Kimball's iron foundry were not far behind. Products made in these factories were of domestic commercial value.

Whether boarding the *Iowa Twins Ferry*, the *Maid of Iowa*, the *Nauvoo Ferry*, or steamboats like the *Mendota*, *Osprey*, or *War Eagle*, tourists came in great numbers to shop in Nauvoo. Most stayed a night or two in one of eleven hotels in town. Some preferred the Davis Hotel on the southeast corner of Mulholland and Wells Streets, while others sought comfort at the fifty-room Mammoth Hotel on the northeast corner of Mulholland and Woodruff Streets. If a good night's sleep didn't cure what ailed the tourists, the herbalist merchant-healer was ready with unsolicited advice and remedies. The Windsor Lyon Drug and Variety Store offered dozens of homespun articles for sale. For twenty dollars, customers could purchase *A New Guide to Health* and be certified to practice Thompsonian medicine. Dentist Alexander

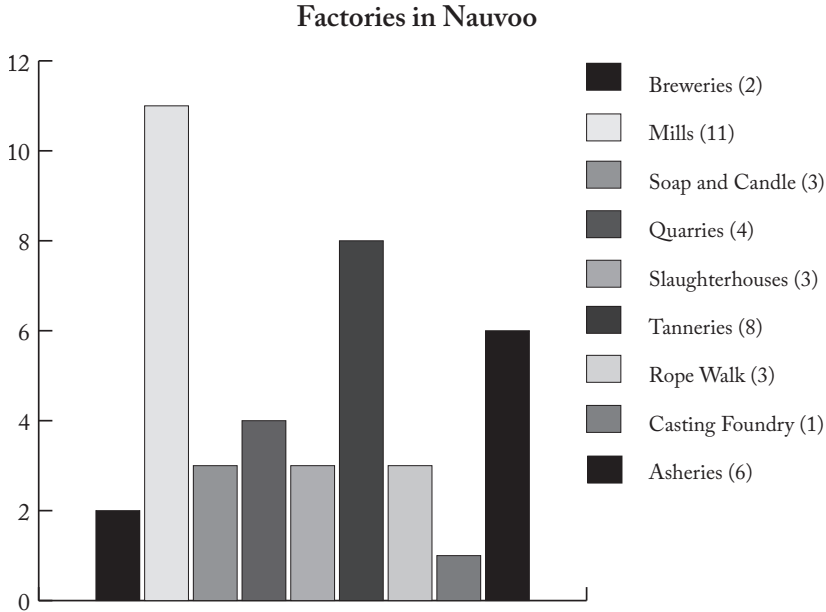


Figure 4. *The chart indicates the number of factories in Nauvoo by the winter of 1846.*

Neibaur, who had an office in his home on Water Street, was not one whit behind the doctors in giving medical advice. The same could be said of midwives Jane Johnston Black and Patty Sessions (figure 5).

Loss of Nauvoo's Economic Structure

In spite of the number and variety of trades depicted on the graphs and anecdotal entries, Nauvoo never attained the stature of industry its founders had imagined. Yet businesses thrived in the 1840s. Robert Foster's Mammoth Hotel and William and Wilson Law's mill are but two examples. In 1845 Wilford Woodruff wrote, "There never was a more prosperous time, in general, amongst the Saints, since the work commenced. Nauvoo, or, more properly, the 'City of Joseph' looks like a paradise."⁴⁸ By late 1845 trade association leaders, merchants, and other businessmen viewed Joseph Smith's prophetic vision of "industry,

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Medical Personnel

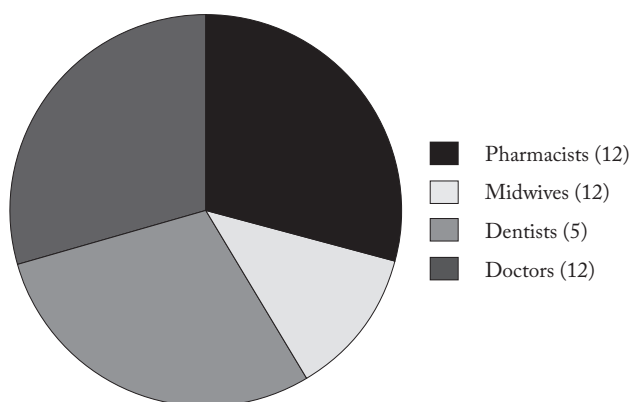


Figure 5. Numbers on the chart represent medical personnel in Nauvoo by 1846.

beauty, and comfort, hardly equaled in any place in the country” within their grasp.⁴⁹

Countering such optimism, however, was an undercurrent of hatred, jealousy, and persecution stemming from neighboring Warsaw. Residents of the proud city of Warsaw, lacking the means and trades to compete on the same level as their counterparts in Nauvoo, declared unfair business practices and aggressive tactics toward the backbone of Nauvoo’s prosperity and threatened conflict when the economy of Nauvoo surpassed Warsaw, Carthage, and Quincy (the commercial center of Adams County). Following such leaders as Thomas Sharp, editor of the *Warsaw Signal*, disgruntled Warsaw businessmen made plans to drive Mormons “from the country [by] destroying their lives and property.”⁵⁰ A delegation from Warsaw petitioned Governor Thomas Ford to expel all Mormons from the state. Rather than confront the Warsaw delegation, Governor Ford advised Mormon leaders, “It would be good policy for your people to move to some far distant country. . . . I do not foresee the time when you will be permitted to enjoy quiet.”⁵¹ Governor Ford later said, “With a view to hasten [the Mormon] removal they were made to believe that the President [of the United States] would order the regular army to Nauvoo as soon

as the navigation opened in the spring—to arrest their leaders and prevent the removal.”⁵²

Outraged Nauvoo businessmen decried the governor’s words and his failure to stop bigoted hostility in the region. In retribution, they lowered prices to steer customers from Warsaw and spoke disparagingly of the governor.⁵³ Noting their outcry, an Iowa reporter penned, “The Mormons consider Governor Ford as an old woman in breeches. [The Mormons] say that, instead of permitting them to defend themselves against the mobs, [the governor] legalizes the mobs by throwing into their aid some of the State forces.”⁵⁴ But such editorial comments did little to stop persecution and threats of extermination. As a result, businessmen who had prospered along Mulholland Street closed their doors and prepared to leave Nauvoo. The same was true of businessmen with establishments on Parley, Water, and Main Streets. Elaborate plans to connect Nauvoo by rail to other cities along the Mississippi and build a dam across the river to advance exportation of local products were aborted. From the factory to the shop, nearly every business was for sale. Few buyers stepped forward, even though the price points were reasonable. Buyers stood eagerly by, waiting for markets to plummet and Nauvoo’s economy to collapse.

While buyers waited, merchants and consumers alike turned to the pressing issue of the exodus. By fall of 1845, Nauvoo had become one vast mechanic shop, as Mormons turned to making wagons. Trained blacksmiths, carpenters, and wheelwrights were on call day and night, and dozens of men and boys were apprenticed to learn their trade. Every available space from the shop to the parlor was used to assemble boxes, covers, wheels, and harnesses. “Our parlor was used as a paint shop in which to paint wagons,” recalled Bathsheba Smith. “All were making preparations to leave the ensuing winter.”⁵⁵ Shopping for just the right dress and bartering for luxury commodities was no longer an option in town. Painters, chimney sweeps, furniture makers, and glaziers put their tools down and trade unions ceased to meet. The University of Nauvoo ended abruptly as eighty-seven common school

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teachers closed their classrooms to prepare for the exodus. Of course, midwives, pharmacists, and doctors continued to practice, but only on an as-needed basis.

Nearly 1,500 wagons were built by Thanksgiving of 1845, and another 2,000 were partially completed by midwinter. Confident most wagons would be ready for a spring exodus, Church trustees advertised: "The undersigned wish to purchase one thousand Yoke of Cattle, from four to eight years old for the removal of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A ready market will be found for all the working Cattle and Mules that may be brought in."⁵⁶ Over "twenty thousand acres of good farming lands, some of which are highly improved," were offered in exchange for "goods, cash, oxen, cows, sheep, wagons, etc."⁵⁷

The building of wagons and buying of cattle was cut short by hostile harassment, unraveled promises, false accusations, and vehement threats against the Nauvoo community. Arrest warrants against Brigham Young on trumped-up charges became commonplace. For example, "During [a Mormon] conference, an officer arrived with a warrant for the arrest of Brigham Young for being engaged in manufacturing *bogus* money, but owing to the hostile disposition of the Mormons, the arrest was deferred."⁵⁸ Elder John Taylor published, "We are making all the preparation in our power to leave the United States next spring, because we are compelled by mobocracy. . . . We will suffer wrong rather than do wrong." Not all Mormons agreed, for threats were against families, religion, and livelihood. But when Brigham Young announced, "Brethren awake! . . . Let every branch in the east, west, north, and south be determined to flee out of Babylon [the United States], either by land or by sea. . . . Judgment is at the door, and it will be easier to go now than to wait until it comes," the Mormon exodus began.⁵⁹

The first Latter-day Saint to leave Nauvoo was Charles Shumway on February 4, 1846. In near zero-degree weather, Shumway loaded his ox-drawn wagon onto a flatboat, crossed the Mississippi, and began his trek westward. Other Saints, with their ox-drawn wagons,

walked down Parley Street and were ferried across the river to join Shumway that first day. On flatboats, old lighters, and skiffs, Mormons formed a makeshift fleet to carry exiles from Illinois. Perhaps some of these travelers paused to reflect on the sacrifice they were leaving behind—thirty-eight general stores, four quarries, an unfinished temple, and more. Brigham Young paused and said, “Our homes, gardens, orchards, farms, streets, bridges, mills, public halls, magnificent temple, and other public improvements we leave as a monument of our patriotism, industry, economy, uprightness of purpose, and integrity of heart; and as a living testimony of the falsehood and wickedness of those who charge us with disloyalty to the Constitution of our country, idleness, and dishonesty.”⁶⁰ New settlers in Nauvoo tried to revive the economic prowess established by early Mormons, but had little success. Perhaps an advertisement in the *Hancock Eagle* on May 29, 1846, says it best: “We are requested to call the attention of Teachers to the fact that a good school is much wanted in this place; and should a competent person think proper to establish one at this place, he would probably be extensively patronized.”

Conclusion

Colonel Thomas L. Kane visited Nauvoo after the Mormon exodus and aptly described the bleakness of the once-industrious city:

The town lay as in a dream, under some deadening spell of loneliness, from which I almost feared to wake it. . . . I went about unchecked. I went into empty workshops, ropewalks, and smithies. The spinner’s wheel was idle; the carpenter had gone from his work-bench and shavings, his unfinished sash and casing. Fresh bark was in the tanner’s vat, and the fresh-chopped light-wood stood piled against the baker’s oven. The blacksmith’s shop was cold; but his coal heap and ladling pool and crooked water horn were all there, as if he had just gone off for a holiday.⁶¹

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Kane saw the town as if in a dream—a “deadening spell of loneliness.” He did not see the dream Joseph Smith had for Nauvoo: “Our city will present a scene of industry, beauty, and comfort, hardly equaled in any place in the country.”⁶²

Mormon shopkeepers rushing through the city with wares to sell and mills, quarries, and tanneries dotting riverbanks are faint historical memories of yesteryear. Today, eleven hundred Nauvoo residents speak of few prosperous shops in the three-block business district of Mulholland Street, suggesting the quaint city remains under the “deadening spell of loneliness.” With small shops, a hotel, and a mom-and-pop grocery store closing their doors and a gas station and dozens of homes for sale, Joseph’s prophetic dream for the town seems a remote possibility at best. Yet his dream lives on as Mormon residents congregate in the mercantile store and the fudge shop to speak of the day when Nauvoo’s past will be dwarfed by the prophesied economic future. Some talk of coming to town with a large fortune, believing themselves pioneers of the prophesied financial wave. Others, beaten down by economic cares, tell of broken dreams and fortunes lost in pursuit of the prophecy. Residents talk of solutions for Nauvoo’s economic drought, but few with means will listen.

Nauvoo is an obscure town ravaged by the economic losses that dominate the region, except for a few summer months when Mormon tourists visit the quaint historic town. Many tourists come to remember the beginning of the Mormon exodus when their ancestors left hearth and home to follow Brigham Young to the West. Perhaps now these tourists and my readers will pause to consider the economic sacrifice associated with leaving Nauvoo for the uncharted West.

Notes

1. “Time Will Prevail,” *Times and Seasons*, April 1, 1841, 366.
2. U.S. Federal Census, 1810, 1820.

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3. Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas, *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 163.
4. Launius and Hallwas, *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited*, 163.
5. Don Carlos Smith, "Miscellaneous," *Times and Seasons*, April 1, 1841, 368.
6. Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 123.
7. Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo, Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 144.
8. Parley P. Pratt, "Correspondence," *Times and Seasons*, April 15, 1843, 164.
9. "Time Will Prevail," 366.
10. Joseph Smith, "Nauvoo," *Times and Seasons*, October 1, 1842, 937.
11. George W. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo: Everyday Life in the City of Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 91.
12. "An Ordinance in Relation to Hawkers . . .," *Times and Seasons*, December 15, 1841, 637.
13. Flanders, *Nauvoo, Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 148.
14. See "Straw Manufactory," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 16, 1845, 3; "Notice to the Ladies," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, May 21, 1845, 3.
15. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 88.
16. "A Word from the Suffering Boot and Shoe Makers," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, August 23, 1843, 3.
17. Brigham Young's journal entry for June 26, 1842, in *Millennial Star*, February 1864, 134, as cited in Flanders, *Nauvoo, Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 146.
18. George Miller, *Correspondence of Bishop George Miller with the Northern Islander from His First Acquaintance with Mormonism up to Near the Close of His Life, 1855*, comp. Wingfield Watson (Burlington, WS: Wingfield Watson, 1916), as cited in Flanders, *Nauvoo, Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 145.
19. *History of the Church*, 4:403.
20. See "Notice," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, January 31, 1844, 2.
21. "To Mechanics," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, October 2, 1844, 2. It is ironic that in his December 22, 1841, journal entry, Joseph Smith penned, "This

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- day I commenced receiving the first supply of groceries at the new store. Thirteen wagons arrived from Warsaw, loaded with sugar, molasses, glass, salt, tea, coffee, &c. purchased in St. Louis." Joseph Smith, journal, December 22, 1841, Joseph Smith Papers, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
22. "October Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons*, November 1, 1844, 695.
23. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 100.
24. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 93.
25. See "Big Field Dinner," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 10, 1845, 3.
26. Joseph Smith to John C. Bennett, August 8, 1840, Joseph Smith Papers, Church History Library. "Dear Sir, Yours of the 25th . . .," *Millennial Star*, February 16, 1858, 102.
27. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 94.
28. *History of the Church*, 6:353.
29. A. Ripley, "Sir—The Association Composing the Trades Meeting . . .," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, February 12, 1845, 3.
30. A February 1847 bill presented in the Illinois legislature sought to raise interest rates on loans from 6 to 10 percent. Opponents of the bill declared that money distributed in Illinois was not worth 10 percent. State Legislature, February 5, 1847. On May 5, 1848, the *State Register* reported that the Illinois Democratic Party had "resolved, that we here renewedly declare our hostility to a United States Bank, and all kindred institutions, whether of a state or a national character, authorized by either general or special laws." On October 31, 1848, the state bank charter expired. *State Register*, May 5, 1848.
31. Samuel A. Prior, "A Visit to Nauvoo," *Times and Seasons*, May 15, 1843, 199.
32. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 130.
33. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 130–31.
34. Smith, "Miscellaneous," 368.
35. See Susan Easton Black, "Businesses on the Streets of Old Nauvoo, November 30, 2011," in author's possession.

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36. Stanley B. Kimball, "Nauvoo," *Improvement Era*, July 1962, 548.
37. See Susan Easton Black, "Merchants, Laborers, and Businesses in Old Nauvoo," November 30, 2011, in author's possession.
38. See Richard E. Bennett, Susan Easton Black, and Donald Q. Cannon, *The Nauvoo Legion in Illinois: A History of the Mormon Militia, 1841–1846* (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark, 2010).
39. "Minutes and Ordinances of Organization of the Nauvoo Legion," in *History of the Church*, 4:415; "Nauvoo Legion," *Times and Seasons*, January 1, 1842, 654.
40. *History of the Church*, 5:3.
41. John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints, or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: LeLand and Whiting, 1842), 211.
42. Thomas Sharp, "Postscript," *Warsaw Signal*, June 19, 1844. Thomas Sharp's estimation of the size of the Nauvoo Legion is suspect due to his strong prejudice against his Mormon neighbors.
43. Script was issued in one-dollar notes for payment and supplies and five-dollar notes for weapons, ammunition, and other arsenal equipment. One-dollar notes were signed by Wilson Law, Joseph Smith, and D. Fullmer. Five-dollar notes were signed by Edmund Ellsworth and Charles C. Rich. Alvin E. Rust, *Mormon and Utah Coin and Currency* (Salt Lake City: Rust Rare Coin, 1984), 27–28.
44. See Susan Easton Black, Harvey B. Black, and Sarah Allen, *University of the City of Nauvoo, 1841–1845* (Wilmington, DE: World Vital Records, 2008).
45. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 246.
46. The temple stone quarry was located on the west side of Main Street near Broadway Street. See Black, "Merchants, Laborers, and Businesses in Old Nauvoo."
47. Luman Shurtliff, "Luman Shurtliff Autobiography," 52, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.
48. *History of the Church*, 7:431.
49. "Time Will Prevail," 366.

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50. "The Mormons and Their Persecutors," *Bloomington Herald*, November 1, 1844, 2.
51. *History of the Church*, 7:397–98.
52. Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois from Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 291.
53. "From Nauvoo," *Bloomington Herald*, October 11, 1844, 2.
54. "The Mormons Again," *Bloomington Herald*, December 20, 1845, 3.
55. "Bathsheba Smith Autobiography," 13, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.
56. "Notice," *Nauvoo New Citizen*, April 10, 1846, as cited in Janath Russell Cannon, *Nauvoo Panorama: Views of Nauvoo Before, During, and After Its Rise, Fall, and Restoration* (Nauvoo, IL: Nauvoo Restoration, 1991), 45.
57. "Farming Lands for Sale," *Nauvoo New Citizen*, April 10, 1846, as cited in Cannon, *Nauvoo Panorama*, 47.
58. "Mormon News," *Bloomington Herald*, November 15, 1845, 2.
59. *History of the Church*, 7:516.
60. *History of the Church*, 7:603.
61. Thomas L. Kane, *The Mormons: A Discourse Delivered before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania: March 26, 1950*, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: David C. Martin, 1975), 4.
62. "Time Will Prevail," 366.