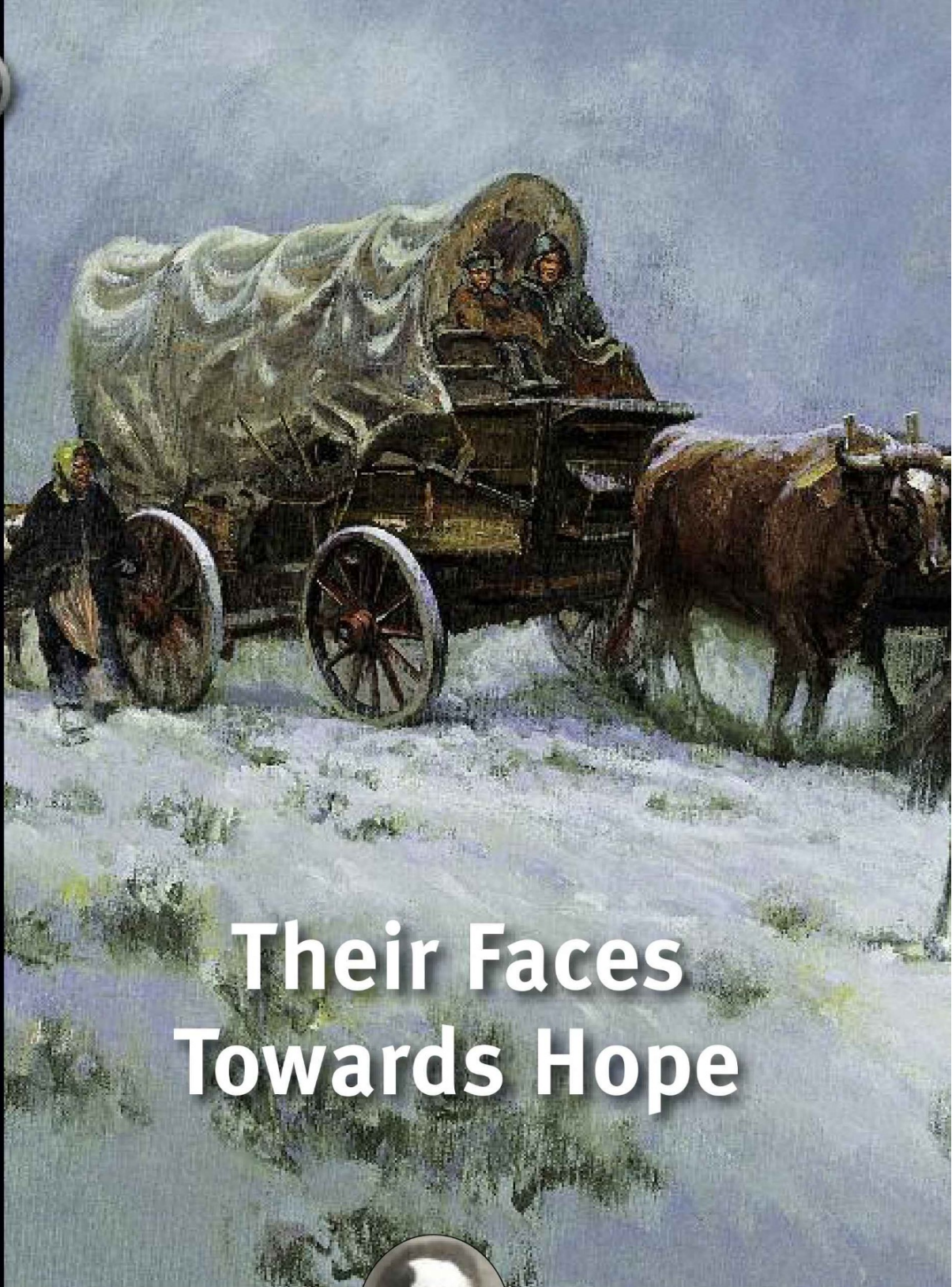


PEOPLE TO KNOW

- Lilburn Boggs
- Samuel Brannon
- Thomas Bullock
- William Clayton
- Oscar Crosby
- Green Flake
- Appleton Harmon
- Jane Manning James
- Hark Lay
- Orson Pratt
- Patty Sessions
- Joseph Smith
- Eliza R. Snow
- Erastus Snow
- Brigham Young

WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

- colonize
- communal
- convert
- exodus
- extermination
- libel
- martyr
- persecute
- polygamy
- revival



Their Faces Towards Hope

Over and over again, the Mormons abandoned their homes and moved to start over in a new place. If they had a choice, they traveled in the spring or summer. If they were forced to leave, they forged through winter snow.

(Painting by Glen Hopkinson)



Chapter

SETTING THE STAGE

While other people were passing over the Great Basin for more attractive lands in California and Oregon, a large group of people fleeing religious persecution settled the Utah region. They believed they would be safe to live their unique way of life in the desert land next to the shimmering salty lake.

The members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were well prepared for their role as settlers of the West. They had practice in moving large groups of people. They had built cities and governed themselves before. They had strong leadership and were united in their goals. Their first migration in 1847 was a great success.



1840

1842

1844

1846

1847

July 22 A few men of the advance party explore the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

July 24 Brigham Young and the rest of the advance party enter the valley.

1839

Mormons move across the Mississippi River into Illinois and begin building a city.

1846

Mormons leave Illinois and gather in Iowa and Nebraska for the winter.

Sam Brannon takes over 200 Mormons to California by ship.

1848

Thousands of other pioneers travel from Nebraska to Utah.

A Journey for Religious Freedom

Settlement for religious reasons was an American tradition. The Pilgrims and the Puritans had come to this land to practice their religion away from the *persecutions* in Europe. In the East, Protestants and Catholics had founded colonies on religious principles. Religious freedom and tolerance are part of the American ideal. Even so, many people then, as now, were often not tolerant of the beliefs of others.

During a time called the Great Awakening, which lasted from 1820 to 1840, thousands of people in the East were caught up in a religious *revival*. The Smith family in New York was part of this group.

The Kirtland, Ohio, temple was built despite the Mormons' extreme poverty. One man sold his 2,000-acre farm in New York to provide \$3,000 to buy supplies. All the men worked on the two-story stone temple. Women donated precious china and glassware to be crushed and mixed with plaster to make the outside walls glisten in the sun.



Joseph Smith was the first leader of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Beginnings

Many people believe the LDS, or Mormon, Church began in Utah, but it really started in New York. At first, “Mormon” was a nickname given by their enemies to people who gathered around Joseph Smith, their leader, in the early 1830s. They were called Mormons because Smith said he had translated the Book of Mormon from gold plates of ancient American writing he had found buried in a hill near his home.

Smith organized a church he called the Church of Christ. Later, he changed the name to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Today the church is often nicknamed the “LDS Church” or the “Mormon Church.” The members are called “LDS” or “Mormons.” The early members of the church often referred to themselves as “Saints.”

Why were people willing to follow Joseph Smith? He said he had received a vision from God at age fourteen. Over a period of years he told of visits from other heavenly beings who instructed him. Smith wanted the followers of the new religion to join together in “a gathering place,” or “Zion.” Zion was to be a place where people would live together in peace and purity.

Hundreds of *converts*—men, women, and children—came to join the gathering. The converts were often tormented. Men and boys threw stones at them during the baptisms in the rivers, beat up Joseph Smith, and tried to steal the gold plates from him.

Moving from Place to Place

It was clear the LDS people needed to leave New York. The first gathering place was in Kirtland, Ohio. Within the same year, many gathered in Missouri and started once again to clear land, plant farms, and build homes. In the meantime, hundreds of converts joined the Mormons as a result of missionary efforts to other states, Canada, and Great Britain.



Another Gathering Place

The people in Missouri didn't like so many people moving in, especially outsiders of a "strange new religion" who did not believe in slavery. The Mormons kept coming. They started new communities in several counties. Finally, as the years went on, the situation got so bad, with accusations on both sides, that Missouri's Governor Boggs gave an *extermination* order. He said all the Mormons must leave or be killed. Mobs began attacking Mormon settlers, beating and killing some and burning homes. Smith and other leaders were arrested and taken to jail.

Finally, several thousand men, women, and children left Missouri during the winter. They traveled in wagons or on foot across the snow to Illinois.

Mobs forced the Mormons to leave their homes in Missouri. What do you see in this painting by C.C.A. Christensen?

What do you think?

Freedom of religion is guaranteed in the Bill of Rights—the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Do you think the LDS people should have been allowed this freedom? Why or why not?

“ I left our house and home, and almost everything that we possessed excepting our little children, and took my journey out of the State of Missouri. ”

—Emma Smith,
wife of Joseph Smith

Linking the Past to the Present

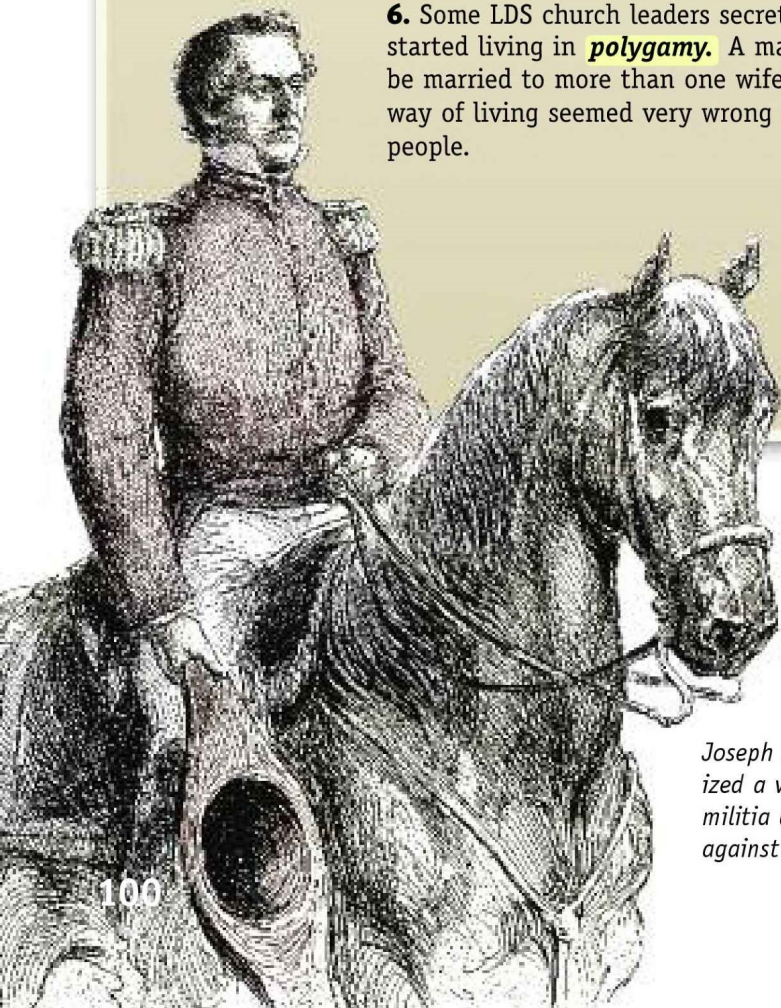
The “extermination order” that forced Mormons from Missouri was not officially ended until 1976, when the governor of Missouri apologized for the actions of Governor Boggs. Then, in 2001, the new governor of Missouri traveled to Utah to apologize for his state's actions back in 1838.



Misunderstanding and Conflict

Why were there so many problems between the LDS people and their neighbors? The differences were mostly about religion, politics, and economics. People felt very strongly about all of these issues.

1. The Mormons said their church was God's only true church. They accepted Joseph Smith as a modern prophet who had talked to God and had translated the Book of Mormon as scripture from ancient gold plates. This upset people of other religions.
2. The LDS belief in a gathering place meant thousands of new settlers moved into a region. They often outnumbered their neighbors.
3. In elections, all of the Mormons usually voted as a block for the same people. Their neighbors were worried that Mormons could take control of state and local politics.
4. The Mormons in Ohio at first lived a **communal** economic lifestyle, which meant everyone gave what they had to the church for the good of the group. This gave church leaders a lot of power.
5. In Missouri, slavery was an important issue. Many of the Mormons were from England and the northern states. They were against slavery. Missouri settlers, however, were mainly from southern states. They had grown up with the idea that slavery was necessary and acceptable.
6. Some LDS church leaders secretly started living in **polygamy**. A man might be married to more than one wife. That way of living seemed very wrong to other people.



Joseph Smith organized a volunteer militia as a protection against persecution.

Nauvoo, Illinois

As the Mormons fled Missouri, they found refuge in the small community of Quincy, Illinois, across the Mississippi River. The people of Quincy felt sorry for the cold and hungry group and took them into their own homes to care for them. In the spring, the group gathered again on some swampland farther north along river. At once, many started getting deathly sick. Others died. It was all the well could do to take care of the sick. Today, we know they got malaria from swamp mosquitoes.

As many men as could get up off their beds drained the swamps, built homes, and planted crops. The people called the new town Nauvoo. Meanwhile, missionaries continued to preach to people in the states and overseas, and converts continued to come. For a time, Nauvoo was the largest city in Illinois.

Steamboats on the Mississippi River roll past stores, homes, and the partially-completed temple of Nauvoo, Illinois. The town that was built on swampland became one of the largest cities in the state.

