

## The World of Joseph Fielding: Chapter 28

After President Young left the temple, he “addressed the saints in the grove and informed them that the company going to the west would start this week across the river.” After the meeting, John Smith, the Nauvoo stake president and Joseph and Hyrum’s uncle, crossed the river with his family. His son, Apostle George A. Smith, also crossed, as did others.



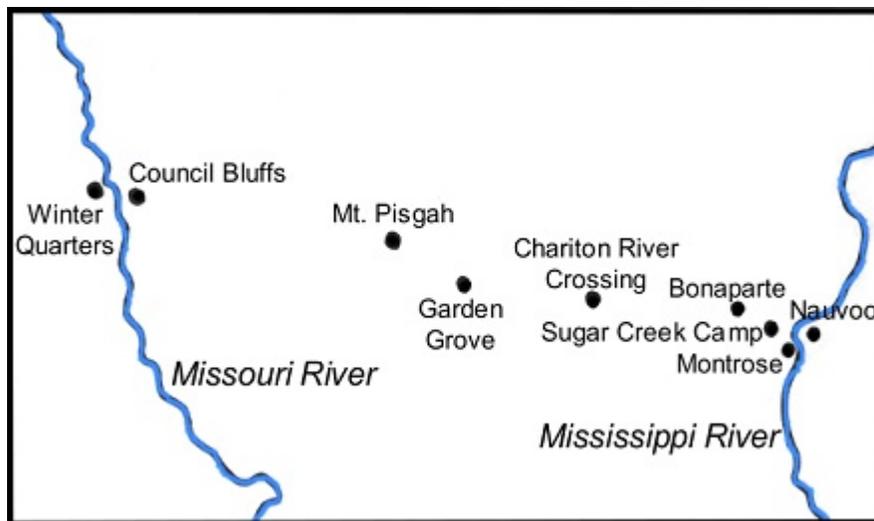
During the winter of 1846, the Mississippi River froze, which greatly expedited the evacuation.

Thomas Grover, a member of the Nauvoo high council, crossed the river the next day with his large family, Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, with some difficulty. Two oxen drowned, but otherwise those crossing were pulled to safety.<sup>1</sup>

John Taylor wrote that the decision for so many leaders of the Church to leave Nauvoo in February was intended to quell the rumors by their enemies that the saints were going to stay put. He wrote that on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, “a large company, four hundred families all told, including nearly all the leaders of the Church,” crossed “the Mississippi on the ice. He continued:

The exodus was not commenced so early, and at such an inclement season of the year

because there was anything in the treaty the Saints had entered into that demanded it, but the movement was made to give proof that it was their intention to leave, and to take away from the mob all excuse for violence or bloodshed.



The thick ice, seen then and now as a gift from God, allowed a safe and speedy crossing of the treacherous Mississippi River for about a week.<sup>2</sup>

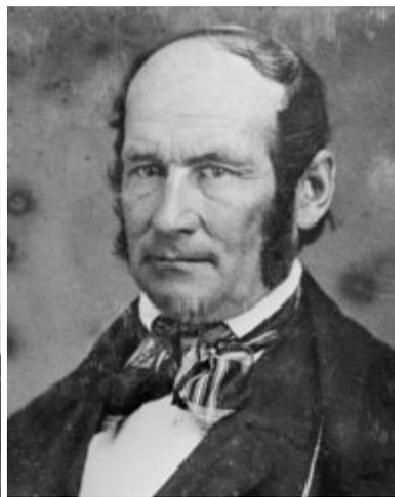
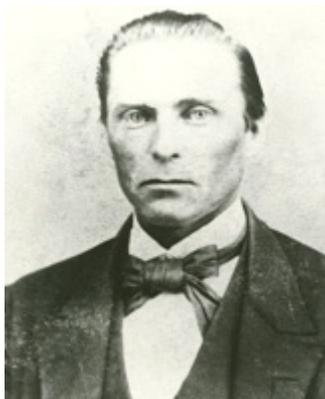
The pioneers fleeing Nauvoo made their own road 300 miles to Winter Quarters.

Elder Pratt crossed the river on February 14<sup>th</sup> with his family and teams, and headed seven miles to Sugar Creek, the first encampment of the Saints in Iowa. There he found President Young.

Parley had left “a good house, lot and out buildings, worth about seven thousand dollars, and several lots and houses of less value, besides a farm in the country worth near two thousand.” His mother and his wife’s parents, remained in Nauvoo. After planting seed for those who would follow, the majority of the group with him moved west one hundred forty-five miles to the camp

at Garden Grove. President Young sent Elder Pratt on ahead, with just a compass to guide, him, as there were no roads, “the country being entirely wild and without inhabitants.” Parley wrote:

After journeying thus for several days. . . through beautiful prairies, I came suddenly to some round and sloping hills, grassy and crowned with beautiful groves of timber. . . . Being pleased and excited at the varied beauty before me, I cried out, ‘this is Mount Pisgah.’”<sup>3</sup> Mt. Pisgah was twenty-five miles past Garden Grove.



Elder Kimball sent many members of his large family across the Mississippi River on February 16<sup>th</sup>, but he did not cross until the 17<sup>th</sup>, remaining behind to secure goods for the pioneers. John Smith, Hyrum Smith’s thirteen-year-old son, helped Elder Kimball and then quietly crossed the river with him, leaving Nauvoo behind.

Joseph Fielding Smith’s older half-brother, John, left Nauvoo early in the evacuation. Apostle Heber C. Kimball took Mary Fielding Smith’s step-son John Smith with him as he left Nauvoo.

John’s seven-year-old half-brother, Joseph F., watched John leave:

I remember in February, 1846, seeing President Brigham Young and the Twelve, and as many of the Latter-day Saints as had the means to travel, drive down to the river and cross the river on the ice over into Iowa. My brother was one of the party that started on that occasion, and I stood on the bank of the river, wondering, ‘Shall I ever see him again?’ I did not know, it did not seem as though it would be possible for me ever to see them any more.<sup>4</sup>

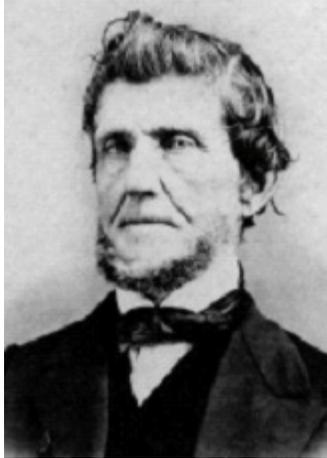
To William Smith, John Smith’s uncle, this act was seen as a betrayal of the Smith family. When he learned that Hyrum’s oldest son had chosen to follow Brigham Young, William met with Mary Fielding Smith, John’s step-mother, in her sitting room. Young Joseph F., in an upstairs room, listened to the voices being transmitted through the pipe from the stove below. He clearly heard William challenge Mary for giving permission for John to leave with Elder Kimball.

Joseph F. later wrote that he “was startled to hear the voice of his uncle William Smith below one day, lifted in angry expostulation with his beloved mother for permitting her son John to be “spirited away.” Joseph remembered that William demanded “the return of the patriarch’s son.” His mother “quietly and firmly refused to accede to the angry man’s insensate demand.” William “became so violent and abusive in his language that Joseph “longed for age and maturing in order that he might defend his helpless mother from such unwarranted and bitter assaults.”<sup>5</sup>

Young John Smith remained with the Kimball family through the next winter.<sup>6</sup> Elder Kimball joined with Brigham Young at the camp in Sugar Creek, where several leaders enjoyed a meal of

bean porridge. Many of the apostles returned to Nauvoo several times to handle Church business and encourage the Saints.<sup>7</sup>

### **Joseph Young, Senior President the Seventy, is Left in Charge of Nauvoo**



As the apostles began to leave Nauvoo, Joseph Young, the older brother of Brigham Young, was appointed the president of the Church in Nauvoo.<sup>8</sup> Joseph Young had been ordained to the First Quorum of Seventy in 1835 when he was thirty-seven years old. Ten years later, he was the most senior member of the quorum, and in fact he would remain a member of the quorum presidency for the rest of his life.

At this time, John Page after stating that he would not leave Nauvoo and would no longer support Brigham Young, was disfellowshipped. Brigham Young, disappointed in Elder Page's decision to not accompany Orson Hyde on their assigned mission to Jerusalem five years earlier, felt as though Elder Page had remained "in the shade" since that time.

Joseph Young provided leadership in Nauvoo after his brother Brigham left the city.

Even with the recent excommunication of William Smith, and the estrangement of Lyman Wight and now John Page, who would be officially excommunicated within a few months, there were still ten apostles in the Quorum of the Twelve: Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, Orson Hyde, Willard Richards, and Amasa M. Lyman.<sup>9</sup>

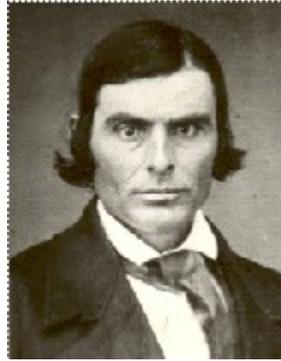
With Joseph Fielding's wife Mary Ann soon due to give birth, Joseph did not make plans to leave Nauvoo with those crossing the Mississippi River. In the middle of February, he wrote:

For about the last 2 Weeks the Saints have been busily crossing the River Mississippi with their Wagons, etc., and [taking] a great deal of Public Property, such as Cannons, Guns and other Weapons, Printing Press and other Mechanical and farming Implements, and the Church Records, etc., Seed Spring Wheat, also intending, if possible to put it into the Ground in the Spring. These, with a suitable Supply of Provisions, at least as far as possible for such an unknown Journey, have taken all the Teams that could be mustered, both Horses and Oxen. I suppose they have over 200 Teams. They cross the River in Flat Boats. They have about 1½ Miles to go on the Water and it is hard Work to row them across the Stream. The Wind has often been too strong for them, and they were obliged to wait.

Six Days ago I went over to see the Camp, which is 5 or 6 Miles from the River. The Camp Ground is by Sugar Creek where they have plenty of Wood and Water; a good Place for such a Purpose. On the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> the Snow fell and covered the Ground, and the 14<sup>th</sup> was a very Rough Day, snowing all the Day long. I felt much for them. Some had Tents and some Wagon Covers, and some, neither of them. This Day is also rough, snowing all the Day from the North, but it is not very cold. When I think that Men, with some Women and Children, should be so exposed - - -<sup>10</sup>

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Stephen Markham, with the title of colonel in the Nauvoo legion, led the way out of the Sugar Creek camp with about one hundred strong men, preparing the road in advance of the rest of the pioneers, many of whom were destitute. Hosea Stout, also a colonel, had organized another hundred men with rifles to protect the travelers.

Another colonel, John Scott, had another hundred men with a variety of artillery. Elder Kimball spoke to the Saints at their departure from Sugar Creek, reminding them that “the grass will start before long.” The camp traveled five miles, where they scraped snow from the ground before raising their tents.<sup>11</sup>



Hosea Stout worked with John Scott, a convert from Stephen Markham to Ireland, led an artillery corps to prepare the trail west. Winter Quarters.

### **Mary Ann Fielding is Born in Nauvoo**

In Nauvoo, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, 1846, Mary Ann Peake Fielding gave birth to a daughter whom she gave her name, and who would be a comfort and joy to her for the rest of her life.

### **The Companies Reach the Chariton River**

By the end of March, the vanguard companies had reached the Chariton River Camp, which was about seventy miles past the Sugar Creek camp. Heber C. Kimball wrote:

[Here] the organization of the camp was perfected. It was divided into companies of hundreds, fifties and tens, with captains appointed over each. . . . The camp consisted of two grand divisions, presided over respectively by Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, the former, as President and General-in-Chief, directing the whole. . . . The law of the Lord was laid down in great strictness, honesty and morality being especially enjoined. Innocent amusement and recreation were encouraged by the leaders, in moderation, as tending to divert the people’s minds from their past troubles, and lighten their present toils, but excess of mirth and loud laughter were deprecated and denounced.<sup>12</sup>

As Joseph Fielding prepared to move his families out of Nauvoo, he tried to arrange for the sale of his property. Land agents found Nauvoo to be a buyer’s market, and in fact some members of the Church chose to stay in Nauvoo, not to help the poor, but in an attempt to take advantage of this market. Lewis Telle, a forty-year-old convert from Pennsylvania, was one who stayed behind, buying properties far below their value.<sup>13</sup> His wife was twenty-eight-year-old Amelia Rogers, the daughter of David Rogers of New York who had been instrumental in helping Joseph Smith acquire the Nauvoo property seven years earlier.

### **Martha Telle is Born in Nauvoo**

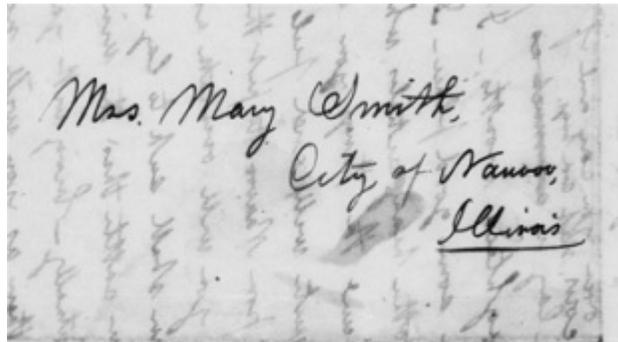
Amelia was close to delivering her third child, and it is possible the couple felt they could buy

these properties and then, when it would be more convenient to leave, sell at some profit and catch up with the saints. Amelia's parents, David and Martha Rogers, lived in Montrose, and possibly Amelia and her children lived with them through the difficult summer.

Amelia's baby was born in May, and Amelia named her Martha after her own mother. Unbeknownst to Amelia or her family, her sister Susanna was making preparations to leave her husband in England. That summer she booked passage for herself and her son on a ship headed for New Orleans. Before the year ended, she was in St. Louis with a large body of Mormons. Some were faithful and trying to get to Winter Quarters, but some were determined not to endure what they had suffered in Missouri. Susanna did not realize her sister Amelia was still in Nauvoo. In order to sustain herself and her son, she married into an unauthorized polygamous relationship, her husband also being married to Agnes Smith, the widow of Don Carlos Smith who had died about the same time as Robert Thompson in 1841.<sup>14</sup>

### **Heber C. Kimball Sends Mary Fielding Smith Advice via Stephen Markham**

In the spring of 1846, the vanguard companies, led by Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, left Pisgah, a camp about one hundred miles past the Chariton River crossing. Amos Fielding had recently left Nauvoo and caught up with these two companies where he had visited with Elder Kimball and brought him news from Nauvoo.



Learning that his plural wife Mary Fielding Smith had not yet left the city, Heber sent a letter back to her with Stephen Markham, advising her to trust Brother Markham and to let him help her. The heading stated he was "2 Miles West of Mr. Pisgah." In this letter Heber mentioned that her step-son John was well, which was certainly welcome news.

Heber C. Kimball, married to Mary Fielding Smith after Hyrum's death, wrote her in Nauvoo from the plains of Iowa.

Heber wrote:

My dear Sister Mary:

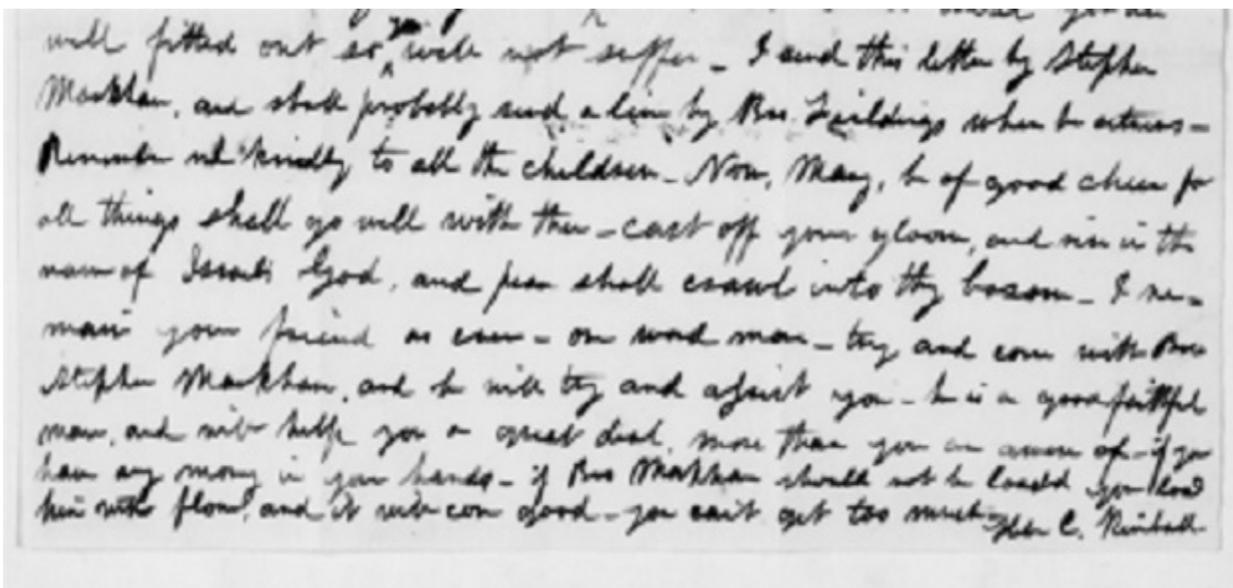
I just saw Bro. Amos Fielding awhile yesterday, but did not have much opportunity to talk with him. I learned you had sold your plow, and was glad to hear it, and I hope you will come on as speedily as you consistently can but take plenty of time to fit yourself out, bring all the oxen you can and if you have any breeding mares bring them. Also, corn, meat and bags. Lay in provisions sufficient to last you fifteen or eighteen months. I hope you will overtake us and winter with us in some good place. Do not bring any furniture that is of no use, nor any other heavy articles, which would only be an encumbrance to you. John received the things you sent him and was very glad to get them. He is quite well and feels anxious to see you.

I want you when you start from Nauvoo to put the best foot forward, and if you are presuming you will overtake us and winter with us without any difficulty, as we shall seek to lay in at some good harbor where we can sustain our cattle thru the winter as they will be our life temporally and spiritually. Bring with you three or four scythes if you can get them as you will need them. Sister Brimhall sends her love and Johnny also. Give my love to Sister Thompson.

Now do not start until you are well fitted out, so you will not suffer. I send this letter by Stephen Markham, and shall probably send a line by Bro. Fielding when he returns. Remember me kindly to all the children. Now, Mary, be of good cheer for all things shall go well with thee. Cast off your gloom, and now in the name of Israel's God, and peace shall crawl into thy bosom. I remain your friend as ever.

One word more, try and come with Bro. Stephen Markham, and he will try and assist you. He is a good, faithful man, and will help you a great deal, more than you are aware of. If you have any money in your hands, if Bro. Markham should not be loaded, you load him with flour, and it will come good. You can't get too much.

Heber C. Kimball<sup>15</sup>

A photograph of a handwritten letter in cursive script. The text is written on a piece of paper with some creases and discoloration. The handwriting is clear but somewhat slanted. The letter is addressed to Mary Fielding Smith and discusses travel plans from Nauvoo, mentioning Stephen Markham and Bro. Fielding. It includes a blessing for Mary and her children, and advice to load Markham with flour if possible. The letter is signed 'Heber C. Kimball' at the bottom right.

Elder Kimball advised Mary Fielding Smith to trust Stephen Markham as she prepared to leave Nauvoo.

### Joseph Fielding Sells His Home and Farm

Joseph Fielding was ultimately forced to sell his frame home and property at a significant loss. He wrote:

I spent the Summer [in Nauvoo] for want of Means to get away. I sold my House and 20 Acres of Land for 200 dollars in Trade, taking 2 Horses, a Wagon, a Coat Cloth, and a few (4 ½ dollars) in Cash. The Land was in good Cultivation; 120 Rods of good Rail Fence. . . . I paid for the Land in its wild State 160 dollars, built the House, etc, so the

Price of the whole would not near pay the cost. . . One of the Horses I took for the Place I soon found to be balky, and I only got in trade for her a small yoke of young Oxen.<sup>16</sup>

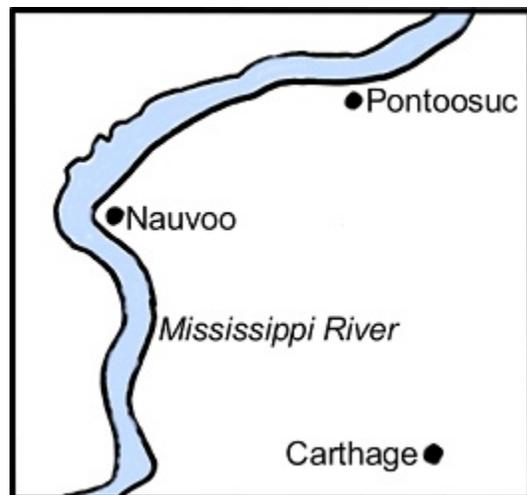
After the sale of his property, Joseph “removed my Family and goods to the House of my Sister’s Farm, called Brother Hyrum’s.”

On the other hand, Joseph was fortunate, as were all the saints in Nauvoo, to have benefitted from a bounteous harvest:

The last Harvest we had in Nauvoo was uncommonly great, the Land in general bringing forth in abundance as much as 60 Bushels of Corn to the Acre. I had about 600 bushels on 10 Acres; in short, the whole Place was as the Garden of the Lord for fruitfulness. This was, of Course, a great Blessing to the Saints, but still it made the Sacrifice appear the greater.<sup>17</sup>

### Joseph Fielding Joins a Posse

During the spring harvest, eight members of the Church were reaping wheat when they were attacked by eighty armed men. The Mormons were beaten and robbed but managed to make their way twelve miles to Nauvoo where they reported the incident. With the lack of a city charter, there was no longer a police force to protect the city. However, those who were buying the properties and moving into Nauvoo, who had been labeled “New Citizens,” felt it important to assist those leaving the city.



Joseph Fielding traveled 14 miles in the night with a posse to rescue captives taken by a mob.

With legal protection from the state, an armed posse sent from Nauvoo was able to find three of the men who participated in the beating. In their homes were found guns and other possessions which had been taken from the eight men. However, the mob kidnapped five more Mormons in retaliation. One was Phineas Young, Brigham Young’s older brother.



Phineas Young, an older brother to Brigham Young, was taken captive by an armed mob.

In short time, a second large armed posse was assembled, with fifty horses and men. Joseph Fielding was among this group. They traveled fourteen miles during the night north to Pontoosuc to rescue the captives. Joseph wrote:

The first thing we saw was a couple of Mounted Men as a Picket Guard. Some of our Party chased them for some Distance. One of them sprang through the Brush and got into the Field, but the other they pursued and overtook him. He said there were about as many of them together in the Village as there were of us. . . . We had been very private about

coming to this Place, but still our Coming was expected there, and just as we got to the Village we were in loud voices commanded to halt. . . [calling] out to us [that if we did not stop] they would instantly fire upon us; we were then within gunshot of them. Each of us had his gun cocked and ready to return the Fire if they fired, but Wm. Cutler, one of our Captains, told them our Authority, etc., and no gun was fired. Some of them were very mad and swore bitterly, and we began taking them Prisoners, and finally we took 14 of them to Nauvoo. On the Way, we were joined by a small Company who had left Nauvoo in the Morning to come to our Assistance if we should need it. We brought them to Nauvoo, and there was some Rejoicing in the City.<sup>18</sup>

The next Day we went off in a Posse in Search of the five Captives, and that Night we Slept in the open Prairie. The Night was cold, and we had nothing to cover us, or but little. At one the next Morning we started, divided into two Companies, and searched several Houses to find, if possible, either the Captives or those that took them, but the former were taken off by those that held them for fear we should find them. At the time we went to Pontoosuc, they had them within hearing of us, a little out of the Village, but on finding that we were there they marched them off, but we found their Stuff: a double horse Wagon containing Flour, etc. belonging to Phineas Young, who was on his way home from the Mill, and a Buggy. These we took home. . . .

When we thus went out in a Posse it put all of them in fear, and we could scarcely find a Man at his home by Day or by Night. We did not return home till Saturday Eve, but our Labor was in vain. The Mob Party took every way they could to deceive us and lead us on the wrong track. As we learned afterwards, they were taken from Place to Place every Day through the woods, some of them being sick with Ague, but they were often told that if they faltered or stopt they would instantly shoot them. Several times they had fixt a time and a Place to do it, and were on the Point of it, but were prevented through fear, through the Mercy of God. We searched for them all this week and most of the next Week, going as far as 30 or more Miles, some times going all Night, and sometimes but little to eat. Our Horses were much reduced, and we were weary. This was just in Wheat Harvest, and so much were the People in fear of us that many large fields of Wheat were destroyed for want of cutting, for they durst not be seen. . . .

After being in Captivity over 2 weeks they all returned safely home, being let go by a fresh guard to whom they had been committed [while] the old ones attended a Meeting in Carthage. They were gladly received home to their Wives and Friends; indeed it was far more than we expected, ever to see them again.<sup>19</sup>

### **Hannah and Mary Ann Fielding Prepare to Defend Themselves**

During this period, while many of the Nauvoo brethren were part of the posse, the women prepared to defend their homes. Joseph's daughter Rachel later wrote of this time:

My mother and auntie were alone with us children, so they began planning to defend our home. They brought the pitchfork, the hoe, the rake and the axe into the house, and filled everything on the stove with water to heat. They also placed cayenne pepper on the table

ready to use, and they waited for the enemy, but they did not come. I remember my mother and auntie remarking that they would help themselves the best they could.<sup>20</sup>

As spring turned into summer, the three Fielding siblings were still in Nauvoo. The route west was traveled both ways, with messengers continually bringing news, encouragement and even physical help in the way of wagons and oxen to move those west who remained behind.

### **September 1846: Joseph, Mary and Mercy Leave Nauvoo as the Battle of Nauvoo Begins**

Joseph continued to write about the intense persecution to those remaining in Nauvoo after the major exodus of many of the saints in the winter:

Not long after this, the Mob began to collect and to threaten us with destruction; first at Goldings Point to the Number of 200 or 300, from whence they dispersed through fear, but soon began to gather again near Carthage where they lay encampment a number of Weeks to the number of 900, as far as I can gather until early in September when they marched into Nauvoo. My two Sisters, Smith and Thompson, and myself with our Families, had just got over the River with all our goods except two Boat Loads before [the mobs] came in Contact with the Citizens. They came and encamped on the Farm I had just left. They took this course to avoid any ambushment that might be laid for them. From there they sent some Balls into the City, but before they came near the Temple they were met and repulsed, but I shall not attempt to record the whole of that Scene of outrage. The poor Saints had to flee, sick or well. They hastened to the River, but [the men did not leave] until the Sick, the Woman and Children got over as fast as they could. I went down to the Bank of the River, and found many of the Saints in distress. Some had left their goods and were destitute of Food and Clothing. Others had left their Husbands in the Battle.

The Cannons roared tremendously on both sides for several Days, but the Mob as it seems to me found themselves losers and a Plan was got up to prevent their own destruction. A Committee came from Quincy, professing to be Friends to both Sides, and Proposed to put a stop to the fighting on terms which the Saints thought it best to accept, as the Mob increased daily, and they, the few Saints (I suppose not more in number than 150) were almost forsaken of the new Citizens. The Number slain of the Mob is not well known, but it is probably that 150 fell in Battle, and although their number was so great and that of the Saints so small, the former said to be not less than 1100, yet but three of the Saints were slain. . . this is truly surprising.

The terms of the Peace, were, of course, such as would suit the Mob, and as soon as the Saints had agreed to lay down their Arms, they had to flee, but many of their arms were taken from them. The Mob found themselves in Possession of the City, and they proceeded to capture, rob and plunder in the most field-like and unlawful manner. They rendezvoused in the Temple. We had guarded it by Night and Day a long time, feeling unwilling to leave it in their Hands, but they now had it to themselves. They even Preached in it and cursed the Saints, but did no great Damage to it, thinking it would add to the Value of their Property. They treated the Saints with various kinds of indignity. Some they pushed over the River in haste; some they took and tried; some they baptized,

etc., but in the midst of this some more humane from Quincy brought up a quantity of Clothing and Provisions for the Poor as they got over the River, where the Poor Saints were in great numbers.

Here also the Lord sent upon them, as it were, a Shower of Quails. They came in vast Flocks. Many came into the Houses where the Saints were, settled on the tables and the floor, and even on their Laps, so that they caught as many as they pleased. Thus the Lord was mindful of his people, and it was truly a Matter of astonishment that in all this Persecution, etc., only 3 of our Brethren lost their lives.<sup>21</sup>

Seventy years after this incident, David H. Cannon wrote about the miracle of the quail:

After crossing the Mississippi River and while waiting for the way to open for us to get teams necessary to take us on our journey, we witnessed the power of the Lord in sending great flocks of quail that fed the saints who were fairly in a state of starvation, through being driven from their homes in this inclement season of the year without shelter or sufficient food to eat. These birds were caught by the thousands. I was then but eight years of age, but I am today of this view – that we are spared as a witness of the fact.<sup>22</sup>

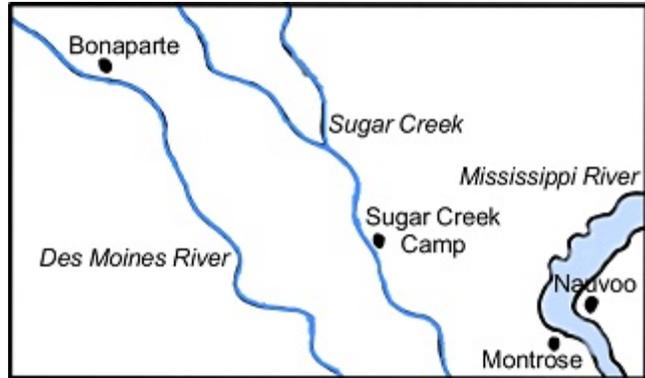
Mary's young son Joseph F. remembered this period in his life:

We remained [in Nauvoo] from February till September, 1846, when suddenly the word of alarm came—‘Get out of the city, the widows, the orphans, the children, the helpless, the very poor and the women, get out of the city as quickly as you can. The mob is upon us!

My mother chartered a flat boat or made provision some way to get hold of a flat boat, which was drawn up to the shore next to the city, and we took our furnishings and our bedding and our wearing apparel and such things as we could not be without, leaving the furniture standing in the home. We took these things and dumped them into the flat boat and were rowed across the river to the Iowa side. We had neither tent nor shed nor shelter of any kind except the canopy of heaven and the shade of the trees along the bank of the river. We camped under those trees for several days and heard the bombardment that was carried on by the mob and the defense that was made by our brethren of the City of Nauvoo, until the city surrendered, or until the brethren surrendered to the mob. I laid there, or sat there on the bank of the river expecting every moment that a cannon ball would come across the river, but I do not know that they had cannon in those days that would shoot as far as a mile away, though I felt, through all the drear and dread, the apprehension of being murdered right there on the banks of the river during the cannonading of the city.

During this time, while we were thus camped on the river, my mother was absent, I knew not where. My father left a numerous family but I do not think there was a child in the family that knew where she was. We learned though, that she was off down to Keokuk, or down, perhaps, to Quincy, making arrangements to exchange some of the property that belonged to my father in Hancock County, Illinois, for oxen and wagons and cows and things like that which would enable us to pursue our journey on after the Twelve through

the state of Iowa. Some time passed—I do not know how long—it seemed like a very long time to me, and then she returned with help. Her brother was one of the help, and others, driving a herd of oxen with yokes and chains, and some with wagons. We loaded from there. I rode a little pony—and I drove the loose stock that we did not put in the yokes, as far as a place called Bonaparte. Now, I have no idea where Bonaparte is, nor how far it was from Nauvoo, but I know I drove the loose stock until we got to Bonaparte. We organized there, we loaded up a supply, what we could, of our provisions, and started out across the state or along the territory of Iowa.<sup>23</sup>



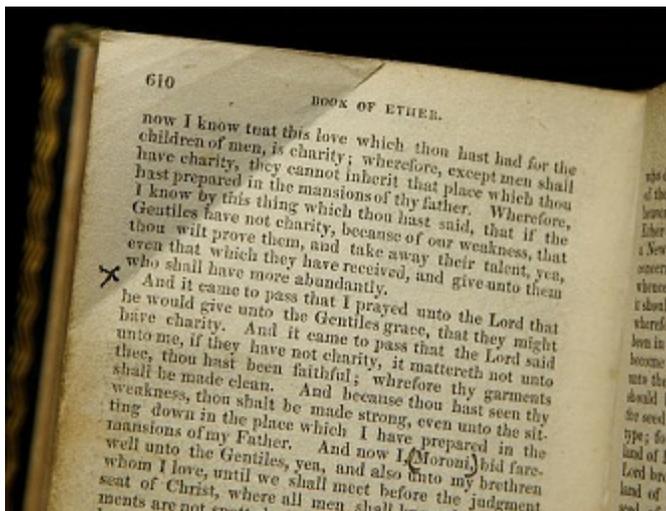
Seven-year-old Joseph F Smith drove a wagon from Montrose 30 miles to the camp at Bonaparte, then to Winter Quarters.

Joseph Fielding’s daughter Rachel wrote about their exodus. “We had two heavy covered wagons and on one we had a span of horses, and our two cows pulled the other. We used to feel sorry for the poor cows having to pull hard all day and then be milked at night.”<sup>24</sup>

### Young Joseph F. Smith Drives a Wagon 300 Miles Across the Iowa Plains

Seventy years later, young Joseph F., who had turned eight years old in the fall of 1846, described during a talk to youth in 1916 his responsibilities in getting to Winter Quarters:

Now, I am going to tell what I did. You may think it egotistical, I guess it is, and perhaps I ought not to say it at all, but I drove a team from Bonaparte to Winter Quarters . . . with the camp of Israel at Winter Quarters on the west banks of the Missouri River. Well, I felt



Mercy took her copy of the Book of Mormon, from which Hyrum had read before he left Nauvoo, across the Iowa plains and on to Utah. Photo from the Deseret News.

mighty proud to think I could drive a team three hundred miles over rolling prairie down hill up hill, sometimes sagging road, sometimes very poor road, sometimes mud holes and all of that sort of thing, and I never got stuck once and I never tipped the wagon over, I never broke a tongue or wretched a wheel. I got through the journey just as well as the old men who drove the teams and I felt mighty big about it, I’ll tell you.<sup>25</sup>

Mary’s step-son John Smith, who had turned fourteen as he crossed Iowa with Elder Kimball, got word that his mother and uncle, Joseph Fielding, had finally been able to leave Nauvoo. John traveled east

on the trail, riding one hundred and fifty miles, before reaching his step-mother's family. He then assisted them back along the trail until they reached Winter Quarters.<sup>26</sup>

Mercy Fielding Thompson and her daughter Mary Jane traveled with Joseph Fielding and Mary Fielding Smith. Among Mercy's most precious belongings was her copy of the Book of Mormon which carried the folded corner from the page which Hyrum Smith had read before departing Nauvoo.

### **Chapter 28 Endnotes Pages 441-452:**

1. History of the Church, Volume VII, pages 580-581. Thomas Grover was my grandmother's grandfather. Thomas, an expert swimmer, dived into the river and saved twenty-two lives on the barge, including many members of his family. His little daughter Percia's cries, "Lord, save my little heart!" became legendary in the family. They were waylaid several days on the west side of the river while reorganizing and drying out.

2. The Life of John Taylor, page 169.

3. Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, pages 304-308.

4. "Boyhood Recollections of Joseph Fielding Smith As Told By Himself," page 58.

5. This interesting exchange between William Smith and Mary Fielding Smith was told to Susa Young Gates, a daughter of Brigham Young, by Joseph F. Smith after he was president of the Church. She included this incident in a biography of Mary, which was published in the March 1916 edition of The Relief Society Magazine, page 131. At this time, Sister Gates recorded her opinion of Emma Smith's decision to remain in Nauvoo. Today, Emma Smith is revered as an elect lady, but a century ago, Emma was seen as one who betrayed the Church. Sister Gates wrote, "We do not know just what followed the martyrdom in the homes of the wives of those great heroes, but this we do know — that when the Twelve, led by Brigham Young, decided to come out to the West, the widow of the Prophet Joseph, Emma Hale Smith, refused to accompany them on this journey. She was approached by the messenger of President Brigham Young three times, for Bishop Whitney often told the story in the presence of our honored president of the Relief Society, Emmeline B. Wells, of how President Brigham Young sent him (Bishop Whitney) to offer every help and assistance to Sister Emma Smith to convey her and her household with the body of the Church to their first stopping place — Winter Quarters. President George A. Smith related many times, in the presence of his nephew, Joseph F. Smith, now president of the Church, the story of how he (Brother George A. Smith) went to his Aunt Emma, seeking to reconcile her to President Brigham Young, offering every help and inducement to come to Nauvoo with the Twelve and the body of the Church. But she was obdurate, and continued her refusal. No doubt, she felt she had ample justification, but whatever her motive, she failed in this supreme test." This can be found online at [https://archive.org/stream/reliefsocietymag03reli/reliefsocietymag03reli\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/reliefsocietymag03reli/reliefsocietymag03reli_djvu.txt). The reference to "come to Nauvoo" indicates that Emma had left the city during the period the apostles were readying the saints to move west.

6. A Biographical Sketch of the Life of The Patriarch John Smith.

7. Life of Heber C. Kimball, pages 351-352.

8. History of the Church, Volume VII, page 584.

9. History of the Church, Volume VII, pages 582-583.

10. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 139.

11. Life of Heber C. Kimball, pages 353-354.

12. Life of Heber C. Kimball, page 355.

13. Josiah Lewis Telle was enumerated in 1840 in New York City and might have been part of the LDS branch there. His first wife, Tabitha Oakley, died of malaria in Nauvoo. Amelia Rogers was his second wife. I spent 30 years of my life researching the family of Lewis Telle, living outside of Utah and prior to the digital age.

14. In Search of Living Water, pages 81-83, 96-97. It is believed that Agnes did not know of her husband's marriage to Susanna. Susanna left the marriage when she learned she was pregnant. This source states that the saints in St. Louis numbered 1500 at the time.

15. This letter is preserved in the Church History Library as MS D 2779 Folder 8 as part of the Mary Fielding Letters Collection. The date is given as "circa 1846," but I have used Heber C. Kimball's journal to learn when he left Pisgah. It appears that the Markham family did not know of this letter. I read it to my husband, a direct descendant and namesake of this man, and we both cried. He has since passed a digital copy on to Markham descendants who are involved in publishing a history of Stephen. Stephen appears to have been just like my husband: strong, dependable, faithful, and a dead aim with a pistol.

16. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 140.

17. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 140.

18. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 140-141. Joseph named three of the captives, "Phineas Young and Brigham, his Son, James Standing, Jos. Ballantyne." He left a space for the fifth but apparently did not learn who that was.

19. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 142.

20. Sketch of the Life of Rachel Fielding Burton, 1914.

21. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 141-142.

22. In a history of Matilda Russell Maxham by Janet Johnson Cox, "On the Mississippi River's marshy bottom lands near Montrose, Iowa, just across from Nauvoo, the Saints were in great peril. . . It was at this time the Lord sent coveys of quail to sustain the people. The small birds flocked amid the people regularly during the early mornings and late afternoons for 20 days. The quail seemed confused and very tame. Even small children could gather the quail." Another reference is in the Cannon Family Historical Treasury, page 241, where it is mentioned that young David Henry Cannon caught quail with his bare hands. In 1917, David wrote his autobiography, where this quote comes from and which I found in BYU's Special Collections, MSS SC 588.

23. "Boyhood Recollections of President Joseph F. Smith," pages 58-59.

24. Sketch of the Life of Rachel Fielding Burton, 1914.

25. "Boyhood Recollections of President Joseph F. Smith," pages 58-59.

26. A Biographical Sketch of the Life of The Patriarch John Smith. Young John traveled back toward Nauvoo in the company of Almon Babbitt.