

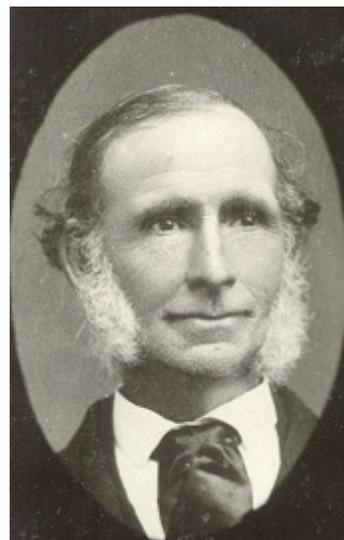
## The World of Joseph Fielding: Chapter 30

### 1847: The Year of the First Pioneers Across the Plains

Joseph Fielding, his sisters and their accompanying families lived in log houses on the western bank of the Missouri River through the winter of 1846-1847. Joseph hurried to build their homes before the cold set in.<sup>1</sup> The cattle did not fare well. Joseph wrote:

The main part of the Oxen and Cows we sent off about 20 Miles to feed on Rushes, etc., reserving 2 Yoke at home to get Logs to build our Houses. By Council we put the Sheep into the general Flock, the 12 engaging to furnish half the Number over the Mountains, but as soon as the winter came on, it was no longer any use to take them onto the prairie, and they had to live on Hay and some little Corn. The Flock, which numbered 1400, began to die, and it was found they could not be sustained, and we were advised to take them home, having lost 6 there. But they still kept dying, so that before Winter was over, we had but 18 left of the 43 that we started with. I had on leaving Nauvoo 1 Pair of Horses and 2 yoke of Oxen, but long ere the end of the winter, 1 Horse and 2 odd Oxen had died, so I had an odd Horse and 2 odd Oxen. [He meant that the oxen would have been mismatched as a team.] Several of Sister Thompson's Cows and Oxen died, not yet ascertained how many. Sister Smith also lost 2 good Mares, 1 young Colt, and it is supposed 1 or more Oxen, besides the Sheep which belonged to us all.

I had but little Provision to begin the Winter. I labored hard to get Sister Smith a House built; first built a double House, each end being 16 feet by 16, put on Clapboards and then laid Sods over them to keep out both the Cold and the Rain. We also built Sister Thompson a Room by setting up Poles in a slanting form, and then covering them with Earth, and my own House of Logs, 14 feet by 16, with Clapboards and Sods on the Roof. The Fall of the Year was very fine and pleasant, and it was a blessing for the Saints, as it was late before we got our houses up. I was much [bothered with stomach troubles] which made me very weak, and my work a Burden to me, and as my Sisters' Men were not the most active, we seemed to move slowly. I supposed I earned something of my Sister Smith, but she, as well as Sister Thompson assisted me far more than what I had any Claim on her for. She had some little Money, and she let it go for Corn and hay for the Cattle, and Flour, etc.; the Lord Reward her for her kindness. Brother T. Cottam who lives with us labored for Wages to help to supply our Family, and is now in Missouri for that Purpose, but has been sick and lame most of the time he has been off.<sup>2</sup>



Thomas Cottam helped Joseph Fielding in Winter Quarters.

Thomas Cottam had been baptized in Waddington after hearing the gospel preached by Heber C. Kimball and Joseph Fielding. He moved west with the Saints even though his wife had died in Nauvoo.

## Joseph Fielding is Called to a Bishopric

The members of the Church in Winter Quarters were organized into wards. Joseph Fielding served in a bishopric. Mary Fielding Smith and Mercy Fielding Thompson and their families were also in this ward of about one hundred and fifty members.<sup>3</sup> Joseph wrote:

The Saints have been sustained here better than could have expected. The whole Camp is divided into Wards, 22, and one over the River. Over each Ward is a Bishop with 2 Counselors. The Saints are tythed and the Tything is applied to the Relief of the Poor. By this Means the Poor have been furnished with Financing, etc., and I suppose the Bishops have generally been faithful in taking care of the Poor. I, myself, was made a Counselor to Bro. Rolfe of the 13<sup>th</sup> Ward.<sup>4</sup>



Samuel Jones Rolfe

Samuel Rolfe was an early convert to the Church and assisted in the construction of the Kirtland Temple. He was called by President Young to serve as the bishop of the 13<sup>th</sup> Ward. The other counselor was Jacob Zundel, considered to be the first German convert to the Church, being baptized in 1836 after emigrating to Pennsylvania with his family.



Jacob Zundel, one year older than Joseph Fielding, emigrated to the U.S. at the age of 9.

Bishop Rolfe made an interesting decision about tithing that winter. Joseph wrote:

[Bishop Rolfe] judged that with my Family and my 2 widow'd Sisters with whom also were 3 other Widows, if we provided for ourselves, we should be free from paying another tithing. I have had a great desire to earn something, but while there was Work to do at house-building, etc., I had enough to do for myself and my Sisters in building our Houses and in fencing in yards for the Cattle and fetching Hay, etc., and when I could have labored for Provisions, there was nothing to do, but still I have always been strong, and it is a fact that I always have been at work. I have lived bare with my Family; my children have worn out their Clothes and the Prospect of getting more is bad, but we have had our Health in general, and I have felt no disposition to complain, but think that all has been done for the best.<sup>5</sup>

Joseph at this time had five children. Rachel was seven years old. Ellen turned six that winter. Heber was three and little Joseph was two. Mary Ann's daughter Mary Ann would soon turn one. Hannah was far into her fifth pregnancy, and Mary Ann was pregnant with her seventh child, the second with her husband Joseph.

Rachel Fielding would later describe their situation in Winter Quarters:

We stopped at Winter Quarters next, and having no house we lived in the wagons and a tent. In time my father built another log house and planted a vegetable garden. While we

were waiting for the vegetables to grow, we ate pig weeds for greens; these and cornbread were our only food until our vegetables were ready to use.

We stayed in Winter Quarters for some time. I cannot tell how long. I remember that father hurried a great deal in building our house because it was getting so cold; and we stayed there and raised crops so that we had a good supply for our journey to Salt Lake Valley.<sup>6</sup>

Joseph wrote his views while living in Winter Quarters:

We have the Kingdom of God among us and no one can take it from us. We must take it to a Place where we can establish it and execute its Laws, which could not be done in the Midst of the Gentiles, and I suppose if we could have stayed in peace in Nauvoo, many of the Church would have remained there whether the Kingdom had been set up or not. As to hard times, it is nothing strange, for I said 2 years ago that I expected things would be as hard as we could bear them. We are not just stepping over the threshold into the Kingdom. The Gate is too strait for some, and they turn back. It is indeed a time of trial to the Saints; if it were not so, many would go into the Kingdom that are not fit for it. So I feel satisfied, and say it is all right.

### **President Young Dreams of Joseph Smith**

Joseph Fielding recorded an important event in his journal:

About the beginning of Feb. 47, President Brigham Young had a remarkable Dream. One Morning, he said he was taken sick, and the Pains of Death seized him, and as he told us, he died and his Spirit left the Body. His Wife watched him for a While till he returned again to Life. She said that when he was returned to life he exclaimed, 'I have been with Joseph and Hyrum; it is hard to come back to life again.' The next Day he dreamed that he saw and talked with Joseph. He was sitting in a large Room, sitting by the Window. Bro. Young went to him, shook Hands with him and kissed him many times, told him how anxious the People of the Church were to see him or to hear something from him, particularly with respect to sealing Power. Joseph began to preach to him; told him to tell the Saints to give diligent heed to the Whispers of the good Spirit. He said they might know the good Spirit, for it always produced Peace, Joy and Gladness. He said, 'Tell them to get the Spirit.' This he said with great feeling and earnestness. 'Tell the People to get the Spirit and not to rest without it, and to keep it. They should have their Hearts open to any Spirit, so that they might try them. If they shut their hearts against what was presented to them they would be in danger of shutting out the good Spirit. If they received whatever was presented to them they would know the true Spirit by its fruits.' Brother Young asked if he might not come to him; they had had many happy Days together, and why could they not again. He said he could not come to him at Present, but must go back for a Season, but it was all right, it was all right. These questions and answers were repeated. He told him he should come to him after a While, but it was all just right. He talked for some time and finally told him that as to the Sealing Power, etc., they should understand all about it. He said they would stand just according to their

original Organization before they took their Tabernacles; shew'd him how they stood in regular Order, and they stand the same again in the End. And as Bro. Young left him he seemed to pass through some thick Darkness. Bro. Young told this at several times. He said he knew it was from the Lord through Joseph. I was much pleased at this; it was very reasonable.<sup>7</sup>

### **John Taylor and Parley P. Pratt Leave England**

In February of 1847, after visiting the branches in England, Scotland and Wales, John Taylor and Parley P. Pratt left Liverpool, arriving in New Orleans in late March on the ship *America*. Elder Taylor and Elder Pratt parted ways in St. Louis, with Elder Taylor and a small group of immigrating saints taking a boat on Missouri River to Winter Quarters. Elder Pratt, traveling by horseback, found the saints in Garden Grove and then traveled through the various Iowa camps, finally reaching his family in Winter Quarters in April, 1847, arriving, surprisingly, before Elder Taylor. Elder Pratt found his family well, but his four horses had not survived the winter, and he had lost five out of twelve cows and more than half his oxen.<sup>8</sup>

Once in Winter Quarters, Elder Pratt joined with the thousands of others who were making extensive preparations to cross the plains. The men worked to provide sturdy wagons and pair the oxen. Women had spent the winter mending their wagon covers and baking crackers. All worked to gather and prepare supplies.<sup>9</sup>

### **Hyrum Thomas Fielding is Born in Winter Quarters**

Early in the spring of 1847, Joseph's sixth child was born, a son Hannah and Joseph named Hyrum Thomas. With Mary Ann expecting a baby late in the summer, the decision had already been made for Joseph, his two wives and Mary Fielding Smith and her families to remain in Winter Quarters that year, and most likely the following year.

### **Emma Smith and Others Remained Behind in Nauvoo**

As the saints were preparing to leave Winter Quarters, many families were still in Nauvoo. Emma Smith had taken her children out of the city for a short time while the military ensured the Mormons had left, but she returned to her home. There she cared for her mother-in-law, Lucy Mack Smith, by then seventy-two and crippled with arthritis, although Lucy would live nine more years.<sup>10</sup>

Emma's niece, the daughter of her brother-in-law Hyrum, Lovina Smith Walker, remained in Nauvoo for several years, lacking the means to leave. Ten years later this family managed to settle in Winter Quarters where they lived for several years, aiding others with supplies before their trek west. In 1860, Lovina's younger brother John Smith returned to Winter Quarters and included her family in his wagon train to Salt Lake.<sup>11</sup> Lovina and Lorin Walker became the parents of thirteen children, several of whom were pioneers in Idaho.

Lewis and Amelia Rogers Telle were also among those who remained in Nauvoo. One evening late in the summer of 1847, Amelia arose in the night. When she returned to bed, her husband



Lewis woke with a start and thought she was a robber breaking into the house. He reached for his gun and instead of shooting a stranger, he shot her.

Amelia lived for several months with the injury, believing it was healing. During this period, Emma Smith cared for Amelia and her children.<sup>12</sup> Amelia would not allow her husband to send word to her parents or siblings because she did not want to worry them. She did not know her sister Susanna was in St. Louis.

In late November of 1847, Amelia suddenly died. Lewis was able to get word to Amelia's parents who were still in Iowa. Amelia's sister Hester had just lost a baby. Hester traveled on a flatbed wagon back to Nauvoo to retrieve young Martha from Lewis, who kept his older sons. Hester raised Martha as her own child, not telling her she was adopted until she was twelve.

Martha Telle's mother died in Nauvoo after the Saints left the city. Although Martha Telle's parents never left Illinois, Martha would later travel to Salt Lake City by train and would become the fourth wife of George Q. Cannon. However, at this time, George was age twenty, preparing to cross the plains in the upcoming summer of 1847 with his sister Ann and their uncle, John Taylor, in a company led by Bishop Edward Hunter.



Ida May Burton, a great-granddaughter of Joseph Fielding, would marry the youngest child of Martha Telle Cannon.

Martha Telle Cannon's ninth and last child, Collins Telle Cannon, married Ida May Burton, a granddaughter of Rachel Fielding.<sup>13</sup>

### **Brigham Young's Vanguard Company**

Joseph Fielding described President Young's company which was preparing to leave Winter Quarters in the spring of 1847. Joseph left blanks for names and a date he intended to fill in later:

In April, a Company of about 140 with Horse and Mule Teams left the Camp of Winter quarters for the Mountains, a journey of 1000 or 1100 Miles. This they performed in great Peace & union. There were with them of the 12, B. Young, H. C. Kimball, O. Pratt, W. Woodruff, W. Richards, G. A. Smith, and A. Lyman. They took but few Women, intending to return before the next Winter. They went out like Abraham of old, not knowing the Place of their Location, but trusted in God to direct them. They were greatly blessed on their Way, and on their return to the Camp in November, not one of their Company had died. They go to the Place of the Location on the \_\_\_ of \_\_\_ and commenced at once to lay out a City, etc.; planted about 100 Acres of Grain, and left Corn several feet high about the middle of August to return to their Families. They reached home on the \_\_\_ of November.<sup>14</sup>

President Young and his vanguard party of one hundred and forty-two men were at that time assembling at the Elkhorn outfitting station. Upon Elder Pratt's arrival from England, he informed President Young that Elder Taylor was bringing almost five hundred gold sovereigns in tithing from the British saints, plus scientific equipment for their journey. Upon hearing Elder Pratt's report, Brigham Young waited a few days for Elder Taylor, who soon arrived with his carefully packed equipment and money.<sup>15</sup> President Young encouraged Parley to travel west with them, but Elder Pratt felt his duty lay in preparing his family for their trek later in the summer.

Those traveling with President Young's company, which left the outfitting station on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, 1847, were strong, able-bodied men who, with only a few exceptions, were faithful in the Church. George Mills, who had worked for Hyrum Smith and had accompanied his widow Mary Fielding Smith to Winter Quarters, was among this group even though he never joined the LDS Church. His intent was to prepare a home for Mary, her family and the people she cared for.<sup>16</sup>

John Taylor described these men as having the "best of teams."<sup>17</sup> Ezra T. Benson, who would later be ordained an apostle, was among this group, as was Thomas Grover of the Nauvoo high council. Two of President Young's brothers, Lorenzo and Joseph, were also in this company. Stephen Markham, a colonel in the Nauvoo Legion, was also with them and was in the same company of ten as George Mills.

Many of these men would return to Winter Quarters after reaching the Salt Lake Valley, spend the winter on the banks of the Missouri River and then take their families west in 1848. Brother Grover stopped at the Platte River to operate a ferry during the spring thaw, and then he headed back toward Winter Quarters, meeting his family along the way and then heading west again, spending the winter of 1847-1848 in Salt Lake City. Brother Markham returned with Brigham Young but remained in Winter Quarters for three years before taking his family west.

### **Mid-June 1847, Families Begin the Trek West**

Joseph Fielding described the large company of pioneers which left at the start of summer:

In June, another Company left the Camp, 566 Wagons, 2600 Souls, P. P. Pratt and John Taylor of the 12 being at the Head. My Sister Thompson and her little girl were among them. We felt great Anxiety for this Company; it was great; the Weather hot; the Loads heavy and the Country full of Indians of whom it had been reported, credibly, that they had a little before robbed the Oregon Company, and caused them much trouble and Loss. So great was my Anxiety that I could scarcely sleep. Some of the Brethren in the Camp also had the same trouble. . . and at one time it was proposed to send off Bro. Hosea Stout with a Company, as many as could be spared, to be as a guard, but it was over-ruled by the Idea that we at the Camp stood in as great a need of a Guard as they did, and we felt to leave them in the Hand of the Lord, daily bearing them up in prayer before him, but it was not many Weeks before we got Letters from them dated 400 Miles on the Way, which they had done in 4 Weeks. They had lost only one; they had no Sickness and as little Difficulty as possibly could be, so our fears were laid aside, and we praised the Lord for his Goodness and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men. We afterwards received other Letters containing the same good News. All things went well with them

excepting the Loss of some of Bro. J. M. Grant's Company's Oxen. The Pioneer Company [Brigham Young's Company in the Salt Lake Valley] waited as long as they thought it prudent for fear of the Winter, but they left the Valley before the others got in, and met them \_\_\_ Miles on this side, but supposed they would get in before the Cold would become severe, so that considering all the dealing of God with them all, we felt to give thanks to the Lord with all our Hearts; he has done all things well.<sup>18</sup>

As Joseph recorded, by early June the families who had prepared to travel west that year assembled their wagons, gear and animals, and headed south along the Missouri River. Preparations had occurred on the east side of the Elkhorn River, so ferries and rafts were constructed to move the companies across the river. Elder Pratt was an operator of this ferry, ultimately moving five hundred and sixty-six wagons.<sup>19</sup>

Women as well as men learned to drive the wagons and work with the oxen. The companies could not leave earlier in the year as grass for their cattle was necessary for feed over their one-thousand mile journey, and it would not sprout until the snows melted. The melting snow increased the flow of the Elkhorn and Platt Rivers, and although crossing them proved to be difficult and often life-threatening, this was a challenge which the pioneers became adept at meeting.

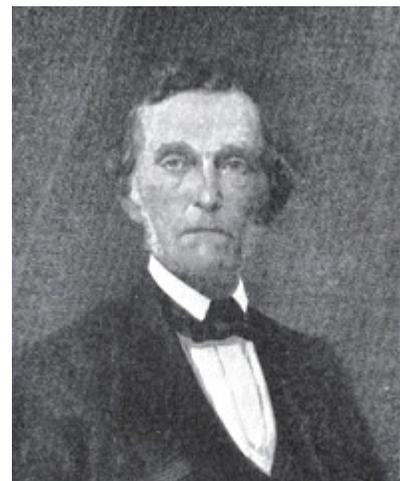
### **Mercy Fielding Thompson Crosses the Plains in 1847**

As Joseph mentioned in his journal, his sister Mercy left Winter Quarters with her daughter Mary Jane that year. Carefully packed among her treasured family letters and meager personal belongings was her copy of the Book of Mormon from which Hyrum, in whose house Mercy lived, had read before he left for Carthage.<sup>20</sup>

A rising question is why Mercy was willing to travel a thousand miles west, leaving her two siblings and their families in Winter Quarters. One reason could be that John Taylor asked her to cross the plains when he crossed that summer, although they weren't in the same company. It is also possible that Mercy had become romantically involved with James Lawson, the young widower who had been close enough to Mary Fielding that he had been sealed to her and Hyrum in the Nauvoo Temple. At the end of the trek, Mercy and James would marry.<sup>21</sup>

This large body of about fifteen hundred people had been divided into nine companies. Mercy, along with Elder Pratt's family, and also James Lawson, traveled with the Daniel Spencer/Perrigrine Sessions company, which had about one hundred wagons.<sup>22</sup> This company was at the lead of all the other companies that summer.<sup>23</sup>

Brother Spencer, age fifty-two, had served as the last mayor of Nauvoo and had been a bishop in Winter Quarters. He was the captain of one hundred wagons. Perrigrine Sessions, only thirty-



Daniel Spencer led a large company from Winter Quarters in 1847.

four, was a captain of fifty, although there were actually almost ninety wagons under his supervision.<sup>24</sup>

Perrigrine had joined the LDS Church while still in his teens when his parents were converted. His mother, Patty Bartlett Sessions, became a well-known LDS midwife who delivered over three thousand babies. Patty Sessions and Mercy were friends and often spent time together as they crossed the plains.<sup>25</sup>

These nine companies intended to arrive at the destination chosen by President Young before he left the Valley and returned to Winter Quarters where he intended to spend the winter of 1847-1848. The companies departed the Elk Horn outfitting station between the 17<sup>th</sup> of June and the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, their wagons stretching out for miles along the Nebraska Territory.

Elder Pratt described their organization:

In the final organization of this vast company, Father Isaac Morley and Bishop Whitney assisted, or rather took the oversight—being a committee appointed for that purpose by the Presidency before they left. As Brother Taylor and myself were present, we were appointed and invited to take a general superintendency of this emigration. The organization consisted of companies of tens, fifties and hundreds, with a captain over each, and the whole presided over by a president and two counselors, a marshal, etc. President John Young [Brigham Young's older brother] was called to preside—having been nominated by the Presidency before their departure.<sup>26</sup>

The biographer of Elder Taylor recorded:

During the early part of June, however, some six hundred wagons gathered on the Elk Horn ready to start. There were 1553 souls in the company, 2213 oxen, 124 horses, 887 cows, many of which had to do service under the yoke, 358 sheep, 716 chickens and a number of pigs.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of June this large company began its journey. It was late in the season for starting on such an expedition. It was too late for them to put in crops that season, even if they stopped far short of the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains. They barely had provisions to last them a year and a half, and if their first crop failed, starvation must follow, for they would be from ten to fifteen hundred miles from the nearest point where food could be obtained, and no swifter means of transportation than horse or ox teams!

It was a bold undertaking, this moving over fifteen hundred souls—more than half of whom were women and children—into an unknown country, through hostile tribes of savages. Had it not been for the assurance of the support and protection of Jehovah, it would have been not only a bold but a reckless movement—the action of madmen. But as it was, the undertaking was a sublime evidence of their faith in God and their leaders. . . . With a faith that has never been surpassed, they placed themselves under the guidance and protection of their God, and we shall see . . . that they trusted not in vain.<sup>27</sup>

## **Mercy and Mary Jane Thompson Leave Winter Quarters**

Mary Jane was nine years old when she left Winter Quarters. She wrote, “In June, 1847, my mother . . . and I bid good-bye to Aunt Smith and Uncle Fielding and their families. . . .”<sup>28</sup> The last time Mary and Mercy had been separated was shortly after their baptisms in 1837 when Mary lived in Kirtland and Mercy accompanied her husband on his mission in Canada. Since that time these two sisters had fled Kirtland together, endured the severe trials in Missouri together, and had even shared a husband after Mercy was widowed during the years Joseph served his long mission in England. The three siblings had departed Nauvoo together and had spent the last year living in close confines on the west bank of the Missouri River. Now Mercy, age forty and the youngest of the surviving Fielding siblings, was leaving Joseph and Mary to spend the winter in an unknown place, hoping she would see them the following year.

### **Chapter 30 Endnotes Pages 465-473:**

1. Sketch of the Life of Rachel Fielding Burton, 1914. “I remember that father hurried a great deal in building our house because it was getting so cold.”

2. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 144.

3. I was fortunate to find information for the 13<sup>th</sup> Ward on the Family Tree page of Samuel Jones Rolfe. While Joseph did not include the bishop’s first name, it only took a bit of searching to determine who the bishop was. Included in Samuel’s information in Family Tree was the confirmation that he served as a bishop in Winter Quarters during the winter of 1846-1847 before leaving for the Valley in June of 1847. Information about Jacob Zundel came from his Family Tree page.

4. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 144.

5. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 144.

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

7. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 145.

8. Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, pages 326, 329.

9. Much of the information about crossing the plains came from the Overland Trail Database. This particular account came from an author in the Spencer/Sessons company who called herself Gatha, a pseudonym. I have used details from her account without giving her further credit.

10. Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, page 625.

11. Lorin Walker History, 1822-1907.

12. In Search of Living Water,” page 111.

13. I know quite a bit about Lewis and Amelia Telle, as they are my ancestors. We are fortunate to have Amelia’s testimony of the restored gospel which was preserved by her sister Susanna. My grandmother Ida May Burton Cannon told me that Lewis was in disagreement with Brigham Young over money he had consecrated to the Church which he wanted returned. Amelia and Lewis were not among those who received their temple endowments in Nauvoo, but another ancestor, Benjamin Freeman Bird, who was very faithful, also did not receive his endowment in Nauvoo, so I’m not sure that is a true marker of alignment with the Church. David White

Rogers and many of his adult children left Nauvoo in 1846, but they did not immediately travel to Winter Quarters. They remained in Iowa farming and earning money before ultimately heading west.

14. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 145-146. Joseph dated an entry February 18<sup>th</sup>, of 1846, before he left Nauvoo, which was page 139. The next several pages of the transcript appear to have been written in Winter Quarters, as he refers to “here,” in that context, and through page 147 were probably all written in one sitting on Christmas Day, 1847. The vanguard company had returned, and surely Joseph intended to fill in those blanks.

15. Life of John Taylor, pages 183, 185. Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, page 326. The equipment included two sextants, two barometers, two artificial horizons, one circular reflector, several thermometers and a telescope.

16. This interesting bit of information came from the writings of Mary Jane Thompson. Her memories of crossing the plains were recorded in the *Juvenile Instructor* in 1897 and are easily found in the Overland Trails data base on LDS.org. She wrote, “George Mills, whom Aunt Mary sent out with the pioneers to begin a foundation for a home for her family, accompanied [Brigham Young] back until they met our company when he returned with us to the valley.”

17. Life of John Taylor, page 188.

18. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 146.

19. Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, page 329.

20. Joseph F. Smith, Mercy’s nephew, wrote on the back flyleaf of that volume that since Hyrum’s death, the book had been in Mercy’s care.

21. I am well aware as I’m writing this paragraph that Mercy had been married to John Taylor in the Nauvoo Temple. So few details are known today, but she clearly set this marriage aside once reaching the Great Basin in order to marry James Lawson, possibly with the blessing of John Taylor, although today we have no way of knowing that. Don Corbett, in *Daughter of Britain*, page 223, wrote, “In June of the same year, Mercy Thompson and Mary Jane, in the care of James Lawson, started for the Valley with a company of the Saints led by Parley P. Pratt.” On the next page Brother Corbett wrote that the rumor of Mercy marrying James Lawson was false. It doesn’t appear that Brother Corbett had access to Mary’s 1848 Chimney Rock letter, nor was he able to digitally search for James Lawson’s census record in 1851 which included Mercy as his wife.

22. Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, page 329.

23. At least two pioneers in the Spencer/Sessions company mentioned that their company was the first to follow Brigham Young’s vanguard company. One was Mary Abigail White Savage. Another was Alexander Abraham Lemon.

24. Alfred Boaz Lambson provided this detail. His account of the journey can be found in the Overland Trail Database, and I have used a few quotes from his published memories.

25. Patty Bartlett Sessions, *Diaries and Account Book, 1846-1866; 1880, Volume 1*, found at Overland Travels at LDS.org. Sister Sessions recorded that she spent two evenings on the trail with Mercy Thompson.

26. Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, pages 329, 330. Elder Pratt said there were sixty wagons. Perrigrine said there were eighty-seven.

27. Life of John Taylor, pages 187-189.

28. Thompson, M. J., *Recollections*.