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CORNELIUS P. LOTT AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE
TEMPORAL SALVATION OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINT
PIONEERS THROUGH THE CARE OF LIVESTOCK

by

Gary S. Ford

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Religious Education

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ABSTRACT

CORNELIUS P. LOTT AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE TEMPORAL SALVATION OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINT PIONEERS THROUGH THE CARE OF LIVESTOCK

Gary S. Ford

Department of Religious Education

Master of Arts

This thesis combines two studies: the role of livestock in the temporal salvation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Mormon exodus of 1846 and Cornelius P. Lott's contribution in the care of cattle and sheep during that time period. At Winter Quarters, the Church and its members depended in large measure for their survival upon the sizeable cattle herds they had acquired prior to their exodus from Nauvoo and during their trek across Iowa. Church leaders relied on men like Lott, whose expertise in the care of livestock, contributed significantly to the salvation of the Latter-day Saints.

The work investigates the American agriculture and livestock industry in the first half of the nineteenth century for the context in which the Latter-day Saints acquired livestock and subsequently herded them across Iowa. During that time period, Missouri and Illinois had an abundance of good livestock, which contributed to success of the Mormon exodus.

After their expulsion from the state of Missouri in 1838, the Church was left destitute of property and had to build up their livestock again. By 1846, they had amassed numerous herds, especially as they made a concerted effort to gather livestock in preparation for their exodus from Illinois. Along the Iowa trail, they continued acquiring cattle in great number by trading many of their possessions with local settlers. As Church leaders had designed, the Latter-day Saints arrived at the Missouri River with thousands of head of livestock. Their herds, particularly cattle, provided a significant lifeline for the Church in both sustenance and trade.

Because the Latter-day Saints' livestock was such a precious commodity, Church leaders had to be selective in choosing men to care for the animals. Cornelius P. Lott represents that class of skilled hands who took on such assignments. He joined the Church in 1834 and became recognized by Joseph Smith in 1838 as he played a key role as a leader in the conflict against the Missouri mobs in 1838. He demonstrated his skills with livestock when the Prophet employed him as superintendent of the Smith farm in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith became well acquainted with Lott and favored him with unique privileges, including his participation in sacred temple ordinances, unavailable to most of the Church until later. Such experiences gave Lott opportunity to associate closely with Brigham Young and the Apostles. Hence, when Young sought for trusted men at the Missouri River who could care for the livestock, Lott was a natural choice.

This study is valuable to Church history because it shows the importance of livestock and the men who cared for them in contributing to the success of the Mormon exodus and the temporal salvation of the Church. It is important in American history because gives insight into the role of cattle during the westward expansion era.

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INTRODUCTION

John Taylor declared that the pioneers of 1846 had “the best cattle and horses in the country.”¹ In preparation for the Mormon exodus, the Latter-day Saints had “scoured the country for one hundred miles round, to purchase cattle, mules, etc., for the removal of the saints; and we have drained the surrounding country for that distance, and for several hundred miles on the route we have traveled, of all the cattle they could spare.”² Time would prove this action a significant contribution to the temporal salvation of both those pioneers and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When the Latter-day Saints departed from Nauvoo, Illinois, many left for the journey with scanty provisions. This, coupled with inclement weather that considerably hindered their progress, brought them later that year into a state of impoverishment, sickness, and death at Winter Quarters. The success of the exodus and the temporal salvation of the entire Church depended in large measure upon livestock, particularly cattle, and the expert hands of those who cared for them. Cornelius Peter Lott, previously the superintendent of Joseph Smith’s farm in Nauvoo, was one of the key men who oversaw the care and maintenance of the livestock at the Missouri River. Though largely

¹ John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom: Selections from the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor*, ed. G. Homer Durham, (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941), 249. All quotations in this work are written as found in the original texts, unless otherwise noted.

² Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, 249.

unheralded today, Lott contributed significantly to the physical welfare of the Latter-day Saints through his agricultural expertise and labor.

This work will investigate the important role livestock played in the temporal salvation of the Church from the late 1830s to 1847 and assess Cornelius P. Lott's role therein. The following topics will be addressed: 1) the context of the American livestock industry during the first half of the nineteenth century; 2) the background and events that preceded Lott's appointment as superintendent of Joseph Smith's Nauvoo farm in 1842; 3) the effect of the 1838 Missouri conflict on the Latter-day Saints' endeavors in raising livestock and their approach to farming and livestock raising in Nauvoo, Illinois; 4) Lott's tenure as superintendent of the Prophet's farm in Nauvoo and how that led to his becoming one of Joseph Smith's closest confidants and a devoted associate to the Apostles after the martyrdom of the Prophet; 5) the Latter-day Saints' preparation and execution of moving a large quantity of cattle from Nauvoo to the Missouri River; and finally, 6) the significance of the livestock in the temporal salvation of the Church at Winter Quarters and Lott's role in the care for those animals.

CHAPTER ONE
AMERICAN LIVESTOCK IN THE FIRST HALF
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

During the 1830s and 1840s, the Latter-day Saints relied heavily on their livestock, chiefly cattle, for their welfare. They were not an isolated people; therefore, their experience with livestock must be understood in view of the larger context. What important developments were occurring in the livestock industry, in the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century?¹

Since the time colonists settled America in the seventeenth century, agricultural efforts sustained America. Farming was the lifeline of the American people, and by the 1800s, the livestock industry, especially cattle-raising, had become one of the nation's greatest enterprises. Important livestock centers emerged several parts of the country and each contributed uniquely to the overall importance of the livestock industry in the United States.

The Farmer: An American Hero

In 1787, President Thomas Jefferson noted, "Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his

¹ This work will deal almost exclusively with cattle and sheep, particularly with cattle, since they made up most of the livestock the Latter-day Saints took with them in the exodus from Illinois.

peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue.”² This he wrote during a time when more than half the population of the United States farmed and nearly all others either grew up on a farm or worked on one seasonally.³ His sentiments came to be known as *agrarianism*, an ideology that “had its roots in the revolutionary republican ideal of putting the public good before private gain.”⁴ Indeed, during Cornelius Lott’s growing-up years, the farmer became society’s hero and a symbol of the ideal person upon whom all others depended for life. This ideology remained strong up until the Civil War period.⁵

During the mid-nineteenth century, a mid-western farmer typically owned a few cattle, several head of sheep, a number of hogs, a horse or two, and some poultry. The crop staples were corn, potatoes, and wheat.⁶ Farm sizes varied, but in the Midwest they were usually between 80 to 160 acres, though certainly not limited to that.⁷

Men and boys worked in the fields in order to produce crops and livestock for the market, whereas women and girls worked at home preparing and preserving food and

² Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 164-165.

³ See R. Douglas Hurt, *American Agriculture: A Brief History* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2002), 150.

⁴ Susan Sessions Rugh, *Our Common Country: Family Farming, Culture, and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 4.

⁵ See David B. Danbom, *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 66 and 85.

⁶ See Rugh, *Our Common Country*, 36.

⁷ See Hurt, *American Agriculture*, 131-133; Rugh, *Our Common Country*, 159; and George W. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo: Everyday Life in the City of Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990), 57.

running the household. The labor of the entire family was a necessity and not a mere convenience in order for the farm to succeed.⁸

In farming, livestock was paramount. The family depended on the animals not only for food production but also for labor, travel, and clothing. The rural family would spend a great deal of time with some of these animals, particularly the horses, dairy cows, and oxen. As a result, a farmer and his team would often develop a sense of partnership.⁹ In fact, these animals that were “touched and spoken to every day, were often given names that signaled familiarity and even affection. Farmers used these names to *address* their livestock and not just to identify them. The names bestowed on working ox pairs, for instance, were meant to sound distinct so each animal would know when it was commanded to do something.”¹⁰

The Rise of Commercialized Agriculture in the Eastern States and the Westward Movement

In colonial America during the 1700s, “cattle raising and small farming were the chief enterprises.”¹¹ Yet as eastern cities such as New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia grew larger, farmers needed to produce greater quantities of food and other goods to meet their needs.¹² This created a symbiotic relationship between farmers and

⁸ See Danbom, *Born in the Country*, 87. Also see Rugh, *Our Common Country*, 17.

⁹ See Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 90.

¹⁰ Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, 91.

¹¹ Charles Wayland Towne and Edward Norris Wentworth, *Cattle and Men* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 147.

¹² See Mary Yeager, *Competition and Regulation: The Development of Oligopoly in the Meat Packing Industry* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Jai Press, 1981), 2.

city dwellers so that “cities lived on the countryside, and the countryside thrived because of the cities.”¹³ Yet because cities were growing large so quickly and adequate farmland was disappearing on the eastern seaboard, agricultural production took on greater significance west of the seaboard. With such new innovations developed in transportation, as the steamboat and the railroad, westerners could supply the east with their demands, making great profit.¹⁴

Western farmers faced various challenges delivering their product to the east, due to long distances and lack of refrigeration. One option was to cure and pack the meat before sending it, another was to drive the livestock east and sell it there. Meatpacking did not require large investments and could be done with little more than meat, salt, and a good curing recipe.¹⁵ Since pork was easier and cheaper to produce, and was tastier than processed beef, it naturally became the meat of choice for large-scale production.¹⁶ The industry boomed from the 1820s to the 1840s, particularly in Ohio, when Cincinnati, dubbed “Porkopolis,” became the hub for meatpacking.¹⁷ By the 1840s, Cincinnati

¹³ Danbom, *Born in the Country*, 66.

¹⁴ See Willard F. Williams and Thomas T. Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1964), 8.

¹⁵ See Yeager, *Competition and Regulation*, 1.

¹⁶ See Yeager, *Competition and Regulation*, 4.

¹⁷ See John H. McCoy and M.E. Sarhan, *Livestock and Meat Marketing* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1988), 15. Also see Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 10.

produced nearly 30 percent of all western meat packing, averaging 481,000 slaughtered hogs per year between 1832 and 1841.¹⁸

Cattle Drives

Cattle, on the other hand, could be driven long distances much easier than hogs for the following reasons: First, they were less resistant to being driven; second, they were more physically capable of making long journeys; and third, they did not lose as much weight as hogs did, which could lower their value.¹⁹

Cattlemen made attempts as early as 1802 to drive livestock overland to markets in Philadelphia and Baltimore. But in the spring of 1805, George Renick became the first Ohioan to drive his cattle over the mountains to Baltimore.²⁰ He drove sixty-eight head of cattle over the Cumberland Road, making a profit of \$13.77 per head. His action inspired numerous others over the next fifteen years to drive their herds to eastern markets.²¹

There were two kinds of drives: thin cattle to be fattened and fat cattle to be butchered.²² The traveling pace for fattened cattle averaged seven miles per day.²³ Cattle typically lost weight on the drives; pounds lost became known as “drift.” A driver could expect a thousand-pound bullock to lose up to 150 pounds of drift in a drive, depending

¹⁸ See Yeager, *Competition and Regulation*, 7.

¹⁹ See Yeager, *Competition and Regulation*, 6.

²⁰ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 218-219; Lesser, *Marketing Livestock and Meat*, 37; and Paul C. Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley: 1783-1860* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959), 103.

²¹ See Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 103.

²² See Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 110.

²³ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 220.

on distance, amount of feed, and temperature.²⁴ By the 1830s and 1840s, driving cattle reached its peak, but began to decline in the 1850s with the rise of the American railroad system.²⁵

In the 1830s and 1840s, farmers generally chose to drive their cattle to eastern markets to be butchered and consumed as fresh meat. Though Cincinnati's contribution to the meat industry dealt primarily with packing pork, the city also became important for cattle drivers who used it as an "assembly and embarkation point for drives over the mountains to eastern markets."²⁶ Cattle drivers herded their livestock to Ohio from the Midwest to be fattened on grain then drive them east to be slaughtered.²⁷

Hence, up to the mid-1840s, Ohio enjoyed a near monopoly in the cattle industry.²⁸ One of the major factors that lent to Ohio's "cattle kingdom" was a drop in corn prices. At the time, Ohio produced large crops of corn due to "a rich soil base and favorable climate for growing corn."²⁹ In the early 1820s, Ohio farmers grew an over-abundance of corn, causing the prices to decrease. Many farmers found a solution in

²⁴ See Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 111-112 and Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 221.

²⁵ See Lesser, *Marketing Livestock and Meat*, 37. Also see Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 116-118.

²⁶ William H. Lesser, *Marketing Livestock and Meat* (New York, London, and Norwood [Australia]: Food Products Press, 1993), 38.

²⁷ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 220 and 222.

²⁸ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 226.

²⁹ Jeremy Rifkin, *Beyond Beef: The Rise and Fall of the Cattle Culture* (New York: Dutton, 1992), 93.

growing corn for other marketable products such as whiskey and feed for cattle and hogs.³⁰

Grain-fed cattle yielded “heavy beef, richly marbled with speckles of fat.” Thus by the 1830s, “the Ohio Valley became an experimental laboratory for the new entrepreneurial scheme” of raising fattened cattle for consumption.³¹ Because of this, Ohio became the central location for the industry as cattle raisers from the Midwest sent their pasture-fed livestock to Ohio to be fattened on corn before driving them to eastern markets for slaughter. In addition, over a decade later, corn and wheat prices deflated due to the Panic of 1837, which resulted in farmers searching for another product to market. Raising livestock was the answer.³² The United States suffered through a drought during 1838 and 1839, followed by good years for corn crops in 1843 and from 1845 to 1849. Census figures show that the years after good corn harvests “witnessed an unusual supply of fat cattle.”³³

As early as 1841, cattle drivers from the midwestern states began to herd their stock across the plains to California.³⁴ However, throughout the 1840s, there were few cattle drives from the Midwest to the Pacific Coast, mainly because little profit could be made in the endeavor. In addition, stock drivers and emigrants did not coexist easily. First, cattle would slow down the company. Second, emigrants without large herds were

³⁰ See Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 4.

³¹ See Rifkin, *Beyond Beef*, 93.

³² See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 223.

³³ Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 41.

³⁴ See Terry G. Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 279.

not willing to lose precious rest at night to stand guard in order to protect someone else's stock. Third, the noise, dust, and smell would make the journey all the more unpleasant. Finally, large herds presented the danger of stampede.³⁵

Cattle Breeding

Both Dutch and English colonists of the seventeenth century came to America bringing various types of cattle breeds such as Devons, Dutch, and Danish. These intermingled and by the early eighteenth century, "their livestock was something to be proud of."³⁶ Of all the breeds, Devons were the first brought to America by the early colonists, though "systematic importation and improvement of this breed did not begin until the middle of the nineteenth century."³⁷

Kentuckians led the nation in improving cattle breeds. As early as 1785, Matthew Patton, Sr., sold a Shorthorn bull he had imported from England two years before, to Clarke County, Kentucky. From that bull came the famous "Patton stock," the favorite breed in Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky till 1817. During that year, Colonel Lewis Sanders from Lexington, Kentucky, imported a pair of Shorthorns, a pair of Longhorns, and a pair of Herefords. Also, in 1816, Henry Clay imported a pair of Herefords to his

³⁵ See John Unruh, Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 332.

³⁶ Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 135.

³⁷ Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 16-17. One source indicates that Devons were imported as early as 1623 (see Jimmy M. Skaggs, *Prime Cut: Livestock Raising and Meatpacking in the United States 1607-1983* [College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1986], 67).

home near Lexington, Kentucky.³⁸ Because of Kentucky's history in improved breeding, some considered Kentucky farmers to have "the best cattle and horses in America."³⁹

At the close of the eighteenth century, although there were a few English Shorthorns, Devons and Herefords were the most popular breeds.⁴⁰ However, in order to

³⁸ See Rudolf Alexander Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1923), 42; Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 25-26 and 28-29; and Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 280.

³⁹ See Clifford D. Carpenter, "The Early Cattle Industry in Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 47 (April 1953): 202.

⁴⁰ See Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 59 and Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 280. Shorthorns, Devons, and Herefords each have their own distinct characteristics that determine their value. Here is a brief description of the traits of each:

1. Shorthorns were the largest and most popular of the beef breeds, the bulls weighing between 1,800 and 2,400 pounds and the cows between 1,300 and 1,800. They have a rectangular shape and colors including red, red and white, white, and roan (see Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 482). Shorthorns flourish in temperate climates with plenty of grass; however, they do not do well in cold weather or drought conditions (see Will C. Barnes, *Western Grazing Grounds and Forest Ranges* [Chicago: The Breeder's Gazette, 1913], 92-93. Also see Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 320). Some Shorthorns are also dual-purpose, producing both milk and meat, but are most commonly used for beef production (see Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 484).
2. Herefords followed Shorthorns in popularity and weighed about the same, yet look smaller. They are easily recognized by their red coats and white heads, throats, and underline. They have large mouths and muzzles, which make them good feeders. They are known for their strong constitution and endurance (see Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 482-483). While Shorthorns have not fared well in cold winters or hot summers, Herefords, on the other hand, due to their rustling ability and early-maturing qualities, were first choice for open range herding endurance (see Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 183). Though they are hardier than Shorthorns, they are "poor milkers" (Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 76).
3. Devon reds are not as large as the other two but have shown their worth as dual-purpose cattle, producing both milk and beef (see Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 484). In addition, "Devons made good oxen, did well on poor land, would yield milk with high butter-fat content, and produced good beef" (Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 86). Further, some have said that Devons "walked faster and lost less flesh on the drive than did Shorthorns . . ." (Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 87).

improve beef production, Americans began to import English Shorthorns between 1817 and 1824, selling much of the livestock to Kentucky and Ohio farmers.⁴¹ By the late 1850s, Shorthorns “had become the most popular beef breed,” though the “purebred stock represented only a small part of all United States cattle.”⁴² During the 1840s, cattlemen imported large numbers of Herefords into the American market, though the breed never achieved the popularity had by Shorthorns.⁴³ However, until about 1840, only the more prosperous farmers owned improved cattle.⁴⁴

The Cattle Industry in California

While the Spanish conquistadors were the first to herd cattle in California in the 1500s, the Catholic *padres* established missions where they insured the survival of the livestock.⁴⁵ By 1800, in California, there were an estimated 74,000 head of cattle, 24,000 horses, and 88,000 sheep, most of which belonged to the missions.⁴⁶

From 1800 to 1848, the cattle industry thrived in California, during which time cattlemen sent an estimated five million cattle to the slaughter. Yet because of the distance from any significant beef market, Californians wasted most of the meat,

⁴¹ See Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 59-60. Also see Hurt, *American Agriculture*, 149-150 and Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 280. One historian contested that Shorthorns were imported first in 1783 (see Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 67).

⁴² Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 17. Also see James Caird, *Prairie Farming in America* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1859), 60-61 and Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 280.

⁴³ See Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 60.

⁴⁴ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 281.

⁴⁵ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 199.

⁴⁶ Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 122.

exporting large quantities of hide and tallow.⁴⁷ So important was this business to the economy that, for a time, cowhides called “California bank notes” circulated as currency from Alaska to Peru.⁴⁸ Cattle raisers in California gained their wealth by shipping hides to leather merchants and shoe manufacturers in Boston.⁴⁹ They also exported tallow to be used to make candles and soap. In fact, during California’s most productive years for livestock, “hide and tallow transactions averaged seventy percent of all California’s foreign trade.”⁵⁰ California ranchers not only exported hides and tallow, but also sent horns and hooves for making combs, barrettes, and glue and hair for plaster and padding.⁵¹ Since Californians used Indians, who were hardly better off than slaves, to perform the labor, the ranchers cleared an enormous profit with little effort.⁵²

The cattle industry in California reached its peak around 1833 when ranchers possessed an estimated 424,000 cattle.⁵³ In 1834, Californians slaughtered approximately

⁴⁷ See Laurie Winn Carlson, *Cattle: An Informal Social History* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 85.

⁴⁸ See Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 31. Also see Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 124.

⁴⁹ See Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 11.

⁵⁰ Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 128.

⁵¹ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 126 and 154.

⁵² See Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 6th ed., an abridgement (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 194.

⁵³ See Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 11. Also see Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 122 and Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 193.

396,400 cattle for their hides.⁵⁴ Prior to that year, ranching had taken place on missions, however, a considerable change occurred between 1834 and 1846 when coastal California transformed into a network of privately owned cattle ranches.⁵⁵ In 1823, California had only twenty-three private ranches, but by 1840 it had more than five hundred.⁵⁶ In 1845-1846, while the Latter-day Saints prepared for their journey west, “southern California exported 80,000 hides and 1.5 million pounds of tallow.”⁵⁷

The Northwest Cattle Industry

The British brought two bulls and two heifers to Oregon Country in 1812.⁵⁸ John McLoughlin, made chief factor of the Hudson’s Bay Company in Vancouver in 1825, brought with him twenty-seven Longhorn cows and steers from California and later supplemented his herd with three head of British Shorthorns.⁵⁹ In addition, he imported pigs from Hawaii and sheep from Canada.⁶⁰ For the next few years, McLoughlin did not sell or kill any of his cattle but only lent them out in order to not decrease the size of his herds.⁶¹ Until the early part of the 1830s, the Hudson’s Bay Company monopolized the

⁵⁴ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 123.

⁵⁵ See Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 166.

⁵⁶ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 128.

⁵⁷ Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 31.

⁵⁸ See Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 33.

⁵⁹ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 229 and Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 153.

⁶⁰ See Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 153.

⁶¹ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 230 and Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 165.

ownership of cattle in that area.⁶² One historian asserted, “Since Euro-American women would not settle on farmsteads without a cow, Hudson’s policy of refusing to sell a cow to a settler kept farmers and their families out of the Northwest.”⁶³

In 1834, the Reverend Jason Lee, a Methodist missionary, drove two cows from Independence, Missouri, to the Willamette Valley in Oregon. Determined to bring privately owned livestock to the area, he organized a joint stock company and raised money to drive 800 head of cattle from California. The experienced Ewing Young, who had lived in California, headed the drive in 1837 with fourteen hired hands, including three Native Americans. Leaving in June, the men arrived at the Columbia River by mid-October with 630 surviving head of cattle, putting an end to the Hudson’s Bay Company’s monopoly on livestock.⁶⁴ Later, in 1843, ranchers drove a larger herd of 1,250 head from California to Oregon. By the mid-1840s, “Spanish cattle of California origin remained the dominant breed in the Pacific Northwest.”⁶⁵

In 1836, Narcissa Whitman, Eliza Spalding, and their missionary husbands trekked across the plains to the Northwest, bringing with them a few multi-purpose cattle, bred for milk and meat. Their expedition opened the way for numerous others to follow,

⁶² See Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 11. Others have contested that the Hudson’s Bay Company did not really have a monopoly since it did not sell their livestock and, therefore, made no profit (see Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 230).

⁶³ Carlson, *Cattle: An Informal Social History*, 255.

⁶⁴ See Carlson, *Cattle: An Informal Social History*, 256-257. Also see Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 231-233; Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 165-166; and David Dary, *The Oregon Trail: An American Saga* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 58 and 67-68.

thus beginning a blaze of wagons and livestock along the Oregon Trail.⁶⁶ In fact, in 1843, Marcus Whitman, Narcissa's husband, who earlier that winter had been in Boston in an effort to keep his mission open, returned to Oregon taking with him a company of 875 people and about 3,000 loose cattle, horses, and oxen. The company totaled 120 wagons, drawn mostly by oxen.⁶⁷ That year, an estimated 5,000 cattle crossed the plains on the Oregon Trail.⁶⁸

In 1844, Cornelius Gilliam and a company of 500 pioneers set forth from St. Joseph, Missouri, with about 700 head of cattle.⁶⁹ Only five days after Gilliam's group began their journey, another company left from Lone Elm, Missouri, with about 500 head of cattle. In 1845, four or more companies, totaling 954 people, set out from St. Joseph with 9,425 head of cattle.⁷⁰ That same year, another group of 287, called the Savannah Oregon Emigrating Society Company, trekked the trail with 1,022 head of cattle.⁷¹

Throughout the 1840s, an estimated 10,000 cattle came from the cattle-rich Mississippi Valley states to the Oregon settlements.⁷² When emigrants reached the

⁶⁵ Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 245.

⁶⁶ See Carlson, *Cattle: An Informal Social History*, 255.

⁶⁷ See Dary, *The Oregon Trail*, 84-85.

⁶⁸ Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 235.

⁶⁹ See Dary, *The Oregon Trail*, 111-112.

⁷⁰ See Dary, *The Oregon Trail*, 129-130.

⁷¹ See Dary, *The Oregon Trail*, 130.

⁷² See Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 277.

Oregon Territory, “all surplus cattle were sold at a handsome profit.”⁷³ Thus began the cattle industry in the Northwest.

Southern Ranching

In the early part of the nineteenth century, southerners also raised cattle, particularly in the frontier cattle towns of South Carolina. These endeavors in livestock quickly faded as cotton production began to boom between the 1830s and 1860s.⁷⁴

On the other hand, southern and eastern Texas offered excellent forage land for cattle and swine.⁷⁵ Though the area would later play a major role in the history of raising livestock in America, the industry there did not prosper during the Spanish era. In part, this was because Texans did not have such a ready market as Californians did at that time.⁷⁶ However, Spaniards had imported Longhorns to Texas since the sixteenth century.⁷⁷ In 1519, Hernán Cortés brought Spanish cattle to North America and in 1641 Francisco Vasquez de Coronado herded them into Texas. Many of these animals became wild and by the time Stephen F. Austin’s settlers entered Texas in 1822, hundreds of small bands of wild Longhorns roamed throughout the coastal plains.⁷⁸

⁷³ Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 190.

⁷⁴ See Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 10. Also see Lesser, *Marketing Livestock and Meat*, 37.

⁷⁵ See Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 321 and Lesser, *Marketing Livestock and Meat*, 39.

⁷⁶ See Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O’Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss, eds., *The Oxford History of the American West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 243.

⁷⁷ See Rifkin, *Beyond Beef*, 45-46. Also see Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 25.

⁷⁸ See Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 25.

Prior to Austin's arrival, raising cattle in Texas consisted primarily of privately owned *ranchos*. By the end of the eighteenth century, Texas had approximately forty-five of them in the province.⁷⁹ A moderate *ranch* during that time period consisted of "eighty milk cows, thirty heifers, thirty bulls and bullocks, forty calves, fifteen tame horses, twenty-four mares, a stud, and some mules."⁸⁰ In the 1820s and 1830s, as land disputes between the Spanish and Americans increased, many Spanish ranchers left the province and abandoned their cattle. During that time period, some 100,000 head of cattle roamed the province, becoming "public property" for ambitious Texan settlers to exploit. Some have said that "Texas did not create their cattle industry, they simply took it over."⁸¹

The first Texas cattle drives occurred in 1842, first to New Orleans and then to Missouri. Later, in 1846, cattlemen drove a herd of one thousand Longhorns from Texas to Ohio for feeding.⁸²

In addition to raising Texas Longhorns, settlers from the United States began to herd American cattle from the east into the Texan woodlands during the 1820s, with a

⁷⁹ See Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 25.

⁸⁰ Rodolfo Rocha, "Early Ranching along the Rio Grande," in *At Home on the Range: Essays on the History of Western Social and Domestic Life*, ed. John R. Wunder (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), 5.

⁸¹ Rifkin, *Beyond Beef*, 68.

⁸² See Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 322; Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 16; Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 24; and Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 176. Another source contested that there were a few cattle drives from eastern Texas to New Orleans as early as 1821 and that other cattle drives in Texas occurred in the mid-1830s (see Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 154).

rapid increase around 1835. Ranchers drove herds of 300 to 1,000 to markets in Missouri, Ohio, and New Orleans to sell.⁸³

By 1850, there were five to six times more cattle than people in southeastern Texas counties such as Polk, Liberty, Houston, Jasper, and Montgomery.⁸⁴ Because of the mild climate and abundant grass and water, the area became the “cattle incubator of North America.”⁸⁵

The American Beef Belt of the Midwest

Around the time the Latter-day Saints settled Nauvoo, Illinois, cattle raising experts had come to recognize what was later termed by James Westfall Thompson as the “American Beef Belt.”⁸⁶ The perimeters of this “belt” lay between the 36th and 43rd parallels and from the east coast to the edge of the Great Plains around the 100th meridian. In this area fattening pastured cattle took less time than elsewhere. Further, meat from this stock proved to be a better mixture of lean and fat than cattle anywhere else in the United States. Animals raised north of the belt were affected by the cold, needing more provender to preserve sufficient body heat. This resulted in a poor quality of beef, dark in color, with little or no mixture of fat and lean. South of the belt, meat was stringy

⁸³ See Rifkin, *Beyond Beef*, 68.

⁸⁴ Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 179.

⁸⁵ Rifkin, *Beyond Beef*, 68.

⁸⁶ See Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 61-62. Also see Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 313.

and the fat did not intermix with the flesh, resulting in a solid layer of fat to be used as tallow.⁸⁷

Beginning in about 1815, Illinois cattle raisers drove their herds to be fattened in Ohio.⁸⁸ By the 1830s, the “cattle kingdom” in the United States expanded into Sangamon Valley, Illinois.⁸⁹ Most of the cattle brought to Illinois in the 1830s came from Kentucky rather than Ohio by some of the leaders of improved breeding, contributing to the quality of cattle in that state.⁹⁰ As the cattle industry increased in Illinois, St. Louis became an important market so that by the late 1840s, cattle business between Illinois and St. Louis was especially heavy.⁹¹

By the time the Latter-day Saints settled Nauvoo, various locations in the state began building meatpacking houses, including Alton, Quincy, Beardstown, Chicago, and Peoria.⁹² In 1841, meatpackers in Quincy slaughtered and packaged 700 head of cattle to be sent to St. Louis. On the other side of the state, in Chicago, during the 1842-1843 season, 3,000 head of cattle were slaughtered for beef and sent to the New York market.

⁸⁷ See Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 61-62. Also see Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 313.

⁸⁸ See Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 110.

⁸⁹ See Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 21.

⁹⁰ See Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 88.

⁹¹ See Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 164.

⁹² Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 12.

By the end of that decade, Illinois became the major livestock-producing area of the United States.⁹³

Iowa, which became a territory in 1846, played a less significant part in the beef industry in the first half of the nineteenth century. Before 1850, very few cattle in Iowa were fattened for the market.⁹⁴ The 1840 Iowa census showed a total of 38,000 head of cattle in the territory, this figure is a significant fact considering that the Latter-day Saints drove between 10,000 and 30,000 head of cattle across Iowa only six years later.⁹⁵

Dairy Cattle in America

Dairy cattle also played a significant role in the lives of rural families and in the settling of the West. Every rural family typically kept one or two milk cows for dairy products; the responsibility to care for such fell upon women.⁹⁶ One historian noted, “American women, coming from a northern European dairy heritage, refused to move west without a family cow.”⁹⁷ Emigrants going west also saw the value of milk cows on the trail. One Oregon Trail pioneer wrote, “Each family should have a few cows, as the

⁹³ See Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 10 and Hurt, *American Agriculture*, 129.

⁹⁴ See P. S. Shearer, “Iowans Feed Beef Cattle for Market,” in *A Century of Farming in Iowa: 1846-1946*, (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State College Press, 1946), 117.

⁹⁵ See See Shearer, “Iowans Feed Beef Cattle for Market,” 112; Bennett; *Mormons at the Missouri*, 114 and 252; and Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), 18.

⁹⁶ See Carlson, *Cattle: An Informal Social History*, 259.

⁹⁷ Carlson, *Cattle: An Informal Social History*, 254.

milk can be used the entire route, and they are often convenient to put to the wagon to relieve oxen.”⁹⁸

In 1840, Francis Wiggins, a noted American agriculturist, commented that farmers used both Shorthorns and Longhorns as dairy cattle, but that good and bad “milkers” could be found in any breed. Most farmers believed that the most important quality of a milk cow was not the quantity of milk the animal would produce, but rather its gentleness, its ability to give milk readily, and how easily it would fatten, since farmers slaughtered most cattle in due course anyhow.⁹⁹

During that time period, a good cow would give from ten to twelve quarts of milk a day.¹⁰⁰ In 1850 an average cow produced 147.9 gallons of milk per year.¹⁰¹ Since refrigeration methods were so primitive in the 1840s on the western frontier, farmers used most of the milk to produce cheese and butter. A good cow could yield seven pounds of butter in a week.¹⁰² One Illinois farmer in the 1850s said that each of his cows gave milk that produced two pounds of cheese per day during the season of good grass.¹⁰³

While cattlemen used some breeds, such as Longhorns, Shorthorns, and Devons, for both beef and milk, they reserved other breeds specifically for milking. During the

⁹⁸ See Dary, *The Oregon Trail*, 140.

⁹⁹ See Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 59.

¹⁰⁰ See Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 59.

¹⁰¹ See C. Y. Cannon, “The Development of Iowa’s High-Producing Dairy Cattle,” in *A Century of Farming in Iowa: 1846-1946*, (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State College Press, 1946), 120.

¹⁰² See Givens *In Old Nauvoo*, 59.

¹⁰³ See Caird, *Prairie Farming in America*, 77.

1840s, the most common dairy breeds in the United States were Guernseys, which were first imported from the Isle of Guernsey in 1815; Jerseys, were first brought from the Isle of Jersey in the English Channel in 1817; and Ayrshires, were introduced from Scotland in 1822.¹⁰⁴ However, because most dairy farmers could not afford to improve their cattle, upbreeding did not become common with milk cows until the late nineteenth century.¹⁰⁵

The American Wool Industry

Since much of America did not eat mutton in the early part of the nineteenth century, a sheep's value was in its wool.¹⁰⁶ At the time, most families in the midwestern states had a few sheep and sheared them periodically, using the wool for clothing.¹⁰⁷

Wool production, of course, became an industry for market as well. One sheep alone yielded three pounds of fleece per year, which earned the farmer as much as an average day of a workman's wages at the time. Hence a sheep raiser was capable of making a nice profit with relatively little work.¹⁰⁸ In the 1840s, sheep suddenly became

¹⁰⁴ See Raymond B. Becker, *Dairy Cattle Breeds: Origin and Development* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973), 106, 204, and 309. Also see Hurt, *American Agriculture*, 150. Note: The latter source asserted that Guernseys were not imported until 1830.

Various traits ascribed to dairy cattle breeds listed above, in order of greatest milk production, are: 1) Ayrshires weigh about 1,200 pounds a head and are typically cherry red, mahogany, brown, or a combination of any of these with white markings. 2) An average Guernsey weighs 1,100 pounds and is colored fawn with white markings. 3) Jerseys weigh about 1,000 pounds each and are fawn colored with or without white markings (See Becker, *Dairy Cattle Breeds*, 492 and 514).

¹⁰⁵ See Hurt, *American Agriculture*, 150.

¹⁰⁶ See W. F. La Grange, "Sheep Production in the Livestock Enterprises," in *A Century of Farming in Iowa: 1846-1946*, (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State College Press, 1946), 128.

¹⁰⁷ See Rugh, *Our Common Country*, 66-67.

¹⁰⁸ See Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 61.

popular with some farmers and probably would have done better had the wool tariff not been lowered in 1842.¹⁰⁹

Summary

By the time the Latter-day Saints established Nauvoo, the livestock industry was strong in many parts of the United States. The people lauded farmers for their role in sustaining the nation. Ohioans and Midwesterners produced sustenance for the large cities on the eastern seaboard. Californians raised livestock and exported great quantities of hide and tallow for markets at both Atlantic and Pacific ports. In the Pacific Northwest, the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed a monopoly with their imported English Shorthorns until American settlers brought in California Longhorns and emigrants crossed the plains with their American breeds. In the South, cotton fields replaced cattle herds while Texan ranching set the stage for a later and more prosperous industry. Also, particularly in the Midwest, farmers took a sudden interest in sheep raising for wool. In this setting, the Latter-day Saints prepared for their trek across the plains.

¹⁰⁹ See Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 140.

CHAPTER TWO

CORNELIUS LOTT: BEGINNINGS AND BACKGROUND

Having joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1834, Cornelius Lott became acquainted with Joseph Smith early on in Kirtland, Ohio. By 1838, while many Church members congregated to Missouri, Lott gained some distinction by becoming an active participant in conflicts against the Missouri mobs. Four years later, in 1842, the Prophet favored Lott by employing him as superintendent of the Smith farm in Nauvoo. What factors in Lott's background put him into a position that would contribute to the Prophet's decision to hire him?

Cornelius Peter Lott

A native of New York City, Cornelius Peter Lott was born on September 22, 1798, and baptized five days later in the Reformed Dutch Church. He was the only child to Pieter Lott and Mary Jane Smiley Lott.¹ Cornelius Lott's daughter wrote, "His parents taught him to be fair and honest in his dealings with others, and he in turn taught his own children the same principles when they came along." She further explained that he "was

¹ See A. V. Phillips, *The Lott Family in America* (Trenton, New Jersey: Traver's Book Store, 1942), 36.

taught to work with his hands, and taught also that hard work helps to build a strong character. He learned at an early age to be obedient.”²

Joseph Smith’s oldest living son, Joseph Smith III, though only a boy at the time when he became acquainted with Lott, described Lott as “a very strong man of sturdy build and medium height,” having “a fine, very high-pitched voice. . .”³

Raised in New York and Pennsylvania, Lott “learned to love animals and took great pride in them. He also loved the soil and liked to farm.”⁴ According to his daughter, Alzina, farming was “the kind of work he loved and was best suited for.”⁵

On April 27, 1823, twenty-four-year-old Lott married seventeen-year-old Permelia Darrow at Bridgewater, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. From 1827 to 1836, Permelia gave birth to seven children: Melissa, John Smiley, Mary Elizabeth, Almira Henrietta, Permelia Jane, Alzina Lucinda, and Harriet Amanda.⁶ During those years, the

² Alzina Lucinda Lott Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” TMs (Lehi, Utah: by Martha Joella Lott Baum, [before 1910]), 1. May the reader know that the author is cognizant that Alzina’s record is subject to error since she was reminiscing about her childhood at an advanced age not long before her death in 1910. She was born in 1834 and her father died in 1850, so that all of her memories of him come from her childhood and youth. Further, because of her relationship with her father, she tended to speak of him in favorable terms, especially since she directed her remarks to her posterity.

³ Joseph Smith III, *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III (1832-1932)*, ed. Richard P. Howard (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1979), 22. For a recent bibliography on Joseph Smith III, see Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

⁴ Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 1.

⁵ Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 11.

⁶ See Rhea Vance Lott, *Descendants of Cornelius Peter Lott*, 24, 29, 37, 42, 50, and 60. The United States 1830 Census shows that Cornelius and his family lived in Bridgewater, Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, with a household of six (see United States 1830 Census:

Lotts “were desperately poor and constantly on the move.”⁷ This compelled Lott to take employment wherever he could.⁸ Since his skill rested mostly in farming and livestock care, undoubtedly that is where he most often found work.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

In 1834 the Lott family was baptized and became members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.⁹ Alzina noted that the restored Church was what her

Bridgewater Township, Susquehanna Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania, p. 79, available from Ancestry.com; Internet).

⁷ Alzina Lucinda Lott Willes, “Personal History of Alzina Lucinda Lott Willes,” TMs (Lehi, Utah: by Martha Joella Lott Baum, [before 1910]), 1.

⁸ See Alzina Lucinda Lott Willes, “Personal History of Permelia Darrow Lott,” TMs (Lehi, Utah: by Martha Joella Lott Baum, [before 1910]), 1.

⁹ There is a discrepancy regarding when the Lott family joined the Church. One family record asserted, “Cornelius and Permelia became interested in the Mormon Church in 1836 and they were baptized on December 13, 1836” (Ferril A. Losee, Jana K. Hardman, and Lyman A. Losee, *The Losee Family History: Ancestors and Descendants of Lyman Peter Losee and Mary Ann Peterson* [Provo, Utah: n.p., 2000], 17). Alzina, on the other hand, claimed that her family had joining the Church in 1837 (See Willes, “Personal History of Alzina Lucinda Lott Willes,” 1). However, the *Messenger and Advocate* made mention of Cornelius as a Church member in Kirtland as early as February 1836 (See *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, ed. Oliver Cowdery [Kirtland, Ohio: Oliver Cowdery & Co., 1836], 2:271). Others have asserted that the Lotts joined the Church as early as 1833 (See Lyndon Cook and Milton Backman, eds., *Kirtland Elders’ Quorum Records* [Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Co., 1985], biographical appendix; Dale Hatch, *Hatch Family Pioneer Stories & History*, 2 vols. [Idaho Falls, Idaho: Snake River Valley Publisher, 2002], 2:124; Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997], 596; and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle, *Old Mormon Nauvoo and Southeastern Iowa: Historic Photographs and Guide* [Santa Ana, California: Fieldbrook Productions, 1991], 176). Hosea Stout, who joined the Church in 1838, noted that Cornelius Lott had “been a member of this church nearly from its rise” (Hosea Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout 1844-1861*, ed. Juanita Brooks [Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964], 373). Permelia Lott’s obituary in 1882 is the best source concerning the Lotts’ baptism, stating that she “joined the Church with her husband in 1834” (“Died,” *Deseret News* [Salt Lake City], January 18, 1882, p. 816).

parents “had been searching for,” and both of them joined at the same time. She observed, “They gained a strong testimony that never left them.”¹⁰ Lott and his wife were the only two of their respective families to unite with the Church. After their baptism, Lott and his family moved to Kirtland, Ohio, “to be near the body of the Saints and obey council.”¹¹

In the beginning of 1836, the Kirtland High Council disfellowshipped Lott with three others for having insulted Cyrus Smalling of the First Quorum of the Seventy and for speaking wrongfully against the Church.¹² The notice read, “We the high council of Kirtland, hereby inform Jacob Shibley, Daniel Brownwell, Peter Brownwell and Cornelius P. Lott, that we have withdrawn our fellowship from them for disobeying the commandments of the Lord, until they make satisfaction. JOHN SMITH, *Ch’n*, CYRUS SMALLING, *Clerk*.”¹³ A few months later, only four days before the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Lott acknowledged his faults and petitioned for reinstatement. His statement reads:

Agreeable to the decision of the High Council of Kirtland, held March 8th, 1836: wherein Cornelius P. Lott and others were put on suspense; this is to all whom it may concern, that I confess the decision of the Council to be just and righteous;

¹⁰ Willes, “Personal History of Permelia Darrow Lott,” 1.

¹¹ Willes, “Personal History of Permelia Darrow Lott,” 1.

¹² During this period, Lott received a blessing under the hands of Joseph Smith, Sr., in which he received the counsel, “Brother Lott in the name of Jesus Christ I lay my hands on thy head I ask my heavenly father to shew thee the corruption of thy heart, or the world, and of the branch of the Church where thou dost reside” (Blessing of Cornelius P. Lott who was born in the city of New York, A.D. 1798, Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City).

¹³ See *Messenger and Advocate*, 2:271. Also see *Messenger and Advocate*, 2:336.

and that we were in a wrong spirit and were led to say many things that were wrong concerning brother Cyrus Smalling and the church, for which I ask the forgiveness of those who, in so doing, I have injured; and I will endeavor to live hereafter by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

CORNELIUS P. LOTT.

Kirtland, May 23d, 1836.¹⁴

Church leaders must have considered his repentance to be sincere as Lott received his elder's license shortly thereafter on August 6, 1836.¹⁵ In addition, the following year, he attended an Elders Quorum meeting in the Kirtland Temple where Church leaders anointed him and others with oil on March 31, 1837.¹⁶

Towards the end of 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company, inviting the Church members to invest stock in the enterprise.¹⁷ On January 2, 1837, Lott responded to the Prophet's call and became a member of said society.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Messenger and Advocate*, 2:336.

¹⁵ Cook and Backman, eds., *Kirtland Elders' Quorum Records*, biographical appendix. Also see *Messenger and Advocate*, 382. In the early days of the Church, leaders gave licenses to all priesthood holders and missionaries so they could verify their authority among those whom they served in their travels (see Donald Q. Cannon, "Licensing in the Early Church," *BYU Studies* 22 (Fall 1982): 96-106.

¹⁶ Cook and Backman, eds., *Kirtland Elders' Quorum Records*, 28. Concerning the anointing with oil, two modern scholars explained, "In January 1836, two months before the dedication ceremonies, Joseph Smith introduced among the leaders an ordinance of washing and anointing with oil, which symbolized the spirituality and cleanliness they desired" (James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992], 109).

¹⁷ See *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., ed. B.H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 2:473. Joseph Smith and other leaders of the Church organized the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company in Kirtland, Ohio, in a time when the Church faced financial hardship. Unsuccessful in obtaining a bank charter from the state of Ohio, Church leaders established a joint stock association, appointing the Prophet as treasurer, to fill the purpose of banking in Kirtland. Through possible acts of embezzlement from one of the tellers, Warren Parrish, coupled with a

After the Kirtland Safety Society folded in the summer of 1837, a number of Joseph Smith's closest associates apostatized from the Church. However, Lott remained true to the Prophet and followed him to Missouri in 1838.¹⁹

Lott's Involvement During the Missouri Period

During the time the main body of the Church gathered to northern Missouri in 1838, Lott became more involved with Church leaders than ever before. On April 26, at Far West, Joseph Smith said that the Lord had told him the following: "Therefore I command you to build a house unto me, for the gathering together of my saints, that they may worship me. And let there be a beginning of this work, and a foundation, and preparatory work, this following summer; And let the beginning be made on the fourth day of July next; and from that time forth let my people labor diligently to build a house unto my name; . . ." (Doctrine and Covenants 115:8-10). Cornelius Lott responded to the Lord's call to build the temple. Elijah Averett noted, "On July 4, 1838 the foundation of

nation-wide financial crash that occurred in 1837, hitting Ohio especially hard, the Kirtland Safety Society failed. The failure caused a great deal of bitter feelings against Joseph Smith, both from in and out of the Church (see Scott H. Partridge, "The Failure of the Kirtland Safety Society," *BYU Studies* 12 (Summer 1972): 437-454.

¹⁸ See *Messenger and Advocate*, 3:475-477. Lott pledged to invest six shares of stock at fifty dollars each, making a total of three hundred dollars. He only paid a fraction of that amount, with two dollars on January 5, 1837, and fifty cents on March 10, 1837 (see Stock ledger and index [microform], 1837-1838, p. 213, from the Mormon Collection of the Chicago Historical Society, 1837-1838, available at L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah).

¹⁹ See *Elders' Journal of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 1, Number 4, Far West, Missouri, August 1838, 60. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Also see Elijah Averett, "The Averett Narrative," Transcription of the Averett Family ledger book, TMs, comp. Murray Averett (1972), L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

the temple was laid by Brother Joseph Smith and his Council. Elisha Averett, my brother, Demick Huntington, and Cornelius Lot quarried rock for the temple, Elisha, being chief mason laying the foundation that day.”²⁰

The Latter-day Saints put on an Independence Day celebration in Far West on July 4, 1838. As part of the festivities, they held a procession leading to the temple lot where they laid the cornerstones for the Far West Temple. Among the officers at the celebration were Joseph Smith, President of the day; Hyrum Smith, Vice President; Sidney Ridgon, Orator; Reynolds Cahoon, Marshal of the day; Colonel George Hinkle and Major Jefferson Hunt, Assistant Marshals; George W. Robinson, Colonel for the day; Philo Dibble, Lieutenant Colonel; Seymour Brunson, Major; Reed Peck, as Adjutant; Jared Carter, Sampson Avard, and Cornelius P. Lott, Generals.²¹

Because of Lott’s position as a general in the Mormon militia, he took an active role in the conflict against the Missourians in 1838. On August 6, fighting broke out in the town of Gallatin, where Missouri mobs denied Church members the right to vote. On August 8, Adam Black, a justice of the peace in Daviess County, stated that Lyman Wight, Lott, and about seventeen others called on him requesting that he sign an agreement to protect their rights. According to Black, he declined to sign the agreement and tried to persuade Wight to go through the proper court system, but Wight refused

²⁰ Averett, “The Averett Narrative,” 1. Because of the severe persecutions the Saints endured during the fall of 1838, they could not build the Far West temple. When the Missourians drove them from the state, nothing but the temple foundation stones remained (see Clark V. Johnson, “Let Far West Be Holy and Consecrated,” in *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith*, eds. Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988], 240).

²¹ See *Elders' Journal*, Vol. 1, Number 4, August 1838, 60.

because he believed the government would not protect the Church. Black claimed that Wight threatened that the “Mormons” would take matters into their own hands. As the men mounted their horses, Black said to them, “Gentlemen, I don't want you to go off and say that I refused to issue you civil process.” In response to his petition, “Cornelius Lott turned on his horse, and one or two of the others saying, ‘You black son of a _____, don't you impeach us with lying.’” Black replied that “he was not impeaching them with lying, but only requesting them not to lie,” to which Lott responded, “you mob, you black son of a _____, shut your head, or I'll cut it off, or take your head.” Finally, Black ordered them to leave, telling them he did not feel he should be insulted in that way on his own property.²²

The Latter-day Saints’ account of the incident differed from Black’s. They recorded that a committee of five or six men, including Sampson Avard, Lyman Wight, and Cornelius Lott, called upon Black in order to promote peace. Upon visiting Black, the men found him to be unfriendly and “refused to give them any satisfaction. This, tended to confirm the report, that he was head of a mob – it created some uneasiness.”²³

²² See *Document containing the correspondence, orders, &c. in relation to the disturbances with the Mormons and the evidence given before the Hon. Austin A. King, Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit of the State of Missouri, at the courthouse in Richmond, in a criminal court of inquiry, begun November 12, 1838, on the trial of Joseph Smith, Jr., and others for high treason and other crimes against the state* (Fayette, Missouri: Boon’s Lick Democrat, 1841), 161. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Unlike the original text, blanks replaced vulgar words in this quotation to maintain dignity.

²³ *An Appeal to the American People: Being an Account of the Persecutions of the Church of Latter Day Saints; and of the Barbarities Inflicted on them by the Inhabitants of the State of Missouri*, 2d ed., (Cincinnati: Shepard & Stearns, 1840), 19.

The Latter-day Saint account further indicates that a large company of their men was near Adam Black's house throughout the day on August 8, owing to a spring where they and their horses could get water to drink.²⁴ The company consisted of about 154 men, including Lott.²⁵ Not long after the first visit, Sampson Avard "and a number of others, went into his house and again interrogated him respecting the mob, and some angry words passed between them." At that point, Black requested that he speak with Joseph Smith.²⁶ The Prophet consented and the encounter between the two ended in Black signing a document stating that he would uphold the United States Constitution and would not molest the Church members so long as they would not molest him.²⁷

Throughout the next couple of months, antipathy between Missourians and Latter-day Saints escalated beyond threats and into warfare. The Latter-day Saints maintained they were simply protecting their freedoms.²⁸ Benjamin F. Johnson recalled, "Ours was a struggle for our lives and homes, and a more conscientious, noble, and patriotic spirit

²⁴ See *An Appeal to the American People*, 19.

²⁵ See Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August 28, 1838, Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

²⁶ See *An Appeal to the American People*, 20.

²⁷ See *History of the Church*, 3:59-60.

²⁸ See Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, revised and enhanced edition, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 217-218.

never enthused man than that which animated our leaders in this just defense of our rights.”²⁹

At a quarterly conference on October 6, 1838, Lott volunteered to serve a mission in Kentucky along with James Carroll, James Galliher, Luman A. Shurtliff, James Dana, Ahaz Cook, Isaac Decker, and Alpheus Gifford. President Thomas B. Marsh instructed them “to go in the spirit of meekness, and preach repentance.”³⁰ However, due to the conflict with the Missourians, the men could not serve their mission at that time.³¹

Lott took an active role in the Latter-day Saints’ defense against the Missouri mobs. Hosea Stout recalled that Lott “was commander of the Horse in Far-West at the time of the surrender in which corps I served.”³²

Benjamin F. Johnson recorded that shortly after the tragedy at Haun’s Mill, Lott led a company of about twenty men on horseback, including Johnson, to a Taylor residence on the Grand River, whose occupants supposedly held arms and ammunition for anti-Mormon mobs.³³ Though the Taylor family denied the accusation, Lott’s men

²⁹ Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life’s Review: Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Johnson* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1997), 33.

³⁰ *History of the Church*, 3:153-155.

³¹ See Luman Andros Shurtliff, *Biographical Sketch of the Life of Luman Andros Shurtliff* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1956), 38.

³² Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 373.

³³ Haun’s Mill was a small mill on Shoal Creek, owned by a Latter-day Saint named Jacob Haun. The small settlement consisted of some thirty families. On October 30, 1838, between 200 and 250 Missouri men, under the command of Colonel Thomas Jennings, brutally bombarded the settlement and murdered eighteen Latter-day Saints (See Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 137). For a more comprehensive study on the subject, see Alma R. Blair, “The Haun’s Mill Massacre,” *BYU Studies* 13 (Fall 1972), 62-67. Also see Alexander L. Baugh, *A Call to Arms: The*

forcibly entered and searched the place. Lott's company informed them that if they found no weapons, they would leave them in peace; but if any were located, they would burn them out. Unable to find the weaponry within the houses and barns, Lott ordered his men to search the cornfields, wherein they indeed found the arms and ammunition. The Latter-day Saint band, though allowing the residents to quickly take from their home what they could carry, then plundered and burned the Taylors' house. Johnson noted, "And here I might say there was almost a trial of my faith in my pity for our enemies, even those who were plotting our destruction My sympathies were drawn towards the women & children, but I would in no degree let them deter me from my duty."³⁴

Not long after the incident, Missouri officials arrested and incarcerated Johnson. When taken before the justice of the peace, who happened to be Adam Black, the prosecutors pressed Johnson to disclose the name of the man who had led the company to the Taylors. Johnson replied that he "had heard the man called Capt. Cornelius, it being Cornelius P. Lot."³⁵

In connection with all the events of the summer and autumn of 1838, the Daviess Circuit Court indicted Lott and others for larceny in 1841.³⁶ The record of March 18, 1841, stated, "And Cornelius P. Lott, was indicted at the same term of our said court, for

1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History: BYU Studies, 2000), 115-127.

³⁴ Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 29-30.

³⁵ Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 35.

³⁶ *Document containing the correspondence, orders, &c.*, 155. In the original, Lott's name mistakenly appeared as "Cornelius D. Lott."

horse stealing; and Jos. Smith, jr., was indicted at the same term of our said court for receiving stolen goods.”³⁷

The Danites

Because of Lott’s participation in these events, questions arise regarding his affiliation with Sampson Avard and the Danite band.³⁸ Reed Peck, once a Danite himself, testified of the following:

A short time after Cowdrey and the Whitmers left Far West, (some time in June,) George W. Robertson and Philo Dibble invited me to a Danite meeting. I went; and the only speaker was Dr. Avard. . . . The Danite oath was administered to about 30 or 40 persons at this meeting. Philo Dibble told me who the head officers of the Danite band were: that George W. Robertson was colonel, that he (Dibble) was lieutenant colonel, and Seymour Brunson major, and that I was chosen adjutant. After that, I had a talk with George W. Robertson and Philo Dibble together, in which I was informed who the officers were, as above; and further, that Jared Carter was captain general of the band, Cornelius P. Lott major general, and Sampson Avard brigadier general. This is as I recollect it.³⁹

Historians today vary in their views of the Danites. Some wrote, “It is probable, however, that, except for those who followed Avard, the group was not as secret or insidious as some critics have argued. Rather, it was formed to protect the Saints and to

³⁷ *Document containing the correspondence, orders, &c.*, 157.

³⁸ Todd Compton asserts that Lott “was actively involved in Danite activities during the troubles” (Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 597). Also see D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 524 and Baugh, *A Call to Arms*, 41

³⁹ *Document Showing the Testimony Given Before the Judge of the Fifth Judicial District of the State of Missouri, on the Trial of Joseph Smith, Jr., and others, for High Treason and Other Crimes Against that State.* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1841), 17. Peck identified one of the participants as George W. Robertson. Clearly, this is a mistake, since other testimonials of the same document identified the man as George W. Robinson.

perform community service for them.”⁴⁰ In addition, many members of the Church at the time, including Joseph Smith, believed that they should fight in defense of their families and religious freedom.⁴¹ A contemporary of Lott named Luman Shurtliff explained how he viewed the Danites, saying, “About this time I was invited to unite with a society called the Danite society. It was got up for our personal defense, also for the protection of our families, property and religion. Signs and pass words were given by which members could know the other wherever they met, night or day.”⁴²

Many scholars maintain a distinction between the Danites and the Mormon militia troops.⁴³ *The History of the Church* states, “And here let it be distinctly understood, that these companies of tens and fifties got up by Avard, were altogether separate and distinct from those companies of tens and fifties organized by the brethren for self defense, in case of an attack from the mob.”⁴⁴

The History of the Church further attests that Avard had formed “a secret combination by which he might rise a mighty conqueror, at the *expense and the overthrow of the Church*.”⁴⁵ Avard held secret meetings daily and bound his followers by

⁴⁰ Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 130-131.

⁴¹ See Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 132. Also see *History of the Church*, 3:67-68.

⁴² Shurtliff, *Biographical Sketch of the Life of Luman Andros Shurtliff*, 33.

⁴³ See Baugh, *A Call to Arms*, 41; Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War In Missouri* [Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1987], 125-125; and Leland H. Gentry, “A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri from 1836-1839” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1964], 326-330).

⁴⁴ *History of the Church*, 3:181-182.

⁴⁵ *History of the Church*, 3:179.

oaths. He deceived many into believing that leaders of the Church had given him authority as a spokesman to build the kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth through violent acts of robbery and plunder. However, in one such secret meeting, where Avard lectured on how to organize their attacks, the Danite officers revolted against him saying, “such proceedings would be in open violation of the laws of our country, would be robbing our fellow citizens of their rights, and are not according to the language and doctrine of Christ, or of the Church of Latter-day Saints.”⁴⁶ One historian argued that Joseph Smith knew and at least tacitly approved of the Danite activities during the summer of 1838, but that he was unaware of Avard’s secret teachings until after the fact.⁴⁷

The Church excommunicated Sampson Avard on March 17, 1839, under the direction of Brigham Young in Quincy, Illinois, after the Latter-day Saints left Missouri.⁴⁸ Lott must have been among those who rejected Avard’s doctrine since he was not excommunicated, but rather went on to follow the Church leaders to Illinois and serve as a loyal member of the Church.

Evacuation from Missouri

Once the Missourians had imprisoned the Prophet and Far West fell to the Missourians, Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve realized that the Church would have to evacuate the state. Hence, on January 26, 1839, Young formed the Committee on Removal in order to expedite their departure.⁴⁹ Lott had already left four

⁴⁶ *History of the Church*, 3:181.

⁴⁷ See Baugh, *A Call to Arms*, 42-43.

⁴⁸ See *History of the Church*, 3:284.

⁴⁹ See *History of the Church*, 3:249-250.

days earlier for Quincy, Illinois, in company of Samuel Bent, Alvey Keller, Henry Jacobs, and Jonathan Dunham.⁵⁰

Exactly when Lott fulfilled the mission he had previously volunteered to serve in October 1838, is not clear, yet his daughter recorded that he did indeed serve a mission.⁵¹ Luman A. Shurtliff, one of the other men that volunteered to serve in Kentucky, later wrote, “I felt anxious to fulfill my covenant with the Lord, that was to preach the Gospel as long as I lived. I had volunteered in Far West but the war prevented one, so I knew it was my duty to go when I could.”⁵² Shurtliff went on to serve a mission first to Ohio and eventually to Kentucky.⁵³ Since Lott’s circumstances paralleled those of Shurtliff, Lott probably went to preach the gospel some time during 1840 to 1842.

⁵⁰ See George Henry Abbott Harris, *Autobiography, 1854-1892*, AMs, 352-354, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

In addition to the difficulty of the times, Lott’s wife Permelia delivered another son, Joseph Darrow Lott, on February 18, 1839. There is a discrepancy concerning the whereabouts of the Lott family in 1839. Most family group sheets show that Joseph Darrow Lott was born in Kirtland, Ohio. In fact, some have asserted that the Lotts returned to Kirtland after leaving Missouri, and then made their way to Nauvoo by 1842 (See Cook and Backman, eds., *Kirtland Elders’ Quorum Record 1836-1841*, biographical index). One family history claimed, “The Lott family was still in Kirtland in 1839 when their eighth child, Joseph Darrow Lott was born” (Losee, Hardman, and Losee, *The Losee Family History*, 17). Lott lived in Missouri at least from July 1838 to January 1839, but the possibility exists that he had left his family in Ohio during that time and they later joined him in Illinois. In either case, according to the 1840 census, the family lived together in Pike County, Illinois (see United States 1840 Census: Pike County, Illinois, p. 46, available from Ancestry.com, Internet. Also see Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 6 and Lott, *Descendants of Cornelius Peter Lott*, 7).

⁵¹ See Willes, “Personal History of Permelia Darrow Lott,” 2. Also see Lott, *Descendants of Cornelius Peter Lott*, 19.

⁵² Shurtliff, *Biographical Sketch of the Life of Luman Andros Shurtliff*, 38.

⁵³ See Shurtliff, *Biographical Sketch of the Life of Luman Andros Shurtliff*, 62.

The Lott Family in Nauvoo

Upon moving to Nauvoo in 1842, Lott built a temporary shelter made of boards for his family. Alzina wrote that shortly after their arrival, “a terrible snow storm arose one night and we awoke to find ourselves in a desperate plight. Our house was full of snow. Everything was soaking wet, our bedding, our clothing, everything! Someone came and rescued us, by sheltering us first in a wagon and then taking us to brother Joseph’s house in the city.” She continued, “We stayed in his home for about two weeks eating at his table and enjoying his hospitality. Words cannot express our gratitude to him for his kindness to us at such a crucial time and the kindness shown also, by his wife, Emma and their children.”⁵⁴

The short time the Lott family resided in the Smith home proved pivotal. The Prophet developed such confidence in Lott that shortly thereafter he appointed him to be superintendent of the Smith farm about three miles outside of Nauvoo.⁵⁵

Summary

Joseph Smith favored Lott and employed him in 1842 to be superintendent of his Nauvoo farm. Several factors led up to that appointment. First, Lott’s upbringing as a farmer lent to his becoming an expert in the matter. Second, he joined the Church only four years after its organization and thus became acquainted with Joseph Smith early on. Third, he loyally followed the Prophet to Missouri in 1838 and became a leader in the

⁵⁴ Willes, “Personal History of Alzina Lucinda Lott Willes,” 1. That same year, the Lotts added yet another son to the family. Peter Lyman Lott was born November 2, 1842, making a total of nine children for Lott and his wife.

⁵⁵ See Willes, “Personal History of Alzina Lucinda Lott Willes,” 1.

conflict against the Missouri mobs. Fourth, some time between 1840 and 1842, Lott served a mission for the Church. Finally, in 1842, the Lott family joined the main body of Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo and stayed in the Smith home for about two weeks. During that pivotal time, Joseph Smith felt to entrust Lott and hire him as superintendent of his farm outside the city.

CHAPTER THREE

EARLY LATTER-DAY SAINTS AND LIVESTOCK IN MISSOURI AND ILLINOIS

During the 1830s and 1840s, when farming began to flourish in the Midwest, Latter-day Saints settled in Missouri and in Illinois. Most of them embarked in agricultural efforts, including livestock raising. In 1838, when mobs once again persecuted them in Missouri, which ultimately led to their expulsion from the state, they suffered great losses in the number of livestock. They settled Nauvoo in 1839 with very few cattle, sheep, or hogs; yet because of their ideals and diligence, they again began to prosper. They were not isolated and therefore not so different in their daily chores from the rest of the populace in the Midwest at the time. However because of their religious goals, they developed some unique attributes in their agricultural efforts. How did the 1838 Missouri conflict affect the Latter-day Saints' endeavors in raising livestock and how did they approach farming and livestock raising in Nauvoo?

The Loss of Livestock in Missouri

The Latter-day Saints' expulsion from Missouri in 1838 not only devastated their hopes to establish the city of Zion, but also decimated their property, including livestock. *The History of the Church* explains, “. . . in 1838 we were again attacked by mobs, an exterminating order was issued by Governor Boggs, and under the sanction of law, an organized banditti ranged through the country, robbed us of our cattle, sheep, hogs, &c.,

many of our people were murdered in cold blood, the chastity of our women was violated, and we were forced to sign away our property at the point of the sword; . . . ”¹

How much livestock did the Latter-day Saints lose? In 1843, one observer noted, “We would here remind our readers that thousands of horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, &c., were stolen by the Missourians, for which our brethren, as yet have obtained no redress.”² In 1874, George A. Smith estimated that they had abandoned more than \$300,000 worth of property.³ More recently, Clark V. Johnson, after researching 678 petitions for the Latter-day Saints’ redress from the Missourians, found that the members of the Church had claimed a total of \$2,275,789 for the loss of liberty and property, \$197,127 of that being specifically for their livestock, their homes, and other personal property.⁴ At the time, the Church did not own common stock, therefore all the livestock lost belonged to private owners.⁵

The mobs not only stole livestock for their own gain, but also shot many of them for sport.⁶ Brigham Young reported that the assailants left the animals to rot in the

¹ *History of The Church*, 4:539.

² “Kidnapping,” *Times and Seasons*, vol. 4 (November 1842–November 1843), Vol. 4, No. 24, November 1, 1843, 376.

³ See *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–1886), 17:60.

⁴ See Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992), xxviii. Other claims included the loss of liberty, time, land, and money. For perspective of their loss, a hired farmhand during that time period earned between \$1.00 and \$1.50 per day (See Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002], 133).

⁵ See Johnson, ed., *The Mormon Redress Petitions*, 20.

⁶ See Johnson, ed., *The Mormon Redress Petitions*, 627.

streets.⁷ In 1840, one of the victims, James M. Henderson, recalled, “. . . they shot our hogs and Cattle to gratify there helish rage a perpose to destroy them. . .”⁸

The loss of livestock not only left the Latter-day Saints impoverished but also handicapped them in their exodus from the state, leaving them with limited teams to pull wagons.⁹ Those with wagons and oxen made the trip between Caldwell County and the Mississippi River several times in order to carry friends and relatives from danger.¹⁰

As refugees in the state of Illinois, the Latter-day Saints possessed very little livestock. Once Joseph Smith escaped imprisonment in the spring of 1839, he rejoined Church members and bought swampland at Commerce, Illinois, on a bend on the Mississippi River. Yet in time, through their industry, they established a thriving community, acquired more livestock, cultivated farmland for crops, and soon prospered again. They named the city Nauvoo.

Nauvoo, Illinois: In Context of Agricultural America

Residents of Nauvoo did not greatly differ from surrounding settlements in performing daily chores on the farm. However, because of their religious goals and the structure of their Church-oriented community, the city had a unique approach to agricultural efforts in comparison to the rest of America in the 1840s. First, Joseph Smith

⁷ See Brigham Young, *Journal of Brigham*, comp. Leland R. Nelson (Provo, Utah: Council Press, 1980), 16.

⁸ As cited in Johnson, ed., *The Mormon Redress Petitions*, 457.

⁹ See Johnson, ed., *The Mormon Redress Petitions*, 53.

¹⁰ See *Church History in the Fulness of Times: The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000), 212.

designed Nauvoo in such a way to encourage people to live within the city but to farm the prairies on the outskirts. In this way, the citizens could farm but also benefit from all that the city offered socially, culturally, and educationally.¹¹ Second, though they aimed to rise above poverty, they did not have intentions to become wealthy. They subscribed to Thomas Jefferson's agrarian ideology, which fit closely with their religious beliefs of the establishment of Zion.¹² One explained, "The agrarian dream of American Saints likewise seemed attainable at Nauvoo. For all Saints so attuned, agrarianism and millennialism were paralleled dreams, yet, when pressed, they would give precedence to the religious dream of a special people and place. Nauvoo was first of all a religious sanctuary from a world doomed to destruction and only secondarily an agrarian Eden, although the Saints typically failed to distinguish between the two in their predilection for subsuming the secular into the sacred."¹³ When viewed in this way, no wonder most residents of Nauvoo chose farming as their occupation.¹⁴

Since Joseph Smith had planned for the Church members to live in the city and farm on the outskirts, this made land in the surrounding area in high demand. Tracts of land were typically small, rarely exceeding 160 acres, often between 40 and 80, and

¹¹ See Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 55.

¹² See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 131. Of Zion, the scriptures state, "And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them" (Moses 7:18, Pearl of Great Price [Salt Lake City: The Church of Latter-day Saints, 1981]).

¹³ Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 132.

¹⁴ See Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 55. Also see Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 133.

occasionally 10 to 20.¹⁵ Those unable to purchase their own land often worked as hired hands.¹⁶ Also, for those of lesser means, Church leaders established a community farm east of the city where people could raise their own crops without having to own land. Under the direction of the Church leaders, a board of trustees known as the “Big Field Association” established the farm.¹⁷ The “Big Field” covered 3,840 acres, divided into parcels of ten to sixty acres.¹⁸

Due to the large number of converts arriving in Nauvoo, producing sufficient food for all the inhabitants was of prime importance. Consequently, farming took on greater significance than it had previously. In fact, any endeavors to industrialize Nauvoo became secondary to agricultural efforts. Further, since the Nauvoo citizens grew up during a time when Jefferson’s agrarian ideology was prevalent, they were inclined to esteem farmers as God’s chosen people.¹⁹ In fact, “the very task of housing and feeding a family in Nauvoo acquired a religious meaning. The Saints saw themselves as God’s people of the covenant, eligible for the biblical promise of life’s necessities if they lived righteously.”²⁰

¹⁵ See Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 140-141.

¹⁶ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 133.

¹⁷ See David E. Miller and Della S. Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph* (Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1974), 79.

¹⁸ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 135.

¹⁹ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 131.

²⁰ Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 125.

Nauvoo's primary agricultural production included livestock, grain, vegetables, and fruit.²¹ The Illinois prairies were productive due to the climate and the quality of the soil. During the 1850s, one man collected four samples of soil from Illinois to be analyzed by a chemist in the Royal Agricultural Society of England. The chemist responded, "*I have never before analysed soils which contained so much nitrogen, nor do I find any record of soils richer in nitrogen than these.*"²²

Such rich soil made the crops flourish, the staples being corn, wheat, oats, rye, and potatoes.²³ Wheat was the most valuable crop but was also the most difficult to grow because of the climate during the colder months.²⁴ Hancock County produced an average of thirty bushels of wheat per acre in 1842.²⁵ Prior to 1837, a plow and steamboat were on the seal of the Hancock County commissioner's court until replaced by a sheaf of wheat, symbolizing the high productivity of crop farming in the county.²⁶ Illinois farms also grew large crops of potatoes. One report during the 1850s indicated that northern Illinois yielded from three to seven tons per acre annually.²⁷ Farmers found oat crops less productive and less likely to turn out a good harvest but grew them nonetheless in large quantities in the northern part of the state. A typical crop of oats at the time would

²¹ See Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 57.

²² Caird, *Prairie Farming in America*, 82.

²³ See Miller and Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph*, 79.

²⁴ See Caird, *Prairie Farming in America*, 83.

²⁵ See Rugh, *Our Common Country*, 18.

²⁶ See Rugh, *Our Common Country*, 10.

²⁷ See Caird, *Prairie Farming in America*, 84.

produce about forty bushels per acre.²⁸ Corn, however, was the most important crop in Nauvoo.²⁹ This was true for many settlements in the mid-western frontier at time. In the 1850s, an agricultural expert noted that “Indian corn is the crop of the prairie farmer, and there is always a market for it either by selling or consuming it in the fattening of hogs.”³⁰ In addition, he stated that a cornfield in Illinois under good management could produce up to one hundred bushels per acre and even the average crop yielded fifty bushels per acre.³¹ Hence, corn meal became the main food in Nauvoo, while other foods such as wheat, beans, potatoes, green vegetables, and cheese only added variety to their diet. Indeed, “it was corn that fed Nauvoo, summer and winter.”³²

During the first half of the nineteenth century, both Missouri and Illinois were ideal locations for raising livestock because of their rich prairies for grazing.³³ The Latter-day Saints consequently took part, to some degree, in raising livestock. However, in most cases, the only livestock Nauvoo farmers possessed was for the purpose of sustaining their own families.³⁴ This stands to reason since they had not channeled their efforts into becoming wealthy, but rather to live the agrarian ideal and establish Zion.³⁵ A

²⁸ See Caird, *Prairie Farming in America*, 84.

²⁹ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 137.

³⁰ Caird, *Prairie Farming in America*, 88.

³¹ See Caird, *Prairie Farming in America*, 83.

³² See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 137.

³³ See Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 44-45.

³⁴ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 136.

³⁵ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 131.

typical Latter-day Saint family in Nauvoo might have owned a team of oxen, a milk cow, some hogs, sheep, and chickens.³⁶

Nevertheless, the Latter-day Saints were not ignorant of the opportunity to raise animals for gain. In August of 1841, an article in the *Millennial Star* indicated that in the Mississippi River valley “every farmer, besides his own land, has the range of the meadows around him, both for his cattle, hogs, turkeys and poultry, so that they are reared in immense numbers, at small expense. They are purchased readily, both, as mentioned formerly, for the New Orleans market, and by drovers, who take them to the east coast, Philadelphia, &c. This district affords, indeed, the chief supply of live-stock for the Union.”³⁷ In the 1850s, one agriculturist observed that greater profit could be earned by raising livestock than by growing corn in Illinois.³⁸

Livestock ran free in the city of Nauvoo; hence those with farms and gardens built fences to protect their crops.³⁹ To promote better cattle breeding, the state of Illinois passed a law prohibiting smaller bulls from roaming; however, the Latter-day Saints largely ignored this regulation.⁴⁰ In fact, the situation of bulls roaming the countryside

³⁶ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 136.

³⁷ “Information for Emigrants,” *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, 132 vols., (Manchester and Liverpool, England: Latter-day Saint Book Depot, 1840-1970), 2:58.

³⁸ See Caird, *Prairie Farming in America*, 60.

³⁹ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 135.

⁴⁰ See Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 59-60.

“pleased small farmers who could not afford good bulls and therefore were happy to have roaming bulls serve their cows free . . .”⁴¹

The citizens also organized a system for feeding their livestock. In order provide their cattle better feed, herders gathered many of the dairy cows in the morning and took them outside of the city to graze, returning them in the evening.⁴²

As for the price of cattle and beef, an excellent cow could be bought for about twenty-five dollars and would last for ten years.⁴³ One Nauvoo man, William Mendenhall, bought 113 pounds of beef for \$2.26.⁴⁴ In 1845, Ann H. Pitchforth wrote a letter to her parents in Wales, stating, “Meat is cheap, but vegetables high, but we hope by next year to grow our own.”⁴⁵ Still, meat prices were higher in the West than in the East.⁴⁶

Like the rest of the Midwest at the time, the sheep industry boomed in Nauvoo. Due to a lack of textile manufacturing, Church leaders encouraged the converts coming from nearby states to bring sheep to Nauvoo for wool production.⁴⁷ They responded to the call and brought large numbers of sheep to Hancock County.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley*, 88.

⁴² See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 140.

⁴³ See Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 60.

⁴⁴ See E. Cecil McGavin, *Nauvoo the Beautiful* (Salt Lake City: Stevens & Wallis, Inc., 1946), 42.

⁴⁵ Ann Hughlings Pitchforth, Ann Hughlings Pitchforth Collection, 1793-1930, AMs, (L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah), folder 7, microfilm.

⁴⁶ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 136.

⁴⁷ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 153.

Summary

Due to the brutality of the Missouri mobs in 1838, the Latter-day Saints lost hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of livestock, which left them destitute when they arrived as refugees in Illinois. Hence, they gathered nearly all of the cattle and other livestock for the exodus while they lived in Illinois.

The Latter-day Saints differed from most of the rest of the United States in their millennial ideology, viewing their agricultural efforts religious in nature and a means to escape the world. They did not have intentions to become wealthy, though they certainly desired to rise above poverty. In other words, there was to be no poor among them in their quest to establish Zion. This became difficult when many who came to Nauvoo, especially European converts, arrived with very little means. This, therefore, increased the significance of farming labors, since they were not only to sustain families, but also to aid the newcomers. In this setting, Cornelius Lott offered one of his greatest contributions to the Church as an expert in agriculture, which caused him to be recognized and trusted by the Prophet Joseph Smith to a great extent. Such confidence allowed Lott to enjoy unique spiritual opportunities and association with the leaders of the Church.

⁴⁸ See Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 61. Also see Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 147.

CHAPTER FOUR

CORNELIUS LOTT: A CONFIDANT OF THE PROPHET

Once hired as superintendent of Joseph Smith's farm in Nauvoo in 1842, Cornelius Lott developed a relationship with the Prophet that afforded him opportunities to associate closely with the leaders of the Church. After Joseph Smith's martyrdom, Lott continued that involvement under Brigham Young's leadership. Eventually, for a time when the Mormon pioneers were at the Missouri River, President Young entrusted Lott with the charge over the Church's livestock. Why did both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young favor Lott with such privileged and trusted responsibilities?

Lott's Association with the Prophet

As superintendent of Joseph Smith's farm, family lived on the Prophet's farm about three miles outside the city, just north of the old Nauvoo cemetery. Their home had eight rooms: four on the main level and four upstairs.¹ They also had a "barn suitably equipped with all the essentials."² Alzina recalled, "The homestead was an admiration of the Prophet and a special attraction to the many travelers passing through . . ."³

¹ See Willes, "Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott," 6. Evidence suggests that Joseph Smith owned both the land and the farmhouse (see William Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle: the Journals of William Clayton*, ed. George D. Smith [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995], 141).

² Willes, "Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott," 6.

³ Willes, "Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott," 6.

The Lotts enjoyed a close relationship with the Prophet Joseph Smith. Alzina reminisced, “We were always happy to see him and nearly always ran to meet him when we saw him coming.” She said that, between her family and the Smiths, “there was a warm neighborly feeling.”⁴ Of that relationship, John R. Murdock, who lived with the Lotts as a hired hand, recalled that Joseph Smith “often brought his family to the farm, for his family and Father Lott were on terms of great intimacy.”⁵

Joseph III recollected these visits as well. He noted, “This Cornelius P. Lott and family occupied the farm east of town until the break-up occurred. I became well acquainted with them all – his older son John, the daughters Melissa, Mary, Martha, and Alzina, and the little son Peter. It was always pleasant to visit their place where everything was interesting to me and everybody busy and kind.”⁶

The History of the Church also mentions the Prophet making trips out to the farm frequently. There he visited with the family, dined with them, and worked.⁷ Lott’s daughter elaborated on such events saying, “The farm was a haven of rest and refuge for the Prophet so he spent as much time there as he possibly could. He enjoyed doing hard,

⁴ See Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 6.

⁵ As cited in Joseph Marion Tanner, *A Biographical Sketch of John Riggs Murdock* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 54-55.

⁶ Smith, *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, 22.

⁷ See *History of the Church* 5:26, 58, 66, 82, 182, 307, 358, 369, 500, 511, 515, 523, 525, 527; 6:35, 46, 356, 427. Also see *Journal History*, June 6, 1842, June 16, 1842, January 27, 1843 and Joseph Smith, *The Papers of Joseph Smith, Volume 2: Journal, 1832-1842*, ed. Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 389.

physical labor, working side by side with my father, Cornelius, hoeing potatoes or any kind of work that needed to be done.” She continued:

It was in the fields that Cornelius’ testimony was strengthened that Joseph was truly a man of God. The two of them had many long talks together while they worked. Cornelius said many times that when a person was with him, he would have to know that brother Joseph was a true Prophet of God because you could feel his wonderful influence when you were with him, as he was so humble, yet so dynamic. Cornelius, my father, gained a Testimony, from this association that never left him.⁸

In addition to the Prophet’s visits to the farm, a couple of the Lott girls found employment working for Emma Smith. Mary Elizabeth lived with the Smiths and took care of their children.⁹ Lott’s oldest daughter, Melissa, also “chaperoned the smaller and younger children of the Smiths and at times made her home with the Prophet’s wife, Emma.”¹⁰

On one occasion, Joseph Smith, being pursued by men, came to the farm. There he found Permelia Lott alone and asked for her to hide him.¹¹ She parted the straw in the mattress and had the Prophet climb in, after which she covered him with straw and proceeded to make the bed as normal. When the mob arrived and observed that she had thus made only one bed, they inquired whether that was the first bed she had made that morning. She replied, “Yes, do you want me to take it apart so you can see it?”

⁸ Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 7.

⁹ See Lott, *Descendants of Cornelius Peter Lott*, 38. Also see Losee, Hardman, and Losee, *The Losee Family History*, 3.

¹⁰ Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 6.

¹¹ This event likely occurred sometime following the false accusation against Orrin Porter Rockwell and Joseph Smith in attempting to murder Lilburn Boggs in 1842. In the late summer and early autumn of that year, Joseph Smith went into hiding around the Nauvoo

Embarrassed, they declined and went on to search the other rooms. After finding no one in the house, they gave up and left, whereupon the Prophet came from his hiding place.¹²

Joseph Smith III recorded an incident in connection with the Nauvoo Legion that gives significant insight into his character.¹³ He related how shortly after the organization of the legion, his father, the Prophet, declared that the first man to provide a pair of epaulets would be named the captain of Joseph Smith's personal bodyguard. He recalled:

On the morning when the guard of sixty men reported for drill, this old man Lott came in and, in a very quiet, unostentatious manner called Father to one side and showed him a pair of epaulets, which had been his to wear in some company elsewhere He seemed rather shamefaced about them, declaring he did not wish to be captain and was not qualified to act in that capacity. Father insisted that he should take the office and retain it for a time at least. This he did, but did not wear the epaulets very long and kindly gave the gaudy trifles to me.¹⁴

Besides supervising the Smith farm and being involved with the Nauvoo Legion, Lott "showed great interest and helped physically with all the important projects in building the City of Nauvoo. He labored faithfully in helping to erect their most beloved structure, the Nauvoo Temple."¹⁵ In fact, records indicate that Cornelius Lott donated some fifty-seven and one-quarter days in building the holy edifice.¹⁶

area (see Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 194; *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 267; and *History of the Church*, 5:157).

¹² See Willes, "Personal History of Permelia Darrow Lott," 1-2. Also see Lott, *Descendants of Cornelius Peter Lott*, 18.

¹³ For a more comprehensive work on the Nauvoo Legion see John Sweeney Jr., "A History of the Nauvoo Legion in Illinois" (Masters thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974). Though the Legion practiced their drills in various locations, at least on one occasion they practiced on Joseph Smith's farm where Cornelius Lott worked as superintendent (see William Wallace Cluff, "A Boy's Faith," *Improvement Era*, April 1899, 455. Also see Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 118).

¹⁴ Smith, *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, 22.

¹⁵ Willes, "Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott," 6.

Lott also had a rather jovial side to his personality as demonstrated in an amusing wrestling match with the Prophet. Joseph Smith III recounted how his father was once in his Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, after having beat a number of men in wrestling matches, when Lott entered carrying a blacksnake whip. He recalled, “Hardly had he entered when Father said in a jolly tone, ‘Here! I have thrown down pretty nearly everybody about the place except Brother Lott, and I believe I can throw him down too.’ The old man stopped, swung his whip under his left arm and said, in his high, piping voice, ‘Well, my boy, if you’ll take it catch-as-catch-can you can’t throw old man Lott!’” After agreeing upon the match, the men stepped outside where Joseph Smith and Cornelius Lott “ran together several times,” yet the Prophet could not beat him. Joseph III noted that after a while, “He gave up his efforts to throw the sturdy old fellow and much good-natured banter at his expense was indulged in as he gave up the struggle. In the midst of the jibes I heard the old man pipe out again, ‘I told you, my boy, that you couldn’t throw old man Lott!’”¹⁷

Close Confidant of the Prophet

As Lott’s relationship with the Prophet developed, he became one of his close confidants. During the Nauvoo period, the Lord revealed various sacred doctrines and ordinances to Joseph Smith, yet due to the sacredness of such matters, the Prophet had to be selective in whom he would confide these doctrines and ordinances.

¹⁶ See Newel Kimball Whitney, Newel Kimball Whitney papers, AMs, comp. Hyrum L. Andrus, Chris Fuller, and Elizabeth E. McKenzie (L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah), box 3, folder 2, microfilm.

¹⁷ Smith, *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, 22.

Lott and his Introduction to Plural Marriage

Plural marriage was one of the doctrines that Joseph Smith carefully guarded.¹⁸ Joseph Smith recorded an explanation of the doctrine on July 12, 1843, now found in Doctrine and Covenants section 132. A couple of weeks prior to that, on June 29, Eliza R. Snow, a plural wife to Joseph Smith, penned, “Thurs. 29th. Took a ride to br. Lot’s in company with Mrs. Whitney, Mrs Durfee & Mrs. Holmes. Before we returned, it was announced that a messenger had arrived bringing the joyful intelligence that the prophet would arrive in a few hours.”¹⁹ Of this journal entry, one historian asserted, “Most likely their destination was actually Joseph Smith’s farm, where Cornelius Lott was foreman. That this is Eliza’s wedding anniversary, and that her companions were all involved in plural marriage by this date, suggests the chief topic of discussion.”²⁰ Only three months after this meeting at the Lott home, on September 20, Cornelius and Permelia Lott gave

¹⁸ James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard noted, “Because of the controversial nature of this doctrine the Prophet initially taught it to only a few of his closest associates. Historical evidence suggests that he understood the principle as early as 1831 and may have begun taking plural wives as early as 1835. The first documented plural marriage came in 1841 when Louisa Beaman was sealed to the Prophet by Joseph Bates Noble. Then, after the Twelve returned from Great Britain, Joseph took them and other close associates aside individually and taught them the doctrine.” They further explained, “Though several prominent men were sealed to additional wives, the practice remained confidential. Nevertheless the widening circle of persons taken into the Prophet’s confidence and the increasing numbers participating in the practice led to rumors and speculations” (Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 185-186).

¹⁹ Eliza R. Snow, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow*, ed. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 78.

²⁰ Snow, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow*, 272. Another scholar made a similar assertion saying that the four women “rode to Cornelius Lott’s farm in the country, perhaps to counsel teenaged Melissa Lott on her upcoming marriage to Joseph” (Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 548).

their nineteen-year-old daughter, Melissa, to Joseph Smith as a plural wife, Hyrum Smith performing the ceremony.²¹

After the marriage ceremony, Melissa “spent most of the following winter with his family, going to school in the so-called brick store. The Prophet’s children, Joseph, Fredrick, and Alexander, went to the same school under the immediate watchful care of Melissa.”²² Since the Prophet did not practice plural marriage openly, he exhibited some confidence in Lott to approach him on such a matter. Also, on September 20, 1843, the same day of the marriage between Joseph Smith and Melissa Lott, Cornelius and Permelia Lott were married for time and eternity “By Presadent Hyrum Smith with seal of Presadent Joseph Smith.”²³

²¹ Nearly sixteen years later, on May 20, 1869, Melissa Lott Willes signed an affidavit before notary public James Jade with this statement: “Be it remembered that on this 20th Day of May AC 1869 personally appeared before me James Jade a Notary Public in and for County of Salt Lake, Territory of Utah, Melissa Lott Willes, who was by me sworn in due form of law and upon her oath, said that on the 20 day of September AD 1843 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hanncock, State of Illinois she was married and sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints by Hyrum Smith, Presiding Patriarch of said church according to the laws of the same, regulating marriage, in the presence of Cornelius Peter Lott and Permelia Lott” (As cited in Lott, *Descendants of Cornelius Peter Lott*, 27-28. Also see Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage: A Discussion* [Grantsville, Utah: Archive Publishers, 2000], 72). Also in 1869, Apostle George A. Smith confirmed that the Prophet did indeed get married to Melissa Lott (See *Journal History*, October 9, 1869, 7). Also see Johnson, *My Life’s Review*, 86. In addition, *The History of the Church* notes that Joseph and Hyrum Smith visited the farm September 20, 1843 (see *History of the Church*, 6:35).

²² Lott, *Descendants of Cornelius Peter Lott*, 26-27. Joseph Smith III recounted an interview he had with Melissa years later, wherein he claimed that Melissa confessed to never having lived with his father as a wife (see Smith, *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, 245).

²³ Lott family Bible (Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City), microfilm.

Lott's Participation in Sacred Ordinances

During this time, Lott became a recipient of other ordinances as well. On December 9, 1843, Wilford Woodruff recorded that Cornelius Lott, William W. Phelps, and Levi Richards all “Received their Anointing” in Joseph Smith’s Red Brick Store.²⁴ With reference to the occasion, Brigham Young simply noted that those three brethren “received ordinances.”²⁵ Less than two weeks later, on December 23, Lott’s wife Permelia, Phebe Woodruff, Bathsheba Smith, Catherine Spencer, and Sally Phelps, “received their Anointing” as well.²⁶

²⁴ See Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9 vols., ed. Scott G. Kenney (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1981-1984), 2:331. Also see Endowments of the living, 1845-1846, AMs (Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; Salt Lake City: Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1958, 1974), microfilm and Holzapfel and Cottle, *Old Mormon Nauvoo and Southeastern Iowa*, 176.

This anointing differed from that which Lott had received in the Kirtland Temple in March 1837. The anointing Lott received in the Red Brick Store is the equivalent to the endowment that Latter-day Saints may receive today in their sacred temples. Joseph Smith administered the first of these endowments to a very select few in May 1842. Such an endowment consists of special washings, anointings, sacred covenant making, and instructions regarding God’s plan of salvation for mankind (see Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 184). For further detail of the ceremony, see Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 258-260. From the time Joseph Smith first administered the endowment in 1842 to the time of his death in 1844, only a few small groups received the ordinance (see Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 184). In fact, not until after Brigham Young dedicated the council chamber in the attic of the Nauvoo Temple toward the end of 1845 did the endowment ceremony become available to the general adult Church membership (see Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 261).

²⁵ Brigham Young, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young 1801-1844*, ed. Elden J. Watson (Salt Lake City: by Elden J. Watson, 1968), 156.

²⁶ See Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:332.

Toward the end of his life, Joseph Smith spent a great deal of time teaching important doctrines to the Church. The Lotts benefited from the Prophet's sermons. In fact, on the afternoon of January 7, 1844, he rode out to the farm, "& Preached at Bro. Lotts. also D Spencer & Reynolds Cahoon preached."²⁷ Lott's daughter recalled that her parents "had many visits with Prophet when he taught them the Gospel and their souls were full of peace toward all men even though their journey with the Saints was filled with sorrow as well as joy."²⁸

On February 4, 1844, Lott and his wife received an additional ordinance. Of that event, Wilford Woodruff wrote, "I met with the quorum in the evening Br & Sister Lott was present we had a good time in prayer. Br Joseph gave us good instruction in meekness & humility. The revelator John remarks was quoted to in the evening Concerning the 144000 of the tribes of Israel. /Cornelius P. Lott & wife Received their 2d Anointing & sealing."²⁹ For two or three weeks prior to Lott and his wife receiving this ordinance, a number of the Quorum of the Twelve and their wives also received the same

²⁷ Joseph Smith, Jr., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, eds. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 317. Also see *History of the Church*, 6:171 and *Journal History*, January 7, 1844.

²⁸ See Willes, "Personal History of Permelia Darrow Lott," 2.

²⁹ Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:348. Regarding the practice known as "second anointing," little is written, presumably due to the sacredness of the ordinance. The ordinance has also been known as "the crowning ordinance of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood" (Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 260). Joseph Smith explained that this ordinance confirmed promises that faithful men and women could become kings and queens and priests and priestesses (see Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 261 and Andrew F. Ehat, "'It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth': Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," *BYU Studies* 20 [Spring 1980]: 255-256).

from the Prophet. Brigham Young recorded that those receiving the ordinance included his wife Mary Ann and himself, Heber C. and Vilate Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt, Willard and Jenetta Richards, and Wilford and Phebe Woodruff.³⁰ Only about twenty couples received this ordinance during the Prophet's lifetime, nine of whom were Apostles and their wives.³¹

Lott's Appointment to the Council of Fifty

Another privilege granted to Lott was his appointment to an organization known as the Council of Fifty.³² Information on Lott's involvement in this council is scant, yet being part of the council certainly afforded him another opportunity to associate with and be recognized by Church leaders. In fact, in 1845, because of Lott's participation in the

³⁰ See Young, *Journal of Brigham*, 67.

³¹ See Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 260.

³² Though records indicate that Joseph Smith had the idea of organizing the Council of Fifty as early as April 7, 1842, the temporal establishment of the council did not take place for another two years on March 10, 11, and 13, 1844. The council served under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. The main purpose of the Council of Fifty was to symbolize the political kingdom that would be established during Christ's reign on earth during the Millennium. It also served to protect the Church in civil and religious liberties (see Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 326). In spite of these purposes, one researcher asserted that the Council of Fifty seldom functioned and was, for the most part, a symbolic formality when it did function (see D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," *BYU Studies* 20 [Winter 1980]: 163-197). However, another historian contested that the council played an active role in seeking redress for the Latter-day Saints' losses in Missouri, defusing political tension in Hancock County, and assisting in the Mormon exodus (see Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 327).

William Clayton identified Lott as part of the council on April 18, 1844, when the council was declared full (see Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 129-131).

Council of Fifty, Brigham Young assigned Lott and others to each select and organize a company to lead in the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo.³³

Lott and Joseph Smith's Last Days

Lott joined with the group that accompanied the Prophet on horseback to Carthage on May 27, 1844. *The History of the Church* states, "Monday, 27. – About 8 a.m., I started on horseback with a few friends, went by the Temple, and pursued my course towards Carthage, thinking it best for me to meet my enemies before the Circuit Court, and have the indictments against me investigated. After I had passed my farm on the prairie, most of the following brethren joined my company, and the remainder soon after my arrival in Carthage . . ." ³⁴ On this trip to Carthage, Joseph Smith learned of a conspiracy against his life. The Prophet, being charged with perjury, confessed being anxious for the trial to take place. However, finding the trial had been postponed, the men returned home to Nauvoo that evening.³⁵

³³ See Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 184. Others with the same appointment included Samuel Bent, Alpheus Cutler, Reynolds Cahoon, Shadrach Roundy, Joseph Fielding, Peter Haws, Daniel Spencer, and Isaac Morley. Lott later filled that assignment and led a company of pioneers across Iowa (See *Journal History*, July 5, 1846. Also see Samuel Hollister Rogers, *Diaries and Reminiscences of Samuel Hollister Rogers, 1841-1886*, AMs [photocopy], box 1, file 4, p. 74, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah).

³⁴ *History of the Church*, 6:412. Those listed in the group included Aaron Johnson, John Bernhisel, Joseph W. Coolidge, John Hatfield, Orrin P. Rockwell, Lorenzo Rockwell, William Walker, Harrison Sagers, Hyrum Smith, John P. Greene, William Richards, Shadrach Roundy, Theodore Turley, Jedediah M. Grant, John Lytle, Joseph B. Noble, Edward Bonney, Lucien Woodworth, Cornelius P. Lott, and Jonathan Dunham.

³⁵ See *History of the Church*, 6:413-414.

One month later, Joseph Smith prepared to leave Nauvoo for the last time to make his way to Carthage, Illinois. Upon leaving Nauvoo on June 24, 1844, the Prophet passed his farm where Cornelius Lott lived and worked. Here the Prophet said his last farewell to Lott and his family.³⁶ Alzina Lott recalled, “He bade a fond goodbye to the sorrowing employees, whom he had so often visited and learned to love and gave encouragement to.”³⁷ He then paused and looked upon the farm for a long time. After having left the place, he turned and looked back several times. The Prophet wistfully replied, “If some of you had got such a farm and knew you would not see it any more, you would want to take a good look at it for the last time.”³⁸

Three days later, on June 27, a mob murdered the Prophet and his brother Hyrum in the Carthage Jail. Of Joseph’s death, Alzina Lott later mourned that her family had “not only lost a personal friend of long standing but my sister, Melissa had lost a husband of just nine months.”³⁹

After the martyrdom, Lott continued working the farm. The day before the Church membership met to listen to both Sidney Rigdon and Brigham Young address them on the issue of Church leadership, William Clayton noted, “Wednesday 7th. This

³⁶ See Tanner, *A Biographical Sketch of John Riggs Murdock*, 65. Also see Losee, Hardman, and Losee, *The Losee Family History*, 19.

³⁷ Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 7.

³⁸ *History of the Church*, 6:558.

³⁹ Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 8.

morning the Committee and myself went out to Lots to take the invoice of Joseph property.”⁴⁰

Lott’s Continued Association with the Apostles

With the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Lott turned his allegiance to Brigham Young and the Apostles. As had been the case during Joseph Smith’s tenure, Lott continued his close association with Church leaders and enjoyed the inherent privileges thereof, including participation in sacred meetings and ceremonies to which few others were privy. Such occasions afforded Lott opportunity to strengthen his ties with Brigham Young and his cohorts.

Lott and his family attended the meeting on August 8, 1844, when Young was transfigured before the members of the Church, thus being established as the new leader in the minds of many of the Latter-day Saints, including the Lotts.⁴¹ The Lotts remained faithful to President Young and the Quorum of the Twelve over the course of their lives.

⁴⁰ Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 141.

⁴¹ See Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 8. For further information on the subject of Brigham Young’s transfiguration, see Lynne Watkins Jorgensen and BYU Studies Staff, “The Mantle of the Prophet Joseph Passes to Brother Brigham: A Collective Spiritual Witness,” *BYU Studies* 36 (Winter 1996-1997): 125-204.

Of Young’s transfiguration, Alzina recounted, “Among others, Brigham Young addressed the great multitude of Saints assembled there. He spoke with great power. When he first arose to speak, we were greatly astonished. President Young stood transfigured before us and we beheld the Prophet, Joseph Smith and heard his voice as plainly as ever we did in attendance. I turned to Mama and said ‘Mama, I thought the Prophet was dead?’ Mama answered and said ‘He is, Alzina, and this is the way our Heavenly Father has told us who is to be our next leader and Prophet’” (Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 8). In another account, Alzina confessed, “I was very much disappointed the next time I saw him that he bore no resemblance to the Prophet at all. Of course, I was deeply impressed by this incident” (Willes, “Personal History of Alzina Lucinda Lott Willes,” 3. Also see Lott, *Descendants of Cornelius Peter Lott*, 62).

On November 30, 1845, as construction on the Nauvoo Temple neared completion, Lott joined with a select group where Brigham Young dedicated the attic of the building.⁴² A few days later, Heber C. Kimball listed Lott and his wife among those who were “members of the Holy order of the Holy Priesthood having Received it in the Life time of Joseph and Hiram, the Prophets . . .” Those of that order entered the temple on December 7, 1845, when Brigham Young gave the select group a tour of the rooms. Following that, a meeting began at two o’clock, with a prayer and a hymn, and Apostles John Taylor, Heber C. Kimball, and Orson Hyde instructed the group. The meeting ended as the congregation partook of the sacramental bread and wine.⁴³ President Kimball recorded, “. . . then Elder B. Young said, this quorum should meet here every Sabbath and partake of the sacrament.”⁴⁴

⁴² See *History of the Church*, 7:534. Also see Journal History, November 30, 1845. Those present included “Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, Parley P. Pratt, John Taylor, Orson Hyde, George A. Smith and Amasa Lyman of the Quorum of the Twelve; also Newel K. Whitney and George Miller, Presiding Bishops; John Smith, Patriarch and President of the Stake, Joseph Young, President of the Seventies, Alpheus Cutler & R. Cahoon, Temple committee, Cornelius P. Lott, Levi Richards, Joseph C. Kingsbury, Orson Spencer, Wm. W. Phelps, Isaac Morley, Lucien Woodworth” (Young, *Journal of Brigham*, 109).

In addition, early that year, on January 22, 1845, Lott received his ordination to the office of High Priest (See *High Priests of Nauvoo and Early Salt Lake City*, comp. Nauvoo Restoration from early Salt Lake Records, 78, Church Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City).

⁴³ See Heber C. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball’s Journal, November 21, 1845 to January 7, 1846*, 19, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

⁴⁴ As cited in Helen Mar Whitney, *A Woman’s View: Helen Mar Whitney’s Reminiscences of Early Church History*, ed. Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 290. Also see Young, *Journal of Brigham*, 110. This “quorum” consisted of Brigham and Mary Ann Young, Heber C. and Vilate Kimball, Orson and Marinda Hyde, Parley P. and Mary Ann Pratt, John and Leonora Taylor, George A. and Bathsheba Smith, Willard Richards, John and Clarissa Smith,

On December 10, 1845, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball commenced administering the ordinance of the endowment at 4:25 p.m.⁴⁵ Within the hour, at five o'clock, Isaac and Lucy Morley, Joseph Fielding, Joseph C. Kingsbury, and Cornelius P. Lott entered.⁴⁶ After the prayer, however, Lott left the temple and went home to his wife in order to participate in the ordinance with her the next day.⁴⁷ Though he had previously received the ordinance on December 9, 1843, he and his wife again received the endowment in the Nauvoo Temple on December 11, 1845.⁴⁸ Also, though Cornelius and Permelia Lott had been sealed together for time and eternity on September 20, 1843, by Hyrum Smith, they entered the Nauvoo Temple two and a half years later to be sealed

Alpheus and Lois Cutler, Reynolds and Thirza Cahoon, Newel K. and Elizabeth Whitney, Cornelius and Permelia Lott, Isaac and Lucy Morley, Orson and Catherine Spencer, William and Agnes Clayton, George and Mary Catherine Miller, Joseph Young, (Sister) Lambson, Levi Richards, Mary Fielding Smith, Joseph Fielding, William W. and Sally Phelps, Joseph Kingsbury, L. and Phebe Moodworth, and John Bernhisel (See Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball's Journal, November 21, 1845 to January 7, 1846*, 17-18). For further information on this "quorum," also called the "Anointed Quorum," see D. Michael Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 79-105 and Ehat, "It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth," 255-256.

⁴⁵ See Journal History, December 10, 1845.

⁴⁶ See Young, *Journal of Brigham*, 112.

⁴⁷ See Willes, "Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott," 7.

⁴⁸ See Journal History, December 11, 1845. Others that received the endowment with the Lotts on this occasion were Isaac and Lucy Morley, Orson and Catherine Spencer, Joseph Young, Alpheus and Lois Cutler, Reynolds and Thirza Cahoon, William and Ruth Clayton, Mercy R. Thompson, and Lucy Mack Smith (See *History of the Church*, 7:543-544).

again. President Brigham Young performed the ceremony at 1:50 p.m. on January 22, 1846, with John D. Lee and Phineas H. Young as witnesses.⁴⁹

One hour before the sealing between Lott and his wife, Lott stood in as a proxy for the Prophet Joseph Smith in being married to the fifty-four year old Elizabeth Davis Durfee for eternity. Immediately after, Lott entered plural marriage and was married to Elizabeth for time, President Young performing the ceremony.⁵⁰

These events demonstrate that Brigham Young knew Lott and trusted him enough to include him in some of the Church's most sacred rituals. That trust became a foundation for future assignments Lott received from Young.

Summary

While in Nauvoo, Lott earned the confidence of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successor Brigham Young. One significant event allowed Lott the opportunity to become closely associated with the Prophet was his appointment as the superintendent on the

⁴⁹ See Nauvoo Sealings and Adoptions 1846-1857, Book A, 381-382, Special Collections, Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

⁵⁰ See Nauvoo Sealings and Adoptions 1846-1857, Book A, 505-506, Special Collections, Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, microfilm. The ceremony took place January 22, but was not recorded for another two weeks on February 7, 1846. Elizabeth Davis Durfee then crossed the Iowa trail with Lott, but after arriving at Winter Quarters, she left both him and the Church and returned to Quincy, Illinois (see Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 264-265). Also on January 22, 1846, having his wife's consent, Lott entered into plural marriage with Charity Dickinson and Rebecca Fausett (see Nauvoo Sealings and Adoptions 1846-1857, Book A, 505-506 and Willes, "Personal History of Permelia Darrow Lott," 2). Two weeks later, on February 7, Lott took Jane Rodger as his fourth plural wife (see Nauvoo Sealings and Adoptions 1846-1857, Book A, 385-386). Finally, on March 30, 1847, at Winter Quarters, Lott took two additional wives, Eleanor Wayman and Phoebe Knight (see Nauvoo Sealings and Adoptions 1846-1857, Book A, 741-742).

Joseph Smith farm. Out of that association grew a friendship that afforded Lott unique privileges. For example, he served as captain of Joseph Smith's bodyguard. Second, he supported the revelation given to the Prophet regarding plural marriage, insomuch that he gave his own daughter to Joseph Smith to be a plural wife. Also, Lott later entered into plural marriage long before the practice became public knowledge. Third, he and his wife were among the few to receive the endowment and other sacred ordinances in the Red Brick Store before the death of the Prophet. Fourth, he served as a member of the Council of Fifty. Finally, he joined the first Latter-day Saints to take part in various sacred ceremonies performed in the Nauvoo Temple. These experiences explain why Brigham Young would later trust Lott to take charge of the Church's cattle at the Missouri River in the summer of 1846.

CHAPTER FIVE

LATTER-DAY SAINTS AND CATTLE: FROM NAUVOO TO THE MISSOURI RIVER

In November of 1846, within the first year of the Mormon exodus, John Taylor informed the British Latter-day Saints that “about fifteen thousand Saints, three thousand wagons, and thirty thousand head of cattle” had evacuated Nauvoo.¹ Most of the cattle they attained were oxen for teams to pull their wagons. Why did the Latter-day Saints give preference to oxen as draft animals, how and where did they acquire such large numbers of cattle, what challenges did they encounter in moving the cattle across Iowa, and what importance did the livestock hold for them?

Oxen: First Choice in Draft Animals

During the 1840s, when thousands of emigrants packed their wagons to find a home in the west, oxen became the most popular draft animals.² They constituted approximately sixty percent of the teams, while horses and mules equally divided the remaining forty percent.³

¹ John Taylor, “Address to the Saints in Great Britain,” *Millennial Star*, 8:114. One scholar contested, “Their herds were estimated at between 10,000 and 30,000 head of cattle alone. The lower figure was likely closer to the truth” (Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846-1852: “And Should We Die . . .”* [Oklahoma City: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987], 252).

² See Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), 37. Also see Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 189.

³ See Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, 37.

Oxen were large, neutered bulls generally of the Shorthorn or Devon breeds. Emigrants, Latter-day Saints, and otherwise chose oxen over horses and mules because they were stronger, a notable trait for pulling heavy wagonloads. Having been castrated, they were more docile and easier to handle, especially through the difficult terrain they often encountered. Oxen could better endure the fatigue of long-distance traveling. They were easier to feed because they would eat whatever vegetation was available and they ate less than horses. Oxen were safer, more reliable, and less likely to stray from camp. They could also be slaughtered and eaten when their draft days were over. Some were actually fattened for consumption and called *beef*, a term beginning to be used for such animals around the time the Latter-day Saints settled Nauvoo. Oxen were less likely to be stolen by Indians or other travelers. They were also less likely to get sick, and finally, they were more plentiful and cheaper.⁴

The pioneers found that cattle raised in Illinois or Missouri made the journey better than those raised elsewhere because they were accustomed to eating prairie grass.⁵ Also, they preferred oxen between the ages of four and seven, because in their prime, they stood the trek better.⁶

⁴ See Audrey M. Godfrey, "No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals across the Plains," *The Nauvoo Journal*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 3; Unruh, *The Plains Across*, 75; Carlson, *Cattle: An Informal Social History*, 27; Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, 40; Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 189; Dary, *The Oregon Trail*, 79 and 140; Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 169; and Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 61.

⁵ See Dary, *The Oregon Trail*, 140 and Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 189.

⁶ See Godfrey, "No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals across the Plains," 4; Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West*, 75; and Dary, *The Oregon Trail*, 140.

Oxen posed some difficult problems for the westward migration. For one, their hooves were not accustomed to rocky terrain so that when the Oregon Trail overlanders reached Fort Laramie, the oxen's feet required serious attention. Hence, shoeing oxen on the trail became a general practice, which required a traveling blacksmith in each pioneer company.⁷ However, shoeing an ox on the trail proved no easy task, as several men lifted the animal while one man shod it.⁸ When oxen became "heated or thirsty, they became headstrong and reckless and would sometimes stampede blindly for a river or waterhole."⁹ Often, when they became ill or exhausted, they gave out entirely while on the trail. When this occurred, the pioneers replaced them with milk cows and saddle horses, so that a variety of animals in one team was not uncommon.¹⁰ One other difficulty they faced with oxen came from dusty trails that caused dirt to gather in the animals' nostrils. The duty to keep the oxen's noses clean usually fell upon young men, who used damp rags to clean off the dust.¹¹

Once the emigrants reached their destination, they used oxen to plow fields. Using two or three yoke of oxen, farmers plowed between one to three acres per day, depending on the soil, the toughness of root systems, the type of plow used, and whether they had any help.¹²

⁷ See Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, 40.

⁸ See Dary, *The Oregon Trail*, 79.

⁹ Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, 41.

¹⁰ See Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, 41-42. Also see Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 189-190.

¹¹ See Dary, *The Oregon Trail*, 79-80.

¹² See Hurt, *American Agriculture*, 133-136.

Since oxen played such a major role in the lives of farmers and emigrants of the early nineteenth century, their owners often gave them names out of affection. Typical names included Bright and Broad, Joe and Tom, Dick and Dan, Star and Roan, Jim and Jerry, Duke and Dime, and Pat and Mike.¹³ Often, when oxen died, “the owner’s grief was as much for the loss of a valued friend as for being marooned in the wilderness.”¹⁴

Acquiring Livestock

Upon their arrival at the Missouri River during the latter half of 1846, the Latter-day Saints had acquired vast herds of livestock, particularly cattle. Since the main body of the Church had lost such large numbers of livestock when they were driven from Missouri in 1838, they essentially had to start over again and acquire cattle from almost nothing when they settled Nauvoo in 1839. They accelerated their efforts in gathering livestock when, in September 1845, Church leaders publicly announced their intentions to evacuate Illinois the following year. Even after the first phase of the exodus in 1846, both the pioneers on the trail and the others who temporarily remained in Nauvoo continued acquiring livestock.

Livestock Acquisition Before the Trek

Because of their location in Nauvoo, the Latter-day Saints were able to acquire large numbers of cattle for the trek. During the 1840s, some considered Illinois one of the most ideal areas in the nation for producing livestock. One historian noted that when

¹³ See Towne and Wentworth, *Cattle and Men*, 87.

¹⁴ Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, 41.

Illinois became a state in 1818, “it was in the stage of extensive cattle raising.”¹⁵ In fact, in 1842, as an effort to promote the British Latter-day Saints to gather with the main body of the Church, one article in the *Millennial Star* referred to the Mississippi River Valley as “one of the best cattle-feeding countries in the world. ‘A farmer,’ it is said, ‘calls himself poor with a hundred head of horned cattle around him.’” The article further noted, “This district affords, indeed, the chief supply of live-stock for the Union.”¹⁶

In another edition of the *Millennial Star* in December of 1843, a writer noted that in the Nauvoo area, “large herds of cattle might be seen in almost every direction on the uncultivated prairie.”¹⁷

More than a year before the exodus, the Council of the Twelve had already made a call to bring cattle to Nauvoo, not because of their plans to leave the state, but rather in an effort to build the temple as soon as possible. In an epistle dated January 14, 1845, they wrote the following:

We wish all the young, middle aged, and able bodied men who have it in their hearts to stretch forth this work with power, to come to Nauvoo, prepared to stay during the summer; and to bring with them means to sustain themselves with, and to enable us to forward this work; to bring with them teams, cattle, sheep, gold, silver, brass, iron, oil, paints and tools; and let those who are within market

¹⁵ Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 44.

¹⁶ “Information to Emigrants,” *Millennial Star*, 2:58.

¹⁷ “Visit to Nauvoo – A Sketch,” *Millennial Star*, 4:122. This report is corroborated by a story told by William Wallace Cluff while serving as the president of the Summit Stake in 1899. He related an incident, while, as a young man in Nauvoo, he went searching for a lost cow. In doing so, he passed hundreds of cows outside the city. He recalled “numerous bunches of cattle in every direction, as far as the eye could reach.” After finding his cow, he returned to Nauvoo passing “numerous bunches of stock in every direction.” (Cluff, “A Boy's Faith,” *Improvement Era*, April, 1899, 455). Incidentally, in this same article, Cluff mentioned coming upon “the farm of old man Lot,” that is, Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo farm where Lott was supervisor.

distance of Nauvoo bring with them provisions to sustain themselves and others during their stay . . . and all these things can be applied to the furtherance of the Temple.¹⁸

During the summer of 1845, “anti-Mormon” newspapers renewed attacks on the Latter-day Saints, focusing on the debate over the Church’s political activity, which served as no more than “a smokescreen for a barrage of vandalism on Mormon property.”¹⁹ Ultimately, they hoped to drive all members of the Church from the state. As a result, in the fall of that year, mob persecutions intensified, particularly in the settlements surrounding Nauvoo where mobs began burning the Latter-day Saints’ homes.²⁰

In September, Brigham Young sent a letter to Solomon Hancock at the Morley settlement telling him to sell their homes, land, and other possessions to the mobs in exchange for “good working cattle, beef cattle, & cows, good horses, good wagons, & sheep, dry goods & money.”²¹

On September 22, a committee of citizens in Quincy, Illinois, wrote to Church leaders requesting that the Latter-day Saints evacuate the state. On September 24, Brigham Young responded with a petition “that all men will let us alone with their vexatious law suits, so that we may have the time, for we have broken no law; and help

¹⁸ *History of The Church*, 7: 357 - 358.

¹⁹ Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 222. Also see *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 301.

²⁰ See Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 225 and *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 301.

²¹ Brigham Young to Solomon Hancock, September 11, 1845. As cited in Lewis Clark Christian, “A Study of Mormon Knowledge of the American Far West prior to the Exodus, 1830-February, 1846,” (Masters thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972), 113.

us [with] cash, dry goods, groceries, good oxen, milch cows, beef cattle, sheep, waggons, mules, harnesses, horses, &c., in exchange for our property, at a fair price, . . .”²²

By that time, Church officials became anxious to make public their plan to leave and to invite all to come to Nauvoo and purchase their property. The Nauvoo High Council requested the newspapers in the area to publish an article, which included this solicitation on January 20, 1846: “And men who wish to buy property very cheap, to benefit themselves, and are willing to benefit us, are invited to call and look.”²³

As a result of these petitions, numerous traders brought livestock to Nauvoo from miles around to make good on the Latter-day Saints’ misfortune.²⁴ Illinois governor, Thomas Ford, noted, “During the winter of 1845-6 the Mormons made the most prodigious preparations for removal The people from all parts of the country flocked to Nauvoo to purchase houses and farms, which were sold extremely low, lower than the prices at a sheriff’s sale, for money, wagons, horses, oxen, cattle, and other articles of personal property, which might be needed by the Mormons in their exodus into the wilderness.”²⁵

²² *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols., comp. James R. Clark (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 1: 278. Also see Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 226 and *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 301-302.

²³ *History of the Church*, 7:572.

²⁴ See David R. Crockett, *Saints in Exile: A Day by Day Pioneer Experience, Nauvoo to Council Bluffs* (Tuscon, Arizona: LDS-Gems Press, 1996), 310.

²⁵ Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois: From its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* (Chicago: S.C. Griggs & Co.; New York: Ivison and Phinney, 1854), 412. So radical was this transition that, around this time, the *Bloomington Herald* noted, “Property of every description is sold at a great sacrifice in Nauvoo. Strangers are flocking in and locating there, and in a few weeks Nauvoo and the country around it will have an almost entire[ly] new population” (as cited in Susan Easton Black, “Nauvoo on

Leaders of the Church set forth requirements for the members in what they should bring on the trek. That list, dated October 1845, included three good yoke of oxen (between the ages of four to ten), two cows or more, beef cattle, and some sheep.²⁶

In addition to these trades, some Latter-day Saints left on expeditions from Nauvoo in order to obtain wagons, livestock, and provisions needed for the trek. One pioneer woman wrote, “On account of continued persecutions, the church authorities began to make preparations to move west, although very few, if any knew where the journey would end. My husband, in company with Joel Ricks, took a journey to St. Louis to assist him in bringing his stock to Nauvoo to prepare for the journey. In return he was to have assistance in moving his family.”²⁷

Their endeavors to gather in cattle proved successful. In November 1846, John Taylor noted, “Men have scoured the country for one hundred miles round, to purchase cattle, mules, etc., for the removal of the saints; and we have drained the surrounding country for that distance, and for several hundred miles on the route we have traveled, of all the cattle they could spare, and we have, in fact, the best cattle and horses in the country.”²⁸

the Eve of the Exodus,” in *The Iowa Mormon Trail: Legacy of Faith and Courage*, ed. Susan Easton Black and William G. Hartley (Orem, Utah: Helix Publishing, 1997), 40-41.

²⁶ See *History of the Church*, 7:454.

²⁷ Sarah Emes Fiske Allen, *Autobiography*, LDS Visitors Center, Nauvoo, Illinois, *Writings of Early Latter-day Saints*, 6, reproduced on *Gospelink 2001* [CD-ROM] (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 2001).

²⁸ Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, 249.

Unfortunately, persecution cut the time short to purchase more cattle.²⁹ Furthermore, mobs reportedly stole or killed a large number of livestock.³⁰ During the fall of 1845, Sheriff John Backenstos of Hancock County reported, “More than 200 head of cattle are missing in this way according to complaints made to me.”³¹

For those unable to sell their homes, Brigham Young appointed a committee of trustees to oversee unsold property and allow them to borrow teams from the Church and go west. Once their property sold, the trustees would send the profit to the individuals so they could purchase their own teams.³²

Unfortunately for the Latter-day Saints, the exchanges they made were not usually in their favor. The *Davenport Gazette* observed, “Property has fallen in Nauvoo, to about one third of its value.”³³ In November 1846, John Taylor wrote, “. . . I do not suppose that on an average we have obtained more than one-third the value of our farms, our houses, lots, and other property.”³⁴

²⁹ Black, “Nauvoo on the Eve of the Exodus,” 39-40.

³⁰ See Preston Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness: The Story of the Mormon Migration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1947), 127. Also see Crockett, *Saints in Exile*, 41.

³¹ “Further Persecution of the Saints in America,” *Millennial Star*, 6:185.

³² See Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 32-33. Also see Journal History, January 21, 1846, and Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness*, 102-104. The committee of trustees appointed consisted of Almon W. Babbitt, Joseph L. Heywood, and John S. Fullmer. They were also entrusted to oversee the completion of the Nauvoo Temple (see *History of the Church*, 7:576).

³³ As cited in Black, “Nauvoo on the Eve of the Exodus,” 40.

³⁴ “Address to the Saints in Great Britain,” *Millennial Star*, 8:115. Also see Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 19.

In reality, the Latter-day Saints generally received less than one-third of their property value. For example, Sarah Leavitt recalled having sold their “beautiful farm” for one “yoke of wild steers.”³⁵ Aaron Johnson sold property valued at \$4,000 for only \$150, Jacob Weiler sold his \$1,200 home for \$200, and John D. Lee declined an offer of \$800 for his home valued at \$8,000, which the committee of trustees later sold for a mere \$12.50.³⁶ John B. McDonald sold the framework of a two-story home he was building for a yoke of wild steers. Albert Merrill sold his house for \$150 worth of cattle.³⁷ Martha Haven related how they sold their place to a Baptist minister for “a cow and two pairs of steers, worth about sixty dollars in trade.”³⁸ Lyman Hinman purchased his cattle with “clothes, furniture and feather beds.”³⁹ Louisa Barnes Pratt, wife of Addison Pratt, recorded that she traded her \$300 home and lot for one yoke of oxen.⁴⁰ Essentially, many of them sold their homes and land for little more than a team.

³⁵ See Willam G. Hartley, “Spring Exodus from Nauvoo: Act Two in the 1846 Mormon Evacuation Drama,” in *The Iowa Mormon Trail*, 62.

³⁶ See Black, “Nauvoo on the Eve of the Exodus,” 41. To put these figures into perspective, a yoke of oxen at that time could be purchased for between \$30-50 (see Godfrey, “No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals Across the Plains,” 4). A good horse would sell for between \$100-150 (see A. B. Caine, “Horses Pull Iowa into Prominence,” in *A Century of Farming in Iowa: 1846-1946*, [Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State College Press, 1946], 141).

³⁷ See Godfrey, “No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals Across the Plains,” 3.

³⁸ As cited in Hartley, “Spring Exodus from Nauvoo,” 62.

³⁹ Godfrey, “No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals Across the Plains,” 3.

⁴⁰ Louis Barnes Pratt, *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Being the Autobiography of a Mormon Missionary Widow and Pioneer*, ed. S. George Ellsworth (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1998), 79.

Acquiring Cattle along the Iowa Trail

In spite of the large number of livestock the Camp of Israel brought with them, many still desperately lacked in their number and nature of livestock while camped at Sugar Creek, Iowa, about nine miles from Nauvoo.⁴¹ Because of that, they had to transact a great deal of trading for livestock while on the Iowa trail.⁴²

Fortunately, Iowa and northern Missouri had plenty of cattle in 1846. The 1840 census showed that Iowans had over 38,000 head of cattle in the territory, which nearly doubled during the next decade. Most of the Iowa cattle were in the southeastern part of the territory in the settlements along the Mississippi River. These breeds would have come primarily from European countries, brought by early settlers from the eastern states. The herds consisted mostly of Shorthorns from Ohio, Kentucky, and Illinois. Devons and a few Herefords had also been introduced to the area by that time. Some southern cattle from the Carolinas and Tennessee were also in Iowa, though considered inferior in size

⁴¹ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 31.

⁴² The Mormon exodus consisted of three major phases. Brigham Young led the first group of about 3,000, known as the Camp of Israel. They left in the winter of 1846, beginning in February. The second, made up of about 10,000, left in the spring. The last group included about 1,000, known as the Poor Camp, whom mobs drove from their homes in Nauvoo in the fall (See William G. Hartley, "Winter Exodus from Nauvoo: Brigham Young's Camp of Israel, 1846," in *The Iowa Mormon Trail*, xiii. Also see Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 230-231). This paper will focus mainly on the Camp of Israel, with occasional mention of the second group, but not of the Poor Camp.

and quality compared to those that came from the east.⁴³ Reports have indicated that the Latter-day Saints herded large numbers of Devons when they crossed the plains.⁴⁴

However, Missouri cattle were more abundant and superior, largely because of the influence of Kentucky ranchers who had come in considerable numbers to Missouri by the 1830s. The Kentuckians “brought with them the knowledge of improved stock breeding as well as the best cattle and horses in America.”⁴⁵ Missouri cattle were known for their excellent breeds, particularly Shorthorns for “their size, early maturity, smoothness of flesh, high percentage of choice cuts . . . and their tremendous prepotency.”⁴⁶ In Missouri during the first half of the nineteenth century, “the people in the frontier parts had all the livestock they wanted, and generally speaking the value of the animals depended more upon their immediate utility to their owners than on the cash into which they could be converted.”⁴⁷ This lent to the willingness of the settlers in Iowa and northern Missouri to trade their cattle so freely with the Latter-day Saints.

Gathering cattle became a high priority to Brigham Young. He frequently encouraged the pioneers to do so and assigned men to go on trading expeditions for this purpose. For example, on February 22, at the Sugar Creek encampment, Parley P. Pratt

⁴³ See Shearer, “Iowans Feed Beef Cattle for Market,” 112-113.

⁴⁴ See Barnes, *Western Grazing Grounds and Forest Ranges*, 92. Also see Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 183.

⁴⁵ Carpenter, “The Early Cattle Industry in Missouri,” 202.

⁴⁶ Perry McCandless, *A History of Missouri, Volume II: 1820-1860*, ed. William E. Parrish, 3 vols. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 49.

⁴⁷ Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry*, 45-46.

and Amasa Lyman left on assignment to trade for oxen, corn, and provisions.⁴⁸ On March 21, while at the Fox River, Brigham Young sent Jedediah M. Grant and Ephraim Hanks to trade his horse for some oxen.⁴⁹ On April 20 at Pleasant Point Camp, just west of Medicine Creek, Brigham Young sent some men on an expedition to the Grand River in Missouri to exchange “watches, horses, feather beds,” and so forth, for “oxen, cows, and foodstuffs.”⁵⁰ On May 8, a number of men left in the morning from Garden Grove on another expedition with two or three wagonloads of beds, harnesses, saddles, and other items.⁵¹ On May 17, John D. Lee and others returned to the camp near White Breast Creek from an expedition with thirteen milk cows, three yoke of oxen, and provisions.⁵² Peter Wilson Conover recalled that while they camped at the Platte River, they “received a letter from Brigham to take our horses and go down into Missouri to trade for cattle and provisions enough to come right on over the mountains with.”⁵³

President Young also counseled the Latter-day Saints to exchange their horses for oxen. One historian noted, “Oxen, because of their strength and patience and their docility in treading through mud, quicksand, or desert, came to be the animals of

⁴⁸ See Crockett, *Saints in Exile*, 172.

⁴⁹ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 97.

⁵⁰ Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 43.

⁵¹ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 154.

⁵² See Young, *Manuscript History*, 161. Also see Crockett, *Saints in Exile*, 320.

⁵³ Peter Wilson Conover, *Autobiography of Peter Wilson Conover*, TMs, p. 3, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

choice.”⁵⁴ George Washington Hill, after hearing about the settling of Mount Pisgah, recalled, “We learned also that it was the council to exchange our horses for oxen as they would travel better on grass than horses. This suited me, & seemed to be good council, so we stoped here one week trading our horses for cattle.”⁵⁵

Word spread to the settlers along the trail that the Latter-day Saints were making such trades. On March 13, while the Camp of Israel camped at Richardson’s Point, locals came “with oxen offering to exchange for horses, but as they generally wished to get a horse worth two yoke of oxen for a yoke of steers, very few trades were effected.”⁵⁶ Others came a couple of days later on Sunday, but some rejected the offers in an effort to keep the Sabbath day holy.⁵⁷

The pioneers found numerous ways and many items to trade for both livestock and feed. For example, on March 1, near Reed’s Creek, men found employment splitting rails and husking corn shocks in exchange for corn and hay.⁵⁸ On March 7, Hosea Stout traded a bedstead for eight bushels of corn.⁵⁹ At Chequest Creek on March 10, David

⁵⁴ Godfrey, “No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals Across the Plains,” 3.

⁵⁵ George Washington Hill, *Autobiography and Indian Missionary Journals of George Washington Hill*, AMs, pp. 12-13 (Salt Lake City: Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1960), microfilm.

⁵⁶ Young, *Manuscript History*, 82.

⁵⁷ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 85.

⁵⁸ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 58.

⁵⁹ See Stout, *On The Mormon Frontier*, 135.

Sessions traded his horse for a yoke of four-year-old oxen and twenty bushels of oats.⁶⁰ Six days later, on March 16, at the same place, William Huntington and Nathan Tanner traded five horses for cattle.⁶¹ That day, Brigham Young wrote to the Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo, “we have exchanged many horses for oxen, and thus multiplied our teams.”⁶² At Richardson’s Point on March 19, Doctor Jesse Brailey stopped to treat a sick man in exchange for a yoke of oxen.⁶³ The next day, Charles C. Rich cleared an acre of land for 23 bushels of corn.⁶⁴ While at the Chariton River, many men worked for farmers and received their pay in corn, oats, pork, cloth, and livestock.⁶⁵ On April 8, men split 3,000 rails for a milk cow and 100 pounds of bacon.⁶⁶ The following day, some men found employment in herding cattle near Locust Creek.⁶⁷ On April 14, Erastus Snow and Albert P. Rockwood traveled fifteen miles to a settlement between the east and west forks of Locust Creek to buy cattle.⁶⁸ On April 18, John D. Lee returned from a trading expedition where he had healed, by the laying on of hands, a man named Patrick Dorsey, who was suffering with sore eyes. Overcome with joy, Dorsey became eager to trade with Lee. Lee

⁶⁰ See Patty Bartlett Sessions, *Mormon Midwife: The 1846-1888 Diaries of Patty Bartlett Sessions*, ed. Donna Toland Smart (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1997), 38.

⁶¹ See Crockett, *Saints in Exile*, 213.

⁶² Young, *Manuscript History*, 88.

⁶³ See Dorothy Gentry and Rick Krenz, “Davis County,” in *The Iowa Mormon Trail*, 205.

⁶⁴ See Crockett, *Saints in Exile*, 222.

⁶⁵ See Snow, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow*, 124.

⁶⁶ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 148.

⁶⁷ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 128. Also see Crockett, *Saints in Exile*, 256.

⁶⁸ See Crockett, *Saints in Exile*, 266.

recorded, “I reflected a little and gave him a list of city property at Nauvoo that I would turn out to him at one-fourth its value He said he had twelve yoke of oxen and some twenty-five cows and other stock.”⁶⁹ Trailblazers found employment along the trail in building a storehouse and a jail for \$250.⁷⁰ On June 23, William Clayton noted, “I bought a scythe and some other things and tried to trade a watch for a yoke of cattle. Major Mitchel offered me three yoke for the gold watch.”⁷¹ In July, once Parley P. Pratt arrived at the Missouri River, he traded “wagons, horses, harness, and various articles of furniture, cash, etc., for provisions, oxen, cows, etc.”⁷²

Continued Cattle Acquisition in Nauvoo

Meanwhile, the remaining Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo continued making an effort to acquire livestock. On March 9, Brigham Young wrote, “The Twelve met in Council at my Markee. We wrote the Trustees, at Nauvoo, to gather up all the milch cows, sheep, oxen, and mules they could; and from fifty to one hundred young pigs, in cages, for the next Camp that came out; . . .”⁷³ Shortly thereafter, the trustees put an advertisement in the *Nauvoo New Citizen* on April 10, 1846, which read, “The undersigned wish to purchase one thousand yoke of cattle, from four to eight years old,

⁶⁹ As cited in Crockett, *Saints in Exile*, 275.

⁷⁰ See Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 39.

⁷¹ William Clayton, *William Clayton’s Journal: A Daily Record of the Journey of the Original Company of “Mormon” Pioneers from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1921), 48.

⁷² Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 429.

⁷³ Young, *Manuscript History*, 73.

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.”⁷⁴ They offered over twenty thousand acres of land in exchange for “goods, cash, oxen, cows, sheep, wagons, etc.”⁷⁵

Later that month, President Young and other Church leaders wrote again to the Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo and recommended that those coming should travel light and bring as many cows, sheep, and farming tools as possible.⁷⁶ On May 12, President Young sent another letter to the trustees requesting that they send twenty-four ox teams and all the flour that could be spared.⁷⁷

The Church members in Nauvoo responded to President Young’s requests. On May 19, Solomon Hancock arrived from Nauvoo bringing nineteen yoke of oxen with him.⁷⁸ At the end of May, just west of the Des Moines River, Jesse Crosby reported that the second phase of pioneers who left in the spring brought herds of cattle and an abundance of sheep with them.⁷⁹

After arriving at Garden Grove, two men, Hyrum Spencer and Claudius Spencer, returned to Nauvoo to sell their farms for cattle. Having made the trade, they herded

⁷⁴ As cited in Black, “Nauvoo on the Eve of the Exodus,” 39.

⁷⁵ As cited in Black, “Nauvoo on the Eve of the Exodus,” 39.

⁷⁶ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 88.

⁷⁷ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 159.

⁷⁸ See Crockett, *Saints in Exile*, 323.

⁷⁹ See Jesse W. Crosby, *The History and Journal of Jesse W. Crosby, 1820-1869* (Provo, Utah: Copied by the Brigham Young University Library, 1940), 30.

about one hundred cattle across Iowa; unfortunately, the strain of the drive killed Hyrum.⁸⁰

Hence, because of the Latter-day Saints' efforts in acquiring cattle while both in Nauvoo and on the Iowa trail, and because they already had numerous herds of cattle, they arrived at the Missouri River with thousands of head. Such preparation would lend significantly to their temporal salvation during their stay at Winter Quarters during the fall and winter of 1846-1847.

Challenges in Traveling with Cattle across Iowa

Traveling with thousands of head of livestock presented a number of challenges. One historian observed, "A look at the subject reveals not a small miracle, but an undertaking of staggering proportions."⁸¹

The Latter-day Saints had planned to make the trek to the Rocky Mountains in 1846, or at least to Grand Island on the Platte River.⁸² Due to a number of challenges, however, they did not realize this goal. Many of the difficulties had to do with the their livestock and the conditions under which the animals had to labor including the daily routine of caring for animals, insufficient draft animals and feed, muddy conditions, straying animals, rattlesnakes, and river-crossings.

⁸⁰ See Hartley, "Spring Exodus from Nauvoo," 74.

⁸¹ Audrey M. Godfrey, "No Small Miracle," *Ensign*, November 1971, 52.

⁸² See Gail Geo. Holmes, "A Prophet Who Followed, Fulfilled, and Magnified: Brigham Young in Iowa and Nebraska," in *Lion of the Lord: Essays on the Life and Service of Brigham Young*, eds. Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 131.

Daily Routine of Animal Care

A typical day on the trail with cattle consisted of rounding up and yoking them in order to drive in the morning. Around lunchtime, the pioneers stopped to have a cold lunch and let the animals rest and graze, which they called “nooning.” Then, in the evening, they grazed, milked, and corralled the cattle. Finally, they set guards over them for the night.⁸³ The pioneers made corrals by circling their wagons in an oval shape to keep the larger stock, while they put pigs and poultry in coops attached to wagons.⁸⁴ If they camped next to a stream or a lake, they would form a half-circle against the water shore to allow the animals to drink.⁸⁵ They set guards to watch both inside and out of the wagon-corral and rotated them every three hours.⁸⁶ The guards not only protected the livestock from outside dangers, but also kept them from escaping or damaging any of the pioneers’ goods. For example, on March 27, Brigham Young reported that the guards had been asleep while cattle ate pickles and crackers from their supplies.⁸⁷

While on the trail, Church leaders established rules to keep order with the teams. For example, in an organized camp, teams could not come within two rods of each other.

⁸³ Stanley B. Kimball, “Social Life on the Mormon Trail and the Meaning of the Camp of Israel: An Essay,” in *The Iowa Mormon Trail*, 88.

⁸⁴ See Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 20.

⁸⁵ See Godfrey, “No Small Miracle,” *Ensign*, November 1971, 55.

⁸⁶ See Godfrey, “No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals Across the Plains,” 8.

⁸⁷ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 106. William Clayton recorded a similar experience that occurred on the night of April 14 (see Clayton, *William Clayton’s Journal*, 19).

Another dictated that the teams drawn by oxen should let the faster horse-drawn teams pass by.⁸⁸

Concerning teamsters, James S. Brown recalled that they “were of both sexes and comprised young and old.” He further noted that few rode in the wagons because “the people who could walk did so, and many were engaged in driving loose stock.”⁸⁹ The overlanders often hired single men as “teamsters, drivers, cattle tenders, and handymen.”⁹⁰

Insufficient Draft Animals and Feed

The unprepared state in which many left Nauvoo proved to be one of the greatest hindrances for the 1846 pioneers. While many came with a strong wagon, dependable oxen, and sufficient provisions, some left panicked with scarce provisions.⁹¹ On May 21, Brigham Young remarked, “Eight hundred men reported themselves without a fortnight’s provisions.”⁹² Much of this problem resulted because some of them could not bear being

⁸⁸ See Journal History, March 3, 1846.

⁸⁹ James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer: Being the Autobiography of James S. Brown* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1900), 21.

⁹⁰ Kimball, “Social Life on the Mormon Trail,” 99.

⁹¹ The Saints had originally planned to leave in April 1846 when the prairie grass would be plentiful for their animals to feed on. The first group left earlier due to two unexpected threats. First, the United States District Court in Springfield, Illinois, issued an indictment against Brigham Young and eight other Apostles for counterfeiting money. Second, though unfounded, Governor Thomas Ford reported that federal troops stationed at St. Louis had plans to interfere with the Saints’ spring exodus (see Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 230).

⁹² Young, *Manuscript History*, 167. Richard E. Bennett contested that this figure was probably an exaggeration (see Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 245).

left behind by the Council of the Twelve, regardless of the Council's direction for them to stay until they had sufficiently prepared for the journey. President Young lamented, ". . . had the brethren submitted to our counsel and brought their teams and means and authorized me to do as the Spirit and wisdom of the Lord directed with them, then we could have outfitted a company of men that were not encumbered with large families and sent them over the mountains to put in crops and build houses, . . ."93

First, many of the Latter-day Saints did not bring sufficient draft animals for the journey. In fact, those that were ill equipped borrowed an estimated one half of the four hundred teams in the first camp from the Church, on loan from the trustees.⁹⁴

A typical outfit consisted of a wagon pulled by two yoke of oxen. With each company came a number of other animals. Church leaders had recommended that each family bring three good yoke of oxen, two cows or more, beef cattle, and some sheep.⁹⁵ Pioneer James S. Brown remarked, "The teams were made up of oxen, milch cows, two-year-old steers and heifers, and very few horses and mules."⁹⁶ Some companies had more livestock than others. Wilford Woodruff, who left in the spring, had a total of twenty-five head of livestock as he began his trek, but acquired some along the way so that when he reached Mt. Pisgah, his livestock totaled forty-two.⁹⁷ George W. Bean, who had run John Taylor's Nauvoo farm, recollected, "We fitted up with three wagons and ox teams, two or

⁹³ Young, *Manuscript History*, 151.

⁹⁴ See Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 32-33.

⁹⁵ See *History of the Church*, 7:454.

⁹⁶ Brown, *Life of a Pioneer*, 21.

⁹⁷ See Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:48 and 3:55.

three horses, several cows, and a flock of sheep.”⁹⁸ Jane Snyder Richards only took an old wagon and two yokes of half-broken cattle, while Maria Lyman only had one yoke of oxen and wagon.⁹⁹

A need to train unbroken teams became one of the initial challenges. One historian wrote, “A common way to train an ox team was for an individual to walk at the side of the wagon and, as a command was needed, to show himself quickly first to the off and then to the near steers until they learned to ‘haw’ and ‘gee.’ Benjamin Cluff said that fortunately this sort of training did not continue very long, as the teams soon learned to follow the commands.”¹⁰⁰ Frederick Gardiner observed that some teams were hard to manage, but because he had trained his animals with gentleness, his were well behaved.¹⁰¹

On the other hand, some teamsters had little experience, often causing difficulty among the companies. Louisa Barnes Pratt recorded how one inexperienced young man received the nickname “Green Horn.” Concerning an incident involving him on June 6, 1846, she wrote, “He blundered into a mud hole and broke his axle tree. So here the whole crowd must be hindered to wait for repairs.”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ As cited in Hartley, “Spring Exodus from Nauvoo,” 68.

⁹⁹ See Hartley, “Spring Exodus from Nauvoo,” 68.

¹⁰⁰ Godfrey, “No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals Across the Plains,” 5.

¹⁰¹ See Godfrey, “No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals Across the Plains,” 5.

¹⁰² Pratt, *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt*, 81.

As mentioned earlier, some used Church-owned teams, designated for Church use only, to pull their own wagons. On April 18, 1846, at Pleasant Point Camp, Iowa, President Brigham Young still had plans for the Twelve, as part of an advance company, to forge on to the Rocky Mountains that year.¹⁰³ To the chagrin of some, he ordered that those using church-owned teams should relinquish them for the cause of the advance party.¹⁰⁴

The lack of feed for livestock became another complication. Church leaders had planned on leaving later in the spring so that the animals could feed on the grass. In a letter from Brigham Young to Samuel Brannan dated December 26, 1845, he wrote, “We shall leave when the grass is sufficient to sustain our cattle on the prairies.”¹⁰⁵ Yet since the Camp of Israel left Illinois earlier than planned, spring grass had not yet emerged. Sadly, not only did they leave earlier than anticipated, but also spring came later than usual.¹⁰⁶

Consequently, the Camp of Israel had to feed their animals on grain, primarily corn, to keep them alive. Fortunately, the corn crops of 1845-1846 yielded an uncommonly large harvest in Iowa and northeast Missouri, which made the farmers in those regions anxious to trade.¹⁰⁷ Orson Pratt recalled, “It now became quite a serious

¹⁰³ Brigham Young initially intended that three advance parties would move on to the Rockies in 1846 to plant crops in preparation for the rest of the Saints that would come later (see Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 235).

¹⁰⁴ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 135.

¹⁰⁵ As cited in Christian, “A Study of Mormon Knowledge of the American Far West prior to the Exodus,” 131. Also see *Journal History*, January 20, 1846.

¹⁰⁶ See Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 37.

¹⁰⁷ See Durham, “The Iowa Experience,” 466.

difficulty to sustain our numerous cattle and horses; for it required many hundred bushels of grain daily to keep them from perishing; but as we had not yet launched forth into regions altogether uninhabited, we were enabled to buy large quantities of Indian corn from time to time, with money, labour, &c.”¹⁰⁸

The lack of cattle, feed, and other provisions partly determined the route the pioneers took through the Iowa Territory. Since the northern part of the state of Missouri was more heavily populated, they primarily stayed close to the Missouri borders, enabling them to acquire provisions and feed along the way through trade or even temporary employment.¹⁰⁹

In addition, William Pitt’s band became an important source of income and trade. All the way through Iowa, the band played for settlers in exchange for supplies, particularly corn and grain.¹¹⁰

Considering the great quantity of corn and livestock available in the settlements along the Iowa trail in 1846, the Latter-day Saints were blessed with good fortune under such unfavorable conditions. Indeed, “though all of this did not appear suddenly out of the heavens, the ample availability of these commodities was nonetheless a godsend.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Orson, Pratt, *The Orson Pratt Journals*, ed. Elden J. Watson (Salt Lake City: by Elden J. Watson, 1975), 319.

¹⁰⁹ See D. Elbert Pidcock, “Wayne County: The Story of ‘Come, Come, Ye Saints,’” in *The Iowa Mormon Trail*, 212. Also see Willam G. Hartley, “Winter Exodus from Nauvoo: Brigham Young’s Camp of Israel, 1846,” xvii.

¹¹⁰ See Carol Cornwall Madsen, comp., *Journey to Zion: Voices from the Mormon Trail* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 27.

¹¹¹ Durham, “The Iowa Experience,” 468.

In spite of the trading expeditions, the corn supply ran low and the animals began to starve. Orson Pratt observed, “It seemed to be with the greatest difficulty that we could preserve our animals from actual starvation, and we were obliged to send off several days journey to the Missouri settlements on the south, to procure grain.”¹¹²

On March 25, Eliza R. Snow related, “It is impossible to obtain grain here for the teams which live mostly on browse.”¹¹³ At times, the Camp of Israel could not even obtain browse for the livestock and had to let the animals fend for themselves. Lorenzo Snow penned, “We browsed our cattle when we could but travelling thro a prairie country it was not always we could find brows.”¹¹⁴

Though the Latter-day Saints themselves suffered much, some had compassion on the animals in their dire circumstances. Bathsheba W. Smith, sympathized, “I will not try to describe how we traveled through storms of snow wind and rain, how roads had to be made, bridges built and rafts constructed; how our poor animals had to drag on day after day with scanty food.”¹¹⁵ Eliza R. Snow recalled, “We were traveling in the season significantly termed ‘between hay and grass,’ and the teams, feeding mostly on browse, wasted in flesh, and had but little strength; and it was painful at times, to see the poor creatures straining every joint and ligament, doing their utmost, and looking the very

¹¹² Pratt, *The Orson Pratt Journals*, 337.

¹¹³ Snow, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow*, 123. *Browse* was a term that referred to feed for cattle that consisted of bark, twigs, or small limbs, eaten only when driven to do so by hunger.

¹¹⁴ Lorenzo Snow, “The Iowa Journal of Lorenzo Snow,” ed. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *BYU Studies* 24 (Summer 1984): 267.

¹¹⁵ Bathsheba W. Smith, *Record Book of Bathsheba W. Smith* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Library, 1970), 13.

picture of discouragement.”¹¹⁶ Perhaps out of desperation or out of compassion, “there were a great many that fed their parched corn and Meal [to] their cattle and horses.”¹¹⁷

The cattle slowed down because of starvation, being left with little energy to pull their loads. On April 16, William Clayton recorded, “We fed a little corn and then started. The company is far ahead of us. We traveled very slowly our teams were so weak.”¹¹⁸ Because animals would get so weak, “the tired men had to unhitch them and pull the wagons into camp themselves, ‘singing all the way’ to bolster their strength.”¹¹⁹

In addition, the pioneers became more scattered as they made efforts to find browse, grass, and water for their animals.¹²⁰ This, of course, impeded the progress as Brigham Young struggled to keep order and communication along the trail.

Finally, by mid-April, signs of spring began to appear, much later than the trekkers had expected.¹²¹ On April 16, William Clayton noted, “There is some little grass for our cattle here, but little.”¹²² Two days later, Hosea Stout recorded happily, “Sent off the cattle to feed as usual and they filled themselves quite full today.”¹²³ The coming of

¹¹⁶ As cited in Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness*, 138.

¹¹⁷ Snow, “The Iowa Journal of Lorenzo Snow,” 267.

¹¹⁸ Clayton, *William Clayton’s Journal*, 20.

¹¹⁹ Godfrey, “No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals Across the Plains,” 9.

¹²⁰ See Stanley B. Kimball, “The Iowa Trek of 1846,” in *The Exodus and Beyond: Essays in Mormon History*, ed. Lyndon W. Cook and Donald Q. Cannon (Salt Lake City: Hawkes Publishing Inc., 1980), 12.

¹²¹ See Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 37.

¹²² Clayton, *William Clayton’s Journal*, 20.

¹²³ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 153.

spring must have cheered many of them. On April 20, Horace K. Whitney penned, “Beautiful day, the birds begin to sing, the grass to grow and everything assumes a pleasant aspect.”¹²⁴

When the Camp of Israel arrived at Garden Grove on April 24, they found the grass to be eight inches tall.¹²⁵ One scholar wrote, “After winter had waned, by April and May, the natural tall grass of these fertile prairies could have sustained many times the number of stock possessed by the Mormon pioneers By the last of May, Mormon livestock had become sleek and fat.”¹²⁶

Mud

As a result of an uncommonly wet season, mud was one of the most frustrating obstacles for the 1846 pioneers. The oxen became critical assets during this trying time as many wagons got stuck in the mire. George A. Smith noted, “The ground was so soft, that it required three or four yoke of oxen to draw our two-horse wagons.”¹²⁷ Out of necessity and sympathy for the draft animals, many who had ridden in wagons had to walk. Helen Mar Whitney recalled, “the road lay over a prairie, and the earth being soft and inundated with the previous rains, all that could were obliged to walk to favor the poor animals.”¹²⁸

¹²⁴ As cited in Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness*, 154.

¹²⁵ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 139.

¹²⁶ Reed C. Durham, Jr., “The Iowa Experience: A Blessing in Disguise,” *BYU Studies* 21 (Fall 1981): 466-467.

¹²⁷ As cited in Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness*, 141.

¹²⁸ Whitney, *A Woman’s View*, 352.

On April 9, George A. Smith recorded, “Frequently we had to put eight or ten yoke of oxen to a wagon to get the wagons out of the mud-holes.”¹²⁹ Another recalled, “Hundreds of teams stuck in the mud, and we had to double-up and help one another out. Many times we had to wade in mud half to our knees and lift our wagons out of the mire.”¹³⁰ Such conditions exhausted both the travelers and the animals. On April 9, 1846, William Huntington recorded, “one cow through fatigue, down by the waggon on the prairie chilled and died. A general sense of suffering for man and beast.”¹³¹

Strays

Finding stray animals also proved to be another considerable hindrance throughout the camp and became very frustrating since it caused so much delay.¹³² Wilford Woodruff summed up the problem when he wrote, “We have a good deal of trouble with our cattle to keep them.”¹³³ Similarly, Louisa Barnes Pratt remarked, “The loose cattle were very unruly and hindered us.”¹³⁴ Franklin D. Richards, in 1855, used this very frustration to promote the use of handcarts. In an editorial, he wrote:

It is only to those who have traveled the plains with ox teams, that the advantages of doing without them will appear in all their force. They alone can realize what it is to get up on a sultry morning – spend an hour or two in driving up and yoking

¹²⁹ As cited in Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness*, 148-149.

¹³⁰ Brown, *Life of a Pioneer*, 21.

¹³¹ William Huntington, *Diaries of William Huntington* (Provo, Utah: Copied by the Brigham Young University Library, 1952-1953), 54.

¹³² See Hartley, “The Spring Exodus from Nauvoo,” 71.

¹³³ Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:53.

¹³⁴ Pratt, *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt*, 81.

unruly cattle, and while patiently waiting to start on the dusty wearisome road in order to accomplish the labours of the day in due time, hear the word passed around that some brother has an ox missing; then another hour, or perhaps half of the day, is wasted, and finally, when ready to start the pleasantest time for travelling has past, . . .¹³⁵

To make matters worse, fully-grown prairie grass would reach five to eight feet tall in the Midwest, increasing the probability of lost livestock.¹³⁶ Further, if a pioneer found a stray animal, he could take it as his own unless the previous owner came looking for it.¹³⁷

Since they considered the larger livestock as a very precious commodity, the pioneers often spent hours looking for them when they strayed. In one journal entry, Wilford Woodruff noted, “Our cows run away. Detained us 3 Hours.”¹³⁸ About the morning of June 15, William Clayton wrote, “Our horses were missing and we were detained till ten o’clock before we could start.”¹³⁹ One historian asserted that “The loss of an animal was considered almost as serious as the death of one. Some believed that they had received divine help in recovering their lost creatures after having prayed for help and guidance to find the animals.”¹⁴⁰ This underscores the important place these animals had in the exodus.

¹³⁵ “Editorial,” *Millennial Star*, 17:810.

¹³⁶ See Durham, “The Iowa Experience,” 467.

¹³⁷ See Godfrey, “No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals across the Plains,” 5.

¹³⁸ Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:52.

¹³⁹ Clayton, *William Clayton’s Journal*, 46.

¹⁴⁰ Kimball, “Social Life on the Mormon Trail,” 90.

The pioneers also brought a large number of sheep with them across Iowa, though no evidence suggests that they acquired large numbers of them on the trail in the same way they did with cattle. On the contrary, due to the difficulty of herding sheep that tended to easily stray and were hard to find in the tall Iowa grass, the number of sheep decreased on that trail. For example, George Whitaker noted that the family of his father-in-law, John Robinson, “had started from Nauvoo in May with a good outfit consisting of three wagons, six yoke of cattle, some cows and quite a number of sheep. They had lost all but about six of their sheep and they lost the remainder before they left the spring.”¹⁴¹ Finding sheep a nuisance on the trail, Joseph Fielding related, “we had together besides our Teams, 21 loose Cattle, as Cows, etc., 43 Sheep, but the Sheep soon began to diminish. We found it difficult to keep them in Sight; some times we have had to seek them 2 or 3 Days, which hindered in traveling by so much.”¹⁴² One historian observed, “The Mormons, who established more or less permanent camps or settlements on their trek through Iowa in the forties, drove many sheep and no doubt some were left in these settlements.”¹⁴³ Further, since sheep were less valuable than cattle, the search for lost sheep was not always worth the time.

¹⁴¹ Whitaker, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 72.

¹⁴² Joseph Fielding, *Diary of Joseph Fielding* (n.p.: Reproduced in Typewritten Form in June 1963), 142-143. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

¹⁴³ La Grange, “Sheep Production in the Livestock Enterprises,” 128.

Rattlesnakes

A new challenge arose as the weather warmed up: rattlesnakes. On April 16, Horace K. Whitney noted, “Today eight rattlesnakes were killed by our company, and two of the oxen . . . were bitten. One of William Kimball’s horse’s lips was swelled considerably, supposed to be occasioned by the bite of a rattlesnake. Today is the first time we have seen any of these reptiles on our journey.”¹⁴⁴ On the same day, Eliza R. Snow wrote, “The prairie begins to look green – the rattlesnakes make their appearance much to the annoyance of our horses & cattle, several of them having been bit in trying to allay their hungry appetites.”¹⁴⁵ Hence, though the grass became more plentiful, a great danger lurked for the famished animals.

These poisonous snakes infested Garden Grove. Ezra T. Benson, described the settlement, “This was a great place for rattlesnakes, either an ox or a horse came up almost every night with a swelled head, etc.”¹⁴⁶ Church leaders advised the Latter-day Saints not to kill the snakes unless they endangered human life; nevertheless, some of the men largely ignored that counsel.¹⁴⁷

The pioneers found various ways to treat their bitten animals. For example, on April 22, when a snake bit his horse, President Young cut the snake up into pieces and applied it to the wound, believing it would draw the poison out. In little time, the horse

¹⁴⁴ As cited in Crockett, *Saints in Exile*, 271.

¹⁴⁵ Snow, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow*, 128.

¹⁴⁶ Ezra T. Benson, in *Manuscript History*, 258.

¹⁴⁷ See Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 39.

recovered and lived.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, when a snake bit William Clayton's horse on the nose on April 25, he and his men "got some spirits of turpentine and bathed the wound, washed his face in salt and water and gave him some snakes master root boiled in milk." The horse died the next morning.¹⁴⁹

Heber C. Kimball's approach to the problem gives further understanding of how the Latter-day Saints valued their animals. On April 20, Horace K. Whitney recorded, "The other day, one of brother [Heber C.] Kimball's horses being bitten [by a rattlesnake], he laid his hand on the part affected and rebuked the sickness occasioned by the poison in the name of the Lord, which prayer was almost immediately answered."¹⁵⁰ President Kimball later responded that it was "just as proper to lay hands on a horse or an ox and administer to it in the name of the Lord, and of as much utility, as it is to a human being – both being creatures of His creation, both consequently have claim to His attention."¹⁵¹ Others also blessed their animals during the years they crossed the plains.¹⁵²

Crossing Rivers

Crossing rivers with livestock presented another challenge during the 1846 trek. The first and largest river, of course, was the Mississippi. To cross that river, the Latter-

¹⁴⁸ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 139.

¹⁴⁹ Clayton, *William Clayton's Journal*, 24-25. It is unclear what was meant by "snakes master root boiled in milk."

¹⁵⁰ As cited in Kimball, "Social Life on the Mormon Trail," 91.

¹⁵¹ As cited in Kimball, "Social Life on the Mormon Trail," 91.

¹⁵² See Kimball, "Social Life on the Mormon Trail," 91.

day Saints loaded their wagons and animals onto a ferry or a skiff and then made the journey, a terribly time consuming and somewhat risky task.¹⁵³

Although a large number of animals crossed the Mississippi in 1846, the pioneers lost only a few of them. A yoke of oxen drowned because a man spit tobacco juice into the eye of one of Thomas Grover's oxen. The ox plunged into the water and dragged the other with which it was yoked into the river as well.¹⁵⁴

From February 13 to 18, the Mississippi froze over, which greatly facilitated moving such large numbers of livestock across the river. However, the days that followed made crossing the river treacherous as the temperature warmed a little, causing the ice to break up into large chunks.¹⁵⁵

While crossing the smaller rivers and creeks, the pioneers had "herd boys" who climbed on the backs of the cattle and slapped the animals on the sides of their faces in order to guide them into the current.¹⁵⁶ Sometimes they had to hitch up six to eight teams of oxen to pull the loads across the smaller rivers.¹⁵⁷ Of course, with these creeks came miry banks. At Silver Creek on June 12, they had to pull forty to fifty cattle out of the mud.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 27.

¹⁵⁴ See Godfrey, "No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals Across the Plains," 7.

¹⁵⁵ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 27.

¹⁵⁶ See Godfrey, "No Small Miracle: The Movement of Domestic Animals Across the Plains," 8.

¹⁵⁷ See Pidcock, "Wayne County," 217.

¹⁵⁸ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 183.

Summary

Cattle and other livestock played a significant role in the 1846 exodus along the Iowa trail. One historian declared, “There could have been no journey without them. They formed the basis of farm power, dairy herds, and industry, . . .”¹⁵⁹

Indeed, the Latter-day Saints’ livestock, particularly their cattle, played an enormously important role in the trek across Iowa. Many of their challenges directly involved their livestock, such as getting stuck in mud holes, lack of feed, and delays caused by lost animals. Yet truly, these animals pulled the pioneers and their loads through to their settlement on the banks of the Missouri River, which could not have happened without them.

After having gathered thousands of cattle from Nauvoo all the way across the Iowa trail, the pioneers set the stage for Winter Quarters, where cattle herds became, as Thomas L. Kane observed, “the only wealth of the Mormons, and more and more cherished by them with the increasing pastoral character of their lives.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Godfrey, “No Small Miracle,” *Ensign*, November 1971, 55.

¹⁶⁰ Kane, “The Mormons: A Discourse Delivered before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania,” in *Millennial Star*, 13:148.

CHAPTER SIX

WINTER QUARTERS, LIVESTOCK, AND CORNELIUS LOTT

Due to sickness, hunger, and cold weather, thousands of Latter-day Saints endured a trying winter at the Missouri River in 1846 and 1847. Their survival depended upon their herds and expert husbandmen, like Cornelius Lott, who looked after them. How did livestock contribute to the Church's salvation at Winter Quarters and what did caring for them entail? To what extent was Lott involved in that effort?

Livestock: A Significant Factor in the Church's Salvation

At Winter Quarters, the Church depended largely on livestock, particularly cattle, for its temporal salvation. There were other factors in their temporal salvation as well, such as the money they received for the enlistment of the Mormon Battalion and the trading expeditions into northwestern Missouri.¹ But because the Latter-day Saints had traded nearly all they had for cattle, animal feed, and food provisions before and during their trek across Iowa, they had become rich in cattle. The products from their livestock

¹ On April 4, 1848, Brigham Young noted, "The enlistment of the Mormon Battalion in the service of the United States, though looked upon by many with astonishment and some with fear, has proved a great blessing to this community. It was indeed the temporal salvation of our camp; . . ." (As cited in Richard E. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus, 1846-1848* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 342-343).

For further research on the trading expeditions to Missouri, see Richard E. Bennett, "Mormons and Missourians: the Uneasy Truce," *The Midwest Review* 9 (Spring, 1987): 12-21.

provided what they needed to sustain life, either as food or as goods traded for food and supplies.

Cattle Rich, Penny Poor

Though otherwise destitute, the Latter-day Saints had a wealth of cattle when they arrived at the Missouri River in 1846. On June 30, 1846, while Wilford Woodruff traveled just west of Mount Pisgah, he wrote, “I stoped my Carriage on the top of a rolling prairie And I had most A splendid view. I could stand And gaze to the east west North & South & behold the Saints pouring out & gathering like clouds from the Hills & dales grove & prairie with there teams, waggons, flocks, & Heards by Hundreds & thousands as it were untill it looked like the movements of A great Nation.”² Another pioneer, George Whitaker, reflecting on their arrival at the Missouri River, recalled, “The next great question was where we could winter our stock as we had several thousand head.”³

On August 12, 1846, at Cutler’s Park on the west side of the river, a census showed 1,264 oxen, 146 horses, 828 cows, 49 mules, and 416 sheep in Brigham Young’s company and 741 oxen, 340 cows, 244 sheep, 105 young cattle in Heber C. Kimball’s, making a total of 3,278 head of cattle between the two.⁴ This number is fitting with Thomas L. Kane’s estimate that he made later while observing the Latter-day Saints’ camp on the west side of the Missouri River. He stated, “Herd boys were dozing upon the

² Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:55.

³ George Whitaker, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 75.

⁴ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 311 and Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:67-68.

slopes; sheep and horses, cows and oxen, were feeding around them and other herds, in the luxuriant meadow of the then swollen river. From a single point I counted four thousand head of cattle in view at one time.”⁵

These figures, however, represent only a part of the livestock that the Church and its individual members possessed at the time since there were many that were still journeying and others who had stopped at various settlements.⁶ The Latter-day Saints in those locations had livestock as well, but those at Winter Quarters were generally better prepared for the exodus and had more animals.

In 1850, Thomas L. Kane reported that in 1846 “no less than 30,000” head of the Latter-day Saints’ cattle crossed the Missouri River.⁷ John Taylor also estimated 30,000 head of cattle.⁸ However, as stated previously, Richard E. Bennett contested that 10,000 head of cattle is a more likely estimate.⁹ The latter is more probable since one of the

⁵ Kane, “The Mormons,” in *Millennial Star*, 13:131.

⁶ By the end of December, approximately 4,000 people inhabited Winter Quarters, while an additional 3,000 had settled on the east side of the river at Council Bluffs. Yet another 2,000 to 3,000 lived at Mt. Pisgah, Garden Grove, and other smaller Iowa communities, and over 1,500 had gone to St. Louis, Missouri, and other towns on the Mississippi River (see Bennett, *We’ll Find the Place*, 58).

Determining the number of individual-owned livestock in comparison to the Church-owned is impossible. However, evidence suggests the Church owned a fairly large portion of the livestock.

⁷ See Kane, “The Mormons,” in *Millennial Star*, 13:148.

⁸ See Taylor, “Address to the Saints in Great Britain,” *Millennial Star*, 8:114. Some modern scholars have echoed this figure as an estimate (see Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 245 and Ernest Widtsoe Shumway, “History of Winter Quarters, Nebraska: 1846-1848,” [Masters thesis, Brigham Young University, 1953], 26).

⁹ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 114 and 252.

largest herds numbered approximately 1,200 in February 1847.¹⁰ Another herd found some 40 miles north of Winter Quarters had about five or six hundred head of cattle according to one pioneer woman.¹¹ Within the vicinity of Winter Quarters in December, the bishops of the wards reported 777 oxen and 463 cows, making a total of 1,240 head of cattle in the city.¹² By December, the Latter-day Saints had already slaughtered a number of cattle for beef, and the Omaha tribe, upon whose land the pioneers had settled, had killed many more.¹³ Whatever the total number, the livestock was “by far their richest resource.”¹⁴

Livestock as a Lifeline

Because of their wealth in livestock, the Latter-day Saints could sustain life, which in turn saved the Church temporally. On January 6, 1847, at Winter Quarters, Brigham Young wrote to some of the Apostles then serving missions in England that the

¹⁰ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 524. This herd, under the care of Asahel Lathrop through the winter of 1846-1847, lived in the rush bottoms on the banks of the Missouri River about seventy miles north of Winter Quarters.

¹¹ See Ursulia B. Hascall, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 247.

¹² See Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 219. Also see David R. Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness: A Day-by-Day Pioneer Experience, Winter Quarters and Mormon Battalion March* (Tuscon, Arizona: LDS-Gems Press, 1997), 348.

¹³ See Hascall, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 244 and Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 250.

¹⁴ Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 114. To add to the value of the Saints' vast herds, livestock prices increased greatly during their first year at the Missouri River, due to the effect the Mexican War had in the United States economy (see Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 5). However, at least at first, the Saints viewed their cattle as valuable primarily because of their worth in pulling wagons. On September 9, 1846, Brigham Young observed, “There were teams enough in the Church to do all that is needed in gathering Israel and establishing ourselves in the mountains” (Young, *Manuscript History*, 376).

main body of the Church did not have to rely on the Missourians to live. “But we are independent of them,” he exclaimed, “and can live without them, for we have thousands of cattle left yet.”¹⁵

Milk cows were a vital part of the livestock and nearly every family at Winter Quarters had one.¹⁶ One pioneer recalled, “We had all the butter, milk and honey that we wanted to eat with our bread.”¹⁷ Sometimes, they used milk to supplement their most common food, cornmeal. Another wrote, “The corn meal was very coarse, but when we got used to it, it went very well. The greatest trouble was that we did not have enough of it. Sometimes we would have a little molasses to eat with it, sometimes a little butter and milk.”¹⁸

However, there were exceptions. Of the winter of 1846-1847, Lucy Meserve Smith recalled, “. . . here I took scurvy, not having any vegetables to eat. I got so low I must wean my babe and he must be fed on that coarse cracked corn bread, when he was only five months old. We had no milk for a while till we could send to the herd and then he did very well til I got better.”¹⁹

The cattle were also used for beef. On August 1, Brigham Young wrote, “We intend to turn our old cattle into the great ranges of pea vines on the Missouri and fatten

¹⁵ *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. Clark, 1: 310.

¹⁶ See Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 114 and Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness*, 268.

¹⁷ Whitaker, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 75.

¹⁸ Whitaker, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 78.

¹⁹ Lucy Meserve Smith, *Diary of Lucy Meserve Smith*, in George A. Smith Papers, file 1, p. 8. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

them for beef.”²⁰ By November, most of those at Winter Quarters had little to eat but a small amount of coarse flour and meal and occasionally some beef.²¹ Lucy Meserve Smith remembered, “We moved down to Winter Quarters when my babe was two weeks old, there we lived in a cloth tent til dec. then we moved into a log cabin ten feet square with sod a chimney, only the wet soft ground for a floor, and poor worn out cattle beef and corn cracked in our hand mill, for our food, . . .”²²

The Latter-day Saints slaughtered many cattle during that time. Lorenzo Young, Alpheus Cutler, and Cornelius Lott, as the beef committee, oversaw most of the slaughtering.²³ In a letter to her sister dated September 19, 1846, Ursulia Hastings Hascall penned, “there is lots of fat cattle killed, one or two every day this six weeks.”²⁴ Some individuals butchered their own livestock as well.²⁵

The Church members sometimes shared meat with each other after slaughtering an animal.²⁶ In 1841, an article appeared in the *Millennial Star*, which read, “Nothing is more common than for an Illinois farmer to go among his stock, shoot down and dress a

²⁰ *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. Clark, 1: 298.

²¹ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 122.

²² Smith, *Diary of Lucy Meserve Smith*, 8.

²³ See Leonora Cannon Taylor, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 212 and 213. Also see Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 131, 238, and 314.

²⁴ Hascall, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 244.

²⁵ See Taylor, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 216; Sessions, *Mormon Midwife*, 59, 64, and 67; Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 216; and Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 387.

²⁶ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 293; Taylor, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 211; Whitney, *A Woman's View*, 393; and Thomas Bullock, *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints*:

fine ‘beef’ (as they call the ox), whenever fresh meat is wanted. This is often divided out among the neighbours, who in turn kill and share likewise.”²⁷

However, the pioneers preserved most of the meat by salting or smoking. They prepared meat dishes in other forms including meat scraps with cornmeal (scrapple), headcheese, and minced meat pudding.²⁸ During the Winter Quarters period, Patty Sessions made numerous baked mince pies.²⁹ Leonora Cannon Taylor once recorded having made “calves feet jelly.”³⁰ On another occasion, she made veal pie for some Otoe chiefs.³¹

Since the Church had little other wealth, it would often pay workers in beef. For example, Apostle Willard Richards, also serving as the Church historian, had little time to work to provide for his family. Hence, on November 3, 1846, the Church gave him a beef to assist him while he built his home.³² The police force received similar pay for their work. On December 4, Hosea Stout wrote, “The council also decided that the police should have some Church beef which will greatly relieve us as most of us have now to

The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock, ed. Will Bagley (Spokane, Washington: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1997), 102.

²⁷ “Information To Emigrants,” in *Millennial Star*, 2:58.

²⁸ See Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 196.

²⁹ See Sessions, *Mormon Midwife*, 66-71.

³⁰ Taylor, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 216.

³¹ See Taylor, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 212.

³² See Journal History, November 23, 1846. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 463.

live on bread and water & as our regular duty.”³³ In some cases, they simply gave beef to the poor to save them from starvation. In December 1846, one of the Seventies quorums donated thirty pounds of flour and thirty-five pounds of beef to those in need under their jurisdiction.³⁴

Livestock further contributed to the temporal salvation of the Church for its value in trade. Since the Latter-day Saints’ wealth lay in cattle, it naturally became the most popular item of exchange.³⁵

The pioneers exchanged beef and other products with the Indians for much-needed buffalo robes and deerskin leggings when the cold winter weather set in.³⁶ They also made a profit in beef hides while on trading expeditions to Missouri. On December 15, 1846, in preparation for one such trip, John D. Lee noted, “Accordingly through the day I fitted up some teams, purchased a load of beef hides at 4 cts and made ready to start on the morrow.”³⁷ Also, in order to pay some outstanding debts, on December 19, Church leaders resolved to sell some of the Church’s cattle.³⁸

Though not as key to the success of the Church, sheep were also valuable during the Winter Quarters period because of their wool. In spite of the trouble herding sheep

³³ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 216. Stout further recorded that he and his men received beef on May 30 and July 6, 1847 (See Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 265 and 258).

³⁴ See John D. Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee 1846-47 & 1859*, ed. Charles Kelly (Salt Lake City: Western Printing Company, 1938), 35.

³⁵ See Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 118.

³⁶ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 121-122.

³⁷ Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 39.

³⁸ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 479.

along the Iowa trail, the Latter-day Saints still had a fair number of them at Winter Quarters. On September 19, one pioneer informed her sister in a letter, “There is seven hundred sheep in one drove that is church property.”³⁹ Joseph Fielding recalled 1400 sheep in the general flock.⁴⁰

Brigham Young intended early on for the Church to produce wool from the sheep. In a letter to George Miller, dated, August 1, 1846, he declared, “We intend sending to St. Louis for two runs of mill stones, casting, etc., and to get up our carding machine.”⁴¹ Over a month later, on September 9, John Pack reported that the carding machine had arrived and that Benjamin Clapp was to oversee the building of a house to put it in.⁴²

Once the sheep were shorn in the spring, women usually did the picking, washing, carding, and spinning to make the wool. For example, from May 1 to May 15, 1847, Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman recorded spending a great deal of time doing those activities.⁴³

Although wool was the most important sheep product at the time, the Latter-day Saints occasionally ate the meat. For example, on January 12, 1847, Mary Haskin Parker

³⁹ Hascall, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 244.

⁴⁰ Fielding, *Diary of Joseph Fielding*, 144.

⁴¹ *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. Clark, 1: 299.

⁴² See Young, *Manuscript History*, 376.

⁴³ See Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, *Eliza Maria Partridge Journal*, ed. Scott H. Partridge (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 2003), 37. Incidentally, on May 13, she “Went to Father Lott’s and borrowed a little wheel to spin wool on, and spun the rest of the day” (Lyman, *Eliza Maria Partridge Journal*, 37).

Richards noted that she “baked a shoulder of lamb.”⁴⁴ However, the pioneers did not eat sheep often, judging by the scarcity of references to mutton and lamb.

Journal entries reveal that the Latter-day Saints brought only few hogs with them across the Iowa trail. However, through trading with Missourians, they brought a fairly large number of swine to Winter Quarters to be butchered. Lorenzo D. Young made the most significant swine purchase on a trading expedition in December 1846 when he bought 1,000 hogs at seventy cents per head.⁴⁵

On December 21, Brigham Young advised John D. Lee prior to Lee’s departure for Missouri to try to purchase 500 to 1,000 hogs.⁴⁶ However, because some of the Latter-day Saints had imprudently bought hogs at inflated prices, Missouri farmers raised their selling price considerably to make a profit off of them. Lee explained that a man with the last name of Rodgers “informed me with reference to the number of fat hogs that our people wish to purchase on foot could not be had at present at 1.50 pr cwt. as was anticipated. That some of our members had unwisely raised the price of pork by paying exhorbitant prices but that he could have delivered us all the pork that our people wanted at the camp at 2.25 pr cwt. provided we could have contracted with him in season; . . . ”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Mary Haskin Parker Richards, *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards*, ed. Maurine Carr Ward (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1996), 105.

⁴⁵ See Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 353-354.

⁴⁶ See Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 43.

⁴⁷ Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 46.

They also bought packaged pork products while on trading expeditions. One pioneer arrived January 8, 1847, at Winter Quarters after having purchased 900 pounds of pork.⁴⁸

Caring for the Livestock

With such large herds, caring for the livestock became a serious matter. One historian described the work as a “herculean task.”⁴⁹ This was especially true after the departure of the Mormon Battalion in July 1846 caused a shortage of men. In a letter to George Miller dated August 1, 1846, Brigham Young remarked, “About five hundred of our brethren have volunteered in the U.S. Service for California; . . . this has left us quite destitute of men to manage our flocks and teams.”⁵⁰ Echoing President Young’s sentiments, Wilford Woodruff lamented, “I have been so busy in Journeying taking Care of cattle & herds And being so few men to assist according to the amount of labour to be done that I have not been able to do Justice to my Journals . . . ”⁵¹

The Latter-day Saints faced a number of challenges tending their livestock. First, they needed to find a place for the animals where there would be sufficient feed to sustain them through the winter. Second, they dealt with straying animals that had to be rounded up. Finally, they struggled to keep peace with the Native American Indian tribes that posed a threat by stealing their cattle.

⁴⁸ See Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:116.

⁴⁹ Shumway, “History of Winter Quarters, Nebraska: 1846-1848,” 26.

⁵⁰ *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. Clark, 1:298.

⁵¹ Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:65.

Finding a Place for the Cattle

After arriving at the Missouri River, Brigham Young turned his attention to finding a place where the cattle could have sufficient feed for the winter. “The next great question,” wrote one of the pioneers, “was where we could winter our stock as we had several thousand head. The prairie grass was drying up and we could not feed them on that, . . . ”⁵²

Knowing that the Missouri River would swell and become more difficult for the cattle to cross in the spring, President Young sought to move as many animals as possible to the west side of the river in order to expedite their departure the following year. Upon the recommendation of Captain James Allen, leader of the Mormon Battalion, Church leaders began to make plans to move their herds to Grand Island, sixty miles west of the Platte River.⁵³

Plans to move the camp to Grand Island for the winter did not last long as scouts found better pasture up the river.⁵⁴ In addition, George Miller had learned from the Ponca Indians that “the Pawnees wintered their horses at Grand Island, and that our [the Mormons] immense herd would eat up all the feed before winter would be half gone, and when the Pawnees came in from their summer hunt they would kill all our cattle and drive us away.”⁵⁵

⁵² Whitaker, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 75.

⁵³ See Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 44.

⁵⁴ See Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 44.

⁵⁵ As cited in Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 46.

Crossing the Missouri River with so many cattle was a sizable undertaking. The cattlemen chose to force the animals to swim. Thomas L. Kane described the event:

They were gathered in little troops upon the shore, and driven forward till they lost their footing. As they turned their heads to return, they encountered the combined oppositions of a clamorous crowd of bystanders, vieing with each other in the pungent administration of inhospitable affront. Then rose their hub-bub: their geeing, and wooing, and hawing; their yelling, and yelping, and screaming; their hooting, and hissing, and pelting. The rearmost steers would hesitate to brave such a rebuff; halting, they would impede the return of the outermost; they all would waver: wavering for a moment, the current would sweep them together downward. At this juncture a fearless youngster, climbing upon some brave bull in the front rank, would urge him boldly forth into the stream; the rest then surely followed: a few moments saw them struggling mid current; a few more, and they were safely landed on the opposite shore.⁵⁶

Once they determined not to settle at Grand Island, Church leaders searched for a location where the Latter-day Saints could camp for the winter. Coming to a suitable spot on August 7, Brigham Young proposed that they stop there and organize a city. He asked those present whether they accepted this proposition or if they preferred looking further. He also asked them “whether they should settle together, or every man for himself.”⁵⁷ The camp historian noted, “Cornelius P. Lott, Reynolds Cahoon and others spoke in favor of following the counsel of the Twelve.”⁵⁸ With the common consent of those present,

⁵⁶ Kane, “The Mormons,” in *Millennial Star*, 13:148. In his journal on July 9, 1846, Horace K. Whitney wrote, “This morning drove our oxen into the river to swim them across, but they would not go, on account of the reflection of the sun's rays upon the water, which dazzled their eyes, consequently had to take them over in the boat—at about five o'clock had everything over but two oxen which were missing” (As cited in Whitney, *A Woman's View*, 383).

⁵⁷ *Journal History*, August 7, 1846, 1. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 297.

⁵⁸ *Journal History*, August 7, 1846, 1. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 297.

Church leaders established that location as the winter encampment, known as Cutler's Park.⁵⁹

One of the first tasks the pioneers had to accomplish at Cutler's Park was to build a place to keep the cattle. Within days after setting up camp, they built oblong, hollow pens for them on the outside of camp.⁶⁰ Next, they cut hay in order to feed the animals throughout the winter. They planned to keep some of the herds near the settlement while they sent much of the livestock elsewhere to graze for the winter. One pioneer recalled, "We crossed the River & camped at A place called Cuttess Park for about two Monts where cut hay around there & prepared feed for our cattle to Winter Driveing our stock that we did not need in herds on the Missoura Bottoms in Rushes"⁶¹

They rigorously cut and stacked hay from the middle of August into September. One remembered, "Quite a number of men went to cutting hay and stacking it up. The hay was not very good as it was cut too late in the season, but it was thought it would save the lives of some of our stock."⁶² Another observed that the workers "cut grass and made such big stacks of hay as I never thought of, for the cattle, . . ."⁶³ This project took

⁵⁹ Cutler's Park was located about five miles south of the Saints' next settlement, Winter Quarters.

⁶⁰ See Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 92. Also see Taylor, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 210.

⁶¹ Archibald Gardner, *Journal of Archibald Gardner, 1815-1857* (Provo, Utah: Copied by the BYU Library, 1944), 18-19. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

⁶² Whitaker, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 75.

⁶³ Hascall, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 244.

such priority that they put off building cabins until after they had finished the work. By the early part of September, they had cut and stacked 1,500 to 2,000 tons of hay.⁶⁴

Cutler's Park was on disputed land between two native tribes, the Omaha and the Otoe. On August 28, Brigham Young met with Big Elk, the chief of the Omaha nation, to discuss the matter. By allowing the Latter-day Saints to stay on their land, the Omaha expected to receive protection against the feared Sioux.⁶⁵ In exchange for permission to stay on Omaha land, Young offered, "We can do you good. We will repair your guns, make a farm for you, and aid you in any other way that our talents and circumstances will permit us" ⁶⁶ Big Elk answered, "I am willing you should stay I hope you will not kill our game. I will notify my young men not to trouble your cattle. If you cut down all our trees I will be the only tree left We heard you were good people; we are glad to have you come and keep a store where we can buy things cheap. You can stay with us while we hold these lands."⁶⁷

Not wanting the Otoe to make claim on any benefits from the treaty, Big Elk recommended the Latter-day Saints move further north to be on undisputed Omaha territory. Unwilling to move as far as Big Elk advised, they moved further north to a location still on disputed land that better served their needs. The Twelve officially selected the site on September 11, 1846, known as Winter Quarters.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 70.

⁶⁵ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 71.

⁶⁶ Young, *Manuscript History*, 353.

⁶⁷ Young, *Manuscript History*, 354.

⁶⁸ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 377.

Upon moving to Winter Quarters, the Latter-day Saints built a large stockyard south of the city for their cattle.⁶⁹ However, cattlemen also tended their herds in other areas. In early September, Albert P. Rockwood and John Pack went in search of good pastureland where these herds could have sufficient feed. On September 6, a few days before the Latter-day Saints settled Winter Quarters, the two men reported finding excellent grounds several miles north. President Young advised a few to establish a small settlement to tend the herds in that area. The council voted John Tanner in charge of the cattle there.⁷⁰

Henry W. Miller oversaw other cattlemen and their herds on the east side of the Missouri River. Responding to a call from President Young in July to find suitable pastures, Miller found good rush bottoms above the Boyer River on Pottawattomie land in the Iowa Territory.⁷¹

Another major cattle herding operation began early October when Asahel Lathrop and John Hill, disenchanted with George Miller's leadership, arrived at Winter Quarters from Miller's camp.⁷² They reported camping at a location with extensive rushes at the

⁶⁹ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 74.

⁷⁰ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 368.

⁷¹ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 263 and 267. Also see Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness*, 206 and Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 66.

⁷² See Young, *Manuscript History*, 404. George Miller had taken a company of 160 wagons northward along the Missouri River in the summer of 1846 and made an alliance with the Ponca Indians. Miller's company camped about five miles down from the Ponca Indian village, which was located where the Niobrara River joins the Missouri. There they camped for the winter (see Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 119 and 129). George Miller eventually apostatized in 1847 (see Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 158-159).

river bottom that would be ideal for grazing cattle during the winter.⁷³ Norton Jacob explained, “They had found extensive Rush Bottoms where they had stoped, and President [Brigham] Young said it was his intention to send his cattle up there to winter them & thought it advisable for some families to go up there, that those that wished might prepare to winter their stock on the Rushes.”⁷⁴

By October 10, most of the men in the camp went to the herd grounds to gather the cattle together and drive them up the Missouri River to the designated location.⁷⁵ The following day, in spite of the rain, the men drove about 2,000 head of cattle through town. Hosea Stout commented, “The herd allmost filled the Town. All hands turned out to select their own cattle out of the Herd They had a disagreeable time of it.”⁷⁶ In his journal on October 11, Wilford Woodruff wrote, “A hard rainy day. A herd of about 2,000 Head of cattle was drove into the encampment this morning. And while the rain poored down in torents I with many others had to go into the midst of the herd & separate my cattle.”⁷⁷

Brigham Young and others offered to pay two dollars per head to tend their cattle for the winter.⁷⁸ On October 19, Brigham Young sent 110 of his cattle, Heber C. Kimball

⁷³ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 404.

⁷⁴ Norton Jacob, *The Mormon Vanguard Brigade of 1847: Norton Jacob's Record*, ed. Ronald O. Barney (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005) 88.

⁷⁵ See Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 204. Also see Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 216.

⁷⁶ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 204.

⁷⁷ Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:92-93.

⁷⁸ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 415.

sent 130, and many others sent their cattle up the river, whereas the Church's cattle were driven in the morning.⁷⁹ Under the dictation of Brigham Young, Willard Richards wrote to Asahel Lathrop on that day, saying, "All the cattle we now send are but as a drop to the ocean compared to what have to be wintered for the camps of Israel, . . ." ⁸⁰

Lathrop and his men grazed their herds about seventy miles up the Missouri River.⁸¹ His camp was comprised of about fifty people.⁸² On November 9, 1846, Church leaders at Winter Quarters received letters from Lathrop saying that the cattle were doing well, but that if they sent more, they would have to move further north to avoid overcrowding and confusion.⁸³

Church leaders appointed others to watch over smaller herds along the river bottoms in various locations as well. For example, one such man recalled, "Some of the men, including myself, were appointed to take some stock about 20 miles up the river to herd. A wagon was unloaded and some provisions put in. My wife and myself with some other families fitted out in the same way with horses to ride, went up the river to herd."⁸⁴

All considered, the Latter-day Saints were fortunate to find such a place to stay for the winter. For the most part, the animals flourished on the rushes. On December 20,

⁷⁹ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 418 and 420.

⁸⁰ Young, *Manuscript History*, 420.

⁸¹ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 404.

⁸² See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 89.

⁸³ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 446-447.

⁸⁴ Whitaker, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 75.

1846, John D. Lee mused, “The cattle and mules were in the rushes almost waist deep and thriving, remarkably fat.”⁸⁵

While the cattle in the rushes fared well, some did not. One pioneer wrote, “Many of our cattle were sent up the river to winter on the rushes, while others were fed on hay at our residence. The winter proved a severe cold one and many cattle died with cold and starvation. I lost one ox during the winter.”⁸⁶

Stray Livestock

Just as straying animals was a challenge on the Iowa trail, so it was while at Winter Quarters because of the large number of livestock and comparatively few herdsmen to tend them. Some cattle wandered as far as seventeen miles down the Missouri River and others actually swam the river. Many cattle were never found.⁸⁷ Occasionally the problem became so great that Church leaders called for as many able-bodied men possible to assist in a “general cattle hunt.”⁸⁸

On one such instance, on October 20, a number of men rounded up stray cattle. Helen Mar Whitney described the day saying, “On Tuesday morning a general turnout was made to go and drive in the cattle, in conformity with the arrangements made at the meeting. They spent a number of days hunting them, and all that were found were put into Father Cutler's yard, which was appointed as the place of rendezvous, where the

⁸⁵ Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 42.

⁸⁶ Appleton Milo Harmon, *Appleton Milo Harmon Goes West*, ed. Maybelle Harmon Anderson (Berkeley, California: The Gillick Press, 1946), 7.

⁸⁷ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 123.

⁸⁸ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 186 and 206; Whitney, *A Woman's View*, 419; and Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 97, 235, and 240.

brethren might come and each select his own cattle.”⁸⁹ In his journal that day, Hosea Stout noted, “Today was another general cattle hunt. & all hands turned out and brought in a large number.”⁹⁰

With such large numbers of livestock spread out for many miles, finding one’s own cattle was extremely difficult. In order to solve the problem, the pioneers devised a system. Hosea Stout explained, “The cattle were scattered over a number of miles and it took a large number of hands to drive them out. So it was a custom for all who wanted any of their cattle to go on Saturdays and drive all out which could be found and every man look out his own cattle more easily this way. Individually a man might not find his cattle in a week.”⁹¹

Stray animals also presented a problem within and around the city of Winter Quarters. In order to provide protection for the residents’ property, city officials established an ordinance in November wherein the owners who did not put their animals into pens at night would have to pay a twenty-five cent fine for each stray.⁹² In his journal on November 21, John D. Lee wrote, “The Marshal advertised [*advised*] the meeting that an ordinance had lately passed by the municipal council requiring all persons to penn their horses, mules, cattle, sheep and all forefeeted animals each night, or

⁸⁹ Whitney, *A Woman's View*, 419.

⁹⁰ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 206.

⁹¹ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 203.

⁹² See Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 294.

they will find them in the stray penn and will have to pay 25 cts each head, the avails of which will go to support the police.”⁹³

Indians and Cattle

One of the greatest challenges in caring for the cattle was protecting their herds from the Omaha, upon whose land the pioneers had settled. When Brigham Young and Big Elk first met in council on August 28, 1846, Young requested that the Omaha allow the Latter-day Saints to temporarily stay on their land. He further asked that honorable men of the Omaha be hired to tend the pioneers’ livestock. In exchange, Young promised that his people would repair their guns, make a farm for them, and help them in any other way they could.⁹⁴ Big Elk responded positively to Young’s proposition, “I have young men that I can lend if you want help to guard your cattle.”⁹⁵ However, Young soon found that the Omaha did not have the skill or the trustworthiness to perform the task.⁹⁶

The following week, on September 3, the chief granted the Latter-day Saints their petition to settle on Omaha land for at least two years and promised that his people would not molest the pioneers’ “cattle, horses, sheep, or any other property.”⁹⁷

After Brigham Young initially met with Big Elk, chief of the Omaha nation, the Latter-day Saints and the Omaha people were on friendly terms one with another. In great part, this was due to the occasional beef the members of the Church would offer to the

⁹³ Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 18.

⁹⁴ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 353.

⁹⁵ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 189.

⁹⁶ See Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness*, 226-227.

⁹⁷ Young, *Manuscript History*, 362.

tribe.⁹⁸ Indeed, Brigham Young's famous Indian policy was that it was "cheaper to feed the Indians than fight them."⁹⁹ President Young stayed true to that creed and was willing to sacrifice a great deal to avoid war.¹⁰⁰

At least at first, the Latter-day Saints had sympathy towards the Omaha because of their starving condition.¹⁰¹ One pioneer noted, "The sufferings of those poor, miserable beings was immense and it excited the sympathy of our people who gave them several beef cattle, and a great amount of bread."¹⁰²

Thomas L. Kane described the Omaha as being "so ill-fed that their protruding high cheek bones gave them the air of a tribe of consumptives."¹⁰³ Their hunger resulted from unsuccessful buffalo hunts and unproductive crops.¹⁰⁴ According to Kane, the Omaha planted corn "but through fear of ambush dared not venture out to harvest it."¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ See Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 245.

⁹⁹ Lawrence G. Coates, "Cultural Conflict: Mormons and Indians in Nebraska," *BYU Studies* 24 (Summer 1984): 291.

¹⁰⁰ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 91. In addition to Young's "Indian policy," the Latter-day Saints had other reasons that compelled them to live in peace with the natives. Doctrinally, Church members saw the Indians as being part of the house of Israel as taught in the Book of Mormon. The Saints believed that the Indians' ancestors came from Jerusalem six hundred years before Christ and would eventually accept the gospel as preached by the Church. Hence, the Saints had a predisposition to look upon the natives in a positive light (see Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 91-92). Also, since the Church had fled persecution since its beginnings, the members may have looked at the Omaha as possible allies against any attacks from Missouri mobs or federal armies (see Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 93).

¹⁰¹ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 96.

¹⁰² Harmon, *Appleton Milo Harmon Goes West*, 9.

¹⁰³ Kane, "The Mormons," in *Millennial Star*, 13:165.

¹⁰⁴ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 96.

Driven by hunger, the Omaha stole cattle from the Latter-day Saints' herds. One scholar observed, "the Omaha either stole or starved."¹⁰⁶ Thus commenced a conflict that escalated throughout the next year causing harsh feelings between the two peoples.

By the middle of October 1846, the Indians were "were killing two or three oxen per day."¹⁰⁷ On October 16, Horace K. Whitney wrote that the Omaha "have had for some time in contemplation a grand buffalo hunt, which they have abandoned in expectation of living and sustaining themselves by the killing of our cattle instead."¹⁰⁸ John D. Lee reported that "the Omahas had a regular slaughter yard where they butchered our beaves without reserve . . ."¹⁰⁹ Horace Whitney further quipped, "It is said that the Indians are killing our cattle in great numbers below here, and they have been here with beef to sell; no doubt the relics of some of our cattle."¹¹⁰ From the Latter-day Saints' point of view, the Omaha clearly violated the agreement.

Church leaders began discussing how to best handle the situation, still having the objective to avoid war. First, on October 17, the Twelve made plans to meet again with Big Elk to discuss the matter.¹¹¹ Next, President Young spoke to Church members and counseled them to build their houses "in a more compact body and form our wagons in a

¹⁰⁵ Kane, "The Mormons," in *Millennial Star*, 13:165.

¹⁰⁶ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 96.

¹⁰⁷ Young, *Manuscript History*, 412.

¹⁰⁸ As cited in Whitney, *A Woman's View*, 418.

¹⁰⁹ Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 42.

¹¹⁰ As cited in Whitney, *A Woman's View*, 418.

¹¹¹ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 414.

circle, that we might be better able to defend ourselves against their encroachments.”¹¹² Of Brigham Young’s discourse, Hosea Stout wrote, “He advised us to geather and form a square so that we could keep them out of our midst and then if they came in and went either to killing our cattle or stealing our clothing blankets or any thing else for us to whip them also for us not to give them any thing to eat nor be sociable with them &c Their interpreter & teacher came in the mein time who recommended the same method He also advised not to sell our dogs as some were doing for the Indians were buying them to get them out of camp so that they could more easily pilfer from us.”¹¹³ Finally, Church leaders also sent out companies of twenty-one men each in different directions to bring in the stray cattle that would be easy prey for the Indians.¹¹⁴ The men spent the next few days carrying out the order.¹¹⁵ Optimistic, Young believed that if the people would carry out this procedure, they could expect “little trouble” from the Indians.¹¹⁶

On October 24, Brigham Young met again with Big Elk and informed him that his people had killed at least fifty of their oxen and many sheep.¹¹⁷ Big Elk retorted that the cattle his people had taken were of lesser value than the game, timber, and land the Latter-day Saints had destroyed; therefore, they felt justified in stealing cattle to

¹¹² Horace K. Whitney, in Whitney, *A Woman's View*, 418.

¹¹³ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 205.

¹¹⁴ See Whitney, *A Woman's View*, 418.

¹¹⁵ See Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 206; Whitney, *A Woman's View*, 419; and Young, *Manuscript History*, 420 and 422.

¹¹⁶ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 420.

¹¹⁷ See Journal History, October 24, 1846. Also see Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 72, and Young, *Manuscript History*, 423.

compensate for their loss.¹¹⁸ Big Elk also confessed that “he could not govern his men & we had best picket in the town &c.”¹¹⁹ Furthermore, he felt that the Latter-day Saints “were soldiers enough to defend” themselves.¹²⁰

The day after the meeting, Church leaders met in council and decided to send ten men to round up all other unclaimed stray cattle, which for the most part belonged to the sick and others who could not look after them. They took the animals to the river bottoms for protection from the Indians and looked after them for two dollars per head. Even after gathering so many cattle, several hundred head still remained on the plains.¹²¹

In an effort to improve relations between the two peoples and also to discourage the Indians from killing any more cattle, Brigham Young sent George D. Grant to the Omaha on November 6 with provisions to assist them in a buffalo hunt.¹²² In a letter to Big Elk, Young wrote, “Brother: According to promise I send you by Geo. D. Grant 1 barrel of powder and about one hundred pounds of lead to prepare for your hunt. May you prosper and get plenty of buffalo, and I want you to counsel your men not to kill any more cattle.”¹²³

¹¹⁸ See Coates, “Cultural Conflict: Mormons and Indians in Nebraska,” 296. Also, the Omaha viewed cattle in the same way they considered other animals, that is “the deer, the buffalo, the cherry or plum tree or strawberry bed were free” (Young, *Manuscript History*, 541).

¹¹⁹ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 206.

¹²⁰ See Coates, “Cultural Conflict: Mormons and Indians in Nebraska,” 290.

¹²¹ See Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 206 and Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 242-243.

¹²² See Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 268.

¹²³ Young, *Manuscript History*, 441.

In spite of Young's endeavors, the Omaha continued to kill the pioneers' livestock. On November 15, Big Elk came to Brigham Young at Winter Quarters and expressed gratitude for the powder and lead. He also returned two horses he had found and begged for a cow, as he and his family were very hungry. Young informed him that his people were still stealing cattle, to which he replied that he had reprimanded the young men who had done it.¹²⁴

Matters became worse on December 12 when the Latter-day Saints received word that Sioux warriors had fallen on the Omaha hunting party and massacred all but a few.¹²⁵ Three days after the incident, they learned that the Sioux killed a total of seventy-eight Omaha hunters.¹²⁶ Not only did this put the Omaha into a worse predicament in terms of feeding their hungry people, but caused a deeper rift between them and the Latter-day Saints since the Omaha believed they would protect them. In addition, they blamed the Latter-day Saints for giving them powder and lead to hunt buffalo, which they felt led the hunters to their deaths.¹²⁷

The Sioux also posed a threat to the Latter-day Saints. In January, over 300 Sioux warriors arrived at Lathrop's camp, where they killed thirty head of cattle and were prepared to kill more. In attempt to keep peace with the Sioux, Lathrop invited Chief

¹²⁴ See Young, *Manuscript History*, 454.

¹²⁵ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 217.

¹²⁶ See Bullock, *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints*, 108.

¹²⁷ See Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness*, 292.

Eagle and thirty of his braves to a feast. Eagle disclosed his intentions of killing the Omaha and not the white men, although he could not always restrain his young men.¹²⁸

As soon as Young heard of the threat, he had twenty-three armed men sent to assist in protecting Lathrop's herds.¹²⁹ This action was enough to ward off the Sioux, as they never again returned to disturb their herds.¹³⁰

During the spring of 1847, after Brigham Young and the advance party had set off for the Rockies, the Omaha continued killing cattle and the problem was "getting worse every day."¹³¹ On April 18, John D. Lee noted that he had lost six out of his fifteen head of cattle by reason of the Indians' stealing.¹³² On the same day, Hosea Stout explained that the Indians "will lay around in the grass and groves untill an opportunity offers and then sally forth and drive all the cattle in their power, even some times they will rush in among the herds, when there is no men present and attempt to drive them off before our eyes or they will appear on horse back and run all the cattle that stray off, away The amount of cattle killed by them the past winter & spring is incredible."¹³³ Parley P. Pratt

¹²⁸ See Bennett, *Mormons on the Missouri*, 93.

¹²⁹ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 93. Also see Whitney, *A Woman's View*, 431.

¹³⁰ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 94.

¹³¹ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 251.

¹³² See Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 151.

¹³³ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 250. "Incredible meant 'from 3 to 5,000 dollars worth of cattle' as Young estimated, enough to cast serious doubt on any chance of moving the camp en masse to the mountains come spring" (Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 97).

declared that the Church would “face starvation unless the Indians stopped their malicious attacks.”¹³⁴

Under these increasingly desperate circumstances, on April 19, 1847, leaders of the Church held a special meeting at the home of Samuel Russell to take immediate action in order to resolve the problem. Hosea Stout remarked, “Much was said after which a committee was appointed to go and have an interview with Big Elk on the subject where upon President Alpheus Cutler Daniel Spencer, C. P. Lott and W. W. Phelps were appointed to go and complain of our grievances. The Feeling of the Council & also of Elders Taylor and Pratt were indignant at the conduct of the Omahas and the prevailing sentiment was to stop them if it had to be by harsher means.”¹³⁵

The men met with Big Elk on April 21 and reported the next day that the Omaha had confessed putting their young men up to the trespasses. By that point, the Omaha were greatly dissatisfied the Latter-day Saints. According to William W. Phelps, Big Elk told the men, “You cut hay but people must buy it if one wants to warm can’t do it but you can take our wood and it won’t grow up tomorrow – our fa[ther] will not buy our lands so good your head men said you would shelter us, but you come among us and first we know up rises a city eat up our grass kill our game scare it away come to live where we used to hunt and find pea vines and plenty of cattle must not kill your Cattle but our game all scared away – vines all trodden down – You were here to protect us, but

¹³⁴ As cited in Stephen F. Pratt, “Parley P. Pratt in Winter Quarters and the Trail West,” *BYU Studies* 24 (Summer 1984): 375.

¹³⁵ Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 250-251.

down comes the Sioux and murderers us that your fault You can raise up our timber can't raise up our dead men so you are the aggressors.”¹³⁶

At the meeting, John Miller, an Indian agent for the United States government, counseled the Omaha that “when the Mormons did not deliver the corn they had promised, the Omaha were within their rights to kill the Mormons’ cattle.”¹³⁷ After this, the Omaha “seemed willing to stop” their young men from stealing cattle if the Church would give two hundred dollars’ worth of corn to them.¹³⁸

In the meantime, Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor, the presiding authorities at Winter Quarters, held a meeting to find other ways to deter the Indians from stealing more cattle. On April 20, “It was decided for the Bishop of each ward to form the cattle in his ward into a herd & appoint a captain over those who are with the herd, all to be well armed with guns &c to defend the cattle against them.”¹³⁹

On April 23, three Indians from the Otoe tribe approached the Church leaders accusing the Omaha of deceiving the Latter-day Saints. They claimed that Winter Quarters was actually on Otoe land. Consequently, they requested that the Church give them corn and they would allow them to stay on the land as long as they wish. Once the Otoe braves had gone, the Church leaders decided to pay corn to both tribes in order to maintain peace. According to Robert Campbell, the clerk, they reasoned that “\$60 to \$80

¹³⁶ As cited in Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 98.

¹³⁷ Pratt, “Parley P. Pratt in Winter Quarters and the Trail West,” 375.

¹³⁸ See Stout, *On The Mormon Frontier*, 251. Also see Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 155.

¹³⁹ Stout, *On The Mormon Frontier*, 251.

is nothing to get peace for we lose that amount in two or three days by their killing our cattle!!”¹⁴⁰

The conflict between the Church and the Omaha peaked in June 1847 when three men from that tribe assaulted a small group of Latter-day Saints, which resulted in the death of a Church member named Jacob Weatherby.¹⁴¹ However, once Brigham Young had returned to Winter Quarters, “relations between the Omaha and the Mormons greatly improved, largely because Young’s sense of diplomacy and justice replaced the impetuosity and lack of common sense among several of his overzealous lieutenants.”¹⁴² In fact, on January 3, 1848, Brigham Young wrote, “The Omahas have been peaceable this winter, and have not killed any cattle, and our circumstances, in comparison with last winter, are very prosperous and good.”¹⁴³

Lott’s Role with Livestock Care

Since livestock was such a valuable commodity, the leaders of the Church had a great deal of trust in those assigned to care for the animals. One historian commented, “Those who labored to fell trees, build cabins, cut sod, plow fields, plant gardens, herd cattle, and create a community, all with the knowledge that ‘even now we are preparing to move on again,’ are the hidden heroes of the triumphal chapter of Winter Quarters

¹⁴⁰ As cited in Pratt, “Parley P. Pratt in Winter Quarters and the Trail West,” 377.

¹⁴¹ See Journal History, June 19, 1847, 3-6; Sessions, *Mormon Midwife*, 85; and Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 179. Incidentally, those who came to Weatherby’s aid and ended up burying him were Lott, Newel K. Whitney, and Alpheus Cutler.

¹⁴² Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 110.

¹⁴³ *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. Clark, 1: 339.

history.”¹⁴⁴ Lott’s close association with both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, coupled with his expertise in the care of livestock, made him a natural choice to fulfill crucial assignments pertaining to the westward exodus. No evidence suggests that Lott had any important role in herding animals across the Iowa trail; hence, his role in caring for livestock began during the Winter Quarters period when Brigham Young gave him charge over all of the Church’s cattle in July 1846. In August, Young appointed him to the Municipal High Council and later assigned him to the Beef Committee, consisting of three men who oversaw the slaughtering of the Church’s old cattle. During the fall and winter of 1846 and 1847, Lott played a significant role in tending sheep. Finally, in the spring of 1847, he took an active part in the peace talks with the Omaha in an effort to protect the Latter-day Saints’ cattle from being stolen.

Lott’s Trek Across Iowa

Lott left Nauvoo with the first group of pioneers in February 1846, crossing the Mississippi River with a team of two cows and two oxen.¹⁴⁵ While at Sugar Creek, Lott assisted some of the Latter-day Saints across the frozen river. On February 24, Horace K. Whitney wrote, “Father Lott with his team left Nauvoo with the women and children, crossed the river on the ice, and took them to the camp.”¹⁴⁶ Of February 27, Helen Mar Whitney recalled, “I bade my last adieu to our home and city and re-crossed the Mississippi with Bishop Whitney’s family, whom he sent to camp in charge of Father C.

¹⁴⁴ Jennifer L. Lund, “‘Pleasing to the Eyes of an Exile’: The Latter-day Saint Sojourn at Winter Quarters, 1846-1848,” *BYU Studies* 39 (Spring 2000): 135.

¹⁴⁵ See Willes, “Personal History of Cornelius P. Lott,” 9.

¹⁴⁶ As cited in Hartley, “Winter Exodus from Nauvoo,” xvi.

R. Lott, the bishop remaining behind to see his own and church teams over, and he came to the camp next day.”¹⁴⁷ That Whitney, who was in charge of the temporal welfare of the Church, entrusted his own family to Lott while they departed Nauvoo certainly underscores the confidence he held in him.

Lott and his company trekked over 300 miles across Iowa and arrived at Mount Pisgah on Sunday, June 28, 1846.¹⁴⁸ A week later, on July 5, Lott met up with Brigham Young at Council Bluffs.¹⁴⁹ Within a week, Lott set up camp at Keg Creek, where Young dined with the Lott family.¹⁵⁰

Lott’s Assignments with Cattle

As President Young organized the encampment on the Missouri River, he quickly made use of Lott’s expertise with the care of animals. On July 17, while still on the east side of the Missouri River at Council Bluffs, Iowa, he wrote, “I instructed Bishop

¹⁴⁷ Whitney, *A Woman’s View*, 333. (Though the transcription here referred to him as “C. R. Lott,” undoubtedly this was an error). Also on February 27, Emmeline B. Wells noted, “Mrs. Whitney Sarah Ann and myself crossed the river to go to the encampment of the saints. Br. Lot and his wife took Mrs. W. and myself in their carriage. We crossed the river a part of the way on foot, and then went on to the encampment about 1 mile beyond” (Emmeline B. Wells, *Diaries of Emmeline B. Wells 1844-1920*, AMs, February 27, 1846, p. 21 [L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah], microfilm).

¹⁴⁸ See Rogers, *Diaries and Reminiscences of Samuel Hollister Rogers*, box 1, file 4, p. 74.

¹⁴⁹ See *Journal History*, July 5, 1846, and Young, *Manuscript History*, 209.

¹⁵⁰ See *Journal History*, July 12, 1846, and Young, *Manuscript History*, 232.

Whitney to gather up all the Church cattle and let Father Lott take them up the river to winter.”¹⁵¹

Having received the assignment, Lott joined with the leaders of the Church that same day, July 17, to scout among the river bottoms and find a place for the cattle.¹⁵² In the river bottoms, the rushes grew green all year, making an ideal place where the cattle could graze throughout the winter months.¹⁵³

As discussed earlier, by recommendation of Captain James Allen, Church leaders seriously considered settling at Grand Island for the winter. Therefore, on July 22, the Twelve instructed Lott “to cross the river and get five or six teams to take loads to Grand Island; . . . ”¹⁵⁴ On July 30, 1846, on the west side of the river, Horace Whitney wrote, “Father Lott came up today, bringing considerable church property, with some cattle and sheep, etc.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Young, *Journal of Brigham*, 171. Also see *Journal History*, July 17, 1846, 1, and Young, *Manuscript History*, 260. Lott’s appointment over the Church’s cattle was no trivial matter. One historian discussed Brigham Young as “a superb judge of character, not given to croneyism, and distrustful of all but his closest advisors, . . . ” (Richard E. Bennett, “A Legacy of Exodus,” in *The Iowa Mormon Trail*, 183).

¹⁵² See *Journal History*, July 17, 1846, 2. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 263. The entire group included Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Willard Richards, John Taylor, George A. Smith, Amasa Lyman, Newel K. Whitney, Jediah M. Grant, Cornelius P. Lott, Andrew H. Perkins, John Scott, Jesse C. Little, James M. Flake, and Chauncey W. Webb.

¹⁵³ See George Washington Hill, in *Journey to Zion*, comp. Madsen, 359. Also see Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 66.

¹⁵⁴ *Journal History*, July 22, 1846. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 270. In addition, “Bro Lott was instructed to take his flocks and herds to Grand Island” (*Journal History*, July 22, 1846).

¹⁵⁵ As cited in Whitney, *A Woman’s View*, 392.

After Church leaders decided against settling at Grand Island, they established Cutler's Park. Heber C. Kimball motioned that a municipal high council consisting of twelve men be appointed to oversee the settling of the town. The Twelve called Lott to be part of that council.¹⁵⁶ With Lott's previous experience, his appointment to the council was a natural fit since caring for livestock held an important place in establishing the community.

In council on August 17, 1846, Brigham Young motioned "that Lorenzo D. Young assist Bro. Cornelius P. Lott in gathering all the old cattle belonging to the Church and place them in charge of Father Lott."¹⁵⁷

Church leaders decided to fatten the old cattle to be slaughtered for beef in order to preserve the young to work as draft animals for the trek the following year.¹⁵⁸ On August 1, 1846, Brigham Young disclosed, "We intend to turn our old cattle into the great ranges of pea vines on the Missouri and fatten them for beef."¹⁵⁹

In council on August 27, Church leaders determined that upon the slaughter of the old cattle, the owner would receive the hide and tallow and then receive "meat at intervals as he might wish, . . ." ¹⁶⁰ Brigham Young concurred that the men in camp

¹⁵⁶ See Journal History, August 7, 1846, and Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 264. Also see Andrew Jenson, comp., *Church Chronology: A Record of Important Events*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1914), 30 and Young, *Manuscript History*, 297-298. The other high councilors were Alpheus Cutler, Winslow Farr, Ezra Chase, Jedediah M. Grant, Albert P. Rockwood, Benjamin L. Clapp, Samuel Russell, Reynolds Cahoon, Daniel Russell, Elnathan Eldredge, and Thomas Grover.

¹⁵⁷ Journal History, August 17, 1846, 2. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 328.

¹⁵⁸ Journal History, August 27, 1846. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 351-352.

¹⁵⁹ *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. Clark, 1: 298.

¹⁶⁰ Journal History, August 27, 1846. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 351-352.

should fatten their old cattle and proposed that a committee be formed “to buy, butcher and sell them, and find out by Bishop N. K. Whitney what can be had for hides delivered at this point, . . . ”¹⁶¹ Hence, the Twelve and the Municipal High Council voted that Lorenzo D. Young, Alpheus Cutler, and Cornelius P. Lott serve as the beef committee.¹⁶² The work of butchering began the next day.¹⁶³ In this particular assignment, Lott played a key role in the temporal salvation of the Church.

Lott’s Role in Shepherding

In the shepherding work, Cornelius Lott and Charles Bird became the key figures¹⁶⁴ At Winter Quarters, the sheep were kept east of the city on the banks of the river.¹⁶⁵ In addition to the regular challenges associated with shepherding, there was a shortage of help, just as there was with cattle herding. Exasperated, Charles Bird called on the sheep owners to provide help in tending the flocks. He also declared that if anyone were delinquent in paying the fee for watching the sheep, he would take the owner’s

¹⁶¹ Journal History, August 27, 1846. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 352.

¹⁶² See Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff Journal*, 3:72; John Lyman Smith, John L. Smith Papers, AMs (photocopy), box 1, folder 2, page 21, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; and Journal History, August 27, 1846.

¹⁶³ See Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 131.

¹⁶⁴ See Journal History, September 5, 1846. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 367.

¹⁶⁵ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 74.

sheep as payment. The Church historian also added, “C Bird and C P Lott use their discretion in controlling the bucks.”¹⁶⁶

Having observed the situation, on November 21, 1846, John D. Lee commented, “Bro. Lott has taken quite a No. of sheep to take care of for the brethren. while they could be hearded on the prairie the sheep done well enough, but now they certainly would do better in smawler No’s. I would recommend those that have sheep to take them back and pay him for his trouble.”¹⁶⁷ Not surprisingly, less than a month later, on December 19, the council met and decided to award Lott one hundred dollars in goods from the store in consideration of his farming and herding for the Church.¹⁶⁸ In addition to any monetary payment the shepherders received, they were given all the wool and half of the lambs born while the sheep were in their charge.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Journal History, September 5, 1846. Also see Crockett, *Saints in the Wilderness*, 145 and Young, *Manuscript History*, 367.

¹⁶⁷ Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 19. Lott kept a record wherein he logged the names of all those for whom he tended sheep and how many sheep they had. The list of people included Albert P. Rockwood (1), Henry Brooks (10), Ezra Chase (36), William Jennings (30), Franklin J. Davis (2), Augustus Stafford (4), William Kimball (1), Samuel Rolf (2), Mary Jones (3), Jonathan Herrington (number crossed out), Joseph Murdock (6), Charles Avery (5), Peter Conover (12), Jackson Redden (21), Nancy Buchanan (11), Nathum Bigelow (8), Gustuvus A. Perry (10), Temple (190), Horace Eldredge (2), Isaac Grundy (10), Alpheus Cutler (21), Eames Hunter (29), John Taylor (8), Thomas Mendenhall (8), Abraham Hoagland (7), Heber C. Kimball (25), Gardner Clark (13), Samuel Shepherd (21), Richard Spencer (11), Samuel Snyder (16), Job Barnum (10), Julian Van Orden? (9), Simeon Holmes (3), Caleb Haight (28), Joshua S. Holman (took home), William Fawcett (9), William Robinson (3), Charles Bird (17), and Elizabeth Vance (62). (See Cornelius Peter Lott, *Daybook 1843-1852*, AMs [Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City], microfilm).

¹⁶⁸ See Journal History, December 19, 1846. Also see Young, *Manuscript History*, 479. The average laborer at the time received about one dollar per day for their labor. Hence, this payment would have been worth approximately over three months’ work for Lott.

¹⁶⁹ See Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness*, 285.

The harsh winter, coupled with the danger of wolves, greatly increased the mortality rate of the sheep. Joseph Fielding recalled, “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 Prairy [prairie], and they had to live on Hay and some little Corn. The Flock, which numbered 1400, began to die, and it was found that they could not be sustained, and we were advised to take them home, having lost 5 there. But they still kept dying, so that before the Winter was over, we had but 18 left of the 43 that we started with.”¹⁷⁰

One pioneer, Peter Wilson Conover, recalled how Lott “agreed to take out sheep and take care of them and bring them to the mountains for one-half of them. Brigham and Heber had about two hundred head and I had about ninety head. There came a big snow after he took them, and snow fell about two feet deep. The big white wolves came down and killed one hundred in one night, and kept on killing until the old man came and begged us to come and get what was left. Out of ninety, I had seventeen left. I soon got rid of them and have never owned a sheep since.”¹⁷¹

Lott’s Role in Protecting the Cattle from the Omaha

As discussed previously, on April 19, 1847, not long after Brigham Young and the first pioneers departed, the remaining Church leaders appointed Lott to be part of a

¹⁷⁰ Fielding, Diary of Joseph Fielding, 144.

¹⁷¹ Conover, Autobiography of Peter Wilson Conover, 3.

committee to meet with Big Elk for peace talks in order to protect the livestock.¹⁷² After meeting with the Omaha chief on April 21, Lott returned to the range to guard the herds.¹⁷³

Unfortunately, on May 7, the “Omahas made another breach on the cattl.”¹⁷⁴ On May 25, Young Elk, son of Big Elk, and a few other braves approached Winter Quarters to talk with the Church leaders. John Taylor sent Lott and Hosea Stout. In the council, Young Elk stated he was ready to hear what they had to say. Lott “replied very angrily that we had said heretofore all we had to say & they would not live up to their agreements & if they had nothing to say it was no use talking &c.” In his diary, Stout commented that he felt Lott’s response was “very hostile” and “unreasonable.”

Young Elk remained calm and vowed that his people would no longer steal horses and expressed his desire for peace. In addition, Young Elk spoke sharply and quipped that if Brigham Young had come, Young Elk would have treated the men more kindly. Stout wrote, “Br Lott’s wrath abated & he talked reasonable in a short time & we all verily believed they were sincere in their words.” Lott and Stout promised to relay the words of the council to Alpheus Cutler, president of the high council.¹⁷⁵

The Church continued having problems with straying cattle, which further factored into why the Indians persisted in stealing cattle. On May 20, Lott joined with other Church leaders and sent out a notice concerning stray animals. They announced,

¹⁷² See Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 250-251 and Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 98.

¹⁷³ See Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee*, 156.

¹⁷⁴ Stout, *On The Mormon Frontier*, 253.

¹⁷⁵ See Stout, *On The Mormon Frontier*, 256-257.

“All stray cattle not claimed . . . shall be used by the authorities on the present mountain expedition and shall still be held as strays for the owners, as this people are all bound for the mountains.”¹⁷⁶

When the conflict between the Latter-day Saints and the Omaha reached its peak in June of 1847 with the murder of Jacob Weatherby, Lott, along with Newel K. Whitney and Alpheus Cutler, made up the rescue party.¹⁷⁷ After that incident, as mentioned earlier, the variance between the two peoples cooled.¹⁷⁸

Lott continued working with the livestock up to the time he left for the Salt Lake Valley in the summer of 1848. In fact, at the time of the pioneers’ departure that year, Lott served as “the man in charge of the public cattle of the company.”¹⁷⁹

Summary

Because of Brigham Young’s foresight in gathering numerous herds of livestock, the Church’s temporal salvation during the Winter Quarters period was largely contingent on livestock and on those who had charge over them. The livestock, particularly cattle, proved to be the Church’s greatest economic asset because they provided what the Church needed to sustain life.

¹⁷⁶ Journal History, May 20, 1847. The other Church leaders were Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, John Taylor, John Smith, Newel K. Whitney, George W. Harris, Winslow Farr, Isaac Morley, John Young, and Joseph Young.

¹⁷⁷ See Sessions, *Mormon Midwife*, 86. Also see Journal History, 20 June 1847, 2.

¹⁷⁸ See Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 110.

¹⁷⁹ Joseph F. Smith, “A Plucky Pioneer Mother,” *Improvement Era*, June 1918, 756. On June 18, Lott was chosen as “Captain of the Herd” (Journal History, September 24, 1848).

Tending the livestock was a difficult task, especially with so many cattle and so few men. The pioneers had to find places where the cattle would have enough feed to last them throughout the winter. They also struggled to keep the cattle from straying and also had to round up those missing. Further, they had to protect their herds from the Indians.

Because of the importance of the herds and the difficulty tending them, those appointed to oversee the care of livestock were highly trusted individuals. Such was the case with Cornelius P. Lott, whose service during the Winter Quarters era epitomized the service of such trusted men. He played a key role in looking after the livestock. First, Brigham Young appointed him to take charge of the Church's herd on arrival at the Missouri River. Second, he served on the beef committee, which supervised the fattening and slaughtering of old cattle for consumption. Third, he was one of two individuals who oversaw the tending of sheep at Winter Quarters. Finally, he was active in protecting the livestock from the Indians, both in watching over the animals and in negotiating with the Indians to keep peace.

Brigham Young's foresight to gather such large numbers of cattle proved to be critical. The livestock and the men who herded them provided much of the temporal salvation of the Church. Men like Lott are to be heralded for their contribution.

CONCLUSION

This work argues that the temporal success and salvation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during the first year of the Winter Quarters period depended in large measure upon their livestock and the men, like Cornelius P. Lott, who cared for them.¹ Showing great foresight, Church leaders chose to amass cattle and other livestock to provide many essentials for the pioneers' survival during their exodus west. The Latter-day Saints needed to transport their provisions; oxen could pull their wagons. They needed more food than they were able to store with their supplies; cattle were a mobile food source that could be slaughtered for beef. They needed to plant crops; oxen could pull the plows. They needed to trade for additional supplies; cowhide and wool, in addition to providing clothing, could be valuable commodities. Indeed, livestock, especially cattle, were an ideal resource supplemented by the money generated by those who enlisted in the Mormon Battalion and those who worked for and traded with settlers in Missouri and Iowa.

Livestock was beyond a doubt the Mormon pioneers' greatest asset. For this reason, Brigham Young had to be selective in choosing men to oversee the herds. Lott's appointment over such crucial assignments grew out of the trust President Young had in

¹ Other areas not included in this work that solicit further research include the differences between Church cattle and privately owned cattle, the role of livestock in the trek from Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake Valley, and Lott's roles as a captain of ten in the 1848 exodus, superintendent of the Forest Dale Farm in the Salt Lake Valley, and a member of the Territorial Senate of Deseret.

him. Lott developed his skills in agriculture while growing up in New York and Pennsylvania. Joseph Smith recognized Lott's abilities and during the Nauvoo period the Prophet hired him to work his farm. This pivotal juncture in Lott's life afforded him great opportunities to associate closely with and gain the respect of Joseph Smith and other Church leaders. Hence, after the Prophet's martyrdom, Lott continued his close association with leaders of the Church. By the Winter Quarters period, Lott was a natural choice for assignments in tending livestock. When the Saints first arrived at the Missouri River, President Young appointed Lott to take charge of the Church's cattle. After settling in at Winter Quarters, Lott was assigned to the Beef Committee with Lorenzo D. Young, Brigham Young's brother, and Alpheus Cutler. They were to direct the fattening and slaughtering of the old cattle. For his next assignment, Lott joined with Charles Bird to supervise the shepherding endeavors. Finally, he played a key role in negotiating with the Indians in order to protect the Latter-day Saints' cattle from being stolen.

Lott represents those key individuals, like Asahel Lathrop, John Tanner, Henry W. Miller, Charles Bird, Alpheus Cutler, and Lorenzo D. Young, who oversaw livestock care at Winter Quarters. Church leaders trusted them with the Church's most prized commodity. To a great extent, the entire Church depended on them and the livestock for their livelihood. In fine, the Latter-day Saints simply could not have made the exodus without them.

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