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Markets and the Mormon Conflict  
in Nauvoo, Illinois, 1839-1846

Caye Wycoff

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Donald J. Harreld  
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## ABSTRACT

### Markets and the Mormon Conflict in Nauvoo, Illinois, 1839-1846

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Master of Arts

This thesis examines the development of the economy during the period the Mormons were in Illinois, 1839-1846. It argues that the economy developed similarly to contemporary towns and that the Mormons in Nauvoo participated in the local and regional market. However, the doctrine of the gathering produced explosive population growth, including almost 5,000 immigrants from Britain. The economy was not able to absorb the number and this contributed to the exodus of the Mormons to the west in 1846. The main sources used are surviving account books, diaries, journals from merchants and farmers.

The first chapter describes the settlement of Illinois and where the Mormons fit in relation to contemporary towns. They were influenced by boosterism, paper towns, and the river economy in Illinois. The public rhetoric about communal practices caused confusion with Mormons and their neighbors. In the second chapter, using data from the account books, evidence shows that the Mormons traded with other towns and participated in the market. In the third chapter, the impact of the gathering, particularly the British immigrants, is analyzed. As the explosion of population occurred in Nauvoo, rival towns, particularly Warsaw, were threatened by the perceived economic strength. The death of prophet Joseph Smith in 1844 was the beginning of the end for the economy in Nauvoo and contributed to the decision to abandon the town and move west in 1846.

The study challenges the prevailing historical interpretation of a self-sufficient economy even though there were some unique elements in Nauvoo due to the religious aspect of the gathering. Comparing commerce in Hancock County to the regional market in different stages of economic development shows how Nauvoo fit into the larger picture in western Illinois. One contribution of the study is to show the impact of the emerging market economy and that even the Mormons participated in the market.

Keywords: Nauvoo, Mormons, market, economy, Illinois

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I am thankful for the faculty of the History Department at Brigham Young University who were patient with me as I re-entered the academic arena after many years. As members of my thesis committee, Donald J. Harreld shared his extensive knowledge of account books and Matthew E. Mason helped me see a broader perspective about the time period studied.

Most of all, I wish to express my appreciation to Susan S. Rugh. I tentatively took my first graduate level history course from Dr. Rugh. Her support and high expectations helped me to stretch my abilities far beyond what I envisioned in the beginning. Her constant encouragement was essential to completing this project. I am especially grateful for the friendship we have formed through this process.

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## INTRODUCTION

Amos Davis, a native of Vermont, arrived in Commerce, Illinois, in the fall of 1836. On January 1, 1837, he married Elvira Hibbard and began operating a mercantile business, presumably taking over the store run by Hiram Kimball. By 1839 his little frontier store was doing very well providing provisions for the few residents in Commerce and farmers from the surrounding areas. Little did Davis know what was about to happen to his life because of the arrival of a group of religious refugees from the state of Missouri. Davis' interaction with the Mormons would bring his family a new religion, temporary business growth, long-term financial prosperity, and a heartbreaking love triangle. All of this happened because he chose to settle in the little town of Commerce, situated on a bend in the Mississippi River.

The Midwest in the early nineteenth century was quickly moving from a subsistence agrarian economy to a market oriented economy. In *The Market Revolution*, Charles Sellers explores the effects of the entire country's move from a subsistence culture that "fostered family obligation, communal cooperation, and reproduction" to the market that "fostered individualism and competitive pursuit of wealth by open-ended production of commodity values that could be accumulated as money."<sup>1</sup> Other historians have also acknowledged the farmer's commitment to Jeffersonian ideals at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As the magnetic force of growing dependence on the market caused the inevitable transformation of the American farm, this new growth of market orientation caused great ambivalence for the farmer and at times the farmer

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 5.

showed outright resistance to economic dependence on the market.<sup>2</sup> Because most historians writing about Nauvoo focus on the religious events in Nauvoo they have taken the narrow position that the economy in Nauvoo was quite unique, self-contained and self-sufficient, isolated from the neighboring communities and the region. Many have failed to consider the larger picture of the region and the nation that undoubtedly had tremendous impact on Nauvoo. Given the fact that thousands of Mormons settled in surrounding areas, some temporarily and some for the entire seven-year period that Mormons were in Illinois, it is more likely that most had economic interaction with their neighbors in the region. The Nauvoo Mormons participated in the market significantly and in a similar manner as other nearby agrarian communities and also experienced the same move towards the market that was common among their contemporaries. And yet, the economy was different because of the religious aspect of the gathering. In Nauvoo, the people were committed to a religion that kept them in a town even though the economic resources to survive were lacking.

From an initial survey of the literature on the seven years from 1839-1846 when the Mormons lived in Nauvoo, it would appear that no stone has been left unturned about the period. Upon closer examination, however, there is limited economic history of Nauvoo. Since B. H. Roberts' 1930 classic history, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, only a handful of significant historical studies have been published regarding the Nauvoo period. *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, (1965) by Robert Bruce Flanders is still considered today the best economic study of Nauvoo. Flanders broke new ground by taking a

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the ambivalence of the nineteenth-century farmer to the move to the market, see David B. Danbom, *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America*, 2d ed. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006).



secular look at Joseph Smith, the man, and Nauvoo as a western boomtown instead of a religious “city on the hill.”<sup>3</sup> Most Mormon historians have a difficult time separating their acceptance of traditional church interpretations of the events during the Nauvoo period and the documented inconsistencies that uncover the flaws and weaknesses of men, especially the prophet Joseph Smith. This was a new view of the prophet and prompted sympathetic responses defending Smith and mainly written by members of the church.

In 1972, Leonard Arrington recruited T. Edgar Lyon to write a comprehensive history on Nauvoo based on Lyon’s work as a research historian for Nauvoo Restoration, Inc., the organization that managed the restoration of the historic sites in Nauvoo. After Lyon’s untimely death in 1978, Glen M. Leonard took over the task using Lyon’s notes and extracts from primary sources. Leonard’s lengthy history finally appeared in 2002. However, rather than a comprehensive history the book “offers a narrative based on key religious themes from the Nauvoo years...and the Saints’ search for places of refuge where they could unite in a quest for inner spiritual peace.”<sup>4</sup> Leonard argues that despite the trials and challenges the Mormons faced during the Nauvoo years “their gathering place was a place of peace.” He also places a strong emphasis on the “unfolding of temple doctrines to a gathered people during the seven-year Nauvoo period of church history.”<sup>5</sup> Leonard argues that this is the proper focus of a history of Nauvoo because “the real story of the Church in Nauvoo is essentially one of a people of faith.”<sup>6</sup> While a history focused on religious doctrines gives an important perspective, this perspective

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2002), xx.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, xviii.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, xix.

ignores other significant aspects that contributed to Nauvoo's history, thus leaving so much of the story untold.

In his 1988 article, "Recent Writing on Mormon Nauvoo," Leonard noted the neglect of economic questions by historians. He writes that besides Flanders' book, three articles in *BYU Studies*, and one in *BYU Law Review* in the late 1970s, this aspect of Nauvoo's past including agriculture and commerce, had much room for additional research.<sup>7</sup> However, in completing his 2002 book, Leonard does not really add much about the economy of Nauvoo. He argues in the section entitled "The Agrarian Ideal and Zion's City" the Mormons in Nauvoo were sympathetic to Thomas Jefferson's philosophy about the rural and idyllic life. Leonard claims that Nauvoo, "like small-town America everywhere, functioned economically in an agrarian model of self-sufficiency."<sup>8</sup> He describes them as yeoman farmers who sought prosperity and self-sufficiency and feared city life. Yet, he does not address the conflict with Jacksonian America and the move to a market economy.

Finally, Kenneth W. Godfrey's article "The Nauvoo Neighborhood: A Little Philadelphia or a Unique City Set Upon a Hill?" reprinted in *Kingdom on the Mississippi* in 1996, uses a social history of Philadelphia to compare Nauvoo and finds much the same in the two cities in social aspects. He explores some economic areas including occupations, associations, and

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<sup>7</sup> Glen M. Leonard, "Recent Writing on Mormon Nauvoo," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 11 (1988): 87. The articles referred to by Leonard are found in *BYU Studies* and includes Donald Enders, "The Steamboat *Maid of Iowa*: Mormon Mistress of the Mississippi," 19 (Spring 1979): 321-35; Dennis Rowley, "Nauvoo: A River Town," 18 (Winter 1978): 255-72; T. Edgar Lyon, "The Account Books of the Amos Davis Store at Commerce, Illinois," 19 (Winter 1979): 241-43; and Dallin H. Oaks and Joseph I. Bentley, "Joseph Smith and Legal Process: In the Wake of the Steamboat Nauvoo," 19 (Winter 1979): 167-99.

<sup>8</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 137.

standards of living. Godfrey concludes that Nauvoo had much in common with Philadelphia.<sup>9</sup> An extension of this argument would be to show a similar focus on market participation in the two cities.

While both Flanders and Leonard have chapters indicating a focus on the development of the Nauvoo economy, they virtually ignore the impact of agriculture even though census data indicates a significant percentage of the population engaged in farming. Both authors focus on the lack of industry to support experienced factory workers coming from England, the attempts to create mills and dams in the Mississippi River, and the cooperative efforts of different trades. While acknowledging that Illinois and the nation entered into a depression in 1839, comparing agriculture in Nauvoo to the rest of the state, region, or nation, is left unanalyzed. This deficiency in existing historiography about Nauvoo leaves us with many questions.

The development of agrarian capitalism in the Midwest has been studied from many different perspectives by historians. Social historians have acknowledged the complexity and ambiguity during the market development. In the first section of Susan Rugh's study of Fountain Green Township, Illinois, which is in close geographical proximity to Nauvoo, she examines "the interplay between the expanding market and changes in the farm household" which began during the 1830's and 1840's. It is important to look at the success of Fountain Green in market growth as compared to Nauvoo. Determining the impact of surrounding communities such as Fountain Green on the agricultural practices in Nauvoo is vital to understanding how Nauvoo's

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<sup>9</sup> Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Nauvoo Neighborhood: A Little Philadelphia or a Unique City Set upon a Hill?" in *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History*, eds. Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 88.

economy developed. Rugh also looks at the impact of the market on changing family farm culture that helps us understand the variety of ways society responded.<sup>10</sup>

Also looking at the social framework of market interaction, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community*, by Don Doyle, is a case study of Jacksonville, Illinois, from 1825-1870. Building on Allan Bogue and Robert Dykstra's theory of frontier society that the process of community building included conflict, Doyle argues that social order coexisted with conflict in frontier communities like Jacksonville. Conflicts arose over wars, slavery, railroads, colleges and temperance. He argues that cultural values and social structure kept social order in Jacksonville. He demonstrates that even though there was a large transient population, the stable core of residents provided social order through the volunteer community of churches, politics, and social organizations.<sup>11</sup>

Doyle particularly focuses on the boosters in the community as they fought for railroads, roads, and colleges to grow the community into prominence. He analyzes their acceptance in the latter part of the century when they did not achieve the greatness for Jacksonville they had hoped for as early pioneers. Looking at Joseph Smith as a booster for Nauvoo and comparing his and others efforts to Jacksonville can help uncover the ways in which Nauvoo and satellite communities were both different and similar to surrounding towns.

Several historians have written about the adjustment to the market by midwestern farmers in the nineteenth century. Allan G. Bogue focused on the economics of farming developments and methods in Illinois and Iowa in *From Prairie to Corn Belt*. Tracing the environment the

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<sup>10</sup> Susan Sessions Rugh, *Our Common Country: Family Farming, Culture, and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), xviii.

<sup>11</sup> Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois 1825-70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).

early pioneers found in the 1820s and 1830s to the transformation of the prairies to the cornbelt as it began to be called in the 1870s, Bogue argued that the farmers' decisions and practices about types of livestock to raise, and crops to plant were determined by the market. Bogue relies on explanations of financing, cost of production and how much profit was eventually made at the market for the farmer's efforts to support his argument.<sup>12</sup> This transformation was going on all around Nauvoo and surely was also experienced by Mormon farmers.

John Mack Faragher presented a negative view of the market experience for early nineteenth-century farmers. Faragher studied the settlement patterns and the agricultural practices in Sangamon County, Illinois in *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie*. From sugar-making to subsistence farming to the corn and hog operations of mid-century, Faragher argues that marketing agricultural surplus was a negative experience before the coming of the railroad in the 1850s. Risks associated with bringing grain and livestock to market were often disastrous for these farmers. A large reason for many failures was due to the inland location of Sugar Creek and the relatively high cost and long distance to bring surplus to market. Yet farmers still persisted in taking goods to market and braving the risks.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to Faragher, Timothy Mahoney argues that families determined where to settle based on factors such as soil quality and access to markets. Although there were large acreages in the Grand Prairie still to be broken, the farmers quickly found themselves in a position to take grain and livestock to market, particularly to the river towns along the Mississippi in the years before the railroad. In *River Towns in the Great West*, (1990), Timothy R. Mahoney shows a

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<sup>12</sup> Allan G. Bogue, *From Prairie to Corn Belt: Farming on the Illinois and Iowa Prairies in the Nineteenth Century* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1994).

<sup>13</sup> John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

strong correlation in the settlement boom of the 1830s between the settlement pattern and accessibility to market. He contends, “The general pattern of settlement across the region tended to follow closely the extent of market access, as determined by the cost of transport by land or water from any point in the region.”<sup>14</sup> By the mid-1840s, settlement actually stalled in the interior of the Military Tract due to higher transportation costs. Location relative to market would not have been important to settlement if farmers were not considering the cost to bring goods to market.

Mahoney’s major argument in *River Towns in the Great West* was that in order to understand local history, the regional context must be considered. Mahoney argues that towns have inherent differences and that characteristics of particular places cannot claim broad representations about other communities. Further, he argues that towns constantly interact with the regional system around them and that towns cannot be analyzed in relative isolation but rather by their responses to larger forces of economic change. He claims that the structure of any local society “can be explained by the functional history of the town economy in the course of its interaction with the regional system.”<sup>15</sup> Mahoney’s arguments clearly support the premise that Nauvoo was affected by the interaction with the towns in the region.

The history of the development of the river economy by Mahoney is significant when considering the economy of Nauvoo during that period. Nauvoo was positioned between the lower and upper rapids, which meant that during seasonally low river levels many steamboats could not pass without unloading their cargo and reloading again after passing the rapids. This illustrates Mahoney’s points that geographical factors influenced the success of a town as a

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<sup>14</sup> Timothy R. Mahoney, *River Towns in the Great West: The Structure of Provincial Urbanization in the American Midwest, 1820-1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 276.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

trading place. It would appear that Nauvoo area farmers would most likely take their grain to market at Quincy, possibly through Warsaw.

The historiography about nineteenth-century Illinois generally supports the idea that the move to market was well underway while the Mormons inhabited Nauvoo. It is likely that many agricultural practices and economic influences in Nauvoo were experienced much like the surrounding communities. Yet, Nauvoo was different in that it was a community formed for the main purpose of a people practicing a common religion.

From the beginning the church has always intertwined temporal and spiritual needs of man as being necessary to establish God's kingdom on earth. Describing beliefs in 1830, Leonard Arrington states, "the religious and economic aspects and problems of the individual and the group were viewed as incapable of disassociation."<sup>16</sup> Church doctrine and the teachings of the prophet Joseph Smith and later Brigham Young had a tremendous effect on the economies of the early communities of Mormons. Many revelations dealt directly with economic topics.

In Nauvoo, the change from the total consecration model and the move towards the tithing principle began to change the attitudes of the people but also created confusion over the public rhetoric from the leaders. While the leaders encouraged cooperation between members they also solicited outside investors and promoted selling goods outside of Nauvoo, therefore promoting market interaction.

In *The Kirtland Economy Revisited*, Hill, Rooker, and Wimmer demonstrate some economic models that are possible to apply to the Nauvoo economy. This 1977 study also sheds new light on previously held misconceptions about the reasons for the economic troubles of the

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<sup>16</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-Day Saints, 1830-1900* (1958; repr., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 5.

Saints in Ohio. The authors argue that vague references to poorly developed agricultural and industrial bases of the community have never been “set forth in a manner lending itself to measurement or verification.”<sup>17</sup> They also contend that many misconceptions exist due to a modern day view that industrialization is essential for economic growth and viability, which is also a position that some historians have claimed about Nauvoo. A similar study about Nauvoo would help to evaluate properly long term beliefs about the deficiencies and failure of the economy.

The authors examine four aspects of the Kirtland economy, one of which I have applied to this study of Nauvoo. To evaluate the viability of the Kirtland economy, the authors compared it to the economy of other Ohio cities. There are many indications that much of the economic difficulties experienced in Kirtland were similar to what was being experienced in other communities. Following their methods, I have compared the economy of Nauvoo to contemporary midwestern towns to find new evidence about the differences and similarities.

To determine the extent to which people in Nauvoo were involved in the market or responded to the market, I have examined account books for evidences of trading in the local and regional market. In accounting terminology there are daybooks, memorandum books, journals, and ledgers. Full-fledged double entry bookkeeping was rare until more advanced industrial and commercial enterprises were formed and the need to calculate returns to stockholders became necessary. For the stores used in this study, most kept a daybook that recorded in chronological order the transactions that occurred. Then at some point in time, the proprietor or a hired bookkeeper would transfer the transactions to a ledger. In the ledger, the left-hand page recorded

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<sup>17</sup> Marvin S. Hill, Keith Rooker, and Larry T. Wimmer, *The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1977), 6.



the debit transaction (“Dr.”) indicating the “debt” the customer owed the proprietor. On the right-hand page the credit transaction (“Cr.”) was recorded showing payment either in cash or other goods of value. Most of the time when people went into a store, they did not pay in cash but rather the purchases were put on account. Sometimes they would bring in eggs or butter to offset a small portion of their purchases. However, at any given time, the storeowner extended credit, carrying balances for their regular, trusted customers. The credit transactions in the ledgers show some accounts being paid off at harvest time with grain or cash when the farmer had sold their grain at market. Other times, balances were carried for years, with payments being made from time to time, but only occasionally were accounts balanced in full.

Some of the mercantile account books I have discovered are from Joseph Smith’s red brick store, the Amos Davis store, the David Dutton Yearsley store, Stephen Markham Account Books, and the shoemaker, Jonathan Harriman Holmes. To show a comparison from satellite communities, I have analyzed the account books from the Matthew McClaughry store in nearby Fountain Green. Account books that provide comparison to nearby Illinois towns include the Ozias M. Hatch store in Griggsville, the J. W. Berry store in Vandalia, and limited account books from the McConnell, Bunn & Co in Springfield and a general store in Macomb. I have also considered the farm account books of Cornelius Peter Lott, who managed Joseph Smith’s farm and traded with neighboring farmers as well as other well-known Nauvoo residents.

I chose different periods of time to take samples of the various account books and analyze the transactions from the various account books and ledgers. The periods represent the major stages of growth for Nauvoo or a significant event that could possibly impact the economy as in the case of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. The first period was in August 1839, just as the Mormons began arriving in Nauvoo. The second period is a year later in July

1840, after the initial settlement period in Nauvoo. Two years later in 1842, when the influx of British immigrants is beginning to have its effect on the town, represents the third period I chose. The final sample is the period around the time of Joseph Smith's death in June 1844. I was not able to find enough data for comparable account books after 1844, however, I will comment on what is available for the time leading up to the final exodus in 1846. I chose these samples to investigate the impact on the economy from the movement of population into and out of the town of Nauvoo.

In the first chapter, I begin with background on the settlement and development of Nauvoo and Illinois. My overall argument is that the development of the Nauvoo was very similar to that of contemporary Illinois towns. The Mormons participated in the market and were involved with boosterism, paper towns, and the river economy. I also set the stage by describing the environment in Illinois and particularly Hancock County when the Mormons arrived. One prevailing belief that the lack of manufacturing opportunities in Nauvoo was the cause of eventual economic failure does not stand up in light of evidence about contemporary towns. Nauvoo was developing similarly to other western boomtowns in most regards. The differences related to the practice of consecration and stewardship that had been in place during the Ohio and Missouri periods. The public rhetoric about cooperation and communal practices caused confusion with Mormons and some of their neighbors.

In the second chapter I focus on the growing economy in Nauvoo and the interaction with the marketplace. By using the data collected from account books from Nauvoo and other Illinois towns, I have analyzed the nature of commerce during the initial settlement period. I include in this chapter evidence that Mormons traded with other communities and participated in the market by transporting grain, livestock, and other goods to the most likely trading points in the

region. As the population swelled in Nauvoo and Mormons participated in the regional market, leaders in rival towns felt threatened, especially those that had the most to lose as Nauvoo became engaged in the market.

However, the fragile and immature economy in Nauvoo was not equipped to handle the large influx of British immigrants that continued to arrive. In the third chapter, even though church leaders attempted to forestall large numbers of immigrants until the economy was prepared to absorb them, the desire to fulfill the gathering doctrine was greater than economic prudence. Significant signs of economic stress appeared as the population grew and the stress contributed to the strains with neighboring towns.

Even though the economy was struggling, the perceived economic strength of Nauvoo contributed to the removal of the Mormons from Hancock County. The death of prophet Joseph Smith in 1844 was the beginning of the end for Nauvoo as the economy collapsed and the ability to trade with the market was diminished. Ultimately, hostilities contributed to the decision by Mormon leaders to abandon the town and move west in early 1846.

My study challenges the prevailing historical interpretations of a self-sufficient economy during the period the Mormons were in Nauvoo. Instead, I argue, Nauvoo residents participated in the local and regional markets and experienced the same types of success and challenges as other frontier towns. However, there were some unique elements in Nauvoo due to the religious aspect of the gathering. The large number of British immigrants who arrived beginning in 1840 weakened the immature economy. The fragile economy in Nauvoo could not withstand the conflicts the Mormons had with their neighbors and its demise led to the decision to abandon a once promising mecca on the Mississippi.

## CHAPTER ONE

### MORMON BOOMTOWN ON THE MISSISSIPPI

Today tour guides in Nauvoo proudly state to surprised visitors that at one time the population of Nauvoo was actually larger than the population of Chicago. This accurate, yet misleading, statistic leads one to believe that Nauvoo was on its way to becoming the metropolis and trading center that we know Chicago to be today. Or that Chicago was somehow lagging behind Nauvoo in population and economic growth. However, the period when the Mormons were in Nauvoo does not coincide exactly with the growth patterns in Chicago. The isolated nature of Mormon historiography fails to recognize that many observations about Nauvoo could also be said about most Illinois towns during the settlement period of the state. A closer comparison of the elements of the Nauvoo economy to other towns shows that Nauvoo faced many of the same economic struggles and successes as her contemporaries. And yet there were differences due to the religious aspect to the gathering and previous economic practices in earlier Mormon settlements.

Although Illinois had been a state since 1818, by the early 1830s most of her larger towns were still in the south, with farming activity expanding upstream from St. Louis on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. Galena, in the northwest part of the state, was becoming known for its lead mining activity. In contrast, in 1833, Chicago was still negotiating treaties with the remaining Indians in the area. Those treaties eventually ended the era where Indians and white Americans coexisted in the small trading community and Chicago's growth took off. Land speculation was rampant throughout the region in the mid-1830s and Chicago attracted some of the wildest speculators and land agents. Based on rumors about canals and dreams of

possibilities and potential for the location, land prices multiplied far beyond the current economic reality. Reminiscent of comments made about Nauvoo, historian William Cronon pointed out the absurdity of the land prices “in a town where the most promising economic activity consisted of nothing more substantial than buying and selling real estate.”<sup>1</sup>

Many historians claim that from the moment the Mormons arrived in Nauvoo, the economy could not sustain its people. Historian Bruce Robert Flanders wrote: “Nauvoo did not have an economy that was able adequately to support its population, and signs of economic immaturity were readily apparent, especially in the early years.”<sup>2</sup> According to Flanders, the main reason for a weak economy was the lack of capital to finance industry and manufacturing. In reality, during the early years, Nauvoo was developing in the same manner and pace as neighboring towns. It was circumstances during the last few years that uncovered the immaturity and final collapse of the economy in Nauvoo.

Even contemporary writers viewed Nauvoo as having a dim economic future. In the late 1840s, artist Henry Lewis took several trips up the Mississippi sketching and illustrating the landscape scenery he encountered. His drawings later reproduced as lithographs in Germany, are some of the most significant representations of life on the Mississippi. He also collected information for the accompanying narrative to the illustrations, relying many times on local

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<sup>1</sup> William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991), 29.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 144.

authors to provide information about the towns he illustrated.<sup>3</sup> When he came to Nauvoo, he enlisted the help of a certain Mr. Flagg, who wrote for a St. Louis newspaper, the *Evening Gazette*. Among other things, Flagg wrote about Nauvoo's economy in 1845, as the Mormons were preparing to go west:

There is little hope for worldly prosperity in Nauvoo. The city is neither a commercial mart in itself, nor does it supply the markets of others. It is to a certain extent quite isolated, and has absolutely no principle of aggregation—if we except that of accumulating population.<sup>4</sup>

That the Mormons lacked capital is undisputed. The events in Missouri had left most Mormons destitute, without the ability to accumulate capital. Joseph Smith and other church leaders frequently called for those with resources to support the establishment of manufacturing and industry. But a similar call was occurring all over the state from leaders in those towns. Nauvoo was not unusual in her efforts to attract factories and commerce. For example, when Mr. Flagg went on to enlighten Henry Lewis about Quincy almost five years later in 1849, he pointed to future promises rather than current economic realities: “There are plans to build dockyards and cotton and wool factories, and if these should be pushed forward with energy, Quincy could become one of the first metropolises of the land.”<sup>5</sup>

In the late 1830s, Quincy was the largest Illinois town, except for St. Louis, with a population nearing 2,000. However, by 1841, Nauvoo had more than outpaced the Quincy

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Lewis, *Valley of the Mississippi Illustrated*, translated from the German by A. Hermina Patgieter; edited with an introduction and notes by Bertha L. Heilbron (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1967). Lewis published his drawings and narrative in Germany during the 1850s hoping to attract the market of Germans investigating emigrating to America or those simply fascinated by the new frontier in America. The work was a financial disaster in Germany for a variety of reasons. However, copies survived and one was translated into English again by A. Hermina Patgieter and published by the Minnesota Historical Society in 1967. One of the most precious drawings in the series is the one of the Nauvoo Temple made just seven weeks before it burned.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis, *Valley of the Mississippi*, 257.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

population of 2,686.<sup>6</sup> During the 1830s and early 1840s the main products exported from Quincy were wheat, corn and hogs, not manufactured goods. A list of businesses in 1835 is similar to other frontier towns with general stores, carpenters and coopers, tailors and butchers. The only manufacturers were centered around the building industry, much like Nauvoo, with brickyards, saw mills, carpenter shops, and the essential U. S. land office.<sup>7</sup> While Quincy did have the potential and actually became a center of commerce and manufacturing, the significant growth in mills and factories did not occur until the 1850s and 1860s. Therefore, it would have been premature for Nauvoo to be successful in those types of endeavors in the early 1840s. Because of Mr. Flag's obvious hopes for Quincy's future, his negative comments about the Mormons may be due more to boosterism than to the reality of economic promise for the two towns.

Contemporary speculation about the economic future of western towns must be regarded as suspect due to the prevalence of the booster mentality. As Illinois was developing during the first half of the nineteenth century, local boosters fought for their towns to attract the activities that would make the town successful. Contrary to Frederick Jackson Turner's concept of individualism in the frontier, many historians have acknowledged the important role of community development in the frontier experience. For example, Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick saw the community-building experience as necessary to the challenges faced by pioneers and their emerging towns.<sup>8</sup> As the boosters enthusiastically promoted the virtues of their town, individuals who were struggling to meet the needs of food and shelter came together

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<sup>6</sup> Patrick H. Redmond, *History of Quincy and its men of mark, or, Facts and figures exhibiting its advantages and resources, manufactures and commerce* (Quincy, IL: Heirs & Russell, 1869), 15.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, "A Meaning for Turner's Frontier," *Political Science Quarterly* 69 (1954): 321-53, 565-602.

to form a solid economic base. Therefore the role of boosterism blended the individualism of the frontier with cooperation to form the social bonds of a community.<sup>9</sup>

Boosterism played a part in the development of many nineteenth century towns on the frontier along with the nationwide land speculation activity in the 1830s. The booster's vision fueled profits for land speculators while investors and merchants attempted to locate in the towns with the most chance of success. Communities competed in the race to obtain railroads, mail routes, colleges, and government institutions with the realization that some of these prizes would be awarded only once. Promotion, fund-raising, lobbying, and donations of land were all methods by which towns battled for the awards that would affect their future.

Boosters typically promoted their towns by evaluating three main categories including natural resources, transportation routes, and climatic forces.<sup>10</sup> For example, boosters promoting the future of Chicago began by listing all of the natural resources within reach of Chicago—soil conditions, timber sources, mines, coalfields, and waterpower sites. Then they would speculate on the probability of Chicago's location as a natural transportation route with the Great Lakes and the promise of a canal providing the link for an inland waterway all the way to the Mississippi River. The final argument rested on climatic theories of growth linking great civilizations and great cities to “a narrow global band arranged around a mean annual isotherm of about fifty degrees Fahrenheit.”<sup>11</sup> One Chicago booster, Charles Butler, who had recently invested \$100,000 in 1,000 city lots on the north side of the river, wrote that Chicago would

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<sup>9</sup> Elkins and McKittrick; see also Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978). Elkins and McKittrick focus more on the cooperative nature of community building, while Doyle highlights the conflicts that contributed to the growth of a community.

<sup>10</sup> Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 36.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.



become “the most important point in the great west.”<sup>12</sup> While it might appear that Butler was visionary with his accuracy about the future, the reality was that other boosters for Illinois towns were saying strikingly similar things about the towns where they owned land. Some turned into towns of consequence, most did not.

The boosterism mentality present in Illinois during the 1830s and 1840s had a strong influence on the development of Nauvoo. Not long after he founded the town, Joseph Smith wrote to the apostles in England in October 1840 that Nauvoo had “advantages for manufacturing and commercial purposes which but very few can boast of: and the establishing of cotton factories, foundries, potteries, etc., would be the means of bringing in wealth, and raising it to a very important elevation.”<sup>13</sup> As historians Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas observed, “Nauvoo was, in essence, a boomtown, and no one was a greater booster than the Mormon prophet.”<sup>14</sup> This was an unconventional view of Joseph Smith, that of a “planner, promoter, architect, entrepreneur, executive, politician, filibusterer.”<sup>15</sup>

Flanders focuses much of his book on the economic aspects of the building up of Nauvoo, including Joseph Smith’s role as a booster in a town where he, on behalf of the church, had invested in a significant amount of land. Many quotes can be compared to common booster rhetoric, such as Joseph Smith’s appeal to a prospective investor: “The city is rapidly advancing . . .there is scarcely any limits which can be imagined to the mills and machinery and

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1980), 4:228.

<sup>14</sup> Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas, eds., *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 2.

<sup>15</sup> Flanders, *Nauvoo*, vi.

manufacturing of all kinds which might be put into profitable operation in this city.”<sup>16</sup> In fact, the First Presidency, consisting of Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith, issued a formal proclamation to the saints living abroad in January, 1841, describing the state of the economy in Nauvoo as follows: “Every facility is afforded in the city and adjacent country, in Hancock County, for the successful prosecution of the mechanical arts, and the pleasing pursuits of agriculture. The waters of the Mississippi can be successfully used for manufacturing purposes, to an almost unlimited extent.”<sup>17</sup>

Other church and civic leaders joined in the boosterism activities. In 1841, a proposal was made to construct a wing dam at the northern end of the peninsula where Nauvoo was located, and to construct a canal through the center of town to the south end of the peninsula creating “the best harbor for steamboats, for winter quarters, on this magnificent stream,” according to leader John C. Bennett. Bennett also touted the additional benefit of water power “for propelling any amount of machinery for mill and manufacturing purposes, so essentially necessary to the building up of a great commercial city in the heart of one of the most productive and delightful countries on earth.”<sup>18</sup> Although Joseph Smith and others promoted dreams of industry and manufacturing, most were never realized.

Another nearby western Illinois town makes a better comparison with Nauvoo than Chicago. In his study of Jacksonville, Illinois, Don Doyle recognized the influence of the cooperation model of boosterism introduced by Elkins and McKittrick. However, he acknowledged the “real problems of social discord that flared behind the boosters’ rhetorical veil

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<sup>16</sup> Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4: 482.

<sup>17</sup> *Nauvoo (Illinois) Times and Seasons*, Jan. 15, 1841.

<sup>18</sup> Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 151.

of unity and collective progress.”<sup>19</sup> Doyle argues that rather than viewing social conflict as a negative influence, it was more of an imperative element for the development of a community. In Jacksonville, the volunteer associations and institutions acted as coercive mechanisms for social control. In the early years of development the boosters played a strong role “as an antidote to internal divisiveness and as a partial solution to the problem of community.”<sup>20</sup> This is strikingly similar to the role the church and other associations, such as the Nauvoo Legion and the Relief Society, played in Nauvoo. Certainly the common goal of building the temple served to unite the people and provided a common purpose that helped soften the conflicts that were often present. Despite the constant threat of conflict and challenges Glen Leonard argues, “it was religion that bound the city’s Latter-day Saint residents into a united community.”<sup>21</sup>

However, in the end, the boosters of Jacksonville and Nauvoo were not as successful as they had originally hoped. Jacksonville did not keep up with the towns like Chicago and St. Louis, but joined the ranks of the majority of Illinois towns. They had managed to attract a few educational and government institutions but not the major railroad lines and industries they had once competed for. Nauvoo not only failed to keep pace with other towns in attracting railroads, institutions, and industry, but also created such a threat to competitive towns that the Mormons were eventually forced to leave the state.

To understand how the Mormons fit into the regional landscape of Illinois, it is helpful to look at the history of the area, especially the county where they settled. Hancock County was formed in 1825 from portions of Pike County. It contained about 775 square miles; thirty miles

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<sup>19</sup> Doyle, *Social Order*, 10.

<sup>20</sup> Doyle, *Social Order*, 16.

<sup>21</sup> Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2002), 200.

in length and from twenty-four to thirty-two miles across. Although stands of timber existed along the Mississippi River and other creeks, overall the county lacked adequate timber for settlement. Located near the center of the county, Carthage became the county seat in 1833 and by the following year one hundred lots had been sold. The town supported “three stores, one grocery, three carpenters, one blacksmith, two cabinet makers, one wheelwright, one tavern, one brick marker, one physician, but no lawyer.”<sup>22</sup> In an 1834 gazetteer, the promising commercial towns in the area include Keokuk (across the Mississippi in Iowa), Venus (post office near the site of Commerce), and Warsaw, located near the old Fort Edwards. Other smaller settlements include Montebello, Perkin’s Settlement (later to become Fountain Green), Fairfield, Ray’s Settlement, and Hardin’s Settlement.<sup>23</sup>

Simply comparing the demographics of Illinois counties shows that Hancock County was similar to the other larger counties at the time. For example, if we compare the fifteen Illinois counties with the largest populations from the 1840 U.S. Census we see that Hancock County was the twelfth largest (see table 1).<sup>24</sup> Analyzing the occupations gathered during the census, Hancock County had one of the lowest percentages of those involved with commerce and on the low side of learned professions and engineers. However, the county was similar to others in percentages for agriculture and rather on the high side for those involved with manufacture and trades. Contrary to Flanders’s view that “the economy of Nauvoo was different from that of other

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<sup>22</sup> John M. Peck, *A Gazetteer of Illinois* (Jacksonville, Ill.: R. Goudy, 1834).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Compendium of the Enumeration of the inhabitants and statistics of the United States, as obtained at the Department of State, from the Returns of the Sixth Census* (Washington: Thomas Allen, 1841).

flourishing western towns” the demographic data suggests otherwise.<sup>25</sup> Nauvoo’s agrarian based economy appears to be similar to other western towns reliant on trade with each other.

**Table 1. Primary occupations for 15 largest counties in Illinois, 1840**

County	Total Population	Agriculture		Commerce		Manufacture & Trade		Learned professions and engineers	
		Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Morgan	19,547	2,651	14	134	0.7	494	2.5	119	0.6
Sangamon (Springfield)	14,716	3,078	21	98	0.7	603	4.1	74	0.5
Adams (Quincy)	14,476	1,909	13	147	1.0	553	3.8	74	0.5
Madison	14,433	3,336	23	265	1.8	749	5.2	120	0.8
St. Clair	13,631	1,284	9	56	0.4	284	2.1	39	0.3
Fulton	13,142	3,615	28	0	0.0	498	3.8	78	0.6
Green	11,951	3,329	28	44	0.4	278	2.3	36	0.3
Pike	11,728	3,454	29	68	0.6	385	3.3	61	0.5
Gallatin	10,760	1,809	17	136	1.3	249	2.3	41	0.4
Cook (Chicago)	10,201	920	9	182	1.8	493	4.8	79	0.8
Will	10,167	1,694	17	86	0.8	294	2.9	41	0.4
Hancock (Nauvoo)	9,946	1,791	18	15	0.2	380	3.8	34	0.3
Coles	9,616	1,876	20	20	0.2	179	1.9	39	0.4
La Salle	9,348	1,101	12	75	0.8	138	1.5	38	0.4
Vermillion	9,303	2,429	26	30	0.3	254	2.7	43	0.5
Total 15 largest counties	182,965	34,276	19	1,356	0.7	5,831	3.2	916	0.5
Total all Illinois counties	475,317	105,342	22	2,495	0.5	13,185	2.8	1,999	0.4

*Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Compendium of the Enumeration of the inhabitants and statistics of the United States, as obtained at the Department of State, from the Returns of the Sixth Census (Washington: Thomas Allen, 1841).*

Flanders argues that Nauvoo had neither industry nor commerce. He emphasizes that Joseph Smith’s experience “was rural and agricultural, not urban and industrial.”<sup>26</sup> However, this could be said about any western town in its infancy. Towns like Quincy and Warsaw began with an agrarian based economy. Only as the towns developed as trading and transportation

<sup>25</sup> Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 115.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

centers, were industry and commerce attracted. Flanders concludes that the business of land speculation proved to be the most lucrative business in Nauvoo, even though it brought “oversanguine expectations, high costs, frequent losses, and individual and corporate disappointments.”<sup>27</sup> Land speculation was the basis for many a western boomtown. The difference with other unsuccessful towns was they simply contracted or even ceased to exist when institutions and commerce failed to materialize. In Nauvoo, however, the people were committed to a religion that kept them in a town even though the economic resources to survive were lacking.

There were many reasons why Joseph Smith might have chosen the physical site for the new gathering place of the saints in 1839. Probably the most compelling reason was the availability of land purchased on easy credit terms. However, other factors played into the decision including the beauty of the peninsula formed by the bend in the Mississippi River overlooked by bluffs in the east, a perfect temple site. Certainly one of the other factors considered was the possibility for commercial opportunity of a river town at the head of the Des Moines Rapids. The Missouri legislature had noticed the potential for the area in 1830 when they petitioned Congress to annex the land between the Des Moines and Mississippi rivers, directly west of Commerce. The petition notes that while navigation at the time was difficult, they envisioned a time when a canal would go around the rapids and manufacturing machinery powered by the river would become important and “a great commercial city will spring up in that wilderness, to serve as the great entrepot of the Upper and Lower Mississippi.”<sup>28</sup>

While Missouri lost her bid for the triangle piece of land and it eventually became a part of Iowa, it is likely that many others saw the potential for the area to have importance in the

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<sup>27</sup> Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 143.

<sup>28</sup> *Senate Documents*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 21<sup>st</sup> Congress, No. 71, p. 4; quoted in Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 40.

future as a commercial center. Commerce, Illinois, on the other side of the Mississippi, was one of many platted towns created during the optimistic expansionism during the 1830s. By the time the Mormons arrived in 1839, the promoters had left due to the Panic of 1837 and the resulting depression. Some of the original settlers remained, such as James White and his family members, along with a few others. Some accounts describe an isolated wilderness at the proposed site for Commerce, indicating only a handful of structures in or near the town.<sup>29</sup>

However, despite the drop in the land business in the late 1830s, at least one local merchant operated a thriving business from surrounding farmers and steamships passing by Commerce in need of cordwood and other essentials. Amos Davis arrived in Commerce in the fall of 1836, a young man of twenty-four years. He may have known Hiram Kimball in Vermont and possibly worked for Kimball in his store before opening his own mercantile business. Davis married Elvira Hibbard on January 1, 1837 and a month later the couple purchased two lots from Kimball. By the time the Mormons arrived in 1839, Amos had established a mercantile operation with almost one hundred active accounts. On average, about a dozen customers came to the store to transact business with Davis per day. They would purchase such staples as butter, eggs, and flour along with fabric, shoes, and clothing. It appears that a popular item was “drinks” for six cents showing that the store was probably a social place to gather on a warm summer day. The sale of alcohol was also a brisk business with rum, whiskey, and wine frequently among the men’s purchases.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> For descriptions of Commerce when the Mormons arrived see Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 52-53; Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 39; and Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:375.

<sup>30</sup> Amos Davis Account Books, August 1839, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

On May 1, 1839, Mormon agents had purchased farms from Hugh White and Isaac Galland near the south end of the peninsula and in mid-August over 500 acres were purchased from the Hotchkiss syndicate including the plotted Commerce City and valuable riverfront property near Amos Davis' store. The available account books begin on August 15, 1839, just three days before the additional purchase of William White's eighty-acre plot of land, connecting the Hotchkiss and the Hugh White purchase. William White is account number one in Davis' ledgers indicating that White was Davis' first customer. Familiar Mormon names were already showing up in the account books in August of 1839 such as Hyrum Smith and Oliver Granger, a mercantile operator in Missouri.

The day's sales in 1839 were on average just under \$12.00 per day. In analyzing the prices of commodities that were brought into the store in trade, Davis' profits can be determined. For example, customers were credited 16 cents a pound for butter which Davis then sold at 18  $\frac{3}{4}$  cents per pound. Chickens were purchased by Davis at just under 15 cents a piece and resold for 18  $\frac{3}{4}$  cents. Sometimes Davis sold perishables at a discount as evidenced by the transaction with the Steamboat *Brasille* on June, 28, 1839, for two dozen chickens for \$3.50 or just over 14 cents a piece.<sup>31</sup>

Fortunately, the ledger book for Davis' store has also survived. The steamboat had an account with Davis totaling \$467.93 for the year. It appears that the captain primarily traded barrels of whiskey and flour along with some cash for cordwood and small amounts of perishables (butter, milk, and chickens). As the town grew with the arrival of more Mormons and

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., August, 1839. The account of the *Steamboat Brasille* is found in the corresponding 1839 ledger book from Davis' store, "1839 Illinois Merchant's Account Book from Commerce, Illinois," Manuscript 723, Vol. 22, 73-74, Special Collections, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.



trading occurred more regularly with passing steamboats, it is likely that the merchants of Warsaw took notice of the loss of business.

While Amos Davis' store was beginning to experience growth due to the influx of Mormons to Nauvoo, other towns in Hancock County were also affected by the migration. Making an effort to avoid problems in Ohio and Missouri where the Mormons almost exclusively settled in one place, the plan for Illinois was different. Joseph Smith encouraged settlement in surrounding towns, sometimes in existing towns and other times creating new ones. Referring to them as "spokes on the wheel," Joseph Smith declared on March 1, 1843, "There is a wheel; Nauvoo is the hub: we will drive the first spoke in Ramus, second in La Harpe, third Shokoquon, fourth in Lima: that is half the wheel. The other half is over the river."<sup>32</sup> Historian Donald Q. Cannon categorized these settlements as major and minor colonies, including towns such as Ramus and Yelrome. He also referred to smaller settlements surrounding Nauvoo as suburbs. A third category included missionary towns where Mormons lived among old settlers hoping to convert many to the gospel. These towns included Carthage, Bear Creek, La Harpe, and Fountain Green. Cannon notes that relationships between the Mormons and old settlers included "amicable relations as well as hostility."<sup>33</sup>

A case history of one such town is Fountain Green, which was founded in 1835. Two years later it was described as a "flourishing settlement." Families migrated from the south, the north, and the Mid-Atlantic states. Three generations of the Perkins family had settled along Crooked Creek in 1826, coming from Tennessee. The patriarch of the family, Ute Perkins, was baptized into the Mormon church in 1839 by Joel Johnson. Johnson came to Illinois directly

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<sup>32</sup> Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:296.

<sup>33</sup> Donald Q. Cannon, "Spokes on the Wheel: Early Latter-day Saint Settlements in Hancock County, Illinois," *Ensign*, February 1986, 62.

from Kirtland and settled in Carthage with his family, where he began to preach and established a branch near Fountain Green in April 1839. Thus, when Crooked Creek (later Ramus) was founded in 1840 just a few miles from Fountain Green, the church membership consisted of a mixture of original settlers and exiles from Missouri and Ohio.<sup>34</sup>

In Fountain Green, the McClaughry store was the centerpiece of Main Street. The largest general store in town was started in the late 1820s by Martin Hopkins and his partner, Clark Leal. After a succession of owners and operators, the wealthy farmer, Matthew McClaughry began financing the store around 1837. Although the store was known as Matthew McClaughry's Dry Goods and Groceries, the store was actually operated by Stephen H. Tyler and his junior partner, Alexander Stevenson. During the period when the Mormons were in the area, Tyler and Stevenson operated a pork house in conjunction with the store, using common business connections in St. Louis to export hogs and import the store goods that Fountain Green residents desired.<sup>35</sup>

The volume of business at the McClaughry store in 1839 is fairly similar to the commerce at the Amos Davis store. While the average daily sales in August 1839 in Nauvoo were \$12.00, the average daily sales in Fountain Green were about \$11.00. Many of the items sold in the two stores were of the same type, such as butter, eggs, molasses, coffee, and tea. One item that was unique to the McClaughry store was Sappinton pills, a treatment for malaria. When comparing the pricing of the two stores, it appears that Amos Davis charged higher prices for many of the items (see table 2). This could have been due to the more isolated situation of

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<sup>34</sup> Susan Sessions Rugh, *Our Common Country: Family Farming, Culture, and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001) 34-35.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

Commerce or lack of competition. As we will see later on, this would change for Davis by 1842 as the involvement with the local and regional market developed.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 2. Commodity Prices at stores in Nauvoo and Fountain Green, 1839**

Item	Quantity	Amos Davis	McClaughry
Butter	1 pound	\$0.188	\$0.125
Coffee	2 1/2 pounds	\$0.500	\$0.500
Eggs	1 dozen	\$0.125	\$0.080
Nails	1 pound	\$0.500	\$0.140
Tea	1 pound	\$1.000	\$1.000

*Sources:* Amos Davis Account Books, August, 1839, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah and C. C. Tyler Store Records, August, 1839, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

*Note:* The third place after the decimal point represents the use of bits, or one-eighth of a dollar. One bit=\$0.125.

The comparison of the state of commerce at the two stores in Nauvoo and Fountain Green at the time of the arrival of the Mormons illustrates the similarity of patterns of trade in both towns. The number of patrons and the volume of business at both establishments were very much alike. The typical customer at both stores was the farming family from the surrounding countryside, bringing eggs and butter to trade for their needed items from the general store. When the Mormons came to town Nauvoo and Fountain Green were parallel towns in Hancock County.

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<sup>36</sup> C. C. Tyler Store Records, August, 1839, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

The question then becomes: What impact did the influx of the new population have on the commerce in Hancock County? What differences in attitude and business practice did the Mormons bring with them? Some historians have argued that the Mormons rejected capitalism based on their commitment to Jeffersonian agrarianism and the yeoman farmer, self-sufficient and isolated from society.<sup>37</sup> While it was true they rejected the individualistic aspect of Jacksonian society, Joseph Smith very much advocated participation in the market economy. At times there was confusion over what appeared to be two conflicting economic philosophies. It is helpful to look back at how economic attitudes and behaviors were developed originally within the religious group.

While Joseph Smith was incarcerated at Liberty Jail in Missouri in early 1839, he reflected on the conflict both with neighbors in Missouri and within the church itself. Much of the conflict within the church arose over economic policies while in Ohio as well as Missouri. The experiments with economic structure in both places had experienced limited success and the challenges encountered exposed weaknesses in the plans. Nauvoo represented a major shift in the church's previous arrangements, ushering in a new phase.

From the beginning the church had always intertwined the temporal and spiritual needs of man necessary to establish God's kingdom on earth. Describing beliefs in 1830, Leonard Arrington states, "the religious and economic aspects and problems of the individual and the group were viewed as incapable of disassociation."<sup>38</sup> Church doctrine and the teachings of the prophet Joseph Smith and later Brigham Young had a tremendous effect on the economies of the

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<sup>37</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 131.

<sup>38</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-Day Saints, 1830-1900* (1958; repr. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 5.

early communities of Mormons. Many revelations dealt directly with economic topics. The concept of communitarianism began to be discussed shortly after the church was formed. The Law of Consecration and Stewardship was first outlined in a revelation to Joseph Smith on February 9, 1831. The vision of the law was a sharp departure of the emerging individualistic economic order of Jacksonian America, on the threshold of the market revolution and industrialization.<sup>39</sup> In contrast, Smith sought to put in place a “system characterized by economic equality, socialization of surplus incomes, freedom of enterprise, and group economic self-sufficiency.”<sup>40</sup>

In Kirtland, Ohio and Jackson County, Missouri, the “United Order,” “Order of Enoch,” and the “Law of Consecration and Stewardship” as the concept was called, was implemented by church authorities. In these plans, members were asked to “consecrate” or deed all of their property to the church and then their inheritance would be determined by the bishop according to the family’s desires and needs. In addition, members were required to consecrate all of their annual surplus production. Some official reports showed peace and harmony with the system. However, several challenges also became apparent. Issues with property rights and legal difficulties along with the perpetual question of agreement between bishops and “stewards” over desires and needs were ever present. The ability to work on these challenges was never realized due to the premature departure of the Mormons from both Kirtland and Jackson County to Far West, Missouri.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Sellers, *Market Revolution*.

<sup>40</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 15.

In Far West, a slightly different provision was instituted with members required to consecrate all surplus property plus one tenth of their annual increase, the predecessor of the tithing principle. More emphasis was placed on voluntary cooperative organizations intended to consolidate and coordinate property holdings and production efforts. Plans were put into place to organize companies and corporations that would provide all needed items for families based on their contributions in labor rather than capital. Joining these efforts was voluntary but the many members seemed enthusiastic about the plans. However, again the results were never realized due to the expulsion of the saints from Missouri. When they were driven out of Missouri for good in early 1839, they virtually abandoned most of what they owned and it was a cooperative effort to remove everyone, including the poor, to Illinois.<sup>42</sup>

In Nauvoo, the principle of consecration was temporarily suspended and the tithing principle was put into practice. This principle, revealed to Joseph Smith in 1838, required church members to give one-tenth of their increase annually to church officials who administered the funds for church needs. However, the spirit of cooperation was still very much encouraged by the prophet and other church leaders. For example new converts were encouraged to purchase church-owned land directly from Joseph Smith and his agents at allegedly inflated prices instead of buying on the open market.<sup>43</sup> Apparently, newcomers were being enticed by other landowners with lower prices for farmland and even town lots. With limited funds available, many were tempted to purchase land at lower prices and not follow the advice of ecclesiastical leaders.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 35.

<sup>43</sup> Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 124.

<sup>44</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 166.

The public rhetoric and millennial visions of Joseph Smith and other leaders created confusion among both Mormons and their neighbors. Mormon ideology was communal but the country was now entering the Jacksonian age of individualism and the market revolution. The leaders appeared to find value in both philosophies. On one hand they called for investors to launch manufacturing and industry and pleaded with these potential employers to produce goods that could be sold in the market for cash. On the other hand they chastised businessmen who were intent on making a profit and instead encouraged them to be benevolent to their fellow church members, especially the poor and needy. While some men of means were generous in this way and also in funding church building projects, many made financial decisions based on market principles of profit, independently of the advice of church leaders. They chose to put their efforts into the land and building trades where their profits had more promise. The voluntary nature of market transactions produces behavior where buyers and sellers demand fair market prices or they do not engage. Most reasonable men with capital and business experience viewed the unstable situation as too risky to invest.<sup>45</sup>

The confusing and contradictory messages in the public forum from Joseph Smith and other leaders created hesitancy for investors, within or without the church, to put capital into manufacturing or industry. The pressure between Mormon communalism and the pull of the market caused unusual economic struggles. As the population in Nauvoo continued to grow, Hancock County began to take notice.

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<sup>45</sup> Hill, Rooker, and Wimmer, *Kirtland Economy Revisited*, 64.

## CHAPTER TWO

### IN THE MARKET BUT NOT OF THE MARKET

Accounts from the first Mormons arriving in Commerce in 1839 lead us to believe they encountered an uninhabited area with few residents. Even Joseph Smith recalled, “the place was literally a wilderness. The land was mostly covered with trees and bushes, and much of it so wet that it was with the utmost difficulty a footman could get through, and totally impossible for teams.”<sup>1</sup> There were only six buildings in the town of Commerce and four more south of the area. As we have already seen, Amos Davis operated a lively business with over 100 active accounts in 1839, indicating a larger population not too far away from the town.<sup>2</sup> But the image of backwoods and isolation has been expanded to include the idea that the Mormons persisted in being aloof and apart from their Illinois neighbors.

Flanders argues that without adequate capital to finance both production and consumption, the Mormons were left with cooperation, sharing, and bartering. He concludes: “The kind of workers’ cooperative, self-sufficient, moneyless economy that budded in Nauvoo and blossomed in Utah was a natural result.”<sup>3</sup> However, Flanders admits that even though there were plenty of mills, brickyards, small factories, and other tradesmen, there are few remaining records to indicate whether any of the products were sold in outside markets.<sup>4</sup> Leonard also

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1980), 3:375.

<sup>2</sup> T. Edgar Lyon, “The Account Books of the Amos Davis Store at Commerce, Illinois,” *BYU Studies* 19 (Winter 1979): 167-99.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 144-145, 147.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.



refers to inadequate capital and argues that Joseph Smith and other apostles advocated a cooperative attitude. Mormon businessmen were not entirely free to pursue market capitalism but rather were expected to be benevolent to church members. They were also expected to contribute surplus to church building projects, particularly the temple and the hotel called the Nauvoo House.<sup>5</sup> These expectations were expanded when Joseph Smith called for those with means to invest in manufacturing and industry. In 1842, he chastised merchants for failing to create industrial jobs for the poor.<sup>6</sup>

Contrary to the public rhetoric and historians' conclusions, Nauvoo residents were participating in the local and regional markets. The most significant evidence of market participation is shown by price convergence. Price convergence has been acknowledged to show the force of the market and demonstrates the emergence of a market economy. Winifred Barr Rothenberg states, "Price convergence is an observable, empirically verifiable, operationally meaningful diagnostic of a market system."<sup>7</sup> Price convergence can be seen in the local market of Hancock County as well as the regional market in Illinois, proof of Mormon integration in the economy.

In this chapter, we will look at how the economy developed in Nauvoo with evidence from the account books of merchants and farmers. Also, we will see how the Mormons participated in both the local and wider regional markets in Illinois. The agricultural sector of the

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<sup>5</sup> Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2002), 143-144.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:34-35, 44.

<sup>7</sup> Winifred Barr Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts, 1750-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), xiv, 23. Others have argued similar ideas of price convergence as evidence of a market economy. Fernand Braudel stated that a market economy exists "when prices in the markets of a given area fluctuate in unison." Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, vol. 2 of *Civilization and Capitalism, 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 227. Alfred Marshall defines a regional market where prices for the same good tend toward uniformity. Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Macmillan Co.: 1961), 324.

economy, including observations about the labor, is documented in the account books of the farmer operating Joseph Smith's acreages in Hancock County. Finally, comparing commerce in Hancock County to the regional market in different stages of economic development will show how Nauvoo fit into the larger picture in western Illinois.

The Mormons from Missouri continued to arrive in Nauvoo and Hancock County during 1840. They followed predictable patterns of settlement by building homes, clearing land for farming, setting up tradesmen in town, and establishing mercantile operations. The developing agrarian economy in Illinois also created opportunities for trade. While Leonard contends that craftsmen served mainly Nauvoo residents, "talk of textile mills, potteries, and other industrial enterprises created an image of a rising regional manufacturing and trading center."<sup>8</sup> As the Mormons traded with others they participated in the enlarging regional market. The perceived growing commercial strength in Nauvoo began to threaten rival towns and tensions rose. Neighboring towns began to perceive that the overwhelming numbers of residents represented an threat that would bring economic power to Nauvoo similar to the political power that was beginning to manifest at elections.

Early settler Amos Davis continued to enjoy new customers in his store. The original Amos Davis store was located along the riverfront where he conducted trade with passing riverboats. Shortly after the Mormons arrived, he operated on Mulholland Street east of the temple lot and eventually built a large three-story building just south of the temple. He also operated a hotel and carriage business out of the building. Davis owned tracts of land outside the city and several other town lots as well. The growth in Nauvoo was bringing prosperity to the old

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<sup>8</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 160.

residents of Commerce. Amos and Elvira integrated well with the Mormons and were baptized sometime in 1840. Along with bringing the Davises a new religion, Mormons also brought new business to his store enabling Davis to respond to the regional market.<sup>9</sup>

But the arrival of the Mormons also brought new competition for Davis. Two main commercial zones developed in Nauvoo. Davis' store was on the bluff near the temple along with a dozen or so other merchants. The other commercial area was located on the flat near Water and Main streets. The largest enterprise in this district was run by two brothers, William and Wilson Law.<sup>10</sup> Later in 1842, Joseph Smith would build his red brick store in this area. Merchants were a mix of old Nauvoo residents, like Davis, and new arrivals eager for the business opportunities created by the growing population.

Like Davis, local merchants had acquired means before coming to Nauvoo or even before they joined the church. David Dutton Yearsley was born in 1808 to parents with a Quaker background. His father was a well-to-do merchant in Pennsylvania. After his father's death, Yearsley inherited a prosperous business and a comfortable fortune. He married Mary Ann Hoopes, also a Quaker, in 1830. About 1840 David and his wife heard the missionaries preach. Mary Ann accepted the message immediately and wished to be baptized. David was a little more reluctant and proposed that they make a trip to Nauvoo to investigate further and meet Joseph Smith. They traveled by steamship down the Ohio River and up the Mississippi to Nauvoo where they were baptized by Joseph Smith. They returned to Pennsylvania, sold all of their property

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<sup>9</sup> Hancock County Deeds, Book H, pp. 288-90; Book N, pp. 29-30, 99-100; Book R, pp. 431-32. Biographical information including the three-story building and the baptism of the Davises can be found in Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 145; T. Edgar Lyon, "The Account Books of the Amos Davis Store at Commerce, Illinois," *BYU Studies* 19 (Winter 1979), 167-69; Richard Neitzel Holzaphel and T. Jeffrey Cottle, *Old Mormon Nauvoo and Southeastern Iowa* (Santa Ana, CA: Fieldbrook Productions, 1990), 40-41; and *History of Hancock County, Illinois, Illinois Sesquicentennial Edition* (Board of Supervisors, 1968), 169, 400.

<sup>10</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 147.

and brought their family, which then consisted of seven children, to settle in Nauvoo. Before he was even baptized, Yearsley invested \$3,000 in Nauvoo House stock and many times assisted the prophet financially. He was a very generous and trusting man and usually did not even require notes for his loans. For example, several days before Joseph Smith was martyred, Yearsley loaned him \$2,000, a debt never repaid.<sup>11</sup>

Upon their arrival in spring 1842 by steamboat, Yearsley hired a builder to construct the only three-story brick home in Nauvoo at the corner of Partridge and White streets, which is still standing today. Many masons and other tradesmen worked on the house, which was completed in 1843. In Yearsley's account books for the year 1843, it is apparent that laborers were paid with store credit.<sup>12</sup>

Yearsley operated a successful mercantile business called the Keystone Store on Mulholland and Page Street. The summary ledger books have survived from the Keystone Store for the years 1843 with some additional records from 1845. The book has an index at the front listing the accounts in alphabetical order by last name and the page on which the details are found. Each account shows a debit and credit page. The debit side usually lists a total for each day's transactions with the entry to "Sundries" or "Mdze" for merchandise. These would have been entered from a corresponding daybook that listed the individual items for each daily sale. This daybook has not survived. On the credit side of the ledger the entries demonstrate how customers paid off their accounts. In 1843, many accounts were settled by work

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<sup>11</sup> Biographical information on David Dutton Yearsley including the loan to Joseph Smith come from a compilation of family reminiscences by B. F. Cummings in 1897 and Richard Neitzel Holzaphel and T. Jeffery Cottle, *Old Mormon Nauvoo and Southeastern Iowa: Historic Photographs and Guide* (Santa Ana, CA: Fieldbrook Publications, 1991), 65-66.

<sup>12</sup> David Dutton Yearsley Account Book, 1843-1845, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Yearsley's account book is a summary ledger for his business and not a detailed daybook, hereinafter cited as DDY.



*Figure 1.* David D.Yearsley home, corner of White and Partridge Streets, Nauvoo, Illinois, 2009. The front porch and one-story addition on the left have been added in later years. Photograph by author, 2009.

and/or materials for Yearsley's home. For example, George Woodward was the foreman for the four masons that laid the foundation and completed the brickwork on the home. Woodward laid 24,400 bricks for the home and instead of receiving cash for his work, purchased goods at Yearley's store in the amount of \$57.93.<sup>13</sup>

The wealth that Yearsley brought with him to Nauvoo allowed him to build a substantial home and stimulate the economy by employing tradesmen. There were some others that had managed to bring capital with them to Nauvoo. However, men with Yearley's circumstances were few and far between. The majority of the population in Nauvoo had come as refugees from Missouri or Ohio, where they had left their assets behind.

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<sup>13</sup> DDY, 19.

Like most of Illinois in the 1840s, the majority of Nauvoo residents were involved with agriculture in some way either within the city limits or in the surrounding countryside. The acre size of the lots in Nauvoo enabled many to grow a large garden, have a few fruit trees, and raise a cow or two along with some poultry. The Big Field was a community farm east of Nauvoo, three miles by two miles containing 3,840 acres, which were divided up into ten to sixty acre parcels for the use of Nauvoo residents wishing to farm on a small scale.<sup>14</sup> However, those who wished to engage in commercial farming located their farms outside the city limits even if they lived in town. Joseph Smith purchased a farm-sized acreage a few miles outside of Nauvoo.<sup>15</sup> Because of his many other obligations, he hired Cornelius Peter Lott to be the superintendant of that farm. We can trace farming for the market through Lott's account books from 1843 all the way to the time of Lott's death in Utah in 1850.

Lott was born in 1798, the only child of Peter Lott and Mary Jane Smiley of New York. In 1821, Lott was married for a short time to a woman in New York, but the resolution of that marriage remains unclear. He married Parmelia Darrow in 1823 in Pennsylvania where they began their family and a life of farming. They both joined the church in 1837 and lived in Kirtland, Ohio, where Lott was a member of the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company. In 1838, after Lott had served a mission, they left Kirtland and settled for a short time near Haun's Mill. After being driven out of Missouri, the Lotts settled for some time in Pike County, Illinois, before coming to Nauvoo. In 1842, Lott moved his family into a large house on Joseph Smith's farm, where he became the superintendant of the farm.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 135.

<sup>15</sup>Holzaphel and Cottle, *Old Mormon Nauvoo*, 175-176.

<sup>16</sup>Biographical information about C.P. Lott from Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register, held at Brigham Young University Family History Library, manuscript collection, and Frank Esshom, *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Pioneers Book Publishing Company, 1913), 1011.

In September 1843, Lott gave his oldest daughter Melissa, age nineteen, to be married to Joseph Smith as a plural wife, which is also about the time that the surviving day book begins. It would only be speculation about what relationship the marriage had to the business arrangement with Smith. However, the close proximity of the dates suggests more than a coincidence. The book shows many transactions between Lott and Smith. Joseph Smith, usually identified as General Smith, acquired substantial quantities of grain from the farm, probably for his store or possibly for the support of workers on the temple or the Nauvoo House. He also contributed cash to Lott as well as dry goods such as fabric, and household goods such as dishes and utensils, most likely from the Red Brick Store. It is not clear from the records exactly what the financial arrangement was between Lott and Smith. However, in January 1844, there is an entry by Lott indicating that he gave General Smith a receipt in full for his and family's work on the farm for the year 1842 and 1843.<sup>17</sup>

There are many transactions that account for paid labor on the farm. This helps us to understand the value of farm labor in the market economy. We know that in town, tradesmen could earn \$1.50 a day in 1842, and common laborers earned about half that. During harvest time a man could earn \$1.00 to \$1.50 and young men could earn half that amount.<sup>18</sup> It was a common practice for fathers to be paid for their son's labor. A long-term employee of Lott's, Washington Bodgis, was often paid in supplies such as staples like sugar and produce, and also items such as shoes and clothing. Bodgis' wife was also listed in the entries, usually in relation to large quantities of cloth, indicating that her work was sewing clothes for the Lott family and the farm workers. Most years it appears that Bodgis was only employed between the spring and fall when

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<sup>17</sup> Cornelius Peter Lott Daybook, Jan. 9, 1844, p. 14, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereinafter cited as CPL).

<sup>18</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 129, 133.

farm work was needed. In November 1844, Lott settled with Bodgis for the season with twenty dollars cash. In March of 1844 and 1845, there is an entry indicating that Bodgis began to work for Lott again on a monthly basis.<sup>19</sup>

Jonathan Herriman Holmes was a shoemaker whose name appears frequently in Lott's daybook. Many of these entries can also be cross-referenced to Holmes' account books. Holmes traded shoes and boots for grain, farm produce, and hides, presumably for use in his shoe business. Because of the numerous pairs of shoes and boots, Lott must have been supplying the needs of his farm workers along with his own family's footwear. From these examples we see that trading for goods was common among merchants, farmers, and tradesmen. Laborers were usually paid in credit at a store or in commodities rather than cash. In Nauvoo, it was mainly a barter economy because there was little to no cash available.

In the local market of Hancock County, the way that Amos Davis, David Dutton Yearsley, and C. P. Lott, and Jonathan Herriman Holmes operated their businesses was not unlike what was going on all over the state of Illinois. To compare commerce and agriculture from Nauvoo and Fountain Green to the larger regional market in Illinois, account books were examined from stores in Vandalia, Springfield, and Griggsville. Due to lack of availability of sources, the time period analyzed in the account books was different from the Nauvoo analysis by one month and one year. Thus the Illinois accounts date from July 1840. While we may expect some seasonal difference in produce bought and sold, we can draw conclusions that support the involvement of Nauvoo merchants in the larger regional market.

In 1819, one year after Illinois became a state, Vandalia was founded for the express purpose of becoming the state's capital. It was located in Fayette County about 50 miles almost due east of St. Louis. During the 1830s, due to the growth in the northern part of the state, public

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<sup>19</sup> CPL, March 9, Nov. 4, Nov. 30, 1844, March 10, and August 26, 1845.



pressure mounted to relocate the capital closer to the center of the state. In a campaign involving Abraham Lincoln and eight other legislators, Springfield was named the new capital in 1837 with a two-year transition period during which a new capitol building was built. On July 4, 1839, as the Mormons were arriving in Hancock County, the capital status officially switched from Vandalia to Springfield. The Ozias M. Hatch store in Griggsville was also examined for the same time period. Griggsville was a smaller sized town in Pike County about halfway between Quincy and Springfield.

The three account books reflect the development stages of market engagement of the different towns and lay out a pattern that might apply to Nauvoo. For example, the McConnell, Bunn & Co. grocers in Springfield showed the most sophisticated finance structure with capital contributions from the partners to begin the enterprise in July 1840. The account books for the following years represent a higher volume of patrons and the type of goods represents the more cultivated society of the new state capital.<sup>20</sup>

Even though Vandalia had lost its capital status, the transactions at the J. W. Berry store demonstrate more urban commerce than the agrarian economy in Hancock County. For example, items such as eggs, butter, and chickens do not show up in the daily transactions as credits. His urban customers may have had a cow or chickens in the backyard for their own needs but not for market production. Perhaps such purchases were made in a specialized store such as a creamery. Common purchases included such staples as sugar, tea, and coffee but not the perishables found at general stores in farming communities. The store sold a variety of fabrics and notions indicating that custom or ready-made clothing was still something of an exception for the

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<sup>20</sup> McConnell, Bunn & Co., Springfield grocers, 1840-1847, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois. Capitalization for the new venture occurred during the first week of July 1840.

average person. Other items such as dishes and silverware, hats and shoes were purchased and even a few nonessential items such as fur hats, silk gloves, and fiddle strings.<sup>21</sup>

Mr. Berry also participated in commercial farming enterprises, showing a payroll to fifteen men for work on developing and farming a section of land.<sup>22</sup> While this operation was much larger than Joseph Smith's farm, operated by C. P. Lott, the utilization of paid labor and hiring a supervisor to manage an agricultural operation was starting to occur in Illinois in the move from subsistence farming to the market oriented agriculture.

Ozias Hatch's store in Griggsville represented a type of commerce closer in nature to Nauvoo and Fountain Green. He accepted butter and eggs from patrons and also showed a few transactions with wheat and freight for hauling grain, most likely to Quincy. The number of customers and the daily sales were more in line with what was happening in Hancock County. At the Amos Davis store daily sales in 1839 averaged just over \$12.00 per day and the sales at the McClaughry store in Fountain Green averaged around \$11.00. In 1840, at the Hatch store in Griggsville the average daily sales one year later were about \$16.00 per day, which is comparable to Hancock County. In Vandalia daily sales were over \$50.00 per day reflecting a larger population with possibly larger amounts of discretionary income.<sup>23</sup>

In comparing pricing between all five of the stores from 1839 and 1840 what stands out is the remarkable similarity in pricing for some of the common items (see table 3). For example,

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<sup>21</sup> J. W. Berry, Vandalia, Illinois, ledger 1839-41, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois. July 1, July 3, and July 4, 1840.

<sup>22</sup> J.W. Berry ledger 1839-41. Berry account books show the payroll for the month of June, including board on July 1, 1840. Berry also recorded an entry to an account for the 3<sup>rd</sup> section of land, indicating that he was keeping track of costs of agricultural production. On the first of June, about half of the men spent a portion of their paychecks purchasing goods from Berry's store for items such as shoes, sugar, coffee and receiving cash for small portions of their earnings.

<sup>23</sup> No average daily sales were calculated for Springfield because the store had just opened, and there were not enough sales to be meaningful.

the price of coffee was exactly the same for all five enterprises. Although goods at Amos Davis' store in Nauvoo were the most expensive, many of the other items found in the account books were very close in price. A barrel of flour, a pound of sugar, or a pound of tea cost approximately the same whether one was making the purchase in urban Springfield and Vandalia, or agrarian Griggsville, Nauvoo, and Fountain Green.

**Table 3. Prices for commodities in Nauvoo, Fountain Green, Vandalia, Griggsville, and Springfield, 1839-1840**

Item	Quantity	Amos Davis 1839	McClaughry 1839	W S Berry Vandalia 1840	Hatch Griggsville 1840	McConnell & Bunn Springfield 1840
Coffee	2 1/2 pounds	\$0.500	\$0.500	\$0.500	\$0.500	\$0.500
Flour	1 barrel	\$8.000	—	\$7.000	—	\$6.000
Nails	1 pound	\$0.500	\$0.140	\$0.125	—	—
Sugar	1 pound	—	\$0.125	\$0.100	—	\$0.125
Tea	1 pound	\$1.000	\$1.000	\$1.500	\$0.500	—
tobacco	1/2 pound	—	\$0.250	\$0.187	\$0.187	—

*Sources:* Amos Davis Account Books, August, 1839, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; C. C. Tyler Store Records, August, 1839, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois; J. W. Berry, Vandalia, Illinois, ledger 1839-41, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois; O. M. Hatch, Griggsville General Store, 1840-1841, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois; and McConnell, Bunn & Co., Springfield grocers, 1840-47, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

Amos Davis was able to charge higher prices on some items in 1839, most likely due to lack of competition, isolation, and small population before the arrival of the Mormons (see table 4). By 1842 Davis had adjusted the pricing of common commodities. With increased settlement

and interaction between towns, Davis' pricing was now competitive to regional pricing. This again shows price convergence and that Nauvoo merchants responded to the local and regional market. It is also clear that competition between stores and towns was active and effective. Nauvoo was not isolated from her neighbors and engaged in the move to market that was typical in Jacksonian America.

**Table 4. Change in Prices at Amos Davis Store, 1839-1842**

Item	Quantity	1839	1842
Butter	1 pound	18 3/4 cents	12 1/2 cents
Coffee	2 1/2 pounds	50 cents	50 cents-\$1.25
Eggs	1 dozen	8 cents	6 cents
Flour	1 barrel	\$8.00	\$4.40
Molasses	1 quart	25 cents	12 1/2 cents
Whiskey	1 gallon	75 cents	37 1/2 cents

*Source:* Amos Davis Account Books, 1839 and 1842, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah

It is evident that the Nauvoo merchants participated in local and regional markets and price convergence demonstrated that merchants were influenced by the market. The question then becomes, did the Mormons participate in the larger regional market by trading commodities and goods? One assumption about the move to a market economy is that there must be a capacity to produce a surplus in order to participate in the market. If that were true, the struggling Mormons, as they recovered from their disastrous exodus from Missouri, would not be in a position to have a surplus to market. However, there is evidence in simple economies the

decision is made to forgo self-sufficiency in an effort to dramatically improve the economic situation by participating in the market. Historian Winifred Rothenberg states, “Exchanges may in fact be sought first and most urgently by those who are inadequately endowed.”<sup>24</sup> The constant plea from Joseph Smith and others for manufacturing and commerce to produce goods that could be sold in the market and provide capital for further expansion demonstrates this principle. Even though many Nauvoo residents had not yet reached a level of self-sufficiency, Smith promoted market behavior and recognized the positive impact of developing goods for the market and how that would allow for self-sufficiency.<sup>25</sup> Price convergence demonstrated the influence of the regional market on Nauvoo’s merchants. Nauvoo was fitting into the regional market in western Illinois as it developed through the different stages of growth.

From surviving diaries and journals the trials and successes of earning a living as a Mormon gathering to Illinois come to life. One family’s story of their life in and around Nauvoo exemplifies the choices available to those who participated in the market. Ira Ames and his wife were introduced to the Mormons by his brother-in-law, Jared Carter, in New York. The Ames’ lived in Kirtland and also lived in Far West, Missouri. When the Mormons were driven out in 1839, Ira removed his family to the little town of Clayton, Illinois, where Ira obtained employment. His first wife, Charity died shortly after arriving in Illinois from complications of illness and hardship suffered in Missouri, leaving Ira with five small children. There were

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<sup>24</sup> Rothenberg, *From Market-places to a Market Economy*, 47.

<sup>25</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 157.

apparently other Mormon families nearby and soon Ira was encouraged to marry Sarah Johnson, a young woman of twenty-five years.<sup>26</sup>

In 1858, Ira Ames wrote a very detailed account of his life, leaving us with much information about conditions in Nauvoo and various ways families survived economically. Ira and his family attempted to make their home with the main body of Mormons and arrived in Nauvoo in April 1840. Ira wrote, “I was reduced to real poverty. One horse had died. I sold the other, and the wagon to Samuel Rolf but he never paid me for them to this day (1858) except a mere trifle.” In the spring of 1841 they were encouraged to move across the river to Augusta, Iowa, where Ira set up a shoemaking business. “I was very poor when I went there, but was greatly prospered all the time I was there.” During the winter of 1842, he floured all the grain he had earned at Moffit’s Mill, built a flat boat and loaded up his family and all of their belongings and returned to Nauvoo and the house they still had there. From September 1842 to June 1843 Ira served a mission to the East. When he returned home he found his family “in health and tolerably comfortable. My wife had planted the garden and it was all up nice.” Apparently, they were still not able to sustain a living in Nauvoo and began to consider alternatives.<sup>27</sup>

During the summer of 1843 Ira contracted with another brother-in-law, Daniel Carter, who had purchased 160 acres eight miles northeast of Nauvoo. He moved his family to the farm and during the fall broke 10 acres of sod and planted wheat. During the winter and spring of 1844 he fenced the entire 160 acres in oak rail. Carter, who was a widower with two children, moved in with the Ames household. Busy with planting and other farm work, they had no involvement in the events surrounding Joseph Smith’s death in June 1844, although they did

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<sup>26</sup> Autobiography of Ira Ames, 1804-1869, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.,1840, 1841, 1842, and 1843.

travel to Nauvoo for the funeral. Remembering that summer, Ira wrote, “This was the hardest summer I ever spent in my life, for food, and our minds were in constant tension, expecting the mob to come and destroy all our labor, but we were not molested by the mob at that time. We harvested about 300 bushels of wheat, between us, and about 20 acres of corn, farrowing several fine hogs and vegetables plenty.” During the spring of 1845 Ira “broke more sod, planted corn, oats, buckwheat, peas and everything common to that country.” In the fall of 1845 they harvested 1,000 bushels of corn, 400 of wheat, along with a large quantity of other grains, peas, potatoes, and fattened hogs.<sup>28</sup>

Ames doesn't mention taking harvests to market until the fall of 1845. He writes that he contracted with a man in Appanoose to deliver 550 bushels of corn at 12 ½ cents a bushel. “I and my two boys, Clark and Ira, thrashed it out and delivered it and with the money I bought a splendid yoke of which proved my salvation.”<sup>29</sup> Presumably, this was a better price than he could have received by taking the grain to Nauvoo. Also, the transportation costs needed to be considered. A typical wagon could hold 20 bushels of corn, or just about one ton. The 550 bushels represented at least 25 wagon loads, which would likely be a reasonable distance slightly north to Appanoose. If he considered taking the grain to Warsaw, where the price for corn was 12 cents a bushel during the fall of 1845, the transportation costs plus the lower price would have been a bad business decision. Transportation costs on the river tended to be risky especially late in the fall as the end of the navigation season approached. Ira probably recognized the lower risk in contracting with a man close to his farm and the guaranteed profit for his crop.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 1844 and 1845.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 1845.

Like Ira Ames, farmers in Hancock County made decisions every harvest time about where to take their produce to market. Current prices for grain and other commodities were published in local newspapers. Farmers then evaluated how to transport their goods and where to get the best price. Aware of prices, they made market-driven choices at harvest time. They were not isolated from the local and regional economy.

As farmers settled in Hancock County and began to trade in the market, neighboring towns began to notice the impact of the Mormons. Sometimes the impact was positive as Mormons went to Warsaw to mill their grain or sell it in the market. However, as the growing population dwarfed the more established towns, the old settlers began to worry about the strength of the Mormons and the possible threat that posed.

Geographical features became important in developing trading centers and transportation routes and towns competed fiercely for their share of the river trade. For example, the future site of Quincy seemed ideal to the writers of guidebooks because of its location right on the Mississippi as well as the suitability of a ferry crossing. The high bluffs provided a respite from the unhealthy bottomlands north and south of the site. However, one of the most important features was that Quincy was about a day's travel on the river north of St. Louis, making it an ideal stopover for river traffic. North of Quincy, where Nauvoo was located, steamboats would encounter the lower and upper rapids, complicating travel during much of the year. When the river was at low water levels, it was necessary to unload riverboats and load wagons to take goods overland where they could be reloaded again north of the rapids. Even during times when navigation through the rapids was possible, travel was slower with more delays, particularly for the lower rapids. The time and expense associated with this caused most steamboats to concentrate on routes below or above the rapids during low water times, to maximize profits.



Competition between towns on both sides of the Mississippi was active as they aggressively tried to expand their position at the expense of their neighbors.<sup>30</sup>

At the time the Mormons came to Hancock County, Warsaw was gaining recognition as a trading center where county farmers took their grain to market. By 1839, historian Timothy Mahoney remarks, “Quincy, Warsaw, Muscatine, Davenport, and Dubuque had become regular passenger and mail stops along the lead route” from St. Louis to Galena.<sup>31</sup> The location of Warsaw at the foot of the Des Moines (or lower) rapids helped to establish its position as a transportation center. Farmers located north of Warsaw could generally save transportation costs by bringing grain directly to Warsaw and avoiding the rapids. However, competition between towns that were regular stops on the riverboat routes was intense and the possibility of Nauvoo taking over Warsaw’s position, at least in high water season, surely troubled Warsaw’s merchants.<sup>32</sup>

Before the Mormons arrived, Warsaw was establishing itself as an important trading town on the Mississippi. One example of this was The Half-Way Tavern, erected in 1816 by Lorenzo Wells, on the road connecting Fountain Green and Warsaw. The trip to market was a two-day trip and the building’s location halfway between the two towns functioned as a stopping point after the first day’s travel or on the way back from Warsaw. The large main building had many rooms with a large dining room on the first floor. The upper floor was divided into small bedrooms with movable partitions and bed arrangements to accommodate flexible numbers of travelers. On the same property were many sheds and barns to take care of the wagons and teams

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<sup>30</sup> Timothy R. Mahoney, *River Towns in the Great West: The Structure of Provincial Urbanization in the American Midwest, 1820-1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 91, 147, 157.

<sup>31</sup> Mahoney, *River Towns in the Great West*, 112.

<sup>32</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 160.

that hauled the grain to market. Old residents recall that the tavern did a brisk business with people from Hancock County as well as other neighboring counties who also brought their grain to Warsaw for shipment down river. There were sometimes as many as fifty or sixty wagons at one time during harvest season. After stopping for the night and tending to their animals, the farmers would enjoy a substantial dinner of “beef and pork with vegetables and corn, wheat bread, corn bread, coffee and whiskey, if you wanted it.”<sup>33</sup>



*Figure 2.* Half-way House near Carthage, 1925. Courtesy of Hancock County Historical Society.

It makes sense that one town’s success was usually at the expense of a neighboring town. Local newspaper editors often contributed to this sense of rivalry by concentrating on a neighboring town’s weaknesses and failures while accentuating their own town’s strengths and virtues. Warsaw’s rival was Nauvoo. Warsaw residents undoubtedly saw a bright future for the town as a regular steamboat stop along the Galena/St. Louis route. However, as early as fall of

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<sup>33</sup> George C. Tyler, “Half-Way House: including a Pioneer anecdote,” *The News of Fountain Green*, Dec. 2, 1925.

1840, the population of Nauvoo had grown larger not only than Warsaw, but even Quincy, the current largest town in the region. In February 1842, a church census of members showed the population in Nauvoo alone was over 3,500. Warsaw, with a population under five hundred, had the most to lose when the growth in Nauvoo outpaced and then dwarfed the population in Warsaw.

The threat of the Mormons to Warsaw's fortunes was enlarged by the Mormon involvement in the market beyond Nauvoo. In nearby Fountain Green, Stephen Tyler also continued to operate the McClaughry store and most likely benefited from the Mormon influx to nearby Ramus, later renamed to Macedonia. In November 1840, Ramus was promoted in the Nauvoo paper, *Times and Seasons*, as an alternative to the less available and expensive land prices in and around Nauvoo. The following spring the population of Ramus required an addition to the original town plot indicating that the advertisement was successful in attracting new residents. Settlers still purchased land from a church agent and payment terms were apparently flexible.<sup>34</sup> It is reasonable to assume that Mormon farmers settling nearby in Ramus would also take their surplus wheat and other grains to market in Warsaw in the beginning. However, as Nauvoo grew, its mill operators and merchants began to compete for the business.

As Mormon merchants became embedded in the market, and Mormon settlers spread throughout the county, the old settlers perceived them as an economic threat to established market networks. Thomas C. Sharp, editor of the *Warsaw Signal*, began to write about his concerns, inciting fear and trepidation in Warsaw residents and eventually helping to organize the Anti-Mormon party. Sharp fanned the flames of anti-Mormon sentiment and became

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<sup>34</sup> Rugh, *Our Common Country*, 35.

involved with the plot to assassinate Joseph and Hyrum Smith in June 1844. While Sharp's editorials directly referenced the political threat posed by the growing Mormon population,<sup>35</sup> the related lost economic opportunities were likely recognized by Warsaw merchants and investors. Had the people in Warsaw realized the immaturity of the Nauvoo economy and how unprepared the town was to absorb the coming influx of British immigrants they might have felt less threatened.

The Nauvoo Mormons were participating in the local and regional markets as evidenced by price convergence from analyzing merchant's account books. The market also influenced choices that farmers made about where to sell their excess produce. The lack of species and the dependence on barter and trade does not preclude participation in the market. The leaders' constant encouragement to develop manufacturing and industry to produce goods for export indicates the desire to participate in the market. As western Illinois was going through different stages of economic development in the 1840s, Nauvoo was a part of the larger picture.

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 39-40.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE GATHERING AND THE EXODUS

Contrary to the fears of Hancock County residents that Nauvoo would become an economic stronghold, Nauvoo's economic development was immature and therefore, unstable and unpredictable. Although the Mormons were well integrated into the market, the precarious economy did not have the ability to absorb the influx of British immigrants. Many merchants at first saw the new converts as potential new customers. Even the date of the opening of Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store indicates the anticipation of a growing number of consumers in Nauvoo. However, although there were a wide variety of professions and economic circumstances represented in the group of converts, most were from the lower ranks and were not equipped to be productive in an agrarian based economy.<sup>1</sup> The economic instability prompted by the gathering of the British played a part in the fall of Nauvoo.

Church leaders attempted to delay thousands of English converts from coming to Illinois before there was a well-developed economic base to support them. Yet the desire to respond to the message of "gathering" was overwhelming and the converts came anyway. The doctrine of gathering as implemented in Britain between 1837 and 1842 by the mission presidency and the Twelve was problematic. The leaders attempted to hold off until the Mormons were more prepared in Nauvoo to receive the British converts. However, the pressure from the converts themselves compelled the reluctant opening of emigration in 1840. Over the next five years almost 5,000 British Mormons came to Illinois, most of them nearly indigent and poorly suited

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Hawkins Percy, *Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*, ed. Fawn M. Brodie (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 16-17.

to adapt to the frontier economy in Illinois. The experiment of trying to influence only those who were ready and those who had capital was not very successful.<sup>2</sup>

The doctrine of the gathering was announced shortly after the organization of the church. Smith recorded in October, 1830, “And even so will I gather mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, even as many as will believe in me, and hearken unto my voice.”<sup>3</sup> In December of the same year, the first specific commandment directed the saints to gather to a place, “And again, a commandment I give unto the church, that it is expedient in me that they should assemble together at the Ohio.”<sup>4</sup>

The church from its inception moved en masse. Early in 1831, Joseph Smith and most of his followers left New York for Kirtland, Ohio, where hundreds of other converts awaited them. In March of 1831, the instructions began to be more specific about who was to gather and the first reference was made about gathering from other nations. While the Saints were in Kirtland, many important temporal and spiritual events occurred, including the building and dedication of the Kirtland temple. The leadership of the church, however, experienced difficulty functioning well together. They were young, inexperienced, and in early 1837 their disagreements turned into division and apostasy with seven men publicly rebelling and criticizing the Prophet. At the same time the Church was experiencing great difficulties in Kirtland due to economic problems and the collapse of the charterless Kirtland bank. It was in this environment, during the spring of 1837, that the first missionaries were sent to the British Isles. Many have speculated that Smith made the decision to send apostles Heber C. Kimball and a repentant Orson Hyde along with five

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<sup>2</sup> Conrad B. Sonne, *Saints on the Seas: A Maritime History of Mormon Migration, 1830-1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 27.

<sup>3</sup> Doctrine & Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1835 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 33:6.

<sup>4</sup> Doctrine & Covenants 37:3.

others to England as a distraction from the problems in Kirtland and within the Twelve. Whatever the reasons for the timing of the mission, the group left New York on July 1 and crossed the Atlantic in eighteen days.<sup>5</sup>

At first the doctrine of the gathering was not taught in Great Britain. Joseph Smith encouraged the missionaries to strengthen the members before they returned from their missions so they would be able to survive on their own. On June 11, 1837, Smith specifically instructed Kimball and Hyde, right before they left on their mission, to “adhere closely to the first principles of the Gospel, and remain silent concerning the gathering, the vision, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, until such time as the work was fully established, and it should be clearly made manifest by the Spirit to do otherwise.”<sup>6</sup> Also, most of the early converts near Preston were extremely poor, and this fact may have delayed their desire to consider gathering with the Saints in America. Orson Hyde wrote to his wife, Marinda, on September 14, 1837, “We have taught them nothing about the gathering for they have no means to bring them to America, let alone procuring them a place to live after they get there.”<sup>7</sup>

When apostles Kimball and Hyde returned to America in 1838, they found persecution greatly hindering the gathering effort. Most of the saints had left Ohio for Missouri, where things turned for the worse when in 1838 Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued the infamous extermination order. This, along with Joseph Smith and other leaders being jailed in Missouri, caused the Saints once more to begin a tragic exodus to Illinois. During this time, Smith revealed

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<sup>5</sup> James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J. Whittaker, *Men With a Mission, 1837-1841* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 22.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Published for the Church by Deseret Book Company, 1980), 2: 492.

<sup>7</sup> Orson Hyde to Marinda Hyde, September 14, 1837, *Elder's Journal 1* (November 1837): 119-21; (reproduced in *Men With a Mission*), Appendix B, document 1, 347.

that the twelve apostles were to return to England as a Quorum. However, it would be almost a year before this happened since the men had to relocate and settle their families in Illinois before they could leave again.<sup>8</sup>

Back in England, the mission presidency kept busy building up the congregations of new converts. Joseph Fielding and Willard Richards traveled and did missionary work while William Clayton spent most of the time forming a strong congregation in Manchester. It was a difficult but rewarding time for all three men as they struggled with financial problems and other personal challenges while also expressing joy at working hard to build up the Church.<sup>9</sup> Many of the original converts fell away from the Church but new baptisms kept the total membership about the same when the Twelve returned in 1840. Also during this period some of the British Saints began to show interest in immigrating to America to be with the Saints.<sup>10</sup>

When John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff of the Twelve arrived back in England on January 11, 1840, the converts began officially inquiring about immigrating to America. In January 1840, William Clayton wrote to Willard Richards telling him that some were wishing to go to America. He also wrote to Joseph Fielding on behalf of his father-in-law, Thomas Moon. The Moons were among those who desired to emigrate even without encouragement from the missionaries, wishing to be with the prophet and the other saints in America. Fielding encouraged the Moons to be patient and wait for the proper time.<sup>11</sup>

But the Saints were not patient and some began to emigrate before official approval from church leaders. William Benbow and his family emigrated early in April, 1840, just weeks after

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<sup>8</sup> Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men With a Mission*, 59, 71.

<sup>9</sup> Diary of Joseph Fielding, reproduced in typewritten form, June, 1963, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>10</sup> Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men With a Mission*, 83.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.



his own baptism. Joseph Fielding and John Taylor assisted them in Liverpool to obtain berths on the ship headed for New York.<sup>12</sup> When Benbow's brother, John, and his wife emigrated they also paid for the passage of forty others who could not afford their own way.<sup>13</sup>

The five other apostles, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Brigham Young, and George A. Smith arrived in England on April 6, 1840 and the subject of emigration was one of the most pressing. On April 15 they held a general conference of the Church in Preston. They discussed the subject of emigration in some detail in a private quorum meeting on April 16. The eagerness of many British Saints was growing for many reasons. Some desired better economic situations like thousands of other British people who were emigrating to America and Canada. However, the desire to be with the Saints and the Prophet in the land of Zion seemed to be more important to most. The apostles were concerned about starting a tide of unprepared people leaving, especially when the settlement was still underway in Nauvoo and the economy was in its infancy. They were cognizant that the town was unprepared to absorb large numbers of the unskilled and poor. Undoubtedly, they were also concerned about keeping a strong presence in England while building up the Church through missionary efforts.

Despite the concerns, the apostles felt the pressure and decided to open up the way for emigration, but only to those who were ready to leave and if they were willing to help others when they had the means. Two days after the April 15 conference, Parley P. Pratt gave the first public discussion about the gathering to a group in Preston, providing information about Nauvoo

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<sup>12</sup> Diary of Joseph Fielding, 69.

<sup>13</sup> Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men With a Mission*, 172.

and how they should act there and “that the Rich should not go without the Poor, or those that had more than they needed should help those that lacked.”<sup>14</sup>

In June 1840, the first organized group of forty-one British Mormons left Liverpool on the ship *Britannia*, setting sail for America. Led by John Moon, about half the group were his relatives and the other half were fellow converts and friends. On June 2, 1840, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball boarded the *Britannia* and blessed the people before they departed for America. The ship set sail on Saturday, June 6, stopped in Newfoundland on July 2 to buy fish, and sighted New York on July 17 after a rough voyage. Moon wrote to William Clayton, who was preparing for his own family’s emigration, from New York after the voyage. He described the hardships of the voyage including winds, storms, seasickness, other illness and injury, bad food and the death of one baby born on the voyage. He relates the experience to being similar to gathering corn and threshing it when “all the good will stand and the rotten will fall.”<sup>15</sup> The sight of New York, however, was worth all of the hardships. He warns Clayton of all of the tribulations he and others would surely experience during their journey but then said “I can say with truth that if things had been 10 times worse than they was I would just have gone right ahead through all.” Two attitudes were necessary to endure the hardships of the journey. The first was that tribulation is necessary to prove dedication. The second was that any hardship is worth going through to fulfill the spirit of gathering.<sup>16</sup> Even though the new converts were warned about the precarious situation in Nauvoo, they chose to go ahead with the decision to gather.

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<sup>14</sup> Diary of Joseph Fielding, 71.

<sup>15</sup> James B. Allen, “‘We Had a Very Hard Voyage for the Season’: John Moon’s Account of the First Emigrant Company of British Saints,” *BYU Studies* 17 (Spring 1977): 330-41.

<sup>16</sup> Allen, “‘We Had a Very Hard Voyage,’” 334.

On September 8, 1840, the second group of over 200 Saints left Liverpool on the *North America*. Theodore Turley and William Clayton led this group and this voyage was similar to the first months before and dozens of voyages over the next few years. The passengers endured bad weather, shortages of food, sickness and death, and cramped quarters. Upon arrival in America they expressed gratitude for arriving safely and for the beauty of seeing land and civilization.<sup>17</sup>

In August, 1840, the First Presidency issued the first public address encouraging the “gathering,” two months after the first ship of British emigrants had left Liverpool. In 1841, the second season of emigration brought over eleven hundred British emigrants in nine different ships to America. Over the next several years almost five thousand emigrants came to Nauvoo and the surrounding countryside (see table 5). The emigration effort began to be more organized under Brigham Young’s leadership. An agent was assigned to arrange things in Liverpool, and communications about departing ships were delivered by missionaries and publications such as the *Millennial Star*. The leaders negotiated favorable rates for both the ship over the ocean and up the Mississippi River (usually from New Orleans) to Nauvoo.<sup>18</sup>

The later groups were better prepared. Prospective emigrants had access to reports from people who had gone before them as well as instructions from church leaders on how to prepare for their journey. These instructions included everything from what to bring on the ship, how to pay for the passage, what to expect when they arrived in New Orleans and how to arrange for the trip upriver. They also addressed what the saints should expect when they arrived in the booming city of Nauvoo; the shortage of housing, the price of food and livestock, sources of fuel, and how to obtain land.

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<sup>17</sup> Sonne, *Saints on the Seas*, 69.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

**Table 5. Number of Mormon British Emigrants to Nauvoo, 1837-1846**

Year	Number of baptisms	Number of emigrants to Nauvoo
1837	600	0
1838	727	0
1839	190	0
1840	2,326	291
1841	2,883	885
1842	3,216	1,614
1843	1,195	772
1844	1,762	644
1845	2,505	335
1846	2,354	290
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,758</b>	<b>4,831</b>

*Source:* Conrad B. Sonne, *Saints on the Seas: A Maritime History of Mormon Migration, 1830-1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983, Appendix 1, and M. Hamblin Cannon, "Migration of English Mormons to America," *American Historical Review*, 52, no. 3 (Apr. 1947); 436.

*Note:* The number of baptisms comes from M. Hamblin Cannon while the number of emigrants to Nauvoo comes from the ship registers in Appendix 1, Conrad B. Sonne, *Saints on the Seas*.

Inherent in the doctrine of gathering was the commitment to religious discipline that required obedience and sacrifice. There were those that immigrated with the primary purpose of escaping conditions in England without sufficient faith to face the challenges of the journey. The emigrants were warned to expect hard work and that circumstances would not be comfortable at first. With remnants of boosterism rhetoric, Joseph Smith proclaimed in the Liverpool newspaper, *Millennial Star*: "but none need imagine to himself that he can sit down there and live without industry and enterprise; if they do they will meet with disappointment. But if an

emigrant goes there with a spirit of honest industry, enterprise and economy, and with an eye single to the glory of God . . . he will find himself a way to establish himself and his posterity.”<sup>19</sup>

As the numbers of British emigrants swelled, one of the main concerns of the local leaders was the ability to assimilate the new residents into the economy of Nauvoo. In January 1841, shortly before the Twelve returned to America, they cautioned, “it is not wisdom for the poor to flock to that place extensively, until the necessary preparations are made.” They encouraged “in the first place for men of capital to go on first and make large purchases of land, and erect mills, machinery, manufactories, & c., so that the poor who go from this country can find employment.”<sup>20</sup>

In Nauvoo in March 1841, Joseph Smith addressed the same concern after expressing his pleasure with the success of spreading the gospel in England and acknowledging that Nauvoo had been appointed for the gathering of the Saints. He encouraged men with capital to establish factories to employ others. He cautioned that this should be accomplished the way the Lord intends because “there are great numbers of the Saints in England who are extremely poor and not accustomed to the farming business, who must have certain preparations made for them before they can support themselves in this country, therefore, to prevent confusion and disappointment.”<sup>21</sup>

Despite his cautions, Joseph Smith also recognized the business opportunity with the influx of new residents. During the fall of 1841, Joseph Smith decided to go into the mercantile

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<sup>19</sup> *Millennial Star*, January 15, 1841.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

business and began construction on a spacious brick building down the street from his home. Several days before Christmas “thirteen wagons arrived from Warsaw loaded with sugar, molasses, glass, salt, tea, coffee, &c, purchased in St. Louis.”<sup>22</sup> Evidently, these goods were obtained from Edward Hunter to pay off his debt for purchasing land from Joseph Smith the previous fall.<sup>23</sup>

The two story building was relatively large for a store in a frontier town like Nauvoo with above average finishes for the main room of the store. Joseph Smith wrote with pride to Edward Hunter as the store was about to open in January 1842: “The principal part of the building below, which is ten feet high, is devoted exclusively to shelves and drawers . . . and the counters, drawers, and pillars present a very respectable representation of oak, mahogany and marble for a backwoods establishment.”<sup>24</sup> Although business was brisk from the beginning, Joseph Smith did not operate the store himself for long. Some accounts attribute the abandonment of the enterprise to the prophet’s many other responsibilities besides head of the church including mayor, other civil positions, and the commander of the Nauvoo Legion. Others note his failure to operate the business on sound financial principles, mainly by extending too much credit to people without the ability to pay.<sup>25</sup> In any event, several months later, it appears that others had taken over the task of running the business. References exist that indicate that Ebenezer Robinson and David Dutton Yearsley each temporarily operated the store.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:481-83.

<sup>23</sup> Roger D. Launius and F. Mark McKiernan, *Joseph Smith, Jr.’s Red Brick Store*, Western Illinois Monograph Series, Number 5 (Macomb, Illinois: Western Illinois University, 1985), 12.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:491.

<sup>25</sup> Launius and McKiernan, *Red Brick Store*, 16-17, and Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 145-147.

<sup>26</sup> Launius and McKierman, *Red Brick Store*, 17-18.

The only surviving daybook from the Red Brick Store is dated June 23, 1842 to June 22, 1844, a full two years. Although it is unclear about who was managing the business by this time, there is still an undeniable connection to Joseph Smith. The transactions in the daybook demonstrate substantial amounts of goods and commodities received by Joseph and Emma Smith. The business practices appear to show the extension of credit to individuals regardless of their ability to pay. Very few transactions involve the payment of cash or goods, and the goods purchased wholesale from St. Louis, Chicago, or New York left the store at a rapid pace when compared to stores such as Amos Davis. For example, comparing daily sales in 1842 shows Amos Davis' store average for a week in Sept. 1842 was about \$10.00 per day while the Red Brick Store averaged almost \$170.00 per day in July 1842. Apparently, customers were more apt to purchase larger quantities of goods and even luxuries when the consequences of non-payment were negligible.<sup>27</sup>

After the national banking panic in 1837, banking experienced a volatile period and Nauvoo did not have an operating bank where credit could be obtained. This may have also been a conscious decision of Smith's in order to avoid the debacle in Kirtland over the Kirtland Safety Society Bank.<sup>28</sup> Businessmen who had surplus cash often lent money and merchants provided some banking services by selling goods on credit and lending small amounts of cash to customers. In any case, the Red Brick Store operated somewhat like a bank. Also, the opening inventory for the store was a payment on a land transaction. If Smith continued to finance the

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<sup>27</sup> Joseph Smith Daybook, July 1842, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; Amos Davis Account Books, Sept. 1842, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>28</sup> Marvin S. Hill, C. Keith Rooker, and Larry T. Wimmer, *The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economis* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1977), 2.

store with land payments or borrowings from private businessmen, then the store was a financial vehicle.

It also appears that Smith financed church building projects through the store. Two conspicuous accounts were those of the Nauvoo House and the Temple Committee, favored building projects of Joseph Smith's. He anticipated the Nauvoo House would be a hotel with enough prestige to host visiting dignitaries. Doctrines introduced by Smith in Nauvoo gave new meanings to the temple and he personally chose the design and the architect for the impressive structure.<sup>29</sup> In a one week period in July, 1842, the account for the Nauvoo House was charged goods amounting to \$95.86 and the account for the Temple Committee \$51.39. During that same week, Joseph Smith's account had charges totaling \$131.69 demonstrating his continuing involvement in the operation.<sup>30</sup>

People who contributed both labor and materials in excess of their tithing responsibilities may have been given permission to collect payment by purchasing goods at the store. Indeed, there were relatively large transactions for individuals that would seem out of reach for everyday purchases. For example, single transactions ranging from \$10.00 to \$30.00 likely represent some kind of debt payment rather than a weekly or monthly shopping trip. For example, one transaction with S.B. Stoddard on July 1, 1842, included no less than 37 yards of various types of fabric; various notions such as thread, pins, lining, buttons, and ribbon; and items such as gloves, bonnets, suspenders and handkerchiefs for a total of \$30.75. Another customer, David Manhard, bought a similar quantity of items totaling \$29.16 on July 2, 1842.<sup>31</sup> Transactions of this volume

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<sup>29</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 241-242.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Smith Daybook, July 1-7, 1842, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Smith Daybook, July 1, and July 2, 1842.



and cost are not represented at the Amos Davis store or the McClaughry store in Fountain Green. In the species-lacking environment, Smith’s creditors had to accept payment in store merchandise or no payment at all.

Because of the atypical nature of the transactions at the Red Brick Store, comparing the daily sales or activity levels in its account books with those of Amos Davis is not useful. However, price comparisons can still have significance. Although most of the merchandise at the Red Brick Store was imported from St. Louis or other large towns, the common commodities still show competitive pricing with the Amos Davis store (see table 6).<sup>32</sup> For example, the price of butter and eggs was fairly close and the price of salt, sugar, and nails was also competitive.

**Table 6. Price Comparison between Amos Davis Store and Red Brick Store, 1842**

Item	Quantity	Amos Davis	Red Brick Store
Butter	1 pound	\$0.125	\$0.080
Eggs	1 dozen	\$0.060	\$0.060
Salt	1 pound	\$0.025	\$0.030
Sugar	1 pound	\$0.100	\$0.125
Nails	1 pound	\$0.100	\$0.125

*Sources:* Amos Davis Account Books, July 1842, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah and Joseph Smith Daybook, July 1842, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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<sup>32</sup> Amos Davis Account Books and Joseph Smith Daybook.

One can speculate about the effect on Amos Davis and other merchants' business when it was possible to buy goods at the Red Brick Store on accounts that did not have to be settled in the customary time periods. Years later in Utah, Brigham Young explained the risks of a prophet extending unlimited credit to members. Even though Joseph Smith had others run the store, as he had C. P. Lott run his farm, everyone still recognized the prophet's involvement and it was human nature for people to expect a prophet to be generous and understanding of a person's circumstances and difficulties. Many took advantage of Joseph Smith's benevolence even when they had no intention of settling the account. The business was not profitable when credit was extended regardless of a person's ability to pay.<sup>33</sup>

While the mercantile business may not have been profitable at the Red Brick Store, many other important events and activities took place in the upstairs rooms of the building. The Relief Society organization, meetings of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, a school, and the introduction of the temple ceremonies all occurred in the upper room. All kinds of political meetings were held in the assembly room and it was there in 1844 that Joseph Smith declared his candidacy for the United States presidency.<sup>34</sup>

Like Joseph Smith, other local merchants and businesses benefitted from the growing population in Nauvoo due to the gathering. However, there was also growing evidence that residents were struggling to survive economically, especially the British immigrants. As early as 1841, one bishop responsible for the care of the destitute, wrote about not only the English immigrants but also other poor members 'gathering' to the prophet's call. He estimated only one

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<sup>33</sup> Hill, Rooker, and Wimmer, *The Kirtland Economy*, 41.

<sup>34</sup> Launius and McKiernan, *Red Brick Store*, 19-32 and Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 223, 259.

in ten could find employment and if it were not for his ability to provide food they might have starved.<sup>35</sup>

Nauvoo's neighbors, particularly in Warsaw, were also worried about the political threat posed by the growing population. The old settlers were being effectively shut out of the political structure because the Mormons held the majority of votes. Mormons were also effective in getting most of the county improvements approved to benefit Nauvoo and other Mormon settlements. Fueled by Thomas Sharp's editorials in the *Warsaw Signal*, talk of ousting the Mormons from Hancock County began to circulate. Surely, if the prophet Joseph Smith was no longer in control, the Mormons would leave.<sup>36</sup>

Ironically, the opportunity to murder the prophet arose because of internal conflict within the church. In the spring of 1844, several prominent men, led by William Law, formed their own church and wished to publish alleged secrets and abominations of the church in a new newspaper, named *The Nauvoo Expositor*. Joseph Smith, in an effort to put down the rebellion, ordered the press destroyed and had all copies of the paper confiscated. This move created fear in the editors, who fled to Carthage for safety and to file charges. This, of course, heightened tensions and fear on both sides and Joseph Smith put Nauvoo under martial law. Illinois Governor Thomas Ford was notified of the dangerous situation and fearing a possible civil war came himself to the county mobilizing forces from other neighboring counties,. Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum, and a group of others named in the warrant voluntarily went to Carthage on June 24 with a promise of protection. Governor Ford underestimated the seriousness of plots to murder Joseph Smith and left Carthage with the prisoners under guard by the Carthage militia.

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<sup>35</sup> Correspondence of George Miller as quoted in Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 145.

<sup>36</sup> Susan Sessions Rugh, *Our Common Country: Family Farming, Culture, and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 40-42.

On the afternoon of June 27, the mob easily overpowered the guards, entered the jail and murdered Joseph Smith and Hyrum and wounded apostle John Taylor. The first reaction by both Mormons and even the rest of the state was shock and outrage. Both sides, but particularly Warsaw and Carthage, feared retribution and more violence.<sup>37</sup>

While further violence was avoided for the time being due to wise leadership on both sides, the calm present the rest of the summer was uneasy. Talk of moving west became more frequent as it became evident that it would once again be necessary for the Mormons to find a new place of refuge. While Brigham Young and other leaders sorted out the ramifications of prophetic succession and other religious matters, ordinary Mormons attempted to find some semblance of normal daily life in Nauvoo. Crops in the field needed tending, building projects needed to be resumed, and shopkeepers needed to reopen their doors.

The martyrdom did disrupt business and during the summer of 1844 there are written and unwritten indications of it in account books. Several account books show that business actually ceased on June 27, 1844, for several days to weeks. In the daybook for the Red Brick Store there is a short account of the martyrdom. Several references indicate that Emma Smith asked others to run the store after the prophet's death and in a letter dated October 18, 1844 to Joseph Heywood, Emma offered the following: "The Brick Store will be empty next week and I would like well if you could find it advantageous to your interest to fill it with goods and groceries this fall, the rent will be low." She added a comment about the state of commerce in Nauvoo by writing, "I think it a good time to commence an establishment of that kind now as there is a number of the merchants about to leave here soon."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Rugh, *Our Common Country*, 44; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 404-405.

<sup>38</sup> Emma Smith to Joseph L. Heywood, 18 October 1844, Manuscript Collections, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah, quoted in Launius and F. McKiernan, *Red Brick Store*, 33.

Stephen Markham, a loyal friend of Joseph Smith's, probably assisted Emma Smith in sorting out some of the business affairs of her husband. Markham's daybook shows transactions through June 25, 1844 and then no entries until July, when the records state: "Settled and balanced all book accounts as of this date, July 6, 1844."<sup>39</sup> He may have helped out with running the Red Brick Store for a time because his own personal account books do not begin again until October of 1845. Markham had been a well-to-do farmer in Geauga County when he was baptized in July 1837. He sold all of his possessions and supported the means for sixty people moving from Kirtland, Ohio to Far West, Missouri. He was appointed an agent for the Church to assist the poor in relocating from Missouri to Illinois. As a colonel in the Nauvoo legion he served as a bodyguard for the prophet, assisting his family in the exodus from Missouri while the prophet was in Liberty Jail. Earlier in 1844, when the prophet needed funds to defend himself from lawsuits, Markham sold his house, gave the \$1200 proceeds to Joseph Smith and moved his family into a tent while a cabin was being built.<sup>40</sup> Markham had also visited Joseph Smith and the others in Carthage jail the day of the martyrdom. He was driven out of town on horseback by the mobs who probed his legs with bayonets. According to other accounts, when he returned to Nauvoo his boots were filled with blood and the scars from the incident remained with him the rest of his life.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Stephen Markham Account Books, July 6, 1844, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. The entry on July 6 was signed by S. Markham and Wilkinson Huitt, most likely Markham's business partner.

<sup>40</sup> *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901-1936) 3:677.

<sup>41</sup> "Stephen Markham's Personal Account of Events Leading to the Death of Joseph Smith", Wilford Woodruff's Papers, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

The last entry between Cornelius Peter Lott and Joseph Smith was on June 11, 1844.<sup>42</sup> Although Lott's daybook did not always have daily entries, there is an obvious lapse in business between June 11 and July 25, 1844, indicating a reaction to the prophet's death. Although references to Emma Smith appeared occasionally in the book before the prophet's death, sometime in late July 1844, after the absence of her husband, the nature of the transactions changed between Emma and Lott. There were several credit transactions indicating that Emma was paying off an obligation to Lott. However, the number of transactions soon tapered off later in 1844 and it appears the relationship ended.<sup>43</sup>

The interruption in business due to the martyrdom and the surrounding threat of violence was just one factor in an already instable situation. The people wondered if it would be necessary to once again give up their homes and businesses and move. Any hopes of investment or moving forward with manufacturing vanished. As talk began to circulate about abandonment prices for homes, and land prices plummeted, smart investors sat by waiting for the market to bottom out.<sup>44</sup>

Besides the murders of the Smiths, during the summer of 1844 other events in Illinois contributed to an economic downturn that affected Nauvoo and the rest of Hancock County. The Great Flood of 1844 began in the spring when unprecedented high levels of rainfall sent water into the river system. The early spring had prompted an unusual early opening of the upper river and high water made its way down the system past Burlington, Nauvoo, and picked up the Illinois river the first week in May. The normal rise at St. Louis came a few weeks earlier than usual and most thought the danger of flooding was over. However, heavy rains continued to fall

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<sup>42</sup> Cornelius Peter Lott Daybook, June 11, 1844, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereinafter cited as CPL.

<sup>43</sup> CPL, July 25, 1844.

<sup>44</sup> Rugh, *Our Common Country*, 45.

in central Illinois, causing a second rise in the Illinois River and picking up the Missouri River with both emptying into the Mississippi at the same time. On June 27, the day of the martyrdom, the forty-five foot high crest flooded St. Louis and transformed the American Bottom into a vast lake. The water remained high for two weeks, not falling back until mid-July. Points further down the river suffered high water levels well into August.<sup>45</sup>

The unusually wet spring delayed planting times and resulted in a smaller harvest in 1844. This had a disastrous affect on the people in Nauvoo who were already suffering. In February 10, 1845, the *Warsaw Signal* reported that “the great mass of the population of the city is in a state bordering on starvation. There is no business going on, and no means of obtaining subsistence only by charitable donations from the richer classes.”<sup>46</sup> While reports in the Warsaw paper were always suspect to exaggeration, other reports substantiate that times were tough in Nauvoo. With the turmoil of the previous summer resulting in confusion about the future, the poor harvest and still incoming immigrants made commodities scarce. More and more Nauvoo residents, especially the British immigrants were applying for poor relief. In the spring of 1845, a disproportionate amount of poor relief to Mormons was granted by the county commissioners.<sup>47</sup>

Any hopes that outside investors would bring capital to the town disintegrated with the death of Joseph Smith so Mormon owned businesses were the backbone of the local economy. Many were watching to see how the town would recover and looked for opportunities to profit from the disaster. Property values were falling and savvy outsiders recognized the advantage in waiting for even lower prices as people began to prepare to leave town. The church leaders

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<sup>45</sup> Timothy R. Mahoney, *River Towns in the Great West: The Structure of Provincial Urbanization in the American Midwest, 1820-1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 73-74.

<sup>46</sup> *Warsaw Signal*, 10 February 1845.

<sup>47</sup> Rugh, *Our Common Country*, 46.

focused on getting the temple completed as an effort to keep the economy afloat. Brigham Young and other leaders also began promoting a renewed effort on home industry beginning with an epistle in October 1844. In part Young stated: “there must be something produced by industry, to send off to market in exchange for cash, and for such other articles as we need.” Again his appeal was to a communitarian type of effort “BY THE UNITED INDUSTRY, SKILL, AND ECONOMY OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE.”<sup>48</sup>

Efforts for a good year of agriculture paid off during the summer and fall of 1845. During an April 1845 conference the leaders had encouraged all those who owned land to plant as much as possible. Also, a community effort to expand production at the Big Field, the community farm just outside of Nauvoo, was quite successful. Brigham Young and others were optimistic about the fall harvest. The harvest of 1845 enabled many families to prepare somewhat for the trials ahead in 1846.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile, Nauvoo’s merchants attempted to sustain a lively commerce. David Dutton Yearsley was away on a mission to the east at the time of the martyrdom. When he returned he began to operate his store again in 1845. Because of his financial resources his family did not suffer the way many others did. They even had the means to entertain and accounts of their social gatherings show up in journals of others. In George A. Smith’s journal, he recalls a gathering of about fifty people at the Yearsley home in 1845. Early meetings of “The Young Gentlemen’s and Ladies Relief Society,” probably a forerunner of the Mutual Improvement Associations, were held at the Yearsley home.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Nauvoo (Illinois) *Times & Seasons*, 1 October 1844, 668-69.

<sup>49</sup> Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 495.

<sup>50</sup> Richard Neitzel Holzaphel and T. Jeffery Cottle, *Old Mormon Nauvoo and Southeastern Iowa: Historic Photographs and Guide* (Santa Ana, CA: Fieldbrook Publications, 1991), 66.



The Yearsley ledger book does, however, tell the story of economic contraction in Nauvoo. Unlike before, there was no indication of Yearsley hiring tradesman for building projects and allowing them to receive payment from the goods at his store. Other more subtle changes can be noted in the ledger. In 1843, when he had ample income, Yearsley probably hired a bookkeeper as evidenced by the elaborate handwriting in his ledger. When he returned from his mission in 1845, at first the fancy handwriting appears. However, by mid-year the entries show a more simple handwriting that suggest that Yearsley or one of his children, kept his own books. But there are also indications of compassion for the circumstances of debtors. In 1845, Lucy Mack Smith's account in the amount of \$20.78 was settled with \$1.00 in cash and the entry "by not being able to pay" for the remaining \$19.78.<sup>51</sup> This would be the nineteenth century version of the "write-off."

Economically speaking, the martyrdom in June 1844 was the beginning of the end for the Mormons in Illinois. However, it did not immediately end the dominance of the Mormons in Hancock County. Even though some Mormons were suffering economically their political strength was demonstrated once again in the elections of 1845. While the reality of the economic situation was challenging individuals in Nauvoo, the rival towns still had the perception that Nauvoo was a threat economically and politically. The swell in population brought on by the gathering of the British converts, frightened neighbors in Hancock County, particularly Warsaw. Therefore, the role of the gathering contributed to the fall of Nauvoo. Although economic strength was only perceived and not reality, the political power shown at the polls was evidence

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<sup>51</sup>David Dutton Yearsley Account Book, 1845, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 5.

enough to agitate violence. Enemies began attacking some of the isolated Mormon communities outside of the protective circle of Nauvoo.

Those who incited violence would not be satisfied until the Mormons left Illinois, even though it took almost two more years to reorganize and prepare for the trek west. As the swell of public feeling against them rose, Brigham Young pledged to leave the state for an unspecified location in the west. Preparations for removal began and in February of 1846 the exodus began. Property was either sold at a deep discount or in many cases, simply abandoned. Once again, the Mormons were to start over and fulfill the doctrine of the gathering in the Salt Lake Valley.

## CONCLUSION

During their seven years in Illinois, the Mormons established a town that surpassed the size of all other Illinois towns including Quincy and Chicago. Nauvoo began much the same as many other western boomtowns with visions of economic success circulated by the town's boosters, notably Joseph Smith. Using similar rhetoric heard in contemporary towns, the possibilities for the future seemed limitless. Businesses were started, land was broken, and the residents of Nauvoo interacted with the market in much the same way as her neighbors. In the end, their success was in accumulation of people rather than accumulation of capital. And with the accumulation of people came the perception of economic power to their neighbors. Contrary to previous historiography, the Nauvoo Mormons were not isolated and self-sufficient and did, indeed participated in the market significantly. There were differences due to the religious aspect of the gathering but in most ways they were remarkably similar to their neighbors. The Mormons experienced similar ambivalence towards the market as other frontier towns. Joseph Smith recognized the necessity of participating in the market while at the same time attempted to remain self-sufficient. This confusion created caution and even fear with investors, which negatively impacted the establishment of manufacturing and commerce. The conflict was even more pronounced due to the Mormon's allegiance to family farming at a time when the market revolution was emerging full force.

The story of the Mormon's encounter with the market in Nauvoo has provided a glimpse into everyday life of some of Nauvoo's most notable residents as well as those we have never heard of. When Ira Ames noted in his journal that his wife had "planted a garden and it was all up nice," I can envision his faithful wife diligently planting that garden to feed her family while

her husband was away serving a mission. When I come across entries in shoemaker Holmes account book, and the matching entries in Cornelius P. Lott's account books, I can almost see the shoemaker driving his wagon out to Joseph Smith's farm, delivering pairs of work shoes to Lott's farm workers, and returning home with additional hides to make more shoes along with bushels of corn and other grains to sustain his family. I can imagine the conversations between husband and wife about how to make ends meet. Women gathered eggs and churned butter to sell at the store. When a debt was owed a man from the church for labor on the temple or contribution of materials he may have returned home to tell his wife about his credit at the Red Brick store. I can imagine his wife choosing an attractive piece of yardage when she went to the Red Brick store for a Relief Society meeting. When a man had credit due to his labor on David Dutton Yearsley's home, they surely discussed what goods were available at Yearley's store that would meet their family's pressing needs the most. Or what goods they could obtain at the store that would be easily exchanged in the market for essential items.

The death of Joseph Smith in 1844 brought changes for the merchants in Nauvoo as they saw their businesses collapse with the fall of Nauvoo. As Brigham Young assumed leadership and prepared the Mormons to leave for the unknown location in the west, those that had previous business relationships with Smith had to adjust. Apparently, Lott remained loyal to Brigham Young, if not the prophet's widow or family. In any event, Lott continued to run the farm for the summer of 1844 and 1845. In 1846, the entries in the account book significantly changed. On February 22, 1846, Lott took his family across the Mississippi to start the journey west. Before leaving Nauvoo there were transactions that show preparation for the journey, such as lists of teams of oxen and which families received them. He also sold remaining grain, possibly even

crops still in the field, to Amos Davis who remained in Nauvoo.<sup>1</sup> Lott and his family, like most families in Nauvoo, gave up their hopes and dreams for prosperity in Nauvoo and courageously accepted the call to follow a prophet to a new frontier.

Cornelius P. Lott had responsibilities during the trek west to attend to church property and assist at the way stations with farming duties. He finally arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1848 and was again put in charge of the church farm. Unfortunately, this did not last for long as he contracted dysentery and died in 1850, shortly before turning 52. Lott and his first wife, Permelia, had twelve children and he had several more with plural wives before his death.<sup>2</sup>

When the exodus began from Nauvoo in February 1846, the Yearsleys left their fully furnished home behind. At the time of the exodus from Nauvoo, David Dutton Yearsley still had enough means to outfit his family comfortably for the trek west and also assisted other families in their preparations. His wife was not accustomed to the pioneer life and Yearsley provided her with a nice carriage for the journey west. Also, because of the extent of Yearsley's wealth and because he was such an astute businessman, he had the means to secure several wagons. He loaded them with dry goods, shoes, and provisions with the intent to operate a store wherever he might eventually settle.<sup>3</sup>

The Yearsleys spent two years in Winter Quarters where David served as a bishop and also operated a store. While in Council Bluffs, as the men were going off to the Mormon Battalion, Yearsley opened up his shoe boxes and let anyone who needed new shoes help themselves. However, while preparing to finally travel to Utah, he contracted pneumonia and

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<sup>1</sup> Cornelius Peter Lott Daybook, 1845 and 1846, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>2</sup> Family group records, Nauvoo Land and Records office, Nauvoo, Illinois.

<sup>3</sup> Florence C. Youngberg, ed., *Conquerors of the West: Stalwart Mormon Pioneers*, 4 vols. (Sandy, UT: Agreka Books, 1999), 2794-2796.

died. His wife, who had enjoyed such a comfortable life as the spouse of a wealthy man, brought her large family to Utah, settled in the Ogden area, and lived to be nearly 93 years old.

Although Amos Davis and his wife, Elvira, were baptized in the church in April 1840 they did not move west with the saints. At first it might seem that Davis was not committed to the gospel and only joined the church to further his business interests while the Mormons were in Nauvoo. However, accounts in the *Warsaw Signal* the winter of 1845-46 hint that there was possibly more to the story. As early as June 25, 1842, the daybook shows Porter Rockwell as a customer at Davis' store. He purchased five dollars worth of merchandise and paid cash.<sup>4</sup> Sometime later, Porter Rockwell took up residence in the hotel that Davis operated and Rockwell ran a carriage taxi service from the building.<sup>5</sup>

Porter Rockwell had led a colorful life due to events while serving as a bodyguard to Joseph Smith, whom Rockwell idolized. Many believe that he was involved with the attempted murder of Missouri Governor Boggs and others. Although this was never proven, Rockwell was frequently on the run from authorities and spent several stints in jail for his zealous behavior. Rockwell married Luana Beebe in 1832 and they had several children. Over the years, however, Luana tired of Rockwell's lifestyle and frequent absences and eventually left him to live with her parents.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>, Amos Davis Account Books, June 25, 1842, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>5</sup> Harold Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 74.

<sup>6</sup> Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell*, 79. This is the most complete biography of Rockwell, although there are some errors concerning the events with Davis. Schindler alludes that Rockwell may have taken Elvira Davis to be sealed in the temple in Jan. 1846. The temple records indicate that Rockwell was endowed on Jan. 5, 1846 but was accompanied by his sister, Alvira Rockwell, not Elvira Davis. There is no record of a marriage between the two and no record of Elvira Davis' endowment in the Nauvoo temple.

Living as a single man in Davis' hotel, Rockwell took a romantic interest in his attractive wife, Elvira. Indeed the *Warsaw Signal* on December 10, 1845, alleged that he had taken Amos Davis' wife as his own. Several weeks later the *Warsaw Signal* published another story about the scandal. It seems that Elvira wanted to go back to her home to retrieve some personal belongings and furniture, so Rockwell accompanied her to Davis' house. According to the report, while Elvira went about gathering her things, Rockwell stood at the door, pistol in hand, as Amos Davis looked on helplessly.<sup>7</sup>

Contrary to the opinion in the *Warsaw Signal* that this was an everyday happening in Nauvoo, this incident caused quite an uproar in Nauvoo as additional rumors abounded. There were rumors that Rockwell attempted to run Davis out of town. Other rumors show people were appalled by the apparent lack of action on Davis' part over the outrage. Based on Porter Rockwell's reputation for disregarding the law and taking things into his own hands, it is not surprising that Davis was unwilling to interfere with this event. However, in the end, Davis had the last word about the scandal when Elvira apparently lost her fascination with Rockwell and wished to return to Davis. Reversing his previous passive stance when Rockwell visited his home, Davis displayed admirable courage as he pulled a spear from his cane and stabbed Rockwell in the side. While Rockwell's wound was not serious and he simply pushed the spear aside, Davis' show of bravery must have convinced Elvira she had made the correct choice in returning to her husband.<sup>8</sup>

It is well known that the *Warsaw Signal* many times exaggerated stories about happenings in Nauvoo in order to create sympathies with the anti-Mormons. While there is no

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<sup>7</sup> *Warsaw Signal*, 10 December, 17 December 1845.

<sup>8</sup> *Warsaw Signal*, 11 February 1846.

record of an actual marriage between Rockwell and Elvira, other accounts lend credibility to some of what appeared in the paper. Hancock County records indicate that a divorce was filed in January 1846 but the divorce was never made final.<sup>9</sup> There is no record of Davis or his wife ever receiving their endowments in the Nauvoo temple. It is possible that Davis' decision to remain in Nauvoo had more to do with maintaining their marriage and not wanting further association with Rockwell than anything else.

Despite his wife's affair with Rockwell, Davis was still committed to helping the Mormons after they left Nauvoo. Nancy Tracy, whose husband had worked in the Amos Davis store, remembered Davis coming to visit the saints in Winter Quarters bringing with him a wagon full of much needed supplies to the struggling saints there. Tracy recalls Davis giving her family sugar, tea, and coffee with such luxuries under the circumstances being greatly appreciated.<sup>10</sup> Helen Whitney also recalls Davis arriving in June 1847 to Winter Quarters "with goods and groceries and the best of wines, liquors, etc. My mother rented them her dining room for a store and boarded them. This was an opening as unlooked for as if manna had rained down from heaven."<sup>11</sup> In this manner Amos Davis extended his business opportunity for the last time with the Mormons.

Fittingly, I close with thoughts about Amos Davis, who remained in the Nauvoo area for the rest of his life. Amos and Elvira Davis had three children, but only one daughter survived early childhood. Perhaps Elvira's disappointment with the loss of her children created her vulnerability to the temporary excitement that Rockwell's affections brought to her life.

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<sup>9</sup> Susan Easton Black, Harvey B. Black, and Brandon Plewe, *Property Transactions in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois and Surrounding Communities (1839-1859)*, Vol. 11 (Wilmington: World Vital Records, 2006), 1000-1001.

<sup>10</sup> Autobiography of Nancy Tracy, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>11</sup> Helen Whitney, *Women's Exponent* 14:78.



Tragically, Elvira died sometime in 1847, leaving a three-year old daughter for Amos to raise on his own. He married three more times and fathered many more children. Sometime after the Mormons left Nauvoo, Davis discontinued operating the store and became a prosperous farmer and landowner, eventually building a fine house and property north of Nauvoo where he was buried.<sup>12</sup> When he originally arrived in Illinois in the fall of 1836 as a young and ambitious man, little did he know that his own merchant career would rise and fall with the gathering and the exodus of the Mormons.

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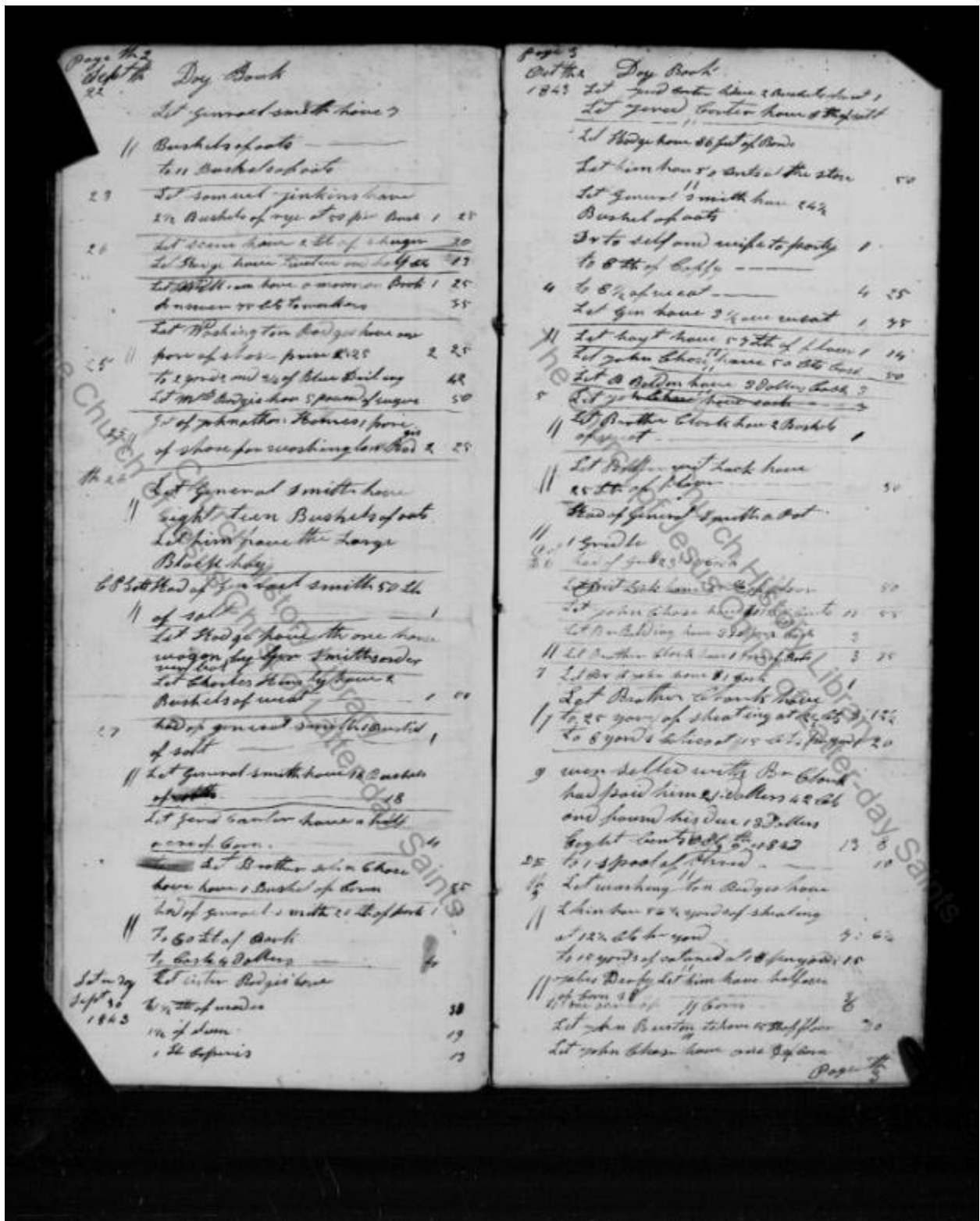
<sup>12</sup> *History of Hancock County, Illinois: Illinois sesquicentennial Edition* (Board of Supervisors, 1968), 169.

## APPENDIX A

The images reproduced on the following pages represent the types of account books that were analyzed for this project.

1. Amos Davis Ledger, 1839. Special Collections, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. This ledger shows entries transferred from the corresponding daybook.
2. Cornelius Peter Lott Daybook, 1843-1852. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Lott was superintendent of Joseph Smith's farm beginning in 1842.
3. C. C. Tyler Store Records, 1838-1915. Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois. The store was actually owned by Matthew McClaughry and operated by Stephen Tyler and later C. C. Tyler. This store was in Fountain Green serving one of the satellite Mormon communities of Ramus (later Macedonia).
4. Jonathan Herriman Holmes Diary, 1846-1848. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Holmes was a shoemaker who traded with C. P. Lott, Joseph and Emma Smith, and others.
5. David Dutton Yearsley Account Book, 1846-1848. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Two pages are displayed here. During more prosperous times in 1843 notice the elegant handwriting most likely a hired bookkeeper. In 1845, either Yearsley or one of his sons were more likely entering the transactions.
6. Stephen Markham Account Books, 1834-1855. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. It is not entirely clear what Markham's primary business was. The page displayed here shows an entry shortly after the martyrdom where Markham had settled his accounts with his business partner, Wilkinson Huitt.





2. Cornelius Peter Lott Daybook, 1843.

413 Tuesday July 9<sup>th</sup> 1839

Catharine Page	—	—
To 15 <sup>th</sup> 1/2 Calico 5/2	581	
9 " " " 20	180	
290 4 " " " —	50	
5 <sup>th</sup> Coffee	100	
4 <sup>th</sup> Tea	52	
4 <sup>th</sup> Pepp	6	
2 Bkls	50	10.17
294 Cr By Cash	—	9.44
Maian Page	—	—
70 By Cash	—	11.50
Page Maaly	—	—
To Postage on letters	25	
1 <sup>st</sup> 1/2 Inf Shoes	150	
3 <sup>rd</sup> 1/2 Calico 5 <sup>th</sup>	94	
2 <sup>nd</sup> 1/2 Dimeshi	52	
15 Spool	13	
1 <sup>st</sup> 1/2 6 <sup>th</sup> stockings	75	4.07
Sylvester Pennick	—	—
27 To 3 Car Linen	—	1.00
Shep Cobb	—	—
190 To 6 1/2 Yrs Rain 5 <sup>th</sup>	225	
" 6 " " "	6	231
Wm Sellings	—	—
To 1 coffee tin	50	
1 " " "	50	
4 " " "	50	
2 Bkls	25	
257 4 <sup>th</sup> Tea	52	
4 <sup>th</sup> Pepp	6	
1 box Lard	28	
1 Gin Beer	62	
1 Milk Strainer	25	3.56
4 <sup>th</sup> Straw	—	6
57 Cr By Cash	—	3.02

414 July the 9<sup>th</sup> 1839

Elijah Pope	—	—
325 To 1 <sup>st</sup> 1/2 on Matt	22	
" 3 Quills	12	.34
311 Rufus Both	—	a
By Cash	—	1.00
Saml Glap	—	—
249 To 1 <sup>st</sup> 1/2 Pin	13	
" 1 <sup>st</sup> 1/2 Salt	12	25
Thos Cambron	—	—
To 5 <sup>th</sup> Coffee	100	
236 " 8 Sugar	100	
" 1/2 Tea	25	
" 1 <sup>st</sup> Calico	38	2.63
Patrick Cambron	—	—
70 By 3 Buttons Finkin	—	1.88
Abner Lincoln	—	—
193 To 1/2 Pepp	13	
" 1/2 Sal Erate	12	21
Patrick Cambron	—	—
170 To 1 Bush Wheat	—	5.50
# Thos Buff	—	—
To 1 <sup>st</sup> 1/2 fine tin Stoppers	—	1.75
David F. Allen	—	—
709 To 1/2 Pepp	13	
" 1 <sup>st</sup> Sal Erate	25	.58
Cr By Cash	—	1.06
Henry W. Conner	—	—
216 To 1 <sup>st</sup> Tobacco	25	
" 1 <sup>st</sup> Box Saddle Pouch	75	1.00
John M. Fennis	—	—
To 1 Rake	—	.38

3. McLaughry Store, Fountain Green, 1839.



4. Jonathan Herriman Holmes, shoemaker, 1843.

130<sup>th</sup> Michael Katz

1843						
June	14 <sup>th</sup>	Adze	.	.	.	9 90 <sup>th</sup>
"	"	do	.	.	.	9 1 50
"	16	do	.	.	.	10 48
"	17	do	.	.	.	11 68
"	19	do	.	.	.	12 94
"	20	do	.	.	.	13 1 16
"	22	do	.	.	.	13 1 12
"	23	do	.	.	.	13 . 05
"	24	do	.	.	.	14 4 08
"	"	do	.	.	.	15 . 27
"	"	do	.	.	.	15 1 20
"	28	do	.	.	.	16 . 55
"	28	do	.	.	.	17 2 16
"	30	do	.	.	.	17 . 10
"	"	do	.	.	.	17 1 38
July	1	do	.	.	.	18 2 00
"	4	do	.	.	.	19 3 04
"	5	do	.	.	.	19 . 14
"	6	do	.	.	.	20 4 38
"	6	do	.	.	.	20 4 98
"	7	do	.	.	.	20 . 75
"	7	do	.	.	.	20 . 84
"	8	do	.	.	.	21 2 95
"	11	do	.	.	.	22 1 50
"	"	do	.	.	.	" 25
"	"	do	.	.	.	" 2 37
"	"	do	.	.	.	" 4
"	13	do	.	.	.	23 . 41
"	"	do	.	.	.	" 9
"	14	do	.	.	.	24 6 15
						17 21

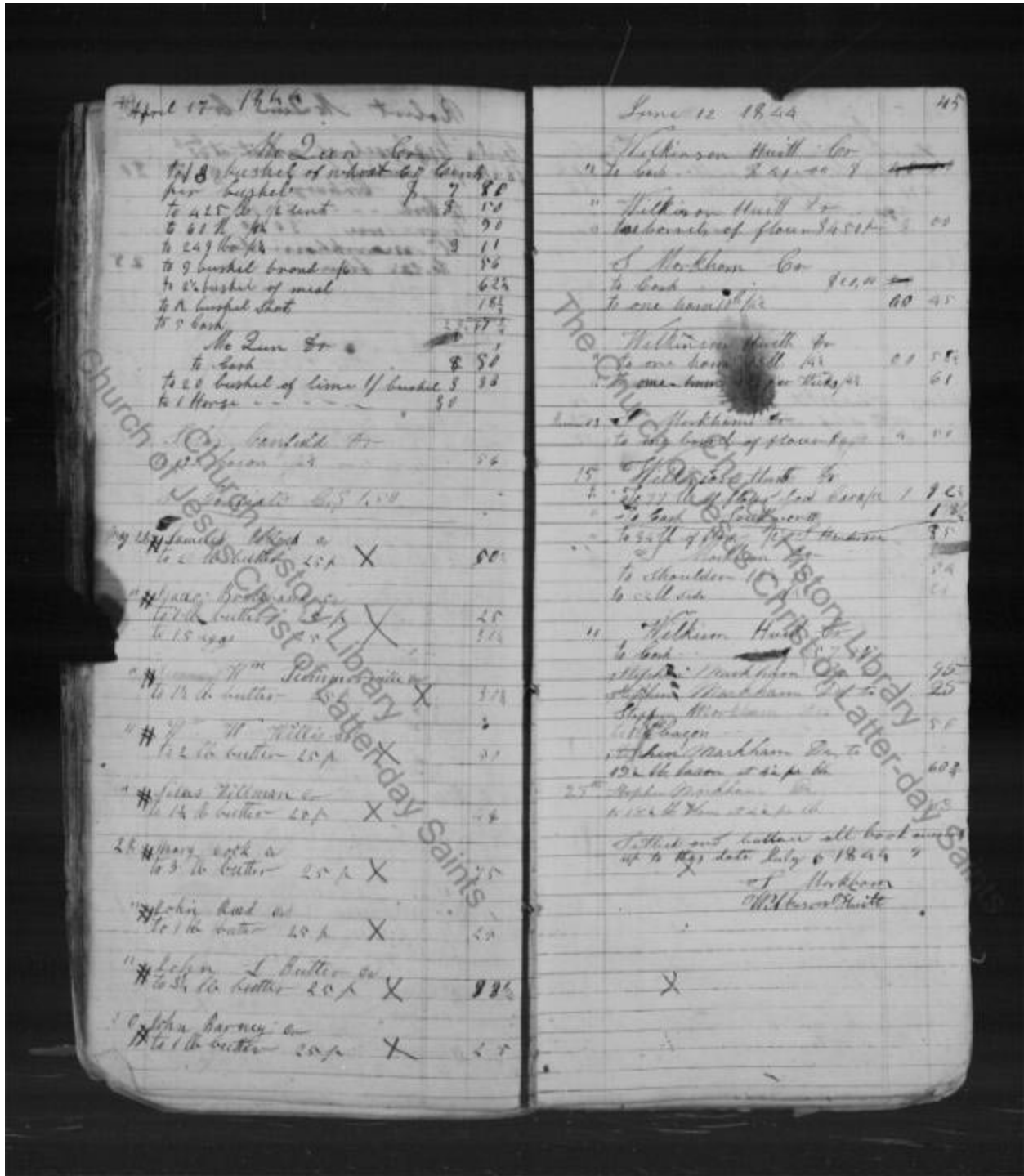
5a. Davis Dutton Yearsley Account Book, 1843.

75 Dr Joseph Morton

1845				
Septem	6	To Sundries	107	17
Augur	18	do	108	1 20
	18	do	110	25
Septem	11	do	109	20
October	1	do	110	4 22
				<hr/>
				0 54

5b. David Dutton Yearsley Account Book, 1845.





6. Stephen Markham Account Book, 1844.

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