
DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 136

MAJOR EVENTS COVERED THIS WEEK

For several years volunteers have collected and digitized information on individuals that crossed the plains in the *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel Database, 1847–1868*:

<http://lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompanysearch/1,15773,3966-1,00.html>

They are still working on this; however, there is a high likelihood that if you have pioneer ancestors this database will include transcripts of the records which document their voyages.

Another great database is the BYU Mormon Migration Database:

<http://lib.byu.edu/mormonmigration/>

- **Winter/Spring 1846** – Exodus through Iowa to Winter Quarters in the Omaha Nation Territory.
 - This was the worst part of the Westward migration for most folks.
- **Winter Quarters**
 - It grew to be a fairly impressive city: “Winter Quarters has quite the appearance of a City. and I never saw the Ladys dress half so well in Nauvoo as they do here. we have a firstrate Mill here and in fact it is quite a business City”¹
 - "The Word and Will of the Lord" **Section 136**.
 - Summer Quarters (BY's Farm)
 - Scurvy a major problem.
 - Due to Federal issues, abandoned in 1848 for Kanesville, Iowa [now Council Bluffs, Iowa].
- **The Vanguard Company**
 - Several published journals, including, Thomas Bolluck and Norton Jacobs. See Pioneer database above.
- **Early Deseret**
 - Handcart Emigration.²
 - The Mormon Reformation.³
 - Mountain Meadows Massacre.⁴

¹ Mary Haskins Parker Richards, Letter to Samuel Richards, Winter Quarters, June to August, 1847, reprinted in Maurine Carr Ward, ed., *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards*, (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 172.

² Chad Orton has written several important articles and has done a couple of podcasts that are worth checking out. [Francis Webster: The Unique Story of One Handcart Pioneer's Faith and Sacrifice](#) and [The Martin Handcart Company at the Sweetwater: Another Look](#). Podcasts [here](#) and [here](#).

³ Paul H. Peterson, “[The Mormon Reformation of 1856-1857: The Rhetoric and the Reality](#),” *Journal of Mormon History* 15 (1989): 59-87.

⁴ Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley, and Glen M. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

- Utah War.⁵

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"THE WORD AND WILL OF THE LORD", JANUARY 14, 1847

SETTING

Brigham Young lead the Latter-day Saints, which followed him—a band of refugees—from Nauvoo in the early months of 1846. They toiled through Iowa in very miserable conditions. Thomas Kane, a non-Mormon friend of the Saints worked with government officials to establish "Winter Quarters" in the Omaha Nation Territory. This was a temporary location in which the Saints prepared for their further journey West.

Brigham Young apparently received several revelations while in Nauvoo though they are now either not extant or not published. However, at Winter Quarters, BY received "The Word and Will of the Lord" on January 14, 1847. The following is Willard Richards journal entry for the day:

1½ P.M. Prest. Young, Kimball, O Pratt, W Richards, W. Woodruff, G. A Smith, E. T. Benson, & Capt Hosea Stout, assbled in council at Elder Kimballs East Room. Prest Young proposed that Letters be written to instruct the brethren how to organize for Emigration. =

Prest Young proposed that E.T. Benson & Erastus Snot, forma n Emigration Co No. 3 – appoint a presidency of 3 & capts. of 100s, 50s, 10s, clerk, &c, & [undecipherable] them. –

Also O. Pratt, & Wilford Woodruff another Co, no. 4.

Anasa Lyman & G. A. Smith 3rd Co. - No. 5.-

Bro. Joseph Coolidge, Erastus Snow, A. P. Rockwood, Phinehas Young, with the Twelve apostles. High council. President of the 70s & two presiding Bishops, were appointed at the [undecipherable] council, a committe to form cos & [undecipherable] the Emigration of the Saints.

Prest Young commened to Give the Word and Will of God concering the Emigration of the Saints & those who journey with them

[meeting ajourned for a few hours. after reconvening] Prest Young continued to write the word and will of the Lord...President Young retired to the octagon & finished writing the "Word & will of the Lord." & Dr. [Willard Richards] copied ⁶

The revelation was immediatly distributed and read. On January 16, after one reading among Church leaders, the Willard Richards journal recorded many reactions. E.g.:

⁵ There are a number of sources for the war, and perhaps the most important recent volume is William MacKinnon's *At Sword's Point, Part 1: A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858*.

⁶ Willard Richards, journal, January 14, 1847, in *Selected Collections*.

Jedh M. Grant. since the death of Joseph have believed that the keys of Rev. were in teh church. When I heard that read I felt a light & joy. satisfied that the Holy Ghost had dictated the words written

The following day the revelation was read to the 70s, High Priests, and other Church leaders. Willard Richards recorded:

Dr. read the word & will of the Lord & the 70s voted unanimously to recieve it as Revelation. – then the high Priests were called upon by Prest B. Young & all prest. voted unanimously to recieve it

...Prest B. Young addressed the assembly to show that the church had been led by Rev. just as much since teh death of Joseph as before & said that Joseph was a great & good man and as great a prophet as ever lieved upon the Earth, Jesus accepted, Joseph recieved his apostle ship from Peter & his brethren.- & the present apostles recieved their apostleship from Joseph, the first apostle & O Cowdery the 2d Apostle.

At another meeting the same day:

Prest W Richards then read "the word & will of the Lord Bro Morley moved that the congregation accept or reject it clear vote for acceptation President Young said all who have copies must become responsible that they be not copied. Adjourned till next Thursday at this place at 6, o'clock PM Hosea Stout Clerk⁷

Within days, Church leaders began to organize their companies. Wilford Woodruff wrote that on January 19, 1847, "President Brigham Young met with his Company or family organization or those who had been adopted unto him or were to be, & organized than into A company out of which may grow a people that may yet be Called the tribe of Brigham."⁸ The next day Wilford Woodruff, "organized my family company this night At my own House consisting of 40 Men mostly Head men of families. Those that Joined me entered in a covenant with uplifted Hands to Heaven to keep all the commandments & Statutes of the Lord our God And to sustain me in my office."⁹

COMMENTS

1. The Saints went by the "Camp of Israel," following Exo. 14:19-20 and Josh. 6:18, 23. Potent imagery.

2, 4, 12. My friend Jed Woodworth asked of these verses:

Keep the change in voice in mind as you read. Why does the revelation begin with "the Lord *our* God" (instead of "the Lord *thy* God"), continue in the first person plural at v. 4, and then

⁷ Winter Quarters Municipal High Council Minutes, January 17, 1847, *Selected Collections*.

⁸Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:118. It appears that the individuals who made up these family-companies intended to formalize their commitment to the company patriarchs at a later date. Brigham Young also encouraged the leaders of the Mormon Battalion to "be fathers to their companies. & in their cos manage the whole affair by the power of the priesthood." Willard Richards, Diary, July 18, 1846.

⁹Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:119, January 20, 1847.

shift into the divine language of first person singular by v. 12? Where does the shift in voice actually occur? Is the first person plural any less authoritative than the divine voice? What explains the appearance of each voice here?

3. Remember, that the 12 Apostles were the governing quorum at this time. And if there were any question about who was in charge, now we have a revelation to clear it up.

6. Why should those that can hurry?

7. It is clear that they wanted a group to go early and arrive in time to put in spring crops (how did they do?).

8. Brigham Young had some harsh criticism for the Saints as he felt they didn't live up to this commandment.

9. What is Winter Quarters supposed to be for?

12-15. Note what BY stated before he began to write the revelation. Sometimes the voice of the Lord tells us what we already know. So why was the revelation necessary? Who is it for?

22. Again with the powerful imagery.

23-24. Would this be mentioned if it weren't a problem?

26-27. There were pretty strict rules about this sort of stuff in Winter Quarters. You were fined for stray animals, for example.

28. Honestly, this verse is lost on us in the modern Church. E.g., William Clayton wrote in his diary of the events in the Nauvoo Temple on December 30, 1835:

The labors of the day having been brought to a close at so early an hour viz; half past 8, it was thought proper to have a little season of recreation, accordingly, Brother Hans Hanson was invited to produce his violin. He did so, and played several lively airs, among the rest some very good lively dancing tunes. This was too much for the gravity of Brother Joseph Young, who indulged in a hornpipe, and was soon joined by several others, and before the dance was over several French fours were indulged in. The first was opened by President B. Young with Sister Whitney and Elder H. C. Kimball with Sister Lewis. The spirit of dancing increased until the whole floor was covered with dancers. After this had continued about an hour, several excellent songs were sung, in which several of the brethren and sisters joined. The Upper California was sung by Erastus Snow. After which Sister Whitney being invited by President Young, stood up and invoking the gift of tongues, sung one of the most beautiful songs in tongues, that ever was heard. The interpretation was given by her husband, Bishop Whitney, it related to our efforts to build this House, and to the privilege we now have of meeting together in it, of our departure shortly to the country of the Lamanites, and their rejoicing when they hear the gospel, and of the ingathering of Israel. Altogether, it was one of the most touching and beautiful exhibitions of the power of the Spirit in the gift of tongues which was ever seen. (So it appeared to the writer of this.)

29. This verse has been abused by people that dismiss the biological nature of mental illness. Still, there is comfort to be found in the Lord.

34-35. The United States is history.