

The Mormon Trail Network in Iowa 1838–1863: A New Look

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For twenty-five years during the mid-nineteenth century thousands of Mormons traversed Iowa, developing a network of trails aggregating over 1,100 miles; that is more than their somewhat better-known trails in Nebraska, Wyoming, and Utah combined. Between 1838 and at least 1863, Mormons crisscrossed a four-county-high tier stretching across the southernmost part of the state, the Mormon Mesopotamia between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. (See foldout map of Mormon trails on the preceding page.)

Up to now interest in and knowledge of Iowa trails have focused largely on the Pioneer Route of 1846 and the Handcart Trail of 1856–1857. But there were many other trails and variants, and we are just now beginning to appreciate the dimensions and magnitude of Mormon travel in Iowa. A new picture of Mormon migrations in that state is emerging, showing Iowa to be the most widely and frequently traversed of all the states through which the early Mormons moved.

Although Iowa trails were used by the Mormons into the 1860s, these trails were extensively traveled only through 1853 and, of course, during the handcart era of 1856 through 1857. After 1853, most Mormons took riverboats up the Missouri River to Council Bluffs and Florence. Also, by 1859, it was possible to go by railroad via Quincy, Illinois, across Missouri to St. Joseph and then to take riverboats to the same destination.

Unfortunately, not only have nearly all physical remains of these original roads disappeared but so also has much of the remembrance of their Mormon use. Their role in Mormon history has faded, has

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been ignored, and has been almost forgotten. Fortunately, however, there are some road signs and markers along a number of these trails.¹

The trails may be grouped into five basic categories, time periods, and degrees of importance:²

1. *The Southern, Pioneer, or Brigham Young Trail*, from Montrose and Sugar Creek to Council Bluffs, 1846–1853, is as well known as any Mormon trail and is certainly by far the best-known trail in Iowa. This route does, however, have two forgotten variants:

Variant A: Between Drakesville and Garden Grove, 1846–1853.

Variant B: Between Dodge's Point and Mt. Pisgah, 1846–1853.

2. *The Northern or Handcart Trail*, from Iowa City to Lewis, 1856–1863, is the second best-known Mormon trail in Iowa.

3. *The Middle, Dragoon, or Des Moines River Valley Trail*, from Bonaparte to Lewis via Des Moines, 1846–1853, has completely faded from Mormon consciousness.

4. *The Mormon Battalion Trail*, from Council Bluffs to the Missouri line at Hamburg, 1846–1856, has only recently been restored to memory.

5. *The Incidental Trails*, 1846–1858, are almost completely forgotten today.

THE TRAILS

The Brigham Young Trail

Commencing at Montrose and Sugar Creek, the Brigham Young Trail meandered over three hundred miles to present-day Council

¹For the trail markers in Iowa, Mormons owe a debt of gratitude to the Daughters of the American Revolution. Of the thirty-six plaques, markers, monuments, museum exhibits, and informational signs (not counting road signs), fifteen were erected by the DAR; of the twenty-seven of these thirty-six referring specifically to Mormons, ten were placed by the DAR. The Mormons have placed seven, locating them at Coralville, Garden Grove, Corydon, and Mt. Pisgah. Local, county, and state groups are responsible for the rest.

²In the account which follows, reference has been made to a few, though by no means all, Mormon pioneer trail accounts. Unless otherwise indicated, the accounts are located in the Library–Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church Archives). This article is based on material gathered from reading more than seven hundred Mormon pioneer journals and on travels throughout southern Iowa, personally following the more than 1,100 miles of trails. Post-1863 accounts of crossing Iowa undoubtedly exist; however, I found none. (See also Stanley B. Kimball, "The Iowa Trek of 1846," *Ensign* 2 [June 1972]: 36–45; and Stanley B. Kimball, *Discovering Mormon Trails* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979].)

Bluffs and is so well known it needs little description here. As famous, however, as this trail was and is, recent study has turned up a few surprises. One well-known section of it, for example, appears to have been traveled for perhaps only one month in 1846, and we have recently learned of several variants. To understand this trail and its variants properly, we must divide it into several segments.

The section from Montrose to Drakesville remained constant until 1853, but there were a few small variants. Some Saints, for example, crossed the Des Moines River at Bentonsport and Keosauqua rather than at Bonaparte (where Brigham Young crossed), and some reached the Des Moines via Charleston rather than present-day Argyle.

The segment from Drakesville to Garden Grove via Locust Creek, where the words to "Come, Come Ye Saints" were written,³ may have been used but once or twice. At Drakesville two important variants originate, one to Garden Grove, the other to Mt. Pisgah. West of Mt. Pisgah the 1846 trail remained constant and became part of the Handcart Trail and the Middle Trail.

These variants west of Drakesville came into use soon after Brigham Young reached Garden Grove and Mt. Pisgah. A glance at the original route of 1846 shows it dipping surprisingly far to the south, so far south that in those days when the state line between Missouri and Iowa was ten miles north of where it is today, the pioneers actually entered Putnam County, Missouri. One would expect the Mormons, who had suffered so much in Missouri, would avoid going there. This seemingly strange out-of-the-way route is partly explained by several contemporary journals.

Erastus Snow noted:

Finding it impracticable to haul grain for our teams, in the bad condition of the roads and it being too early to sustain them upon grass we thought it expedient *to deviate from the direct course which we had intended to travel* and bear further south so as to keep near the border settlements where we could obtain feed for our teams. In pursuance of this council [*sic*] we took the old Mormon trace, crossed the Fox River a few miles above Bloomfield [near present-day Drakesville] and followed it to the ford on the Chariton River. We journeyed up Fox river till we struck what is called the old Mormon trace (it being the trail of a party of brethren who made their escape from their enemies in Far West Mo. in November 1838 and traveled through a then trackless & uninhabited country to the Mississippi river).⁴

³See Paul E. Dahl, "'All Is Well . . .': The Story of the Hymn That Went around the World," this issue.

⁴Erastus Snow Sketch Book, no. 3, 16 March 1846, Church Archives; italics added.

Let me explain this reference to the Old Mormon Trace. John Lyman Smith and Hosea Stout also briefly mentioned this road which some Saints used during 1838–1839 en route to Iowa when fleeing Missouri persecutions.⁵ Just where these Mormons entered Missouri (John L. Smith indicated it might have been near Locust Creek) and where they went beyond the Fox River is unclear. We know that some, Israel Barlow for example, did go to Montrose;⁶ but I have found no reference to any other portion of the Old Mormon Trace. In 1925 Andrew Jenson, Assistant Church Historian, wrote that some of these Mormons settled on the Fox River until they became part of the general exodus of 1846. Unfortunately, he gave no particulars.⁷ This trace may have been part of the Military Road from northern Missouri to Dubuque via Muscatine.

By the time Brigham Young reached Garden Grove on 24 April and especially Mt. Pisgah on 18 May, he realized that the shorter, more direct route he had originally intended to take was much to be preferred. Since grass was now sufficient to feed the stock, it would not be necessary for later companies to take the Southern Route. Brigham Young “proposed to send men back from Grand River [Garden Grove] to look out a new and better road, so that companies which were coming out of Nauvoo might avoid the bad roads, creeks, and settlements through which the leading company had passed.”⁸ Horace K. Whitney noted that as early as 23 April men were sent back to Nauvoo.⁹ Erastus Snow recorded that they were to “head the Medicine, Locust, Chariton, and Fox Rivers and thereby open a safer and more practical route for the balance of our emigration from Nauvoo.”¹⁰

It is not clear how many Saints followed Brigham Young into Missouri; most likely it was only those companies which left Nauvoo before the guides dispatched from Garden Grove returned to Nauvoo to recommend the more direct route.

The Pioneer Route has been well marked. From 1933 to 1940 the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of the Iowa Conservation Commission placed about a hundred wooden Mormon Trail road markers across the state. All but two of these (at Unionville and Mt. Pisgah)

⁵John Lyman Smith Journal, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 21 March 1846; and Hosea Stout Diary, 20 March 1846, Church Archives.

⁶Ora H. Barlow, *The Israel Barlow Story* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1968), pp. 132–37; see also Joseph Smith, Jun., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1932–1951), 3:265.

⁷Andrew Jenson, Iowa Manuscript History, July 1925, Church Archives.

⁸*Ibid.*, 27 March 1846.

⁹Horace K. Whitney Diary, cited in Iowa Manuscript History.

¹⁰Erastus Snow Journal, typescript, p. 70, Church Archives.

seem to have totally disappeared. Then in 1972 the trail was re-marked with about a hundred metal Mormon Pioneer Trail road markers erected by the Iowa Highway Commission and the Mormon Pioneer Trail Foundation.

In addition to these road signs, there are other markers on the grounds of the Wayne County Historical Society Museum in Corydon, in the town park of Garden Grove and also one mile west of Garden Grove at the Trailside Historical Park, at Mt. Pisgah, on the school grounds of Orient, in the Reno Cemetery seven miles southeast of Lyman on County Road G61, in the Cold Springs State Park just south of Lewis, in the town park of Lewis, and on the north side of Baylis Park in Council Bluffs.¹¹ There are even two markers commemorating the Mormon use of the Keosauqua Ford. On the banks of the Des Moines River in the Lacey-Keosauqua State Park is a wooden post stating "Mormon Trail"; nearby is a bronze marker to "Ely Ford, Mormon Crossing." At one time the Mormon use of the fords at Bonaparte and Bentonsport was marked, but these markers have disappeared.

There is a "Come, Come Ye Saints" exhibit in the Wayne County Historical Society Museum, as well as a Mormon Trail Park near Bridgewater.

The Brigham Young Trail, Variant A. This variant did not cross the Fox River near Drakesville but followed a high ridge road between the Fox River and Soap Creek across the top of Appanoose County to the Chariton River, which was forded at a place then called Dodge's Point near Iconium. The trail then proceeded directly west to Garden Grove. The first section of this variant, from Drakesville to Dodge's Point, was used until at least 1853.

There is an Appanoose County tradition that some Mormons remained for a time near present-day Moravia before going farther west. According to this tradition, in 1849 some members of the Moravian Brethren church bought out the Mormons and founded the community of Moravia. If this be true, it is an interesting bit of cooperation between two persecuted peoples; for the Moravians fled religious intolerance in Europe in the eighteenth century, settling originally in Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

Also, according to local lore, there is supposed to be a Mormon cemetery "about four miles out in the hills east of town."

¹¹Of interest is the fact that in 1927, before *American Gothic* made him famous, Grant Wood painted three oil-on-wood murals depicting the Mormon settlement of Kaneshville (Council Bluffs) for a conference room in the Hotel Chieftain, which stood across the street from the marker in Baylis Park in Council Bluffs. In 1970 when the hotel was remodeled into a home for the aged, these murals were removed and a collector in Los Angeles purchased them.

Unfortunately, I could find no one in Moravia who could direct me to this cemetery.

There is only one Mormon Trail marker along this variant, and it is one of the Iowa road signs of the 1930s in the little town square of Unionville. The Mormon presence in this part of Wayne County was, however, noted in the 1904 *Atlas of the State of Iowa*, which referred to this road between Confidence and Humeston (County Road J22) as the Mormon Trail, a designation apparently now, unfortunately, forgotten.¹²

The Dodge's Point to Garden Grove segment of this variant, it appears, was little used, perhaps only during 1846, because a still shorter and better road west was promoted and settled upon.

The Brigham Young Trail, Variant B. This variant came into use concurrently with Variant A. Instead of crossing the Chariton River at Dodge's Point, the Saints were encouraged to follow high ground along the Chariton as far north as possible, to the Chariton Point, near the present-day community of Chariton. There the river turned west and the Saints followed high ridges between the Chariton River and White Breast Creek through Clarke County, intersecting the Brigham Young Trail south of present-day Osceola about thirty miles southeast of Mt. Pisgah. As early as 15 May 1846 John Lyman Smith noted that one group reached Mt. Pisgah by this route.¹³

The Mormon use of this trail is well commemorated in Lucas County. On the Court House Square at Chariton is a Mormon Trail marker. There is another similar marker at the Chariton Point about one mile south of the Court House on the south side of Blue Grass Road (also marked as County Road B). Furthermore, there are a Mormon Trail School District and a Mormon Trail Basketball Conference in Lucas County. The 1904 *Atlas of Iowa* also refers to a road, marked today as State 34 and County S23 and H50 running north of the Chariton River and west of the city of Chariton, as the Mormon Trace Road, another designation now generally forgotten. (This same road, H50, extending westward into Clarke County, through Smyrna to Highway 69 going south out of Osceola, was also known in 1904 as the Mormon Trail Road.)¹⁴

Also on this trail, exactly five miles south of Highway 34 at Osceola on Highway 69, was located Lost Camp, about thirty miles east of Mt. Pisgah. Little is known of Lost Camp, but it is mentioned

¹²M. Huebinger, *Atlas of the State of Iowa* (Davenport, Iowa: Iowa Publishing Co., 1904).

¹³John Lyman Smith Journal, 15 May 1846.

¹⁴Huebinger, *Atlas of Iowa*.

in the travel accounts of Samuel K. Gifford, Reuben Miller, and Charles R. Dana. It was a branch of the Church during 1846–1847.

The Handcart Trail

The Handcart Trail is also so well known that it will require little comment. Coming by rail from the East Coast via Albany, Rochester, Buffalo, Toledo, and Chicago, the Saints crossed the Mississippi at Rock Island, entering Iowa at Davenport where they picked up the Davenport and Missouri River Railroad for the railhead at Iowa City. Some of the journals which refer to this trip are those of Peter Madsen, Samuel Openshaw, and William Woodward.

The first train crossed the river for Iowa City on 22 April 1856, and almost immediately Mormon immigrant agents began shifting immigrants going to Florence via Westport, Missouri, and Mormon Grove, Kansas, to Iowa City.

Railroad travel, while faster and more convenient than wagon, was far from luxurious. Passengers were packed eighty-six to a car; there was a stove in the middle, a toilet on one end, but no eating or sleeping accommodations. Sometimes the benches had no backs and the cars no springs. At times people tried to sleep in the cars and at times in warehouses along the line. The trains averaged twenty miles an hour, smoke and soot were everywhere, and schedules were wildly erratic. Europeans considered American railroads far inferior to those back home. But still the Saints moved west.

During the Civil War, conditions got much worse. Mormons often rode in cattle cars crawling with lice, experienced long delays, and suffered harassment from soldiers and the “bad spirit” of many of the railroad employees. They also had to contend with detours, with roadblocks, and with shelling when, for example, guerrilla bands, led by the infamous William C. Quantril, blew up the Hannibal, Missouri, trestle in 1861 and tore up a section of track near St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1863. With the destruction of the Hannibal trestle, some Saints, including William Hart Miles, took a riverboat from Quincy, Illinois, to Keokuk and became, perhaps, the first and last Mormons to ride the new Des Moines Valley Railroad from Keokuk to the end of the line at Eddyville and then to proceed by wagon to Council Bluffs.¹⁵

From the rail depot at Iowa City the handcart immigrants crossed the Iowa River and walked to the staging area on the bank of Clear

¹⁵See the diaries of William Henry Freshwater, William Hart Miles, and Elijah Larkin, Church Archives.

Creek three miles west at a small settlement known as Clark's Mills and later as Coralville.

The 275-mile-long Iowa portion of the famous Handcart Trail was used for only two years, 1856 through 1857, but during that time seven of the total nine companies (and eighty percent of the people) who used the Handcart Trail left from Iowa City.¹⁶ There was little immigration in 1858 because of the "Utah War," and by 1859 it was possible to go all the way to the Missouri River by rail.

From Coralville, the Saints followed well-known roads to Adel and Redfield, where they picked up a Dragoon Trail to Lewis via Bear Grove and Grove City, a now defunct community three miles east of Atlantic in Cass County. (Mormon journals occasionally refer to various groves in Iowa, which appear to have served as landmarks.) In Lewis the handcarters picked up the 1846 trail to Council Bluffs. There appears to have been but one variant along this route. Jessie Bigler Martin noted that his 1857 company passed through Dalmanutha, which no longer exists.

It is of interest to note that this Handcart Trail was used by some Mormons after the handcart era. By 1860 the railroad, then known as the Rock Island Line, extended to Marengo. According to the accounts of Lucy M. Canfield and George M. Brown, some Mormon companies went that far by rail in 1862 and 1863.

There are several markers along the Handcart Trail. In Coralville, just west of the intersection of Fifth Street and Tenth Ave., there is a 1936 DAR marker to "The Mormon Handcart Brigade Camp." There is also Mormon Trek Boulevard, connecting Iowa City with Coralville. In 1976 a several-acre Mormon Handcart Historic Site was developed through funds provided by the LDS church for the Bicentennial in Coralville on ground owned by the University of Iowa. It is located along Clear Creek and Highway 6 near the Hawk-eye Court housing complex to the west of Mormon Trek Boulevard. A Historical Marker, a Pioneer Campsite Marker, and a Pioneer Burial Ground Marker are at this site.

In Davenport there is a marker somewhat related to the Handcart Trail. It marks the western end of the no longer existing 1856 railroad trestle connecting Rock Island, Illinois, with Davenport. This marker is located at the junction of Third and Fourth streets (yes, despite Euclid, parallel lines and streets do meet, when the curve of the river, at East River Street, so dictates).

¹⁶*Deseret News 1976 Church Almanac*, G 15-17; see also the series of articles by Andrew Jenson, entitled "Church Emigration," which appeared in the *Contributor* from September 1891 and ran throughout 1892.

The Des Moines River Valley Trail

This trail has totally disappeared from Mormon memory, and yet it was trod extensively throughout the main period of Mormon migration in Iowa from 1846 through 1853. This trail did not originate from buffalo tracks, Indian trails, or meandering settlers, as did many of the trails. It was purposely blazed in 1835 by the First U.S. Dragoons under Colonel Stephen W. Kearny. In 1835 several companies of Dragoons were located at Ft. Des Moines (present-day Montrose). These Dragoons were an elite corps of infantry especially created by the War Department to serve on foot or horseback on special assignments. They were usually in the vanguard of civilization, acting as umpires in disputes between white pioneers and native Americans. As such, they blazed many trails in Iowa, some of which were later used by the Mormons. In 1835 Colonel Kearny, later General Kearny who commanded the Mormon Battalion, was ordered on an expedition to locate a site for a new fort near the confluence of the Raccoon River and the Des Moines River (site of present-day Des Moines).¹⁷ By 1846 the colonel's trace had become an important road into the interior of Iowa Territory, a fact not unknown to the Mormons.

Just why certain Mormons, including Richard Steele, went this way is uncertain, but many apparently found it a convenient way to travel. In general the trail followed the highlands of the Des Moines River Valley, via Ottumwa, Oskaloosa, and Pella to Des Moines, a route subsequently followed by major roads and the railroad (as roads and railroads later followed the Mormons along the Platte River Valley west).

Some Mormons, as will be noted, did not follow it very far. A few, for various reasons, left it at Eddyville and Oskaloosa to rejoin the Pioneer Trail of 1846. The earliest journal account I have located noting Mormons beyond Oskaloosa was in 1849. Perhaps the roads beyond Oskaloosa were too rough in 1846. After Oskaloosa, one of the first communities the Mormons would have passed was Pella, or "Dutch Town," as Angelina Farley dubbed it in 1850. Those Mormons who knew its history must have felt some strong kinship with its inhabitants. The community, named after a first-century city of refuge for Christians in Palestine, was founded in the same year the pioneers founded their far western city of refuge—1847. The early settlers were seven hundred Hollanders seeking religious freedom

¹⁷"Ft. Des Moines (I) Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 3 (1897-1899): 355.

in the New World. The Mormons could well have borrowed their motto—*In Deo spes nostra et refugium* (In God is our hope and refuge). There is a tradition in Pella that the Mormons tried to get the Hollanders to buy Nauvoo and settle there.

Between Pella and Prairie City, at least one group of Mormons was aware it was passing through a “paper town” which had been surveyed for the capital of Iowa. Nothing was ever built there, however, and Angelina Farley recorded that her company burned the surveyor’s stakes for camp fires.¹⁸

Crossing the Des Moines River at present-day Des Moines, the Mormons headed for Lewis via Winterset in Madison County.¹⁹ At Lewis the Mormons followed the 1846 Pioneer Trail to Council Bluffs.

The DAR has marked this Dragoon trail with five markers (only one of which refers to the Mormons). The first can be found on the northwest corner of the main intersection in Montrose. (Incidentally, mayflies are called “Mormon flies” in Montrose.) A second is located at a defunct community, once named Brattain’s Grove and later Utica, at the junction of present-day roads 269 and 16, three miles south of Stockport, Van Buren County. This is the one of the five which refers to the Mormon Trail. At the main intersection in the village of Libertyville is another marker. About four miles north of downtown Ottumwa on Highway 63 at the entrance of the municipal golf course is another marker. All that remains, however, of this is the boulder, which is hidden by trees; the plaque has been removed. The last of the five markers is on the west of Highway 163, five miles northeast of Oskaloosa, across the road from a water tower.

The Mormon Battalion Trail

The last Mormon trail to be considered in this study is the relatively unknown Iowa portion of the Mormon Battalion Trail, which extended from Council Bluffs 1,850 miles to San Diego, California, via Ft. Leavenworth and Santa Fe. The Iowa section of this trail is fifty miles long from Council Bluffs to the Missouri line, and undoubtedly the first Mormons to use this route were the 549 men, 60 women, and some children of the Battalion. Starting out 21 July

¹⁸Angelina Farley Diary, 29 May 1850, Church Archives.

¹⁹It is of interest to note that Winterset is not only the Covered Bridge Capital of Iowa—there are nine such bridges in the county—but also the birthplace of the Delicious Apple and John Wayne.

1846, they followed the bluff line of the Missouri River through Mills and Fremont counties.²⁰

Thereafter, occasional groups of Mormons, including Mary Snow, David Bowen, and George H. Harris, followed part of this road between Council Bluffs or Weston and Utah, going to and from the Great Basin until at least 1855. Close to this road was located the Bethlehem Ferry on the Missouri River, below the mouth of the Platte and just west of today's Pacific Junction. For nearly a decade, Mormons used it as an alternative crossing of the Missouri River both going and coming from the Far West. This crossing, frequently called the Lower Ferry, was especially popular with Mormons who chose to go west along the south bank rather than along the north bank of the Platte, the route followed by most of the early pioneers. It was also used when high water on the Elk Horn River (west of Florence) made the route on the north bank of the Platte dangerous.

Incidental Mormon Trails

Between 1847 and at least 1863, nine or more other trails or roads were used by some Mormons crossing Iowa. No one today has any idea how extensively these routes were used, but a study of pioneer journals suggests only incidental use. Perhaps they could be referred to collectively as "pigtailed" to the main Mormon trails in Iowa.

1. Chronologically the first such pigtail to come into use was in 1846 when some Mormons crossed the Mississippi at Ft. Madison, proceeding straight west to the Des Moines at Farmington. Among others, James V. Williams took what we might call the "Ft. Madison Direct Route."

2. Also during 1846 Anson Call, and perhaps others that year and subsequently, utilized the "Albia Cutoff," which ran from Eddyville, an established ford on the Des Moines, via Albia to Chariton Point on the Chariton River.

3. The next incidental trail was the Keokuk Segment from Keokuk to Montrose and Sugar Creek. Although some Mormons, including Charles R. Dana, went this way as early as 1847 (some even picked up this route as early as 1846 from Nashville when Keokuk was the southern terminus of the just then developing Des Moines River route to Des Moines), this route was used mainly during the one year, 1853. During that year it was common for Mormon immigration

²⁰Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 21 July 1846, Church Archives.

agents to send European converts to Keokuk via New Orleans and St. Louis. An outbreak of the dread river scourge—cholera—however, ended the use of Keokuk as a point of departure; and immigrants were urged to sail to New York City and Boston and make use of the nation's developing road and rail systems to the Missouri River.

But during 1853 an official Mormon staging ground was established on the river bluffs one-half mile north of downtown Keokuk. This would place the camp somewhere near today's intersection of Morgan and Second streets, overlooking the river. Stephen Forsdick described the camp as "a long street with wagons on either side of it."²¹ Others who stayed at this camp were Christopher J. Arthur²² and Christian N. Munk. During this period, a branch of the Church was organized in Keokuk.

At times when the river was low, boats could not navigate the Des Moines rapids, and passengers had to disembark at Churchville, Missouri (also known as Alexandria), and go by wagon to Keokuk, crossing the Des Moines River at a place referred to as Dog Town. Among those to do so were Jane Rio Pearce, Richard Rushton, and Robert Bell.

Today all that is left to remind one of this one-time staging ground in Keokuk is a bronze plaque on one side of the DAR statue of the famous Sac and Fox chief, Keokuk,²³ in Rand Park overlooking the Mississippi. It reads, "To the memory of the Pioneers who traveled the Mormon Trail."

4. Also in 1847 there was the "Talley's Ford Cutoff," extending from Oskaloosa to Chariton Point via Talley's Ford, a good, smooth, shallow, and rocky crossing place on the Des Moines. Among others, Richard Steele went this way.

5. The next incidental road was the "Burlington Route" via West Point to Bonaparte. This way was used by Canute Peterson and others during 1848–1849.

6. During the one year of 1849, a rather strange route, the "Washington Way," was used. That year Angelina Calkins Farley and others found themselves in Iowa City long before the railroad reached there. They proceeded to Oskaloosa and points west via Washington County.

7. Several years later, in 1853, and also prior to the railroad, another group of Mormons, including James Armistead, from La

²¹Stephen Forsdick Autobiography, typescript, p. 15, Church Archives.

²²The Christopher J. Arthur Journal is located at the Utah State Historical Library, Salt Lake City.

²³Chief Keokuk had been in Nauvoo during August 1841 and was told of the Book of Mormon by Joseph Smith, himself. For further information, see Lawrence Coates, "Refugees Meet: The Mormons and the Indians in Iowa," this issue.

Salle County, Illinois, likewise found themselves at Iowa City. They headed for Oskaloosa and points west taking the "Sigourney Segment" through Keokuk County.

8. In 1850 one group of Mormons, including Mary Maughan, left Galena, Illinois, crossed into Iowa as far north as Dubuque, traveled through Fairview and Cedar Rapids, intersected the future Handcart Trail at Newton, and picked up the Des Moines River Trail and went to Council Bluffs via Winterset.

9. Perhaps the last of these incidental trails was used in 1858 by John Lyman Smith and others. It was by far the longest of these incidental roads, stretching between Burlington and Oskaloosa. Perhaps it might be termed the "Burlington–New London–Abingdon–Fremont–Oskaloosa Road."

Lastly, a few other places in Iowa connected with the Mormons might be listed. Although Iowaville in Van Buren County no longer exists, some Mormons crossed the Des Moines River there, and Elias Smith lived there for five years before continuing west. There was also a branch of the Church there during 1846–1847.²⁴

Trussell Cemetery in Monroe County, about five miles southwest of Blakesburg, along what is sometimes called the Old Southwest Trail, is a small Mormon cemetery with sandstone gravemarkers.

Manti is located near the Fremont and Page county line, three and one-half miles southwest of Shenandoah. This community was founded in 1849 by Alpheus Cutler, who claimed to be the rightful successor to Joseph Smith and who started the Cutlerite church. Although after his death in 1864 most of his followers united with the RLDS, the church continues into the twentieth century.²⁵ In this nearly deserted community, there is what is often referred to as the "Mormon Cemetery," and Alpheus Cutler (this author's great-great-grandfather) is buried there.

A few Mormon travel accounts, including those of David Moore and Caroline Barnes Crosby, mention passing through Stringtown in Davis County. This was a post office located one mile south of Troy; it also went by the names of Fox and Dover.

Preparation Canyon State Park (not shown on the map) is located five miles southwest of Moorehead, about fifty miles due north of

²⁴In the Iowaville cemetery the Smith family of Layton, Utah, put markers on the graves of some of their relatives buried there. One such marker is to Asahel Smith, uncle to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

²⁵Rupert J. and Daisy Whiting Fletcher, *Alpheus Cutler and the Church of Jesus Christ* (Independence, Mo.: Church of Jesus Christ, 1974); see also Dale L. Morgan, "A Bibliography of the Churches of the Dispersion, Part III," *Western Humanities Review* 7 (Summer 1953): 265–66; Steven L. Shields, *Divergent Paths of the Restoration: A History of the Latter Day Saint Movement* (Provo: David C. Martin, 1975), pp. 6–11; Wayne Ham, "Center Place Saints: A Survey of Restoration Fragmentation in Zion," *Restoration* 1 (January 1982): 5, 7.

Council Bluffs. Here Charles B. Thompson, another claimant to the "mantle of Joseph," established the colony of Preparation, originally consisting of about fifty families. The group is sometimes known as the "Baneemytes" or Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion. As was the case with the Cutlerites, after the death of Thompson, most of his followers joined the RLDS.²⁶

CONCLUSION

As would be expected with Mormons traveling through and living in Iowa for at least twenty-five years, there are many local (and sometimes unconfirmable) traditions regarding them. Since by 1848 there were forty branches of the Church in Pottawattamie County, it is not surprising that that county abounds with Mormon lore and tradition. In the southeast area of Monroe County, probably in Urbana Township, there used to be a neighborhood called the Hairy Nation, from the appearance of the heavily bearded Mormons. There is Mormon Ridge in Marshall County. Van Buren County is especially rich in traditions regarding Mormon cemeteries: one is on Reed's Creek two and one-half miles east of Bonaparte; another is in Vernon; one is two miles southwest of Stockport; one is the Boston Cemetery on the Des Moines River; another is the Oak Lawn Cemetery in Section 32 of Chequest Township; and there is also the Philips Cemetery.

May I conclude this re-evaluation of the importance of Iowa roads and trails in the history of early westerning Mormons with the personal expression that I would like to see these routes restored to memory, better marked, commemorated, and preserved, as well as followed by all those who wish to relive, recapture, and enjoy this important and fascinating part of the Mormon and American past. The Mormon Pioneer Trail Foundation would be happy to cooperate to this end. Invariably during my travels of the more than 1,100 miles of Mormon trails crisscrossing Iowa, I found non-Mormons interested in and proud of the Mormon history of their area and most willing to be of help to me.

²⁶Morgan, "Bibliography of Churches of the Dispersion," pp. 262-63.