

# HOPE FOR A *Better* LIFE : MORMONS



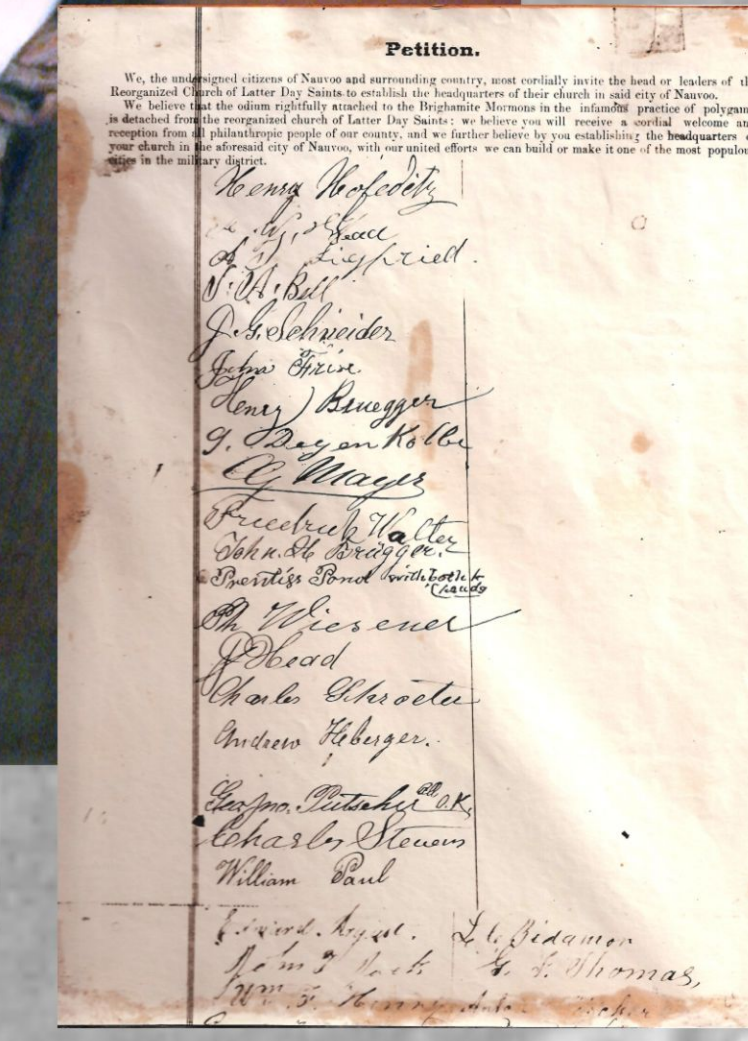
“I have no friend left but God, and no place to go but home.”  
Emma Smith, ca 1847

Emma Smith holding her son, David, ca. 1845  
Courtesy of Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri

Emma Smith, Joseph's widow, fled the city just before the “Battle of Nauvoo” in September of 1846 and returned five months later. Emma's oldest son, Joseph Smith III, grew up in Nauvoo and was elected Justice of the Peace in 1857. In 1860, he and Emma joined a group of his father's followers who remained in the Midwest. His decision to lead what is today known as Community of Christ was controversial among the locals who remembered the conflict of the 1840s. They passed resolutions forbidding Joseph Smith III to preach or pray in Nauvoo. By 1877, attitudes had changed, and hundreds of citizens signed a petition inviting the “Josephites,” based in Plano, Illinois, to locate their headquarters in Nauvoo. Although deeply touched by the gesture, Joseph Smith III and his church chose Lamoni, Iowa, located on the new CB & Q railroad line.



Joseph Smith III  
Courtesy of Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri



1877 petition inviting Joseph Smith III to establish his church headquarters in Nauvoo  
Courtesy of Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri

## The Thornber, Pilkington, Ellison, Clark, and Romney Families

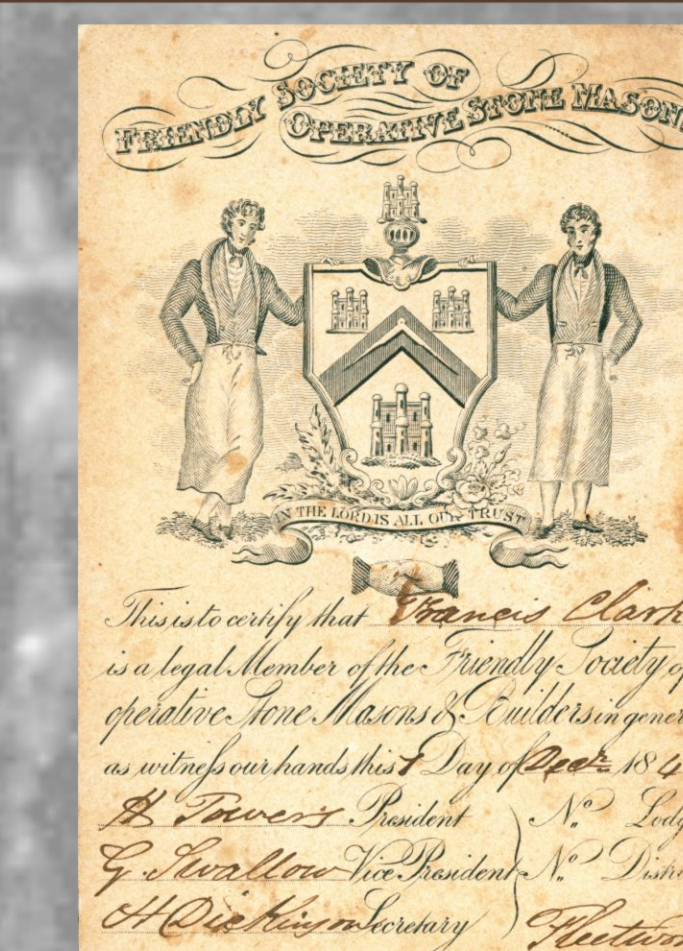
Five thousand or more British Mormons gathered to Nauvoo in the 1840s. Leaving the factories of industrial England behind, the Clark and Romney families spent eight weeks at sea sailing on the *Sheffield* to New Orleans and another two or three weeks steaming up the Mississippi to Nauvoo. The excitement of a new country and new church soon wore off for some, and they turned their attention to surviving in a strange land. As a stone carver, Francis Clark found work on Joseph Smith's Brick Store and the Nauvoo Temple. Others were not so lucky. Disillusioned, sick, tired, or too well-established here to leave, some families including the Thornbers, Pilkingtons, and Clarks chose to separate from the Mormons following Joseph Smith's death and stay in the Nauvoo area. Of nine children in the Ellison family, one moved on to the Salt Lake Valley. Also continuing the journey west was the Romney family.



Ellison Family, English converts who gathered to Nauvoo  
Courtesy of Nauvoo Historical Society



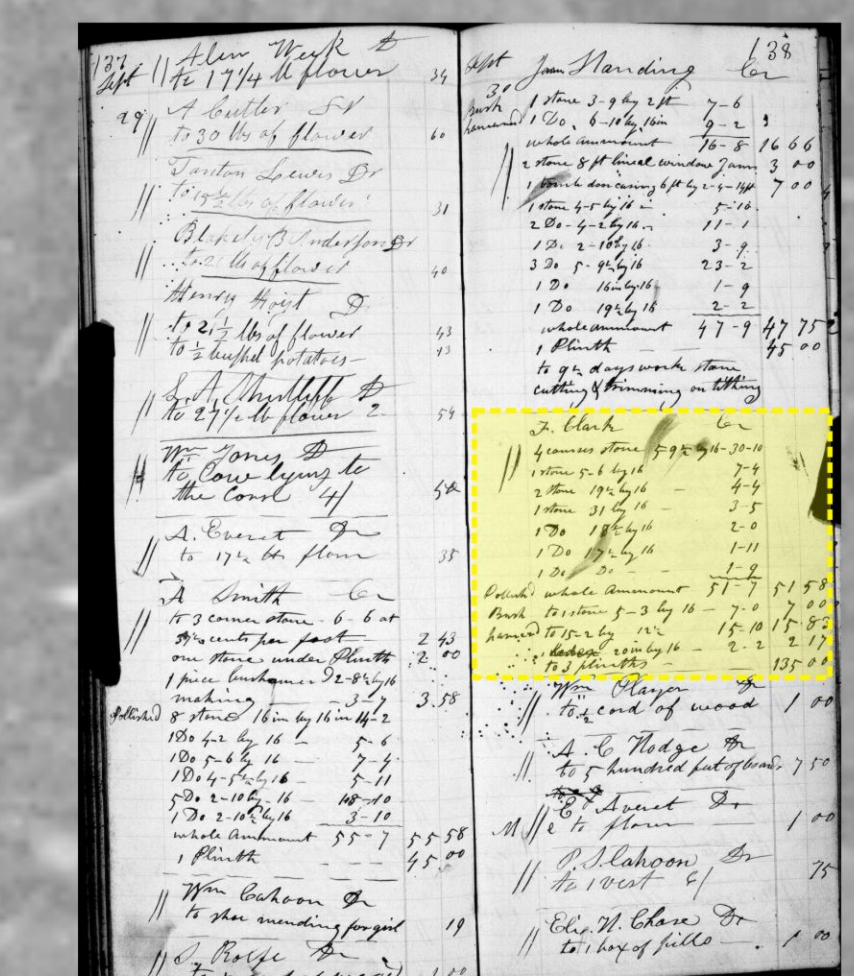
Tintype of Henry Thornber (right) and Lucy (Ellison) Thornber, holding William Henry Thornber, ca. 1861  
Courtesy of Edward J. Newton, Burnside, Illinois



Francis Clark's membership card for the Friendly Society of Operative Stone Masons, 1840  
Courtesy of Nauvoo Historical Society



Francis and Elizabeth Clark  
Courtesy of Nauvoo Historical Society



Francis Clark receives pay in kind for working on temple  
Courtesy of the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

“EMIGRATION. -- We feel truly thankful that amidst the general distresses, poverty, and famine which prevails throughout this country [England], several hundred of our brethren and sisters have just been enabled to embark for the country which God has provided for a refuge for all nations . . . Among this company was a large proportion of the industrious poor, who were upon the point of starvation in this land . . . May the Almighty . . . bring them to Zion with songs of everlasting joy.”

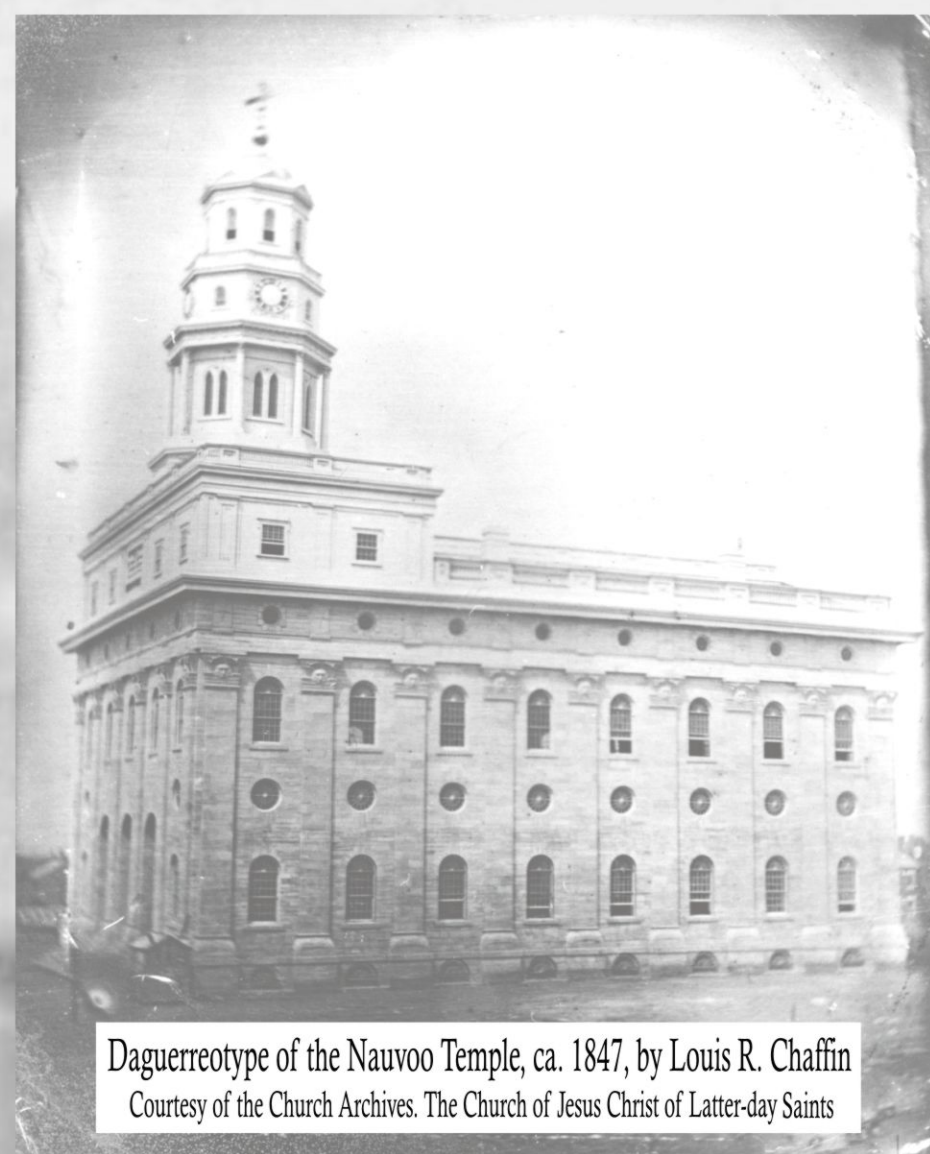
The Latter-Day Saints' *Millennial Star*, February 1841, describing the sailing of the *Sheffield* from Liverpool, England

The Mormon Zion was not to be in Nauvoo. Thousands of Latter-day Saints headed west to build God's Kingdom on Earth in the Salt Lake Valley. Others, like Emma Smith and her children, would stay in Nauvoo and attempt to build Zion through a more moderate form of Mormonism. Still others would cease to be Latter Day Saints, remain in Nauvoo, and live out their lives as Catholics, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Methodists. With houses for 12,000 people but only 1,200 residents after the exodus and a beautiful but vacant temple on the hill, Nauvoo was a vacuum waiting to be filled.

Background image of the Nauvoo Temple with city in foreground.  
Courtesy of the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

## “Bring Them to Zion”

Latter Day Saints, also called Mormons after the Book of Mormon, one of their scriptures, were first organized by Joseph Smith, Jr., in upstate New York in 1830. A group of people seeking to restore New Testament Christianity as they understood it, they were heavily influenced by the Bible, especially the book “The Acts of the Apostles.” This was expressed through a desire to live in gathered communities with a temple at the center, early attempts to live “all things common,” and a passion for sharing the gospel with the rest of the world. These traits made them a journeying people. They hoped to bring about the cause of “Zion,” where no one was poor and all were united and good. They were building the Kingdom of God on earth here in Nauvoo.



Daguerrotype of the Nauvoo Temple, ca. 1847, by Louis R. Chaffin  
Courtesy of the Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Engraving of Nauvoo by Hermann J. Meyer, ca. 1854  
Courtesy of Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri

## Brief History:

The Mormon “gathering” to Nauvoo between 1839 and 1846 intensified cultural and religious differences with neighbors who did not belong to their church. Political and economic power increased with church growth. In 1845, the Nauvoo area had about fifteen thousand Mormon residents, one-quarter of them converts from England, and was second in size to Chicago in Illinois. The non-Mormon population felt threatened by them. Squabbles inside the church spilled into public view and increased the Mormon/anti-Mormon conflict, resulting in the 1844 assassination of Joseph Smith, Jr., and his brother, Hyrum. Beginning in 1846, church members scattered, with many making the trek west to the valley of the Great Salt Lake. In September of 1846, anti-Mormon forces used cannons and rifles to drive out the remaining Mormons. Also armed with cannons but greatly outnumbered, Nauvoo residents fight back, but were forced to surrender. Every remaining Latter Day Saint had to go. The Mormon kingdom in Nauvoo was no more.

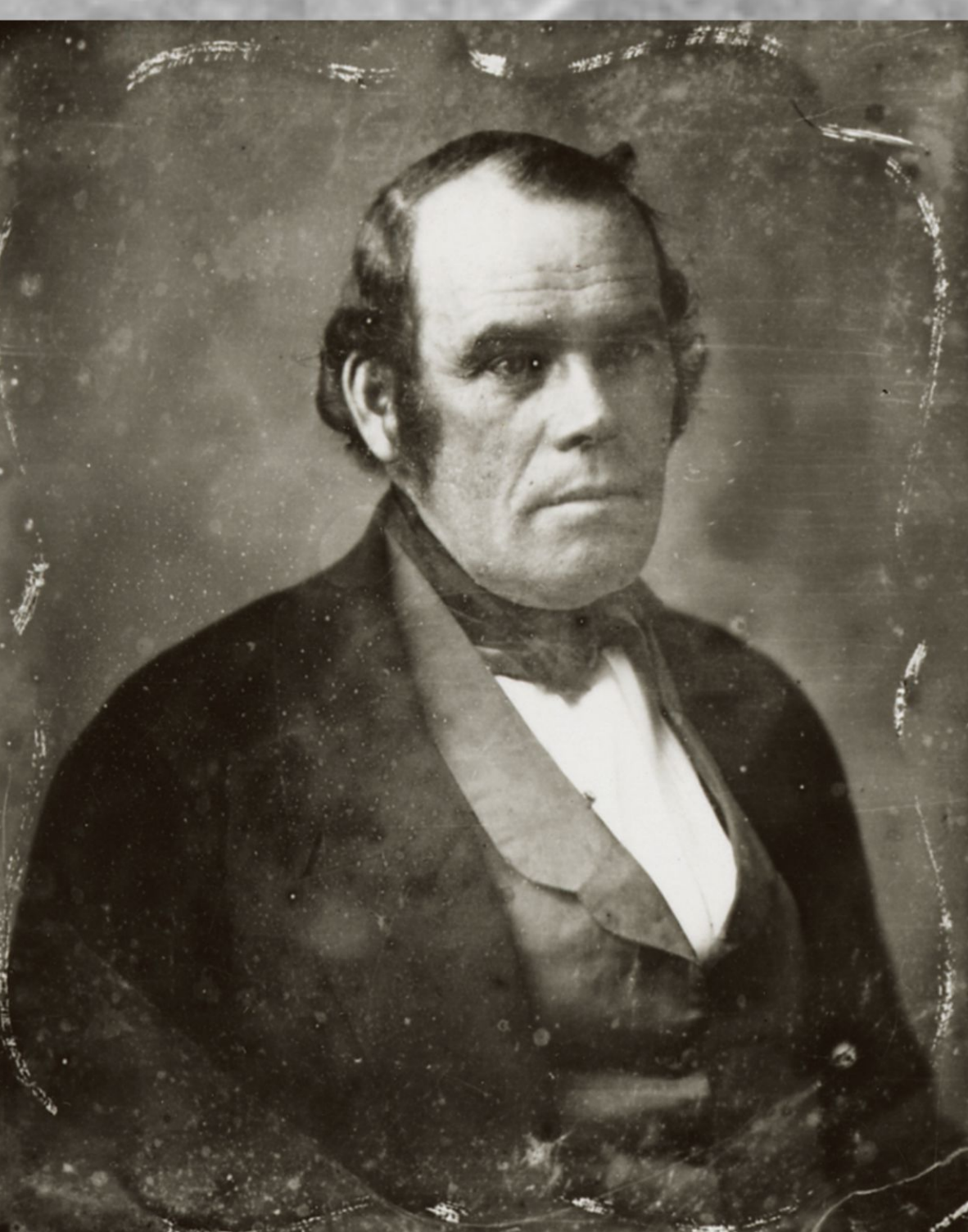


Joseph Smith Jr., ca. 1842, attributed to David Rogers  
Courtesy of Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri

“For my part, I want to see a gathering in earnest .... If the saints would do this with all their might and means, Nauvoo in one year would be the largest city in the west, in ten years the largest in America, and in fifteen years the largest in the world.”

Parley P. Pratt, March 1842, *Times and Seasons*

Parley P. Pratt has been called the “Apostle Paul of Mormonism” because of his missionary journeys of thousands of miles and his contribution to Mormon beliefs. Parley's travels took him from Nauvoo to England in 1840. Upon his return in 1843, he built a brick home and store on the corner of Wells and Young streets. Following the death of Joseph Smith, Jr., Parley followed Brigham Young west and helped to establish the Great Basin Kingdom with Salt Lake City at its center. His missionary zeal later took him to the islands of the Pacific and to South America. Parley was murdered in Arkansas in 1857. His Nauvoo home and store became St. Patrick's Catholic Church and is now known as Villa Marie, a rectory for the parish priests.



Daguerrotype of Parley P. Pratt  
Courtesy of the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Parley P. Pratt home and store - later St. Patrick's Catholic Church and currently Villa Marie  
Courtesy of Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.