

D & C Lesson 34
FAITH IN EVERY FOOTSTEP

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, September 2001

This page contains Map 2 (The Missouri, Illinois and Iowa Area of the United States) and Map 3 (The Westward Movement of the Church) from
Doctrine and Covenants and Church History
Class Member Study Guide

(These maps correspond to Maps 5 and 6 in the most recent set of maps produced by the Church to be included in the latest editions of the Triple Combination.)

2. The Mobs intensified persecution against Nauvoo in January 1846; many of the Saints were forced to leave Nauvoo on February 4, 1846

A. The Saints sought the blessings of the Temple before leaving. Almost 6,000 received their endowments before commencing their westward journey.

B. There were tremendous hardships. On the first night of their encampment at Sugar Creek (approximately seven miles from Nauvoo on the Iowa side of the Mississippi River), nine infants were born, in tents and wagons, in rain-storms and snow-storms. The saints waited there for instructions to move on. “A steady wind blew snow that fell to a depth of almost eight inches. Then a thaw caused the ground to become muddy. Around, above, and below, the elements combined to produce a miserable environment for the 2,000 Saints huddled in tents, wagons, and hastily erected shelters while they waited for the command to move on.” [*Our Heritage*, p. 70]

C. Two weeks after the first crossings, the weather grew so cold that the Mississippi River froze over, with ice so thick that it supported wagons as they crossed it. The cold caused much suffering as the Saints plodded through the snow.

D. “It took the Saints 131 days to travel the 310 miles from Nauvoo to the settlements in western Iowa where they would pass the winter of 1846-47 and prepare for their trek to the Rocky Mountains. This experience taught them many things about travel that would help them more quickly cross the 1,000 miles of the great American plains, which was done the following year in about 111 days.” [*Our Heritage*, p. 71]

E. By September, 1846, most of the Saints had left Nauvoo and were scattered across Iowa in settlements they had prepared for the coming winter. “A number of the settlements stretched along both sides of the Missouri River. The largest settlement, Winter Quarters, was on the west side, in Nebraska. It quickly became home to approximately 3,500 Church members, who lived in houses of logs and in dugouts of willows and dirt. As many as 2,500 Saints also lived in and around what was called Kaneshville on the Iowa side of the Missouri River. Life in these settlements was almost as challenging as it had been on the trail. In the summer they suffered from malarial fever. When the winter came and fresh food was no longer available, they suffered from cholera epidemics, scurvy, toothaches, night blindness, and severe diarrhea. Hundreds of people died. . . Brigham Young’s son John called Winter Quarters ‘the Valley Forge of Mormondom.’ He lived near the burial grounds there and witnessed the ‘small mournful-looking trains that so often passed our door.’” [*Our Heritage*, pp. 71-72]

F. Determined to remove all the saints from Nauvoo, the mobs drove out the remaining 500 to 600 poor and sick saints, beating them, looting their homes, and throwing some into the river. Refugee camps of these people were established in a two-mile strip along the Iowa side of the Mississippi river. Most had no provisions nor additional clothing. Many were too sick to travel; some died. Brigham Young sent relief parties back from the camps in western Iowa to bring them westward.

G. “While the Saints were in Iowa, United States army recruiters asked Church leaders to provide a contingent of men to serve in the Mexican War, which had begun in May 1846. The men, who came to be called the Mormon Battalion, were to march across the southern part of the nation to California and would receive pay, clothing and rations. . . Eventually 541 men accepted their leaders’ counsel and joined the battalion. They were accompanied by 33 women and 42 children. . . The battalion marched 2,030 miles southwest to California, suffering from lack of food and water, insufficient rest and

medical care, and the rapid pace of the march. They served as occupation troops in San Diego, San Luis Rey, and Los Angeles. At the end of their year's enlistment, they were discharged and allowed to rejoin their families." [*Our Heritage*, pp. 72-73]

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