
The Prairie Branch, Jackson County, Missouri: Emergence, Flourishing, and Demise, 1831-1834

Larry C. Porter and Ronald E. Romig

In January 1831, disciples of a new religious movement suddenly appeared in western Missouri, heralding their intent to establish a “colony of Heaven.” They called their chosen place of gathering in Jackson County, “Zion.” Adherents believed that if they were obedient to the revelatory teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith they could claim the scriptural promises of heaven. By following the Church’s economic strategy, known as the law of consecration, they hoped to evolve a social and economic Christian society on earth preparatory to the reign of the Savior.

Regrettably, a sad fate awaited the flowering Church of Christ in Missouri. Disciples found themselves at odds with other inhabitants, the result being their forced expulsion from the county. Many of the detailed exploits of these Mormons and those who opposed their vision have been lost with the passage of time. Salient historical perspectives and rich cultural memories have been forfeited in the process. Fortunately, however, sufficient traces preserved through diaries, journals, church-related accounts, and civil documents offer an informative glimpse of the early quest for Zion and its turbulent aftermath.

This paper is primarily a more detailed study of extant sources related to the growth and development of one of the principal units of the Church in

LARRY C. PORTER (larry_porter@byu.edu) is an emeritus professor of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University.

RONALD E. ROMIG (rromig@CofChrist.org) serves as the Community of Christ Archivist, Independence, Missouri.

Jackson County, the Prairie Branch. Such an examination offers an important index to many of the events which shaped the overall experience of the Saints in that land and allows us to reclaim some valued segments of a lost heritage.

Beginnings of the Prairie Branch

The earliest missionary effort involving elders of the Church of Christ going into Jackson County, Missouri, originated in Fayette, New York. Commencing in October 1830, Oliver Cowdery and four companions carried the gospel as contained in the Book of Mormon to western Missouri, arriving in January 1831. Interestingly, their primary goal was not to proselytize among the Anglos but rather to work with the Native Americans or Lamanites as they were distinguished by the Mormons as a fulfillment of prophecy.¹ The U.S. Government had relocated numerous tribes from the States in Indian Territory immediately west of the Missouri state line. Here the elders hoped to establish an extended ministry. However, because of threatened arrest by a federal Indian agent, the hostility of sectarian ministers, and added disfavor of the U.S. military at Ft. Leavenworth, the Mormon elders were forced to abandon their labors among the Shawnee and Delaware tribes and confine their work to the white citizenry of Jackson and surrounding counties. In this latter endeavor they enjoyed some notable successes.

Preparations for yet another early Church expedition to Jackson County, Missouri, from Ohio, known as the Western Mission, were made following the fourth general conference of the Church held in Kirtland Township, June 3, 1831. Some twenty-eight missionaries were called by revelation to travel in selected pairs. Their primary purpose was to assist in the establishment of a Church colony on the frontier and to further promulgate the beliefs of this new American religion. During their journey from Ohio to attend an appointed conference in Missouri, the respective pairs of missionaries chose a variety of routes, proselytizing along the way. Companions Lyman Wight and John Corrill passed through Tazewell County, Illinois, en route to their destination. Resident Nathan Porter reported the missionaries' arrival during the month of July 1831. "There came two ministers travling through the country on their way to the western Boundary of the State of Missouri calling them selves Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; who called upon my Father [Sanford Porter] having learned that he was a singular man in his Religious belief Contending for the Apostolic Doctrin."²

Nathan recalled that these missionaries represented themselves as part of an important mission. They related an amazing story to the Porters about "an

Ancient Record written upon Gold plates . . . to come forth by the hand of God in the Last Days unto the remnant of their Seed which (they said were the Indian Tribes of this continent, according to the record).” He continued, “With this Record was found an instrument called the Urum & Thummun; Being two transparent Stones placed in two rims of a Bow; by means of this, through the Gift & power of God, Mr. Smith was inabled to Translate the ingravings on these Plates into the English Language.”³ In addition to the story of the Book of Mormon, Lyman taught the Porters the new Church’s economic principles intended to bring about a condition of equality, similar in nature to that described in the book of Acts in the New Testament. Later, writing to the Porters, Lyman recalled this exciting time:

I traversed the prairies of Illinois and preached the gospel unto you at . . . first my contemptable sheep skin valise, humble dress, and contemptible speech you dissipated not nor rejected me but received me as an angel for I bear record that if it had been possible you would have given me the half of your estate yea at that time you fully believed the principal of equality and the principal of loving your neighbor as yourself⁴

The missionaries’ teachings bore immediate results. Sanford Porter added that:

They held a meeting at my house again [August 10, 1831] and we went to the place prepared and the ordinance [of baptism] was performed for my wife, myself and eldest daughter [Malinda Porter] and I was ordained an elder and set apart to labor as a missionary in and around the vicinity where we lived. The elders then went to the home of Nathan Sumner about six miles from our place whom they also baptized and ordained an elder and set him apart to labor with me as a missionary in the adjoining towns.⁵

The Porter family accepted their message, as did many other neighbors who were also converted. Sanford Porter and Nathan Sumner [Nathan Porter recorded that it was Jonathan Sumner and not Nathan Sumner] were instructed by the missionaries “to unite their labors together in Preaching the Gospel in the Country round about for a season intill the land of Zion Should be designated; [Which] Was the object of their mission to the western boundaries of the State of Missouri in connection with the Prophet Joseph Smith & others; as directed by the Word of the Lord.”⁶

Lyman Wight and John Corrill soon said goodbye to their new friends in Tazewell County and continued the journey to their anticipated Zion in Missouri. Despite the departure of the missionaries, the excitement created by their teachings and baptisms began to spread abroad. Sanford Porter and Nathan Sumner labored locally and also ranged out from their immediate surroundings some sixty miles to the north. Here they met with certain of



Closeup of an 1833 map in *Tanner's Universal Atlas* (Philadelphia: H. S. Tanner, 1833), 28. The map shows the size of several of Missouri's western counties (including Jackson County located to the far left). On September 14, 1835, Jackson County was reduced to one-third of its original size. The extracted part of Jackson County was called Van Buren County in honor of Martin Van Buren, eighth president of the United States. The southern part of the county was named Bates, but was kept a part of Van Buren County until January 29, 1841. On July 1, 1849, Van Buren county was changed to Cass County in honor of Lewis Cass, a U.S. Senator who ran for the U.S. Presidency in 1848. Map image courtesy of Alexander L. Baugh.

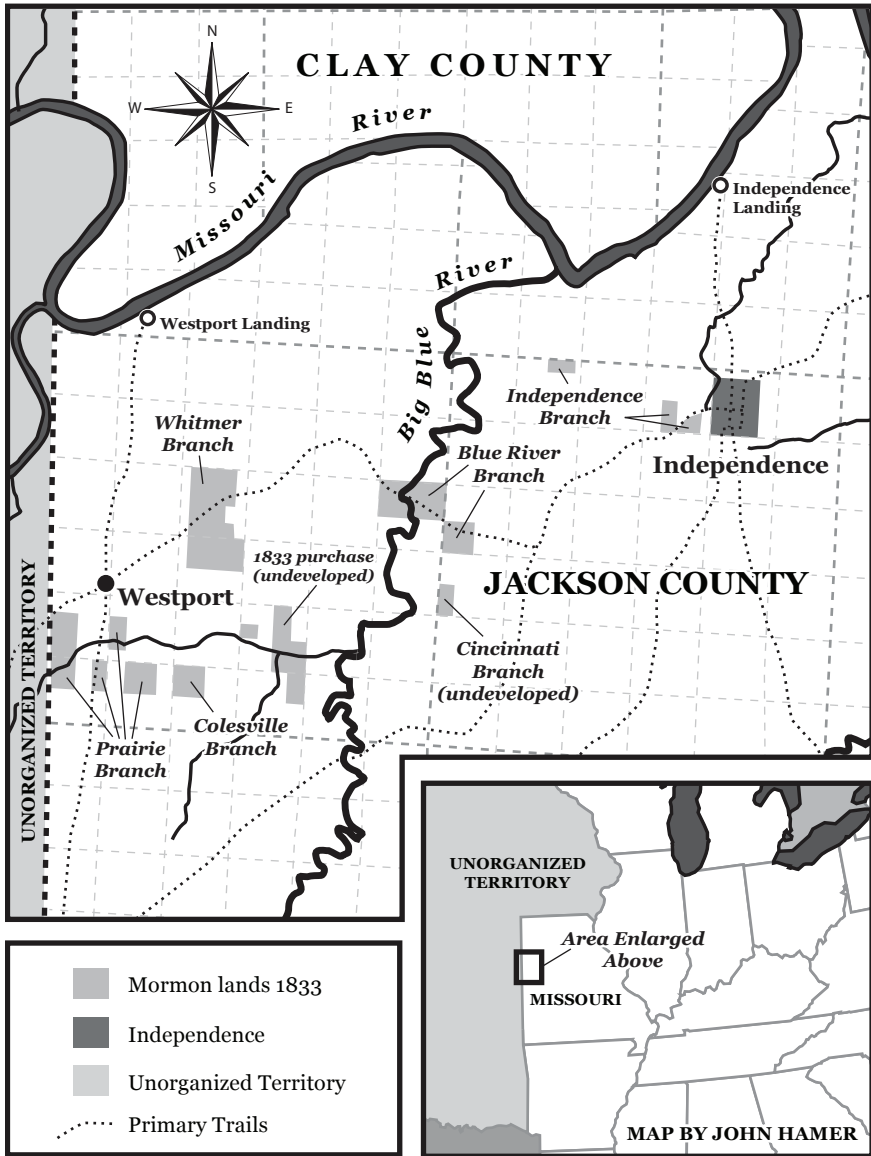
their old neighbors and were successful in converting members of the Morris Phelps, Baldwin Clark, and John Cooper families.⁷ An avid group of believers quickly developed in Tazewell County.

As Elders Lyman Wight and John Corrill traveled toward Jackson County they again fell into company with Elders Hyrum Smith and John Murdock, with whom they had originally left Kirtland.⁸ On August 2, John Murdock had the misfortune of getting his feet wet while crossing the Mississippi River, which he said, “caused me a severe Sickness even <near> unto death.”⁹ After reaching Lexington, Missouri, Murdock finally became so ill he was unable to continue. He said that the brethren then

took me to [a] house where they leftme four days & Br’s S[olomon] Hancock & L[yman] wight came with a horse [acquired from a Saint in Jackson County] & carried me to Thos. Hopper’s [near Lone Jack, on the Lafayette-Jackson county border] Where I remained a few day[s] & then was caried in a waggon to Joshua Lewis’ [west of the Big Blue River in Kaw Township], Jackson Co Where I lay Sick 2 or 3 months & the Brethren thought I could not live but tho I was so weak that I could not keep the flies out of my mouth my faith was fixed that I could not die for the Lord had something more for me to do. Altho I was so weak that A number of days was lost time with me & had not energy enough to even prey to my God tho I believed he would take care of me in my weakness. After I had a little recovered I went to N[ewel] Knights & from that to L[yman] Wights and so remained with the brethren for a tim[e].¹⁰

Murdock’s remembrances provide vital clues to the Church’s earliest moments in this new land. Support networks of common interest quickly evolved among established resident converts and new arrivals from the East. Because of a scarcity of Church housing, members pulled together, looking after one another. The Thomas Hooper and Joshua Lewis families were already citizens of Jackson County when converted to the new doctrine of Mormonism by the missionaries to the Lamanites under Oliver Cowdery early in 1831. These two families were now in a position to give immediate aid to the new arrivals, who desperately needed their assistance.

The Colesville Saints were among the earliest émigrés to Jackson County. They had traveled together all the way from Colesville, New York, to the vicinity of Kirtland, Ohio, during April-May 1831. After only a brief interlude on the Leman Copley farm in the Ohio township of Thompson, they were directed to follow closely behind the Prophet Joseph Smith’s party to Missouri in June-July. There they were greeted at Independence by the Prophet and arrangements were made by Bishop Partridge to settle them in Kaw Township, Section 33, in an area that appropriately came to be known as the Colesville Branch.¹¹ John Murdock suggests that despite the lateness of their arrival, the Colesville group succeeded in at least partially enclosing one house before severe weather struck. Murdock recalled, “After having recovered sufficiently



Mormon Settlements in Jackson County, Missouri, 1831-1833. Maps courtesy of John Hamer.

to be moved, I went to Bro. Newel Knight's house."¹² Despite the already crowded conditions of the extended Knight family, they also made room for Murdock.

While Murdock was recuperating at the Knights, Lyman Wight (he arrived in Jackson County on August 13, 1831)¹³ prepared for an envisioned settlement nearer the western border of the state. Lyman's enthusiasm, joined by the energies of like believers, brought about a remarkable transformation—turning wilderness lands into an extended community of farms, homes, and settlements. In documenting these early experiences, LDS historian Thomas Bullock produced a map of the Mormon settlements in Jackson County, reflecting the memories of old-time Saints. Bullock's map locates the Prairie Branch south of a small area stream named Brush Creek, and also gives the comparative site location of the Lyman Wight homestead.¹⁴

Concurrent with the arrival of Wight and other Western Missionaries, Bishop Partridge began to purchase land southwest of Independence, Jackson County, for the benefit of the gathering Church members. On July 26, 1831, Partridge traveled to the federal government's land sale at Lexington, Missouri, where he entered three tracts of land in his own name on behalf of the Church. One tract, Township 49 N, Range 33 W, in the SW quarter of Section 30, comprising 111.30 acres, lay right along the state line, close to the unorganized area that became Indian Territory. Another property in the NW quarter of Section 31, containing 105.23 acres, lay immediately to the south of the first and was also on the state line. The third tract, containing 80 acres, was also secured in the NW quarter of Section 33, to the east.¹⁵

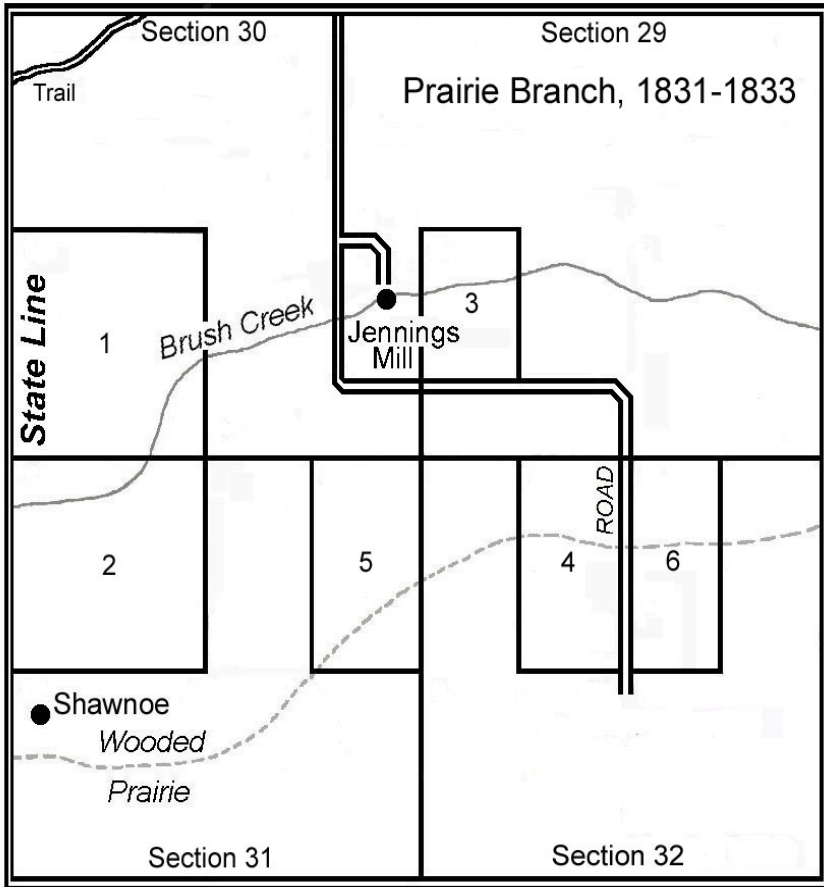
In consultation with the bishop, Lyman Wight examined available Church lands to select a location for a home. To advance Church strategic interests, Lyman wished his land to be near the "border of the Lamanites." Oliver Cowdery's missionary company had been denied access to Indian lands, and Lyman was determined to share the Church's story with these Native American peoples. However, rather than settling immediately along the state border, Wight selected more desirable land in the NW quarter of Section 32 to the east, where another eighty acres were acquired by Partridge from the government on September 16, 1831. This location coincides with the early land survey maps of the area showing the edge of the vast prairie, from which Prairie Branch took its name.¹⁶ These acquisitions and attendant Mormon activities in the area coincide with the observations of Delilah Lykins, daughter of old settlers Isaac and Christina McCoy, who were then on a surveying assignment at Ft. Gibson. On September 6, 1831, "A fresh cargo of Mormonites arrived in our neighbourhood yesterday, between seventy and 100. I think that they will take possession of this country for a while. they are crowding in as near the state line as they can get."¹⁷

The inauguration of the Mormon colony in Jackson County had been marked by formal identification of the land of Zion on August 2, 1831, in Kaw Township, and the place for the envisioned temple, dedicated by the Prophet Joseph Smith near Independence on the August 3. Soon thereafter, on August 4, the first conference in the land of Zion convened. Following the conference, Joseph and many of the Western Missionaries then returned to Ohio. Some of those participating in the Western Mission actually did not arrive in Jackson County until after Joseph's departure. Therefore, on August 24, 1831, a second conference was organized that involved elders yet remaining in the area.¹⁸ Following the conference, numbers of these supporters also returned to Ohio to gather up their families to prepare to move to Zion.

Lyman Wight was among those who remained in Jackson County at this point. Before his mission to Missouri, Lyman had arranged for his family in Ohio to follow him, using his time to begin earnest preparations for their arrival. There was plenty of work while planning the erection of a suitable house for his family. As was common in pioneer America, Lyman initiated a number of "improvements" on his new land, clearing trees and fencing fields. Arranging temporary shelter at his new homestead, he invited the still recuperating John Murdock to stay with him. John observed, "A little later I removed to Lyman Wight's place and thus remained with the Brethren till the 24th of January 1832."¹⁹ Wight was so devoted to his central purpose that even while improving his land, he managed to visit "surrounding counties to engage in missionary work."²⁰ Nevertheless, at the earliest possible moment, Lyman began a more permanent, though modest, frontier home, probably a squared log house.

Lyman was not alone in appreciation of the desirability of the location of land near the state border. Nearby, nonmember Isaac McCoy secured some strategically positioned land just across the border from the government-operated Shawnee Indian Agency, where Richard Cummins served as agent. Like the Lamanite missionaries, McCoy, a Baptist minister and government land surveyor, was vitally interested in seeing the establishment of a competing missionary school among Native Americans. At the government land auction, McCoy helped his son John C. McCoy, and son-in-law, Johnston Lykins, secure additional lands nearby. Lykins successfully bid on land bordering the Indian Agency the same day Partridge made land purchases for the Church.²¹

Even before Lyman's arrival in Missouri, his family initiated their own journey west to join him during the late summer of 1831. Wight's son, Orange Lysander, seven years old at the time, provided a detailed description of their journey in his "Recollections."²² In company with a party of other Church members gathering to Jackson County, Wight's wife, Harriet Benton, her son Orange and two daughters, traveled overland to a steamboat landing



Key

1. 111.30 acres purchased July 26, 1831, by Edward Partridge.
2. 105.23 acres purchased July 26, 1831, by Edward Partridge.
3. 60 acres purchased July 26, 1831, by Edward Partridge.
4. 80 acres purchased September 16, 1831, by Edward Partridge.
5. 80 acres purchased September 16, 1831, by Edward Partridge.
6. 80 acres purchased March 8, 1832, by Edward Partridge.

Map showing the land purchases that made up the Prairie Branch in Jackson County, Missouri, 1831-1833. Research and map by Ronald E. Romig, Larry C. Porter, and Alexander L. Baugh.

near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, or perhaps East Liverpool, Ohio. They then proceeded by water, boarding a steamer going down the Ohio River. Orange recalled that the boat was “a flat bottom arrangement with side wheels, something after the order of Fulton’s first effort. It had a board shanty on it for cabin passengers. Mother was honored with a corner in the shanty, while most of the rest of the Saints occupied the open decks without shelter.”²³ Their route led down the Ohio River, then up to St. Louis on the Mississippi, and west on the Missouri River. The trip passed without any serious incident. They disembarked at a landing called Yellowstone.²⁴

Lyman’s family, from whom he had been separated for three months, arrived in Jackson County on September 6, 1831.²⁵ Born May 9, 1796, Wight was now thirty-five years old. He wrote that it was a time of “toiling and undergoing all the hardships of a new country . . . and suffering many privations of the comforts of life.”²⁶ But a sense of mission made the family’s labors seem worthwhile. Their new home probably lay among the old growth timber very near the line of a vast expanse of prairie land that rolled off to the southwest. That expanse of prairie provided a challenge for the farmer. One biographer writing of this period in Jackson County observed, “The soil was rich under a hard earth crust. It took five to six yoke of cattle to break the prairie sod. Ox teams plowed for sowing. Crops came rich.”²⁷

Lyman would certainly have taken pleasure in finally moving his family into their own snug log house. Other church families were also attracted to this neighborhood. A little colony soon began to develop, turning into a sizable church settlement.²⁸ Before that first season ended, the form of the Prairie Branch began to coalesce as the Solomon Chamberlin family and others joined their neighborhood. Chamberlin, living near Lyons, New York, had made contact with the Joseph Smith family in Palmyra Township as early as the fall of 1829. He was instrumental in spreading news of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon even before the Church was formally organized on April 6, 1830. Solomon had been baptized in Seneca Lake by the Prophet himself “a few days after” the Church was founded. He moved to Kirtland in the spring of 1831 and the family emigrated to Jackson County that same fall. At that time Solomon’s family consisted of his wife Hope (Hopestill) Haskins, a son Lorenzo (Alonzo), and daughters Polly and Electa. Polly would later marry Joseph Wilson (1832), and Lorenzo married a “Mrs. Susan Welcher” (1833), both while living in Jackson County.²⁹

The Chamberlins traveled to Missouri by water. Their company was under the direction of William W. Phelps and Algernon Sidney Gilbert. Phelps was accompanied by his wife, Sally, and their six children. Sidney Gilbert had with him his wife, Elizabeth, her sister, Keziah Keturah Van Benthuyssen Rollins, and Keziah’s three orphaned children, James Henry Rollins, Mary Eliz-

abeth and Carolyn Amelia Rollins. Mary Elizabeth remembered that Cyrus Daniels and his family likewise accompanied them.³⁰ Also numbered in the group were the wives and children of Edward Partridge, John Corril, and Isaac Morley (the husbands already being in Missouri). Still other Saints were likewise members of that body.³¹ James Henry Rollins affirmed that “it was at the first of October we prepared to start.”³²

As the group made their way up the Missouri River we learn of the presence of the Solomon Chamberlin family because of an incidental reminiscence of Emily Partridge who recalled, “Once when the boat landed, one of our company, a young woman, Electa Camberlin [Chamberlin] slipped from the plank into the water, but was soon rescued again.”³³ Thick ice coming down the river forced the company to land at Arrow Rock, Saline County, a hundred miles from Independence. Lydia Partridge said that she and her family “were obliged to stay there about two weeks, when a man came hired to take us to Independence.”³⁴ William W. Phelps stated that he was detained at Arrow Rock until “the 1st of February 1832” and finally arrived in Independence on 22 February.³⁵

The Chamberlins were located in the Prairie Branch upon their arrival in Jackson County, and they were among the earliest settlers to join the Lyman Wight family in the important labor associated with carving a new settlement out of the wilderness. Solomon, a cooper by trade, provided a very important commodity as far as life goes on the rough frontier.³⁶ (“Cowp” is the Old English word for a “container” in which to keep or hold things.) No doubt Solomon, perhaps with the help of his son Lorenzo, produced a steady stream of new barrels for his neighbors around the Prairie settlement. Having a profession, Solomon was apparently well-situated financially and brought many family possessions on the family’s trip to Missouri. Solomon recorded, “I moved from the State of Newyork with a ton and a half of house furniture.”³⁷ As a visionary man and strong advocate of the tenets of the Book of Mormon, Solomon would have shared Lyman’s dream of carrying the gospel message to the “Lamanites.”

The advent of the “smokey days” announced the beginning of the fall hunts in which the Indians burned the prairie to drive the game. The fall winds carried the smoke into the Jackson valleys, filling them with a blue haze.³⁸ The October frosts transformed the leaves of the trees around them into bright colors and turned the prairie to a yellowish brown. Having arrived much too late to prepare ground for fall crops, during the first winter the pioneers made do using what could be found growing in the frontier wilderness. Like the Indians, the Wights and their neighbors also resorted to nature’s harvest and gathered from the wild. Prairie hay was cut to provide fodder for their cattle.



47th Street and State Line Road, Kansas City, Missouri, March 2007. On July 26, 1831, Edward Partridge purchased 111.3 acres on the extreme western border of Jackson County and Indian Territory, the first of six land purchases which became part of the Prairie Branch settlement. The location pictured in the above photograph marks the northwest corner of the July 26, 1831, purchase and is situated on the present-day Missouri-Kansas border.

Photograph by Alexander L. Baugh.

Also during that first fall in Missouri, young Orange Wight turned eight years old on November 29, 1831, reaching the age to be baptized. For this important occasion, his family traveled to be with the Saints living at the nearby Big Blue River. He recalled he was baptized in the spring of 1832, “in the waters of the Big Blue River three miles west of Independence, Jackson County, Missouri”³⁹ His father Lyman probably performed the ceremony, after which he proudly confirmed his son a member of the Church.

Despite the Wight family’s recent arrival, and the rigors of that first difficult season in a new land, Lyman began planning to undertake a preaching mission back east. He worked until he had “provided enough food and clothing to last six months” for his family. By the first of the year, Wight, though ready to go, decided to wait until after the next scheduled conference, which convened at Newel Knight’s dwelling in the Colesville settlement on January 23, 1832. Having finally overcome the rigors of illness, John Murdock simply

recorded, "We held a conference, Bro. Partridge presided."⁴⁰ Several other elders joined Wight in his missionary endeavor. Perhaps in order to catch a steamer down the Missouri River, the brethren decided not to wait for the final day of the meetings held on the 27th. On January 26, 1832, Lyman "left for Cincinnati in company with Parley P. Pratt, John Murdock and Levi Hancock."⁴¹ Lyman's spouse Harriet, born March 19, 1801, was not yet thirty-one, and with her husband's departure to the East, she was now a mother alone with three young children on the far western edge of the organized United States. "It would be of great interest to know what went through Harriet Wight's mind. . . . If she was resentful it was never recorded. All indications are that she was long-suffering and accepted her lot as God's will. Regardless, she bore her trials well."⁴²

Meanwhile in Illinois, Nathan Porter reported that within a few months of hearing the message of Mormonism, "two Elders called on their return from the State of Missouri in Search of a gathering place for the Saints to be called Zion) as before mentioned; which they informed my Father was located in Jackson County."⁴³ Many of the new converts in Tazewell County sold their lands and prepared to gather with the Saints in Jackson County, Missouri. The initial group began their journey in the midst of the winter season. Nathan Porter recorded, "on the first of December 1831 we started for Jackson Co. in company with Morris Phelps, James Emit [Emmett], Wm. Aldridge & John Aldridge Harrison Aldridge (his two Sons) and a Man by the Name of Berry with their Families."⁴⁴ Sanford Porter was chosen to preside.

After two months of daily travel, the Tazewell County company arrived at Independence on March 1, 1832.⁴⁵ Nathan remembered, "The Brethren greeted us with a harty wellcome as Brethren and weary Pilgrims to the center Stake of Zion; as we were the first company that had come up pitching their tents by the way;—like Israel of old;—we were now on the consecrated land; with high antisipations of soon reseveing an inheritence that would be everlasting with all the Blessings pertaining there too; which was the object of our toil. We felt that our Pilgrimage was ore [sic] that our abiding place was shure untill the coming of the Son of Man; and through his Reign of a Thousand years; yea unto the comsumation of all things spoken <of> by the mouth of all the Holy Prophets."⁴⁶

It was time for the Porters to find their place among the developing settlements of the rapidly expanding Church colony. In keeping with the Church's consecration plan, known as the law of consecration, they consulted with Bishop Partridge. Like the majority of those who gathered to Missouri, they agreed to consecrate their possessions and in exchange receive an allotment of Church land, known as an "inheritance." Nathan specified:

A goodly number of the Saints from the Branches of the Church in the Eastern States mostly from Kurtland [sic] Ohio had come up by water during the previous Summer & fall and were located to the distance of twelve or fourteen miles to the west, being divided into five Branches; called as follows 1st Indipendance [sic] 2nd Bigblue 3rd Timber 4 Colesville & 5 Praria [Prairie] Branches. my Father [Sanford Porter] recieved his inheritance in the last named Branch under <the> hand of Bishop Patrage, consisting of Some 20 Acres he immediately went too building & improving upon it.⁴⁷

Wight, having made Cincinnati a major focus of his mission, was not present when they arrived. The Porters apparently continued to follow Lyman's example, asking Partridge for the privilege of settling near Wight in the Prairie Branch. As revealed in the description of Porter's inheritance, Partridge directed them to twenty acres of land in the NE quarter of Section 32, Township 49 N, Range 33 W:

Beginning one rod E. of the center of said Sec., thence E. thirty nine rods 12 1/2 L. thence N. eighty rods, thence W. thirty nine rods 12 1/2 L to a road thence S. on the E. line of said road eighty rods to the place of beginning containing twenty acres to be the same more or less subject to roads and highways.⁴⁸

In successive days, additional immigrants found their way onto Church lands near Lyman's house. Sanford Porter's extant certificate of inheritance reveals the Church's settlement model. Families engaged in farming typically received about twenty acres. Somewhat in contrast to typical settlement patterns, each family had its own land, while the smaller size of the homesteads encouraged the development of a strong central core settlement. This pattern provided the basis for a thriving Prairie Branch.

In their new homeland, several of the Porter family who had not initially joined the Church in Illinois decided to join. Nathan Porter recalled, "My self.—Brothers John & Sanford with several others; was Baptised on or near the 20th day of June 1832 By Elders Jonathan Sumner & Confirmed under his & the hands of my Father—in the Pararia [Prairie] Branch."⁴⁹

Ongoing missionary preaching, especially in places like Portage County, Ohio, were remarkably successful. Rapid inroads among the extended families of the Western Reserve, resulted in significant branches being created in Nelson and Hiram townships in Portage County. In the early 1800s, the Hulet, Mills, and Noah and Whiting families had located in Nelson Township, close to Garrettsville and formed what was referred to as the Hulet settlement. In point of time, Sylvanus Hulet and his brother had moved to Nelson in about 1814.⁵⁰ Because the area was so sparsely settled, the families obviously became well acquainted.

An account by a member of the Hulet family suggests that while living in Portage County, they heard about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon and discussed it. In the dead of winter, Sylvester Hulet reportedly rode horse back from Ohio to New York where he met and talked with Joseph Smith and was converted. He was baptized at Joseph Smith's home in March before the Church was even organized in April 1830.⁵¹ Sylvester was then said to have returned to Nelson with a copy of the Book of Mormon.⁵² The authors, however, have been unable to substantiate this claim of so early a contact with the Prophet from other relevant sources.⁵³

When the Lamanite missionaries visited Kirtland and vicinity in October-November 1830 they set in motion a rapid series of conversions. Members of the Hulet family were said to have been among the first to be baptized. Oren (Orin) Hulet was baptized either in October 1830 or February 1831. Anna Hulet of Nelson was baptized in February 1831, as was Elvira Hulet Mills on February 10, 1831.⁵⁴ Young Katharine, daughter of Charles and Margaret Noah Hulet, recalled, "In February 1831 my parents embraced the gospel, and a few months later I was baptized."⁵⁵ The extended family of John Noah also became interested in the Church sometime in the same proximity. At the time Joseph Smith arrived from New York in Kirtland on February 1, 1831, Nelson Township contained a budding network of inter-related families who were in the process of aligning themselves with the Church.⁵⁶

Responding to words of counsel from the Lord to Joseph Smith, since canonized in Section 42 of the Doctrine and Covenants, Lyman Wight and John Whitmer visited the Nelson area with considerable missionary success.⁵⁷ Their stay lasted from February 10 until around March 8. Wight and John Whitmer proselytized in Nelson during March or early April 1831, during which time, as Whitmer wrote, we "built a branch of the Church of Christ."⁵⁸ Missionaries David Whitmer and Harvey Whitlock also labored in Nelson and baptized Francis Hulet between June 11 and July 18, 1831.⁵⁹

In the fall of 1831, Joseph Smith was living at the John Johnson Sr. farm near the village of Hiram, Ohio, deeply involved with Sidney Rigdon in a careful revision of the Old and New Testaments. The Johnson home in Hiram Township was not far from the residence of the Hulets in Nelson, which proximity provided the Hulets with an opportunity to get to know many Church leaders. The Prophet Joseph once ate dinner at the Hulet settlement in Nelson. Young Katharine, daughter of Charles and Margaret Noah Hulet recorded that she was "born March 12, 1820, at Nelson, Portage, Ohio. In 1830 [1831] the Prophet Joseph Smith and Parley P. Pratt came to my father's house and desired to hold meeting there. Father gave them the privilege. The Prophet bore testimony to finding the plates containing the Book of Mormon. . . . I hear[d]

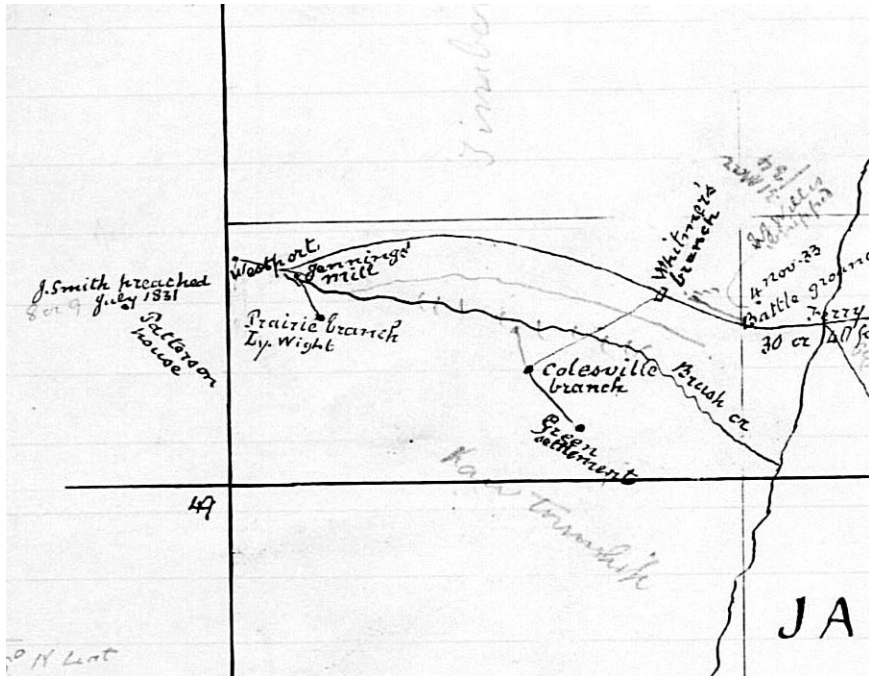
him preach the following Sunday [March 25, 1832] after the mob had tarred and feathered and beaten him and Sidney Rigdon so badly.”⁶⁰

The new branch at Nelson was full of promise, but it also presented some serious problems for Mormon leaders. Nelson was the home of Ezra Booth, who broke with the Church in the fall of 1831 soon after his visit to Jackson County as an elder on the Western Mission. His series of letters written from Nelson and published in the *Ohio Star* were a source of strong local antagonism toward the Church. Nelson was also the residence of part of the Philastus Hurlbut family. Hurlbut was later excommunicated from the Church, after which he assisted anti-Mormon publisher E. D. Howe in publishing the first anti-Mormon book, *Mormonism Unveiled*, in 1834.⁶¹

The summer of 1831 was a busy time for the Church in Ohio and Jackson County, Missouri, for it encompassed the Western Mission and the Lord’s identification of the land of Zion. During late 1831, important Church conferences held at Hiram in Portage County delineated significant plans for enlarging the program of gathering. At one of these special conferences, Sylvester Hulet and John Noah appeared from the Hulet settlement and “expressed desires to preach the work if thought proper by this conference. Voted that these two brethren be ordained according to the voice of the church in which they live.”⁶² With the help of local priesthood leadership and missionary labors, the Church was able to overcome some of its immediate problems, and the Hiram and Nelson branches continued to thrive.

Members converted in the East were taught and encouraged to gather to Jackson County, Missouri, as quickly as sanctioned by Church leaders. And, with the rapid development of Zion during the years 1831-32, many local members made preparations to move west. Katherine (Catherine) Hulet wrote, “In 1832 my parents and I moved to Jackson County, Missouri, Father had sent money ahead with which to purchase a farm.”⁶³ Twelve-year-old Elvira Pamela Mills, daughter of the widow Rhoda Hulet Mills and niece to Sylvester Hulet, was among those who departed Nelson Township for Zion. On their departure for the West, her aunt Marietta Streeter Mills presented her with an autograph album on May 1, 1832, as a going away gift.⁶⁴ Elvira used the album to note family events throughout their stay in Missouri. The party from Nelson arrived in Jackson County by early summer,⁶⁵ in sufficient time for Margaret Ann Noah Hulet to give birth to Elizabeth, her fifth daughter and sixth child, in Independence, Missouri, on July 22, 1831.⁶⁶

As a result of immigration, the Church in Missouri experienced a surge of significant growth. Bishop Partridge sent many more new arrivals, including the Hulets to the Prairie Branch area. Charles secured a farm and a good home for his family; Rhoda Mills and daughter Elvira located nearby in the Whitmer settlement.⁶⁷



Portion of a map drawn by Thomas Bullock in 1862 showing the Mormon settlement sites in Kaw Township, Jackson County, Missouri, including the Prairie Branch. Bullock probably made the map based upon information provided to him by William W. Phelps.

Image courtesy LDS Church Archives.

Development of the Prairie Branch

Parley P. Pratt presided over the Prairie Branch during a portion of Lyman Wight's lengthy absence on his Ohio mission. Wight's remarkable success has been recorded:

On arrival at that city [Cincinnati] he called at a hotel and engaged his board for several weeks. The landlord asked him what his business was. He replied he was a preacher after the order of Melchisedek. He created so much curiosity that they wished to hear him preach. He told them that was his business, and if they would open the court house he would do so willingly. They obtained the house, and he delivered a series of lectures and built up a branch of the Church, and baptized upwards of one hundred. . . . The family of Higbees were among the first baptized; they were fishermen, and Wight would fish with them through the day and preach at night. One evening he went from the fish net to the court house, and stood on top of the stove barefooted with his trousers rolled to his knees and his shirt sleeves up to his elbows, and preached two hours. Some of the people remarked, "he preached the truth, though he does not look much like a preacher."⁶⁸

Many of Wight's new converts from the Cincinnati, Ohio, area prepared to remove to Jackson County, Missouri.

During the summer of 1832, Henry Hoagland, his wife Catherine, and family also immigrated to Jackson County. Hoagland had joined the Church at Mayfield, eight miles from Kirtland, being baptized by Oliver Cowdery and confirmed by John Whitmer, in October 1832. He and his family left Mayfield for Jackson County, Missouri, in May 1833, taking a canal boat to Dresden, Ohio. At Dresden he built a boat for five families, then continued by water through the Ohio and Erie Canal and Ohio River systems to Louisville, Kentucky, and thence on to New Albany, where he hired passage on a steamboat upriver to St. Louis. Hoagland remembered, "Lyman Wight[,] Elias Higbee, Nathan West, [?] Dimmett, and [?] Roberts from Cincinnati, afterwards came on [the steamboat] at New Albany. At St. Louis, Lyman Wight hired a Steam Boat to carry us to Independence, but at Arrow Rock the water was so low that the boat could go no further. They left their families at Arrow Rock and walked about 100 miles to Jackson Co., to get teams to fetch their families."⁶⁹ The party arrived in Jackson County on July 14, 1832.⁷⁰ At the Little Blue River crossing they encountered waters so deep "they had rough work to ford it." Hoagland settled in the Prairie branch under the care of Parley P. Pratt. At the time of their arrival in Jackson County, Pratt was temporarily providing leadership for the Prairie branch.

The Crandall clan also arrived in Jackson County in July 1832. Daniel and Sarah Crandall were the parents of a large family and it appears they all settled in the Prairie Branch.⁷¹ Daniel's wife, Sarah [Sally], was thought by some to be a visionary woman.⁷²

When Lyman Wight returned from his mission in southern Ohio he brought with him the extended Isaac Higbee family. Wight recorded that he had traveled 2,650 miles since leaving home in January.⁷³ Lyman left the new arrivals in the care of Bishop Partridge and hurried home to reunite with his family in the Prairie branch. Meanwhile, Isaac, Elias, and the other members of the Higbee families began making plans to locate their new homes, ultimately settling on land along the Big Blue River.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1832, Lyman resided in Prairie branch. He continued preaching at least five times a week as well as traveling in surrounding counties doing missionary work. During this period, he succeeded in baptizing thirty-three new members, combining his missionary labors with leading the religious activities of the Prairie Branch. Lyman's 1855 letter to Sanford Porter revealed Porter's organizational role in the branch: "I lived a near neighbor to you in Jackson County I . . . found you to be a good counsellor and when you saw iniquity you was quick to refute it."⁷⁴ President Wight was periodically called upon to perform matrimonial rites in the area. During the fall

of 1832, one of Daniel and Sarah Crandall's sons, also named Daniel, became engaged to Parintha Abbott, another Prairie Branch member. The couple was married by Lyman Wight on November 24, 1832.⁷⁵

Yet another relatively large group of members arrived in late 1832 from the Warrensville, Ohio Branch. Those settling in the Prairie Branch included the families of Benjamin Covey, Philo Judd, Ellis Eames, Justis Pooler, and Elam Barber.⁷⁶ Others from the same group located in the settlement of the Big Blue River.

Church merchant Algernon Sidney Gilbert, designated to serve as the agent for the Church in Jackson County, had also been counseled to sell goods to the Indians, as a way to continue the Church's contact with them. Lyman either assisted Gilbert or assumed these responsibilities for the Prairie Branch. Located near the unorganized area that subsequently became Indian Territory, the Mormons at Prairie Branch were well positioned to sell goods and equipment to the Santa Fe traders who passed by. Lyman pursued these businesses and proselytizing opportunities, despite warnings from government Indian agent Robert Cummins. Lyman was well matched with this opportunity. In his capacity as agent, he raised \$1,578.00 for the Church selling the following items: "eighty head of cattle for \$500; four horses, \$175; twenty-two thousand pounds of flour at \$2.50 per one hundred pounds, \$550; pork \$141; leather goods \$72; corn \$50; potatoes \$75; store goods \$75; and bacon \$120."⁷⁷ Young John Brush of the Big Blue settlement also hauled corn by wagon for sale to the Shawnee Indian Nation.⁷⁸ Funds were desperately needed by Bishop Partridge and the Church organization to secure additional land for new members pouring into the county.

Joshua Hitchcock, a brother-in-law of Lamanite missionary Richard Ziba Peterson through marriage, apparently found gainful employment during this period by providing agricultural products to the Kansas Indian Agency which lay further west beyond the Shawnee-Delaware lands. The sub-agent for the Kansas Indians was Marstin G. Clark. The Kansas Agency record of payments for the period October 11, 1832, to September 30, 1833, show Joshua Hitchcock receiving payment of \$131 for providing agricultural aid.⁷⁹ Joshua, an old-time settler before the arrival of the Church, may have provided contact for other Church members, such as Lyman Wight, to sell produce and goods on Native American reservations.⁸⁰

In addition to duties as agent, it is reported that Lyman Wight cleared and fenced his land and planted sufficient crops to sustain his family. That fall he turned in enough surplus to the bishop's storehouse in Independence to sustain one more family.⁸¹

Even as the Prairie Branch began to prosper, a rival non-Mormon settlement began to develop in the vicinity. The interests of this nonmember com-

munity also lay with the Indians. Isaac McCoy, a prime mover in proselytizing among the Shawnees, was one of the principals in its establishment. With connections as a federal government surveyor, McCoy succeeded in obtaining an appointment for his son John as postmaster of a small post office in Jackson County near the Missouri State border. He called the Post Office Shawnoe, in keeping with his aims among the Shawnee tribe. Shawnoe soon rivaled the Prairie settlement for Native American related business and commerce.

Initially, the growth of Shawnoe provided Church members ready day work among their nonmember neighbors. Such welcome work supplemented meager incomes from farming and similar pursuits. During Lyman's absence, Isaac McCoy began construction of a house.⁸² McCoy benefitted from abundant cheap Mormon labor, completing his home in a very short time. His journal indicates he had six or eight workmen building log dwellings "in the woods" for his family. By the end of July one "hewed log" cabin was finished, and the main house (35 x 22 feet) was covered in, doors cut out, etc., but lacked chimneys and "shutters to doors and windows."⁸³ McCoy noted in his daybook, "Commenced building June 21, 1832. Moved into the large house, and discharged most of my hands, July 19. Just 4 weeks."⁸⁴ Pioneer William Mulkey recollected, "Isaac McCoy came with his family and settled out just south of where Westport is now . . . a big double log cabin . . . which stood on a big hill."⁸⁵ McCoy also used Mormon laborers on his frequent survey trips into Indian Territory.⁸⁶

An openness in this new religion to the workings of the Holy Spirit, and an interest in attendant charismatic gifts, helped attract converts. During the Jackson County period, this inclination eventually proved a source of difficulty. At about the same time Church leaders in Ohio began to openly include the use of the gifts in public worship an identical interest was expressed in Missouri. John Whitmer noted in his history that the gift of tongues was received in the fall of the year 1832 by the disciples at Ohio.⁸⁷ Members of the Church had claimed and were inclined to exercise the gift of prophecy from the beginning. This caused repeated difficulties as the Church labored to establish a workable balance in regard to who could speak for the Church at large. Some members of the extended Hulet family in Jackson County seemed more predisposed to the exercise of the gifts than others. In December 1832, high priests John Corrill and Isaac Morley were appointed to "go forth and set in order the different Branches of the Church of Christ in the land of Zion."⁸⁸ On December 15, 1832, Church clerk John Whitmer took note of the "case of Thomas Mills [Mills] who was going about preaching much: By due examination we found that he taught contrary doctrine to the revelations & prophesied things contrary to scripture. We therefore received his license & silenced him & advised him, if he would still persis in his foolish doctrine to withdraw from

the Church & save us the trouble of excommunicating him from the same, which he did[.]”⁸⁹

The Charles and Sylvester Hulet families found themselves in the middle of this excitement. By late spring, Missouri Church leaders queried Church headquarters in Kirtland regarding concerns of excesses. The questions asked are known only from answers sent back over the signatures of Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams from Kirtland on June 21, 1833. The most important part of the letter was “The Plat of the City of Zion” and its explanation, a key document in the Saints’ social planning. But the questions Phelps posed to Kirtland obviously had to do with doctrinal points being raised at Prairie Branch by Charles and Sylvester Hulet.⁹⁰ The Prophet replied:

Say to the brothers Hulet and to all others, that the Lord never authorized them to say that the devil, his angels or the sons of perdition, should ever be restored; for their state of destiny was not revealed to man, is not revealed, nor shall be revealed, save to those who are partakers thereof; consequently, those who teach this doctrine, have not received it of the Spirit of the Lord. Truly Brother Oliver declared it to be the doctrine of devils. We therefore command that this doctrine be taught no more in Zion. We sanction the decision of the Bishop and his council, in relation to this doctrine being a bar to communion.⁹¹

Despite this initial attempt to control the use of gifts, their expression persisted, especially the gift of tongues. John Whitmer observed, “June 1833, we received the gift of tongues in Zion.”⁹² The following month Whitmer reported, “The gifts are breaking forth in a marvelous manner. . . . God is pouring out his Spirit upon his people.” W. W. Phelps added, “Everyone that is a Saint or nearly so . . . speaks in tongues. Br. David says he can speak in all the tongues on earth, we shall probably begin to worship here in tongues tomorrow.”⁹³

Later, events in Clay County following the expulsion of the disciples from Jackson County suggest that the Prairie Saints exercised the gift of tongues extensively—as much as or even more so than did the Saints in other branches. One indication of this is Nathan Porter’s reminiscence that, following the 1833 solemn assembly held in Prairie branch, “Many did humble them selves before [the] Lord so that the gifts and Blessings of the gospel was made manifest in Prophesicy Speaking in Toungs & interpretation of Toungs &c many children were Baptised who had arriven to the age of eight years & upwards they would rise up in the meeting under the inspiration of the Holy spirit and speak many great things.”⁹⁴

It is also known that a high priests council in Independence, August 21, 1833, made the gifts a topic of their discussions. “Much consultation concerning the gift of tongues &c.”⁹⁵ Counsel was again requested from Joseph about

the matter. Apparently the Prophet did not discourage their use, but cautioned, "We wish you, however, to be careful, lest in this you be deceived. . . . Satan will no doubt trouble you about the gift of tongues, unless you are careful."⁹⁶

During much of 1832 another controversy involving the application of the law of consecration preoccupied the disciples. A Church-wide disagreement existed over who must consecrate and how inheritances should be held. This philosophical problem affected all the branches, including the Prairie. Bishop Partridge finally worked out an arrangement, putting the issue in its best light.

The Spirit of Persecution is Manifest

Despite interest in working with the Lamanites, Isaac McCoy's tactics effectively thwarted Church members from establishing any enduring work among the Indians. This intention was also neutralized as anti-Mormon sentiment was openly expressed. Nathan Porter wrote, "Now in the latter part of this year [1832] there began to be made manifest a Spirit of persecution towards the Saints on the part of our gentile Neighbours; living in and about our Settlements Threatning violence towards all that were believers in Jo Smith, as they called him."⁹⁷

Members of the Prairie branch experienced occasional difficulties with nonmembers. At times, men working in their fields were harassed by marauders. Katherine Hulet recalled, "One day Brother Lyman Wight, our neighbor, was working in his cornfield and a number of the mob saw him and rode across the field after him. He concealed himself in a small shock of corn at the bottom of the field. They searched for him in vain. They swore he couldn't possibly be in that small shock."⁹⁸ Katherine's own father was likewise a victim of that same mob tactic with similar results. She declared, "I remember, too, my father hiding in a shock of corn to keep away from the mob. We carried food to him while he was there."⁹⁹

Despite growing uncertainty as to the future of the colony, members continued to gather. Lyman Leonard and wife Abigail (Calkins) were baptized on August 20, 1831, while living in Columbia Township, Bradford County, Pennsylvania. Abigail wrote, "When we heard of the 'gathering' we were ready for that also, and began preparations for the journey. On the 3rd of July, 1832 we started for Jackson county, Mo., where we arrived some time in the latter part of December of the same year." The Leonards were directed to the Prairie Branch. "Here we lived in peace, and enjoyed the blessings of our religion till the spring of 1833, when the mob came upon us, and shed its terror in our midst."¹⁰⁰

Church members began to realize the precariousness of their situation as a result of their comparative isolation in the separate settlements. Scattered about, each family living somewhat apart from their neighbors on individual inheritances, they found it quite impossible to keep their homes secure from wandering marauders. As the residents of Prairie branch discovered, outlying settlements were at the greatest risk. Lyman Wight was an early advocate of the development of a strategy of self-defense. About this time, perhaps for such purposes, he moved his family to the larger Church settlement at the Big Blue River. Wight enjoyed a no-nonsense reputation among nonmembers. Disciples in Jackson County soon began to look to him as a leader in things pertaining to defense.

Nathan Porter summarized the complete degeneration of relationships between the Mormons and Missourians that occurred when the mob element concluded to go on the offensive:

During the following Spring and Summer [1833] they entered into a Secret Combination binding them selves in the most wicked oaths, to stand by each other in driving evry Man Woman & child that would not renounce Mormonism from the County, this they did, But not without Some Sharp resistance [on] the part of the Brethren who felt it their duty, to defend themselves their Wives & Children a gainst sutch inhuman outrages which resulted in the Death of several of the Mob, and one on the part of the Brethren.¹⁰¹

The above engagement, sometimes known as the Battle above the Blue, actually occurred at the Whitmer settlement further to the west. One fatality on the part of the Saints resulted when young Andrew Barber, the son of Andrew Barber Sr. of the Prairie branch, was killed on November 4, 1833. Others of the brethren were wounded: "Christian Whitmer shot thro the wrist; Alan-son Cleveland shot in the shoulder; and Wm. Whiting shot in the foot."¹⁰²

Following this critical action the militia was called out to settle the situation. In the negotiations that followed, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Pitcher disarmed the Mormons but failed to require the arms of the opposing belligerents as part of the understood agreement by the Saints. Once the Saints were deprived of their weapons, "a systematic policy of harassment began. Companies of from fifty to eighty men, mounted upon horses and with guns on their shoulders, called on the Mormon settlements. . . . Homes were broken into and searched for weapons. Some of the Mormons were caught and whipped, and others fired upon. A few of the disciples were chased for several miles into the woods."¹⁰³ The general exodus from Jackson County began on Thursday, November 7, 1833, as the shore of the Missouri River "began to be lined on both sides of the ferry with men, women and children."¹⁰⁴

The George A. Smith and Thomas Bullock enumeration of exiled Mormons from Jackson County lists the figure of 883 known Church members expelled. Parley P. Pratt set the number at one thousand, while John Corrill estimated it to be as many as twelve hundred.¹⁰⁵ Currently, Ronald Putz, an independent researcher, has enumerated a sum total of approximately twelve hundred persons, corresponding to Corrill's estimates. Although the majority chose to go north into Clay County, records indicate that some families, such as Thomas B. Marsh's, elected to go east into the adjoining Lafayette County, where Thomas "kept a common school and taught the children of the brethren" during the winter of 1833-34.¹⁰⁶ Some few sought refuge in Johnson County.¹⁰⁷ Others chose to go northeast into Ray County (later part of Caldwell County), where it was reported: "In the fall of 1833, some of the Mormon fugitives from Jackson County settled near the mouth of Log Creek, two miles southeast of Kingston. They built a horse-mill, a blacksmith shop, and several cabins."¹⁰⁸

A significant number of Saints caught in the dispersion were disposed to seek safety in a southerly direction. In order to understand this southern migration it is important to recognize that in 1833, Jackson County was much larger, approximately twenty-five miles in width and seventy-nine miles in length, from the Missouri River on the north to the Osage River on the south. This same area was soon reshaped:

On September 14, 1835 . . . Jackson County was reduced to one-third of its original size. The extracted part of Jackson County was called Van Buren County in honor of Martin Van Buren, the eighth president of the United States. The southern part of the county was named Bates but was kept a part of Van Buren County until January 29, 1841. The name Van Buren was rather short lived and on July 1, 1849 it was changed to Cass County in honor of General Lewis Cass who was a U.S. senator who ran for the U.S. Presidency in 1848.¹⁰⁹

Numbers of Mormon exiles seeking refuge in the remote reaches of Jackson County went south into what later became Van Buren (Cass) and Bates counties. At least three small groups of Mormons, involving the Aaron Wilds family and others, located in the extreme southern end of Jackson County in what later became Bates County.¹¹⁰

David Pettigrew of the Blue River Branch outlined one of the larger concentrations of Mormons who banded together for safety at the Big Blue settlement and then headed in a southerly direction. He recorded:

I found the brethren of four different branches collected together and we moved in a body. Only two belonging to my family were well, David and Lucy Ann. Our company numbered eighty or ninety, and all but seven men were not sick. My brethren, like myself, had left all, and we traveled south, nothing but the canopy of



John President Porter (1818-1895)



Nathan Tanner Porter (1820-1897)



Sanford Porter Jr. (1823-1913)



Lyman Wight Porter (1833-1914)

Sanford Porter Sr. (1790-1873) and his wife Nancy Warriner Porter (1790-1864) and their family moved to Jackson County in 1832 and settled in the Prairie Branch. At the time of the expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County in 1833, the Porters and their nine surviving children and several other Mormon families relocated to the southern part of Jackson County. In 1834, the Porters moved again and established a settlement on the Grand River (not to be confused with the Grand River in northern Missouri). In 1835, the area where the Porters were living became Van Buren County (in 1849 it was renamed Cass County). The Porters remained in Van Buren County until 1839 when they moved to Illinois to be with the main body of Latter-day Saints. Four of Sanford and Nancy Porter's sons are pictured above. Lyman Wight Porter was born in Jackson County and named after Lyman Wight, the leader of the Prairie Branch. Photographs courtesy the Sanford Porter Family Organization.

heaven for our covering, the earth for our beds, and in a large open prairie we saw daily companys of armed men as we passed along. . . . The third day we come to a cave, where we found shelter for two days. This cave was about fifty feet long and from sixteen to eighteen feet wide, and deep, solid rock overhead. . . . While in this situation two or three men came to us and advised us to go to Big Creek, which was about a days journey. We accordingly packed up our things and started across the prairie, with a cold and blustering wind blowing. I did not expect my son Hiram, to live through the day, but by the mercies of God we reached a house and gave him relief. I here rented a small cabin, I procured some provisions. . . . We remained in Van Buren County until the last of February [1834].¹¹¹

The majority of those Saints with the Pettigrews removed to Clay County during the course of February-March 1834 to be with the main body of Saints.

Some members of the Prairie Branch and some attachments from other branches also went south into the “wilderness” under the charge of Sanford Porter, Sr. Nathan Tanner Porter said that his father had “the oversight of the little company consisting of 10 or 15 families.”¹¹² Nathan specifically mentions the “[Jonathan] Sumner[,] [Abel] Pryor [Prior], & [Ira] Smith” families who accompanied the Porters.¹¹³ Interestingly, Sanford Porter Sr. performed the marriage of Warren [Warriner] Porter and Amy Sumner on 6 December 1833 and also married Enos Smith and Arilla Miller on 14 February 1834. Both marriages obviously occurred during the dispersion, and the parties were part of the exiled company.¹¹⁴

Henry Hoagland has provided a more comprehensive list of exiles under Sanford Porter and approximated the time of their departure. He stated that within a week of the Battle above the Blue, which occurred on November 4, 1833, he and others started south. Henry recalled the makeup of their company as follows:

Henry Hoagland, wife Catherine, and 9 children, viz: Oliver, Harriet, Mary, Ann, Sophia, Selia Ann, Thomas, Wm. Henry, Jane.
 Charles Hulet, Wife & 4 children.
 Frank Hulet, Wife & 3 “
 Sylvester Hulet, Mother & 2 Sisters.
 Harmon Butler, Wife & 3 Children. 1 boy 2 girls
 Lyman Leonard, Wife & 2 Children
 Rufus Abbott Wife & 4 “
 Burnet Cole Wife & 4 “
 Simeon Crandall Wife & 4 “
 Amos Tubbs Wife & 5 “
 Father Sumner Wife & 5 “
 Josiah Sumner (single)
 Stephen Strong (single)
 Chamberlin [This would be Solomon, but no mention of individual names or number.
 There is a potential of 7]

Chapin—and 2 girls [Adolphus Chapin family members from the Whitmer Branch?]
Father George Brace—and 2 girls
Heman Prior and Wife, and girl Sobrina.¹¹⁵

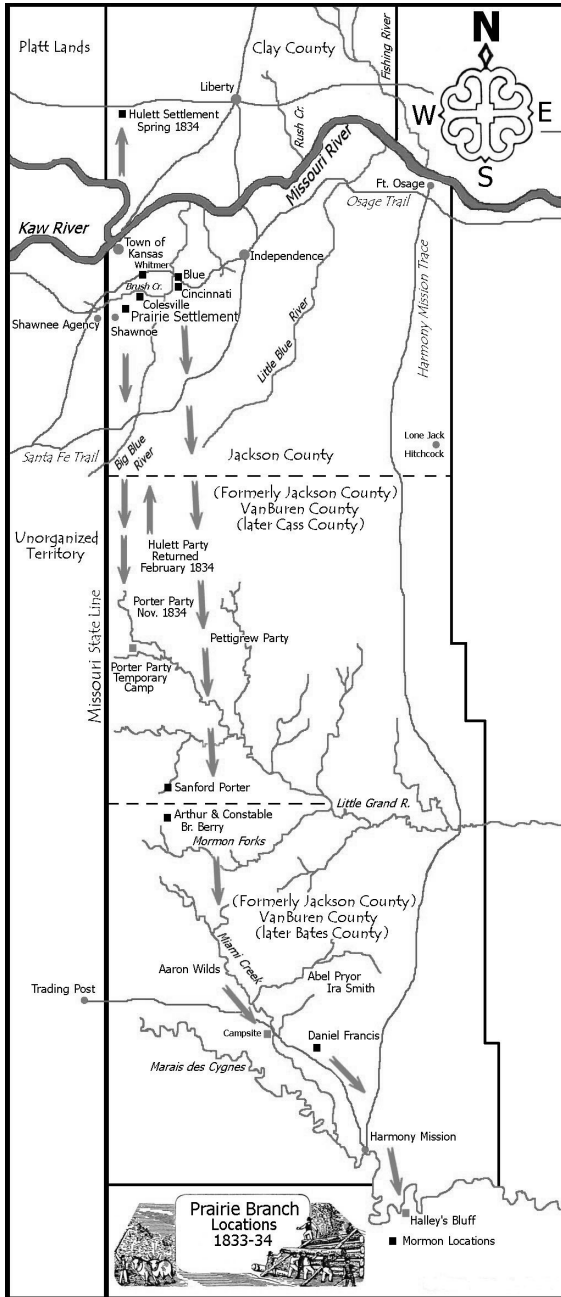
Henry Hoagland makes no mention of the Porters or the Smiths in his tally, although he does include the Sumners and Priors. There was later a disagreement on the course of action to be taken, and the factions split in two different directions. This circumstance may account in part for some discrepancy in the recording of the various names.

Starting from their homes in the Prairie Branch this company crossed the Blue River and then had no road. They made their own track south. Hoagland spoke of “frequently miring down, having to unload the wagon, pull through, and reload it.” He also remembered that the children could not ride, and “their tracks on the burnt prairie grass, were seen by the blood on the white frost.”¹¹⁶

On the night of November 13, while the company was encamped on the headwaters of the Grand River, Josiah Sumner awoke and cried out to the whole camp, “‘For God’s sake brethren wake up, for the Heavens and the Earth are coming together.’ They threw off their blankets from their faces, when it appeared as though the Stars fell on their beds and rolled off. it was a memorable night to all of them.”¹¹⁷ Nathan Porter declared: “The starry Heavens were in such commotion, that for a time it seemed as the Heavens would be no more, And thus the earth might pass away, at an instant suddenly, even as the Prophets have declared, the whole camp were a roused from their slumbers and stood around their fires in groups. Gazing with wonder and admiration feeling that the hour of their deliverance had come.”¹¹⁸ The next day they moved down the creek some two miles and camped on a branch of South Grand River for the winter season.¹¹⁹ Here, they built a few rude homes near the head of the Grand River.¹²⁰

The exiles momentarily “destitute of means to purchase,” augmented their diet through temporary employment and a charitable gift from an area farmer named Massey. They also sought to add to their simple larder from nature by the culling of deer, wild turkeys, coons and even a turtle frozen beneath the ice. However, their meager supplies were soon completely exhausted.¹²¹

Sanford Porter Sr. consulted with the brethren on the best course of action to replenish their provisions. He suggested that they implore the Lord to soften the hearts of their enemies, and let them know that “our Women & Children were about to perish with hunger in the wilderness.” He further recommended that a few wagons then return to the site of their inheritances in the Prairie branch and obtain the necessary stores from the substance from “the grain we had left in our bins and hogs we had left in the pens.” However, the larger contingent of the company was determined to return with their entire families and reoccupy their inheritances. Nathan Porter attributed this development to:



Map showing the Mormon settlement locations in southern Jackson County (later Van Buren, Cass, and Bates Counties). Map prepared by Ronald E. Romig.

a Delusive Spirit, having got in to the hearts of many they were carried away with the belief that they should return with their Families and take possession of their inheritances, that if their Enemies came upon them, the Lord would manifest his power unto their deliverance; And the redemption of Zion, they be came so firm in this belief that they would not harken to my Father notwithstanding he remonstrated with them, (Now their faith was based in Revelations & manifestations through the gift of tongues; through diferent individuls interpreted by a Sister [Sarah, Sally] Crandel. they finally drew off choosing a leader from among themselves.¹²²

While these individuals made preparations to return, Sanford, “with two or three others took their teams” and returned to their inheritances. He found that there was no corn in his crib and a man named Pickrel occupying his homestead. Fortunately, a Mr. [Stephen] Cantrell, a “Mobicratic Neighbour,” saw his plight and with aroused sympathies told Sanford to “Drive your teem up to my house and load it up . . . you shall have provisions for your family.” But Sanford was decisively warned by Cantrell, “That if they should return with their families to remain on their Inheritances, the Mob would shurely come upon them.”¹²³

As for the returning company, the mob unexpectedly told them that they might remain “with out molestation” until spring, when they must leave the Jackson County. But when the nonmember neighbors discovered that these Saints had no intention of going and that they had returned for an indefinite period, the severity of their vengeance was again unleashed.¹²⁴ Henry Hoagland described the horrendous results:

We had not been there over a week before the Mob came and beat brother [Lyman] Leonard with two chairs, which they broke to pieces over him and left him for dead. They knocked Josiah Sumner backwards into an open Cellar, with a large rock, and then threw another rock at him, same as a person breaks one rock by throwing another at it and left him for dead. At the same time another squad of the mob tied up Barnet Cole, to a section Cedar Post, and whipped him with raw hides until as Col. Jim Jennings told us, he picked up pieces of raw hide from 4 to 6 inches long, enough to make a roll 6 inches in circumference—about the same time they whipped old man Brace with an Ox Gad until it was splintered up like a Broom.¹²⁵

Henry Hoagland, Simeon Crandall, and Amos Tubbs were warned by one of the Brace daughters to flee before the mob got to their places. These men were barely able to escape and make their way across the ice-covered Missouri into Clay County. They remained there until March 6, 1834, when, in conjunction with Sylvester Hulet, they made arrangements with a nonmember resident named Yocum and some others to safely conduct them to their homes in Jackson County, where they secured the last of their family members and escorted them back to Clay County.¹²⁶ In Clay County these Saints continued

their organizational entity as the Hulet Branch under the leadership of Sylvester Hulet.

The Sanford and Chauncy Warriner Porter families, some of the Sumners, the Priors, and the Ira Smith families remained in the southern portion of Jackson County, occupying the temporary homes they had built for the winter of 1833-34. But with the coming of spring, the company moved still further south on the Grand River in what became Van Buren (Cass) County. The Sumners, Priors, and Smiths went an additional five miles to the south, settling on the South Grand River. The Porters took up a 160-acre homestead, Township 43 North, Range 32 West, described as NW Section 21.43.32. The land was situated in a valley known to the Osage Indians as Amarngia, meaning Pleasant Valley.¹²⁷ Over the next several years all of the families except the Porters and the Smiths went north and joined with the main body of the Church, which had settled first in Clay County and later Caldwell County. Those families were ultimately among the Saints expelled from Missouri in 1838-39 under the extermination order of Governor Lilburn W. Boggs.

Having remained in Van Buren (Cass) County for the space of five and one-half years, the Sanford Porter family finally returned to the main body of the Church. The Porters left their Missouri home in Cass County during the first of May 1839 and arrived in Nauvoo in the fore part of June. They then located across the Mississippi River in Lee County, Iowa, “five miles west of Nauvoo.”¹²⁸

Though the most tangible vestiges of the Prairie Branch in Missouri had closure in 1833-34, still some entities persisted as late as 1839 in the southern reaches of Van Buren (Cass) County. We have used Lyman Wight as the catalyst for the earliest rudiments of the Prairie branch. He was in the forefront of a literal defense of the faith in the land of Zion at the time of his banishment by a relentless mob. We know that throughout his life Lyman carried lingering feelings for the establishment of Zion in Jackson County and the construction of a temple there. In his 1855 correspondence with his old “counselor,” Sanford Porter, he sent his friend a poem. In two particular verses of the six composed, Lyman gave vent to his most latent desires—and in effect reflected the cherished hopes of other Prairie Saints:

With revelation firm in my hand,
I still feel bound for Zion’s land,
Still fall in with Joseph’s behest,
And seek Jackson County for a haven of rest
Never did we retire to our couch of straw

Till we did first appeal to God for his law,
Which bids us all to Jackson County repair,
And sacrifice all to build a temple there.¹²⁹

Notes

1. See 1 Nephi 15:14; Book of Commandments 2:6; Community of Christ (formerly RLDS), Independence, Missouri, D&C 2:6; LDS, D&C 3:16-20.
2. Nathan Tanner Porter, *Reminiscences* [ca. 1879], 12, LDS Church Archives, Family and Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter LDS Church Archives).
3. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 31-32.
4. Lyman Wight to Sanford Porter, December 7, 1855, Lyman Wight Letterbook, 1853-55, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; also Lyman Wight, Letter, December 7, 1855, 1-2, LDS Church Archives. Wight wrote the letter from Medina River, Texas.
5. Sanford Porter Sr., History of Sanford Porter, typescript, 3, LDS Church Archives; also Joseph Grant Stevenson, *Porter Family History* (Provo, Utah: J. Grant Stevenson, 1967), 107. Nathan Tanner Porter remembered that his older brother, Chauncey Warriner Porter was also baptized at the same time as his father. See Porter, *Reminiscences*, 40.
6. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 41-42.
7. Porter, History of Sanford Porter, 3.
8. Jermy Benton Wight, *The Wild Ram of the Mountain: The Story of Lyman Wight* (Bedford, Wyoming: Afton Thrifty Print, 1996), 56-57; Pearson H. Corbett, *Hyrum Smith, Patriarch* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1963), 89-91.
9. John Murdock, Journal, 8, LDS Church Archives.
10. Murdock, Journal, 9-10; also Journal History of the Church, June 14, 1831, LDS Church Archives (hereafter Journal History).
11. See Larry C. Porter, "The Colesville Branch in Kaw Township, Jackson County, Missouri, 1831 to 1833," in Arnold K. Garr and Clark V. Johnson, eds., *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History, Missouri* (Provo: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1994), 281-300.
12. Murdock, Journal, 10; also Journal History, June 14 1831.
13. Wight, *The Wild Ram of the Mountain*, 57.
14. Thomas Bullock, Mormon Settlements in Jackson County Missouri, 1831-1833, map (1862), LDS Church Archives.
15. Records of Original Entries to Lands in Jackson County, Missouri [ca. 1828-1857], Jackson County Courthouse, Independence, Missouri; also Records of Original Entries to Lands in Jackson County, Missouri, 1832—; Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter Family History Library).
16. Records of Original Entries to Lands in Jackson County, Missouri. The legal description found on Sanford Porter's inheritance form also confirms this section of land as the probable location of Prairie Branch settlement.
17. Warren Abner Jennings, "Isaac McCoy and the Mormons," *Missouri Historical Review* 61, no. 1 (October 1966): 65.
18. Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book), 13-14.
19. Murdock, Journal, 10.
20. Philip C. Wightman, "The Life and Contributions of Lyman Wight" (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1970), 15.
21. Records of Original Entries to Lands in Jackson County, Missouri.
22. Orange L. Wight, Recollections of Orange L. Wight, Son of Lyman Wight, to Joseph I. Earl, May 4, 1903, typescript, 11, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee

Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

23. Wight, *Recollections*, 11.

24. Wight, *The Wild Ram of the Mountain*, 57.

25. Wight, *The Wild Ram of the Mountain*, 57; also Wight, *Recollections*, 11.

26. Lyman Wight, Petition to President Martin Van Buren, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

27. Paul Horgan, *Josiah Gregg and His Vision of the Early West* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1979), 21.

28. Bullock, Mormon Settlements in Jackson County Missouri, 1831-1833, map.

29. Solomon Chamberlin to Albert Carrington, July 11, 1858. This letter is the cover to, Solomon Chamberlin, *A Short Sketch of the Life of Solomon Chamberlin by Himself*, LDS Church Archives (hereafter cited as *Autobiography*). See also Chamberlin Family Group Sheet, LDS Family History Library; and Marriage Records of Jackson County, Missouri, Jackson County Courthouse, Independence, Missouri, 1:36, 49.

30. Geraldine Hamblin Bangerter and Susan Easton Black, *My Servant Algernon Sidney Gilbert: Provide for My Saints* (n. p.: Rollins, Hamblin and Bangerter Families, 1989), 12, 30; Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 17 (July 1926): 195.

31. Bruce A. Van Orden, "Printer unto the Church," Chapter 9, unpublished manuscript on the life of William W. Phelps, copy in the possession of the writers.

32. Bangerter and Black, *My Servant Algernon Sidney Gilbert*, 30.

33. Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young, *Autobiography*, typescript, 5, Perry Special Collections.

34. Lydia Partridge, Statement, in Albert R. Lyman, "Edward Partridge Family," typescript, 14, Perry Special Collections.

35. William W. Phelps, Statement, April 21 1864, Thomas Bullock Papers, LDS Church Archives.

36. Chamberlin wrote: "I was born July 30th, 1788 of goodly parents in Old Canaan, Connecticut. My father's name was Joel Chamberlin, born in Tolland, Connecticut, & Sarah Dean his wife born in same state. By her he had six sons & three daughters. When I was about 20 years old, which should be about the year 1808, I went to the house of Philip Haskins and took one of his daughters to wife, by the name of Hope Haskins, of goodly parents. By her I had one son, and two daughters. . . . I soon learned the cooper's trade and worked the most of my days at that." Chamberlin, *Autobiography*, 1-2.

37. Solomon Chamberlin, Petition, in Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833-1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1992), 428.

38. Warren Abner Jennings, "The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 64, no. 1 (October 1969): 41.

39. Orange L. Wight, *Autobiography*, typescript, 1, Perry Special Collections. Susan Easton Black gives Orange's date of birth as November 29, 1823, thus he would have turned eight in November 1831. See Susan Easton Black, comp., *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1848*, 50 vols. (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989), 46:108.

40. Murdock Journal, 11; also *Journal History*, June 14, 1831.

41. Wightman, *Life and Contributions of Lyman Wight*, 15. The conference was held January 23-24, and 27, 1831. Minutes of the 23rd are in Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 39-40. The remainder of the minutes is in the Joseph Smith Papers, LDS Church Archive. See also, Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith, January 28, 1832, "Appendix A," in Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 231-38.

42. Wight, *The Wild Ram of the Mountain*, 58.
43. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 43.
44. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 44-45.
45. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 61.
46. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 62-63.
47. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 64-65.
48. Sanford Porter, Consecration Inheritance Form, LDS Church Archives.
49. Porter, *Reminiscence*, 68.
50. Viva M. P. Jones, comp., *The Wheel of Time: The Story of Mary Holt and her Husbands* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1964), 343.
51. Mary H. Coburn, Papers, Special Collections, Merrill Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah (hereafter USU Special Collections); also Orville Cox Day to Mary H. Coburn, August 5, 1947, USU Special Collections.
52. Coburn, Papers, USU Special Collections.
53. Mark Staker of the LDS Church Historical Department has conducted an extensive study of the Nelson and Hiram branches of the Church and is skeptical of any contact between Joseph Smith and Sylvester Hulet prior to Smith's arrival in Ohio in 1831. Larry C. Porter, personal interview with Mark L. Staker, January 30, 2001.
54. Porter, Staker interview; also Mark Staker to Larry C. Porter, January 31, 2001.
55. "Katharine Hulet Winget" in Kate B. Carter, comp., *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1970), 13:489.
56. A. J. Simmonds, "John Noah and the Hulets: A Study in Charisma in the Early Church," unpublished paper delivered at the Mormon History Association conference, 1979, copy in the possession of the authors.
57. Community of Christ and LDS D&C Section 42; Book of Commandments, Chapter 44.
58. Bruce N. Westergren, ed., *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995): 55 (hereafter cited as *The Book of John Whitmer*). Whitmer had returned to Kirtland from his mission when called to be Church historian on March 8, 1831.
59. Mark L. Staker to Larry Porter, January 31, 2001.
60. "Katharine Hulet Winget," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 13:489.
61. E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville: Published by the Author, 1834).
62. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 30.
63. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 30.
64. Orville Cox Day to Mary Hulet Coburn, February 17, 1947, USU Special Collections. See also Elvira Pamela Mills, Album, microfilm, Family History Library.
65. Members of the extended Hulet family known to have moved to Jackson County in 1832 include the following: Mary Lewis Hulet (b. 1763), widow of Sylvanus Hulet; Charles Hulet (b. 1790), son of Mary Lewis Hulet; Margaret Ann Noah Hulet (b. 1794), wife of Charles Hulet; Catherine Hulet (b. 1820), twin daughter of Charles and Margaret; Melvina Hulet (b. 1820), twin, daughter of Charles and Margaret; Electa Fidelia Hulet (b. 1823), daughter of Charles and Margaret; Sylvanus Cyrus Hulet (b. 1824 [1826]), son of Charles and Margaret; Sylvester Hulet (b. 1800), son of Mary Lewis Hulet; Francis Hulet (b. 1803 [1802]), son of Mary Lewis Hulet; Schuyler Hulet (b. 1824 [1826]), son of Francis Hulet; Mary Hulet West (b. 1804), daughter of Mary Lewis Hulet; Nathan Ayers West (b. 1801), son-in-law of Mary Lewis Hulet; Rhoda hulet Mills (b. 1795), daughter of Mary Lewis Hulet; Elvira Pamela Mills (b. 1820), daughter of Rhoda Hulet Mills; Robert Frederick Mills (b. 1825), son of Rhoda Hulet Mills; Orrin Taylor Hulet (b. 1815), son of Charles and Ann Taylor Hulet; possibly William and Lydia Whiting. See Simmonds, "John

Noah and the Hulets,” 24.

66. Some sources suggest Elizabeth Hulet was born in Kaw Township.

67. “Request for names of those driven from Jackson County,” *Deseret News*, 1882, LDS Church Archives.

68. Andrew Jenson, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901), 1:93-94.

69. Henry Hoagland, Incidents of history of the Camp that was driven by the mob from Jackson County in 1834, and who went South into the Wilderness, 1, Thomas Bullock Papers, LDS Church Archives.

70. Wightman, *The Life and Contributions of Lyman Wight*, 15.

71. Daniel and Sarah Crandall’s family included sons Patrick, Thomas, John, Simeon and Daniel. At least John and Simeon were married at this time.

72. Sally [Sarah] became very involved in the operation of tongues among the branch. See Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 82.

73. Wight, *Wild Ram of the Mountain*, 59.

74. Lyman Wight to Sanford Porter, December 7, 1855, LDS Church Archives, also in Lyman Wight Letterbook, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

75. Jackson County Marriage Record Book, 1:42.

76. List of members of the Warrensville (Ohio) branch, summer 1831, Murdock, Journal, 9; also Journal History, June 14, 1831.

77. Wightman, *The Life and Contributions of Lyman Wight*, 15-16.

78. “John tried to add to the supplies of the family by hauling corn from Jackson County to the Shoshone [sic, Shawnee, sometimes spelled Shawnoe] Indian Nation, about twenty-five miles away,” “Elder John Brush,” *Autumn Leaves* 4 (April 1891): 22.

79. Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854* (Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 245.

80. Reminiscences by Edward and Nancy Larkey confirms the membership of Joshua Hitchcock, see Edward and Nancy Larkey, “Personal Reminiscence,” *Herald* 26 (1 July 1879): 165.

81. Wightman, “The Life and Contributions of Lyman Wight,” 16.

82. Isaac McCoy’s land patent receipt reads: “Received from Isaac McCoy of Jackson County, Missouri \$100. W 1/2 of S.E. quarter Sec. 31, Tsp. 49, Range 33, 80 Acres, at \$1.25 per acre. Wm. Ryland, Recorder U.S. Land Office, Lexington, Missouri, June 18, 1832.” Isaac McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society Archives, Topeka Kansas.

83. Isaac McCoy’s journal as cited in Barry, *The Beginning of the West*, 216.

84. McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society Archives.

85. Mulkey quoted in W. H. Harris, article on Westport, *Kansas City Star*, March 21, 1933.

86. For example, see Truman A. Brace, Receipt, Shawano, Jackson County, Missouri, July 29, 1833, McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society Archives. The receipt reads: “Received of Isaac McCoy two dollars for repairing wagon, for the use of the United States in Surveying Indian Lands.” Jacob and Daniel Crandell, and their brother-in-law Hiram Abbott, all residents of Prairie Branch, were hired by McCoy and were out of the county from 18 September to 12 October 1833. See Barry, *The Beginning of the West*, 243. Westport was situated four miles south of the Missouri River and one mile east of the western boundary of Missouri.

87. Westergren, ed., *The Book of John Whitmer*, 103.

88. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 58.

89. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 59.

90. See Simmonds, “John Noah and the Hulets.”

91. Joseph Smith Jr. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:366 (hereafter *History of the Church*).
92. Westergren, ed., *The Book of John Whitmer*, 103.
93. John Whitmer to Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith, July 29, 1833, Joseph Smith Papers, LDS Church Archives, as cited in Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 63, n2.
94. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 67-68.
95. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 63.
96. Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith Jr., and Frederick G. Williams to the Brethren in Zion, *History of the Church*, 1:369.
97. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 68-69.
98. "Katherine Hulet Winget," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 13:489.
99. "Katherine Hulet Winget," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 13:489.
100. Abigale C. Leonard, *Reminiscence*, in Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: n. p., 1877), 163. See also V. Alan Curtis, "Missionary Activities and Church Organizations in Pennsylvania, 1830-1840" (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976), 88-89.
101. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 69-70.
102. Hoagland, *Incidents of history*, 1.
103. Warren A. Jennings, "Zion is Fled: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri" (PhD Dissertation, University of Florida, 1962), 190-91.
104. Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (Salt Lake: Deseret Book Company, 1985), 82.
105. See Max H Parkin, "A History of the Latter-day Saints in Clay County, Missouri, From 1833 to 1837" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1976), 30-32.
106. "History of Thos. Baldwin Marsh," *Deseret News*, March 24, 1858, 18. Wayne J. Lewis has found at least twenty-six Mormons living in Lafayette County. See Wayne J. Lewis, "Mormon Land Ownership as a Factor in Evaluating the Extent of Mormon Settlements and Influence in Missouri 1831-1841" (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1981), 23.
107. Lewis, "Mormon Land Ownership," 22.
108. Walter Williams, ed., *A History of Northwest Missouri* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishers, 1915), 1:372. The three Lyons brothers were part of this contingent. See Bertha Ellis Booth, *A Short History of Caldwell County* (Hamilton, Missouri: Hamilton Public Schools, 1936), 7.
109. Lewis, "Mormon Land Ownership," 11-14.
110. Lewis, "Mormon Land Ownership," 19-20.
111. David Pettigrew, *Journal*, LDS Church Archives. See also Ronald E. Romig, *Early Jackson County, Missouri: The "Mormon" Settlement on the Big Blue River* (Independence: Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation, 1996), 25-27.
112. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 87.
113. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 95. Abel Prior said that he was forced out of his home by the mob on November 8, 1833. See Abel Prior, *Petition*, in Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions*, 322.
114. Jackson County Marriages, Book A, 62.
115. Hoagland, *Incidents of history*, 2
116. Hoagland, *Incidents of history*, 2.
117. Hoagland, *Incidents of history*, 3.
118. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 84-85.
119. Hoagland, *Incidents of history*, 3.

120. Lewis, "Mormon Land Ownership," 16.

121. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 87; Hoagland, *Incidents of history*, 2-5.

122. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 88-89. On July 31 and August 6, 1834, the high council in Clay County examined and severely reprimanded these very members of the "Hulet Branch" for their misapplication of the gift of tongues in both Jackson and Clay counties. See Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 77-85, 88-92.

123. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 89-93.

124. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 93-94.

125. Hoagland, *Incidents of history*, 5. Abigail Leonard gave a detailed deposition concerning the beating of her husband, Lyman Leonard. See Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions*, 273-74; also Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom*, 165-67.

126. Hoagland, *Incidents of history*, 5.

127. Lewis, "Mormon Land Ownership," 16. See also Wayne J. Lewis, "Land Owned by Latter-day Saints in Missouri 1831-1841," unpublished paper in possession of the authors.

128. Porter, *Reminiscences*, 95-99.

129. Lyman Wight to Sanford Porter Sr., December 7, 1855. Wight's reference to "our couch of straw" has reference to his 1838-39 incarceration with Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail.