

## Editor's Introduction

My first awareness of Keokuk, Iowa, and its connection with early Mormon history was upon reading family histories of my husband's ancestors. His great-grandparents, James and Hannah Pexton, emigrated on the *Ellen Marie* in 1853. His second great-grandparents, James and Alice Ellison, also emigrated in 1853, sailing on the *Elvira Owen* with five children, including my husband's great-grandmother, Jane Ann, age four.

At the time I read those histories, I had just given birth to my first child. I was intrigued when I read that Alice Ellison gave birth to her last baby on 3 May 1853 in Keokuk and that Alice carried her little daughter in her apron as she crossed the plains, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley in December 1853. I remember putting my new son in the bib of an apron to understand how Alice felt.

Two years ago, my husband and I stood on the bluff at Rand Park in Keokuk, trying to envision a camp with over two thousand people living there. Last spring I returned to see the marker that had recently been placed in the park by the Mormon Historic Sites Foundation, showing the Mormon immigrants' camp in 1853. Both times, I thought of James and Hannah Pexton and the James and Alice Ellison family living there for a short time.

This issue of *Mormon Historical Studies* comprises several of the papers presented at the Lee County History Symposium and the 1853 Keokuk Mormon Encampment Sesquicentennial, held on 27–28 June 2003. These papers include "From Liverpool to Keokuk: The Mormon Maritime Migration Experience of 1853," by Fred E. Woods; "Frederick Piercy: English Artist on the American Plains," by L. Matthew Chatterly; "Mormons Crossing the Plains to Salt Lake City in 1853," by William G. Hartley; and "Esquire James Weston Woods: Legal Counsel to Joseph Smith," by Susan Easton Black. Another paper on the 1853 migration through Keokuk, written by Douglas Atterberg and Fred E. Woods, is reprinted here, having formerly appeared in *The Annals of Iowa* (winter 2002). An additional paper,

not presented at the symposium but which has a regional connection to the area, is Robert H. Goodwin, "Among the Poorest of Saints: Mormon Migration to and through Burlington, Iowa, 1846–1887."

Included in this issue is a historical list of the emigrants who arrived in New Orleans from eight ships in 1853. Most of these Saints would have traveled on to Keokuk and camped there while readying for the trek westward. This information was extracted from the Mormon Immigration Index CD, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and was alphabetized by Ann Atterberg. Everyone involved hopes that our readers will recognize some of the names of their ancestors and want to learn more about the importance of Keokuk.

Two documents are included in the issue. Matthew J. Grow authors one about a letter from Oran Brownson to his brother Orestus, explaining his conversion to Mormonism. The other document is a corrected version of "Anti-Mormon Bug and Vermin Poison," by Kent P. Jackson. Unfortunately, the version printed in the spring 2003 issue was an earlier draft that was mistakenly printed in place of the final version.

We also have two historic sites to share with our readers. Newell R. Kitchen and John L. Fowles describe their experience in finding the Haun's Mill face wheel. Alexander L. Baugh consented to share information and photograph descriptions of three historical markers recently placed in Keokuk and Montrose by the Mormon Historic Sites Foundation.

Finally, Donna T. Smart reviews the award-winning book by Ronald H. Barney on his ancestor, Lewis Barney. This book received the Evans Award for best biography in 2003.