

HELEN MAR WHITNEY REMINISCENCES
(PART THREE)
Richard Neitzel Holzapfel

In the 15 November 1883 issue of the *Woman's Exponent*, Helen Mar Whitney recalled the days just before she abandoned her home in Nauvoo to begin the trek to Winter Quarters, the temporary Mormon settlement on the Missouri River. She entitled this section, "Last Chapter of the Scenes in Nauvoo."

During the week that we remained in Nauvoo we called upon a few of our old neighbors, among them was Dr. Weld, one of the oldest settlers, where we spent one evening. My husband's sister, Sarah Ann, accompanied us to Mr. Hibbard's, who were also old settlers at Commerce, and they had received the Gospel. The "Mormons" settling there speedily increased their wealth, so that instead of their old log row a large brick mansion was soon reared. But their worldly riches made a shipwreck of what little faith they possessed. We had been associated together from the first settling of Nauvoo, and the first party that my brother William and myself attended in that place was given on the first Christmas by their little son and daughter, and after we were grown up we were invited to several balls given in their new home. In fact the old lady had a number of times, when in a good natured mood, thrown out sly hints that I might be the wife of her son, William, who would be the heir to their estate. Though their home was beautifully situated upon the banks of the Mississippi, with a lovely green lawn sloping down from the house to the river bank, with flowers and shrubbery, and the view from the water was most charming, neither my ambition nor my fancy

would lead me in that direction; for he had neither education, polish or wit.

His father was what might be termed a fine old gentleman, and was very generous and hospitable, but his wife was quite the opposite, and sometimes nearly a shrew. They owned large orchards with a great variety of fruit, but to see other people eating of it without paying her caused her to feel very uncomfortable.

Her son and youngest daughter were her pets, and the latter had been lately married to a cousin who had come there from the east. We did not call out of any desire of our own, but went by the request of a friend, as we were riding around for pleasure. When we entered their door we met with so cold a reception that it was like being in the vicinity of an iceberg. Neither Mr. Hibbard nor his son were at home, but the son-in-law was, and his looks showed plainly how he felt towards "Mormons," and that was the first time that we had met him. There was but one in the room who treated us with any degree of respect, and that was their daughter, Mrs. Amos Davis, who was the one we called to see. We only stopped a few minutes, and before the hall door was closed behind us we heard them roaring with laughter, which, of course, was intended for our ears. They thought, no doubt, that this would crush us, but we considered the source and felt as much relieved as though we had escaped from a hornet's nest. A few years after we had settled in this valley we were told by

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good authority that William Hibbard was taken up with a gang of horse thieves somewhere in California and hung.

Friday, the 27th of February, I bade my last adieu to our home and city and recrossed the Mississippi with Bishop Whitney's family, whom he sent to camp in charge of Father C. R. Lott, the Bishop remaining behind to see his own and church teams over, and he came to the camp next day. Brother Joseph C. Kingsbury and Wm. Clayton staid back in Nauvoo to assist in winding up the church business. During that time Wm. Clayton composed a parody on the song, "Dido and I," and though I have forgotten the words, the burthen of it was that the chores had been left for the "Bishop and I," which was afterwards sung in camp with much gusto by the boys.

It seems only a little time since those scenes were transacted which I have been rehearsing. When memory is once aroused how many a forgotten incident comes up which has lain hidden for years among the dusty and smouldering cobwebs of the past. Just now my mind reverts back to a lovely evening in the summer of 1844, when strolling upon the hill side with a young gentleman (Mr. Hatch) and two of my girl companions who proposed, as we came to the brink of the hill, that we should seat ourselves upon some of the temple rocks near by and watch the setting sun with its beautiful reflections on the river and our quiet city that rested in the valley below. We little dreamed, as we sat there enjoying the delightful scenery, more particularly the lovely landscape beyond the Mississippi, until the sun had sank behind the western hills, how very soon our paths would be in separate directions, and our cities abandoned to wicked foes, and I be traveling with homeless exiles beyond those hills towards the setting sun. Scarcely seven years had elapsed since the saints were driven from Missouri, and came there weary, homeless and destitute,--hundreds lying sick and dying with scarcely an earthly comfort, or well ones enough to hand them a drink of water or even to give a respectable burial to their dead. And in the midst of this scene my father and his brother Apostles, who were sick, and their families, almost unto death, started for Great Britain

to fulfil a revelation, and which the evil one was determined to frustrate. But the Lord blessed them and their families, as He had promised inasmuch as they were obedient. And by faith and perseverance, with the blessings of God, there in the place of forests and sickly swamps lay a beautiful and thriving city, with lovely farms and villages springing up around us as if by magic, and this had all been accomplished by the toil and sweat of an honest and energetic people, whose efforts and desires were centered in the building of a Temple to the Lord. And in this they had proven their love and devotion to him; for with willing hands and tithes and offerings from their frugal store, and His assistance they had accomplished it, and been endowed with those blessings and keys which had been promised through His Prophet Joseph, which were the greater riches, and of these no man could rob them. Though the wicked and lawless could drive us into the barren wilderness to endure the pangs of hunger and death in many forms, and they could desecrate and demolish our Temple, they could not turn us from our faith, nor break down the walls that preserved the virtue and chastity of "Mormon" women. We preferred to go among the wild savages and suffer, if need be, rather than forsake the only true religion or to dwell in the midst of alarm. All the crimes committed against the "Mormons" have been allowed to go unpunished, which is a lasting stain on our country, a boasted land of freedom and a refuge for the oppressed of every nation. What mockery! The following is from a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph: "I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my church, in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land. And as pertaining to law of man, whatsoever is more or less than these cometh of evil. I, the Lord, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free; nevertheless when the wicked rule the people mourn."

Though our people have long been oppressed we have not lost any of that spirit and love of freedom which inspired our fathers--the daring sons of liberty, to stand in their own defense--but we shall not turn traitors to our beloved country nor its institutions, which we know were formed by inspired men; but we shall

continue to sue for our rights, and leave the rest in the hands of the Almighty, who is already vexing them as he said He should do if they would not cease their wickedness and persecution of His people.

The testimony of the servants of God has gone forth unto the condemnation of this generation, because the majority have hardened their hearts against them, and in a revelation to Joseph the Lord said, "Verily, I say unto you, that woe shall come unto the inhabitants of the earth if they will not hearken unto my words. O! this unbelieving and stiffnecked generation, mine anger is kindled against them." * * * * *

"For a desolating scourge shall go forth among the inhabitants of the earth, and shall continue to be poured out from time to time, if they repent not, until the earth is empty, and the inhabitants thereof are consumed away and utterly destroyed by the brightness of my coming. Behold, I tell you of these things, even as I told the people of the destruction of Jerusalem, and my word shall be verified at this time as it hath hitherto been verified." The Lord also said, "Whoso layeth down his life in my cause, for my name's sake, shall find it again, even life eternal: Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in my heart, saith the Lord, that I will prove you in all things whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy. For if ye will not abide in my covenant, ye are not worthy of me." Concerning those who have been afflicted and persecuted and cast out from the land of their inheritance, He said, "I, the Lord, have suffered the affliction to come upon them, wherewith they have been afflicted, in consequence of their transgressions; yet I will own them, and they shall be mine in that day when I shall come to make up my jewels. Therefore, they must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son: * * * Verily I say unto you, notwithstanding their sins, my bowels are filled with compassion towards them: I will not utterly cast them off; and in the day of wrath I will remember mercy."

"I have sworn, and the decree hath gone forth by a former commandment which I have

given unto you, that I would let fall the sword of mine indignation in the behalf of my people; and even as I have said, it shall come to pass."

It may not be out of place here to repeat a few of the prophetic words spoken in the Temple at Kirtland, much of which has come to pass, and therefore our faith should be strengthened to believe that the whole will be as literally fulfilled. They were related to me by Father Butterfield, of Santaquin, where I visited this summer. And Brother Charles Hyde, the Patriarch, being at Father Butterfield's, bore witness that he was present in that Temple, and heard the same things. The former was doorkeeper there for two years. The Patriarch, Father Smith, said, "It is a time of peace now, but there will be a great apostasy here among us. The judgments will commence right here, and they will try to burn this Temple, but they cannot do it, for it will stand as a monument for this generation to look at. There will be men that you little think of who will seek Joseph's life--then we shall be driven from city to city--we shall go beyond the Rocky Mountains into the valleys of Ephraim. Then there'll be great excitement for Mexico and Oregon, for the Lord will contrive a way to call out the honest in heart." The Prophet Joseph said, "Thus saith the Lord, the government will send an army far away in the west beyond the Rocky Mountains, and it will be just before the north and south go to war, and I will give it to you as a sign, as the Savior gave the disciples, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded with armies they may know that their desolation is at hand." They heard the mother of the Patriarch, Charles Hyde, give the interpretation of tongues in that Temple. Among the things spoken was that "This people would be driven from city to city, and many would shed their blood for a testimony to the truth of this work, Joseph would be cast into prison, and the people would say "Mormonism is down." The trials would be so great that it would seem as if the Saints could never go through them. Then there would be another that would be more severe than the first, and it would appear as though they could never go through it. Then the power of the Lord would be made manifest, and their enemies confounded, and Joseph's name would then be sacred among all nations." He said that some of the Saints felt

very sad over these things, believing that the Prophet would have to die before they could be fulfilled. We have witnessed his death and the fulfillment of the most of these predictions, and we know that the blood of our martyrs is still crying from the dust, and that He who has promised to avenge His people of their wrongs will repay our enemies four fold, and that all they have taken from us will have to be restored with interest; and let the faithless ones mark it down, that day is nearer than many of us have imagined.¹

In the 1 June 1884 issue of the *Woman's Exponent*, Helen Mar Whitney continued her story, but began a new section that she entitled: "Travels Beyond the Mississippi."

Previous to this an express had been sent by the President to Mt. Pisgah to raise one

hundred men for the expedition over the mountains, and the day before their arrival brother Woodruff had called for mounted volunteers, when "sixty at once stepped out into line." But the day following the people there were thrown into consternation by the sudden cry, "The United States troops are upon us!" But it soon proved to be Captain James Allen with three dragoons--who, after making known his business in the High Council at that place, was furnished with a letter of introduction to the President and authorities at Council Bluffs and Brother Woodruff dispatched a messenger to prepare them for the business of this government agent.

On the 7th of July they began crossing the Missouri River. That day Horace and the other boys returned from their trading trip in the Platt country, having met with no other accident



Mormons arrived at the Missouri River in 1846 after their departure from Nauvoo. The trek across Iowa of nearly 265 miles brought them to the Missouri River. After reaching present-day Council Bluffs in June 1846, the Latter-day Saints crossed the Missouri River and made a permanent camp at Winter Quarters. Frederick Piercy's illustration looking west across the Missouri River to the Nebraska shore was ordinarily published in F.D. Richards' Route from Liverpool.

than the breaking of a yoke and a wagon tongue, the latter happened to Hans Hanson while alone on the prairie. There was but one boat and that capable of holding only three wagons at a time. Our cows were driven across on the 8th, and we came down to the landing in the afternoon, but a number of teams were ahead of us, and we had to wait till one a.m. before we could commence crossing over. Horace wrote:

“Thursday, 9th. We were blessed with a fine moonlight night, which aided us greatly in crossing. This morning drove our oxen into the river to swim them across, but they would not go, on account of the reflection of the sun’s rays upon the water, which dazzled their eyes, consequently had to take them over in the boat--at about five o’clock had everything over but two oxen which were missing. Had a very hard rain while we were going out to the camp--four miles from the river, where we all arrived to-night pretty well fatigued. We just learned that Bishop Miller, who has gone ahead, has had his horses stolen.

“Friday, 10th. Rainy this morning. Father came up to-day, he crossed soon after we did, but stayed in the woods last night, and was detained some time, having lost some of his cattle, but he found them again. * * Joseph Herring, an Indian of the Mohawk tribe, has just come from the south-west; he tells us that there is a civil war among the Cherokees on account of one party of them selling land to the United States. He had to escape to save his life, and had traveled 200 miles on his pony in three days. This afternoon we moved about 1/4 of a mile beyond and located ourselves on a small rise of ground--being much more commodious and cleanly than the place where Brigham is. * * * Very good springs of water in the vicinity. Quite a large creek about 1/4 of a mile distant. The Indians have cornfields immediately around us, and on that account we have to keep close watch on our horses and cattle lest they should break into them.”

I can remember the scenes he describes and the camping fires; also of going to the creek mentioned to do our washing, as well as the cornfields that we passed, they being the first we

had seen; and of our purchasing some of the ears to roast. It looked good to us to once more see vegetation and cultivated land, or anything resembling civilization after traveling as we had and camped for so long a time upon wild prairie land. It was to us like an oasis to the weary traveler in the midst of a wilderness, and reminded us of our western homes, where the tall cornfields waved o’er our heads, and where we had learned the art of making hoe cake, which was our “daily bread” with hominy and the luxurious gravy from transparent pork.

Here we first met our staunch young friend, Col. Kane, who came to our camp on the 12th, being Sunday, and made a speech that evening concerning the recruiting orders given to Capt. Allen to raise a regiment of volunteers from among the “Mormons” on such conditions that it would be an advantage to us. Brothers O. Pratt and G. A. Smith also made appropriate speeches, ratifying what Col. Kane had said. “This young man,” wrote Horace, “appears to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to bring about our salvation at the present time. The United States’ fleet have taken possession of the coast of California. By doing this we establish a certain claim on the land, and once there ours will be the majority of the people.”

We learned that father and B. Young were at the camp on the Bluffs, and that they were all full of life and bustle--that over 300 had enlisted. Those who could went to see them, some in carriages and some on horseback. My mother went with others of our family and I was to have gone horseback, but the boys all wanting to go, and not having horses enough, I stayed back--Horace and others returned that evening, but father and mother remained. We learned that one hundred men were yet wanting to complete the recruiting list.

The following is from the life of Brigham Young:

“Brigham Young, while believing the battalion call to be a test of loyalty, hastened with Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards to Mt. Pisgah, 130 miles, to execute the “demand,” as they deemed it, for a battalion of their picked men to serve their country. They immediately

sent messengers, with official dispatches from their high councils, to Nauvoo, Garden Grove, and the regions around, calling to head-quarters their old men and able-bodied boys to supply the place of their picked men going for the service of their country.

“Returning to Council Bluffs, they gathered the ‘Camp of Israel’ to enroll the companies of volunteers. While Major Hunt of the volunteers, was calling out the first company, Brigham Young conversed with Col. Kane in Bro. Woodruff’s carriage about the affairs of the nation, and told him the time would come when the Mormons would have to ‘save the Government of the U.S., or it would crumble to atoms.’

“Forty minutes after twelve of the same day, July 15th, the Elders and the people assembled in the Bowery. President Young then delivered to the congregation a simple but earnest speech, in which he told the brethren, with a touch of subdued pathos, ‘not to mention families to-day;’ that they had ‘not time to reason now.’ ‘We want,’ he said, ‘to conform to the requisition made upon us, and we will do nothing else until we have accomplished this thing. If we want the privilege of going where we can worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences, we must raise the battalion. I say it is right; and who cares for sacrificing our comfort for a few years? * * * * * I want to say to every man, the Constitution of the United States, as formed by our fathers, was dictated, was revealed, was put into their hearts by the Almighty, who sits enthroned in the midst of the heavens; although unknown to them, it was dictated by the revelations of Jesus Christ; it is as good as ever I could ask for. I say unto you, magnify the law. There is no law in the United States, or in the Constitution, but I am ready to make honorable.’”

“Thursday, 16th. (Horace wrote) A meeting was called at our camp--the people were told to choose whether they would go over the mountains with Bishop Miller to Grand Island or to go back on the other side of the river--the most of them were for going on with Miller. There was also a call made for more volunteers for the war. Brother Kimball, father and Brigham started

to go over the river to the Bluffs--there to hold another council--then they intend with some of the Twelve to go up the river some distance to seek a location for us this winter. Wm. and wife, Helen, Sarah Lawrence, Harriet Sanders and myself accompanied them to the Bluffs. * * After going about a mile and a half from the ferry on the other side, the brethren were met by a number of the Twelve and others going down to the village; being near Bro. George A.’s camp they stopped there and held council. I rode on with the girls and we reached the camp.”

Here we found a number of our old acquaintances--among them were Bros. Robert Pierce and Cooledge and families. This camp was much larger than ours and consisted principally of those who left Nauvoo long after our departure. Horace, myself, and Sarah Lawrence stopped with Bro. Cooledge’s folks that night. Horace wrote: “Friday, 17th. A meeting was called this morning and considerable business done--there was quite a subscription taken in behalf of Bro. Yokum, who lost a limb in the Missouri persecution and had suffered a great deal--some gave him money, some flour, etc. * * * Wm., myself and the girls took a short ride into the country this forenoon, and about three p.m. started for home, which we reached about sunset.” The next day President B. Young and father went some fifteen or twenty miles up the river in search of a suitable place to winter, but not finding any they came back, previously sending on six men in search of some good place.

Sunday, 19th. They held a meeting in order to find out who were going over the mountains and who were not going to Grand Island.

“They made out some fifty wagons which,” Horace says, “were to go ahead--join Miller and proceed with him over the mountains. Brigham spoke severely of brethren, who being set to watch cattle, fell asleep at their posts and suffered them to roam into the Indian’s corn-fields, * * and those found guilty of like acts again should be expelled from the camp of Israel, for they were a perfect disgrace to us.

“Monday, 20th. * Brother James Smithers [Smithies] and Jacob Hutchinson went

over the river to join the rest of the band in a party which they held over there to-day.”²

This was the farewell ball which Col. Kane so touchingly described to the “Historical Society of Pennsylvania.”

My parents and a great number were there, both old and young, but there were also many more who did not attend it. There were not horses enough for all to ride, and we being among the number who remained behind were determined to make a party, too, and accordingly the boys got a quantity of bushes and made a bower before our tent, and commenced dancing about noon and continued till supper time. We then adjourned till evening, when we met and danced till about ten o’clock, and then dismissed, having had a good time, and all expressing themselves satisfied with our scene of festivity. We could furnish our own music, and we often danced “by the light of the moon,” which was then shining upon us in all its glory like one bright chandelier. I remember many an evening after the cares and bustle of the day were over, when numbers of the youth would gather outside the tents, and as chairs were rare luxuries, the majority resorted to wagon tongues, ox-yokes, provision chests and that sort of appliances in camp life, where we enjoyed a quiet entertainment of songs, music, etc. Horace excelled as a flutist, and the sweet strains that flowed soft and mellow from his instrument was owing much to his father’s training. When a small boy, in Kirtland, he was presented with a fife by Orson Hyde, who was then a clerk in his father’s store, but his incessant practice wearied his father and every body within the hearing of it. And seeing his determination to learn the instrument his father bought him a flute the next time he went to New York for goods. John F. Boynton, one of the first quorum of the twelve, who stopped at his father’s a great deal, gave him his first lessons on the flute, and his father would always correct him if he heard him play otherwise than smoothly. He also possessed an excellent voice for singing, as well as a generous supply of wit and humor, and telling anecdotes was one of his best fortes; and there were others of this class as well as some superior lady singers, and by this means we often drove away, dull care and cheered the aged and the

drooping hearts, making lighter their burdens. One of the best songs that we used to hear was the “Jewish Maid,” which one of our girls could sing as sweetly as did Miss Devine at the Point, the evening before the departure of the battalion boys, which was referred to by the late Thomas L. Kane, but who, it seems, was unable to obtain the song except the following lines, which he gives as “a version of the text touching to all earthly wanderers.”

“By the rivers of Babylon we sat down
and wept,
We wept when we remembered Zion.”

Bro John Kay was the first to introduce this song to us in Nauvoo, but the chorus was changed, and instead of singing “No more shall the children of Judah sing,” it was,

“Again shall the children of Judah
Sing the lays of a happy time.”

This was sung according to the faith of the Saints, who did not weep when they “remembered Zion,” for Zion they had brought with them.

The same day that we held our festival we were visited by two men from the village, who came on horseback, their names being Beach and Harding. They were old residents there. Mr. Beach informed us that the name of the creek in that vicinity was “Butterfly.”

The day following the folks returned home and brought the news that four companies started from the village that day, and the fifth was to start on the morrow. It is not pleasant to dwell on the dark side, nor is it my intention now to rehearse the scenes of sorrow and additional suffering of wives and children, which was forced upon them by the cruel requisition made upon our people at that time by this government, after suffering us to be ruthlessly driven out from their midst, I will only mention the case of Sister Ed. Martin, which may illustrate, the pitiful condition under which many more were left with families.

Brother Martin had just buried a new born infant, and left his wife sick, not knowing who was to take care of her, and there was no

time to make any arrangement for her comfort, and they had to leave all in the hands of God and their friends. And who are more capable of singing and sensing the full meaning of the sweet and touching song, "Hard times, hard times come again no more" than the ones who remember those gloomy days and scenes of want and suffering that were experienced by the Saints who were left in Winter Quarters.

The following is from my husband's journal.

"Wednesday, 22nd. Rained a little this morning. * * Continued storming through the day. I went ahead on the road about a mile to watch the Indian cornfields, lest the cattle shall break into them. These are to be found on either side of the Butterfly Creek for some distance up and down that stream. In the making of these fields they have not used the plough, but selecting the softest ground, which is to be found on the margin of these streams, with little or no sod. They have simply cut down the weeds with their hoes, and then put in their corn. In this way they leave it, giving it no farther attention till they are ready to harvest it, or rather when they return from their hunting expeditions they resort to their fields for roasting ears, which they are very fond of. If any is left after that they bury it deep in the ground, where it remains during the winter. I had considerable difficulty in keeping the cattle away from the fields. * * * Quite a number of teams from Brigham's camp, as well as our own, started to-day, and I had all I could do to keep the cattle of our camp from crossing the creek and following them off.

"About noon Bro's B. Young and Kimball and Dr. Richards passed by me in a carriage on the way to the Elk Horn, * * in order to survey the face of the country. Those six men who had been sent up the Missouri River to select a location returned, and reported that they had been some distance up the river, but had been entirely unsuccessful in finding a suitable place to winter, the country being no more favorable for that purpose than the place where we now are. Accordingly, Brigham advised the brethren in council on Monday last, at the Bluffs, to disperse themselves among the hills and bottoms and remain there this winter.

"While out to-day I set my hook and line and caught six very fine cat-fish, one of which weighed four or five pounds. * * * Bro. Kimball exchanged his horse, Charley, for one yoke of oxen, a cow and heifer, and another old horse for another yoke of oxen. To-day Hans was fitted out with a wagon and team to accompany his father-in-law over the mountains.

"This company started the next day, but coming to the creek they were obliged to build a bridge before crossing, the late rain having considerably swollen the stream--consequently had to camp. * * * Bro. Kimball and Brigham returned to-day from the Elk Horn. * * Just as Bro. Kimball arrived Bro's Woodruff, Taylor, Little and Horne came here in pursuance to previous arrangements to hold council. They remained with us all night. Bro. Kimball rode over to the creek to organize that company before they go on. He appointed Hiram Clark captain of fifty, and Bro. A. Billings and N. B. Bartholomew as his counselors. We hear that a number of Indians rode over to look at their corn this afternoon, and on discovering it to be trodden down by the cattle, were very angry; and for fear that they might retaliate by taking some of our cattle every man in the camp was ordered out to assist in driving in the cattle and yoking them up, which was done."

On the morning of the 24th the Twelve and Bp. Whitney met in council pursuant to appointment. Father sent most of the camp ahead that day, in order to build a bridge over the Elk Horn, this being one of the objects of the council. Horace says: "Today our cattle remain yoked, and two men are sent out to herd them. I went myself on that duty this afternoon--the bridge they have built is a very good one--but three or four families remain besides Bro. Kimball's and father's."

The next day being July 25th, Horace wrote: "This being the 23rd anniversary of my birthday mother, Sarah Ann and Orson took supper with us at Bro Kimball's tent. To-day Bro. Orson Hyde moved back over the river, where he intends to leave his family till his return from England, whither he is immediately going with Bros. Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor. Bro.



Since the great trek to the Salt Lake Valley could not begin until spring, the Latter-day Saints wintered in temporary settlements in the Missouri River Valley (Iowa and Nebraska). The central settlement was Winter Quarters, at present-day north Omaha, where more than 3,000 people lived in 700 log houses by December 1846. This painting by C.C.A. Christensen was part of his "Mormon Panorama" series. Courtesy of Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Woodruff is about moving over this side of the Missouri River. * * About eleven o'clock at night it commenced raining and continued about half an hour accompanied by considerable thunder and lightening. We hear that one of the soldier brethren has died since their departure from the village. He is said to be the son of the late General Dunham, of the Nauvoo police, who died about a year ago, while on a mission among the Indians.

"Saturday, 26th. Fair weather--Bro. Kimball and father sent four yoke of oxen each to the river to assist Bro. Woodruff up. Bro. Coolidge with his omnibus came in the afternoon, Bro. Hosea Cushing driving it for him, he being quite sick at this time. Wm. Kimball and

some of the rest of the boys got back from the river, where they went this afternoon, about two o'clock in the morning, bringing up the remainder of Bro. Coolidge's wagons. Bro. Brigham, Kimball and father went over the river to-day. * * Bro. Harrison Burgess took the lead of a meeting which was held here to-day under our bower in front of the tent, by Bro. Kimball's request."³

On the 27th Horace mentions the boys and girls going fishing. "At the same time," he says, "we saw a number of team crossing the bridge on their way back. There were ten wagons, which proved to be the property of men who had left the Pawnee village about 120 miles above there, in consequence of the hostility of the Indi-

ans, where they had lived a number of years. They were going to the village below on the west side of the river, where a number of their company had preceded them. Among those we saw were four wagons and six men belonging to Bishop Miller, who are taking a load back for them, and receive in payment for the same three hundred bushels of grain, mostly wheat. * * The occasion of their leaving is this--a hostile tribe of Indians called the Punksaws, who are constantly roving about and are much addicted to thieving, have lately made their appearance at the Pawnee village, and molested them so much with their thieving operations and otherwise, that they are obliged to leave, the Indians having previously stolen all their horses. The settlement of men who have thus left, formerly consisted of eight families, viz: three missionaries, three farmers, one blacksmith, and a school teacher commissioned by government; the school teacher had under his direction some twenty Pawnee children, who have left with him to go down to the said village, and whom he is educating at the expense of the government. Some of Bishop Miller's men told me that the Pawnee village was totally deserted, they having gone out on a hunting expedition. They told me furthermore that they are living on the 'fat of the land,' there being plenty of garden sauce, such as potatoes, onion, peas, etc., which the settlers had left behind, not being able to bring them away."

We had been deprived of vegetables from the time that we had left the states, and it had already begun to tell upon us, though we had no idea then of the scourge and suffering that were lying before us; but we will not "cross the bridge till we come to it." There was a piece of unexpected good fortune happened to Bishop Whitney which Horace relates:

"When father's boys went down into the country some time after provisions he sent \$89 for the same, but through the mismanagement of the agent he did not get more than half he wanted, and consequently would have been unable to prosecute the journey had it not been that the Lord, seemingly on purpose to repair this misfortune or injury, put forth His hand in his behalf. The circumstances were these: Bro. Hyde being about to depart for England, just

before crossing the river again with his family, let him have two yoke of oxen, ten barrels of flour, and a bushel and a half of beans, which to use his own phrase, 'has completely set me on my feet again,' and he is now fitted out to his heart's content. * * At the same time Bro. Parley P. Pratt gave him \$30 in gold for the same amount of money. *

"Tuesday, 28th. Beautiful morning. About 2 p.m. it commenced raining, and continued showering through the day and night, accompanied by considerable thunder and lightning--it seemed to pour down almost perpendicularly and in perfect torrents, so that there was not a wagon but what the rain penetrated through the cover thereof and wet all the bed clothing, etc."

This was one of the trials calculated to test one's patience, a virtue which had been considerably exercised during the five months that we had spent picking and plodding our way under difficulties which no language can describe, therefore must leave it for imagination to do, though Horace gives no slight idea: "Wednesday, 29th. This morning fine and pleasant, the atmosphere sweet and pure, in contrast to the sultry heat of yesterday; almost every wagon in camp was unloaded, in order to dry the things therein. * * Bros. Kimball and Brigham went over the river to-day to make some arrangements for the brethren starting for England. * * They intend starting to-morrow. Since we have been lying still our cattle have suffered from the 'footale,' caused either by the mud or grass getting between their hoofs; while traveling we have never been troubled with it." The remedy made use of was to pour melted rosin into the hoof, afterwards pulling a rope backwards and forward through it to get out the filth. Rather a rough remedy this. We had showers at intervals for two or three days and nights, and on the 30th Horace wrote:

"During the storm on Tuesday evening an ox belonging to Bro. Eldredge was struck by lightning and instantly killed. Father Lott came up to-day, bringing considerable church property, with some cattle and sheep, etc." and that my father and mother went over the river to visit

a farm the same day, returning at evening and bringing quite a quantity of green corn--first we had seen that was fit to eat. He wrote:

"Another meeting was held this morning, and a number of teams sent down to help those who are crossing the river all the time, and are constantly swelling the size of our camp with their numbers.

"Next morning another meeting was called and a number of men who had not yet been were sent to the river to work. Father and President Young went also. While they were there the steamboat 'General Brooks' came down the river and stopped at the village on our side about two miles below the ferry. Bros. Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, John Taylor, R. Pierce and Little came over in a skiff and took in Bros. Brigham and Kimball and went down the river to overtake the boat, but when they got to the village the steamboat had left, consequently Bros. Taylor, Hyde and Pratt were obliged to go down in a flat-boat in company with some missionaries till they can overtake a steamboat.

"Saturday, August 1st. * * * * Another lot of men were sent down to the river this morning with teams. * * To-day a number of the Otoe Indians were here, they had a lot of corn with them which they had stolen from the corn-fields of the Mohawks close by here. The Otoes are a mean, thieving race, and are also very cunning, which they showed particularly in this case, knowing that the taking of the corn would be laid on to us by the Mohawks. Father, mother and little brother are very sick to-day. Father took cold sitting up and watching with mother, who was very sick during last night, but is a little better to-day.

"Sunday, 2nd. Brothers Brigham and Kimball and some others took a trip up the river on this side to-day to find out a nearer road to the place where they want to go, they returned and held a council. * * It is contemplated to start on to-morrow or next day and to go to some place to settle down and prepare for winter.

"To-day, by Bro. K.'s advice and arrangement, the family was divided into three

messes, making it more agreeable and convenient for all. * * To-day put up my little tent again * * * Sarah Ann, Helen, Mary Houston, George Billings and myself are to occupy it.

"Monday, 3rd. The weather still fine. * Brother Kimball sent ten yoke of oxen down to the river to help up Bro. Clayton and family. * * Bro. Brigham let Bro. Kimball have a quantity of beef to-day, an ox of his having jumped off a bridge and broken his neck this forenoon. * The same day he called the people of the camp together and told them the intention of moving in the morning, and received their vote and acquiescence in the same. Among other things he informed them that they had no doubt of finding some good location. We started next morning and traveled eight miles and encamped on the prairie."⁴

President Young and company did not overtake us till Thursday, the 6th. Father encamped the day before near a spring at the head of a ravine with some timber near by--having traveled but thirteen miles in two days. On the second day we were joined by Colonel Kane who, Horace wrote, "had been to Grand Island, where he received a letter from President Young informing him that the brethren had given up the idea of moving up that way, so he thought he would return. There is a mound in the vicinity, about 1/4 of a mile off, which Bro. Kimball and Col. Kane have noticed in a short ramble which they took last evening; and the Col. expressed a desire that some of the men should take spades in the morning and see what could be found by examining it."

President Young, my father and others rode ahead on the 6th to make a survey of the country to see if they could find some good place to stop, and visited some springs a mile or two from camp.

Horace continues; "Some of the boys to-day dug into the before mentioned mound, where they found the 'skeleton form' of an Indian, apparently having been buried for some time; they also found with it quite a quantity of beads, brass trinkets, etc., which formerly in life adorned his person. Col. Kane has carefully



Government Ferry & group of Cotton-wood trees

F. D. Richards 1853.

The Latter-day Saints developed several ferry crossings in the Missouri River Valley to connect the farms and communities developed during the 1846-1853 period. Frederick Piercy's illustration ordinarily published in F. D. Richards' Route from Liverpool.

wrapt up the bones and the cranium, which he intends taking with him to Philadelphia for the inspection of some professional friend of his, who is versed in the science of craniology. The boys received \$2.00 divided among them for their services. * * * Father and mother are gaining rapidly.”⁵

In the next issue of the *Woman's Exponent*, Helen Mar continued her story.

On the 3rd the committee sent to confer with the above named tribes brought in their report of the same. They had seen the chiefs of the Omahas, Big Elk and Standing Elk, his son, who signed the article which they had drawn up requesting their consent to remain one or two more years. Both tribes are very anxious to have all the improvements we shall leave behind. The Otoes were anxious that we should not close with the offer of the Omahas and go up the river, because there they would have no clue to the improvements we shall make, whereas if we stay where we are they consider themselves entitled to every thing we shall leave behind. A committee was appointed by the council to look out a good place for cattle and to see about the removal of the ferry up the river near here.

On the 5th my father accompanied by Bros. O. Pratt, W. Woodruff, J. M. Grant, Horace Eldredge and several others, set out in pursuit of a new ferrying place. A committee met them from the other side of the river by agreement. “They took a leather boat,” says Horace, “belonging to Brother Horace Eldredge, which they had brought with them, and two of them, Bros. Kimball and O. Pratt,

went over to see the committee. On getting over they found five of the brethren, Isaac Morley, George W. Harris, Phinehas Richards, Wm. Snow and Bro. Miller, waiting for them--they all got into the boat with them and went back, making seven in all, there being a heavy wind up stream; the waves were very high, they were in momentary danger of upsetting, as Brother Kimball said who steered the boat, but they landed safely without any accident at the place from whence they started."

Here, at the mouth of the creek, they built a brush bridge--two of them, Brother Kimball and Wm. Snow, rode up the river about two miles to see if they could find any better place for the ferry than here--they returned, not having found any, consequently it was agreed to establish it here. One of two of the brethren then took the others back over the river in the leather boat, and they then returned. He [Horace] says, "The brethren up to this date have cut from 1500 to 2000 tons of hay, the most of which is already stacked." He also mentions the arrival of Uncle Joseph Young and family that evening. There were then rising of 800 wagons in the three camps, which were situated in the form of a triangle.

On the morning of the 8th Bishop Whitney and Bros. Woolley and Van Cott started for St. Louis to purchase goods, also Wm. Kimball, Colonel Kane, Daniel Davis and Orson K. Whitney started for Nauvoo.

On the 11th Wm. returned with O. P. Rockwell, the latter having started for Mt. Pisgah. "They came to bring back some bed clothes, etc., belonging to Bro. Jedediah M. Grant, that were taken away by Col. Kane. They had gone about fifteen miles on their route from the village when he (the Colonel) told them he did not feel able to go through by land, consequently they came back and put him on board the steamer "General Brooks," letting Wm. take his horse, and agreed to meet him at Nauvoo, in which if he failed he was to keep the horse."

Saturday, 12th, a council was held, at which the following resolutions were made:

1st--That all dogs should be tied up at sunset and not released till the next morning at sunrise.

2nd--that no firing of guns should be permitted within hearing of the camp either by night or day, and that such things should cease wholly at sunset.

3rd--That no timber should be cut down for fuel which would answer the purpose for building, and that when anyone wanted wood they were to apply to Stephen Winchester and Father Eldredge, who would instruct them when and where to fell trees. It was particularly enjoined on the brethren to spare the walnut trees, which had been already cut down in great numbers to procure walnuts.⁶

Under a new title, "Winter Quarters," Helen Mar began her description of the life at the Mormon staging ground at the Missouri River.

The evening after the departure of Bishop Whitney, Brothers Woolley and Van Cott, a council was held at Bro. Russell's tent, where a committee was chosen to select locations for the winter, between the village and the Old Fort, as sanctioned by the Indians. Committee's names: Fathers Eldredge and Cutler, Bro's A. P. Rockwood, Winslow Farr, and J. M. Grant. They started next day, though the weather was stormy, and continued so two or three days.

* * * * "Sunday, the 30th. Meeting was held at the stand, commencing at 10 a.m. Elder O. Pratt opened the meeting by prayer and said he would endeavor to occupy the time, by the President's request, till he and Bro. Kimball should arrive. He then spoke on general matters for a while, when, the President arriving, he said he would stop, but by his request he proceeded. His subject was the necessity of education to the Elders of Israel, and to the children in the camp. He was followed by Bro. Kimball, who spoke in corroboration of his remarks, and spoke at some length on the government of the Kingdom of God.

Horace Eldredge, the Marshall, then arose and told the congregation of the late reso-

lutions adopted by the council. President Young succeeded him, and spoke at some length, sanctioning what Bro. Kimball had said, and spoke at some length, on miscellaneous matters, and gave a great deal of good instruction. After singing by the choir, the meeting was closed with prayer by Jedediah M. Grant.”

On the 14th my husband’s journal mentions B. Young, H. C. Kimball and others still being engaged in laying out city lots.

Bro. Joseph Harvey’s wife died on the morning of the 6th. She had been very ill for some time--”He had recently come from Nauvoo, and had spent a great deal of his time and substance in fitting others out for this journey before he started himself, the consequence is that he is very sick himself. His wife left three small children. Bro. Kimball had him put into Daniel Davis’s tent that he might be nearer to us, and thus have better care and more attention paid to him.”

The next day warm and pleasant some of the boys were engaged in cutting the drawing house logs. Horace speaks of attending council that evening with my father, President Young and others of the brethren. H says:

“It had already commenced when we arrived; they were reading a report brought by one of the brethren who came from the Punkaw nation; the substance of which was, that Bishop Miller’s company were located on a stream called Running Water, or Punkaw river, and two hundred miles from this place; that they were uniformly used well by the Indians, had good forage for the cattle, etc. Bro. Grant, by vote of the council gave an oral report of his visit to the village at the point. He had seen Mr. Sarpee and he was willing that we should remove the ferry boat to the new place that we had selected, as he had a Mackinaw boat of his own that would answer his purpose. Mr. Sarpee also informed him that he had lately seen a Dr. Mann, who, he said, was at the massacre of Haun’s Mill in Missouri, and a regular mobocrat, who told him that the State Marshal of Missouri, with a posse, was

on his way here to arrest the Twelve. Bro. Grant also stated that the Secretary of War had written to the Indian agent to have the Mormons leave the Pottawotomie lands on the other side of the river as soon as may be.”

He mentions seeing a letter written by Sister Diantha Billings to “Brother Kimball’s folks,” in which is recorded a specimen of Indian justice. It appears that one of the young Punkaw Indians had shot an arrow into one of Bro. Brigham’s cattle, for which misdemeanor he was taken to the Indians of his own tribe and whipped, his pony shot and had one of his own eyes dug out.”⁷

Whitney, like many other Latter-day Saints, made the nearly 1,300-mile-long trek from Nauvoo to Salt Lake valley in two stages: the 265-mile march across Iowa in 1846, and the 1,032-mile journey across the plains of Nebraska and Wyoming into Utah. The first Saints reached present-day Council Bluffs in June. From there the Mormon Battalion marched to war with Mexico. By September, the remaining Latter-day Saints crossed the Missouri River and made another permanent camp at Winter Quarters, present-day North Omaha. The story of Winter Quarter’s is one of the most interesting in Mormon history. Helen Mar Whitney, like many other people, left priceless gems from her stay in the Missouri River Valley for us to examine.

NOTES

1. Helen Mar Whitney, "The Last Chapter of Scenes in Nauvoo," *Woman's Exponent*, (15 November 1883).
2. *Ibid.*, "Travels Beyond the Mississippi," 1 June 1884.
3. *Ibid.*, 15 June 1884.
4. *Ibid.*, 1 July 1884.
5. *Ibid.*, 1 September 1884.
6. *Ibid.*, 15 November 1884.
7. *Ibid.*, 1 December 1884.