

## II

# The Westovers of Ohio

[23] ON FEBRUARY 13, 1823, ELECTA BEAL married Alexander Westover, a resident of the twenty-year-old Buckeye state, as previously noted. Eight months following Electa and Alexander's marriage, in a turnabout, Electa's brother, Daniel, married Alexander's younger sister, Olive.

Electa and Alexander's firstborn arrived on August 27, 1824, in Perry, Franklin County, Ohio, to whom they gave the name Edwin Ruthven. Two years later, while still living in Perry, their second son, Albert, was born, but he died in infancy. From Perry, the Westover family moved to Licking Valley in Muskingum County, hoping to improve their circumstances. The valley was so named due to the abundance of salt lick along the river, also named Licking.<sup>1</sup>

It was there that another son was born on November 25, 1827, named Charles Beal Westover. Not long afterwards, Alexander and Electa and their two sons moved back to Franklin County. Their fourth son, Oscar Fitzland, entered the world in Franklin County on November 27, 1829, two days after his brother Charles's second birthday.

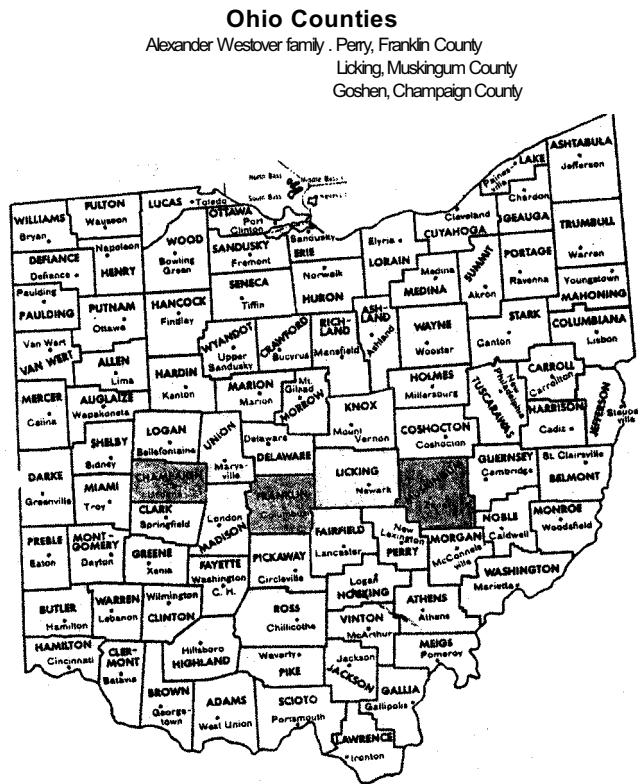


Figure 9: Westover residences in Ohio

Alexander and Electa leased a piece of timberland in Goshen Township, Champaign County, Ohio.<sup>2</sup> The Westovers were off to Goshen again with renewed hopes for the future. Electa's parents, Obadiah and Rebecca, were still living in Goshen with their blind daughter, Laura.

[24] When Alexander and Electa and the three boys arrived, it was a joyful reunion for the Beal family. Electa's three married sisters, Polly, Sally, and Ann, as well as her brother, Daniel, and his wife, Olive, were also living in close proximity. The families enjoyed the support of one another.

Despite his failing health, Alexander built a small log home in a clearing on their land. Following an extended illness, Alexander died on March 12, 1834, leaving the young indigent family grief stricken. The boys were only nine, six, and four years old. Before he passed away, Alexander described to his family a dream he had in which he saw people being baptized by immersion in something similar to a "tan vat." Their father's dream turned out to [25] have a special significance later in Edwin and Charles's lives.

Alexander's death left the Westover family devastated. Electa tried to keep her family together for a time, but finally had to give it up. She arranged for her three sons to each live with various families in exchange for the labor that the boys were able to provide. Edwin was sent to live with a family near Springfield in Clark County. Oscar lived with Electa's sister, Aunt Hannah Brown. Seven-year-old Charles ended up with Grandmother Beal for one winter and one summer. Then one day a man on horseback came and took young Charles to his home, ten miles away. As the stranger pulled little Charles on to the back of the saddle, the boy sensed that his life was going to take another turn for the worse. Tears filled his eyes as the lad waved farewell to his widowed Grandmother Beal. Rebecca watched her small grandson disappear around the bend of the road as an uneasy feeling stirred within her bosom.

Rebecca's concerns seem justified as years later Charles recorded this unhappy experience:

When I went with that man my troubles began. He had a wife but no children. Their name was Osborne. They worked me early and late. He and his wife seemed to take delight in thrashing me. They would send me upstairs to bed without supper. I would look down through a crack and watch them eating which made me feel very hungry.

Throughout his years on earth, Charles never asked for much out of life, and that seemed about his allotment. More than a year passed before Electa learned that Charles was being ill-treated at the Osbornes. Electa was outraged! She had trusted them with the welfare of her small son. She did not know what she was going to do with that boy, but she knew that Charles was not going to stay there another night with the Osbornes. She hitched up the team and off she flew [26] in a flurry of dust to fetch her mistreated son.

It was not long before Electa was able to place Charles with a family by the name of Savage who lived close to her sister, Hannah. That gave Electa some comfort. This made it possible for Oscar and Charles to see each other on occasion. Hannah had good words to say about the old gent. Mr. Savage was a tanner and a currier which gave Charles an opportunity

to learn some useful skills in the technique of preparing animal hides. The son, Gypson, and his wife lived with the elder Mr. Savage in the same household. Charles recorded in his history that he “was in charge of young Gypson and his wife.” Charles’s perception of the scope of his authority must have been misconstrued because in reading Charles’s account further, one gets the distinct impression that Charles responded, willingly or unwillingly, to the directions of the young Mr. and Mrs. Savage. Gypson was kind to their young subservient, but according to Charles, “his wife was a tarter. I did not like her and was saucy to her and did not always mind her, unless I was obliged to, and that was against me.”

Charles must have been obliged to obey the young Mrs. Savage more than his nature was inclined because he stayed with the Savages for several months. Mrs. Savage certainly lived up to her name, as far as Charles was concerned. “The woman was cross and unkind to me-this made me worse than I otherwise would have been.”

Charles confessed that while living at the Savages he became infected with the “itch,” as well as a healthy dose of lice. It would seem to a layman’s mind that the itch and lice would go hand in hand. His body from his knees to his hips was a solid scab. Perhaps at the invitation of the Savages, or through his own desperation, Charles returned home to his mother’s loving care to find relief from this abominable affliction. It took several weeks before Electa was able to bring her son’s vexation under control through medication and a frequent combing of his hair. He then returned to the Savages free of lice and itch, but not of Mrs. Savage’s [27] contempt.

In spite of his improved hygienics, Charles’s relationship with Mrs. Savage did not seem to improve. The time came when Mrs. Savage finally prevailed upon her husband to go to Mrs. Westover and ask her to find another place for her son. Partly due to Charles’s independent nature, finding a home for him became a very frustrating challenge for Mother Electa.

From the Savage’s home, Charles next stayed with a widow by the name of Tudger and her two grown children. Here, again, the situation was far from ideal. Charles was worked hard and remained under-clothed. Although he grew very fond of the good widow, her son, Peter, was difficult to work for. Charles managed to suppress his frustrations for the most part at Peter’s demands; consequently, life became somewhat tolerable for this growing boy. There was cloth in the house that Mrs. Tudger had spun and woven and had sent to the factory to be colored, foiled, and dressed. She had promised to make this cloth into a suit for young Charles, but Peter would not allow it. Yet Charles remained with the widow Tudger until he was fourteen years of age.

While living with the Tudgers, Charles fell victim to an acute case of the measles. The measles epidemic had taken several lives in the area, including that of his cousin, Fedora. It was not long after Charles became sick that Electa once again took her son home with her to nurse him back to health. While recuperating from the effects of the disease, a Mr. Lapham came to see him. “He knew my condition-that I was overworked and scantily clothed.” Mr. Lapham made a bargain with Charles. He was to work for nine months for him at \$4.50 a month. This was somewhat under the prevailing wage of \$1 0 for farm hands, but Charles was impressed with the kind demeanor of Mr. Lapham, so they sealed their agreement with a handshake. His wages were to be paid in clothing.

Soon after going to work for Mr. Lapham, Charles [28] suffered a relapse of the

measles with complications of pleurisy, which brought him close to death's door. He ran a violent fever and had an excruciating pain in his side. An old retired physician, Dr. Tenney, gave what Charles described as "an old-fashioned sweat. He used boiled com on the cob around me. After the fever broke he gave me calomel." Charles survived because of, or in spite of, the com cob treatment. He felt that his life was preserved by the Lord and gave the com cob remedy little credit.

Finally, finding peace and a sense of security in the Lapham home, Charles developed a sense of loyalty to his new employer. Mr. Lapham had taken a fatherly interest in the young lad. Charles's brothers, Edwin and Oscar, also worked for Mr. Lapham during the summers. Charles remained with the Laphams for five years.

While working for Mr. Lapham, nineteen-year-old Edwin married Sarah Sophia Darrow on February 11, 1844. A son was born to them on April 2, 1845, whom they named Edwin Lycurgus (Li-KUR-jus). Tragedy struck the young family three months later. On July 31, 1845, Sarah died, leaving the baby in the care of his grandmother, Electa. Sarah was buried in the Hazel Cemetery in Goshen Township, Champaign County.

During the summer of 1844, two Mormon missionaries, Jackson Goodale and Wakefield Howe, began preaching in the vicinity around the Scioto River near Columbus, Ohio. Aunt Hannah and her daughter Adeline were living in Franklin County in the area where the Mormon elders were proselyting. Upon listening to the message of Elders Goodale and Howe, Hannah and Adeline became converted and were baptized. Charles also had the occasion to listen to the elders preach and made it a point to carefully study the scriptures that were quoted, looking for errors in their claims. Charles was very prejudiced against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at this time and was disturbed when told that his aunt and cousin had accepted [29] baptism, convinced that they had been misled by the Mormons.

Upon Hannah's urging, Elders Goodale and Howe traveled to Champaign County to bring the message of the Restored Gospel to Electa and her other sisters: Polly Griswald, Sally Perry, and Ann Baker. The missionaries arrived on the last day of school. Traditionally, a spelling bee had been planned for that evening as a fitting climax to the school term. Surprisingly, the bee was canceled in favor of the elders preaching, as the schoolhouse was the only place to accommodate the event. Grudgingly perhaps, but likely due to his mother's persuasion, Charles gathered wood from the surrounding forest, chopped it up, and built a fire in the schoolhouse stove. By the time the people arrived for the meeting, Charles had the schoolhouse warm and comfortable. "The house was jammed full," Charles exclaimed.

Electa and her sons felt the spirit that radiated from these two humble missionaries. After listening to Elder Goodale preach, Charles's prejudices against the Mormons had vanished. He expressed his emotions of this singular experience that was to change the course of his life:

Such a sermon as we heard that night I never heard before. That night with all my prejudices, I was converted to the truth of Mormonism. I tell you all who read this sketch that Elder [Goodale] was most powerful and that he was filled of the Holy Spirit. His words pierced you through and through.

There is an incongruity in the time sequence as described by Charles in his history. The impression is given in Charles's history that Electa was baptized soon after the meeting. However, Electa's baptism is recorded as taking place on August 19, 1845. But Charles's conversion at the meeting took place *before* the martyrdom of the prophet, which occurred on June 27, 1844, unless Charles's memory was a bit faulty when he recorded the event several years [30] later. We have to place our trust in the record asserting that Electa was indeed baptized in 1845 and that Elder Howe both baptized and confirmed her as the first Westover to have joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Edwin entered the waters of baptism three weeks after his mother on September 13, 1845, shortly after burying his young wife, Sarah. Yet, Charles did not commit to baptism following the meeting, in spite of the conversion of the other members of his family to this new faith. He felt in his heart that the words spoken by Elder Goodale were true; the Mormon elder spoke with power and authority. But Charles was a serious and deliberate person: he wanted to ponder over these amazing claims before committing himself to baptism. He felt that sometime in the not-too-distant future, he would have to travel to Illinois to see and learn about this Mormon religion for himself.

Charles had learned the meaning of work many years earlier. Now at seventeen, he was wiry and strong. A restlessness began stirring inside of him. He wanted to do something with his life besides being a farmhand working for others. But what to do, he was not sure. It was at this period of his life that Charles decided to learn the carpenter trade. He was eighteen years old, and he felt a need to develop a skill which would assure him a respectable living. He agreed to work for a Mr. Sessions at Woodstock, Ohio, for three years for his board and clothes in return for his services as an apprentice carpenter. It was also agreed that Charles would be allowed to attend school for three months of each year. During that time he was to work nights and mornings. Charles later confessed,

My schooling did me little good as my teacher, a Mr. Joseph Smith, a little dark-complexioned highly educated man, spent all his time with a few advanced pupils.

As fate would have it, Mr. Sessions died before the first year was out. Back to the Laphams went Charles, where he [31] spent the next two summers molding brick. While he seemed to have a very unstable youth, having lived with a several different families and employers, Charles was receiving training that would prove invaluable later in helping to build the Lord's kingdom, such as farming, tanning, carpentry, and now masonry.

But Charles still could not get Elder Goodale, and those incredible claims, out of his mind. "God has shown himself to a fourteen year old boy! And God has restored his true Church upon the earth?" were thoughts that consistently distilled through his mind. These concepts seemed inconceivable, but gradually the troubling thoughts changed to enthusiasm and a new hope. He studied the scriptures, and even defended Mormonism when hostile accusations were made in his presence against this newly revealed faith.

News of the murder of the Prophet Joseph Smith soon after Charles's conversion came as a shock to the boy. Now what was to happen to this fledgling church without their prophet? A depression settled over Charles as he went about his work in a perfunctory manner in Lampham's brickyard. A strong feeling within his heart had only recently

dispelled an doubts concerning the truth of Mormonism. Suddenly, his future had become strangely clouded.

A few years later, in February of 1848, Charles and Oscar traveled together thirty miles east to Franklin County to attend Edwin's second wedding ceremony. Edwin realized that his mother could not attend to his small son, Lycurgus, indefinitely. Besides, he had fallen in love with a pretty, young lass, Sarah Jane Burwell. The fact that she had just turned fifteen on January 29 and bore the same given name as Edwin's first wife was no deterrent. They were married on February 10, 1848. In keeping with the accepted practice of the time, the newlyweds, along with Electa and little Lycurgus (it is questionable if the accepted practice also included the mother-in-law and step-son), moved in with the bride's mother and step-father, Mr. and Mrs. Morse, also recent converts to Mormonism.

[32] During Charles and Oscar's visit with their mother and older brother, a conference of the Saints was held fifteen miles north at the home of Electa's sister, Hannah Beal Kempton. Mr. Morse's son, Gilbert, was present. Gilbert Morse had recently arrived after being driven from his home in Nauvoo, Illinois. He was anxious to persuade his father to sell out and accompany the Saints on their pending journey west. Charles continues his account of this conference as follows:

At those meetings I saw the power of the Lord manifested to a great degree. Brother Sevey [who later married Hannah's daughter, Adeline] arose and walked the floor and sang psalms or songs. His face fairly shone. A number of people spoke in tongues.

Oscar was also convinced of the truth of Mormonism as a result of his attendance at this conference. His enthusiasm even prompted him to promise his mother that he would go west with them as their plans to do so now began to be formulated. But when he returned home, Oscar's convictions of these truths seemed to fade as he was influenced by the popular anti-Mormon sentiment of his companions at work. As for Charles, he knew that the time was ripe to search out this Mormon Zion. If he were to be baptized, Elder Goodale was the one to do it.

Two months later, in April of 1848, Electa with her two sons, Charles and Edwin, and the latter's bride, Sarah Jane, and three-year-old Edwin Lycurgus set off for the Saints' gathering place in the proximity of Council Bluffs on the Missouri River. Also in the company were Aunt Hannah and her second husband, John Kempton, and her daughter, Adeline, Sarah Jane's mother and step-father, Sarah and William A. Morse, Gilbert Morse, Aaron Sceva, and James Bay (a cousin of Edwin's first wife, Sarah Darrow), as well as several other converts.

Often, historians view the great migration of the Mormon pioneers as merely an escape from persecution. [33] But this was not the motivation of the Westover family and the company of converts with whom they were associated. They felt themselves called out of the world to go to Zion. The time of the harvest had come when the wheat was to be gathered from the tares. The missionaries had quoted from the scriptures, "Go ye out from Babylon. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."<sup>3</sup> They were to gather to Zion for "a refuge from the storm" that would soon be poured out upon the whole earth.<sup>4</sup> They would gather in one place "to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things" for the second coming of the Lord.<sup>5</sup> This Electa believed; her faith was undaunted.

The group of converts met at the Kemptons in Franklin County, then together they traveled by wagon to Urbana in Champaign County, about thirty miles distant.<sup>6</sup> In Urbana, they boarded railroad cars that transported them on recently laid tracks for almost a hundred miles until they arrived at a port city on the banks of the Ohio River, probably Cincinnati, which was a major trading center, known then as the meat-packing center of the nation. From this point, the journey would be by riverboat on the Ohio River.

The waters of the Ohio were swollen by the winter snow melt, although there seemed to be no danger of ice floes now. Frequent stops were made at the several ports along the river to load and discharge cargo and passengers. At Louisville, Kentucky, they watched the slaves load the huge bales of cotton on board the steamer to take them downriver to the cotton mills.

Day after day, they listened to the rhythm of the paddles and the frequent blasts of the ship's horn. The river teemed with life as boats and rafts of all sizes and shapes plowed endlessly through the murky waters. Life on the river seemed to be a world apart from the peaceful farmlands of Ohio. The river widened where the Wabash flowed into the Ohio. At the confluence of the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers, the steamboat changed its westerly course and the paddles began laboring against the upstream current of the [34] mighty Mississippi as the bow pointed north towards St. Louis.

Before the city of St. Louis came into view, the passengers could see the layer of black smoke that hung over the northern horizon. Soon, smokestacks could be seen rising from the foundries and mills of the burgeoning city. Steamboats of every description lined the docks. Charles had never seen so many boats and so much activity. He was beginning to think maybe he had made a mistake to start on this adventure into this strange country. His group had sailed six hundred and ninety-one miles from Cincinnati to St. Louis, and they still had six hundred and thirty-one miles to sail on the Missouri to their destination at Council Bluffs.<sup>7</sup> A sailor's life was not for Charles. He felt more at home behind a plow and an oxen's hind quarters.

St. Louis was alive with commerce. The company of Saints disembarked into the swarm of humanity, horses, oxen, wagons, cursings, and mud. As they set foot on land, a couple of strangers hailed them. They turned out to be acquaintances of Gilbert Morse, and they requested the group to follow them to the next stage of their journey. They slowly made their way along the waterfront until they arrived at another dock that was bristling with activity. Tied to the dock's pilings was a large steamboat bobbing lazily in the current. The gold-leaf lettering on the side of the bridge identified it as the *Mandan*.<sup>8</sup>

The Ohio Saints boarded the big side-wheeler for their upstream journey on the Missouri River, the third river to take them on their cross-country migration. Captain Beers was the skipper of the steamer.<sup>9</sup> Already settled on board was a large group of Latter-day Saint converts. Now the company of Saints aboard the *Mandan* numbered 108. Their leader was Ezra T. Benson, a large, distinguished-looking man whom two years previously had been ordained an apostle of the Lord.[35]



Figure 10: Ezra Taft Benson

Accompanying Elder Benson were Apostle Amasa Lyman, and two future apostles, Erastus Snow and Mathias Cowley.<sup>10</sup> The Westovers were certainly in good company. These brethren were returning to Winter Quarters from their “begging missions” to the East in an effort to relieve the Saints in their destitute state and to gather funds to enable them to reach their home in the Rocky Mountains.<sup>11</sup> Out of desperation, over one hundred brethren had been sent out to solicit help in November 1847, for as Brigham Young admitted, “The operations of the church are paralysed with poverty.” They had chartered the *Mandan* to transport the hundred or more Saints and about fifty tons of goods from St. Louis to Winter Quarters.<sup>12</sup>

On April 11, 1848, the steamer sailed from St. Louis bound for Council Bluffs, Iowa. The Missouri River was difficult to navigate due to the heavy amount of silt washing down, causing the river bed to shift, thus resulting in uncharted sand bars. The life span of the average steamboat on the Missouri was short, and hundreds sank. [36] Many succumbed to fire and burst boilers, but the majority fell victim to submerged “snags,” which punched holes in the hulls of unsuspecting ships like deadly rams.<sup>13</sup>

Of all the Western rivers, the Missouri was probably the most treacherous. “Every voyage was an adventure and every pilot a gambler,” wrote historian Louis C. Hunter.<sup>14</sup> After five days and one hundred forty miles sailing up the Missouri River, the *Mandon* fell victim to the Missouri’s treachery near Covington by striking a submerged rock, rendering the boat unsafe for sailing. Captain Beers told the passengers that he would go no further until his boat was repaired. The steamer was forced to return to port for repairs after leaving the passengers ashore. The company pitched their tents on the bank of the Missouri, where they remained for twelve days. Elder Lyman accompanied the boat and crew to ensure her officers complied with the contract and return for their stranded passengers. The men on shore had a chance to work in order to obtain much needed provisions during the extended layover.<sup>15</sup>



On April 29, after the long delay, the *Mandon* was once more plowing through the waters of the Missouri, her passengers and cargo secured. They had traversed the entire midsection of the state of Missouri as they steamed past the site of Independence. On the port side lay Jackson County and on the starboard, Clay County. There were a few in the company of Saints on board who had endured the Missouri persecutions and Governor Boggs's infamous Extermination Order of members of the Mormon Church. Some had sought refuge in settlements across the river from Independence. While steaming past, many of the Saints aboard could not contain their emotions and tears welled up in their eyes. These landmarks, such as the hovels the Saints had dug in the bluffs along the river, brought vivid memories of the time they were driven from their homes in Jackson County into the November coldness of 1833. Even those aboard who had not experienced the atrocities of Missouri were aware of the savage barbarity and mobocracy [37] suffered by the members of the Church in Jackson, Clay, Caldwell, and Davies Counties. Electa surely felt a surge of compassion for those in the company who had endured the mob brutality of Missouri.

The *Mandan* docked at the busy river port of Kansas City.<sup>16</sup> The second half of their voyage on the Missouri River lay before them, now on a northerly course. The following morning, the huge side-paddles were once again churning against the current of the Mighty Missouri.

About sundown on April 28, their riverboat finally docked on the eastern banks of the Missouri River in the vicinity known as "The Bluffs." The Journal History notes that on their arrival the morning was cool with the wind blowing in from the north. Mud was everywhere after the previous night's downpour. After disembarking, the company of Saints ferried across the Missouri River to Winter Quarters, where they spent the next ten days preparing for the long journey across the plains.<sup>17</sup>

Upon arrival at Winter Quarters, across the river from Council Bluffs, Charles was beginning once again to have doubts about his decision to join with these Mormons on their trek west. He had searched the camps at Council Bluffs in an unsuccessful effort to find Elder Goodale.<sup>18</sup> Now Charles hoped to find some trace of the elder on the Nebraska Territory side of the Missouri River. The thought of finding himself fifteen hundred miles from his old home in Ohio, stranded in a strange land among an even stranger people, was beginning to give Charles an uneasy feeling.

Hundreds of log cabins lined the muddy streets with no distinction as to one's social or economic status.<sup>19</sup> The layout of Winter Quarters looked more like a permanent settlement with its forty-one blocks surveyed in an orderly fashion and all the buildings evenly spaced with wide streets. Certainly this enormous undertaking to create a city from virgin land in the space of nine or ten weeks was a task that well prepared the Saints to survive in their future Rocky Mountain home.

[38] It seemed curious to Charles that this was merely a stopping-off place in the Saints's westward migration. Pawnee Indians swarmed throughout the settlement, trading robes and moccasins for corn and other items of interest. Everywhere Charles looked, he noticed men and women busy working on wagons-sewing or preparing and storing food. Even the children seemed to be occupied with one task or another. A sense of urgency filled the air. Although Winter Quarters was a city of logs and mud, there was an inner strength that gave purpose and hope to this destitute [39] people. A Mr. Bancroft, a non-Mormon historian

of no small fame and who lived and wrote as a contemporary of these events, related the following:

With cheerfulness and courage, they adapted themselves to their many vicissitudes, their faith in their religion never swerving, and supported by it to a patient endurance beyond human strength. Most of them had exchanged their household treasures and personal effects, even to their table and bed furniture, for stores of maize or flour, which with milk were their only articles of diet. As evening approached, the tinkling of cattle bells announced the return of the men, when women went forth to meet them, and welcome them back to their log hut and frugal meal. Then a little later all sounds were hushed, save that on the still night arose the strains of the evening hymn and the murmur of the evening prayer, the day closing, as it had commenced, with a supplication for the blessing of the Almighty, and with heartfelt thanksgiving that he had been pleased to deliver his people from the hands of their persecutors.<sup>20</sup>

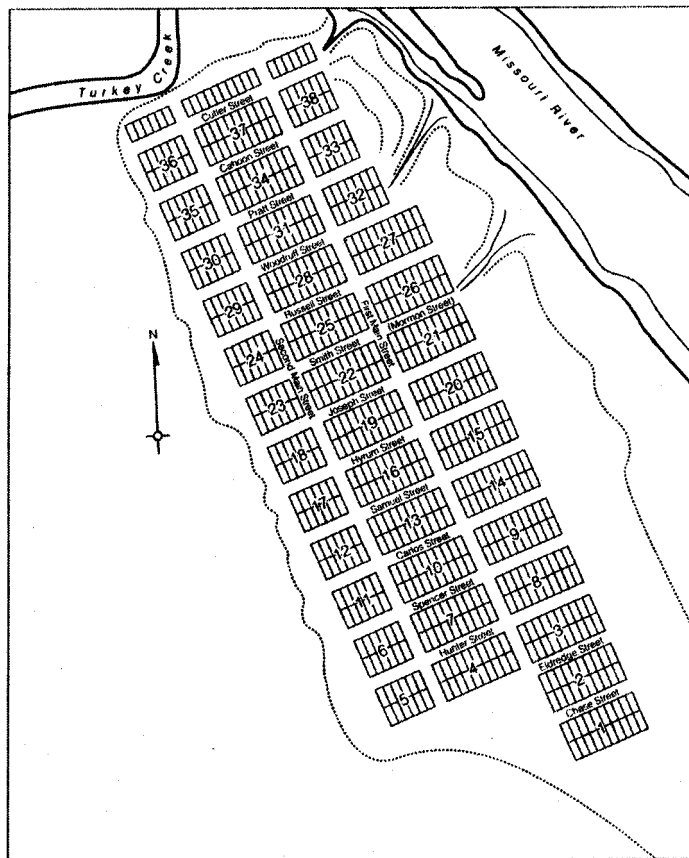


Figure 11: Plat of Winter Quarters

As the day wore on and his inquiries seeming more and more futile, Charles discovered that he had strayed near a graveyard on a hillside, dotted with a sea of markers of Saints who had made the supreme sacrifice for their faith.<sup>21</sup> Instinctively, Charles began wandering among the myriad of headboards and stone markers, although most grave sites

were identified only by mounds of dirt. Perhaps Charles thought that his search for Elder Goodale might end there. The sun faded behind the western horizon while stars began to dominate the graying skies.

Charles was beginning to feel the despair of loneliness, confused as to where fate was leading him. He could not decide if he should return to his old home grounds in Ohio or cast his lot with the Mormons. He had no money and no prospect of getting provisions for the long trek to the Rocky Mountains. East or west, the future looked bleak. Before he was fully aware of what he was doing, he had fallen to his [40] knees, depressed in spirit, and began pouring out the longings of his heart to his Maker. Charles's prayer gradually took on the form of a heartfelt plea. He wanted to know---he needed to know---what direction the Lord wanted him to go.

As he opened his eyes, his face was towards the west. He noticed a star moving slowly toward the western horizon until it sank out of sight. Charles remained transfixed, staring into the blackness of the heavens. Finally, he arose with a sense of peace filling his soul. He had his prayer answered just as surely as though he had heard a voice from heaven. He knew now what he was to do. "With a strong feeling I took it to be a sign that I was to go west with the Saints," Charles affirmed in his later writings.<sup>22</sup> A surge of profound relief drained his body of the anxieties that had been building up within him until a few moments before. Charles now understood where his future lay.

The next morning, with a new determination, Charles went about the task of finding someone who could use the services of a strong, hard-working, young convert. He was informed of one who needed a wagon driver for the journey to the Rockies, a man by the name of Erastus Snow. Ah yes, Charles was acquainted with Elder Snow from their voyage on the *Mandon* of the past few weeks. Now there was a man Charles felt that he could follow to the Rocky Mountains, the good Lord willing.

Charles found Brother Snow in his corral working on a wagon. Charged with a feeling of optimism, Charles greeted Elder Snow with a cheery hello. Erastus looked up and, with a warm smile, extended his hand to the young fellow traveler. After Charles explained the purpose of his visit, a frown formed on Erastus's brow. "I'm sorry, Charles, but I have already hired Will Hamblin for the job." Charles's hopes were crushed. He was sure that this was what the Lord had in mind for him. He shrugged his shoulders and slowly turned to walk away. Brother Snow suddenly called him back. Erastus started shooting questions at young [41] Westover. Where was he from? What experience did he have in driving ox teams? Could he repair wagons, such as fixing on bows and projections on boxes? Why, sure! Charles had worked behind oxen almost all his young life. And a wagon box was no trouble for him with his experience in the carpentry trade.

The Lord surely had heard that boy's lonely prayer of the past night, because, right then and there, Brother Snow put Charles to work fixing a wagon. Erastus became convinced that this twenty year old was indeed capable of handling his wagon and team. Charles's account reveals his delight at this new opportunity: "It was a beautiful team to drive-a yoke of large stags on the tongue, a yoke of cows and a yoke of yearling heifers on the lead."<sup>23</sup>

Before leaving for the west, Charles asked to be baptized into this peculiar new faith at the hands of his newly found mentor, Erastus Snow. The Missouri River was only a stone's

throwaway, quite suitable for cleansing both body and soul of this young Westover lad. And that is where Charles's life took on a new meaning and purpose. William Snow, Erastus's older brother, confirmed Charles.<sup>24</sup> The date was May 17, 1848.<sup>25</sup>

A day's journey out of Winter Quarters, while they were camped near the ferry at the Elkhorn River awaiting the assembling of Brigham Young's company, Charles spied a comely young lass as she was helping her father yoke his oxen and cows. "She just took my fancy," he later wrote. Young Charles kept stealing glances at his phantom of delight at every opportunity as the sparks of true love started to flicker within his breast. It took only a week to find out that she was Eliza Ann Haven, daughter of Captain John Haven. But she was much too sophisticated and lovely to give her attention to such a common country-bred lad as he, Charles reasoned. "I managed to get acquainted with her; I hardly knew how, for as rough as I was then, I was very timid."<sup>26</sup>

### Notes

1. Salt lick sometimes occurs naturally, as is the case along the Licking River, or is made available for domestic livestock in blocks. Animals often crave salt.
2. Charles Westover, *A Short Sketch of My Life From Memory*, Family Archives. In the *Westover Magazine*. reading from Electa Beal Westover's history, the township is identified as Rush, as opposed to Goshen township described in Charles's history. The following accounts and quotes of Charles's early life are taken from this source.
3. D&C 133:5.
4. D&C 115:6.
5. D&C 29:8.
6. In Mary W. Carroll's *Edwin Ruthven Westover*, it is indicated about April 1, 1848, that a large group of Ohio converts met at Sister Date's place in Springfield and then on to Urbana.
7. Distances according to "Missouri River Navigational Charts," U. S. Army Engineers Division, Corps of Engineers, Omaha, Nebraska.
8. This steamboat is recorded as the *Mandars* in John Henry Evans and Minnie Egan Anderson's *Ezra T. Benson, Pioneer-Statesman-Saint*. *Mandan* is correct according to Conway B. Sonne's *Ships, Saints, and Mariners*.
9. Conway B. Sonne, *Ships, Saints, and Mariners, A Maritime Encyclopedia of Mormon Migration 1830-1890*. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, Utah 1987, 137.
10. Journal History, microfilm BX No. 19, Reel 8, July 22, 1847Oct 8, 1848.
11. John Henry Evans, *Ezra T. Benson, Pioneer-Statesman-Saint*.
12. Richard E. Bennett, *We'll Find The Place*, Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, 301, 309
13. Fergus M. Bordewich, "Raising Arabia" printed in *Readers Digest*, November 1999, 122.
14. *Ibid.*, 125.

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15. Journal History BX No. 19, Reel 18, July 22, 1847-October 8, 1848.
16. About three weeks later, on May 17, the *Mandon* was totally destroyed in the great fire at St. Louis that burned twenty-three steamboats. No lives were lost aboard the *Mandon*.
17. The events of the Westover family conversions and travels to Winter Quarters area composite of the separate histories of Charles, Edwin, and Electa. The latter two are taken from the *Westover Magazine*, as previously cited.
18. Not long before the arrival of the Westovers at Winter Quarters, Jackson Goodale had aligned himself with apostates Hazen Aldrich and James C. Brewster becoming part of their "first presidency." Their settlement in New Mexico finally failed. See B.H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, V.2, Ch. 65, 438-40.
19. "In Dec. 1846 at Winter Quarters there were 538 log houses and 83 sod houses, inhabited by 3,483 souls, of whom 334 were sick." Church Chronology, 65.
20. *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, V. XXVI, *History of Utah*, The History Company, publishers, San Francisco, 250.
21. Colonel Kane reported 600 deaths in 1846 before cold weather brought some relief from the sickness but then the elements and fatigue began taking their toll. The Winter Quarters Temple now stands upon this sacred ground, which "was hallowed by the suffering of the Saints a century and a half ago." (Dedicatory prayer offered by President Gordon B. Hinckley on April 22, 2001.)
22. Charles Westover, *A Short Sketch of My Life*, Family Archives.
23. Ibid.
24. William Snow eventually served as bishop of Pine Valley in southern Utah at a time when Charles resided there.
25. Early Church Information File, film no. 1750725, Family History Center, Harold B. Lee Library, BYU, Provo, Utah.
26. Charles Westover autobiography, *A Short Sketch of My Life*, Family archives.