
Introduction

The central message of this book is the message declared by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since its beginning. Joseph Smith, the first prophet of this dispensation, taught:

“The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”¹

Every prophet who has succeeded Joseph Smith has added his personal witness of the divine mission of the Savior. The First Presidency affirmed:

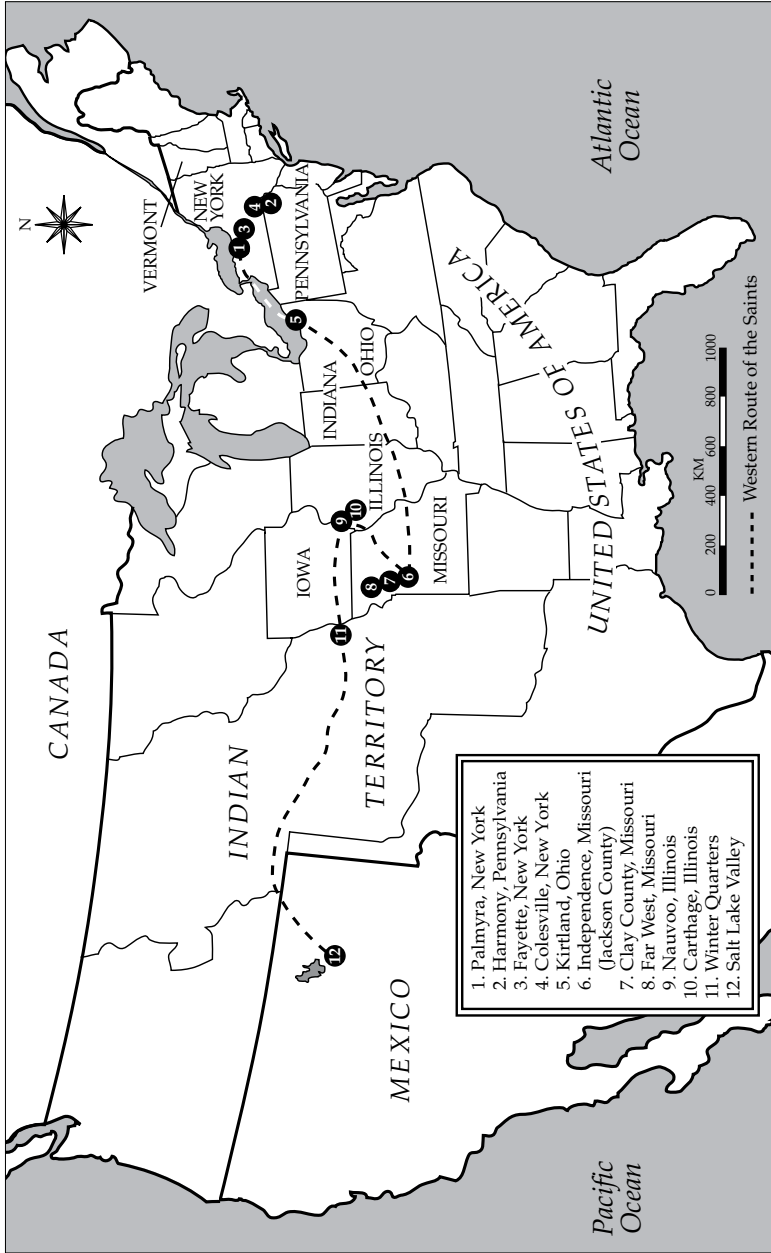
“As those who are called and ordained to bear witness of Jesus Christ to all the world, we testify that He was resurrected on that Easter morning nearly two thousand years ago, and that He lives today. He has a glorified, immortal body of flesh and bones. He is the Savior, the Light and Life of the world.”²

Millions of faithful Saints have also had testimonies of the divinity of Jesus Christ. This knowledge has motivated them to make the sacrifices necessary to build The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the kingdom of God on the earth. The story of the establishment of the Church is one of faith, consecration, and joy. It is the story of living prophets who taught the truths of God to the modern world. It is the story of men and women from all walks of life who sought for the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and, upon finding it, were willing to pay the price of becoming the Savior’s disciples. These stalwart Saints pressed on

through sufferings and hardships, witnessing even in their darkest hours of the goodness of God and the joy of his love. They have left a legacy of faith, courage, obedience, and sacrifice.

The heritage of faith continues today. Latter-day Saints throughout the world are modern pioneers in their own homelands, where they live with faith and courage in a time fraught with new challenges and opportunities. There are pages of history yet to be written. We each have an opportunity to leave a heritage for generations to follow that will help them understand the joy of living and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As we learn more about the faith of those who have gone before us, we can better understand those with whom we have joined hands in bearing witness of the Savior and helping to establish his kingdom. We can determine to live more righteously as faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.



The United States of America in 1847. This map shows locations and routes of travel that were important in the early history of the Church.