

# Iowa Mormon Trail – Bibliography & Route

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## Introduction:

As the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo Illinois began in early February 1846, the leading wagons followed some established wagon roads westward into Iowa Territory. After 100 miles, they primarily followed game and Indian paths as they cut new roads westward. Many thousands followed in three waves that first year of Mormon migration. Tens of thousands followed later. At the Hamlet of West Grove their route west returned some over the same trail they had followed eastward in 1838 when the Saints were driven out of Missouri.

Two way-stations, large crop farms really, were established for the aid of those coming later. The Garden Grove camp was almost exactly half-way across what became the state of Iowa later that year. Thirty-five miles further west, the Mt Pisgah camp was set up in May. Soon, the LDS leaders continued on to the Missouri River, arriving at the Council Bluffs area on June 13. Elder John Taylor set up his camp on Mosquito Creek.

Just five miles south was Peter Sarpy's trading post at the Pottawattamie Indian Agency. "Traders Point", earlier named "Pointe aux Poules" by French traders, had about twenty cabins, many whitewashed and described as neat for a frontier community. The LDS leaders paid a visit on the 17<sup>th</sup>, were feasted by Indian Agent Mitchell. In repayment, Pitts Brass Band entertained the locals.

Thirty miles further south, the Army was building a new fort, Camp Kearny. Dr. George B. Sanderson had just been appointed the contract doctor for troops stationed there. Sanderson's home was further south at Weston across from Fort Leavenworth. He was liked and trusted by the Army officers. On Sunday June 28<sup>th</sup>, Dr Sanderson and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Abraham Lincoln (no – not THAT Abraham Lincoln) paid a courtesy call at the tents of the LDS leaders. What they discussed is not apparent from the records available, but rumors were that the Army wanted Mormon men to enlist for the Mexican War.

Fast upon the heels of Brigham Youngs 'Camp of Israel' pioneers, the wagons of the massive Mormon Spring Exodus began arriving from Nauvoo. Within days, thousands of people, cattle, horses, and pigs were swarming the Missouri River bottoms and hillsides at the Bluffs.

On 30 June arrived dragoon Captain James Allen, dispatched to recruit a battalion of men for California. Allen apparently had intelligence that he could find Brigham Young at Mt Pisgah, but the information was old and Brother Brigham was already at the Bluffs. Learning this, Allen followed the new wagon trail west, passing hundreds of people along the way to the Bluffs. Allen met with Brigham Young and the other LDS leaders, explaining his charge by the President – to recruit, if possible, 500 men to serve for one year in the Mexican War. Their service as infantry would provide General Kearny the manpower and foot soldiers he very much wanted and needed, but had not been able to recruit in Missouri.

The Mormons provided, but it took Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards to convince the Saints to enlist. They hopped in a carriage and tore out for Mt Pisgah – all along the way telling the men to hurry to the Missouri River camps and enlist. At Mt Pisgah, Brigham sent a letter to Garden Grove asking for men from there. Edward Bunker responded as did 70 men from Mt. Pisgah. Returning

to the Bluffs on July 12, Brigham called for a mass meeting the next morning. Over a thousand people heard Thomas Kane, Brigham Young and Capt Allen explain the request for the battalion of men. That afternoon and early evening, a dance was held at the bowery just down from Elder John Taylor's camp where a flag pole had been erected. All who wished to enlist were to meet at the flag pole the next day – 14 July 1846, the start of the official enlistment process.

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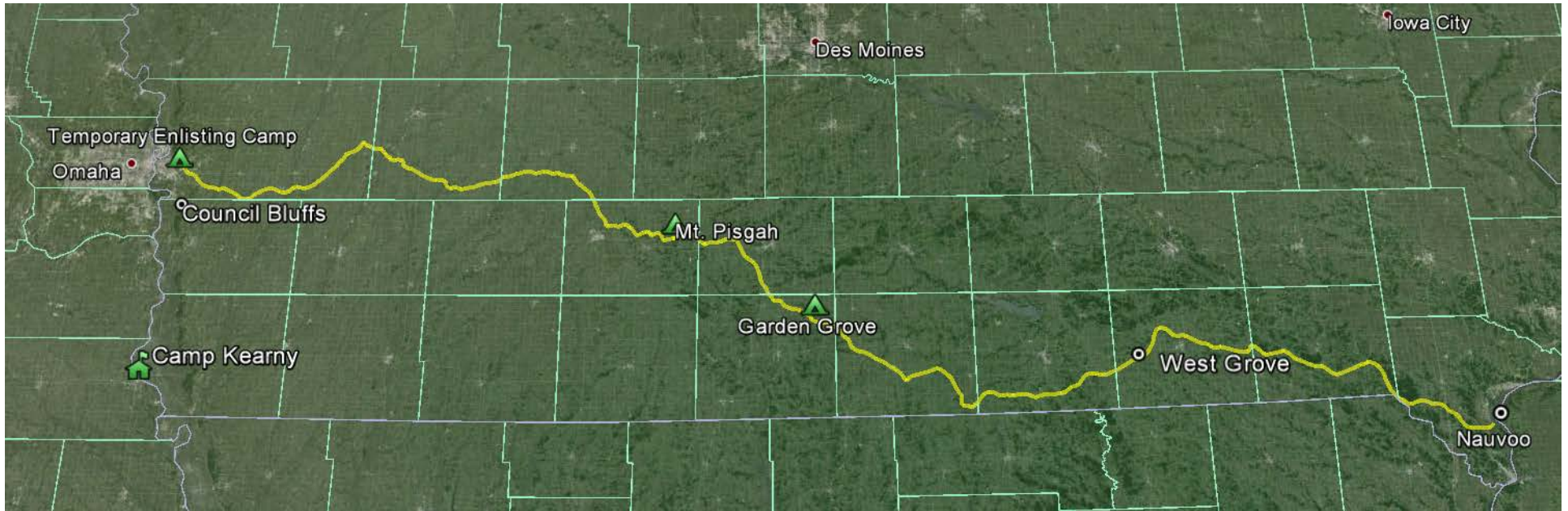
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## Iowa Mormon Trail Route

### Advance wagons leaving Nauvoo (2.04) and arriving Council Bluffs (6.14)



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