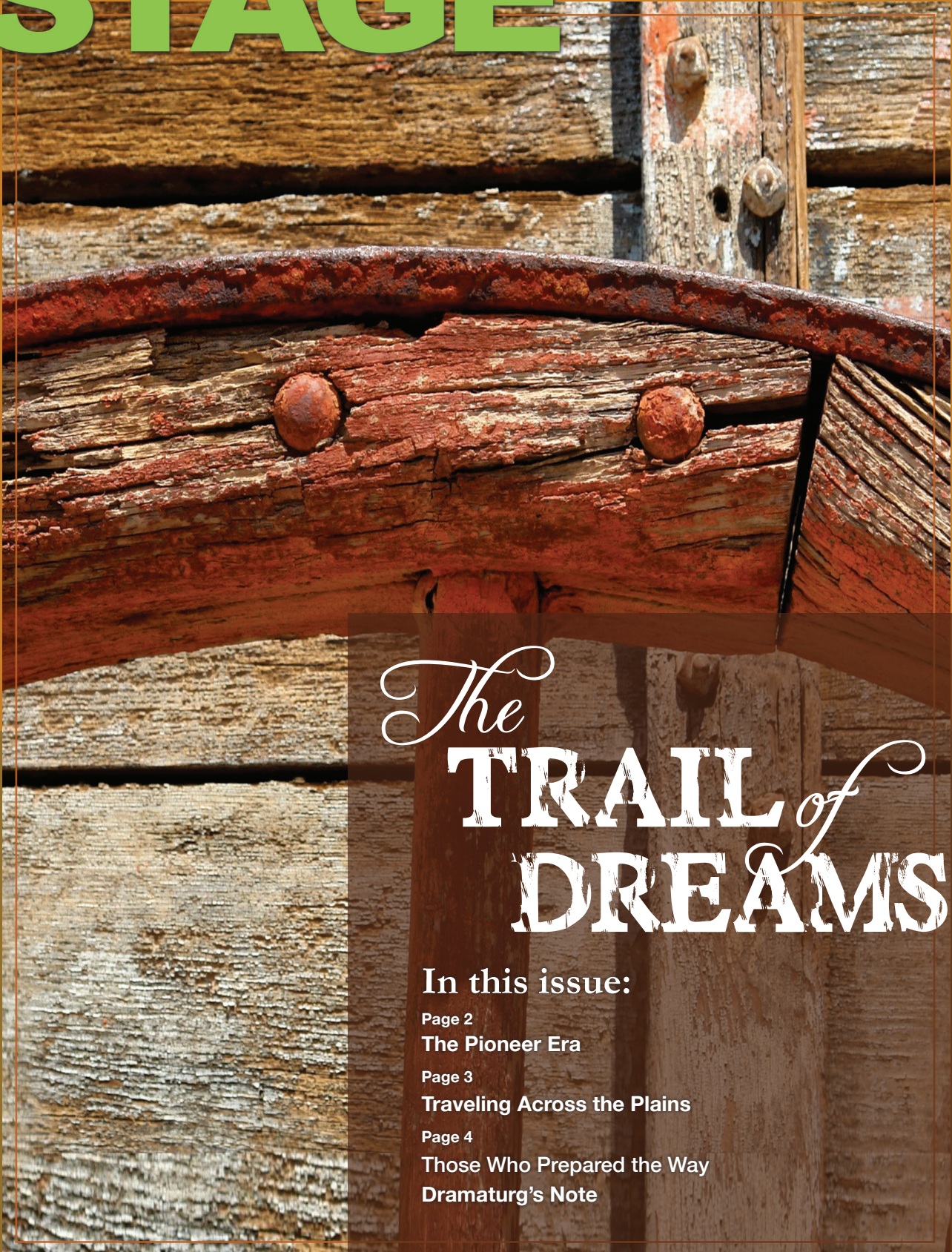


*Learning*  
**STAGE**

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*The*  
**TRAIL** *of*  
**DREAMS**

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## THE PIONEER ERA

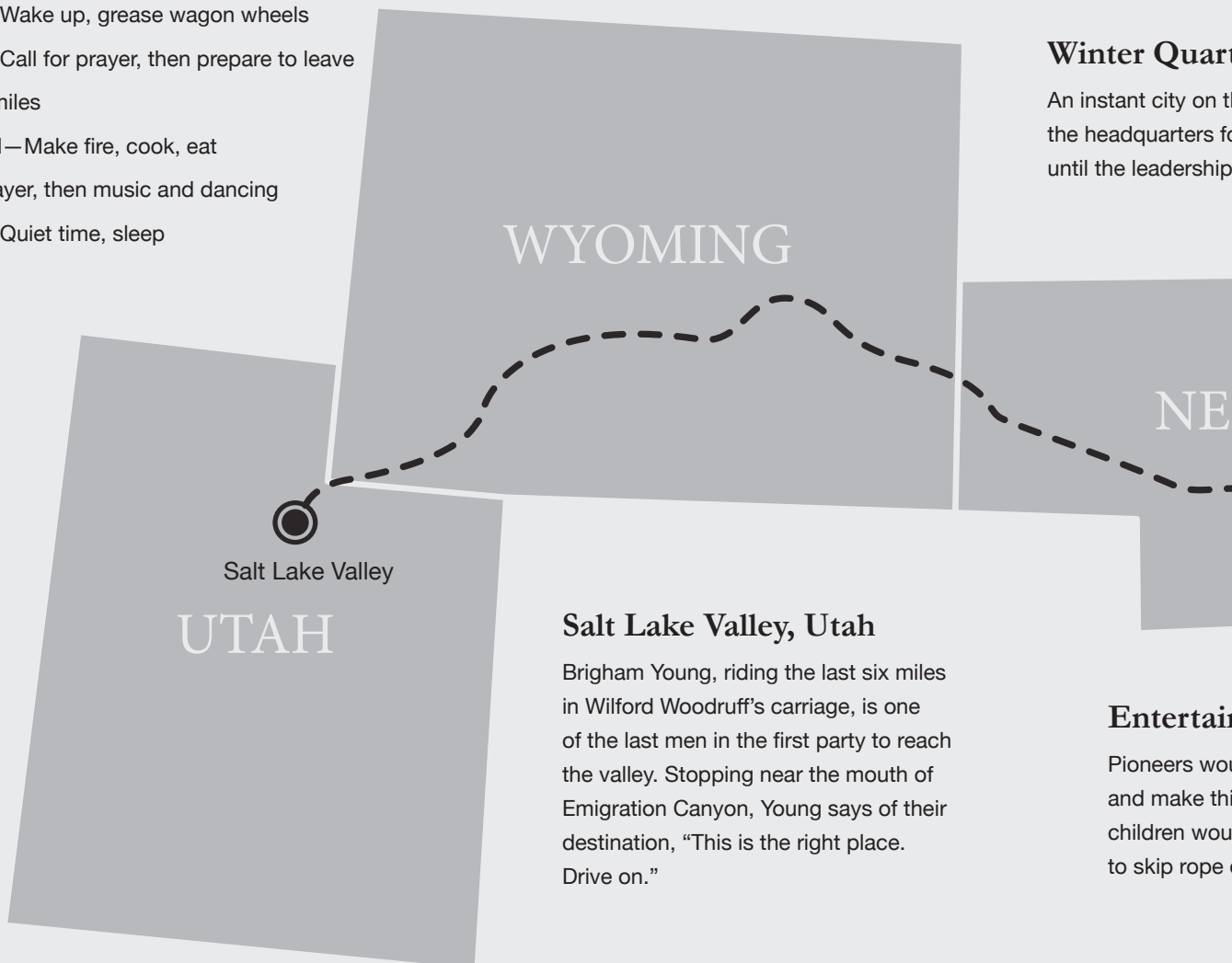
Mormons believe that the church founded by Jesus Christ was restored through a man named Joseph Smith, whom Mormons revere as a prophet. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints became known as “Mormons” because of their belief in *The Book of Mormon*. Many Mormon beliefs brought persecution upon early members. To escape harassment, ranging from destruction of property to murder, the main body of the church moved from Kirtland, Ohio to Jackson County, Missouri and then to Nauvoo, Illinois. After Joseph Smith was imprisoned in Illinois in 1844, he was killed by a mob.

Shortly after Smith’s death, the Mormons, led by Brigham Young, were again driven from their homes by their oppressors. This time, the Mormons emigrated outside of the United States into what was then Mexican territory.

The journey west was undertaken by various methods, including wagon trains and handcart companies. Some traveled around South America by ship to the western coast of California, making their way eastward into Utah. The time period from the arrival of the first Mormon wagon company into what is now Utah in 1847 until the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 is considered the Pioneer Era.

### Wagon Train Schedule:

- 4:30 AM—Wake up, grease wagon wheels
- 5:30 AM—Call for prayer, then prepare to leave
- Travel 15 miles
- After travel—Make fire, cook, eat
- Call for prayer, then music and dancing
- 8:00 PM—Quiet time, sleep



### Winter Quar

An instant city on the...  
the headquarters for...  
until the leadership...

### Salt Lake Valley, Utah

Brigham Young, riding the last six miles in Wilford Woodruff’s carriage, is one of the last men in the first party to reach the valley. Stopping near the mouth of Emigration Canyon, Young says of their destination, “This is the right place. Drive on.”

### Entertain

Pioneers would...  
and make their...  
children would...  
to skip rope...

## TRAVELING ACROSS THE PLAINS

Traveling by ox-cart from Illinois to Utah took about 95 days. Families packed flour, bacon, sugar, tea, coffee, beans, dried fruits, canned goods, salt, dried meats, vinegar, cheese, pickles, oat meal, molasses, bran meal, eggs, and butter. Along the way, emigrants also gathered roots and hunted game to supplement their food supplies.

Traveling with handcarts rather than ox-carts was a faster, easier, and cheaper option. Handcarts were made almost entirely out of wood. They were generally six or seven feet long, the width of a wide track wagon.

The handcart carried about 500 pounds of flour, bedding, extra clothing, cooking utensils, and a tent. Most handcart companies had a few ox-drawn wagons to carry extra supplies. The trip from Illinois to Utah took about 75 days by handcart.

Once the railroad arrived in Utah in 1869, travelers only had to pack enough food for a few days. The train ride from Omaha, Nebraska to Ogden, Utah took 58 hours.

### Omaha, Nebraska:

On the plains, Winter Quarters serves as a home for the Mormons for less than a year, before they move west in 1847.

### Nauvoo, Illinois:

“The word was to cross the Mississippi and to launch out into an unknown wilderness—to go where, no one knew. Who knew anything of the terrors of the journey thither, or of the dangers that might have to be met and contended with?”

- George Q. Cannon



### Amusement:

They would dance and sing, talk with each other, and pass the time by whittling or sewing. Sometimes they would run ahead of the company to make time or to play in other ways.

### Fording a river:

Because the ox-carts had to cross rivers, the bottoms were usually caulked or covered with canvas so they would float.

## THOSE WHO PREPARED THE WAY

Captain Benjamin de Bonneville's journal included a five-page description of the Great Salt Lake. Bonneville was the first to prove that loaded wagons could be taken through South Pass.

Captain John C. Fremont's 1842 report of his expeditions gave a three-page account of the exploration of the Great Salt Lake, the Bear River area, and the Valley of the Great Salt Lake. Fremont highlighted the fertility of the valleys west of the Rocky Mountains.

There were others who traveled to the Salt Lake Valley prior to the arrival of the Mormon Pioneers, including fur trader Justin Grosclaude and mountain men Jim Bridger and Miles Goodyear. The Donner-Reid wagon party cut a path through Emigration Canyon the year before the first Mormon company arrived in the Salt Lake Valley.

Each year the trek became a little easier as a result of experience, discipline, better roads, better bridges, and better ferries. There were also new trailside services such as blacksmithing, medical assistance, military installations, trading establishments, and telegraph stations.



Image courtesy of lds.org

## DRAMATURG'S NOTE

"Years from now your grandchildren will tell with amazement stories of your choices which changed their lives. You will be called their pioneers. Have you ever thought that as you step into the unknown you are showing others the way?" – Bonnie D. Parkin (Deseret News, 24 July 2013)

Being a pioneer in any sense of the word is difficult. The Mormon pioneers left everything they had built up—a city they had created from a veritable marsh, their trades, their livelihood, their temple—to escape persecution. Their exodus to the west was an effort to live their lives the way they chose to without harassment. The settlement in Salt Lake City was influential in creating the United States as we know it today.

Every one of us is a pioneer in some sense. Every innovative plan or personal philosophy is breaking ground on a new tomorrow that, if given time and the right attention, could shape the world we live in. We may not know when or how our story will end up or who will be affected by it, but if we forge ahead, following what we believe in, we control what is written and where the story goes.

- Curtis Cluff

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## CREDITS

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**UVU**  
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY  
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