THE SCANDINAVIAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN UTAH, 1850-1920:
USING MATERIAL CULTURE TO INTERPRET CULTURAL ADAPTATION

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Date
April 29, 2013
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A
DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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Fairbanks, Alaska

May 2013
Abstract

From 1850 to 1920, over 25,000 Scandinavians who had joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints emigrated to Utah to unite themselves with fellow Church members (Mormons) and build their Zion. These Scandinavian immigrants brought distinctive cultural heritages and traditions that contributed to the collective identity in Utah. The majority of literature on Scandinavian immigration to America and Scandinavian immigrants in America, however, neglects to consider the Mormon Scandinavian immigrants in the larger discourse. In addition, many historians of Utah history have concluded that Scandinavian immigrants assimilated culturally and left no trace of their Danish, Norwegian and Swedish traditions.

To understand the Scandinavian immigrant experience in Utah, this study examines the material culture emigrants took and produced in their new home. These objects reveal that rather than totally jettisoning homeland heritage, Scandinavian immigrants and their descendants maintained and modified their traditional folkways, skills, and crafts while comingling them with new cultural traditions.

The work presented here is the product of four years of fieldwork throughout areas in Utah that were predominantly settled by Scandinavians in the nineteenth century. The study concentrates on furniture, pottery, folk painting, textiles, embroidery, tools and implements. Each object was compared to similar
objects in Scandinavia to verify their validity as Scandinavian, then the history of each object was investigated through archival research. Objects and contextual material were examined to elicit their reflection of the immigrant experience and cultural adaptation, especially to understand the evolving identities of Scandinavian Mormons in their new land.

This dissertation analyzes material culture to explore the concepts of acculturation and identity. The artifacts suggest that while immigrants adapted to Utah's desert landscape and adjusted to Church expectations, they retained core aspects of their homeland identities. The findings thus illustrate complexity of identity; that it evolves and that certain threads are perhaps more resilient than others.

The findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on Scandinavians in America and assert that Scandinavians in Utah maintained and perpetuated skills and traditions acquired in their homelands as they adjusted to the culture and environment of their new home.
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Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the product of many people’s generosity, time, and interest. I give special thanks to my dissertation committee: my chair, Mary Ehrlander; and committee members Carol Gold, David Koester, and Lynn Henrichsen. I am immensely grateful for their constant support and encouragement. I appreciated their availability and quick responses to any question. Each of them contributed their expertise from their various fields of discipline and helped me focus and refine the work. I thank Mary Ehrlander for meticulously reading and editing thousands of pages of drafts throughout the three-year process of writing. I could not have asked for a better advisor.

Many archives and museums provided important resources and evidence for this dissertation. I thank Dag Blanck, director of the Swenson Center at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, who encouraged me to apply for the Dagmar and Nils William Olsson Visiting Scholar Award. The two weeks I spent in the Swenson Center in their archives in 2008 provided me with a base of understanding for the Scandinavian immigrant experience in America. I also give immense credit to Craig Smith at the Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum in Salt Lake City who introduced to me to the Museum archives and let me freely peruse the objects, many of which I chose to highlight here. Upon my return to Alaska, Craig graciously searched Museum archives for more objects, pictures and histories that I was unable to
search for myself. I also recognize the various docents of smaller Daughter of Utah Pioneers Museums throughout rural Utah who likewise offered their time and knowledge of community history.

Additionally, I am indebted to various scholars who shared their expertise of various topics addressed in this dissertation. Thomas Carter at the University of Utah offered advice and direction for studying material culture in Utah. Jennifer Eastman Attebery at Idaho State University offered guidance for examining Scandinavians in the West. Julie K. Allen at the University of Wisconsin-Madison provided a model of how to examine nineteenth century Scandinavian Mormons in a scholarly manner. Timothy Scarlett at Michigan Technological University shared his research on pottery in Utah, and similarly Kirk Henrichsen from the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City shared his work of Scandinavian potters and pottery in Utah. David Ericson at David Ericson Fine Art in Salt Lake City and Richard Oman, former curator of the Museum of Church History and Art, provided invaluable insight about Scandinavian-influenced folk painting in Utah. Dale Peel of Peel Furniture Works in Mount Pleasant, Utah offered his expertise in woodwork and cabinetry in nineteenth century rural Utah. To each of these scholars and historians, I am greatly indebted for their time and interest in my work.

Finally, I thank my family and friends who supported me with encouragement, interest, and faith that I could accomplish this undertaking. I am grateful for the hours and hours of babysitting they offered that enabled me to
remain a stay-at-home mother during the six-year process of coursework, fieldwork, and writing. I deeply thank my husband Ben for his help and support throughout this whole effort—an endeavor that has been our entire marriage. Ben listened to me formulate ideas, gave suggestions of what would be important to include, helped solve computer mysteries, watched the kids in the evenings and weekends, and endured my irritability when I was overwhelmed with responsibilities. He did this all while working on his Ph.D. too. Without his support, this work would not have been accomplished.
Background and Purpose of This Study

Scandinavians played significant roles in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ establishment of communities in nineteenth-century Utah. From 1850 to 1920, over 25,000 Scandinavians emigrated to Utah.¹ Like other Mormon converts and emigrants, these Scandinavians brought to their new communities distinctive identities and cultural traditions. Their Scandinavian heritage, in turn, aided in creating a unique Mormon identity in Utah. Many of the Scandinavian homeland traditions and skills transferred both obviously and subtly. This dissertation examines the history of the Scandinavian Mormon emigrants—specifically from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden—and how they and their descendants maintained and adapted cultural traditions through their material culture. This study shows how Scandinavian immigrants and their descendants continued to employ Scandinavian traditions and skills, while comingling them with Mormon and American traditions.

In Europe great changes were taking place in the late nineteenth century. European populations were growing rapidly owing to the disappearance of

pandemics, the increased cultivation of the potato, better tillage techniques, and developments in transportation and communication. Along with this population growth came the Industrial Revolution and modernization that changed the roles of people in production. The surplus population combined with industrialization’s consolidation of human power pushed people to search for new places to find economic gain. Other factors such as political and religious unrest contributed to a desire to relocate. By the 1830s, the United States became the destination of most European emigrants. Between 1821 and 1924, almost thirty-six million people emigrated from Europe to America.

America offered these immigrants possibilities for personal, social, religious, political, and economic freedom and opportunities. By 1885, eighty thousand members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had emigrated from Europe to Utah. The same “push” and “pull” factors that influenced others inspired these Mormon emigrants, but religious conviction was the overwhelming reason for emigration. Along with this opportunity for development, immigrants faced the

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4 Daniels, *Coming to America*, 23.


6 The Mormon concept of “gathering” is explained in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.
challenges of adaptation, acculturation, and retention of cultural traditions.

Mormons united multiple nationalities and ethnicities and produced their own cultural system to respond to conditions in America.\(^7\) In this way, Mormonism has been viewed as both a religion and a cultural system.\(^8\) Each of these concepts will be addressed in further detail in the succeeding chapters.

Material culture is a central element of culture and cultural expression. Material culture is the visible and tangible result of folk behavior and covers the range of objects people make or modify. Material culture study examines the techniques, skills, and formulas that are learned by example within an ongoing tradition of a people.\(^9\) Material culture includes a wide array of objects such as tools, foods and recipes, furniture, woodwork, clothes, quilting, embroidery, instruments, pottery, folk art, and vernacular architecture such as houses and barns. Material culture not only represents ways of life, historical movements, and processes, but also exemplifies the values, ideas, attitudes, latent desires, feelings, thoughts, and assumptions of the people and culture who produce and use the objects.\(^{10}\)

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\(^8\) Lawrence Foster, \textit{Women, Family, and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons} (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 204.


therefore, reflect directly and indirectly the beliefs of the people who make and use them and, by extension, the larger society to which they belong. These objects and symbols also represent what the society values, as reflected in its formal and informal norms. To study material culture is to study history, customs, traditions, politics and economics. Examining immigrant material culture is essential for understanding the American immigrant experience.

The Scandinavian Mormon immigrants in Utah produced considerable material culture that reflected their homeland traditions. This study explores concepts of adaptation, acculturation, and retention of Scandinavian culture focusing on three themes: evolving identity of Mormons, the relationship of the people and their material culture to the landscape, and gender roles reflected in the material culture. This analysis is achieved through the lens of the immigrants’ material culture. In addressing each theme the analysis illustrates how the folk crafts and skills emigrants took with them continued to be practiced, sometimes directly translated, while more typically adapted to fit their new Mormon and American culture. The study focuses on the meaning of these objects for the people who made and used them and how those meanings shed light on transformed identity. The endeavor brings to light Scandinavian cultural persistence in Utah during the immigration period and demonstrates that though some traditions faded, others were maintained in ways that are easily perceptible in some material culture and more subtle in other objects. It is important to note that many of the highlighted
objects in this study, and the techniques associated with them, are not uniquely Scandinavian in origin; the argument is, however, that Scandinavian immigrants brought with them learned skills and heritage from their homelands that they maintained in Utah. This study shows how those traits are evident in nineteenth-century Utah material culture.

The initial motivation for this dissertation arose from the recognition that the vast majority of the extensive literature on Scandinavian immigration to America and Scandinavian immigrants in America focuses on the immigrants who settled in the Midwest—particularly in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and North Dakota. This discourse largely neglects the history of the Scandinavian Mormon converts who immigrated to Utah. Nearly 10 percent of all nineteenth-century Scandinavian immigrants in America were Mormons.\textsuperscript{11} This dissertation aims to bring to light and give scholarly attention to the Mormon Scandinavian experience similar to that of other Scandinavian immigration study.

A further impetus for this dissertation was the assertion in earlier scholarship on Mormon immigrants that Scandinavian immigrants in Utah lost or gave up their cultural heritage and identities when they came to Utah as a byproduct of uniting with fellow Mormons. For instance, Kistie Simmons concluded from her thesis on Scandinavian ethnic identity in Utah that there was “little continuance of

\textsuperscript{11} Kristian Hvidt, \textit{Danes Go West: A Book About the Emigration to America} (Skørping: Rebild National Park Society, 1976), 9.
Scandinavian culture." Similarly, Raymond E. Lindgren stated that “clear proof is found of the abandonment of all national traditions.” Cynthia Rice asserted that “Scandinavians were acculturated rapidly and as a result left few identifiable marks on the landscape.” Admittedly, unlike in the Midwest, there were no exclusively Scandinavian enclaves in Utah that could have provided national solidarity; instead, Scandinavians in Utah comiled with Americans and other Europeans in religious unity. However, their doing so did not equate with a total abandonment of homeland culture. In his studies of Mormon vernacular architecture and furniture, architectural historian Thomas Carter resists the “complex myth of Mormon homogeneity,” asserting, “To understand the enigma that is Mormon culture, then, we must begin not by assuming that there is a single Mormon identity, but by looking carefully at different subregional expressions, the building blocks upon which a complex regional whole may be understood.” Scandinavians, and other immigrant groups, provided such building blocks of culture that contributed to the collective Mormon culture.


I lived and travelled three years in Scandinavia and became familiar with Scandinavian history and material culture. Later, while I was employed as a grant writer and fieldworker for the Utah Humanities Council, I observed that there was a significant amount of Scandinavian tradition and culture in Utah. From this background, I recognized that the alleged cultural disappearance that others had written about was, in fact, not accurate and seemed to be based on a lack of understanding and inability to recognize Scandinavian survivals throughout Utah. I became keenly determined to document the Scandinavian culture and heritage in Utah and to produce a critical and comparative study of the collective material culture of these Scandinavian immigrants that would demonstrate that they did, indeed, maintain aspects of their Scandinavian identity. I felt a need to put these people and their folklore into historical context. I became interested in knowing the stories of their traditions and artifacts, and my interest centered around the everyday life aspect of folklore.

As art historian and Mormon historian Richard Oman stated, “Mormonism embraces the physical with the spiritual.”16 Brigham Young profoundly esteemed the material culture produced and developed by the early pioneers and directed the people to “document their lives by word and artifact.”17 He appreciated the skills of

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17 Marilyn Conover Barker, The Legacy of Mormon Furniture: The Mormon Material Culture, Undergirded by Faith, Commitment, and Craftsmanship (Salt Lake City: Gibbs-Smith, 1995), 11.
the craftsperson, and desired that the Church become self-sufficient and provide for its own needs. Scandinavians responded to Brigham Young's directive.

The aim of this study has been to locate, identify, describe, and interpret Scandinavian material culture in nineteenth century Utah. The work presented here is the product of four years of fieldwork. I have concentrated my investigation on furniture, textiles, kitchen equipment, textile production implements, and carpentry tools. My analysis draws from in-depth visual and ethnological descriptions. I investigated each object, examining its construction and materials, researching the history of the craftsperson and how he or she used the object, as well as the object’s cultural significance and economic value. I used the objects and written texts, both primary and secondary, as my main sources. Relying on archival research and fieldwork, I employ the folkloric methodology outlined by Jennifer Eastman Attebery by “collecting together as many examples of traditional texts as is possible and examining the resulting mass of material for shared characteristics and patterns.”

Drawing from contextual research about the Scandinavian craft tradition, I demonstrate the similarity between objects found in Utah and their Danish, Norwegian, or Swedish counterparts.

This study is qualitative, concerned with cultural persistence, organizational and religious life, artistry and craftsmanship, and gender roles. The study is

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behavior-oriented and is interested in the experience of the maker, both as an individual and as a member of a group, and how these experiences influence the objects he or she makes. I ask questions such as: What were the immigrants’ influence on Utah? What was Utah’s influence on them? What roles do diffusion, acculturation, and assimilation play in tradition? Can an institution, such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, influence tradition? By analyzing and interpreting the ways in which traditions remain or are discarded, I show how Scandinavian culture is meaningful to those who experience, create and celebrate it.

This study has limitations and rests on certain assumptions. The immigrants under study are limited to Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes. Though Icelanders and Finns also immigrated to Utah during the same time period, their numbers were significantly fewer. Their material culture is equally meaningful in examining group identity, but for the purposes of this study, efforts are focused on the larger Scandinavian immigrant groups. The analysis is geographically restricted to Utah, specifically the valleys that contained the highest numbers of Scandinavians: Sanpete, Cache, and Salt Lake. Chronologically, the study is limited to the period between the mid-nineteenth century when missionary work began in Scandinavia.

and the early twentieth century when Scandinavian immigration slowed considerably. Some of the objects I found in my fieldwork did not have labels with maker and date. But because they were found in towns of high Scandinavian population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I presumed they were made by Scandinavians or their descendants. This study excludes vernacular architecture, as Thomas Carter’s dissertation is an extensive study on the topic.20 Although some of the techniques and styles here are not exclusively Scandinavian in origin, the point is to demonstrate that Scandinavians and their descendants employed skills acquired in Scandinavia.

Certain terminology must be defined to enhance the clarity of the thesis. For the purposes of this dissertation, the terms Scandinavian and immigrants include both the immigrants from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden and their descendants; in this way the study is generational but limited to the period between 1850 and 1920. The organization, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is referred to as the Church, while its members and doctrines are referred to as Mormon—an alternate name stemming from members’ belief in the Book of Mormon as a holy text to be used in conjunction with the Bible. Though The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints falls within the broad umbrella of Christianity, Mormonism is referred to at times in the text as a new religion, owing to certain rather sharp

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distinctions from mainstream Christianity, namely the belief in the Book of Mormon and the belief in Joseph Smith and his successors as living prophets. Within the context of this study the terms *frontier* and *West* refer to the intermountain region of the American West—Nevada, Utah, and parts of Idaho, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico—with primary focus on Utah. It is also important to note the differences between the definitions of assimilation and acculturation. This study defines assimilation as when a minority group is absorbed into a dominant group until the minority no longer exists as a separate identity. Acculturation, however, is when immigrants retain their homeland identity while also becoming part of their new culture. This dissertation centers on the notion of acculturation and how the Scandinavian minority culture remained distinct, yet in an altered manner.

Outline of This Study

This introductory chapter presents the aims and contribution of the study and presents its central theses and underlying assumptions. The second chapter provides a literature review that contextualizes historiographically the dissertation by highlighting the seminal sources that grounded the examination. The topics surveyed are American immigration and Scandinavian emigration and ethnicity, Manifest Destiny and westward migration, gender in the West, the concept of the

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21 The five major religions in the world are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Chinese folk religion, and Buddhism.
American frontier, nineteenth-century Mormonism, nineteenth-century Mormon Scandinavian emigration, the significance and meaning of material culture for a culture and identity, and Scandinavian Mormon folklore and material culture. Throughout this review, I demonstrate how the existing literature relates to my work and explain my contribution to the existing literature in the field. This chapter also presents the methodologies employed in this examination of Scandinavian material culture. The chapter also explains how my primary research—the discovery of objects, the interviews conducted, and the research done in archives throughout Utah—is the core of my dissertation.

The third chapter presents the history of early Mormonism and its introduction to Scandinavia to provide the religious and cultural context for the Scandinavian Mormon experience. I outline various aspects of the structure of Mormon thought and philosophy, including the role of the concept of gathering followed by migration and the metaphorical and literal building of Zion. This background elucidates the immigrants’ reasoning for joining themselves with the Church and leaving their homelands.

The body of the dissertation addresses three themes: evolving identity, adaptation to the landscape, and gender roles. The first theme—evolving identity—encompasses the national, religious, and cultural changes the immigrants experienced as they joined the Church and made their home in America. Leaving the countries of their ancestors to become Americans required a change in national
identity. For a people whose ancestry went back numerous generations, to suddenly become American created struggles in feelings of belonging and loyalty. I ask, what were the principal characteristics of the Scandinavian Mormon immigrant experience? How did these Mormons adapt to their new surroundings and reconcile their nationality? Similarly, the implications of leaving Lutheranism and converting to Mormonism were not only theological but also social. Abandoning the religious traditions of forefathers created alienation from countrymen, and many converts were ostracized and even forced from their towns and country. Furthermore, leaving behind their homelands and embracing American culture inevitably meant that, with time, cultural traditions transformed or fell away. Certain homeland values, however, were complementary with their new identity such as the importance of frugality, family, and hard work. Through this discussion I examine various objects that evidence the evolution of identity. I look at traditional carpentry tools, folk painting, religious furniture and clothing, family Bibles and other religious literature, trunks, wooden clogs, wooden spoons, baskets, folk dress, and Scandinavian gatherings and festivals that demonstrate the performance aspect of material culture. Each object’s use and meaning exhibits the evolution of identity unique to these immigrants in Utah as well as how they took elements of their native cultures and incorporated them into their new lives and identities.

The fifth chapter shows how Scandinavian immigrants adapted to Utah’s landscape. It addresses the climate and geography and how immigrants responded
and adapted to the arid landscape, so different from their coastal homelands. The chapter investigates the broad context of Utah in general and then examines more closely the valleys in which the Scandinavians settled. Though the immigrants continued in farming as they had in Scandinavia, the arid conditions throughout Utah provided new challenges in agriculture. The landscape also affected the materials they used. Traditional crafts were modified to use whatever wood, fiber, or clay was available. I consider the economy and how the various industries influenced and affected the people and the objects they produced and used. Folk and landscape painting, furniture construction and design, and pottery production and use specifically adapted to the Utah frontier manifest adaptation.

Chapter six analyzes gender and the roles it played in the production and use of Scandinavian material culture. I first consider the Church’s nineteenth-century view on gender roles and their complementarity and apply that to the production and use of objects by Scandinavian men and women. For example, men traditionally performed woodworking and carpentry, whereas women executed textile and clothing production as learned in their homelands. Accordingly, men and women employed tools closely associated with their separate spheres, and I examine those tools and objects: household tools such as water carriers, food choppers, potato graters, rolling pins, butter molds, and irons; textile tools such as wood carders, spinning wheels, and looms; and handwork such as knitting, samplers, and embroidery. I consider objects created by both sexes and draw conclusions as to
how gender affected the objects’ purposes and interpretations specific to these immigrants.

This study does not dispute that over time as immigrants settled into their American lives, their distinctly Scandinavian culture became increasingly difficult to differentiate within the larger frontier and Mormon context. It is evident that cultural traditions, skills, and crafts were influenced by Western culture and Mormon ideology and that certain cultural traits faded for immigrants. Especially within the Church, where the gathering brought together people of different cultures, there was a great synthesis of ideas and style, and religious assimilation. I argue against complete cultural convergence and acceptance, however, among the early Scandinavian immigrants in Utah. Though immigrants were amalgamated from a variety of different cultures into a single people, they did not totally discard former traditions. This study shows how Scandinavian immigrants in Utah negotiated an evolving balance between joining themselves to a larger united whole and still maintaining their heritage. As Thomas Carter states, "what is significant is the innovative way these elements were combined to produce a distinctive local form, instead of simply a copy of an older or a contemporary popular form." Their material culture illustrates that Scandinavian Mormons adapted their various identities as they settled into their new conditions and a new culture on the American frontier. My research demonstrates that though Scandinavian immigrants

came to Utah to help build the Mormon Zion, rather than completely assimilating into a homogeneous culture, they maintained traditional folkways and skills, adapting them to the American frontier and Mormon community.
Introduction

To best understand and interpret the history and experiences of nineteenth-century Scandinavian immigrants in Utah, it is imperative to be familiar with the extensive historical and social context associated with the people and their native culture. This chapter reviews the literature addressing the range of topics that ground and contextualize this study. Each section highlights the seminal pieces in the historiography of the topic and notes how these analyses inform and apply to this research project. Ultimately I demonstrate how the existing literature relates to my work and explain my contribution to the existing literature in the field.

First, I address immigration to America generally, and then more specifically address Scandinavian emigration and ethnic transformations. I then examine the concepts of Manifest Destiny and westward migration and how they influenced Scandinavian immigrants. Next I address gender in the West and how it affected pioneers’ roles. I also analyze the concept of the American frontier and how Scandinavian emigrants/immigrants adapted to create a comparative context. I then consider the significance and meaning of material culture for a culture and identity. These theories and methods aid me in illustrating how an object can illuminate a larger concept; i.e. identity, landscape, or gender. Next, I examine various studies
that have been done on Scandinavian Mormon folklore and material culture and explore how Scandinavian material culture maintained and adapted its traditions when relocated in Utah. The chapter concludes with the methodology employed in this research and how the literature addressed is integrated into the study. My extensive ethnographic and folkloric fieldwork in Utah has provided the objects I use as examples. This primary research—the discovery of objects, the interviews conducted, and the research done in archives throughout Utah—is the core of my dissertation.

This study is largely in concordance with preceding scholars’ analysis of the Scandinavian culture among immigrants in America. Where this study diverges—and where its primary value lies—is in its inclusion of the Scandinavian immigrants in Utah in the broader history of Scandinavian immigrants in America. Its singularity within Mormon scholarship is in the evidence that Scandinavian immigrants did indeed maintain homeland traditions, particularly in the form of their material culture.

American Immigration and Scandinavian Emigration and Ethnicity

The literature on American immigration is extensive, with myriad subjects and issues explored. Much of twentieth-century immigration literature stems from Oscar Handlin’s seminal monograph, *The Uprooted*, published in 1951, which
considered the effects of immigration on individual immigrants.¹ Handlin focused on the immigrants’ adaptation and assimilation in a new culture. He noted that immigrants sought support from people back in their homelands and created communities that helped them transition to their new lives. John Bodnar’s *The Transplanted*, published in 1987, an obvious response to Handlin’s work, turned from the analysis of individuals and analyzed instead migrating networks.² Bodnar noted how immigrants encouraged family and friends to immigrate, typically resulting in ethnic enclaves. The immigrants then looked to other immigrants of their homelands for help in adjusting and finding jobs and learning where services could be found. Bodnar examined America’s need for immigrants in the development and growth of capitalism and considered immigrants as an essential element in American free enterprise.

Later scholars linked concepts of immigration to Americanization. In 1983, Thomas J. Archdeacon claimed in *Becoming American: An Ethnic History*, that immigration was the starting point of a process that ended in Americanization—implying that immigrants wanted not only to become American politically as citizens, but also culturally.³ In “Forming a Transnational Narrative: New

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Perspectives on European Migration to the United States,” published in 2001, David A. Gerber disputed this claim of assimilation. He asserted that by maintaining cultural traditions, immigrants established identities made from comingling their homeland traditions with American traditions. In 2000, Orm Øverland examined the creation and dissemination of “homemaking myths” in *Immigrant Minds, American Identities*. Øverland explained these “myths” as “stories told in immigrant/ethnic groups that both bolstered members’ confidence in their identities as Americans and proved to other Americans . . . that their particular group had a unique right to a home in the United States.” This dissertation draws from the acculturative ideas of Gerber, Øverland, and others who argued that, instead of completely discarding homeland identities and traditions, immigrants both retained and gradually reshaped their ethnic identities by blending them with traditions encountered in their new homeland.

The historiography of Scandinavian-American immigration demonstrates an evolution in historical methodologies. Generally speaking the first writings on Scandinavian immigration of the late nineteenth century were highly ethnocentric

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and filiopietistic. The commentaries of the early twentieth century, however, took a more professionalized and academic approach to Scandinavian immigration history in the works of historians such as George Stephenson, Theodore Blegen, and Helge Nelson. The work of this era was mostly quantitative, relying on demographics, other statistics, and economic and social characteristics of Scandinavian immigrants. Historians were less concerned with the social reasons for migration and more interested in aggregates and patterns.

Around the 1960s, the discourse became more qualitative and began to include ethnicity and the perpetuation of cultural traditions, with an increasing interest in regional studies rather than the general migration experience. Writers such as Sture Lindmark, Ulf Beibom, and Kristian Hvidt combined contemporary social science methods with the study of ethnic customs to learn whether and how various customs were maintained. Such scholars opened the door for the exploration of Scandinavian immigrant cultural history, and showed how distinct regions demonstrated divergent yet, in some ways, similar cultural patterns.

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7 Filiopietism is defined as excessive or exaggerated veneration of tradition or ancestors. Some of the earlier historians who exemplified this were Svein Nilsson, Johan A. Enander, Kendric C. Babcock, and Adolph B. Benson.


Today, historians are studying cultural and ethnic aspects of Scandinavian migration. Robert Ostergren, Dag Blanck, Lars Ljungmark, Hans Norman, and Harald Runblom have examined the transnational aspects of Scandinavian ethnic expression and the shifting patterns in Scandinavian ethnicity.\textsuperscript{10} They have traced ethnic roots and have explored how blending with American culture has affected Scandinavian ethnicity. Their discourse provides insight into how immigrants maintain their heritage to varying degrees. These writers' studies provide a foundational understanding of ethnic concepts upon which this study relies.

A branch of contemporary Scandinavian immigration scholars has examined the folkloric aspects of emigration and immigrants. Much of H. Arnold Barton's work takes this cultural approach, and in a 2007 collection of cultural history essays entitled, \textit{The Old Country and the New: Essays in Sweden and America}, he has explored topics including material culture, women's encounters with America, and immigrant letters.\textsuperscript{11} Similarly, contemporary historian and folklorist Jennifer Eastman Attebery has examined the vernacular form and folk practice of letter writing in \textit{Up in the Rocky Mountains: Writing the Swedish Immigrant Experience},


published in 2007. Attebery has argued that letters convey, among other meanings, “implicit and explicit identity claims,” and that immigrants continually negotiated national and ethnic identities and where their loyalties lay. Other contemporary scholars, such as Phebe Fjellström, Larry Danielson, Lena Palmqvist, Lizette Gradén, Barbo Klein, and Birgitta Svensson have examined topics of settlement, building traditions, religion, language, the role of women, education, art, foodways, and folk traditions. These historians have helped bring everyday life aspects of immigrant experiences into the larger discussion of the Scandinavian immigrant experience in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding. This study of Scandinavian material culture in Utah follows this contemporary approach of examining culture to shed light on the immigrant experience.

Two comprehensive Scandinavian history books, T. K. Derry’s *A History of Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland*, published in 1980, and

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Byron J. Nordstrom’s *Scandinavia Since 1500*, published in 2000, offer historical overviews of Scandinavia to the present day, providing historical context for this study. These books assist in understanding the historical, political, economic, and social settings from which immigrants came and help students of Scandinavian studies place their work in that historical context. Derry emphasizes the countries’ common cultural, political and social settings. Nordstrom’s narrative history surveys political, diplomatic, social, economic, and cultural conditions in Scandinavia. He has shown how Scandinavians responded to foreign religions, political ideas, economic practices, intellectual movements, and technological concepts within the unique Scandinavian setting.

These above-mentioned sources on American immigration and Scandinavian emigration and ethnicity help explain the intricacies of immigration and how it socially, culturally, and politically affects immigrants’ identities and loyalties. Essential to many of these discussions are the concepts of assimilation and acculturation. In his 1997 essay, "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation," John W. Berry placed acculturation into four categories: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. This study centers on integration: when individuals are able to adopt the cultural norms of the dominant or culture while

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maintaining their homeland culture. Relevant to this study's focus is how acculturation affects cultural identity in the adopted homeland. While the Scandinavian Mormon immigrants settled fairly easily in Utah and comingled with Church members of various nationalities, they also maintained many homeland traditions. This study demonstrates the maintenance of tradition.

Manifest Destiny and Westward Migration

America offered Scandinavians in the nineteenth century the possibilities of freedom and development in the personal, social, religious, political, and economic realms. Many foreigners viewed America as a prosperous place where they could begin new lives and create opportunities for themselves and their posterity. Part of America's attraction to both emigrants and Americans was the idea of "Manifest Destiny," a term coined by journalist John O'Sullivan in 1845. Manifest Destiny was the belief that the United States was preordained to expand across the continent. It is most often associated with the territorial expansion of the United States from 1812 to 1860.17 As historian William E. Weeks noted in 1996, there were three key themes espoused by advocates of Manifest Destiny: population growth required more land; American expansion was sanctioned by God, and expansion of

17 New York Morning News, December 27, 1845.
democratic institutions meant expansion of freedom for the people. Manifest Destiny was a uniquely American phenomenon that some argued assisted in the country's growth and development, while others more critically viewed it as rationalization for imperialist expansion.

Tied to the notion of Manifest Destiny was westward migration and the growth of human potential in a "frontier" setting. In 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner presented his essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," which claimed that the spirit and success of the United States was directly tied to westward expansion. At that time, the American frontier was generally considered the most western edge of settlement. Turner promoted the notion that because of its lack of social and political institutions the frontier had a liberating influence upon people. According to Turner, the frontier produced a new and uniquely American citizen—one with the ability to tame the wild and one upon whom the wild had conferred strength and individuality. Turner noted this at the close of his address:

That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness, that practical inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients, that masterful

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20 According to Turner, the Mormons were continually on the western frontier from western New York to Kirtland, Ohio to Far West, Missouri, to Nauvoo, Illinois to the Great Salt Lake Basin. A century later, Gerald Nash and Martin Ridge declared separately that the western region was a spiritual place, not a physical place. See Gerald Nash, "Where's the West?," *Historian, IL* (1986); Martin Ridge, "The American West: From Frontier to Region," *New Mexico Historical Review* 64, no. (1989). In Ridge's words, "There is a psychological and not a physiographic fault line that separates regions." Ridge, "The American West," 140.
grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends, that restless nervous energy, that dominant individualism working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom—these are the traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the frontier.\textsuperscript{21}

Many immigrants appeared to possess these qualities of restlessness and resourcefulness. The conditions demanded such assets as they navigated their way in the rugged landscape.

People moved west for various reasons: for economic advancement, usually by acquiring land for their own farms; for mining opportunities such as the 1849 gold rush in California; and for religious freedom. The Mormons' westward movement was a religious pilgrimage. They embodied many of the ideals of Manifest Destiny and Turner's concept of the frontier. They believed God willed their journey westward and that their "promised land" was in the West.\textsuperscript{22} In 1845, Mormon leader Parley P. Pratt said, "We want a country where we have room to expand, and to put into requisition all our energies and the enterprise and talents of a numerous, and intelligent, and increasing people."\textsuperscript{23} Yet, as Davis Bitton contended in 1966 in "A Re-Evaluation of the 'Turner Thesis and Mormon Beginnings,'" Mormons of the nineteenth century were seldom thought of as being typically American in

\textsuperscript{21}Turner, \textit{The Frontier in American History}, 37.

\textsuperscript{22}Thomas O'Dea's \textit{The Mormons} was the first to relate Turner's theory to Mormons. Though only brief mention, O'Dea recognized that the westward movement had tremendous significance for the Mormons. See Thomas F. O'Dea, \textit{The Mormons} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 7, 117.

\textsuperscript{23}B.H. Roberts, \textit{A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints} (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1930), 464.
democratic or individualistic terms. Bitton argued that Mormon collectivism conflicted with laissez-faire economic practices of the time. This research shows that Mormons were indeed communal in many more aspects than other Americans; though they were pioneers in moving westward into unsettled territory, they created a rather insular community.

Before the 1930s, few historians found fault with Turner’s thesis. By the 1970s, however, revisionist criticism identified significant flaws in the thesis, namely the exclusion of women and minorities from the narrative. In the 1980s the New Western History movement arose in opposition to the concept of the frontier and American exceptionalism. New Western historians focused on race, class, ethnicity, gender, religion, and the environment in the trans-Mississippi West. Turner had argued that “the first ideal of the pioneer was that of conquest. It was his task to fight with nature for the chance to exist... All had to be met and defeated.” Patricia Nelson Limerick, one of the foremost scholars of New Western History, claimed that the West was indeed a cultural ideal signifying conquest. In her book, The Legacy of Conquest: the Unbroken Past of the American Present, published in 1987, she wrote: “Conquest forms the historical bedrock of the whole nation, and

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25 Ibid., 331.

the American West is a preeminent case study in conquest and its consequences.\textsuperscript{27} In contrast to Turner's emphasis on the act of conquest, however, Limerick analyzed how conquest related to ethnic, environmental, and economic issues and how these issues remain part of the West's "legacy of conquest" today. This dissertation shows how Mormons did indeed embody the ideals of the frontier and establishment, but how their quest centered around the principles of a utopian self-contained community and was less a political or economic enterprise.

Gender in the West

As noted, for almost a century after Turner's thesis, women's roles in Western history were seen as minimally significant. In 1993, Glenda Riley, maintained in her essay, "Frederick Jackson Turner Overlooked the Ladies" that Turner's ironically exceptionalist theory omitted women, in devoting the frontier story to men's actions.\textsuperscript{28} Riley identified three reasons why Turner disregarded women: he taught history "in a largely male enclave," he built his work on that of previous writers who overlooked women, and he emphasized political and economic, rather than social, history. Riley noted that Turner was more interested

in masses of people—in types rather than individuals. By overlooking individuals, Turner’s theory was overly general and failed to elucidate the experiences of actual people.

Prior to the last few decades, those who did write of Western women tended to present them from a masculine perspective. Women’s stories were told from a preconceived outside perspective with masculine interpretations imposed upon their feminine history. As Dee Brown portrayed women in his book, *The Gentle Tamers*, published in 1958, women’s role on the frontier was to civilize and bring gentility to the West. Their husbands came to tame the West, whereas they came to civilize it. As Joan M. Jensen and Darlis A. Miller pointed out in 1980 in “The Gentle Tamers Revisited,” historians of the previous decades stereotyped women in the West in four major images: “gentle tamers, sunbonneted helpmates, hell-raisers, and bad women.”

Such approaches eventually exhausted themselves and scholars began to seek new modes of examination. They argued that the study of women’s history was valuable and essential in understanding the human experience through time and that men and women interacted with each other and the world around them.

Historians of the 1980s such as Lillian Schlissel and Susan Armitage helped

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audiences recognize that a more effective way to know these women was to study their lives through the stories and histories the women themselves left behind. In The Women's West, published in 1987, Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson explained that “the crucial step in women's history is to see women as actors, not as onlookers in history.” With this methodological reconceptualization, the discussion of nineteenth-century Western women opened to a more personal study of the women, looking more intimately at what the women thought and felt for themselves. Elizabeth Jameson claimed, "We need to approach western women's history, not through the filters of prescriptive literature or concepts of frontier liberation and oppression, but through the experience of the people who lived the history." Historians began to interpret history through women’s eyes using primary sources such as their journals, diaries, letters, material culture, and other folkforms. These Western women's scholars aimed to identify and correct the oversights and stereotypes found in previous histories and see women as central, rather than secondary or incidental to the Western story. To understand what women valued materially, they asked questions about what these women brought with them to the frontier, what they held onto, and what they chose to leave behind.

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Scholarship on Mormon women is a recent field, with serious scholarship beginning in the 1980s. Many general studies on Western women, such Sandra L. Myres’s *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience 1880-1915*, published in 1982, and Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson’s *The Women’s West*, included only brief discussions of Mormon women within the larger context of Western women.34 Writers of the same time period such as Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Marie Cornwall Madsen, however, devoted exclusive attention to nineteenth-century Mormon women, both as individuals and as a group.35 Beecher’s work centered on women’s daily work and the interaction of genders within the Mormon context, while Madsen based much of her work around the institutional roles of women in the Church. Both examined how gender roles were largely dependent on the Church’s expectations of women, which conformed to Victorian ideals. Lawrence Foster in “Frontier Activism to Neo-Victorian Domesticity: Mormon Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries”36 examined the shift from rugged frontier demands that blended gender roles to the resumption of typical roles after settlement took place. Kathryn Daynes’s book, *More Wives Than One*:

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36 Lawrence Foster, "From Frontier Activism to Neo-Victorian Domesticity: Mormon Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Mormon History* 6, no. (1979).
Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840-1910, published in 2001, examined extensively polygamy in Manti, Utah, how and why women entered plural marriage, and how immigration and affluence affected their decisions. These recent Mormon gender-related commentaries, combined with the theoretical framework of Western women’s history, have provided insightful analysis of the relationships between Mormon men and women. Through the examination of personal accounts and everyday objects, this dissertation shows how Mormon men and women navigated together the challenges of frontier life.

Nineteenth-Century Mormonism

Although their cultural purpose was to build a utopian community, Mormons played significant roles in the social and economic development of the American West. Leonard Arrington’s Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, published in 1958, initiated the examination of the Mormon contribution to the development of the American West. Spanning the period from the arrival of the Mormon pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley to the end of the nineteenth century, Arrington’s study examined the various economic ideas, techniques, and endeavors by which the Mormons sought to build a self-contained society in the pre-railroad


era. Four decades later, Arrington and Davis Bitton compiled a general history of the Church and its people: *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints.*\(^{39}\) Arrington and Bitton examined the origin of the religion, reasons for conversion, the persecution the church encountered, the migration of converts, political conflict encountered, as well as gender and social issues. These two books are critical works for understanding Mormon history and the politics of settlement.

In 1987, Jan Shipps published *Mormonism: the Story of a New Religious Tradition*, in which she went beyond historical chronicling and interpreted the formative stages in the history of the Church.\(^{40}\) Shipps is the foremost non-Mormon scholar to study Mormon history and used little sectarian rhetoric, taking into account both analytic and sympathetic viewpoints to create a study that showed that events, conditions, and experiences can have different meanings depending on the frame of reference. Shipps’s external interpretation provided a model for this analysis, the objective of which has been both to interpret and understand rather than celebrate or denigrate immigrants’ experiences.

A defining era in early Mormon history was the handcart migration of 1856-1860. During this period, 3,000 people, many of whom were Scandinavian, pushed and pulled handcarts from Iowa to Utah where they would join a Mormon


community, demonstrating their religious conviction. In 1960, LeRoy Reuben Hafen and Ann W. Hafen published the history of the journey in *Handcarts to Zion: The Story of a Unique Western Migration, 1856-1860*. Hafen and Hafen recounted the history with personal accounts, journals, church reports, rosters of members of the ten companies that made the journey, maps, and statistical charts showing information on how many people were in each company, when they left Iowa City and arrived in Salt Lake City, and how many deaths occurred en route. This book’s value is in its first-hand accounts that relate individual experiences including how the occurrences solidified or undermined the travellers’ faith in the Church.

Mormon settlement patterns reveal important aspects of early Church history and developments. In 1952, Lowry Nelson published *The Mormon Village: A Pattern and Technique of Land Settlement*, in which he examined the social aspects of the Mormon village. While American contemporaries were establishing homesteads on separate farms, the Mormons adopted the farm village pattern of settlement with homes and yards located in the village. These villages exemplified social cohesion based on a common belief system. Nelson’s study placed the Mormon village pattern in the context of other American patterns of settlement (i.e. the isolated farmstead or the line village) and showed how the Mormon socialist

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ideology contrasted with other patterns and motives for settlement on the frontier. Nelson’s work, along with knowledge of Scandinavian settlement patterns, sheds light on how immigrants retained homeland housing ways while adopting the uniquely Mormon village pattern.

In addition to the physical aspects of Mormon settlement, in 1978, Richard V. Francaviglia examined the Mormon rural cultural landscape in The Mormon Landscape: Existence, Creation, and Perception of a Unique Image in the American West. Francaviglia defined cultural landscape in the Mormon context as “the totality of the real religious and folk elements such as chapels, homes, barns, gardens and fences, and their combinations.” Francaviglia argued that the “Mormon landscape” combined cultural and visual characteristics, a concept essential to understanding Scandinavian influence on the landscape as well as how the landscape affected the immigrants.

A basic understanding of early Mormon history requires a meaningful analysis of aspects of early Mormon culture. The nuances of a specific history help explain various aspects of the culture and later events. The various impacts (i.e. economic, social, environmental) of Mormons in the West, are reflected in the material culture produced by the people. Being familiar with these impacts enhances interpretation of the meaning of material culture.

43 For description of these village patterns see Nelson, The Mormon Village, 4-22.

Nineteenth-Century Scandinavian Mormon Emigration

_The History of the Scandinavian Mission_, compiled in 1927 by Andrew Jenson, addresses events from the beginning of missionary work in Scandinavia in 1850 through 1926. It provides statistics of baptisms, names, dates, locations of missionary events in Scandinavia, and convert accounts of conversion. This volume offers demographic information as well as personal narratives that contribute to understanding the early missionary work in Scandinavia and how it affected subsequent conversion in Scandinavia.

_Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia_, by William Mulder, published in 1957, is the foremost piece of literature on nineteenth-century Scandinavian Mormon history. The scholarly monograph chronicles the introduction of the Church in Scandinavia, Scandinavian responses both from converts and other countrymen, the motivation for emigration, and the migration, settlement, and integration of converts in Utah. The work takes into consideration Mormon doctrine and reasons for adopting lifestyle changes and demands. Mulder’s historical study draws extensively from immigrant journals and narratives to relate their experiences and roles in the history of Scandinavian migration and the

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46 William Mulder, _Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia_ (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
settlement of the West. Mulder also wrote numerous articles examining the Scandinavian Mormons that analyzed in similar fashion aspects of Mormonism’s influence in Scandinavia, letters to home written by immigrants, and the concept of “Skandinavisme” which was the inclusively Scandinavian perspective upon nationality.\textsuperscript{47}

Gerald M. Haslam’s 1984 book, \textit{Clash of Cultures: The Norwegian Experience with Mormonism, 1842-1920} thoroughly examined the Church’s introduction to Norway, its political and social reception, and subsequent communities built in Norway.\textsuperscript{48} Its scope is limited to the Norwegian history of the Church and does not examine the emigration or immigrants in Utah. Unlike any previous scholar, Haslam integrated Mormon and non-Mormon sources into a unified narrative. He did this by synthesizing national and LDS Church official records with eighty manuscript journals to determine “the social, religious and educational backgrounds; the diet, clothing and means of transportation; and factors of conversion, social and recreational activities, and religious practices of resident Norwegian Mormons.”\textsuperscript{49}


\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., xiv.
Haslam's work is an essential source for comprehending the Norwegian context for the Mormon experience.

Similarly, Julie K. Allen, a contemporary historian of Scandinavian history, has recently focused on the impact of modernity on conceptions of religion and religious freedom in Denmark in the mid to late nineteenth century, and the growth of the Mormon Church in Denmark during that time. Her work examines the notion of personal choice in relation to religious freedom, and how Danes reacted to the introduction of Mormonism. By using journal entries, Allen demonstrates an inside non-Mormon perspective of Mormonism in Denmark during its peak years of conversion.

As far as examining the settlement experience of immigrants, various studies of Sanpete County written in the mid to late twentieth century chronicled the Scandinavian colonization of the area, where the majority of the Scandinavian immigrants to Utah settled. The three most authoritative histories of the area are: *A History of Sanpete County* by Albert C.T. Antrei and Allen D. Roberts, published in 1999; *The Other Forty-Niners: A Topical History of Sanpete County, Utah, 1849-1983*, edited by Antrei and Ruth D. Scow, published in 1983; and *These Our Fathers: A Centennial History of Sanpete County, 1849-1947*, compiled by The Daughters of Utah

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Pioneers of Sanpete County, published in 1947. These histories address geography, Mormon settlement, and the economic, social, and political development from settlement to the time of publication. More personalized accounts of the history of the county can be found in the annual series, *Saga of the Sanpitch*, published from 1969 to 1998, which compiled experiences and reminisces of individual residents of Sanpete County, most of whom were Scandinavian immigrants or people with Scandinavian heritage.

The majority of these Sanpete County histories simply recount events in the county's history. Folklorist William Wilson, however, examined personal stories in his 1979 essay, "Folklore of Utah's Little Scandinavia." However, Wilson's assessment of the various folklore of Sanpete County summarized narratives into four main themes: the challenge of settling in a new and inhospitable land, the task of building and maintaining a temple, the struggle with coming to terms with polygamy, and the transition for Scandinavian converts to come to terms with a new

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language, culture, and identity.\textsuperscript{54} Wilson demonstrated how stories can be interpreted to explain deeper cultural meanings.

This study echoes Wilson’s analysis by seeking deeper meanings than the timelines, stories, or objects themselves reveal on the surface. A mere recounting of events is not as effective as interpretation and analysis in understanding a people and their culture. This dissertation aims to tell the story of Scandinavian immigrants in Utah through the examination of their material culture; by examining their objects, the immigrants’ values can be elucidated.

The Study of Material Culture

The body of this study examines objects, or material culture, to analyze the Scandinavian immigrant experience in Utah. In \textit{Folklore and Folklife}, published in 1972, folklorist Richard M. Dorson defined material culture as the visible and tangible aspect of folk behavior.\textsuperscript{55} Swedish ethnologist Bengt af Klintberg describes folklore as the “traditional cultural forms that are communicated between individuals through words or actions and tend to exist in variation.”\textsuperscript{56} Folklore has

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Ibid.,151.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Richard M. Dorson, \textit{Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 2.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Thomas A. Green, \textit{Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art} (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1997), s.v. "Folklore."
\end{itemize}
been defined by others as “the unwritten learnings of a people,” as “the artistic communication in small groups,” and as “the traditional, unofficial, non-institutionalized part of culture that encompasses all knowledge, understanding, values, attitudes, assumptions, feelings and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or by customary example.” Material culture, a form of folklore, comprises the range of objects made or modified by people, and examines the techniques, skills, and formulas that are learned by example within an ongoing tradition of a people. Material culture includes a wide array of objects such as tools, toys, foods, furniture, woodwork, clothes, quilting, embroidery, instruments, pottery, fences, and vernacular architecture such as houses and barns. The knowledge and learned skills applied in the making of the objects renders them folklore.

In the 1968 essay, "Ethos, World-View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols," anthropologist Clifford Geertz wrote that “meaning can only be stored in symbols.” Material culture study searches for the symbolic meanings of artifacts. This field of study acknowledges that material culture not only represents historical movements,

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60 Toelken, *The Dynamics of Folklore*, 9.

processes, and ways of life but also represents the values, ideas, attitudes, latent desires, feelings, thoughts, and assumptions of the people and culture who made and used them. Objects, therefore, reflect directly and indirectly the beliefs of the people who make and/or use them and, by extension, the larger society to which they belong. These objects and symbols also represent norms of the producer/owner and culture. To study material culture is to study subjects such as history, customs, traditions, politics and economics. In his 1963 book, *Cultural Anthropology*, anthropologist Melville Herskovits defined material culture as “the totality of artifacts in a culture; the vast universe of objects used by humankind to cope with the physical world, to facilitate social intercourse, to delight our fancy, and to create symbols of meaning.”

Thus the term *material culture* refers to both the material and the culture to which it belongs.

The material culturist continually asks how objects reflect the culture of the people who produced them. In 1975, folklorist Henry Glassie stated, “Artifacts are worth studying because they yield information about the ideas in the minds of people long dead. Culture is pattern in mind, the ability to make things like sentences or houses. These things are all that the analyst has to work with in his struggle to get back to the ideas that are culture.” By inferring the mental processes of individuals as they interact with objects, folklorists can also develop an

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understanding of the collective aesthetic preferences and philosophies of the group to which the individual belongs.

From its beginning, material culture studies has not been a theoretically self-sufficient discipline. It has tended to rely on theories from adjacent fields that also examined objects in their studies such as ethnology, ethnohistory, cultural history, cultural anthropology, social anthropology, geography, religion, psychology, archeology, architectural history, art history, and social history. Beginning in the 1960s, however, more cross-disciplinary perspectives were considered for cross-disciplinary audiences. The theoretical literature tends to center around the question: How do objects make a difference in the study of history? By drawing on existing literature and theories from other disciplines and adapting them to concepts unique to material culture study, material culture studies has created its own theoretical frameworks.

In 1964, John A. Kouwenhoven offered such pivotal cross-disciplinary commentary in his essay, "American Studies: Words or Things?" Kouwenhoven identified an overdependence on verbal evidence in our thinking processes—we tend to interpret reality almost exclusively through words, both written and oral,

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and neglect objects themselves as sources of information. Kouwenhoven's perspective exemplified the school of thought that the object itself is the text for interpretation. He maintained that in the preoccupation with using words to interpret sources, the actual things we wish to describe have been neglected. He argued that in order to understand history one must encounter the objects of history firsthand.

Similarly, in his book, *Medieval Technology and Social Change*, published in 1966, Lynn White Jr. wrote: “If historians are to attempt to write the history of mankind, and not simply the history of mankind as it was viewed by the small and specialized segments of the race which have had the habit of scribbling, they must take a fresh view of the records.” In this way, Kouwenhoven similarly argued that the most creative expression and evidence of culture is not in the form of written documents but in tangible objects. He claimed that “vernacular arts”—tools, toys, buildings, books, machines, and other artifacts—evolve in response to the materials, needs, attitudes, and preoccupations of a society. As such, they can tell us perhaps even more about a people than what the people wrote.

In 1964, historian Wilcomb Washburn argued in “Manuscripts and Manufacts,” that the object deserves and needs more scholarly attention, but that

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66 Ibid., 87.

67 Ibid., 88.
written documents are of equal value in any evaluation.\textsuperscript{68} Washburn viewed the manuscript and the "manufact" (his term to show the connectedness of the two) as "companion keys to the past."\textsuperscript{69} His thesis was that the manuscript and the object required the same analytical tools and that no theoretical distinction was required when addressing the two.

Another pivotal theoretical essay about the value of the object for historical study is "Folk Art," by folklorist Henry Glassie, published in 1972.\textsuperscript{70} Glassie argued that folk art should be studied in the historical-cultural context in which it originated rather than on a museum wall. He stated that an artifact, whether functional or artistic, "simultaneously gives pleasure and serves some practical, social, or economic end."\textsuperscript{71} He maintained that there were no such things as useless objects: "a painting, itself 'useless,' is hung on the walls of a house, a useful tool in environmental modification, or in a museum, a useful educational tool."\textsuperscript{72} Likewise, functional objects such as furniture or textiles can be interpreted as art, as they reflect the maker's and his or her culture's aesthetics.\textsuperscript{73}


\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 105.


\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 126.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 135.

\textsuperscript{73} The Danish term is \textit{brugskunst}, "use art."
Using material culture to interpret a culture and its history does raise problems, however. In "Material Culture and Cultural Research," published in 1985, Thomas Schlereth outlined five major methodological difficulties with using material culture as a main source of information. The first is that the objects that survive are only fractionally representative of any culture at large. Typically, more refined objects survive, while more utilitarian objects are used until they are discarded. Second, it is nearly impossible to convey an object’s original form so that it can be accessed, studied, and verified by other scholars; photographs, drawings, and quantitative descriptions are the most effective ways to relay the object’s appearance, yet they do not capture the essence of an object. Thirdly, the examination and intense focus on one particular object tends to lend itself to the “exaggeration of human efficacy;” in appreciation of the artifact, the researcher tends to overemphasize its cultural significance. The fourth difficulty Schlereth identified is that American history and material culture research have a tendency toward progressive determinism—objects of preceding periods tend to be less valuable in the explanation of current tendencies. However, this fourth shortcoming does not play a factor in studies such as this one that uses objects to explain historical values. The final methodological hindrance Schlereth addressed is the


75 Ibid., 15.
“synchronic syndrome” of examining an object in an isolated way, without acknowledgement of the culture surrounding it. The focus is on the object’s aesthetic uniqueness and ignores the cultural context. These caveats demonstrate the importance of understanding the history surrounding an object rather than simply contemplating the object in an isolated setting. Being cognizant of such methodological complexities outlined by Schlereth keeps the researcher ever mindful that interpretation is rarely definitive. Each of Schlereth’s caveats informed the final interpretation of the objects examined here.

Studies in Scandinavian Mormon Folklore and Material Culture

Various studies on nineteenth-century Mormon material culture prove the topic enlightening. In 1992, Russell W. Belk examined the meaning of possessions of Mormon travelers to Utah in “Moving Possessions: An Analysis Based on Personal Documents from the 1847-1869 Mormon Migration.”76 The study analyzed objects in relation to sense of self and sense of past and how they aided in the reconstruction of self in a new environment. Belk took into consideration Mormonism’s “otherworldly emphasis that discourages placing too great a value on worldly possessions,”77 and used diaries, journals, letters, and histories to identify

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77 Ibid., 341.
five categories of possessions in migration: sacred, material, personal, familial, and communal. He then examined how the objects that reflect these categories express aspects of identity. Each of these categories has been applied and addressed in Chapter Four of this study.


to English speakers, as well as English speakers' acceptance of Scandinavians, assisted in immigrant assimilation. Rice examined a combination of house-types, agricultural practices, and language retention to conclude that the Sanpete area “bears little imprint of its Scandinavian population.”60 These researchers used language as the primary basis for evaluating acculturation, while ignoring the maintenance of Scandinavian cultural traditions which demonstrate that immigrants did, indeed, retain many of their cultural traditions, mostly in the form of craftsmanship, as this dissertation elucidates.81

Other studies, however, have argued against total assimilation. In regard to linguistic traits of immigrants, Lynn Henrichsen, in his 2010 publication, “Building Community by Respecting Linguistic Diversity: Scandinavian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Utah,” noted that linguistic assimilation of Scandinavians did, indeed, take place faster in Utah than in other parts of the United States, but that through various cultural preservers such as foreign language papers, “Scandinavian meetings” (gatherings in native language for religious instruction), and Scandinavian celebrations, ethnic ties and traditions were preserved and

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60 Rice, “A Geographic Appraisal,” x.

81 These papers did not consider Scandinavian-language newspapers that would have given proof of more cultural retention.
maintained for several generations. Henrichsen has identified these cultural modes as cultural adaptations, rather than assimilation.

Similar to folklorist William A. Wilson, Barbara Lee Hargis recognized the significance of folk history in understanding a people. In her 1968 thesis, “A Folk History of the Manti Temple: A Study of the Folklore and Traditions Connected With the Settlement of Manti, Utah, and the Building of the Temple,” Hargis examined the oral histories and stories told by immigrants and descendants of the men and women who were directly involved in the building of the Temple. She found that many were proud of their Scandinavian heritage and skills. Hargis found significance in the lore itself, and was less concerned with its historical and cultural accuracy. Hargis argued that people’s self-perceptions were more significant than others’ interpretations. In this case, cultural pride was more representative of the level of cultural preservation than other outwardly cultural assimilation or retention.

Thomas Carter’s 1984 dissertation, “Building Zion: Folk Architecture in the Mormon Settlements of Utah’s Sanpete Valley, 1850-1890,” stemmed from architectural research on each of the ten towns in the Sanpete Valley. Knowing

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that Scandinavian immigrants built most of the structures, Carter expected to find evidence and understanding in uniformity. Instead he found the opposite: “a healthy, typically American frontier architecture with newcomers consistently finding the solutions to their building needs in the traditions of their recently departed homelands.” Carter found persistence of immigrant building forms and techniques, as well as a general openness to and incorporation of local design. Carter’s study refuted the previously accepted claims that small towns in Utah were uniform in nearly all aspects due to the Church’s influence. Instead the study demonstrated the diversity of architecture found throughout the valley. Carter argued for “revisionist historiography that suggests that Mormon society must be considered from a multicultural perspective and that a new emphasis must be placed upon sources of community strength and cohesion that lie beyond simplistic theories of cultural convergence and theocratic oppression.”

This study of nineteenth-century Scandinavian material culture aligns with Carter’s findings, in arguing that instead of total assimilation and uniformity, Scandinavians blended and com mingled their traditions with others to create a unique and distinct Utah identity.


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85 Ibid., 25.
86 Carter, “Building Zion,” x.
cultural influence. Thatcher found that the furniture in Cache Valley, an area largely settled by immigrants including Scandinavians, consisted of forms that were found in other parts of the world, but created in variants unique to Utah. Thatcher described furniture and artifacts as expressions of culture within a group of people. In this regard, blending did not negate original forms of culture, but created new ones representing aspects of both the old and new cultures. Thatcher's conclusions align with the findings of this research.

The production of pottery in pioneer Utah illustrated the comingling cultural ideas. Three contemporary scholars, Lynn Henrichsen, Kirk Henrichsen, and Timothy Scarlett have studied Utah potters extensively. Henrichsen and Henrichsen have focused on the Danish potters and their production and operation of potteries throughout Utah. These potters brought pottery traditions that they followed quite closely while adapting to frontier resources and conditions. Because the Danish potters' utilitarian pottery techniques were easily adaptable, they were more successful than other potters with backgrounds in more refined pottery techniques. In examining utilitarian pottery, Timothy Scarlett has concentrated on the anthropological aspects of Mormon pottery, particularly with regard to the Mormon value placed on home-industry and how Mormons considered locally made objects more "exotic" than the imported "mundane" objects. Because of the "theocratically

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organized economy" in Utah, Scarlett interpreted the preference for locally-made objects as a reflection of religious devotion and a metaphor for obedience and cohesion. By supporting the local industries, members abided by church leaders' requests and followed what they believed to be God's design.

Early Utah folk painting also represents the intermingling of cultural traditions. Richard Oman and Richard Jensen chronicled the "golden age of Danish painting," in *C.C.A Christensen 1831-1912: Mormon Immigrant*, published in 1984, to explain how painters Carl Christian Anthon Christensen and Danquart Weggeland exemplified the Danish art tradition of the time. The Scandinavian emphasis on everyday life and common people reflected these painters' desire to document the Mormon pioneer experience. Christensen viewed art as a religious endeavor and appreciation, and he deemed all forms of craft, not just "high art," art. This interpretation of craft as art elevates the object's value and in turn the maker's value. As such, the object is an extension of the artist's identity.

Each of these studies demonstrates that Mormon material culture does indeed reflect Mormon culture and values. The types of objects early Mormons chose to make and use, as well as the setting, manifested Mormon providence of the time. The material culture associated with early Mormon history reflects individual

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self-perception and a reconstruction of individual identity while also manifesting the values of group identity, particularly in the form of religious devotion. This study builds on previous Mormon material culture studies, showing that objects not only reveal a people’s values but also their heritages and homeland cultures.

Methodology Employed in This Study

In the 1972 publication, *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*, Richard Dorson outlined various hands-on skills, perspectives, and methods essential to the folklorist’s research. Among the primary methods are the use of libraries, archives, museums, and fieldwork. Interpretation of these sources informs the folklorist’s understanding of culture and the meanings of folklore.

My research began by gathering contextual information in the literature discussed above, in order to grasp the underlying discussion and concepts. The study of the historiography and terminology of folkloristics, particularly in material culture, heightened my understanding of the historical validity of folklore and the relationships of folklore to culture, and it also allowed me to place my work into the broader folkloric scholarship and discourse. I then immersed myself in the literature on nineteenth-century Scandinavian history and culture, Utah history, and Mormon Scandinavian emigration. I read extensively in journals, books, and local histories.

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visited historical archives in Utah and perused indexes of unpublished manuscripts and recordings that treated Scandinavian immigrants and their experiences.

My primary research consisted of four years of fieldwork in Utah during which time I visited numerous Daughters of the Utah Pioneers\textsuperscript{91} museums throughout the state and conducted fieldwork in rural areas of Utah to learn what types of Scandinavian material culture remained. From having lived in Scandinavia for three years and having studied its history, my knowledge and familiarity with Scandinavian material culture allowed me to recognize what objects contained Scandinavian features. I read local histories and talked to local historians who knew the histories and stories associated with the objects. In conjunction with my Utah fieldwork, I contacted numerous folk history museums in Scandinavia to inquire about nineteenth-century Scandinavian material culture and learn what parallels existed between their collections and what remained in Utah. This enabled me to illustrate that certain characteristics of surviving material culture in Utah were indeed Scandinavian.

With a general knowledge of Scandinavian material culture and a sense of what types of Scandinavian material culture remained in Utah, I began to formulate my thesis: Scandinavian immigrants and their descendants continued to employ Scandinavian skills and traditions, although these were comingled with Mormon

\textsuperscript{91} Daughters of the Utah Pioneers (DUP) is a women’s organization dedicated to preserving the history of the Mormon pioneers in Utah. DUP museums house pioneer relics.
and American traditions. Because of my ability to recognize the subtle and obvious Scandinavian traits in material culture throughout Utah, I recognized more Scandinavian cultural persistence than what previous scholars had found. Once I identified the specific objects that supported my thesis I began to formulate questions to ask about the objects that would elicit their latent cultural markers. I followed folklorist William A. Wilson’s suggestions for important questions to ask while out in the field: “What is there about this lore that is pleasing? What makes it artistically powerful, or persuasive? How does the lore function in the lives of the people who possess it? What needs does it meet in their lives? What does the lore tell about the values and attitudes of individuals and the groups to which they belong?”

I was also interested in how objects reflected identity—specifically Scandinavian and Mormon identity—and the reflexive relationships between objects and people. I looked for what Scandinavian traditions survived. I wanted to know how immigrants reacted to their surroundings and how they adapted their traditions in the American setting.

The methodology employed in this dissertation stems from various folklorists’ and material culturists’ theoretical frameworks. In The Dynamics of Folklore, published in 1979, Barre Toelken outlined some of the most prominent methods of orientation for scrutinizing folklore and material culture: textual,

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ethnological, performance, functional, and contextual.93 This study employs each of these methods and applies them to my findings to create a holistic analysis of each object to determine how it reflects Scandinavian culture and identity in nineteenth-century Utah.

Textual orientation treats the object as a completed text. This mode of study not only describes the contours and features of an item but also scrutinizes its relation to other objects. My textual analysis considered the material, construction, design and form of each object to formulate its meaning to its makers and users. In the case of a spinning wheel, for example, its wood, color, size, construction techniques, and feel illustrate how these qualities reflect Scandinavian skills and aesthetics. The comparison of various spinning wheels also elucidates meaning through similarities and differences from which inferences can be drawn about what was culturally important.

Ethnological methods examine how the culture expresses itself in the object. The researcher scrutinizes the relation of the object to aspects of a culture and conversely considers the dynamics of the group to which an object belongs to understand the object more fully. My research of Scandinavian tradition and material culture of the time, as well as Mormon ideology and self-sufficiency, clarified the cultural meanings of each object in its setting. A daybed, for example, was not simply a furnishing for sitting and sleeping, but an object of craft that

93 Toelken, The Dynamics of Folklore, 4-6.
reflected Scandinavian carpentry skills and preference in taste as well as a piece of furniture that reflected Mormon sensibilities of utility mixed with a value for craftsmanship espoused by the Church.

When material culture is not viewed merely as a product, but also as behavior, it can be considered as “performance in context.” In this case, action and its meaning are central in analysis. Questions such as, “Who is expressing what for whom—and when, how, and why?” help in understanding why a people value the objects they choose to create. A garment demonstrating certain Scandinavian aspects of design and construction communicates cultural tradition mixed with the basic need for clothing. How the garment is worn, with cultural pride or embarrassment, for example, and for what occasions, is a performance that conveys the wearer’s feeling about his or her homeland.

The functional approach in analysis seeks to understand the uses and roles of an object. The function and utility of an object communicate status, ideas, values, feelings, and meaning about the culture it represents. Skillful Danish immigrant potters created crocks that were valuable for household use in holding liquids or solid foods. The fact that they learned how to make only utilitarian pots in Denmark reflected immigrants’ homeland communities’ needs for and value of such objects.

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Danish potters’ success in Utah demonstrated that such utilitarian household aids were highly valued there as well.

The most prominent method employed in folklore in recent years has been the contextual approach, addressing the social, psychological, political, economic, geographic, and historic contexts of a folkloric item. By studying the maker and his or her whole creative process, a folklorist can glean the maker’s values and attitudes and in turn interpret the object as a reflection of the maker’s culture. Studying folk art and Scandinavian folk artists in Utah, in particular, draws upon a range of contextual information. The artists’ personal histories, the cultural history and landscape from which they came, and their training and artistic philosophies contribute to the meanings of their work.

Thus this study employs a range of methods to achieve a complex understanding of the Scandinavian heritage and material culture of Scandinavian Mormon immigrants in Utah. A familiarity with Scandinavian, Mormon, and Utah history as well as theoretical frameworks used in material culture analysis, and the fieldwork itself contribute to a rich interdisciplinary analysis.

Conclusion

As evidenced in the literature surveyed here, the writing that surrounds the subject of nineteenth-century Scandinavian immigrants in Utah spans topics of Scandinavian and American history, ethnicity, people’s relationship to the landscape,
negotiating evolving identities, and the role of gender on the frontier. These studies show the complexity of the immigrant experience and that the discourse is expanding. This work differentiates itself from previous conclusions in Scandinavian immigration through the central thesis that Scandinavian Mormon immigrants were a significant portion of Scandinavian immigrants in America and that Scandinavian Mormons did not simply jettison their heritage and culture when they converted and immigrated to Utah. Instead, Scandinavian immigrants blended homeland traditions with their Mormon and American identities. By using established material culture methodologies it is found that the objects emigrants brought, used, and created support this thesis.
Chapter 3

The History of Early Mormonism, the Establishment of the Scandinavian Mission, and the Subsequent Emigration of Scandinavian Converts

Introduction

To understand the appeal of Mormonism and the motives of the Scandinavian converts for joining the Church, it is important to be familiar with Mormon beliefs, doctrines, and history. This chapter presents some of the central tenets of Mormon thought and history. It outlines the early history of the Church in general and in Scandinavia, with particular focus on the Scandinavian convert and emigrant experience. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the religious and cultural context of the immigrant experience and to understand the immigrants’ motives for joining themselves with the Church and leaving their homelands.

The Origins and Development of Mormonism

Mormonism began in a time and place of great religious excitement in America. The Second Great Awakening and Christian Primitivism swept across America in the early nineteenth century, especially in the eastern United States.¹ In New York, many easterners were disillusioned with religion and religious leaders and were moving west of the Catskill and Adirondack mountains with hopes of

finding religious refuge. Upstate New York in particular had few clergy from the
established churches, and as a result, was open to religious innovation and new
movements. Religious revivals and debates took place regularly. A spectrum of
reformers including Shakers, Unitarians, Universalists, Congregationalists,
Methodists, and Presbyterians flocked to the western and central regions of New
York to gather disciples and build communities.

Amidst this revivalism, Joseph Smith, Jr., a farm boy in the
Palmyra/Manchester area of western New York, became interested in the debate.
Smith soon became confused by the various claims of truth each group presented.
Impressed by the admonition in James 1:5, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of
God,” Smith decided to ask God which church he should join. In the spring of 1820,
the fourteen-year-old Smith went to a nearby grove to pray. Smith experienced what
Mormons today call “The First Vision,” during which he saw God and Jesus Christ:

I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun,
which descended gradually until it fell upon me. . . . When the light rested
upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all
description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling
me by name and said, pointing to the other—“This is My Beloved Son. Hear
Him!”

2 Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of

3 Arrington, The Mormon Experience, 3.

4 Joseph Smith—History 1:17.
In accounts of the vision, Smith wrote that he was told by God not to join any of the churches, and that in time he would be called upon to restore “the fullness of the Gospel ... unto the ends of the earth.”

Smith’s written accounts relate that three years after the vision and having done little about it, he felt concerned about his lack of spirituality, and prayed for forgiveness and guidance. According to Smith, that night an angel, identifying himself as Moroni visited him and explained that he was the last prophet of a people who anciently inhabited the Americas. Moroni explained that a collection of gold plates containing a thousand year history of the people lay hidden in a nearby hill. These plates held the religious accounts of the ancient people, abridged by Moroni’s father, Mormon. Smith wrote that shortly thereafter he located the plates, along with an instrument used for translation. Four years passed and on September 22, 1827, Smith removed the plates from the hillside and took possession of them. Two years later, with the aid of various scribes, the translation and transcription of the records took place over the course of approximately four months and was

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5 Doctrine and Covenants 1:23.
6 Joseph Smith—History 1:29.
7 This instrument was identified as the Urim and Thumim as described in Exodus 28:30. A survey of Smith’s use of seer stones is found in Richard L. Bushman, Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 45-52. In the early 1800s “divining rods” or stones were often used to locate water or minerals, to find lost items, or to communicate with spirits.
8 Joseph Smith—History 1:59.
completed in June of 1829. The result was the Book of Mormon, a 275,000-word work.

The Book of Mormon chronicles the history of several peoples who lived on the American continent from 600 B.C. to 421 A.D. It begins in Jerusalem where a Hebrew band of people was inspired to leave the city just prior to the Babylonian invasion and sail to their promised land on the west coast of the Americas. Various prophets recorded the histories of the peoples and they told of elaborate cities and temples, numerous wars, and missionary expeditions. The Book of Mormon culminates in Jesus Christ’s visitation to the people after his crucifixion on Calvary. Before the prophet Moroni’s death, he buried the record of his people to preserve it.

The Book of Mormon includes unique doctrinal discussions on various religious and spiritual subjects: the fall of Adam and Eve, the nature of Jesus Christ’s atonement, eschatology, physical and spiritual resurrection, and the restoration and organization of Jesus Christ’s original church. Mormons believe

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9 Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 70.
10 3 Nephi 12.
11 Introduction to the Book of Mormon.
12 2 Nephi 2.
13 2 Nephi 9.
14 Alma 12.
15 1 Nephi 13.
that the Book of Mormon complements the Bible and clarifies central doctrines to provide “the fullness of the gospel.”\textsuperscript{16} While critics claim the Book of Mormon was fabricated and partially plagiarized,\textsuperscript{17} Mormons believe that it is a literal historical record with spiritual significance.

The Church was officially organized on April 6, 1830 in Fayette, New York. Shortly thereafter, Joseph Smith began preaching the importance of proselyting and the gathering of the elect “unto one place upon the face of this land.”\textsuperscript{18} Smith prophesized that “The glory of the Lord shall be there ... and it shall be called Zion.... The righteous shall be gathered out from all nations, and all shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy.”\textsuperscript{19} The doctrine of gathering was essential to both the physical and spiritual growth of the Church. Scripture is replete with the unifying theme throughout history when God’s people sought to remove themselves from wickedness and gather to a new place.\textsuperscript{20} Mormons called

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} 1 Nephi 13:24.
\item \textsuperscript{17} For discussions about the Book of Mormon’s possible fabrication or plagiarizing see Fawn McKay Brodie, \textit{No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet} (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1945), 91; Jerald and Sandra Tanner, \textit{Mormonism - Shadow or Reality?} (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1987), 91.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Doctrine and Covenants 29:8.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid. 45: 67, 71.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Biblical examples of people relocating include Enoch’s holy city, Noah’s ark, Abraham’s family, and Moses’ tribes. The Book of Mormon tells of the migrations of the people of Lehi, Mulek, and the brother of Jared.
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themselves “Saints;”\textsuperscript{21} the term “Latter-day Saints” referred to the time period prior to Jesus Christ’s second coming.

The Mormon “Gathering” and Migration

The Mormons needed a place where they could build and solidify their new religion. As historian William Mulder notes of the early church, the “inspiration for the gathering sprang from a literal interpretation of Scripture, from a providential reading of history, and from the circumstances of free-land society in early nineteenth-century America.”\textsuperscript{22} While many millenarians of the time focused on the timing of Christ’s second coming, the Mormons were seemingly more interested in the place where Christ would come. According to the Book of Mormon and revelations received by Joseph Smith, America was the new Promised Land. For the Mormons, the communities they would create in their gathering would be in preparation for Christ’s return to earth.

From its beginning the Church had a westward movement, partly due to revelation and partly owing to necessity. In March 1831 Smith received a revelation which he recorded in a collection of revelations, the Doctrine and Covenants:

“Gather ye out from the eastern lands . . . go ye forth into the western countries. . . .

\textsuperscript{21} Throughout the Bible, disciples of Christ are often called Saints. See Psalms 50:5, Romans 1:7, and 1 Corinthians 1:2.

\textsuperscript{22} William Mulder, Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 20.
And with one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed to you.” Over the next fifteen years, the Mormon population grew to nearly fifteen thousand. Because of rapid growth, however, the threat perceived by nonbelievers of the Mormons’ growing political power, commercial rivalries, and peculiar new religion, put the Church into turmoil. During these years, members were driven out of various towns in Missouri and Illinois.

Initial resistance was based on Mormons’ religious beliefs and doctrine. The fact that Mormons had a different perspective on the nature of God from traditional Protestants, namely that God was a distinct personage who had a body, and that their belief in modern revelation and new scripture seemed blasphemous to many. Other factors played a role in their intensely negative reception, however. They openly discussed how they would acquire lands of previous settlers. Also, because of their economic cohesion, Mormons dominated local economies. Additionally, they wielded political power because they tended to vote in blocks, which posed a threat

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23 Doctrine and Covenants 45:64-65.

24 The “Mormon Extermination Order” was issued on 27 October 1838, by Governor Lilburn Boggs of Missouri. See Bernard DeVoto, The Year of Decision 1846, New York City (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2000), 84-5.

25 Mormons do not believe in the Trinity. They assert that God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are separate personages unified in purpose.

26 Doctrine and Covenants 52:42.
to other interests where there was a critical mass of Mormons in the community.\textsuperscript{27} Part of the political animosity stemmed from the fact that most Mormons came from areas that were sympathetic to abolitionist viewpoints.\textsuperscript{28} Most scorned, however, was the practice of polygamy that began in 1844 but was not officially announced until 1852 by Brigham Young. The practice was not officially disavowed until 1890.\textsuperscript{29} Estimates are that five to twenty percent of members were associated with polygamous families.\textsuperscript{30} Folk doctrines and myths surround Smith's reason for introducing polygamy,\textsuperscript{31} although there was no official statement of explanation given by the Church. In a church so literally minded about "a restoration of all things,"\textsuperscript{32} polygamy was restored in the biblical tradition.

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\item \textsuperscript{27} DeVoto, \textit{The Year of Decision}, 84-85.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Stephen C. LeSueur, \textit{The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri} (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), 10, 17-21.
\item \textsuperscript{29} \textit{Deseret News Extra}, September 14, 1852. The Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887 prohibited the practice of polygamy and punished it with a fine of $500-$800 and imprisonment of up to five years. It disincorporated the Church and authorized the federal government to seize all of the Church's assets over $50,000. See L. Rex Sears, "Punishing the Saints for Their Peculiar Institution: Congress on the Constitutional Dilemmas," \textit{Utah L. Rev.} (2001). The act also forced divestiture of Church economic control over businesses, real estate, government planning, and the courts. See Leonard J. Arrington, \textit{Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 358-62.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Davis Bitton, \textit{Historical Dictionary of Mormonism} (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 147.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Some claimed polygamy was instituted to help care for young widows, or that there was an excess of women among the Mormons. Others believed God commanded his followers to practice polygamy to have more children to "raise up seed" to him. Jacob 2:30.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Doctrines and Covenants 27:6.
\end{itemize}
Joseph Smith was murdered by an angry mob in 1844, after which Brigham Young assumed leadership of the main branch of the Church. After consulting various sources, including frontiersmen, Young decided upon migrating to the Salt Lake Valley and the Great Basin in what would become Utah. As early as August of 1842, Joseph Smith had prophesied that the “Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains. . . . Some of you will live to go to assist in making settlements and build cities and see the saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains.”[^33] One of the reasons the Great Basin was chosen was because it was outside the territorial borders of the United States, and Mormons hoped that the isolation would protect them from opposition. Brigham Young also sought a place that no other settlers desired. The Great Basin was largely desert with little vegetation and just enough mountain water for cultivation. It presented itself as a difficult place to cultivate, but the Mormons saw it as a place where they could make the “desert blossom as a rose.”[^34]

Mormons gathered and spent the winter of 1845-46 in Winter Quarters, in northern Omaha, Nebraska in preparation for the Mormon exodus across the Great Plains to the Salt Lake Valley. In early April a few wagons left to scout the trail, and by the summer of 1846, five hundred wagons had reached the Missouri River, with 2,500 more following across the prairieland with approximately twelve thousand

[^33]: Joseph Smith, *History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, by Himself* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902), 85.

[^34]: Isaiah 35:1.
people. Their route, called “The Mormon Trail,” pictured in figure 3.1, followed much of the same route as the Oregon and California Trails.

![Map of the Mormon Trail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mormon_Trail_3.png)

Figure 3.1. Sites along the Mormon Trail. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mormon_Trail_3.png.

Wagon trains travelled six weeks to Fort Laramie, Wyoming. From Laramie they travelled to the Salt Lake Valley with the first wagons arriving July 24, 1847. Brigham Young famously declared, “This is the place whereon we will plant our feet and where the Lord’s people will dwell.” Unlike other frontier communities that

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took years to grow, the Salt Lake Valley formed an intact and lasting community within months. Over the next twenty-two years, more than seventy thousand Mormon pioneers crossed the plains to settle in Utah.\textsuperscript{37}

Mormons perceived their flight as an obvious and intentional parallel with the exodus of the ancient Israelites. This metanarrative of being driven out of their homes to a desert land to create a new sacred center acted as a uniting force among them. Similarly, \textit{the Mormon presence in the Salt Lake Valley was compared to a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy that the City of God would be established in the top of the mountains where people from all nations could gather}.\textsuperscript{38}

The Church’s Introduction and Spread in Scandinavia

After the period of concentrated settlement efforts in Utah, the Church refocused on proselytizing. Missionaries were sent throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe to encourage converts to migrate to Utah. The British Mission had already begun in 1837 with enormous success. Britain’s unemployment and generally challenging times promoted quick acceptance of a church that promised both material and spiritual salvation. By the end of 1851, forty-four thousand


\textsuperscript{38} “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” Isaiah 2:2-3.
Britons converted, eleven thousand of whom had already emigrated to Utah. A General Epistle published by Church leaders in December of 1847 issued an invitation to build the Mormon Zion:

To all the Saints in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and the adjacent islands and countries, we say emigrate as speedily as possible to this vicinity ... bringing with you all kinds of choice seeds, of grain, vegetables, fruit, shrubbery, trees and vines, everything that will please the eye, gladden the heart, or cheer the soul of man, that grows upon the face of the whole earth; also the best stock of beast, bird, and fowl of every kind; also the best tools of every description, and machinery for spinning, or weaving, and dressing cotton, wool, flax, and silk, etc. ... So far as it can be consistently done, bring models and drafts, and let the machinery be built where it is used, which will save great expense in transportation, particularly in heavy machinery, and tools and implements generally.

In 1850, missionaries were sent to France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden. By 1855, over sixteen thousand European converts had immigrated to Utah, bringing their skills, knowledge, and a desire to be united with fellow believers.

Second to Britain, the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway produced the highest number overall of converts and immigrants for the Church. From the years 1850-1905 the Scandinavian countries produced 46,497

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40 The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star, 40 (1878): 81.

converts, 22,653 of whom emigrated. The first missionaries sent to Scandinavia were Peter Ole Hansen from Denmark, John Erik Forsgren from Sweden, and the American-born Erastus Snow. Hansen and Forsgren had joined the Church in America. These initial missionaries arrived in Copenhagen on June 14, 1850. Natives to Scandinavia, Hansen and Forsgren were fluent in their respective languages and familiar with the laws and customs of the countries, which greatly aided their ability to gain followers. The missionaries immediately began meeting with pastors and political leaders to introduce their work. In accordance with Joseph Smith’s admonition that “every man shall hear this fullness of the gospel in his own tongue,” Hansen promptly began the Danish translation of the Book of Mormon, along with translating various other Church tracts into Danish. Shortly after their arrival in Denmark, Forsgren set out for his hometown of Gävle, Sweden.

The missionaries quickly found people interested in receiving the new message; within two months after the three missionaries’ arrival in Scandinavia,

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43 Other Scandinavian immigrants had joined the Church in America. There were Norwegian Mormon settlements in Fox River, Illinois, and Sugar Creek, Iowa. These settlements embraced Mormonism after their founding. Hansen and Forsgren were residents of Nauvoo when they joined the Church.


45 Doctrine and Covenants 90:11.

46 The Danish Book of Mormon, published in 1851, was the first non-English edition of the book.
Mormon converts totaled twenty-six.\textsuperscript{47} Danes, in particular, were receptive to the message. The newly revised and liberal Danish constitution, completed in 1849, allowed greater political and religious freedom.\textsuperscript{48} After only three months the Danish Ministry of Culture and Copenhagen's Board of Magistrates recognized the Mormon Church and granted permission for a place of worship.\textsuperscript{49} Forsgren met greater resistance in Sweden, however, and after three months was deported. Back in Copenhagen, Forsgren sought Swedes to teach. By the end of the first year of missionary work in Scandinavia, Mormon membership had reached approximately three hundred, with half the members in Denmark. By the following year, approximately one thousand converts had joined the Church.\textsuperscript{50} No work had yet been attempted in Norway, however. Both Norway and Sweden had histories of prohibiting public preaching, religious gatherings in homes, or persuasion from the

\textsuperscript{47} Erastus Snow, "One Year in Scandinavia," (1850), 6.

\textsuperscript{48} An important reform was the abolition of the Danish passport system. Prior to the changes, even Danish citizens were required to show passports when travelling throughout Denmark. This abolition allowed for missionaries to proselyte and travel more freely. See Mulder, \textit{Homeward to Zion}, 40.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 37.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 39.
mother faith, but by late 1851 Mormons finally gained a foothold in Norway and eventually in Sweden in the spring of 1852.52

A variety of factors explain why some Scandinavians were willing to embrace new ideals. Beginning in the late seventeenth century and lasting till the mid-eighteenth century, the pietism movement swept through Lutheranism and influenced Scandinavian religious thought. Pietism emphasized the individual’s relationship to God and that one could receive personal revelation and conversion without needing intermediaries such as pastors or priests. Such a religious climate allowed the Mormon message to spread in Scandinavia. The period also displayed great social unrest, religious dissent, and economic hardship throughout Scandinavia. Denmark was recovering from the Napoleonic wars that forced the kingdom to relinquish Norway to Sweden. There was also political upheaval with the decline of the monarchy in Denmark and more power to the common people. Educational reforms throughout Scandinavia created free school programs where the working class could become literate and educated, allowing them to run their own businesses. Many throughout Scandinavia felt a sense of self-sufficiency and

51 By the 1880s, the attitudes of Denmark and Sweden were reversed towards Mormons and most of the missionaries in Denmark were forced to finish their missions in Sweden. See Theodore Christian Blegen, Norwegian Migration to America (Northfield: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1931), 30-31; Florence Edith Janson, The Background of Swedish Immigration, 1840-1930 (New York: Arno Press, 1970), 167.

independence from the government and state church that imposed restrictions. There was also widespread interest in emigration to America.\textsuperscript{53}

The religious oppression of the time also contributed to a climate in which people sought relief. Many were disillusioned with the Lutheran state church and were no longer attending its services. Highly affiliated with the government, the church imposed taxes, and clergy followed regulations and religious dogmas set by higher authorities.\textsuperscript{54} The pastor was thought to be the only person who could correctly interpret the teachings of the church, and as a public official he was accountable to the state for the indoctrination of his congregation.\textsuperscript{55} Many Scandinavians felt oppressed and as a result there was a variety of pietistic movements. Denmark’s nationalist followers of N.F. S. Grundtvig were dissatisfied with the monolithic state church and argued that the common people themselves should have access to enlightenment and spiritual revelation. Similarly, Baptists, Methodists, and other reformers within the Lutheran church contributed to religious awakenings in Scandinavia. Contact with the Anglo-American religious


world contributed to this reformation.\textsuperscript{56} Mormonism, in particular, was distinctly optimistic; it offered salvation from oppression, both spiritually and physically.\textsuperscript{57}

The unique Mormon doctrine appealed to many who were dissatisfied with Lutheranism and its strict religious authoritarianism. It also offered a physical place of refuge where people could start new lives.

Aside from its religious and spiritual elements, another factor for success was that Mormonism offered a common ideology and community. The population growth in Scandinavia—due to improved medical care, sanitation, and nutrition—pushed many of the rural population to cities where there were employment opportunities. Family ties were less strong in cities because many had left their extended families behind in the countryside. Along with their interest in a more appealing religious doctrine, many people sought a sense of community.

Mormonism fulfilled both needs. Many of the early converts had recently moved from the countryside and were transitioning into urban life. This appeal of community was not unique to urban residents; those in rural areas also sought out community after having been shunned by family and friends for their religious beliefs, and the Mormons promised a unified community.

\textsuperscript{56} The older reformation was German; the younger was Anglo-Saxon, and in the later stages, almost exclusively American. See George M. Stephenson, \textit{The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration} (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 24.

\textsuperscript{57} Doctrine and Covenants 64:24.
The freedom to publish combined with Scandinavia’s high rate of literacy also played a role in the acceptance of Mormonism. There was a strong literacy movement in Scandinavia, mainly focused on religious instruction and confirmation, stemming from the Reformation and Luther’s insistence that everyone be able to read the Bible. Scandinavia’s high literacy rate assisted the Mormons in that their primary missionary tool was the Book of Mormon, and proselytes could read the book for themselves. Mormons also distributed numerous tracts and literature that explained more about their doctrines and beliefs. Tracts could easily be passed around informally or undercover. Convert Carl Fjeld, explained how the gospel was spread throughout Oslo’s factory district: “From the foundry men the gospel went round among the smiths, good and solid material, and from there to the stone masons.” Word of mouth and pamphlets helped disseminate the message. Because Mormons emphasized personal revelation, they encouraged listeners to study the literature and pray about its veracity.

As a result of these appeals and favorable conditions, membership grew and local ministry increased proportionally. Mormon leadership and ministry were drawn solely from unpaid laymen, in contrast to the traditional Lutheran clergy whose doctrine and practices triggered the existing religious, social, and political

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59 Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 112.

60 Moroni 10:5.
discontent. Historian William Mulder described these laymen as “homespun evangelists preaching the old Bible in the new light of American gospel.” Shortly after baptism, many of the converts were asked to serve missions or serve as leaders of local congregations. Some served missions for six or seven years before emigrating. During the first decade of proselytizing, only seven of the hundreds of missionaries in Scandinavia were not Scandinavian. By 1900, of the 1,361 missionaries who served in Scandinavia, all but 24 were Scandinavians.

Demographics of Conversion in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway

Of the three Nordic countries, Denmark provided the majority of converts, totaling 23,509 from 1850 to 1905. Largely due to the new Danish constitution, Mormon missionaries were able to freely proselytize, and members could meet together legally—conditions that were not reliable in Sweden and Norway. After 1850, unlike those in Sweden and Norway, economic conditions improved in Denmark owing to improved methods of tillage and profitable crops. Consequently, Danish emigration to America should have been considerably less than Swedish and Norwegian.

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63 Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 56.
64 Ibid., 104.
65 According to P.S. Vig, the three main factors for emigration from Denmark were Mormonism, gold fever, and letters sent from America from immigrants. See P.S. Vig, *Danske i Amerika*, vol. 1 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 1907), 284.
Norwegian emigration, as the Danes had more economic reason to stay in their homeland. But the persecution of Mormons in Denmark was such that many sought religious relief. By 1890, Utah had 9,023 Danish born residents. By 1905, 54 percent of the Danish converts had emigrated.

The highest conversion rates occurred in Copenhagen. Of the rural areas, the most converts were gained from Jutland, specifically the countryside around Aalborg, Århus, and Fredericia. Mormons were not concerned with people’s social standing, but rather with their desire and ability to join themselves spiritually as followers of Jesus Christ and the new faith. This was evidenced in the missionaries’ indiscriminant search and acceptance of any who would listen to the new gospel. One missionary described the people of Jutland as follows: “The country people might be plain and simple with their black bread and strong coffee, their age-old wooden shoes and homespun, and their ‘hornspoon and finger’ manners might be primitive as their dress, but they were industrious and certainly the most strictly

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66 However, there were some of the rural population who were left out of the new improvements and “good times.” Some later became husmænd (homeowners) with small plots of land, but many never saw land ownership altogether.

67 The three states with higher numbers of Danish born residents were Iowa (15,519), Nebraska (14,345), and Minnesota (14,133). See John H. Bille, *A History of the Danes in America* (San Francisco: R&E Research Associates, 1971), 12.

68 Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 104.

69 27 percent of the total Scandinavian membership came from Jutland. See Kristian Hvidt, *Danes Go West: A Book About the Emigration to America* (Skørping: Rebild National Park Society, 1976), 108.
honest that I have ever met with.” Industriousness and a willingness to work were of key importance to building up the new Church.

From 1850 to 1905, Sweden produced 16,695 converts. In the 1850s and 1860s, the majority of converts came from the southernmost region of Skåne, and after 1870, the majority came from Stockholm. This reflects the shift in membership from rural to urban areas: there was a predominance of farmers in the early emigrants with a shift to laborers with the later emigrants. By 1905, almost nine thousand of the Swedish converts—36 percent—had emigrated to Utah. In the late 1870s more Swedish-born immigrants lived in Utah than in any other mountain state or territory in America.

From 1851 to 1919, Norway contributed 7,907 converts to the Mormon movement. Mormonism's introduction to Norway came on the heels of the philosophies of Hans Nielsen Hauge, a lay minister who spoke against the state church in Norway during the late 1790s and early 1800s. Hauge argued for the individual's access to and choice of spirituality as the primary means for personal salvation, and that it was not the Church's place to determine individual spirituality.

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71 Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 106.


Half a century later, the Mormons reintroduced elements of religious nonconformity similar to the Haugeans who also sought freedom from political and religious tyranny. The Mormons faced significant political opposition, and in 1853 the Norwegian Supreme Court declared them “non-Christians,” and as such they were not protected under the Dissenter Law of 1845 that protected “those who confess the Christian Religion without being members of the State Church.” Consequently, Mormons were not recognized as a religious group, and any actions performed within the Mormon Church, such as marriage or baptism, were not recognized by the state. In addition, Lutheran clerics tried to stop Mormon proselyting with arrest, imprisonment, and threats of deportation. By the mid-1860s, however, the state began to allow Mormons more freedom to practice and thenceforth the Church freely grew in Norway.

Reactions to Mormonism in Scandinavia

Both Scandinavians and Americans were skeptical and critical of the convert-emigrants. Many national authorities were stupefied by the emigration. In reference to the Mormons, in 1879, consular John L. Stevens of the dual kingdoms of Norway and Sweden declared: “The government and the public sentiment of these countries


are averse to having their population victimized and depleted by immoral and
criminal means."  

The Swedish government conducted a survey about its emigrant loss and found respondents to believe Mormonism to be a “well-ordered emigration recruiting system under the cloak of religion.” 

Denmark showed concern that its peasants, who were typically stable, were persuaded so readily.  

As these statements reflect, many authorities and laypeople tended to view Mormonism as an illegitimate Christian denomination and as a deviant movement.

Many American regarded the Scandinavian Mormon similarly negatively. In 1879, Secretary of State William Evarts expressed concern about European immigrants who were “drawn mainly from the ignorant classes, who are easily influenced by the double appeal to their passions and their poverty.” 

Similarly, Samuel Bowles, editor of the Springfield Republican, described Mormon immigrants as “simple, ignorant people beyond any class known in American society, and so easy victims to the shrewd and sharp and fanatical Yankee leaders in the Mormon

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77 Gustav Sundbärg, Mormonvärfdningen I Sverige (Stockholm: Emigrationsutredningen, 1910), 10.

78 Gunnar Hansen, Dansk Udvandring Til U.S.A. Tag Fart for 100 Aar Siden (Aalborg: Danskposten, 1948).

church.” In 1889 Utah Governor Caleb West wrote: “It is just as if a lot of Chinamen or other foreign people should come here and take possession of that Territory, with ideas entirely distinct and diametrically opposed to ours.” Ironically, by 1896, Utah was primarily “foreign,” with 66 percent of the population either foreign born or having one foreign-born parent. This proportion was double that in the rest of the United States.

During the decades leading to the turn of the twentieth century, the Scandinavian Mission experienced both successes and setbacks. Persecution followed the Church just as it did in America. Missionaries throughout Scandinavia constantly navigated through legislation and regulation to ensure that their proselytizing was legal. Despite difficulties, the Mormons found ways to spread their message. William Mulder describes the Mormons’ tenacity:

If standing up was construed as preaching, they preached sitting down; if religious services were forbidden in homes, they held ‘conversations.’ . . . Where they were shut out as missionaries, they found work at their trades and passed the contagion of their message to fellow workmen. A shoemaker stuffed Mormon tracts into his customers’ shoes; a tailor sermonized as he

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80 Samuel Bowles, *Across the Continent: A Summer’s Journey to the Rocky Mountains, the Mormons, and the Pacific States, with Speaker Colfax* (Springfield: Samuel Bowles & Company 1865), 398.


sowed. . . . Every proselyte bore witness to his neighbor. The new gospel was a germ which spread by contact.\textsuperscript{83}

For the most part, the agitation that led to political action brewed within the clergy rather than civil authorities. Pastors saw the Mormons not only as a threat to their religious tradition but also as an economic threat. As pews emptied so did tithing coffers. Pastors were known to cut off assistance to parishioners who joined the Mormons. Pastors persuaded farmers to dismiss Mormon hands, attended Mormon meetings to dispute doctrine, and circulated letters from disillusioned emigrant-converts.\textsuperscript{84} Many converts were refused state-recognized marriages, largely due to the high church marriage tax which they could not afford, which in turn “bastardized” them and perpetuated their poor reputations.\textsuperscript{85}

Community and family members also resisted and ostracized the Mormon movement and its members. Many new converts lost their reputation practically overnight. Letters published in newspapers provided scandalous stories about the Mormons.\textsuperscript{86} Mobs disrupted services. Homes of new converts were attacked, and it became a saying that to become a Mormon was to have one’s window broken.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{83} Mulder, \textit{Homeward to Zion}, 51.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 54-55.
\textsuperscript{85} F.D. Richards, Scandinavian Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
\textsuperscript{86} Snow, \textit{One Year}, 9.
\textsuperscript{87} Mulder, \textit{Homeward to Zion}, 47.
Many members were accused of kidnapping after relatives or estranged spouses found parents attempting emigration with their children. Countless accounts tell of converts losing their work and/or being shunned by family and friends. Hannah Madsen Alrirch wrote of her children being “mistreated and driven from school” and homes being pelted with rotten eggs.\footnote{88} Carl Madsen, a Danish convert explained, “My stepfather told me that if I became a Mormon I would become an outcast and would not be permitted to enter their home. This threat filled my heart with bitter anguish, for I loved home dearly.”\footnote{89} Another convert, Søren Andersen, after eight months from being baptized, was unable to convince his wife of thirty years and all but one of their children, emigrated in 1851.\footnote{90} Another Dane expressed his dilemma about joining the Mormons and the efforts of his family to convince him otherwise: “In this state of affairs there was a fight going on in my own mind, my prospects in life was reasonably bright for a poor boy, should I become convinced of the truth of Mormonism, which was very unpopular, my prospects would be gone. . . . My parents and friends used their influence with me and sought to draw my attention away from Mormonism in the

\footnote{88} “A Brief Sketch of the Life of Hannah Madsen Aldrich,” Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.

\footnote{89} Carl Madsen, “My Conversion to Mormonism,” Scandinavian Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

\footnote{90} “Life Story of Soren Andersen,” Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
pleasures of the world.” Another woman explained, “I had no idea before I was baptized that I should have to go through so much if I joined the Mormons; if I had known it, I don’t think I could have done so.”

Mormon Scandinavian Emigration to America

For many of the early Mormons, emigration was synonymous with conversion. A Scandinavian convert reported: “Everywhere among the saints the next year’s emigration is almost their every thought, this circumscribes their prayers, their anxieties, and their exertions.” The doctrine of “Gathering to Zion” was stressed as heavily as other foundational doctrines. To be a member of the Mormon Church required accepting the responsibility of building God’s kingdom on earth, and that kingdom was literally in Utah. Emigration from the homeland was an onerous undertaking for the early emigrants, as many of them had never been out of their country and some never beyond the boundaries of their home counties. Converting to Mormonism typically meant leaving the land of their forefathers and heritage.

91 Hans Christensen, "Memoirs," Scandinavian Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.


93 "Christian A. Madsen," Scandinavian Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Just a year and a half after establishing the Church in Scandinavia, the first twenty-eight emigrants left for Utah in 1852. Emigration began as a steadily increasing trickle and by the 1860s it was in full force until the 1880s. Between the years of 1850 to 1905, of the 46,497 Scandinavians who joined the Church, 50 percent were Danish, 36 percent were Swedish, and 14 percent were Norwegian. Nearly half of those converts emigrated (22,653). Those converts who remained in Scandinavia, whether owing to personal decisions to remain with family, or owing to lack of funds for emigration, maintained the Church in Scandinavia and assisted in missionary work. Exact numbers of those who left the Church, whether in Scandinavia, during emigration, or in Utah, are unclear. It is estimated that in the first few years of Scandinavian conversion, up to a third withdrew membership in the Church, largely owing to eventual doubt, inability to endure persecution and ostracism, and overall disillusionment. Later decades saw the Church urging potential converts to have a longer period of investigation of the Church with hopes that abandonment could be lessened.


95 In 1850, 26 percent of Scandinavian converts emigrated, in 1860 the figure rose to forty-eight percent, and in 1880 emigration reached sixty-seven percent. See Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 107.

96 Ibid.

97 Richard G. Ellsworth, "The Dilemma of a Pernicious Zion," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 8, no. 4 (1968): 407-22. Ellsworth retells the story of Nels Bourkersson, a man who followed his Mormon wife to Utah. Bourkersson never joined the Church, and after three years returned to Sweden and later wrote of his criticisms and disillusionments with the Church in *Tre År i Mormonlandet: Berättelser efter Egna Lakttagelser* (Malmö, Sweden, 1867).
Within a few years from the first Scandinavian emigrants’ journey, Scandinavian travelling groups grew by the hundreds. Emigrants who had travelled earlier sent home letters of encouragement, telling stories of success and prosperity. One Danish man wrote of how Zion was “glorious to work for by day, to dream of by night, and refreshed, arise to begin the Lord’s work in the fruitful morning hours when the snow-clad mountain tops send a refreshing coolness down into the valleys and fill the streams with water.” Such affirming testimonials fueled the existing spiritual desire to be united with other members. These generally positive letters are similar to those that other Scandinavians elsewhere in America wrote home about their new setting and experience; however, these were typically laden with spiritual encouragement.

Church leaders warned against those who saw migration primarily as an opportunity for individual or economic advancement. Mormon publications in Europe advised converts that they needed strong spiritual conviction for the coming journey and hardships:

We do not purpose in our communications to hold out inducements not to be realized, to encourage emigration. We write for those who are determined to go, feeling that it is a sacred duty, which they owe to God, to themselves, and their children after them. Those who go for any other motive, will be ill prepared to meet the trials of such an arduous journey. Where anything less

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98 "Madsen to Carl Widerborg, July 25, 1858," Skandinavien Stjerne 8, no. 26 (October 15, 1858).

99 For examples of Swedish immigrant letters, see Jennifer Eastman Attebery, Up in the Rocky Mountains: Writing the Swedish Immigrant Experience (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).
than Eternity is in view, the spirit is not sufficiently exalted to brook the difficulties that lie before the Saints, to endure the rage of persecutors, or to meet undismayed the power of the destroyer that seeks for conquest on the earth.¹⁰⁰

Mormons believed that faith in God and a true religious intent with migration would protect them spiritually and physically through the journey.

**Emigration Route and Conditions**

The journey for the Scandinavian converts consisted of a series of connections (see fig. 3.2). Travelling by horse, wagon, boat, or foot from various regions, Danes congregated in Copenhagen. Swedes, likewise, travelled by various modes to Malmö and then crossed the Swedish Sound to Copenhagen. From Copenhagen emigrants would either take the train to Hamburg and then sail to Liverpool, or sail directly from Copenhagen to Liverpool. Norwegian converts sailed from Christiania or Stavanger to Liverpool. Ships sailed from Liverpool to New Orleans. Once in New Orleans immigrants travelled on the Mississippi River to St. Louis. Later emigrants landed in New York and travelled by train to Missouri where they continued on paddlewheel boats up the Missouri River to Omaha.¹⁰¹

Immigrants gathered in Iowa where they began their travel by wagon to the Salt

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Lake Valley. The total journey ranged from six to nine months, with sea travel taking two to three months, and the overland wagon journey lasting four to six months.  

The Mormon Scandinavians followed a tried and tested route. From the experience of transporting English converts, Mormons grew increasingly adept at chartering ships, organizing emigrants into communities on board, securing train and steamboat connections, and assembling wagons, oxen, mules, and tents. Unlike many other European emigrants who suffered from a strong sense of

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103 Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 139.
uprooting, Mormon emigrants experienced what William Mulder called a “tended transplanting, a shepherded migration.”104 Mormon emigrants were escorted by men they knew with people they knew, with the assurance that once they arrived at their destination they would receive outfitting, lodging, food, and of course be united with a religious community.105 Brigham Young counseled bishops to prepare for the immigrants:

You are hereby instructed to proceed forthwith, and make diligent inquiry, to ascertain who in your wards can take into their families, or houses, some of the brethren, or members of their families, who are now on the road to this land, and give them employment and food until the harvest of 1855, and furnish those who may need it, transportation from this city to the several places of destination.106

Such accommodation was practically unheard of for other immigrants coming to America. While the typical European guidebook warned the immigrant to America to “look out for himself, choose the right route, buy the right ticket, get into the right car,”107 Mormon guidebooks assured emigrants that as long as they followed the company leader they would find themselves safely in Utah. Along with physical instructions, spiritual counsel was provided. The Skandinaviens Stjerne (Scandinavians’ Star), a monthly periodical that included mission news, sermons

104 Ibid., 141.


from leaders, information about Utah, advertisement for homes for sale in both Scandinavia and Utah, travelers’ accounts and immigrant letters, also acted as a guidebook. Many of the letters published there offered advice and encouragement from immigrants who had recently made the journey. One edition gave directions on how to get to Utah.\textsuperscript{108} H.C. Haight, president of the Scandinavian mission, published in 1857 \textit{Læseøvelser i det engelske Sprog for Begyndere} (\textit{Reading Exercises in the English Language for Beginners}), which was designed to help converts learn English.\textsuperscript{109} Along with general vocabulary lists and phrases, instructions were given on how to make the voyage as well as the English needed to buy wagons and purchase supplies.

Mormon agents chartered steamers and ships to carry large companies of European converts. Scandinavians’ first sea voyage was a steamer to England. These ships carried approximately 300 converts from Danish ports through Germany and finally to Liverpool. Many Scandinavians describe the North Sea Passage as their most terrifying experience.\textsuperscript{110}

On November 24, 1854 the 160-foot Danish paddle-wheel steamer, \textit{Cimbria} (see fig. 3.3), left Copenhagen only to spend the next month returning to Norwegian


\textsuperscript{109} H. C. Haight, \textit{Læseøvelser i det engelske sprog for begyndere}, (Copenhagen, Denmark: Author & F. E. Bording, 1857), Harold B. Lee Library, Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

\textsuperscript{110} Conway B. Sonne, \textit{Saints on the Seas: A Maritime History of Mormon Migration, 1830-1890} (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 38.
harbors seeking refuge from storms that crashed aboard and shattered bulwarks and boxes and threatened to capsize the ship. Through the storms the 450 cold and ill converts spent hours holding onto their bunks and tables.\textsuperscript{111} After a month the ship reached Liverpool.

Figure 3.3. \textit{Cimбриa} paddle-wheel steamer. Source: Sonne, \textit{Saints on the Seas}, 38.

The price for the journey ranged from $75 to $100 per person, with steerage accounting for about a quarter of the price.\textsuperscript{112} For families, the cost was several hundred dollars. If they owned property, families sold their cottages and farms and everything associated with them. Emigrants tended to sell as much of their belongings as they could. Earlier immigrants advised forthcoming ones not to fill their trunks with items that could be bought in America. In 1855 J.C. Nielsen wrote that the previous year’s emigrants had to leave many of their trunks upon arrival in America due to the limited space and weight restrictions on wagons, and he advised

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 147.
future emigrants not to take so many trunks along to Utah. He explained that the emigrants would need more patience than baggage.113

Once on board the ships to America, Mormons created well-ordered communities, often berthed apart from other emigrants. Priesthood leadership oversaw both the physical and spiritual needs of the members on board. There were morning and evening devotionals, children had school, English was studied, dances frequently were enjoyed, and emigrants sewed tents and wagon covers. Marriages, births, and deaths were also frequent occurrences. To ease the crowded conditions of the ships, since single men and women were in separate quarters, betrothed couples were married on board.114

The overseas journey proved exceedingly trying for many emigrants. One Danish Mormon convert recorded that her six weeks at sea were the most miserable weeks of her life, surpassing the hardships of walking across the plains from Nebraska to Utah. Emigrants suffered numerous discomforts: overcrowding, sanitation problems, storms, poor food, lack of privacy, and tedium. They experienced various illnesses such as measles, cholera, and dysentery.115

113 "A Pioneer Journal, Forsgren Company," in Heart Throbs of the West, ed. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1939), 11.

114 The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star, 23 (1861): 328, 475, 478, 522.

115 Sonne, Saints on the Sea, 53.
Demographics of Mormon Scandinavian Emigrants

The emigrants were drawn from all professions and livelihoods, though farmers dominated. From 1850-57 farmers contributed to half of the emigration; though by the 1860s they comprised just a third. The proportions of farmers decreased through the following decades as the proportion of laborers rose, reflecting the shift from rural to urban membership. Journals kept by passengers on the 1853 Forest Monarch, the Mayflower of Scandinavian migration, note that in addition to the numerous farmers, several weavers and blacksmiths, a tailor, a wagon maker, a seaman, a miller, a wheelwright, a carpenter, a cabinetmaker, a cooper, a government clerk, a former Baptist lay preacher, a village choirmaster, and a school trustee emigrated. Two years later, according to the records of the John Boyd Company, there were numerous artisans on board the ship: carpenters, cabinetmakers, coopers, wheelwrights, joiners, turners, and carriagemakers. The next largest group of emigrants by profession were the tailors, seamstresses, dyers, and weavers, followed by blacksmiths, ironfounders, coppersmiths, tinsmiths. A handful of shoemakers, tanners, saddlemakers, harnessmakers, as well as

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116 Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 110.

117 “The Forsgren Company,” Scandinavian Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
stonecutters, masons, and bricklayers also emigrated.\textsuperscript{118} It was evident that each of these professions could help build the Zion in Utah.

The Perpetual Emigration Fund

The program under which all emigration for the Church was organized was called the Perpetual Emigration Fund (PEF). The PEF operated from 1850 to 1887 and took approximately 26,000 emigrants who needed economic assistance from Europe to the United States.\textsuperscript{119} As most Scandinavians were poor peasants, they relied heavily upon this program for their emigration needs. Contributions to build the fund came from pledges from members both at home and abroad, advance deposits from emigrants, and prepayment by those sending for friends and relatives. The PEF was designed to be a revolving fund in which the aid was considered a loan to be repaid upon settlement. Those who used assistance signed a contract which stated that "on our arrival in Utah we will hold ourselves, our time, and our labor subject to the appropriation of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, until the full cost of our emigration is paid, with interest if required."\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118} According to the same records of the \textit{John Boyd}, there were a handful of butchers, brewers, bakers, millers, fishermen, seamen, ropemakers, house painters, watchmakers, clerks, potters, a furrier, a miner, a matchmaker, a hairdresser, a hunter, a bookbinder, a printer, a thatcher, a sailmaker, and a shipbuilder. See Mulder, \textit{Homeward to Zion}, 112.


\textsuperscript{120} Kate B. Carter, \textit{Heart Throbs of the West}, vol. IV (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1944), 151.
contract, some Scandinavians speculated that slavery existed with the Mormons.\textsuperscript{121} Though there were tales that bishops hunted down debtors and made them work for the money they owed, according to instruction, the collections were to be “consistent with the debtors’ ability to pay, without distressing the poor, the widow, the aged, or the infirm.”\textsuperscript{122} Those who refused to repay their loans, however, were excommunicated. In 1880, in commemoration of the Church’s fiftieth anniversary, half the debt of those still owing was forgiven.\textsuperscript{123}

The Handcart Migration

Because of the high number of emigrants in the early 1850s, the PEF was nearly exhausted by 1855. Subsequently there was little financial aid for those who desired to emigrate to Utah, and wagon train travel was too expensive for emigrants to shoulder fully. In September of 1855, Brigham Young proposed travelling by handcarts, a considerably less expensive mode of transportation. In addition to being inexpensive, Young argued that handcarts would be faster and easier than the typical wagon train mode of travel. The handcart migration was instituted from 1856-1860, and during these years, nearly 3,000 Mormons migrated from Iowa across 1,300 miles of rugged frontier to Utah. Immigrants walked, pulling and

\textsuperscript{121} Mulder, \textit{Homeward to Zion}, 144.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Names of Persons and Sureties Indebted to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company from 1850 to 1877 Inclusive} (Salt Lake City, 1877).

\textsuperscript{123} Mulder, \textit{Homeward to Zion}, 146.
pushing their possessions in handmade two-wheeled carts (see fig. 3.4). A typical cart could carry up to five hundred pounds of flour, food, bedding, clothing, cooking utensils, and a tent. About five people were assigned to one handcart, with seventeen pounds of bedding and clothing allotted per person.\textsuperscript{124}


Over the four years of handcart migration, ten travelling companies, ranging from 200-500 people each, made the trek. Scandinavians were present in almost every company, sometimes only a handful while other times numbering in the hundreds. The seventh company, led by Christian Christiansen in 1857, was

\textsuperscript{124} Hafen and Hafen, \textit{Handcarts to Zion}, 58.
exclusively Scandinavian, with 330 persons. The companies would typically leave Iowa City in June and arrive in the Salt Lake Valley in October. All the immigrants—the healthy and strong, the children, and the elderly—pushed and pulled the carts. The trek was arduous; weather could be harsh, sickness struck regularly, and food was scarce.

The circle of life continued on the trek: babies were born and deaths occurred along the way. An account of Anna Marie Sorensen tells how she “retired from camp, and under some willows gave birth to a baby girl. In the morning she appeared with the baby in her apron, but the captain told her to ride in the wagon for a day or so.” On occasions of death, the family would remain long enough to dig a shallow grave along the trail before they joined the rest of the group. When James Jensen’s small daughter died, “a grave was dug, and a sieve was placed over her face before earth covered the emaciated little body.” Mette Mortensen was eleven years old when her family left Denmark, and she recounted how the handloomed linen sheets her mother, Lena, had made from the flax on their farm in Denmark were used to cover the frozen bodies of a common grave of thirteen people, six of whom were Scandinavians, who died one night in Rock Creek, Wyoming.

125 The chronicling of this event is found in Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 157-64.

126 Hafen and Hafen, Handcarts to Zion, 161.

127 Ibid.
Mortensen told of other precious objects the family had to abandon during their migration:

At Florence, Nebraska, . . . we discarded many of our finest things. We traded six cups and saucers of the finest china for a little milk; shared our hand woven linens with those in need, then rather than see our enemies abuse our treasures, we weighted them and rolled them into the Mississippi River. . . . I have always severely censured myself for taking from the pocket of one of the dead women a crust that I knew she was saving. May the Lord forgive a child so desperate for food.128

The most significant tragedy of the handcart migration struck the two largest handcart companies of 1856—the fourth led by James G. Willie, and the fifth led by Edward Martin—both of which had large numbers of Scandinavians. Of the 1,076 people between the two companies, over half were Scandinavian: 502 Danes, 67 Swedes, and 46 Norwegians.129 Having set out in late July and encountering an early winter, the companies struggled with the elements. Initially the heat and dust posed the main trials. Else Neilsen from Denmark wrote about the “. . . heat, ghastly, unrelenting heat and stifling alkali dust that has driven our remaining oxen to stampede, overturning a wagon and destroying more of our precious food supplies.”130 She wrote of the dryness and dust: “Horrible dust storms plague us. It


130 “Else Nielsen,” Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
cuts our faces, grills away at our axels, blinds us and the animals until we can hardly see a yard in front of us and we make such little progress.”\textsuperscript{131}

It was the early winter, however, that brought the greatest tragedy for the two companies. At their expected restocking site in Wyoming, due to miscommunication, there were no provisions waiting for them. They had to cut back on their food rations, a nearly impossible demand, when they were walking twelve to fifteen miles a day through sections of knee-deep snow drifts. To lighten their loads to ten pounds a person, the pioneers discarded portions of clothing and blankets they would desperately need later to survive blizzards.\textsuperscript{132} After wading through a frigid river, many of the members of the company suffered from hypothermia and frostbite.\textsuperscript{133} One woman wrote: “It was bitter cold... My brother James was well as ever when we crawled to our beds. In the morning he was dead. My feet, my brothers’ and my sisters’ were badly frozen. There was nothing but snow, snow everywhere and the bitter Wyoming wind. We could not drive pegs to set our tents. We were out of food. We did not know what was to become of us.”\textsuperscript{134} One man summarized the experience:

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{132}Rebecca Bartholomew and Leonard J. Arrington, Rescue of the 1856 Handcart Companies, ed. Charles Redd Monographs in Western History (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1993), 3-4.


\textsuperscript{134} Gordon B. Hinckley, "Mary Ann Goble Narrative," Improvement Era (June 1970).
Cold weather, scarcity of food, lassitude and fatigue from over-exertion, soon produced their effects. . . Life went out as smoothly as a lamp ceases to burn when the oil is gone. At first the deaths occurred slowly and irregularly, but in a few days at more frequent intervals, until we soon thought it unusual to leave a campground without burying one or more persons. . . Many a father pulled his cart, with his little children on it, until the day preceding his death.\textsuperscript{135}

Rescue parties had been sent from Utah in late October but could not get through the weather to aid the survivors to Utah until early November. Of the 1,076 people in the two companies, 212 people died along the way, sometimes up to 15 people a day.\textsuperscript{136}

Many Scandinavian immigrants recorded how their faith gave purpose to their trials in what William Mulder labeled “evidences of the Lord’s purposes with them.”\textsuperscript{137} Danish immigrant Maren Kjirstine Johansen recounted how she and her four siblings became orphaned on the trip. She became ill and was allowed to ride in a freight wagon. During this time her legs and feet froze and her feet literally fell off as the wagon jolted. After reaching Salt Lake City, her legs did not heal and a doctor removed both legs below the kneecaps. She remembers, “I told them not to cry so, for I would have my feet again when I got to heaven.”\textsuperscript{138} Brigham Young later had a special sewing machine designed for her that she could operate without feet. Maren went on to marry and have seven children. She was known to sit in bed carding

\textsuperscript{135} Hafen and Hafen, \textit{Handcarts to Zion}, 102.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{138} Allpin, \textit{Tell My Story, Too}, 360.
wool, spinning yarn, or knitting stockings late into the night. She also made quilts and did wash for other families and would walk for two miles on her knees to help someone in need. Others declared Maren’s life of service was a testament of her faith.\textsuperscript{139}

Another faithful immigrant was Anna Jorgenson Larsen. Larsen came from a wealthy family in Copenhagen, but she converted to Mormonism and her family dis-inherited her and her husband and children. Like most emigrants, Anna left behind many of the family’s belongings, but felt moved to keep a small cedar chest. Three weeks into the journey on the plains, the Larsen’s newborn son died from cold and exposure. Anna placed his frozen body in the cedar chest, and her husband, Johannes, chopped a hole in the frozen ground large enough to bury it. Years later when her granddaughter asked how she endured the many trials of the migration, Jensen replied, “It will be worth it all if my posterity will keep the faith.”\textsuperscript{140} Jensen’s response echoes the belief of many immigrants: conversion to Mormonism, no matter the cost, was a matter of salvation for generations.

Wallace Stegner, American historian and novelist, appraised the Mormon handcart experience as follows: “If courage and endurance make a story, if human kindness and helpfulness and brotherly love, in the midst of raw horror are worth recording, this forgotten episode of westward migration is one of the great tales of

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 361.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 330.
western America.” Though a tragic chapter in both Mormon history and the history of the American West, the Mormon handcart experience was considered triumphant by many, as it enabled thousands to migrate who otherwise would have been unable to afford it. In time, the PEF was replenished enough to assist more in emigrating from Europe to Utah.

In 1860 ox-and-wagon companies resumed. The Church sent wagon companies east each spring and returned to Utah in the summer with the immigrating converts. Further travel advancements shortened the overall journey. In June 1867 the first Scandinavian converts crossed the Atlantic by steam. In July 1869, with the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, immigrants began to travel by rail, reducing the total journey to 27 days. Such advancements marked the end of the era of the Mormon pioneer trail.

Emigration After 1869

The highest era of Scandinavian emigration to Utah was 1860-1890. Mormon emigration continued into the twentieth century at a significantly lower rate, proportionate to overall Scandinavian emigration to America. Also, the Church was becoming more established throughout Scandinavia and converts were more likely to stay with their home congregations. Table 1 illustrates the number of immigrants

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142 Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 176.
from Scandinavia to America, and table 2 notes the number of Mormon emigrants from Scandinavia to America.

Table 1. Immigrants from Scandinavia, 1820-1920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Scandinavia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820-1830</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>283</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831-1840</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>1,063</td>
<td>2,264</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841-1850</td>
<td>13,903</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>14,442</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851-1860</td>
<td>20,931</td>
<td>3,749</td>
<td>24,680</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861-1870</td>
<td>37,667</td>
<td>71,631</td>
<td>17,094</td>
<td>126,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871-1880</td>
<td>115,922</td>
<td>95,323</td>
<td>31,771</td>
<td>243,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881-1890</td>
<td>391,776</td>
<td>176,586</td>
<td>88,132</td>
<td>656,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-1900</td>
<td>226,266</td>
<td>95,323</td>
<td>50,231</td>
<td>371,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-1910</td>
<td>249,534</td>
<td>190,505</td>
<td>65,285</td>
<td>505,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-1920</td>
<td>95,074</td>
<td>66,395</td>
<td>41,983</td>
<td>203,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,116,239</td>
<td>695,455</td>
<td>300,036</td>
<td>2,111,730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 165. (※ indicates that immigration from Sweden and Norway were not separated, * indicates numbers corrected from original table).
Table 2. Emigration from the Mormon Scandinavian missions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Scandinavia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851-1860</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>2,138</td>
<td>2,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861-1870</td>
<td>1,764</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>3,894</td>
<td>6,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871-1880</td>
<td>1,863</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>3,125</td>
<td>5,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881-1890</td>
<td>2,048</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>2,388</td>
<td>5,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-1900</td>
<td>1,078</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>2,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-1910</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>2,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-1920</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>1,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8,374</td>
<td>3,326</td>
<td>13,789</td>
<td>25,489</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Starting in the 1890s, no organized Mormon emigration took place; converts either left independently or in small groups. Mormon immigrants followed the traditional route, mostly traveling by train after arriving in America (see fig. 3.5).

Figure 3.5. Western routes frequently traveled by Mormon Scandinavian immigrants, 1853-1905. Source: Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, Map 2.

Though these later emigrants faced many similar challenges and sacrifices in Scandinavia as those who left in the beginning of the migration, they had different settling experiences. They came to settled communities where families, homes, culture, and the economy were established. Instead of having to settle new communities, they helped grow communities. Such changes manifest the evolving nature of the emigrant/immigrant experience.
Conclusion

The foregoing chapter has outlined the historical context of Mormonism and the reasons for its appeal to Scandinavian converts. This framework elucidates why Scandinavians joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and why they chose to leave their homelands and emigrate to Utah.

The impetus for the founding of the Mormon Church stemmed from a religious climate in early-nineteenth century America when many were disillusioned with Christian churches and their leaders. Those who joined themselves with the Mormons asserted that the newly organized church offered spiritual assurance and theological explanation that they did not find in their previous churches.

Within its first twenty years, the recently established denomination spread across eastern America and into Britain, Scandinavia, and throughout mainland Europe. Like other Europeans of the nineteenth century, Scandinavians encountered social and political unrest, economic hardship, and religious dissent. Many Scandinavians felt oppressed and disillusioned with the Lutheran state church. Just as those in America who were seeking new religious experience prior to the formation of the Mormon Church, many Scandinavians found that Mormonism presented new answers and solutions to problems. The hopefulness and personal relationship with God Mormons spoke of had great appeal in contrast to the cold officious state church. Mormonism also promised material and spiritual salvation.
Furthermore, it offered a common ideology and community. Various events in Scandinavia such as the pietism and literacy movements, as well as the completion of the Danish constitution in 1849, allowed for greater self-sufficiency and independence from the government and state church.

Between the years of 1850 and 1905, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway produced over 46,000 Mormon converts. Joining the Church proved a great sacrifice for its converts. Many experienced persecution and ostracism from family, friends, and clergy for abandoning the religious heritage of their forefathers. Many sold all their land and property to secure funds for emigration. Emigration to America proved harrowing. Ultimately, however, the spiritual blessings promised to its followers combined with the opportunity to secure and cultivate land and property resonated with Scandinavian converts.

A key component in early Mormonism was the doctrine of gathering—a Biblical concept of spiritual and physical unification. Mormons believed in the literal gathering of its members. This central doctrine not only consolidated its members into one place, but created the cohesiveness needed to secure the Church’s growth and well-being. Early Mormon history is replete with controversy and persecution, and leaders sought the isolation of Utah as the place of gathering to protect their people from opposition. In contrast to most European emigrants who had to work out all aspects of their journey, the Mormons had an established emigration system that provided their own guidebooks, charted ships, wagon trains, lodging,
provisions, and the assurance that there would be a place for them upon arrival in Utah.

By 1920, Scandinavian Mormon emigrants to Utah totaled over 25,000. These immigrants faced many of the same cultural challenges other immigrants experienced as they adjusted to a new culture. The difference was in their religious unification, which created a sense of belonging regardless their backgrounds. As evidenced in the following chapter, the conversion process and subsequent migration created new identities within its members as they drew themselves to their Zion in Utah.
Chapter 4

National, Religious, and Cultural Adaptation Among Scandinavian Immigrants in Utah Through the Lens of Material Culture

Introduction

This chapter considers specifically nationality, religion, and culture as contexts in which Scandinavian immigrant Mormons' self and group identities were shaped and perceived by themselves. It examines various objects that represent each of these three aspects of their identity to demonstrate how their identities adapted and evolved in their transition to a new country and religion. This chapter demonstrates how, as Scandinavian immigrants’ identities transformed on the Utah frontier, their material culture reflected a unique comingling of their original Scandinavian identities and their new Mormon identity.

The arrival in the Salt Lake Valley marked one of the greatest events in the lives of many immigrants, surpassing even the relief and excitement of landing in America. Already settled church members shared in the excitement, and festivities typically greeted immigrant groups as they entered the valley. A Swedish convert reported: “As we came out of Parley’s Canyon, the Saints met us in droves, bringing fruit and edibles in abundance, and though we had our troubles on the journey, now every heart swelled with joy to see the snow-covered mountains and beautiful
valley where the fields and meadows were still partly green and many trees full of fruit.”¹ Many of the Scandinavian immigrants who had travelled upwards of six months described their entrance to the Salt Lake Valley as their arrival in “the Promised Land.”

After their arrival, immigrants faced the challenges of establishing themselves in Utah. Upon arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young counseled the people to settle in quickly and help build up the new Zion:

You are faint and weary from your march. Rest, then, for a day, for a second day, should you need it; then rise up, and see how you will live... Be of good cheer. Look about this valley into which you have been called. Your first duty is to learn how to grow a cabbage... Then how to feed a pig, to build a house, to plant a garden, to rear cattle, and to bake bread; in one word, your first duty is to live.²

Brigham Young’s admonitions for establishment and self-sufficiency in the frontier characterized much of early Mormon settlement and thought. The Mormons’ overarching goal was to work industriously together and become spiritually united. Transitioning not only to frontier American life but also to being part of the Mormon community was essential for immigrants, and the process aided in the development of new identities among the people.

In the general sense, the term identity describes a person’s conception of him or herself and his or her relationship to others. Social psychologists Michael Hogg

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and Dominic Abrams defined identity as “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others.” Identity is a complex formulation and is studied from various perspectives, though most commonly in terms of personal and social perceptions; personal referring to an identity specific to the individual, and social being membership in a group. Studying individual and group identities—both as perceived by themselves and externally—aids in understanding people and interpreting their experiences in larger contexts.

In an effort to examine identity, folklorist Sandra Dolby Stahl suggests eight folk group categories that play significant roles in the “formation and expression of individual identity:” family relationships, ethnicity, religion, place or region, age, gender, occupation, or other social networks. By recognizing these categories and their unique roles in contributing to a person’s overall identity, one can begin to understand a person’s life experience. Mormon Scandinavians negotiated a variety of identity orientations. Scandinavian historian Dag Blanck describes immigrants as “active agents in shaping these cultural patterns and ethnic identities.”

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4 Sandra Stahl, Literary Folkloristics and the Personal Narrative (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 35.

National Identity

As did most immigrants, the Scandinavians in Utah negotiated the dynamic interplay between their cultural heritage and their new nation. Questions of ethnicity and nationality influenced their perceived identities. They were confronted with the duality of their non-American ethnicity and their American residency. Physical manifestations of national loyalties, whether they be Scandinavian or American, are less prominent in Utah, and historians have attributed this to the fact that immigrant converts identified themselves more with the religious group than with a nationality. In 1865, John Taylor, a Church leader declared, “We are not composed of one particular family of the human race; we cannot be called Germans, we cannot be called English, we cannot be called Americans, or French, or Italians, Swiss, Portuguese, or Scandinavians. You cannot call us by any nationality, in particular, for we are composed of the whole.”

In 1853, an editorial in the Deseret News described the gathering of Mormons as follows: “To see a people gathered from a multitude of nations, indiscriminately gathered . . . and those who gather being one in faith, fellowship, feeling, and acts, is an anomaly on the earth.”

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Evidence in the material culture emigrants brought, however, reveals the national ties the immigrants maintained with their homelands. Some brought remnants of national remembrances with them, as seen in this crepe chiffon (figure 4.1) used for the mourning of the King of Sweden’s death, brought by Mary Nelson.

4.1. Band of black crepe chiffon used by Mary Nelson for the mourning of King of Sweden. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.

Such nationally significant objects, though rare in Utah, acted as mementos of historical events and tied immigrants to their memories of those events. No known record exists explaining why Nelson chose to bring the chiffon.

The processes of migration, naturalization, and enculturation affected immigrants’ perceived national identities. They transitioned from thinking of themselves as Danes, Swedes, or Norwegians to thinking of themselves as Danish-
Americans, Swedish-Americans, or Norwegian-Americans, to thinking of themselves as Americans with Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian heritage. This national pluralism created complex perceptions and interpretations of identities.

National identities are formed in social, political, and cultural contexts. Nationalism was a dynamic force in both Europe and America in the nineteenth century. National romanticism peaked by the late nineteenth century in Scandinavia, and the emphasis on national folk and local culture fostered strong national feelings. After immigrating, Scandinavian immigrants faced the challenge of balancing a cultivated homeland nationalism with a newfound allegiance to America. As Dag Blanck pointed out, becoming American did not require so much a shift in cultural loyalties, as a “committing to the abstract political ideals of liberty, equality, and republicanism.” In this same view, Lawrence Fuchs suggested that if immigrants embraced the national dimensions of Americanism, their cultural and ethnic identities were more easily accepted by others in America.

Numerous Scandinavian enclaves throughout America provided immigrants with an opportunity to balance their homeland ethnicity with being Americans. The

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8 Blanck, The Creation of an Ethnic Identity, 4.

9 This suggests that those who emigrated after the mid-nineteenth century had less of a sense of nationalism or patriotism than those who left around the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century.


majority of these enclaves were clustered throughout the upper Midwest, with smaller groups scattered throughout the West. Swedish journalist Johan Person wrote in 1900 that these communities maintained ethnic identity through their “shared language and culture, a common [national] history, and a common experience in America.” Churches, Scandinavian language newspapers, and various fraternal and service organizations strongly perpetuated cultural traditions and acknowledged national ties. Enclaves in the Midwest, in particular, remained distinctly ethnically Scandinavian until the 1950s.

The American West especially appealed to immigrants in general. Beginning in the 1840s, the “myth of the West” spread across America and Europe. The pathfinder Daniel Boone and Western dime novels described the region as a place of vast mountainous landscape, cowboys, Native Americans, and outlaws. As folklorist Jennifer Eastman Attebery has observed, the West was viewed as “a liminal place, where civilization meets the wild and primitive and is transformed or renewed.” Descriptions of the dramatic landscapes and wilderness fed the nineteenth-century imagination with the sublime. People from around the world converged in the West and it became more ethnically diverse than any other region in America. The mixed population of Native Americans, Asians, Mexicans, Canadians, Europeans, and

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13 Ibid., 112.

14 Ibid., 46.
eastern Americans created a new and unique regional identification, creating a distinct version of American nationalism. Because of the national, ethnic, panethnic and regional coexistence in the West, Scandinavian-American identities and other hyphenated identities were much less pronounced than in the Midwest.

The Scandinavian Mormon immigrant experience varied greatly from the general Scandinavian immigrant experience in America. Instead of cultivating a primarily Scandinavian identity as many Scandinavian communities did in the Midwest, Mormons sought an insular Mormon identity. Scandinavians found themselves mingling with Americans and other Europeans in a unifying religious kinship. In an effort to integrate its diverse population, the Mormon leadership prescribed a blending among the various nationalities. In 1894, Levi B. Reynolds taught the people of Mount Pleasant: “We should meet often together to enjoy ourselves without nationality, for we are all one Family.”  

Similarly, in response to a group of Swedes wanting separate Swedish meetings, Mormon leaders published in the Deseret Evening News in 1903: “We deprecate the attempt to build walls of separation between Saints from different countries, and fanning the flames of the dying embers of former national hatreds.” As a result, communities that were predominantly Scandinavian demonstrated a blending of Scandinavian, Mormon, and American identities. Historian Orm Øverland called this formation of a new

15 “High Priests Quorum Minute Book,” (Mt. Pleasant, Utah, December 23, 1894).
16 Desert Evening News, April 5, 1903.
national identity “trinitarian, not only in the sense that it is composed of three elements, but in the sense that the three elements are inseparably one.”17 The new identity was one in which it was difficult to discern distinct parts. And perhaps it was simply easier for immigrants to accept a broad inclusive identity than try to identify with many groups. Historian Barbra Hargis pointed out that, in this way, the Church upheld the American nationalism with the “welding of the different cultural, material, and educational backgrounds” of various nations.18 Of the overarching Scandinavian, Mormon, and American identities, it was clear that for Scandinavian immigrants, Scandinavian national loyalties were more readily diluted than other identities. The old Danish proverb: “Man må hyle med de ulve man er i blandt”19 (“One must howl with the wolves one is among”) also indicates a Danish norm of adapting to new ways.

Though perpetuation of national pride was not wholly discouraged, a general panethnicity existed among the Scandinavians with little distinctions made among Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians. In other Scandinavian regions in America, organizations such as The Sons of Norway, The Nordmanns-Förbundet, The Vasa Order, The Danish Brotherhood, Bygdelags, along with the various Scandinavian-

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American presses throughout the country set each Scandinavian country’s immigrants apart from one another. Utah had the Danske Klub, Norske Klub, Norden Society, and Svenska Gleeklubben, but religious affiliation was the unifying factor overlying these organizations. The high rate of intermarriage among Scandinavian immigrants contributed to the pan-Scandinavian cultural identity in Utah.\(^{20}\) Most immigrants accepted the pan-Scandinavian grouping, though some resented and rebelled against the image, particularly those who were not Danish, as Danish tended to be the nationality of the majority of Scandinavians.\(^{21}\) Attempts to separate nationalities eventually were eclipsed by not only church influence but also the rise of U.S. nationalism in the early part of the twentieth century. Reactions to World War I led political leaders to campaign for immigrant assimilation. Echoing the Mormon point of view, in 1915, President Woodrow Wilson declared, “America does not consist of groups. A man who thinks of himself as belonging to a particular national group in America has not yet become an American.”\(^{22}\) The Mormons had long previously adopted this mentality, especially in religious terms.

The monument in Ephraim, Utah, pictured in figure 4.2, illustrates coexisting cultural heritage. It includes a plaque that states: “Majestic wildlife, ancient natives,


\(^{21}\) Most of the opposition was in the press. The *Svenska Härolden*, founded in 1885, was the first Swedish publication in Utah and aimed to present the Swedes as a distinct cultural group.

ancestral Scandinavians together bound on this common ground called Ephraim.”
The monument embodies the notion of multiple national identities (Scandinavian, Native American, and American) united in one.

4.2. Monument in Ephraim, Utah. Artist and date unknown. Source: Author’s photograph.

Religious Identity

The very little Scandinavian national material culture exhibited in Utah can be attributed to the Mormon emphasis on, above all, a united religious identity. In her study of Mormon identity, historian Jan Shipps noted that early Mormons sacrificed various loyalties, including immigrants’ homeland national allegiances, for
the spiritual rewards they sought. As immigrants’ national ties and identities waned, their religious identity intensified and became their primary identity. In this way, Mormons created and became their own ethnic group, identifying themselves as members both ecclesiastically and culturally. This core religious identity indicates religious assimilation. Religious assimilation, however, did not equate to a uni-dimensional identity. Rather, Scandinavians retained their complex, multidimensional identity with regard to their cultural identities and traditions, demonstrating acculturation. The rich material culture of Scandinavian Mormons suggests that they maintained pride in skills acquired and traditions learned in their homelands. Their perpetuation of these folkways evidences enduring cultural identity as Danes, Swedes and Norwegians.

The desire to unite and identify with like-minded believers was not unique to Mormons. The nineteenth century’s Second Great Awakening in America saw many religious groups forming utopian societies wherein all aspects of members’ lives were governed by their faith. The formation of the Shakers, Rappites, Ephrata Closter, Harmony Society, Oneida Community, Amana Colonies, and Mormons illustrated that America was relatively tolerant of such social and religious experiments. Utopian communities were a response to a desire for religious purification and an alternative to the materialism and urbanization that reflected

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24 For the distinction between assimilation and acculturation, see definitions in chapter 1.
decreasing religiosity among Americans. As historian Steve Mizrach explained, these communities “withdrew from the sinful, corrupt world to work their miracles in microcosm . . . . [They] saw themselves as islands of redemption in a world awash with temptation, sin, and avarice; the Elect could come and perfect themselves, if they were prepared to heed the Lord’s call to chastity, poverty, simplicity, hard work, purity, and brotherly love.”

By the nineteenth century, Europeans seeking political, economic, and religious relief saw America as a utopia, both symbolically and actually. For those pursuing religious freedom, America was viewed as a place of secular and religious coexistence.

Like other utopian communities, the Mormons dedicated themselves to a society of righteousness, equality, and plenty. Part of the communitarian ideal rested on the notions of contribution and distribution. Beginning in 1831, Joseph Smith instituted the Law of Consecration in which members were asked to deed their money and property voluntarily to the Church and then receive in return what they needed with the remains being distributed among the poor. The Law of Consecration was implemented to varying degrees and a form of it was termed the United Order. It was a socialistic program based on egalitarian beliefs designed to achieve equal income for each family, eliminate poverty, and create group self-sufficiency. It required the consecration of people’s money, property, and skills to

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26 Doctrine and Covenants 43:30-35.
the Church. The United Order emphasized collectivism over individualism, with no
class distinctions, whereby everyone was expected to contribute. These
commandments, however, were predicated on the willingness of its members, as it
was a voluntary program.\textsuperscript{27} The United Order was discontinued in 1877, but
members to this day are urged to donate ten percent of their income in tithing.\textsuperscript{28}

Mormons perceived spiritual belief and daily living as inseparably linked.
The pooling of physical resources was essential to survival and strengthening
spirituality. Brigham Young taught,

\begin{quote}

The Kingdom we are talking about, preaching about and trying to build is the
Kingdom of God on the earth, not in the starry heavens, nor in the sun. We
are trying to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth to which really and
properly everything that pertains to men—their feelings, their faith, their
affections, their desires, and every act of their lives—belong, that they may
be ruled by it spiritually and temporally. . . . We cannot talk about spiritual
things without connecting them with temporal things, neither can we talk
about temporal things without connecting spiritual things with them. They
are inseparably connected. . . . We, as Latter-day Saints, really expect, look for
and we will not be satisfied with anything short of being governed and
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{27} Apostle Lorenzo Snow emphasized the importance and preservation of individual free will
with these directives: “In things that pertain to celestial glory there can be no forced operations. We
must do according as the spirit of the Lord operates upon our understandings and feelings. We
cannot be crowded into matters, however great might be the blessing attending such procedure. We
cannot be forced into living a celestial law; we must do this ourselves, of our own free will. And
whatever we do in regard to the principle of the United Order, we must do it because we desire to do

\textsuperscript{28} In 1838 Joseph Smith received revelation that all members should pay “one-tenth of all
their interest [increase] annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever.” See Doctrine
and Covenants 119:4. Since all Mormon Church leadership is lay, tithing funds go strictly to building
and maintaining meetinghouses, temples, and other facilities, as well as for support of the
missionary, educational, and welfare programs of the Church. See Howard Swainston, ”Tithing,” in
controlled by the word of the Lord in all of our acts, both spiritual and
temporal. If we do not live for this, we do not live to be one with Christ.29

Young continued,

I have often remarked that in spiritual things we are one; and we have also
got to become one in temporal things as we are one in spiritual things. . . .
[T]he Lord does not mean that we shall be one in property, in the height of
our persons, color of our hair and eyes, in the size and expression of our
features, or in the acuteness and vigor of our senses. Being thus physically
one would not make us one as the Lord wished us to be one. He wishes us to
be one in our efforts to advance our kingdom. He wishes every man, every
woman, and every child that has attained to years of discretion to be one in
putting forth their hands, their means and their influence to bring about this
desired object.30

These communitarian ideals influenced Mormons’ material culture, and as
such, many of their objects can be considered religious in nature. Objects that
immigrants brought and created symbolize sacrifice, trial, and rebirth. The early
Church meetinghouses, storehouses, tabernacles, and temples are products of
members’ donations of time, skills, and material resources. In these buildings,
everything from the millwork, construction, finish carpentry, furniture, decorative
painting, pottery, textiles, and embroidery were offerings of members’ personal
skills and resources. The buildings themselves and the objects therein reflect the

29 Brigham Young, "Synopsis of Instruction, During Visits to Davis, Weber, and Cache

30 Brigham Young, "Remarks Delivered in the Bowry, Salt Lake City, Ocotober 7, 1864,
finest work and craftsmanship of the pioneers because their work was “an offering to the Lord.”31

Temples

Scandinavian craftsmanship is apparent throughout early Church construction. For Mormons, part of the restoration of the gospel included the renewal and building of temples as in Old Testament times.32 The Manti Temple (see fig. 4.3) in Sanpete exemplifies Scandinavian craftsmanship and material culture. The timing of its construction was such that pioneers were established enough in their personal needs to dedicate their efforts to building an elaborate and costly temple. The Manti Temple was the fifth temple built by Mormons.

31 Exodus 35:5.

32 Mormon temples are reserved for special forms of worship and ceremonies. They differ from meetinghouses of weekly worship in that only Church members who are recommended by their local leadership may enter. In temples, Mormons learn about the purpose of life and participate in ceremonies (called ordinances) necessary for salvation. Ordinances include eternal marriage, eternally sealing children to parents, and a series of covenants called the Endowment. Baptism and confirmation for the dead are also performed for those who were not baptized while living.
The Manti Temple was a locally executed endeavor in every aspect. People from the Manti Temple District\(^33\) provided the majority of the supplies and labor. The rock, timber, and other building supplies consisted exclusively of local materials. Excavation began April 30, 1877, and the cornerstone was laid on April 14, 1879. For two years, laborers quarried cream-white colored oolite stone from nearby hills and sent it to stonecutting shops in Manti. Over the next nine years, laborers worked ten hours a day, six days a week on the temple. Many walked or

\(^{33}\) On October 25, 1876, the Presidency of the Church decreed: “Let the Bishops of the settlements in Washington, Kane, Iron, Piute, Beaver, Millard, Sevier, Sanpete, and Juab counties call the people of their wards together and ascertain from them how much each one is willing to do in labor and means, monthly, quarterly, and annually, toward the erection of a Temple at Manti, Sanpete County.” See James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord: A Study of Holy Sanctuaries, Ancient and Modern, Including Forty-Six Plates Illustrative of Modern Temple* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1912), 224.
travelled up to twenty miles to Manti each Monday morning to return home on 
Saturday night. Skilled craftsmen—the majority of whom were immigrants from 
Wales, England, and Denmark—executed the workmanship of the exterior and 
interior of the temple.\textsuperscript{34} Stonecutter Andrew Christian Neilson walked five miles 
each day to the temple and returned home each night.\textsuperscript{35} Records show he was the 
only stonecutter who knew how to do “peach facing”—a type of facing formed by 
chipping the stones to round the front side of the stone—a skill he had learned in 
Denmark.\textsuperscript{36}

The carpenters and cabinetmakers who labored on the temple were 
predominantly Scandinavian. Much of the woodwork and finishwork—including 
benches, tables, doorways, altars, pulpits, staircases, arches, doors, and moldings— 
and the tools associated with such work were made by the Scandinavian craftsmen. 

Scandinavian carpenters made and used this mallet and various hand planes 
pictured in figure 4.4 for the construction of the Manti Temple.

\textsuperscript{34} Scandinavian craftsmen on the Manti Temple included: Nils L. Christensen, assistant 
mason; Peter Ahlstrom, pattern maker; Dan Weggeland, landscape painter; C.C.A. Christensen, 
landscape painter; German Rasmussen, scaffold builder; Andreas Olsen, carpenter. See Victor J. 

\textsuperscript{35} Glen R. Stubbs, \textit{Temple on a Hill: A History of the Manti Temple} (Rexburg, Idaho: Ricks 

\textsuperscript{36} Hargis, "A Folk History of the Manti Temple," 58.
The mallet was used, in combination with chisels, for finishing work on the oolite stone blocks, and the carpenter planes were employed in crafting door casings and moldings. The religious significance of these tools lies in their transformation from being utilized for common ordinary purposes to their being used to construct a building of great religious significance. The tools became imbued with religious significance that persisted long afterwards, their having contributed to such a great religious endeavor.

Local carpenters executed their work on the temple site using lumber made of the native red pine. Christian Madsen supervised the woodwork turning on the
temple. Andreas “Steamboat” Olsen, who was originally a sail maker from Norway, employed his carpentry skills throughout the temple, and prided himself on his contribution to the two freestanding open spiral staircases found in each tower (see fig. 4.5).37


The Manti Temple’s staircases rise seventy-six vertical feet with no center support, make six complete revolutions, and have 151 steps. Without central supports, each stair is supported solely by the stair below. The construction is a remarkable engineering feat, especially for pioneer carpenters. Architectural historians note

that very few wooden freestanding open spiral staircases exist in the world.\textsuperscript{38} The staircases also manifest the religious devotion of those who crafted them, given the far greater time and effort dedicated to them than the building of the humble homes in which these immigrants and their families resided. Because most church buildings in Scandinavia were constructed centuries prior, immigrants had no experience in their homelands constructing church buildings, and perhaps would not have identified as closely with their church buildings. Hence, the immigrants’ willingness to devote such extraordinary energy and pride into their voluntary, unpaid work in building the Manti Temple demonstrated a new level of devotion.

The furniture, such as pulpits, altars, and sacrament tables, had essential religious significance in temple ceremonies. Temple attendees made sacred vows at these structures. Presumably, it was a great honor for craftsmen to make them. In meetinghouses and tabernacles, pulpits typically were the most elaborate pieces of furniture in the buildings, occasionally ornamented with symbolic forms to remind and inspire the congregation about spiritual commitments. Many such objects displayed chip carving, as pictured in figure 4.6. Chip carving is one of the most ancient forms of wood decorating in Scandinavia, and it had a resurgence in popularity in the seventeenth century. It is done by carving intersecting horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines into v-shaped patterns in the wood.

\textsuperscript{38} The Trumpet Stone. "Temple Spiral Staircases," 
Scandinavian craftsmen employed this carving technique to create organic forms such as leaves and branches, as well as other symbols easily recognized by temple attendees.

The mural scenes in each endowment room correlated with the instructional purposes of the endowment ceremony. Murals on the temple walls demonstrated Scandinavian training and skills. Carl Christian Anton Christensen from Denmark and Danquart Weggeland from Norway produced the murals in various temples. The Creation Room of the Manti Temple, painted by Christensen with assistance from Weggeland for certain animals, reflects the events of the various days of Creation.
Figure 4.7. Detail from the Creation Room mural in the Manti Temple by Carl Christian Anton Christensen. Source: Richard L. Jensen and Richard G. Oman. *C.C.A. Christensen, 1831-1912: Mormon Immigrant Artist* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984), 62.

Figure 4.7 depicts a scene from the sixth day of creation. Christensen’s decorative painting skills acquired at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts are evident in the pastoral tone and foliage, shading, and perspective. The livestock in this panel—cows and sheep—represent farm animals and breeds with which Christensen and Weggeland were familiar on the Danish farmstead. The artists drew from their farming backgrounds as they painted these animals and translated their importance into religious instruction.

Christensen and other artists executed faux graining, a technique learned in Denmark, to simulate marble and hardwoods found on the columns and furniture of the temple (see discussion of faux graining in chapter 5). Faux graining was a fairly
standard technique in Europe and in America in the late nineteenth century to
demonstrate that owners could afford the work. An example of Christensen’s
marbling is found in the Canute Peterson home in Ephraim, Utah. The mantelpiece
looks like stone but is actually pine (see fig. 4.8).

Figure 4.8. Detail of faux marble graining by Carl Christian Anton Christensen on the mantelpiece of
the Canute Peterson home, Ephraim, Utah. Source: Author’s photograph.
Many of the columns and tables throughout the temple display such marbling.\textsuperscript{39} Marble is historically associated with divinity and was used in Greek and Roman temples and sculptures. As with all faux graining, whether it imitated wood or marble, pioneers the technique as way to make rudimentary things look fine and elegant, worthy of adorning the temple.

Religiously significant beautification also extended to the temple grounds. When the Manti Temple was still surrounded by rocks and sagebrush, Apostle Anthon H. Lund, an immigrant from Denmark, likened the unfinished setting to a “fair maiden” of his native land, “dressed in a beautiful silk gown but with clumsy wooden shoes on her dainty feet.”\textsuperscript{40} In 1907, thousands of loads of soil were brought in and landscaped for lawns and flowerbeds. Scandinavians accustomed to the finely groomed gardens of their homelands assisted in making the temple grounds suited to the temple.

The architectural folklore of the temple plays an important role in its history. William H. Folsom, architect and general superintendent, along with church leader and assistant superintendent Canute Peterson, from Norway oversaw the architectural plan. The design of the temple, both interior and exterior, blends

\textsuperscript{39} Because Mormons consider their temples to be sacred, there are few photographs of the interior of Mormon temples. Temple observations included here are based on personal observation of the author.

\textsuperscript{40} William Henry Peterson, \textit{The Miracle of the Mountains} (Manti, Utah: Wm. H. Peterson, 1942), 21.
Gothic Revival, French Renaissance Revival, and French Second Empire styles. According to Mormon folklore, Norwegian carpenters, who had never constructed a building of such magnitude, built the roof in the form of an inverted boat frame.41

Figure 4.9. Schematic of the Manti Temple roof. Source: Author’s screen shot from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints General Conference address by L. Tom Perry, October, 2009.

Church architectural records show, however, that the roof of the Manti Temple was not constructed after a boat frame, but used the same architectural style found in buildings of the time, particularly ones designed by Folsom (see fig. 4.9). The perpetuation of this architectural folklore illustrates people’s desire to honor and revere their ancestors. Folklorist William A. Wilson explained that the value of such folklore is that it “gives better insight into what people believe about themselves and about the localities in which they live than we can often get from more customary sources. . . . People tell stories about those things that interest them most or are most important to them.” In her assessment of the Manti Temple and the folklore associated with it, Barbara Hargis similarly concluded, “Because folk history is fact or fancy readily altered by its different spokesmen, its value lies not in its historical accuracy, but rather in its expression of the human element which permeates all history.” This particular piece of folklore, then, expresses a folklore theory of cultural transmission: by creating and perpetuating such folklore of the ingenuity of Scandinavian craftsmen, the lore praises and honors these craftsmen and their culture.

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42 These buildings include the Salt Lake Tabernacle, the Salt Lake Theatre, the St. George Temple, the Moroni Tabernacle, and the Provo Theatre and Tabernacle. Historic Sites Division of the Church History Department, e-mail message to author, November 11, 2011.


44 Hargis, A Folk History of the Manti Temple, 1-2.
Tabernacles

Another religious structure in Sanpete County, the Ephraim Tabernacle, dedicated in 1871, also manifested various components of Scandinavian craftsmanship. The tabernacle was built and decorated almost exclusively by Scandinavian craftspeople.


Figure 4.10, a photograph taken during Tabernacle’s first twenty years of operation, shows a man at the lower table, blessing the sacrament for the

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45 When the mural was twenty years old, it was ruined in a cleaning accident. The paint was water-based and when cleaners used water it was destroyed to the point that it had to be removed.
congregation. At this time, the 1890s, the congregation was mostly Scandinavian. The woman at the lower left of the photograph wears a white apron with openwork embroidery along the bottom, as well as a black head covering, both typical of Scandinavian women’s clothing of the time.

Most prominent in the Ephraim Tabernacle was the mural on the back wall painted by C.C.A. Christensen. It depicted the “First Vision:” Joseph Smith’s visitation by Jesus Christ and God the Father. Christensen’s decorative art training from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts is evident in the painted curtains surrounding the subject. This decorative frame creates a dramatic effect as it accentuates the religious significance of the subject matter for church members.

The carpentry and finish work in the Ephraim Tabernacle demonstrate Scandinavian immigrants’ craftsmanship. Scandinavian craft is seen in almost every aspect of the building in its pulpits, sacrament tables, benches, stairs, balcony, columns, and spindles by the pulpit. Figure 4.11 is a photo of a pulpit from the west end vestry of the tabernacle.
The term *vestry* was used in a loose sense, as the room was not used for changing clothes, but used for Sunday school and children’s Primary meetings.\(^{46}\) Though simple in design, the pulpit demonstrated the Scandinavian quality of precision and sturdiness in construction as seen throughout Scandinavian craftsmanship in Utah.

\(^{46}\) Larry Nielson, interview by author, December 17, 2011.
Textiles

Blending both cultural and religious identities Scandinavian immigrants incorporated their homeland embroidery techniques in sacred Mormon symbolism. By incorporating these techniques learned in their homelands, immigrants drew upon their native skill sets while exercising their religious identity and devotion. Like the male craftsmen who used their carpentry skills to glorify God, so too the women used their sewing skills to demonstrate their religious devotion.

As seen on the above pictured pulpit, doilies crocheted by women ornamented the tops of pulpits and altars. Crocheting gained popularity in Scandinavia in the early nineteenth century to create openwork, such as lace, for clothing, but more commonly on solid fabrics for covering domestic furnishings such as beds and tables. Many of the doily designs found throughout Sanpete County show patterns seen in Scandinavia. These doilies and other embroidery work found in religious structures demonstrate not only the blending of cultural traditions with religious beautification, but also how men and women's skills complemented one another in the beatification of church buildings.

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Danish immigrant, Maria Hansen Larsen Christofferson, took the shawl, pictured in figure 4.12, to Utah when she emigrated in 1887.

In a family history, Christofferson’s granddaughter, Leona Christensen Ostlund, wrote that Christofferson and her husband and five children were baptized into the Mormon Church in Denmark. One year after immigrating to Utah, her husband and all the children returned to Denmark. Christofferson remained in Utah and she never saw her family again. She worked in the Manti Temple until she died in Manti in 1911 at the age of sixty-eight.\footnote{48 Notes on Leona Christensen Ostlund, Fairview Museum, July 20, 1972.} Christofferson’s resolution to remain with fellow Mormons rather than return to Denmark with her family and then to devote her life
to church service demonstrated her sacrifice for and conviction in her faith. In this way, this shawl also acts as a symbol of religious and spiritual devotion.

Religious clothing such as baby blessing gowns, wedding dresses, temple clothing, and burial clothes not only carried religious significance, but also exemplified textile and embroidery skills immigrants acquired in Scandinavia. Various forms of embroidery such as openwork, drawn-thread work, cut openwork, counted thread work, and cross-stitch learned in Scandinavia embellished linen and cotton fabrics in Utah, giving refinement to otherwise plain articles of clothing. The counted thread techniques employed traditional geometric patterns. Often base fabrics were muted tones of cream, white, or tan, with embroidery threads matching the base fabric. Figure 4.13 is a baby blessing gown demonstrating these techniques.

Figure 4.13. Baby blessing gown. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneer Museum, Ephraim, Utah.
Marriage clothing and associated articles had great symbolic significance. The temple wedding dress pictured in figure 4.14, made and worn by Mary C. Winkler Larsen of Denmark in 1890, shows a double crocheted leaf and flower pattern, with ruffles on the sleeves and a folded down collar.

Figure 4.14. Wedding dress made and worn by Mary C. Winkler Larsen, 1890. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.

Marriage as a rite of passage, combined with Mormonism’s view of marriage with eternal potential, is immensely significant in Mormon doctrine. Embroidery patterns provided not only embellishment of the fabric, but also allowed for spiritual and
artistic expression. As in many cultures, Mormon wedding clothes symbolize not only the event, but also familial and cultural traditions.

Textual Forms

Literary forms such as letters, the Book of Mormon, family Bibles, and hymnals also represented religious devotion. Mormonism relied heavily on the Bible, along with its unique cannon of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price to proselytize and win converts. The reading of scripture and personal literal interpretation played a principal role in conversion of Mormons; therefore, the books themselves carried great importance in the conversion process. In a letter to his sister in Sweden, Ola Svenson encouraged her to read the Bible and convert to Mormonism. Influenced by pietism, Svenson believed that the Bible could speak to the individual and that one did not need priestly guidance to interpret its meanings. Svenson wrote: "You need to do precisely what the Scripture tells you and not what the clergy preaches because they say that they are explaining it but that is falsification and not an explanation. You can understand it for yourself, that it does not mean anything different than what is written."\(^{49}\)

Because the literature distributed by the Church played a principal role in conversion, convert-emigrants prized books and pamphlets. Because these objects

\(^{49}\) Attebery, *Up in the Rocky Mountains*, 155.
were small in size and treasured items, immigrants brought the texts with them. They were essential for new converts’ daily worship and scripture study during the journey.

Figure 4.15 pictures a brown, leather-bound Swedish Bible, published in 1839.

Figure 4.15. Swedish Bible belonging to Lousia Swenson Johnson. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.

Lousia Swenson Johnson brought the Bible from Sweden and across the plains in 1864. Starting in the early nineteenth century, Bibles were widely distributed
throughout Scandinavia and many families owned a family Bible. Mormons did not have their own translations of the Bible, but used whatever was standard in the home country’s language. This Bible originally belonged to Johnson’s mother, and is inscribed with her name, Carolina G. E. Reutercrona. The book measures nine and a half inches tall, three and a quarter inches across, and seven inches thick. The Johnsons’ journey overseas and by ox team was arduous. Carrying the Bible and ensuring its safety represented various levels of familial and religious devotion. Once in Utah, Louisa and her husband Jens with their two children settled in Sanpete County where Brigham Young had requested that Jens be a blacksmith. Louisa spun their wool into yarn and knit the yarn into articles of clothing. She also milked cows and skimmed the cream to churn into butter for sale. Presumably the Bible remained in the family as a symbol of familial ties and religious faith, both pre-conversion and post-conversion.

One of the most prominent symbols of Mormon religion is the Book of Mormon. Missionaries preached from the book as a primary conversion practice. Interested parties were either given a copy or could buy the book for a small fee to cover the cost of printing, and they were encouraged to read it in its entirety to

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50 Agencies like the British and Foreign Bible Society sent out missionaries; Scottish Christian missionary Ebenezer Henderson distributed Bibles throughout Denmark, Sweden, Iceland and Germany in 1807-17. See Thulia Susannah Henderson, Memoir of the Rev. E. Henderson, Including His Labours in Denmark, Iceland, Russia (London: Knight, 1859).

51 "Louisa Swenson Johnson," Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
determine its veracity. Figure 4.16 is a Book of Mormon that belonged to Danish pioneer C.C.A. Christensen.

![Figure 4.16: Above left, Danish Book of Mormon belonging to Carl Christina Anton Christensen; right, title page. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.](image)

For Scandinavian converts, the Book of Mormon symbolized supplementation of their previous religious teachings; it combined their Christian faith of Lutheranism with Mormonism’s new approach to Christianity. The converts did not reject their Christian beliefs; but the Book of Mormon instead clarified the Bible and gave believers direction. Acceptance of both texts exemplified the change in religious
identity Scandinavian emigrants underwent as they negotiated between past and new beliefs.

Cultural Identity

Though they experienced national and religious transformations in the Mormon and American contexts in which they lived, Scandinavians in Utah maintained various homeland cultural traditions. The material culture that immigrants created was rich with references to Scandinavian culture and craft. After visiting the Utah Territorial Fair in 1872, C.C.A. Christensen remarked of his fellow Scandinavians, “I would never have believed so much talent could be found among us as a people who are nearly all gathered from among the poor and most downtrodden classes of mankind.” He noted various objects created by Scandinavians that won medals: a landscape painting by a Dane, a Swedish woman’s haararbejde (hair artistry), Norwegian Danquart Weggeland’s portraits, a Norwegian man’s wood carving, and a Swede’s artistic watch. These and other Scandinavian cultural objects, combined with their festivals and the material culture associated with them, contributed to the diverse cultural heritage in Utah.

52 Hair artistry was a Victorian tradition in which hair is collected from hairbrushes, or from a deceased person, and then formed into a decorative wreath.

Wooden Objects

From the moment Scandinavians decided to emigrate, their identities began to transform. Among the first objects symbolic of the cultural transition is the emigrant trunk. The trunk was the most common object Scandinavian emigrants took to transport their belongings to America. Carefully selected items from the homeland not only conveyed what was most valued to the emigrant but also represented their culture and values.

Trunks themselves also carried cultural significance. Homes in Scandinavia contained a variety of traditional trunks and chests of varying sizes. Typically, trunks stored clothing and textiles, and also served dual purposes as benches in the main living room. The owner’s name was usually painted or inscribed on the trunk along with the year made, and then it was rosemaled for embellishment. Trunks were most commonly betrothal gifts, and their owners filled them with textiles and other items needed in a home. A trunk was passed down for generations and carried both familial and cultural symbols.

The trunks transported to Utah, however, tended to differ from the traditional Scandinavian trunk; they were more utilitarian with little or no embellishment, and they were not filled with accessories. Emigrants were advised to leave the heavy chests of their inheritance and take lighter trunks that could easily


55 Rosemåling is a Norwegian style of decorative painting on wood that uses stylized flower ornamentation, scrollwork, lining and geometric elements, often in flowing patterns.
be loaded into prairie wagons.\textsuperscript{56} Prior to the 1869 completion of the transcontinental railroad when the journey lasted six to nine months, the Church’s presidency counseled the emigrants to pack lightly: “If the Saints do not appreciate the wisdom of taking the smallest practicable amount of luggage, they will before they have hauled it far on the plains.”\textsuperscript{57} Emigrants on ships were allowed up to 100 pounds before being charged excess weight charges. Company organizers allowed the pioneers of the handcart years (1856-60) were allowed only seventeen pounds total for each individual, which included bedding, clothing and any other essential items.\textsuperscript{58} After 1869, with steamboats and trains easing the journey, 135 pounds were allowed per adult, and children were allowed half that weight. With a greater weight allowance, the emigrants took more objects carrying cultural significance. During this time, spinning wheels, smaller furniture such as chairs, china, and family heirlooms made their way to America more frequently.

Emigrants were advised to lash luggage well, to mark it with “Utah, U.S.A.,” and not to wrap trunks with sailcloth that would hinder opening at customs.\textsuperscript{59}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[56] Mulder, \textit{Homeward to Zion}, 166.
\item[57] “Thirteenth General Epistle of the First Presidency,” \textit{The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star} 18 (January 26, 1856): 52.
\item[58] Frederick Hansen, "The Great Handcart Train From Iowa City to Salt Lake City," \textit{Iowa Journal of History}, no. 9 (1916): 410.
\item[59] “Til Emigranterne,” \textit{Skandinaviens Stjerne} 2, no. 2 (October, 1852): 30.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
two trunks in figure 4.17 are typical of the emigrant trunk taken to Utah and clearly display the destination.

Figure 4.17. Immigrant trunks. Source: Above, Mount Pleasant Pioneer Relic Home, Mount Pleasant, Utah; below, Daughters of the Utah Pioneer Museum, Salt Lake City.
The trunk pictured on the left belonged to Hanna Andersson who came to Utah in 1886 from Malmö, Sweden with her mother. It was shipped to her brother, Mons Andersson Nauman in Nephi, Utah; she spent the rest of her life in Fountain Green, Utah. The misspelling of Utah (“Utha”) might be explained by the emigrant’s lack of familiarity with their new home and the English language. The fine penmanship on each trunk, however, whether it was done by the emigrants themselves or by a hired person, suggests the desire to demonstrate refinement and appear educated.

Emigrants were told to bring in their trunks as many blankets as could fit, a food basket that was long and low enough to slide under a seat, hand towels, soap, combs, and enough money to pay for expenditures such as lodgings and drayage along the journey. This counsel did not hinder them completely from bringing assorted items that represented homeland culture such as shoes, clothing, and blankets with Scandinavian-style decoration. Artisans were advised to select and bring only their lightest and most valuable tools.

These trunks also carried symbolic religious significance, as they represented convert-emigrants’ material sacrifices. As Russell W. Belk noted, the decision to leave behind almost all of their material possessions was “an act of abnegation that was charged with meaning and purpose.”

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60 “Instruktioner til Emigraterne,” Skandinaviens Stjerne, no. 34 (April 1, 1885): 201.


possessions found meaning through their religious conviction. What emigrants chose to bring became relics of the journey and tangible reminders of the sacrifices required to move to Zion. As for the trunks themselves, however, upon arrival rather than being used to store items or act as a remembrance, most trunks were disassembled and made into rudimentary furniture.

Clogs (træsko, or “wooden shoes” in Danish) are another immigrant item prevalent in Utah museums and homes today, most likely because emigrants wore these wooden shoes on their overseas journey and walked across the plains in them. Figure 4.18 shows various clogs worn by early Scandinavian immigrants in Utah:
The clog originated in the early 1300s in Holland, and eventually spread to France, England, and Scandinavia. They became the most common work shoe in Europe throughout the Industrial Revolution era and were traditionally worn by both male and female peasantry for labor-intensive jobs working in fields and providing
protection from the elements. Historically, Scandinavian clogs came in two varieties: a whole foot clog made of one piece of wood, and a wooden sole with a leather upper. Figure 4.19 shows a wooden sole:

![Figure 4.19. Detail of clog footbed. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneer Museum, Ephraim, Utah.](image)

Most villages throughout Scandinavia had clog makers who sold their wares at local markets, as seen in figure 4.20.

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Mount Pleasant, Utah records tell of Jens Hendersen, Peter Andersen and Rasmus Hansen making wooden clogs, and N. P. “Pete” Nielsen tanned leather for clogs.64

Since wooden footwear was a handmade product, the shape of the footwear, as well as its production process, showed great local and regional diversity in style. Emigrants took these various regional styles and adapted them once in Utah. Within a generation or two, however, American-made shoes proved to be lighter and easily

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available. Thus, those of Scandinavian descent transitioned to typical American leather shoes and the older clogs became heirlooms.

Many clogs, as well as other objects such as the bowl and candlestick in figure 4.21 demonstrate chip carving, one of the most ancient forms of wood decorating in Scandinavia. Chip carving predates other decorative practices such as painting and other carving techniques, but made a resurgence in popularity in Scandinavia in the seventeenth century. It is done by carving intersecting horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines into v-shaped patterns. These repeated geometric designs were traditionally found on cheese and butter molds, porringers that held soup or porridge, and small boxes. Less intricate patterns are found on objects in Utah, perhaps because the immigrants devoted their time to other practical pursuits of survival.
Figure 4.21. Bowl and candlestick holder displaying chip carving. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Ephraim, Utah.
The candlestick incorporates horseshoes; a blending of Western life with Scandinavian woodcraft and culture. Candlesticks and candles played important functional and decorative roles on the Scandinavian feast table. For Western pioneers, they also served the utilitarian purpose of providing light, and immigrants were innovative with their resources and new culture in perpetuating the festive tradition.

The small wooden box in figure 4.22 shows a more organic, flowing form of carving. This handheld box would have been easy to pack along in a trunk or clothing bag in migration. Its significance is in its traditional Scandinavian style of carving. The lock and key allowed for safekeeping of other objects.
Figure 4.22. Carved wooden box, Andrew Jensen collection. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Spoons also provided functional and decorative roles in Scandinavian culture. Until the late nineteenth century, spoons and knives were the only eating utensils used at the Scandinavian peasant table. Individuals had their own spoons that they would use for each meal and even take with them when they traveled. Spoons were specifically designed for everyday eating techniques and table customs. They were often made by hollowing out small tree burls, and then they were ornately decorated with carving (see fig. 4.23).

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65 Much eating was done communally out of the same bowl, so each person had to eat in a way that would not encroach on others’ sector of the bowl. In order to do this, spoons for porridge eating were short-handled so as to be held vertically when dipped into the bowl and take up as little space as possible in the bowl. See Nylén, *Swedish handcraft*, 357.

Spoons found their way to Utah more easily than other traditional objects, because they were small and light, and essential for the journey. The designs and decorative carving were reminiscent of traditions from the immigrants’ homes as seen in the spoon in figure 4.24.
In Utah, immigrants hung their spoons on the wall, just as they had in the Old Country, as remembrances of their Scandinavian heritage, and the spoons thus symbolized the tradition of the homelands. In Utah, immigrants continued to make spoons, though they generally were utilitarian and lacking in any ornamentation, as seen in figure 4.25 in the spoon Anna Peterson Jensen used.

Figure 4.25. Wooden spoon used by Anna Peterson Jensen. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneer Museum, Salt Lake City.
Such utilitarian spoons echoed tradition, even in the most subtle ways, such as the carving technique or the curve of the handle.

Coffee grinders are another historical implement prevalent throughout museums in Sanpete County. The coffee grinder in figure 4.26 belonged to Mrs. Christian A. Larsen of Ephraim.

![Figure 4.26. Coffee grinder belonging to Mrs. Christian A. Larsen. Source: Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.]

Coffee was deemed essential to daily life in Scandinavia, and despite Mormon prohibitions on coffee,⁶⁶ many Scandinavians continued its consumption. Sanpete

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⁶⁶Mormons live by a health code called the Word of Wisdom, which prohibits coffee, tea, alcohol, tobacco, and excessive meat consumption. It recommends eating herbs, fruits, and grains. The divine promise is that they “shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying
County folklore is replete with Scandinavians justifying their coffee drinking. The story, “The Flying Coffee Pots,” recounted by Grace Johnson tells of a Danish bishop who stood in front of his congregation to preach that coffee was not good for the body:

Within the congregation there was a shudder… Scandinavian converts… took everything in stride. They pulled up stakes and bade farewell to their native lands. Tossed about for weeks in sailing ships on a stormy Atlantic. Braved the perils of the Plains in covered wagons. Obediently trekked out to the desolate wastes of the Sanpitch Valley. Fought Indians, grasshoppers, drouth! But tossing away the coffee pot? If a Scandinavian had created the earth, it was reasonable to suppose that he would have placed a fragrant pot of simmering coffee on the back of every Scandinavian stove together with cream to go with it!

“Brodders and Sisters,” began Brodder Yustesen, clearing his throat with a righteous flourish… “For me I do not use tobacco… I do not use strong drink… I do not use tea… Brodders and Sisters,” conceded the harassed preacher, “I do take a cup of coffee vonce in a while. But it vas no sin. IT DID NOT BOIL!”

Thereby adding additional weight to the premise that sin is a matter of temperature.67

Another piece of folklore states that Church leaders allowed Scandinavians to drink coffee while they were building the Manti Temple if it would help them accomplish the work faster. Coffee grinders and pots found throughout Sanpete County bear witness to the resistance of the coffee drinking tradition among the Scandinavians. With time, church members embraced the directive; whether the coffee drinkers eventually died or they finally accepted the mandate, it is unclear.

Hand woven baskets are also found in museums and homes throughout Sanpete County. Immigrants continued to weave baskets from roots and branches as they did in their home countries. In Scandinavia, baskets were made and used for practical work-related containers such as to hold fish, roots, vegetables, or berries; they were also used to hold household items such as coffee, flour, bobbins, or yarn. The baskets were woven from various lengths of birch or willow twigs and roots, or from straw. Each region in Scandinavia had distinctive basket making styles, and the raw materials available dictated what exactly was used in the basket making. Immigrants employed these weaving techniques because they were fairly easy and were a quick way to make a container from limited resources. Figure 4.27 shows hand woven willow baskets that could have been used for a variety of purposes.

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68 Nylen, Swedish Handcraft, 385.

69 Ibid., 389.
Figure 4.27. Handmade woven baskets. Source: Above, Daughters of the Utah Pioneer Museum, Ephraim; below, Mount Pleasant Pioneer Relic Home, Mount Pleasant, Utah.
Textiles

Clothing is one of the most recognized forms of folk tradition transferred by immigrants. Historically, clothing played an important cultural role for Scandinavians. It was not only a covering and protection for the body, but also an identifier. For centuries throughout Scandinavia, peasants dressed in a way that was uniform within localities yet distinctly different from region to region.\(^\text{70}\) Clothing signified group identity and membership as well as individual status within that group. As sociologists Jeanette and Robert Lauer pointed out, clothing expresses personality, moral character, conformity and non-conformity to social norms and roles, and the condition of the society.\(^\text{71}\)

Different clothes were used for different purposes. Work and everyday clothes were typically made of heavy linen and were of the same cut as the finer clothes, but of stronger materials with little decoration.\(^\text{72}\) Women throughout Scandinavia generally wore a jacket over an undershirt, a pleated skirt with a bodice, a belt, apron, and neckerchief.\(^\text{73}\) Silver brooches, buttons, and eyelets fastened articles together. Women wore some sort of headdress—bonnet, cap, or scarf—both

\(^{70}\) Colburn, "'Well, I Wondered When I Saw You, What All These New Cothes Meant,'" 119.


indoors and outdoors. Men’s clothing consisted of a jacket or vest, waistcoat, shirtdress, pants or breeches, stockings, a neckerchief, and a cap or hat. Children’s dress resembled adult dress, modified in design and quality. Scandinavians wore finer, special dress (see fig. 4.28), primarily to church on Sundays, on holy days, and to weddings and funerals. People valued these garments because of their higher quality and the greater time devoted to their making, as well as the family traditions behind the clothing. Such folk dress, or costume, carried specific symbolic meanings. For example, cut, color, pattern in weaving, embroidery, knitting, and the design of brooches, buttons, and buckles indicated a home district or a specific locality within that district, and in some cases a specific parish or neighborhood.

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74 Noss, "Rural Norwegian Dress and its Symbolic Function," 151.
75 Ibid.
The value and significance of clothing shifted for immigrants, however. Though the clothing most emigrants took reflected Old World traditions, by the time of mass migration of the 1860s dress styles were influenced by mainland European
styles more than traditional Scandinavian dress traditions.\textsuperscript{76} By the late nineteenth century, because of economic changes related to the Industrial Revolution, the use of traditional peasant and folk dress was in rapid decline in Scandinavia. The use and adoption of fashionable dress represented participation in the international marketplace, as well as delineating social classes.\textsuperscript{77} While the peasant class still wore its traditional dress, the professional class wore international clothing. Immigrants in America wore these folk costumes only for events such as national holidays, public ceremonies, and folk dancing.\textsuperscript{78}

Today very few articles of Scandinavian peasant or everyday clothing from the nineteenth century remain in Utah. This is due to the fact that so little clothing was brought over owing to weight and space limits, especially during the handcart trek when immigrants were allowed only seventeen pounds of luggage. Brigham Young advised that they “bring nothing with them but what they wear, or may wear of necessity on the road, or carry on the handcarts.”\textsuperscript{79} When everyday clothing wore out, immigrants salvaged sections for smaller pieces of clothing or turned them into


\textsuperscript{77} Colburn, "'Well, I Wondered When I Saw You, What All These New Cothes Meant," 126.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.,157.

rags for patching other clothing or making rugs or quilts. Moreover, as old clothing wore out, instead of replicating homeland styles, immigrants typically adopted American styles. This transition to American clothing styles demonstrated that their identities were shifting and resulted in the loss of Scandinavian peasant style everyday clothing, although several of its components remained. As Fairfax Proudfit Walkup notes of Utah pioneer clothing, “The trained eye recognizes the traditional elements of the old culture which were brought with the pioneer from his former environment, and were retained in his new home, and those elements which he added as a result of his unique dwelling place.” The traditional traits of fine embroidery, rich colors, and dress patterns and styles distinguish Scandinavian clothing. Figure 4.29 shows a man’s vest, a woman’s skirt with embroidery, and wooden clogs.

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81 Ibid., 207.
Figure 4.29. Vest and embroidered skirt. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneer Museum, Ephraim, Utah.
The vest's fabric and tailoring are common for men's styles in Scandinavia of the late 1800s and evidence a transition to mainland European traditions. The skirt demonstrates time-honored Scandinavian weaving and embroidery patterns. The clogs display chip carving, a typical embellishment of Scandinavian clogs.

Women's paisley shawls are common artifacts preserved from the migration. Perhaps shawls survived the migration because they were both personally significant and easily worn. They were likely also brought because the immigrants knew they were popular in America and the immigrants knew others would appreciate them there. Moreover, shawls had multiple practical uses.

Shawls were popular throughout Europe from 1780 to 1870, and were first imported from Kashmir and later produced in France and Scotland. Production took place primarily in Scotland in the town of Paisley, where the shawls were most economically produced and for the longest period; hence, the name of the shawl became synonymous with the place of manufacture. In Denmark, however, these shawls were called "French shawls." By the mid-nineteenth century the use of shawls had spread to the peasant class. They were used as outer garments, were easy to wrap around clothing and were affordable because no tailoring was needed. Shawls were present on most farms as they could be used for a variety of purposes such as keeping people warm, swaddling infants, draping doors, and decorating tables. Nanna Snygg from Fleminga, Sweden, pictured in figure 4.30, demonstrates a
typical usage of a paisley shawl. Though it is her dress that has the paisley pattern, the shawl demonstrates the usual function.

Though less fashionable in Europe after 1870, the shawl remained popular in rural Scandinavia until 1900 among women; it was used in the folk garments for festive occasions.\textsuperscript{82}

The paisley scarf and shawl pictured in figure 4.31 include only brief descriptions of their owners’ histories. The scarf (pictured above) was worn by Mary C.J. Bearnson when she left Denmark at the age of eight in 1866. The shawl was used by Mariane J. Larsen to wrap herself and her babies during their journey in 1856.

\textsuperscript{82} Berit Eldvik and Mats Landin, \textit{Power of Fashion: 300 Years of Clothing} (Stockholm: Nordiska Museets Förlag, 2010), 153.
The fact that these textiles were not Scandinavian-made is less significant than how they acted as cultural signifiers demonstrating the influence of mainland Europe on Scandinavian peasant class fashion. With the spread of the Industrial Revolution, though many traditional styles were being overtaken by mainland European styles, such new styles were viewed as Scandinavian in the sense that so many Scandinavians embraced them. Once in America such styles could be labeled as Scandinavian, as many of the immigrant women from Scandinavia brought the clothing traditions with them from their homelands and continued to adhere to them in Utah.

Another outgrowth of the Industrial Revolution was that the early emigrants did not take folk costumes to Utah. In addition to mainland European styles becoming more popular throughout Scandinavia, the generally poor economic standing of the converts combined with the limited trunk space in emigration precluded the transference of folk costumes. Instead, missionaries returning from Scandinavia brought materials with which women and tailors could recreate costumes. Later emigrants who had more luggage allowance took traditional clothing.

Some immigrants, however, managed to bring treasured clothing. Gustave Anderson, handcart pioneer of 1857, was known for his fastidious attention to the preservation of his well-tailored clothes brought from Sweden. He wore them to
church and made sure that his children walked either far in front of him or behind him so as not to kick up dust on his clothing.83

Figure 4.32, a photograph of a Swedish Midsummer party reenactment of a bridal parade in Lagoon, near Salt Lake, displays traditional Swedish folk dress. The Swedish Midsummer, *Midsommar*, held on the summer solstice on June 21, is the most celebrated holiday in Sweden, apart from Christmas, and carries great cultural significance for Swedish people.84 A maypole is erected, and people wear traditional folk costume, dance around the maypole, listen to and sing folk music, and eat traditional foods.

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83 Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 218.

84 Midsommar is celebrated widely thought Scandinavia with a similar name: Denmark calls it *Sankt Hans Aften*, and similarly Norway calls it *Sankthansaften*. 
Figure 4.32. Swedish Midsummer party reenactment in Lagoon, Utah, pre-1900. Source: William A. Morton. *Utah and Her People* (Salt Lake City: W.A. Morton, 1899), 52.

At this particular pre-1900 event, women wore white embroidered long-sleeved blouses with turned-down collars fastened with a silver or glass button, and gathered material at the wrist. Fitted sleeveless bodices were usually made of red or black patterned material. An apron with decorated borders of *Hardanger* embroidery lay over long and full skirts tied with woven ribbon. Bonnets and caps were edged with lace, and the Swedish bride wore a crown. Some women in the photograph wear wreaths around their necks and heads, which was traditional for women on Midsummer day. The men’s clothing in the image, however, reflects the

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influence of mainland European and American fashion of the day. As in other
countries, Scandinavian women wore folk costume more typically than men. 86

Women typically wore purses with their traditional dress. The purse
pictured in figure 4.33 came from Denmark and is attributed to Peter Jensen.

Figure 4.33. Embroidered purse from Denmark, by Peter Jensen. Source: Daughters of the Utah
Pioneer Museum, Salt Lake City.

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86 Historian Ida Bloom contends that mothers preserved and transmitted national identity
and therefore dressed in traditional clothes. They represented history and home, so when these
values were being celebrated, women were more likely to bear representative clothing. The national
dress, therefore, became a symbol for the nation and it implicitly reflected women's importance to
the nation as mothers. Thus women in the folk dress represented both motherhood and nationhood.
According to Bloom, the Western suit "represented national modernity, while women stood for
retrograde cultural nationalism." See Ida Blom, "Gender and Nation in International Comparison," in
Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century (Oxford: Berg,
2000), 32.
This purse demonstrates a form of free embroidery called *rosesøm*. It displays a colorful, rococo scrolling technique that is related to the painting style of rosemaling, a floral painting technique. Unlike other embroidery that has stitching lying in one direction, *rosesøm* stitching slants and curves to suit the shape of the petal. It is commonly found on purses, cushions, wool caps, bonnets, and along the edging of cuffs and lapels of traditional dress.

The traditional black wool cap with woven ties, pictured in figure 4.34, was owned by Mary Larson Ahlstrom who was born in Sweden and settled in Manti.
Culturally distinct clothing acted as a vehicle for immigrants to celebrate their homeland culture visibly once in Utah just as they would have in Scandinavia. A celebration of Midsummer in America, however, would have carried multilayered cultural meanings compared to the celebration in Scandinavia. The added nostalgic desire to preserve and celebrate cultural heritage would have been more prevalent in Utah. American elements, such as food or language, inevitably would have crept into the celebration. These adaptations may have changed the celebration somewhat from what it was in Scandinavia, but the festivities nevertheless manifested the desire for cultural preservation in Utah.

Festivals

Though festivals are not in and of themselves material culture, their material products are. Like Midsummer, May Day was a festival transferred and celebrated by Scandinavians in Utah. May Day is an ancient northern European pagan spring festival that marks the end of the winter season and the beginning of summer and the farming season.87 As with most pagan holidays, the celebration became Christianized and even secularized. In Utah, May Day, held on May 1, is best known for the activity of dancing around a maypole and crowning a May Day queen, as seen in figure 4.35.

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Many residents of the early Utah villages celebrated the festival by dancing and braiding streamers around the maypole.\footnote{Pictures of May Day celebrations are found in History of Moroni City 1859-2009: Legacy of Cooperation (Richfield, Utah: Paradise Press, 2009); Committee Fountain Green Historic, History of Fountain Green 1859-1999: 140 years (Fountain Green Historic Committee, 1999). See also http://www.mendonutah.net/may_day.htm which describes Mendon’s celebration year-by-year from 1863-2011.} Mendon’s May Day queen of 1906, Olive Sorensen, remembered:

My parents [Isaac and Mary Sorensen] were of good pioneer stock. Mendon was noted for its celebrations, especially Christmas and May Day. My father
helped in directing these events for many years. The maypole dance was a vital part of the May Day. I danced for some years and taught others to dance when I was older. At the age of twelve I was chosen Queen of May Day. My sister Minnie [Malena] made my dress. What a beautiful thing it was. White organdy with ruffles, trimmed with lace and insertion. May Day dawned. How excited I was.89

Sorensen’s references to her Scandinavian parents and their assistance in the holiday celebrations implies the Scandinavian influence on town festivities.

With time, in many communities, May Day’s celebration shifted to recognize the community’s Founder’s Day or children’s graduation from Primary, the Church’s children’s organization.90 The dress and maypole of this 1919 celebration in Moroni in figure 4.36 show differences from the typical Scandinavian scene.

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90 History of Moroni City, 58.
Here, girls wear white dresses, and the pole is not decorated with traditional wreaths. Though the obvious Scandinavian markers such as the wreaths and traditional dress are not present, the subtle references (such as celebrating in springtime, the pole and its ribbons, and the dancing to music) are recognizable for those familiar with Scandinavian history and culture.

The Midsummer and May Day events pictured and described above demonstrate two of the many Scandinavian celebrations kept alive in Utah into the twentieth century. Though the Church encouraged church affiliation over ethnic alliance, it also supported ethnic activities and connections. In 1854, the Church established a “Scandinavian Meeting” that allowed immigrants to attend services in the Scandinavian languages, as well as to participate in secular activities and ethnic
holidays. Scandinavian meetings were supplemental to church meetings held in English. They provided the religious, social, and cultural support immigrants needed to adjust to their new lifestyle in America and the Church. Scandinavian meetings continued into the late 1940s. Various activities were held in the mother tongue, such as reunions, choir practices and performances, outings, dramatic productions, and holiday celebrations. These activities perpetuated Scandinavian culture and pride. Records show that the town of Pleasant Grove’s Scandinavian organization instigated a winter sleigh-riding party, a Scandinavian Christmas-day program, a Midsommarfest, and Pioneer Day, a Utah holiday celebrating the first pioneers’ arrival to the Salt Lake Valley on July 24th. The poster in figure 4.37, written in Swedish, advertised a “Stor Skandinavisk Pionär Fest” (“Great Scandinavian Pioneer Party”) at Garfield Beach, a beach on the Great Salt Lake.

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Figure 4.37. A flyer announcing the Scandinavian Pioneer Celebration at Garfield Beach, 1895. Source: Henrichsen, "Building Community by Respecting Linguistic Diversity," 12.

The program outlines various activities such as music by the choir, speeches, a ball, and barbeque. Such activities bolstered immigrants' cultural ties, unity among immigrants, and solidarity as Church members. Similarly, nine Scandinavian-language newspapers, such as the Danish-Norwegian Bikuben ("The Beehive"), which were published from 1876 to 1935, acted as conduits for Scandinavian thought, folklore, poetry, and humor.93

Conclusion

Joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints required Scandinavian converts to turn from much of what was familiar and traditional. Many converts found the requirement challenging. Danish convert immigrant Conrad Hansen wrote, “It was my supreme sacrifice in my new religion, as I should never have left my people and country otherwise.”94 William Mulder argued that converting to Mormonism “produced a break with the convert’s past, separating him from mother church, fatherland, and native tongue.”95 While the decision to convert created strong delineations between many people’s pasts and presents, it did not, however, require a total severance. The choice to migrate to and settle in Utah represented an immigrant’s ultimate decision to shift and adapt his or her sense of identity but not to jettison homeland identities.

Identity shifts for immigrants included those involving national loyalties, religious beliefs, and cultural traditions. National allegiances were some of the least persistent identities of Scandinavian Mormons, as leaders stressed the importance of becoming a singular people with devotion towards the Church over any other association. Nevertheless, Scandinavians had to make sense of the shift from being Danes, Swedes, or Norwegians to being Americans with Danish, Swedish, or


95 Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 128.
Norwegian heritage. Little material culture remains to demonstrate persistence of national homeland identity, however.

The religious transition from being a member of the state church to becoming a Mormon set converts apart in their homelands. Once in Utah, conversely, religious identity united immigrants with others. Religious identity was materially manifest in the communitarian work offered by immigrants to the Church. Using their homeland skills, the construction, furnishing, and decorating of church buildings evidenced the immigrants’ consecration of determination and ability. Immigrants also employed homeland-learned embroidery and sewing skills to create clothing with religious clothing. They brought religious literature—Bibles, Books of Mormon, and proselyting tracts—that linked them to their homelands while also teaching them of their new faith. These artifacts in Utah reflect the evolving identities of Scandinavian Mormons as they adapted to their new setting in Utah.

Despite the shedding of national allegiance and a whole-hearted devotion to the Church, Scandinavian immigrants retained various homeland cultural traditions such as using wooden trunks, carving wooden spoons and implements, weaving baskets, wearing traditional folk dress, and celebrating traditional holidays such as May Day and Midsummer. These cultural signifiers acted as clear symbols of tradition and heritage to their makers. Each was modified to accommodate what
was available for production, demonstrating both adherence to tradition and ingenuity with resources available.

The material culture shown in this chapter illustrates that Scandinavian immigrants incorporated homeland values, adapted to the frontier and the demands of the Church, and constructed new aspects of their identities as members of the Mormon community. In the process, these divergent identities and backgrounds merged to create a Mormon identity and culture. Thomas Carter explained that “the making of Mormon society was not accomplished through the process of acculturation . . . but of syncretism, the melding of the various cultures into an essentially new, Mormon culture.”96 Scandinavian immigrants found themselves balancing their homeland background and individualism with their new Mormon communitarianism. The result was a blended yet distinct identity, unique to the Utah Mormon culture.

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Chapter 5

Scandinavian Immigrants’ Adaptation to the Utah Landscape and its Effects on their Material Culture

Introduction

Landscape and its resources influence people’s attitudes, perspectives, responsibilities, and production. Therefore, it is essential to consider the landscape when examining a people and their material culture to understand why they made what they made. This chapter addresses ways in which the landscape and its resources influenced the material culture Scandinavian immigrants developed and produced in the Utah frontier. It will be shown that though the foreign landscape provided unfamiliar resources and challenges through which the immigrants had to navigate, the immigrants were innovative in their adaptations. In this chapter, three categories of material culture are examined—folk painting, furniture, and pottery—to demonstrate specifically the role landscape played in Scandinavian immigrants’ transition. These categories are chosen because of their ubiquity throughout Utah. To contextualize this study, the chapter begins with an overview of the reasons for Mormon settlement in the Utah Territory, a description of the geography and climate of the three main valleys when Scandinavians settled (Salt Lake, Sanpete, and Cache), and the characterization of the communities they built. The body of the
chapter addresses these three areas of material culture and shows how Scandinavian skills and crafts adapted to and were affected by and the landscape.

Mormon Settlement in the Utah Territory

In 1830, Daniel Webster, a leading statesman and senator from Massachusetts, declared of the American desert: “What do we want with this vast, worthless area? This region of savages and wild beasts, of deserts, of shifting sands and whirlwinds of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs? To what use could we ever hope to put these great deserts, or those endless mountain ranges, impenetrable, and covered to their very base with eternal snow?”¹ Such an undeveloped and undesirable place was precisely the ideal refuge for the Mormons who were seeking refuge from persecution and a place to make their own. After long consultation with land scouts, Brigham Young decided upon the Utah territory as the Church’s new home, and in July 1847 the first Mormons arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. Mormon leadership declared: “Our pioneers are instructed to proceed West until they find a good place to make a crop, in some good valley in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains, where they will infringe on no one, and be not likely to be infringed upon.”² Indeed their destination was isolated, rainless, and had little arable land, but the Mormons had found their new Jerusalem to build their city of Zion.

¹ Orson Ferguson Whitney, *History of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Cannon, 1892), 288.
One of the foremost goals and ideals for the Mormons in settlement was to create a self-sufficient society. Early Mormons planned to reach this goal through agrarian labor, home industry, and cooperation. As a metaphor for this spirit of collaborative work ethic, they named their territory Deseret, after the Book of Mormon word for honeybee.³ The settlers aimed to be as industrious as honeybees: engaged, cooperative, and productive. In an effort to accomplish this goal, individuals with essential skills, such as midwives, carpenters, blacksmiths, and farmers were asked to settle throughout Utah to help build self-sufficient communities. Brigham Young counseled them “to help to sustain each other, to labor for the good of all, and to establish cooperation.”⁴ Such efforts would allow the Mormons and their communities to be self-supporting.

Leaders also encouraged early pioneers to beautify their setting. Brigham Young said: “[P]rogress and improve upon and make beautiful everything around you. Cultivate the earth and cultivate your minds. Build cities, adorn your habitations, make gardens, orchards and vineyards, and render the earth so pleasant that when you look upon your labors you may do so with pleasure, and that angels may delight to come and visit your beautiful locations.”⁵ Thus, as historian

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³ Ether 2:3.


⁵ Deseret News, August 8, 1860, 177.
Richard Oman stated, for the early Mormons, “creating beauty was an act of learning, worship, and faith.”6

This paradigm of self-sufficiency, combined with cultivation and beatification of the land was greatly dependent on and influenced by the context of the landscape. The isolated arid valleys and high surrounding mountains provided little initial natural assistance for reaching the settlers’ goals. Pioneers faced challenges including lack of water, harsh climate, limited supplies, and little outside help. As Richard Oman observed, “their resources were largely limited to their faith, their tools, and their desire to establish a new society on the edge of a barren desert.”7 Their isolation from other established settlements strongly influenced the material culture of the Mormons.

The Scandinavian immigrants played significant roles in establishing numerous early Mormon regions and villages. They brought practical skills that were valuable in a frontier society. Carpenters, cabinetmakers, wheelwrights, shoemakers, cooperers, tailors, dyers, weavers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, and stonemasons from Scandinavia immigrated, as well as people whose artistic abilities would help beautify their homes and buildings. Overwhelmingly, however, farmers came; approximately sixty percent of the emigrants brought skills that

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7 Marilyn Conover Barker, The Legacy of Mormon Furniture (Salt Lake City: Gibbs-Smith, 1995), 12.
complemented the needs of the Mormon agrarian-based settlements in Utah. They learned to adapt to the Utah desert landscape—one quite different from their coastal homelands—and to employ skills and create objects that reflected their homeland traditions. The interaction with and adaptation to the landscape constituted a large part of the immigrant experience and transition.

Utah Geography and Climate

Scandinavians settled in communities throughout Utah, but the three main valleys that Scandinavians helped settle were the Salt Lake, Sanpete, and Cache valleys. Figure 5.1 shows centers of Scandinavian settlement in Utah, 1852 to 1905.

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Figure 5.1. Chief centers of Scandinavian settlement in Utah, 1852-1905.
The Salt Lake Valley

The Salt Lake Valley was the first area of settlement for the Mormon pioneers and the first wave of Scandinavian immigrants. The semiarid valley, approximately twenty miles wide by forty miles long, lay between the Wasatch and Oquirrh Mountains. Though Anglo-American historians tend to portray the valley as barren desert, but centuries before, Utes called it a grasslands area, and it abounded with plant and animal life.9 The Great Salt Lake drew numerous varieties of birds, as well as antelope, deer, and other animals. Pioneer accounts convey contrasting perspectives of the landscape’s hospitality. Orson F. Whitney wrote of “interminable wastes of sagebrush” and a “paradise of the lizard, cricket, and the rattlesnake,”10 while Wilford Woodruff saw “the most fertile valley ... clothed with a heavy garment of vegetation, ... with mountains all around towering to the skies, and streams, rivulets, and creeks of pure water running through the beautiful valley.”11 Regardless of the perspective, the valley symbolized potential: religious, agriculture, economic, and political.

Because the route to the gold fields in California passed through Salt Lake, the Mormons were not as isolated as they had originally thought they would be. Between the 1840s and 1860s, up to 20,000 overlanders stopped in Salt Lake to

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11 Wilford Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor, 1882), 313.
recuperate, restock, and reoutfit. The providential timing of the gold rush produced material and economic benefits that allowed the otherwise isolated Utah communities to thrive. The trade of wagons, animals, furniture, clothing, and other excess supplies for food grown by the Mormons assisted in the viability and growth of the Mormon settlements along the “Mormon Corridor.” The previously well-established Mormon hegemony throughout Utah insured that those passing through would not overtake the Mormons’ property.

Owing to this economic activity, Salt Lake City grew rapidly. By the time Scandinavian immigrants settled in the Salt Lake Valley in the fall of 1852, Salt Lake City was an established frontier city, with a population of over 6,000. The city was divided into numerous ten-acre blocks, laid out on a simple grid pattern with road names numbered with a north, south, east, or west designation. Brigham Young directed that streets be wide enough for ox teams to turn around in without “resorting to profanity.” Homes and businesses were placed on 1.25 acre lots. At

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14 Ibid., 84-88.


the center of the city lay Temple Square containing the temple and tabernacle, the two most religiously significant buildings in the city.

Scandinavians contributed greatly to developing Salt Lake City. By 1860 a section of town was dubbed “Little Denmark” because half the community was Scandinavian. Figure 5.2, shows a map of Salt Lake City in 1871 with the Second Ward Scandinavian congregation shaded.

Figure 5.2. Map of Salt Lake City. Second Ward (Scandinavian congregation) shaded, 1871. Source: Church History Library Collection, Salt Lake City, Utah.

In 1869, The Salt Lake City Directory and Business Guide listed a Scandinavian blacksmith, hairdresser, weaver, tinsmith, photographer, potter, woodturner,

17 The other half of the community was American, English, and Scottish. See Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 196.
gunsmith, stone mason, cabinetmaker, artist, physician and surgeon, carpenter, shoemaker, and tailor. Young Scandinavian domestics were also numerous, primarily working in non-Scandinavian homes, earning wages to pay back the Perpetual Emigration Fund program. By 1885 a section of town called “Swede Town,” had developed to supply Scandinavians with their business needs and supplies.

The Sanpete Valley

Scandinavians were also instrumental in developing various outlying rural communities. In 1849, two years after settlement in Salt Lake City, Brigham Young rallied fifty families to travel 125 miles south of the Salt Lake Valley to settle the Sanpete Valley in central Utah. The decision to move settlers to the Sanpete Valley was a function of both Young’s desire to expand the Mormon domain and the request of a local band of Utes to have Mormons teach them to build houses and plant crops. Under the direction of Church leadership, fifty families decided upon a townsite, surveyed it into 110 blocks, and named it Manti after a city in the Book of Mormon. The allowance for expansion in the plan displayed the hopeful foresight of

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19 Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 196.

20 Albert C. T. Antrei and Ruth D. Scow, *The Other Forty-niners: A Topical History of Sanpete County, Utah, 1849-1983* (Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1982), 8. The name Sanpete is a derivation of a Ute Chief’s name, Sanpitch.

21 Ibid., xiv.
the initial settlers and the intention of Church leadership. Leaders saw the Sanpete settlement as a model for similar future settlements. They wrote that “there will be a continued line of villages, at short distances, for more than 200 miles in extent,” ranging from Salt Lake to the south.

As planned, settlements around Manti soon sprouted. The initial settlers in the Sanpete Valley came from Salt Lake City, having hailed originally from New England and the Midwest. By 1853, however, with the influx of immigrants, the cultural composition of the valley changed. Brigham Young sent the first company of Scandinavians who had recently arrived to the Salt Lake Valley to the newly established town of Ephraim, five miles north of Manti. Christian Nielson, one of the first Danish immigrants in the Sanpete Valley, wrote of the town’s advantages over Salt Lake City:

> It was stated that there was plenty of grass and forest at that country place and there was a good opportunity for emigrants to get around and have a house erected at that place. The best ground around Salt Lake City was already divided out, or bought, and, of course, nearly every one of ours did not have the dollars to buy it with. Our oxen and other animals that belongs to us could likely find more grass to eat in San Pete than around Salt Lake City, where grass fields were limited. Further, it took three days to get a load of cut down trees taken from the mountains to Salt Lake City and a small load will cost $6. For the different reasons stated, it was recommended by our church authorities, and accepted by us, to journey down to Sanpete.24

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22 *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, 13 (1851): 51.


24 “Christian Nielson Diary, 1852 December – 1853 March.” Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
By the following fall a second group of Scandinavians, mostly Danes, joined the Ephraim community. The town continued to grow at a steady rate, receiving mostly Scandinavian immigrants, and in 1856 one visitor noted that “there are about eighty families here, and fifty of that number speak the Danish language.”

By 1880 the city was nearly ninety percent Scandinavian. Canute Peterson, a Norwegian convert, was Sanpete County’s foremost religious leader in the 1860s and 1870s, as well as the president of the Scandinavian mission in the 1870s.

With settlers coming mostly from coastal regions of Scandinavia, the Sanpete Valley presented a dramatically different climate for the immigrants. Danish land, in particular, is near sea level and receives rainfall throughout the year. The geographically isolated Sanpete Valley, accessible only though narrow passes, lay at a high altitude (5,500 feet at the valley floors with mountain peaks reaching 12,000 feet) that produced hot summers and cold, harsh winters. The semiarid climate saw very few inches of annual precipitation, most of it coming in the form of snow in the higher elevations. The growing season was limited to ninety frost-free days.

Melted snowpack feeding the canyon creeks to the San Pitch River provided water for irrigation that would make farming possible. Scandinavians were unfamiliar with

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25 Andrew Jenson, *Manuscript History of the Ephraim Ward* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Archives), 3.

irrigation, however, and with clearing desert land, particularly land that was covered in sagebrush and greasewood, a deciduous shrub.

Owing to these conditions, immigrants found farming and cultivation in the Sanpete Valley daunting. Unlike later settlers who saw much potential in the landscape, one original settler appraised the valley as “only a long, narrow canyon and not even a jackrabbit could exist on its desert soil.” 27 Sporadic and insignificant rainfall made cultivation difficult. The soil was hard-packed alkali mud, strewn with sagebrush and bunchgrass. One pioneer wrote how the wood was “very difficult to dig out and too green to burn since the wood of the plants was hard and gnarly, and their roots, because of the scarcity of water, extended deep and far.” 28

The Danish immigrant, Peter Madsen, explained the physical challenges of this new setting:

Here I have cometh in a new School. Here was many things to learn, now to be a foreigner in a new land, every thing was different from the land I came from, here we have to cut the brush off first, and then try to plowe [sic] with Oxen, and a simple plough to, and prepare for to water the grain, and make water ditches from the Creek, there was so much to do I had to work hard all the time, and then I had to stand guard sometime to watch for the Indians, we had plenty of grass for our Stock, I had 2 yoke of Oxen and 1 Cow, we could get all the hay we want, but we had to cut it by armpower. 29


20 Antrei, The Other Forty-niners, 19.

29 "Peter Madsen," Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Despite the challenges presented by the unfamiliar climate, the unyielding ground and conflicts with indigenous people, Madsen persevered.

Settlers found that trees did not grow on the valley floor, except along the river and creek banks. This made gathering wood supplies for construction problematic. The foothills, however, contained an abundance of tree species: juniper, pinyon pine, scrub oak, maple, birch, alder, and cottonwood. Even higher in elevation grew aspen, mountain mahogany, spruce, and fir. Such woods were used for the building of Scandinavian-style homes and furniture. Berries, likewise, were prevalent in the hills and plentiful in the late summer and fall. Large parties of women and children would hike to the hills and collect chokecherries, wild currants, wild strawberries, elderberries, and ground cherries and make jams and fruit soups reminiscent of homeland recipes. These berry gathering expeditions also supplied the majority of winter fruit until the orchards they planted reached maturity. The wild vegetables pioneers found growing included white meadow thistle, black mustard, sego lily bulbs, roots of weed onion, and dandelion green. Abundant animals—beavers, rabbits, ground squirrels, deer, mice, hawks, owls, eagles, rattlesnakes, bobcats, mink, weasels, coyotes, skunks, bears and mountain lions—contributed to the western frontier experience, as many were unknown to the Scandinavians. Coyote numbers were often high due to the abundant rabbit and

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rodent populations. Many families subsisted on the rabbits until livestock husbandry was introduced.

The Cache Valley

In 1862, Brigham Young sent Swedish tailor Ola Nilsson Liljenquist eighty miles north of Salt Lake to help establish Cache Valley, originally inhabited by the Shoshone and later by mountain men and fur traders. Liljenquist was called upon to be the spiritual and temporal director of the recently settled town of Hyrum. Cache Valley, at 4,500-feet elevation and surrounded by the 9,000-feet Wasatch and Wellsville Mountains, provided fertile and irrigated land for agriculture. Numerous canyon streams fed the Logan and Bear Rivers, which then flowed through the valley and created excellent soil for various crops of fruits and vegetables. Canyon winds prevented early winter frosts, so fruit crops could ripen. Winter was long with abundant snow that contributed to the plentiful irrigation waters. Following the pattern of previous Mormon villages, Bishop-Mayor Liljenquist laid out ten-acre blocks with wide roads and a center block for church buildings. Liljenquist offered each head of household “a town lot, twenty acres of outlying farm land, common grazing, a stake in the irrigation ditch, and timber from the hills.”

31 Hyrum’s nearby wooded areas grew a productive lumber industry and supported a furniture industry to which the Scandinavians contributed greatly. Townspeople organized a

31 Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 215.
dairy cooperative and a sheep cooperative. In time, Hyrum became the state’s wool-
shipping center. By 1881 Hyrum had grown to a population of 1,400, the majority of
whom were Scandinavian.32

A year later, twelve Danish families, led by Hans Jens Jensen, travelled fifteen
miles south of Cache Valley to settle a small valley they named Mantua after the
birthplace in Ohio of Apostle Lorenzo Snow.33 Leaders tasked the families with
growing flax and hemp crops with which the Danes were familiar in their textile
industry in Denmark. The flax did not prove useful for clothing production;
however, it was used for rope. Industry in Hyrum grew to two saw mills and various
mines, including a gold mine, as well as a large lime kiln that supplied construction
supplies.34

The Mormon Village

Though each region and community in Utah had elements unique to its
specific setting, commonalities can be seen in these Mormon villages and settings.
Religious, historic, economic, agricultural, and visual unity characterized each
community and unified communities. Regardless of the region, Mormon settlements

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32 Ibid., 218.

33 Andrew Jenson, "Origin of Western Geographic Names," *The Utah Genealogical and
Historical Magazine* 10, no. 2 (1919): 83.

offered people land to cultivate, abundant work, and the opportunity to grow economically. Though Utah was still a territory, the national Homestead Act of 1862, granted any interested residents 160 acres for cultivation and improvement. Many residents took advantage of this program, while most Mormons chose to remain in towns with fellow church members.

Cultural geographer Richard Fracaviglia described the “Mormon landscape” as a “trinity of mountain, field, and village.” Generally speaking, the majority of pioneer Mormon villages lay in north-south trending valleys. They were surrounded by sagebrush and cedar-covered hills leading up to pine covered mountains reaching on average 8,000 feet. The water supply to the villages ran from the mountains through large canyons. The water flowed to the villages through a large canal from which smaller ditches diverged to spread the water throughout the towns. Because of the semi-arid conditions, Francaviglia described irrigation as “a symbol vividly demonstrating that the entire town [was] dependent for its very life on the irrigation water coursing down from the mountains.” Farming was the main economy of the pioneer town. Villages were surrounded by orchards, fields, pastures, and hay lands. Cattle and sheep grazed together in the fields. Farmers lived in town and traveled to their fields in the daytime, typical of European strip farming.

36 Ibid., 14.
where villages were surrounded by several large open fields that they split into sections (or strips) to farm.

The village itself had a distinct layout that embodied a planned community. Through revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants, God had instructed Joseph Smith, "Behold, mine house is a house of order . . . and not of confusion." The Mormons interpreted this both spiritually and literally and manifest it in their geometrically designed towns, farms, and homesteads that they placed on a grid pattern of northeast-southwest. At the center of each Mormon town were the meetinghouse, tithing office, barn, and granary—all belonging to the Church. This religious nucleus of the town resembled the Scandinavian village that had a central church. Additionally, it was typical of seventeenth century European city planning to lay out new city districts on a grid. Architectural historian Thomas Carter noted that the Mormon town possessed a dual function with corresponding symbolism: externally it presented a group identity and purpose; internally it mirrored the organization of the Church. These functions created a solid community identity.

The homestead was in turn modeled after the village. In addition to outlying fields, the Mormon village had farms throughout the town. Each block was divided squarely into four lots. Each lot had a homestead with two primary structures, the

37 Doctrine and Covenants 132:8.
house and the barn, usually on opposite sides of the property.\textsuperscript{40} Outbuildings such as the granary, hay barn, and stable, as well as the corral, pasture, garden, and orchard filled the remaining space (see fig. 5.3).

Figure 5.3. Typical Mormon farm block. Source: Francaviglia, \textit{The Mormon Landscape}, 17.

\textsuperscript{40} Carter, "Building Zion," 71.
Such a village layout contrasted starkly to the haphazard way in which most towns in the West developed, as well as to the typically sprawling Scandinavian farmstead of both Scandinavia and the Midwest.\textsuperscript{41} The similarities between these Mormon and Scandinavian villages, however, were their self-sufficiency and working with natural resources as the bases of the economic system. The rural population made their implements, furnishings, and textiles by hand from materials found in their natural surroundings. In both settings, for example, wood for carpentry and woodworking crafts came from the nearby forests, and flax and wool for textile making was harvested in the fields and from sheep. People cultivated and perpetuated these crafts whose raw materials were supplied from their natural settings, regardless of the community layout. Mormons’ decision to organize and centralize their community layout was a function of group solidarity rather than other cultural traditions.

As evidenced, Mormon pioneers settled upon the Utah frontier with intention, foresight, and cooperative work habits. Their interactions with the climate, geography, religion, culture, and frontier conditions summoned them to find their place and identity in their new home. Each of these elements proved new challenges.

to be internalized and navigated through. The landscape and its resources were assets to be cultivated and benefited from. The pioneers quickly found that the landscape influenced their attitudes, perspectives, and responsibilities. Jens C.A. Weibye wrote home in 1870: "We built ourselves a stone house last summer. We also planted a number of fruit trees, and sowed about fifty kinds of flower seed. I am a sort of farmer, gardener, tithing clerk, and postmaster." Thus the Scandinavian immigrants negotiated their cultural heritage with the new setting and resources available.

Folk Painting

One way in which the landscape and its resources influenced the material culture of Scandinavian immigrants in the Utah frontier can be seen in its folk painting. During Utah’s early settlement, pioneers were preoccupied with securing their basic necessities of food, shelter, and safety. Within a short time, however, in an effort to create refinement, Mormon leaders established a variety of cultural societies and intellectual groups. These societies’ primary functions were "social

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42 "Weibye to Jesse N. Smith, February 10, 1870," Skandinaviens Stjerne, no. 19 (March 15, 1870): 188.

43 Cultural societies in early Utah were the Universal Scientific Society, the Polysophical Society, the Horticultural Society, the Deseret Philharmonic Society, the Deseret Dramatic Association, the Deseret Literary and Musical Association and the Deseret Musical Association. See Joseph Heinerman, "Early Pioneer Cultural Societies," Utah Historical Quarterly 47, no. 1 (1979): 78.
improvement and to cultivate a taste . . . for refinement,”44 as leaders explained. In addition to these societies, leadership encouraged the practice and spread of fine craftsmanship throughout the territory, including the development of the visual and performing arts among the early pioneers.

Because resources for patronage and purchasing of art were essentially non-existent, art was not a lucrative industry in pioneer Utah. Artists who had elsewhere relied on their training and skills to support themselves found that in Utah they had to depend on farming and other work to subsist. Danish artist, C.C.A. Christensen observed: “One will most often find the Utah artist in overalls, with a broad brimmed straw hat, in a field, armed with a pitchfork, or other farming implement in practical work, in order to fill bellies of himself and his families, instead of following the bidding of Apollo.”45 However, as was the practice in other frontier regions, many settlers relied on bartering. Early artists accepted commodities in exchange for their artwork. Very few Utah artists ever lived solely on their art revenues.

Numerous Scandinavian settlers were artists, some of whom were among the most famous Utah produced, while others painted simply as a hobby. Regardless of whether they made a living by painting, Scandinavian painters brought a rich cultural tradition influenced by the cultural history of their countries. Scandinavian immigrants of the 1850s and 1860s, in particular, were schooled in the romantic

44 The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star, 17 (1855): 255.

45 C.C. A. Christensen correspondence, Bikuben, July 14, 1892.
nationalism that spread across Europe and Scandinavia in the first half of the nineteenth century. The industrialization that swept through Europe at that time gave the common people more power and influence, and their culture became more valued and lauded. These ideals of portraying common people’s ways of life were reflected in the art of the time.

Denmark’s response to romantic nationalism was seen particularly in its philosophy, politics, and art. The country had recently suffered from military bombardment during the Napoleonic Wars, national bankruptcy, and the cession of Norway to Sweden, and consequently the country sought new ways to identify itself. Art historian Niels Laurits Høyen (1798-1870), a member of the faculty of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts argued for the creation of a popular national historical art. In 1844, Høyen delivered a pivotal speech, "Om Betingelserne for en Skandinavisk Nationalkunsts Udvikling" ("On the Conditions for a Scandinavian National Art’s Development"), that became a manifesto for Danish art. Høyen called for artists to search for subject matter in their local folk life rather than pursuing themes originating in other countries. He emphasized the importance of the Scandinavian landscape, mythology, history, and the experience of the common

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46 This creative period for Danish thought became know as the Danish Golden Age. Famous Danes of this period were artists C.W. Eckersberg and Wilhelm Marstrand; sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen; author Hans Christansen Anderson; and philosophers Nikolaj Gruntvig and Søren Kierkegaard.

people. The grandiose historical art that had previously focused on upholding the
monarchy and the established order gave way to less pretentious paintings and
landscapes. The painting was more realistic, and included humble domestic people,
objects, scenes, and landscapes.

It was from this orientation that the Scandinavian artists in Utah brought
their profound respect for “the nobility of the common man.” Both the Mormon
and Scandinavian art philosophies emphasized documenting the history of the
people and the more intimate aspects of daily life within the environment. The Utah
landscape influenced imagery for these Scandinavian artists. The arid, rugged land
was so different from what Scandinavians were accustomed to that it inspired much
of their early work in Utah. Two Scandinavian artists, C.C. A. Christensen and
Danquart Anton Weggeland exemplify the incorporation of Scandinavian culture
and influence as they depict and document the historical events of the colonization
of the Mormon West. These two artists gained wide respect among early Church
leaders and members and became two of the most famous painters in Utah history.

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49 Early paintings from these artists included scenes of Scandinavian seascapes and
missionaries proselytizing in homelands. See Museum of Church History and Art archives in Salt Lake City for examples.
Carl Christian Anton Christensen

Carl Christian Anton Christensen was born in 1831 in Copenhagen. At age eleven he entered a state boarding school where his artistic talent was recognized by a wealthy patron of the arts, Ane Sophie Bruun, who arranged for Christensen to attend art classes at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen.\(^{50}\)

Christensen apprenticed with the master painter Carl Rosent who taught him lessons in easel, house, and decorative painting. Rosent counseled Christensen to create art that would exemplify Danish folk traditions and cultural history.\(^{51}\)

Two famously influential artists at the Academy who oversaw Christensen’s work were Wilhelm Marstrand and Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg.\(^{52}\) Marstrand focused his work on everyday life in Copenhagen, and Eckersberg on the Danish landscape and sea. Both of these men subscribed to the nationalistic teachings on art of N.L. Høyen. This focus on landscape and everyday life prevailed in the world of art and was evident throughout Christensen’s career as an artist.

Midway through his studies at the Academy, Christensen converted to Mormonism in 1850. Caught up in his religious zeal, Christensen’s enthusiasm for his future as a painter dwindled. He wrote: “And then my prospective success as an

\(^{50}\) Mary A.C. Welling and V. Terry, "Biography of C.C.A. Christensen and his Wife," Brigham Young University Special Collections, Provo, Utah.


\(^{52}\) Eckersberg laid the foundation of the “Golden Age” of art in Denmark. See Richard L. Jensen and Richard G. Oman, C.C.A. Christensen, 1831-1912: Mormon Immigrant Artist (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984), 5.
artist-painter, seemed suddenly to be swallowed up or ruined forever, as we looked for the end of the world in a very few years. I therefore slackened a great deal in my efforts to become an artist, yet I continued attending the art academy, till I had served my time as an apprentice and had passed my examination with merit.”53 Though Christensen’s response shows his misunderstanding of the Mormon view of the timing of the millennium, it reflects the shift in priorities many converts felt—joining with fellow Saints seemed more pressing than worldly pursuits.

Christensen did not abandon his painting career, however. After his graduation from the Academy, he went on a three year Church mission in Denmark and Norway. During those years he financially supported himself, putting his decorative painting skills to use by painting houses and doing a variety of odd jobs including painting a baby carriage, a sign, and a marbled fireplace.54 On subsequent missions he took painting lessons and attended museums and art exhibitions. He attended an art school in Kristiania (now Oslo), with instructor Philip Barlag, who taught him landscape painting. Barlag studied at the Royal Drawing School in Kristiania and was influenced by one of Norway’s premier landscape artists and realists, Johan Fredrick Eckersberg.55 The romantic style employed by these artists emphasized the everyday life of the common people. Barlag’s instruction gave


54 Sorensen, “Carl Christian Anton Christensen,” 95.

55 Jensen, C.C.A. Christensen, 15.
Christensen confidence to go beyond house and decorative painting and to depict landscapes in his paintings. These years of training in the Danish art tradition influenced the remainder of Christensen's art career, in terms of what he chose to paint and how he chose to paint it.

Christensen emigrated to Utah in 1857 with the predominantly Scandinavian Seventh Handcart Company. Emigrants were limited to fifteen pounds of possessions for the handcarts. Given these limits, Christensen brought few art supplies, but he sketched scenes and events from the journey later to be transformed into paintings. From his first-hand experience he personified early Mormon history, and he portrayed the strong sense of early Mormon community in his paintings.

_The Handcart Company_, circa 1900, depicts pioneers on their journey westward to Utah (see fig. 5.4).

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56 Sorensen, "Carl Christian Anton Christensen," 97.
The painting is composed of various vignettes of the general Mormon handcart company experience; it depicts men and women pulling handcarts, families fording a prairie stream, a woman gathering buffalo chips to start a fire, a family cooking a meal, a mother nursing her child, and nearby Native Americans approaching. There is a sense of exposure and vulnerability. Inclement weather looms tenuously and the pioneers appear unprotected; the river, though shallow, represents the possibility of people and possessions, or even convictions, being washed away; Native Americans represent the possibility of hospitality or hostility on the western frontier. Despite
these underlying messages, in accordance with the Danish artistic philosophy, Christensen’s concern here is less with the landscape and more with subject matter and, as Mormon historians Richard Oman and Richard Jensen observe, the “common man in the epic experience.” The work also reflects Christensen’s first-hand experience crossing the plains and his desire to document the journey. Upon his arrival in the Salt Lake Valley by handcart in September 1857, Christensen wrote that he had the “Danish flag flying from [his] cart, [his] trousers flapping in tatters around [his] legs,” illustrating the effort and dedication to the migration as well as his connection to his native land.

By 1859 Christensen moved his family to Sanpete County to join other Scandinavians. Early years for settlers were spent clearing land, building cabins, and digging irrigation ditches. Farming was a necessity and occupied most of Christensen’s time.

*Wheat Harvest in Ephraim*, circa 1904, depicts the pioneer farming experience within the context of the landscape (see fig. 5.5). As a farmer, Christensen was immersed in the local landscape and it played a central role in each of his paintings.

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This valley and mountain landscape depicts the unique topography of Sanpete County. Christensen's attention to farming is seen in the details of neatly gathered wheat, a headgate on an irrigation ditch, and the importance of children helping. A productive harvest and large stacks of wheat in the background emphasize preparation and foresight, important factors in Mormon teaching and in surviving the winter. The buildings in the background symbolize establishment and permanence. The largest building, the Ephraim Tabernacle, signifies the religious influence in the town. Similarly, the man's kneeling, prayer-like posture indicates his acknowledgment of God's blessing on farming endeavors. Each of these elements in the painting points to the relationship between humans and landscape, with
landscape being an implicitly crucial aspect of life. Christensen’s artistic training is evident in the triangular figural composition reminiscent of the Danish art tradition.

Christensen saw his work as a useful tool in building God’s kingdom, rather than merely as a pastime as he had viewed it at the Danish Academy. He considered his work as part of the cottage industry that was highly valued in the pioneer setting. He wrote in the Salt Lake City Danish-Norwegian newspaper, *Bikuben*: “Since I also know that you are interested in everyday useful home products, allow me here to give you a little further information about my [work].”\(^{59}\) He emphasized that his art formed a bond with the common person, rather than setting itself apart as something elite.

In 1892, Christensen wrote an essay in the Utah newspaper *Bikuben* entitled, “De skjønne Kunster” (“The Fine Arts”) to promote art appreciation and education among his fellow Scandinavian immigrants in Utah.\(^{60}\) Christensen valued all forms of art as “fine art” and drew no hierarchical distinctions between *brugskunst* (“use art”), decorative arts such as quilts, handiwork, or furniture, and academic art. For Christensen, “utility did not diminish an object’s artistic importance.”\(^{61}\) He claimed that pursuing the fine arts and beauty allowed people to imitate and become like

\(^{59}\) “Christensen to A.W. Winberg,” *Bikuben*, 20 March, 1879.

\(^{60}\) This essay was serialized in *Bikuben* February 18 and 25, and March 3 and 31, 1892.

God—the goal and aspiration of Mormons. Christensen claimed that beauty (i.e. art) arose from forethought and organization: “The fine arts occupy their proper place in heaven . . . all Latter-day Saints should certainly comprehend that the New Jerusalem and other heavenly places . . . were not established or constructed without a plan.” In accordance with Mormon belief, Christensen argued that all temporal skills should be used to build up the kingdom of God. He claimed “the Lord does not consider human skill to be merely a luxury branch of scholarship . . . but rather to be both useful and necessary in order to obtain temporal and eternal bliss.”

Christensen’s Danish training tradition shone through in his rejection of the trends of the grandiose landscape tradition becoming popular with American artists Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran. Bierstadt and Moran were influenced by the Dusseldorf School, which Christensen’s teachers at the Academy rejected. French Impressionism also was widespread in Utah by the 1890s. Of particular interest in French Impressionism were the effects of light and color on the subject. Many Utah artists adopted both of these styles, but Christensen remained true to his Danish training. He focused on Mormon history, Utah’s manmade landscape, and the common man rather than grandiose nature scenes and artistic manipulation of light.

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62 Ibid., 410.

63 Ibid., 407.

64 Ibid., 410.
The concept of experience within the context of landscape, rather than the landscape alone, is evidenced in two of Christensen’s paintings, *Temple Hill in Manti, November 1849*, and *The Manti Temple*. Christensen painted these works as companion pieces to provide a comparison of the impact pioneers had on the landscape with the building of their temple.

*Temple Hill in Manti, November 1849*, shows the temple site as it was when pioneers arrived in the valley (see fig. 5.6). The foreground focus is on the Ute Indians, their activities, teepees, and horses. It is an industrious and active scene. A sense of peace and security conveys composure and harmony with nature. The Indians in the wilderness contrast with the pioneer wagons at the rise of the valley floor. Two men
on horseback approach the Utes. There is no sense of invasion, and it is unclear whether the Utes and pioneers have made contact yet. The landscape depicts a place yet to be cultivated. The changing of seasons symbolizes the impending shift from Indians and wilderness to pioneer settlement.

Including Native Americans in a painting exemplifies Christensen’s desire to depict real life scenes. Mormon settler accounts of encounters with and reactions to Native Americans varied. Some relate reactions of fear and contempt, while others convey curiosity and respect. Some coexisted and worked well with the Indians, while others saw no reason for compromise. Relations between white settlers and Native Americans drew directly to the landscape. In the Sanpete area, by 1853, problems of Indian dependency on white settlers for supplies due to the influx of settlers and limited hunting grounds created heightened conflict that resulted in “Walker’s War.” In 1855, the U.S. government granted Indians the Twelve Mile Creek Reservation where they were guaranteed immunity from white encroachment, but the area ultimately proved unaccommodating to the traditional Indian way of life. By 1872, Native Americans had been permanently relocated to

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65 For accounts of Native American and settlers’ relations, see Albert C. T. Antrei and Allen D. Roberts, *A History of Sanpete County* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1999), 61-80.

66 After a year of murders, ambushes, and skirmishes, peace negotiations between the Ute leader, Wakara, and Brigham Young ended the war.

67 With the Homestead Act in 1862, Congress limited Church-owned properties and confiscated the reservation, and the Utes were sent to the Uintah Reservation in northeastern Utah. The Black Hawk War of 1865-1872 was spurred by the Indians’ outrage with their loss of access to resources combined with the white settlers tiring of theft of livestock and dependence of Indians. The ultimate result of the Black Hawk War was that the Utes were forced permanently onto the Uintah
the Uintah Reservation in northeastern Utah. Christensen’s painting offers an interpretation of Native American pre-settlement life and what the area was like prior to Mormon settlement.

_The Manti Temple, 1889_, contrasts starkly with _Temple Hill in Manti, November 1849_ (See fig. 5.7).

![The Manti Temple by C.C.A. Christensen, 1889. Source: Collection of the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City.](image)

Reservation where their numbers dramatically decreased with time and eventually traditional ways of life ceased.
This painting celebrates the construction of the temple and the progress of the pioneers. Scandinavian craftsmen contributed to nearly every aspect of the building of the temple. The architectural dominance and order of the stone temple contrasts strongly with the scattered skin-teepees shown in *Temple Hill in Manti, November 1849*. The manicured and tamed landscape symbolizes development from the previous wilderness. The people wear refined clothing, not the clothing of immigrant pioneers, and thereby are clearly distinguished from the skins and bare-chests of the Utes. The vertical lines of the temple draw the eyes heavenward. The blue sky symbolizes a clear and bright future. To admirers, the Temple replaced previous perceptions of the landscape and became the landscape. Christensen’s formal training in perspective, combined with his zeal to portray the refined Utah church leaders’ vision, resulted in a painting not so much stylistically representative of his philosophies, but conceptually in line with his theoretical background.

Danquart Anthon Weggeland

Another prominent early Utah artist was Danquart Anthon Weggeland, who was born in 1827 and raised in Kristiania, Norway. Weggeland’s artistic training reflected the Scandinavian art tradition of the time. At age sixteen, Weggeland began his formal art instruction in Stavanger. After four years Weggeland moved to Copenhagen where he spent the winter months studying drawing and painting at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. At the Academy, Weggeland was influenced
by Høyen’s emphasis on peasant life and folk culture. After two years in Copenhagen he returned to Stavanger and took lessons in landscape painting from Bernhardt Hansen, a well-known landscape artist in the region. From 1851 to 1853, Weggeland travelled to the Hardanger region and the eastern provinces of Numedal, Telemark, Suldal, and Vøringfoss to document folk costumes (see fig. 5.8).68

Figure 5.8. Above left, *Peasant Girl in a Blue Jumper*, by Danquart Weggeland, 1852; right, *Old Man with Top Hat and Walking Stick* by Danquart Weggeland, 1852. Source: Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City.

During his travels he became acquainted with Adolf Tidemand and Hans Gude, renowned Norwegian painters, both of the Norwegian national romantic movement. These men painted idyllic Norwegian landscapes that presented romantic, yet realistic views of the country. Weggeland, likewise, followed this national trend, while emphasizing the common person’s relationship to the land.

In 1855, Weggeland became interested in Mormonism. After cautious investigation he was baptized a year later in the ocean on the southern coast of Norway at Østerrisør. Following his baptism, Weggeland was confirmed by fellow artist, C.C.A. Christensen who was a missionary at Østerrisør at the time. The two began a friendship that lasted the rest of their lives in Utah, and they influenced and collaborated with one another.

In 1861, Weggeland emigrated to New York where he worked to earn money to move west. There he studied with Daniel Huntington and George P. A. Healy, two of the more successful and famous portrait painters in the East at that time. They influenced Weggeland’s refined technique in portraiture that later set him apart from his Utah contemporaries’ less refined styles. After securing sufficient funds, Weggeland travelled to Salt Lake City in the fall of 1862.

Over the next five decades in Utah, Weggeland painted prolifically. His work spanned genres. He painted scenery for the Salt Lake Theatre, produced murals inside four temples, painted portraits, still lifes, billboard murals outside local

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69 Ibid., 272.
businesses, and faux grained furniture and mantelpieces. Weggeland was one of the few Utah artists who eventually supported himself solely by his painting. In his early years in Utah, Weggeland bartered for his art. He wrote: “Occasionally I could dispose of a painting or give a lesson in return for a pair of hand-knitted socks or a basket of onions or other vegetables from the garden.” Weggeland’s ability to barter demonstrates how artwork was valued in pioneer Utah, yet purchased in non-capitalist ways.

Despite his versatility, Weggeland’s strength lay in his ability to depict everyday life, a skill encouraged by and learned from his Danish teachers. He had a great desire to employ his artistic philosophies in chronicling the Mormon experience. Weggeland’s replica of Danish artist Christen Dalsgaard’s 1856 painting, *Mormoner på Besøg hos en Tømrer på Landet* (Mormons Visit a Country Carpenter) (see fig. 5.9) most clearly exemplified painting in the Danish tradition. Dalsgaard created his painting during the early years of Mormonism in Denmark, and reflects the artistic emphasis on current national interests. The painting depicts the interior of a provincial cottage with people listening to a Mormon missionary’s message.

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Scandinavian immigration historian Julie K. Allen notes the socio-cultural significance of Dalsgaard’s painting, as it represents the religious turmoil Denmark faced in the early and mid-nineteenth century, and the social turmoil engendered by the arrival of the Mormons.\(^\text{71}\) Dalsgaard wrote a reading guide to explain the response of each figure in the painting.\(^\text{72}\) He explained that the two missionaries

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(one addressing the people, using one of the carpenter’s rests as a makeshift pulpit, and the other standing by the woman with the pamphlet) had met the seated girl at a previous occasion and that she brought her father to a carpenter’s house to hear the message. The skeptical father finds the religious message “unethical and worldly,” while the daughter finds it captivating. Dalsgaard attributed the daughter’s interest to her blindness and hopefulness that the Mormons could heal her. The bystanders are indifferent to the message. The father represents the Danish skepticism of new denominations’ promises, while the daughter characterizes the Danish people’s dissatisfaction with the state church and their search for alternatives.

Figure 5.10. Preaching the Gospel in Scandinavia by Danquart Weggeland, date unknown. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.
Weggeland was concerned with the strongly promoted national romantic folk movement of the period, which Dalsgaard’s painting conveys. Though Weggeland’s version (see fig. 5.10) is less refined than Dalsgaard’s it gives similar attention to corresponding features. It is a study of current daily life, with particular detail to the domestic interior, its furnishings, style, and architecture, as well as the costumes and mannerisms of the people. Symbolism imbues the painting with much meaning. The elemental sturdiness of the building reflects the peasants’ vigor and ability to withstand persuasion and make their own decisions. The unkempt floor and workbench littered with wood shavings and scraps, the dishes left from the last meal, as well as the casual response of the listeners, indicate that the visit was unexpected, yet deemed worthy of attention. The lighting highlights each members’ face and attention, particularly the carpenter’s as he stands at the center of the painting, reading a tract. The activity of the bystanders—the person peering in outside the window, the girl standing by the door, and the woman in the back room tending to a cradle—reflect the everyday aspect of missionaries’ proselytizing. The importance of literature is emphasized by a pamphlet in a top hat that reveals a clearly legible title, “En Sandhed’s Röst,” (“A Voice of Truth”), the widely read Mormon tract in Scandinavia. Weggeland likely copied the painting because he found the subject matter an important historical scene representative of the Danish
conversion experience. He was likely unaware of Dalsgaard’s critical explanation and intention with the painting, as it does not speak well of the Mormon message.

Weggeland also combined pastoral western landscapes with everyday scenes from pioneer life. Like Christensen, Weggeland painted numerous variations of emigrants crossing the plains. These early paintings focused on scenes from his and other pioneers’ treks westward. Later paintings emphasized pioneer life, depicting landscapes, cabins, barns, fences, haystacks, and livestock. Such a painting, Bishop P. Madsen’s Residence in Provo 1883, painted in 1912, (see fig. 5.11) was most likely offered as a thank you to a Danish bishop who hosted Weggeland as he travelled south to paint murals in the Manti or St. George temples. It was customary for church members to house craftsmen as they travelled to work on Church projects.
Bishop P. Madsen's Residence in Provo greatly resembles Danish artist Jens Juel's *Sealand Farm. On-Coming Storm*, painted in 1793, pictured in figure 5.12. Weggeland’s composition and subject matter echo that of Juel’s but no records state if Weggeland modeled his painting after the Danish one. The similarity proves, however, the emphasis and romanticism of the time on the rural lifestyle.
Bishop P. Madsen’s Residence in Provo 1883, contains various Danish references. Most obvious is the Danish flag’s cross on the boy’s hat. This style of hat, called a *studenterhue* (“student hat”) was common in Scandinavia at the time. The style and architecture of the farmhouse with double chimneys and symmetrical form resembles the Swedish *parstuga*, or “pair cottage.” Such an architectural style, with two main rooms on either side of the door, was common throughout Scandinavia from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.\(^7^3\) The woman walking in the background wears a traditional apron and bonnet, typical of peasant dress.

\(^7^3\) A discussion with images of “pair houses” is found in Carter, "Building Zion," 221-41.
throughout Scandinavia. The Scandinavian visual elements illustrate how cultural markers from the homeland were transplanted into the Utah setting. The greatest contrast to this scene and an equivalent Scandinavian setting is the evident aridity. The lack of any indication of humidity or lush greenery that most Danish scenes would convey, renders this a typically Utahan landscape.

This Danish farmstead thus reflects an established immigrant’s adaption to the landscape. The immediate farm scene with barn, a hay stack, a wagon, fencing, shrubbery, and trees lies within the larger context of landscape and mountains. It is a secure farmstead with a bountiful harvest. The well-travelled driveway and welcoming flowers indicate connection and integration with the surrounding community. The fence provides containment and protection. The large cottonwood tree offers shade and protection. The couple sitting on a bench in the shade of the house implies well-earned rest after a hard day’s work.

Similarly, Weggeland’s View of Utah Lake Near Lehi, 1878, is reminiscent of a Scandinavian peasant scene in a pastoral setting (see fig. 5.13).
A milkmaid tends to her few cows. A typical farm scene with a wheelbarrow, pitchfork, fence, and hay shelter surrounds her. The larger context of mountains, lake, and valley surrounds the idyllic farm scene. The milkmaid and her work receive the attention, rather than the looming landscape, demonstrating the humanistic focus characteristic of the Danish tradition. Her peasant clothing, bonnet, and perhaps wooden shoes subtly mark her Scandinavian background. Despite the lake's presence, this is a desert scene; there is no greenery on the mountains, the ground is compact, and the sky is washed-out and dusty. Though farming activity was familiar to immigrants, the arid setting was foreign to those accustomed to lushness and humidity.
Weggeland also devoted his artistic energies to teaching, and he later became a founder of the Deseret Academy of Arts, an institution that promoted various branches of fine arts. He taught and influenced many of the second generation of Utah artists: J. T. Harwood, Edwin Evans, John Hafen, Lorus Pratt, and Phineas H. Young. As one of the most influential early Utah painters, he was dubbed "The Father of Utah Art." His work garnered appreciation on a national level as well. He exhibited nationally and won gold and silver medals at the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893.

Both Christensen and Weggeland’s work demonstrated the application of the Scandinavian art tradition in documenting and relating the Mormon experience. Both artists primarily concerned themselves with the people and their story and setting, rather than producing art for art’s sake. The landscape acted as a subtle, yet essential, backdrop and provided the context in which these people and their stories could be told. Informally trained Scandinavian artists also produced artwork, though their work has received little or no attention and almost none of the artwork survives. Likely, however, their work demonstrated similar attention to the common folk and their lives in their new setting. Though evidence of the Scandinavian heritage and background of these artists can be seen in the subject

74 Robert S. Olpin, *Artists of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1999), 278.

75 One such artist was C.V. Hansen, who lived in Provo in the mid-1900s. His work centered around seascapes and ships that were obvious references to his Danish heritage. See family files of Lynn Henrichsen.
matter of these paintings, the desert landscape set them apart from typical Scandinavian scenes and rendered them uniquely representative of the Utah landscape and the comingled culture of early Utah Settlements.

Furniture

As evidenced in Scandinavian immigrant painting, the Utah frontier fostered in immigrants the urge to create familiar and traditional scenes and objects from the resources surrounding them. This desire to employ their skills while drawing upon their traditions resulted in the production of objects that Utah folklorist Hal Cannon described as contrasting “the natural world with the civilized world, available materials with accepted form.”76 The material culture that grew from the natural resources contributed a romantic view of the frontier experience. The furniture, in particular, communicates the direct relationship between pioneer and landscape. The rich furniture tradition in pioneer Utah demonstrates early Mormonism’s adaptability to a frontier lifestyle and landscape, as well as stylistic reliance on cultural traditions, skills, and crafts that immigrants brought with them.

The early Utah community appreciated fine furniture craftsmanship. Before becoming the prophet, Brigham Young was a cabinetmaker, carpenter, painter, and

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glazier. Young and other Church leaders accepted and encouraged whatever new forms and techniques convert-craftsmen offered. Consequently, many furniture styles in pioneer Utah coexisted, and traditions were absorbed rather than discarded. Unlike Shaker furniture, which has a distinct, mandated style linked to religious ideology, furniture made throughout pioneer Utah was multifarious and demonstrated the diverse styles and homeland traditions of its makers. Ethnic eclecticism combined with the unique blend of necessity, limited material resources, and Church needs, created new forms and styles in furniture design. Elements from specific furniture making traditions evidenced themselves within this new aesthetic tradition.

Like other artisans and skilled workers in the early Utah pioneer era, carpenters and cabinetmakers were sent to outlying communities to establish workshops and produce buildings, furniture, wagons, and tools for Church members, as well as to provide the woodworking for churches, tabernacles, and temples. Brigham Young’s drive for self-sufficiency among his flock required craftspeople


78 Barker, The Legacy of Mormon Furniture, 26.


willing to contribute their skills in the budding communities. Young called for those trained in crafts and design to settle new towns.

The majority of the cabinetmakers sent to help establish settlements were British and Scandinavian. These craftsmen were apprenticed and steeped in their homeland furniture-making traditions. The Scandinavians, in particular, had a predilection for woodcraft. The making of furniture (benches, tables, beds, shelves, and cupboards, etc.), vehicles, tools, utensils, various containers, decorative carving, and other wood objects had been a means to utilize the abundant natural resources of their homelands. In the eighteenth century, cabinetmakers were valued furniture-making craftsmen in every Scandinavian village. These craftsmen employed woodcraft techniques such as turning, joining, and carving. Many immigrants who were trained in these fields shifted to general carpentry and cabinetmaking to supply the more basic needs of newly settled pioneers in Utah. Very few immigrants came with tools or furniture, owing to the space and weight limitations of the migration. Their skills and long-standing aesthetic traditions imported weightlessly, of course. The turned columns, scooped molding, carved feet,

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81 Sweden and Norway have dense and bountiful forested areas abundant in spruce, pine, and birch, while the south relies more on hardwoods such as beech and oak. See Anna-Maja Nylén, Swedish Handcraft (Lund: H. Ohlsson, 1976), 339. By the nineteenth century, Denmark, however, was essentially deforested due to cultivation. Woods were imported from Sweden, Norway, and other European countries for their woodcrafts. By 1800, only 2-3% of the country remained forested. See “About Forestry in Northern European Countries,” Northern European Database of Long-Term Forest Experiments. http://noltfox.metla.fi/nordic.htm (accessed February 11, 2011).
and faux graining found in the furniture throughout pioneer Utah exhibit the Scandinavian furniture-making tradition.

Just as in Scandinavia, wood was essential to survival in Utah. It provided shelter, furnishings, transportation, and fuel. The first settlers in Utah found the valleys sparsely wooded and other material resources limited. Settlers’ initial efforts went simply to finding ways to shelter and protect themselves. Primitive furnishings included simple beds and shelves for food and possessions. A Norwegian convert, Oluf Larsen, recalled the scant furnishings upon settlement: “We commenced with two tin cups, two tin plates, a coffeepot, a three quart pan, a kettle we had used across the plains and a baking skillet which a friend lent us. Our furniture consisted of two slab benches and a table made by knocking two sticks into the wall and putting a couple of narrow boards on them.”82 Immigrants found various ways to innovate with their resources. Many settlers used their luggage boxes as primitive tables, chairs, chests, and cupboards. Later they dissembled the hardwood shipping containers and wagon boxes to make furniture.83

Admonitions soon came from Church leaders to utilize natural resources for building and providing furniture to establish homes. Brigham Young instructed:

“Learn . . . how to get timber from the kanyons [sic], . . . how to hew stone and bring

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83 Barker, The Legacy of Mormon Furniture, 24.
them into shape and position to please the eye and create comfort and happiness for the Saints. These are some of the mysteries of the Kingdom.”

Apostle John Taylor similarly encouraged the pioneers: “I believe in going into the mountains and cutting down the timber, framing it into proper shape, and then manufacturing the various articles of furniture that we need; ... make the furniture here.”

In obedient response, pioneers built roads to the mountain forests, erected sawmills, and made tools and machinery to construct furniture. Douglas fir, spruce, and ponderosa, referred to as red pine, white pine, and yellow pine were the most common woods used in furniture manufacture, with cottonwood, box elder, and black willow often employed as well. Each wood’s properties influenced the resulting style of craftsmanship.

Beginning with their arrival in Utah in the 1850s, Scandinavian cabinetmakers settled in small communities in Sanpete, Cache, Box Elder, and Sevier Counties. The craftsmanship found throughout the smaller communities in Utah illustrates that quality work was not limited to the larger urban areas. With each decade, the numbers of Scandinavian cabinetmakers in each community rose.

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86 The mid-1860s wood was hand-planed, but by the 1870s handwork was replaced by water-powered planning, turning, and milling.

1880 Census for Sanpete County showed that of the fifty-six cabinetmakers, thirty-seven were Scandinavian. The 1880 Census for Logan included fifty-one Scandinavian carpenters and three cabinetmakers. Little is documented about the actual shops, but the small size of each settlement, suggests that cabinetmakers tended to work alone or with an apprentice rather than in large workshops with other furniture makers.

Identifying an individual piece of furniture’s history is difficult because most furniture was not signed by its maker. Similarly, because the furniture was moveable it is difficult today to know the original location of the surviving pieces. This lack of “behavioral context,” as archeologist James Deetz described it, combined with little documentation from and about workshops, makes it problematic to trace the history of each piece. Therefore, this inquiry focuses on studying the furniture itself.

The Mormon Couch

One of the most common pieces of furniture in pioneer Utah was the “Mormon Couch,” a daybed that could be drawn out into a double bed. This piece of

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88 Barker, *The Legacy of Mormon Furniture*, 93.

89 For census information see Elaine Thatcher, "Nineteenth-century Cache Valley Folk Furniture: A Study of Form and Function" (Master’s thesis, Utah State University, 1983).

furniture likely appealed to Mormons because of its versatility as both a sitting piece and a bed. Made of soft woods, daybeds were long enough to accommodate a reclining person, and wide enough to sit several people. Alternating slats in the frame allowed for the base to be pulled out to make a double bed. Backs and arms incorporated a variety of designs, often in Empire style; spindles typically lined the backs and arms. Legs were either turned or cut into a lyre shape.

The origins of the daybed are unclear, but similar beds were common throughout Scandinavia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because Scandinavian peasant families lived in one room of the house, furniture performed many functions and was creatively concealed. One such feature in the peasant home was the bedstead. Originally, beds were built into the walls and enclosed with shutters or homespun bed curtains. They were either placed end to end or one on top of the other against the wall.91 In the nineteenth century, Swedish homes began to use the köksoffa (“kitchen sofa”) or utdragssoffa (“pull-out sofa”) that had a high back and could be drawn out for sleeping (see fig. 5.14). Similarly Norwegians employed the slagbenk (“folding bench”). The wooden plank seat could be lifted off and removed to reveal a storage compartment.

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Usually the sofas were painted and had a light or dark wooden patina with varied backings. Many had decorative armrest and backrest supports, repeated carved mandala motifs, and flared legs. From 1850 to 1870, Scandinavian furniture makers practiced the Empire style, which derived its name from the Emperor Napoleon the Third who commissioned reproductions of furniture forms from the
ancient Greek architectural style. The backs were carved into renaissance-style fan shapes and painted.

Scandinavian cabinetmakers in Utah adapted the daybed to their needs, abilities, and resources. One such craftsman was Anders Swensen from Norway who immigrated in 1865 to the Salt Lake Valley. Shortly thereafter Swensen settled in Sanpete County in Mount Pleasant where he worked as a carpenter and cabinetmaker making tables, chairs, cupboards, and other items for households. Later in his career he also assisted in the construction of the Salt Lake Theatre, the Jennings Mansion in Salt Lake City, and the St. George and Manti Temples.

Swensen created a variety of furniture but is best known for the craftsmanship of his Mormon couches. These, and other craftsmen’s couches of the area, display many Scandinavian furniture making features. The Mormon couch pictured in figure 5.15, made by Swensen, is one of the best preserved examples of the pioneer furniture making tradition with distinctive Scandinavian characteristics.

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93 Ibid., 127.

94 Barker, The Legacy of Mormon Furniture, 95.
The scrollwork, spindles, joining, and faux graining demonstrate styles found throughout Scandinavia. Most noticeable and striking is the curved, Empire style scrolling design of the back and legs. The pattern was traced onto a piece of spruce lumber and then cut out with handsaws, and finished with rasps, and files. The mortise and tenon technique was employed to join cross pieces to the arms by inserting one piece (tenon) with a shaped peg on the end into an exactly corresponding hole (mortise) on another piece and then gluing, pinning or wedging it in place. Spindles were made on a lathe and then inserted into notches. The fine stenciling on the back and the crotch walnut graining also point to Scandinavian tradition. Swensen crafted this piece for his daughter. Though it was likely used as a
parlor piece and is more elegant and decorative than the typical daybed, it contains
structural and stylistic traits (such as the overall shape of the couch and the
spindles) that were found in more common, less exquisite pieces.

The richly painted faux hardwood graining over softwoods was a popular
finishing technique used in both Europe and America during the nineteenth century.
It was employed in an effort to make utilitarian items look more finished and
refined. Scandinavian cabinetmakers in Utah employed faux graining to cover the
natural softwood graining and knots in the lumber. The earlier wood-grainers
simulated rosewood, mahogany, and maple, while the later simulated maple, oak,
and walnut. The use of illusionistic trompe l’oeil techniques simulated architectural
details such as moldings, crowns, carving, shadows, and nails that were not present.
Burls or crotches were painted into the wood as well.95 Some craftsmen painted the
faux work themselves while others employed those specialized in the trade.
Graining allowed use of what the environment had to offer, while disguising and
enhancing it so it appeared to be made of superior materials.

More typical of the Mormon couch is a Cache Valley piece by Swedish
immigrant Niels Lindquist (see fig. 5.16).

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95 The two main types of graining are additive and subtractive. Additive is achieved by
painting the grain on top of the base coat. Subtractive is done by applying a pigment over the base
coat and then with brushes, rollers, feathers, or combs removing some of the pigment from the base
coat, leaving the impression of a wood grain.
Lindquist learned his trade in Sweden in 1863 and emigrated to Cache Valley in 1868. Lindquist employed many of the same construction techniques as Swensen, including lathe work for the back and arms, and mortis and tenon joining. The spindles in this couch, however, are flat. The seat lifts up for storage, a standard feature in benches in Scandinavia. Instead of graining, Lindquist used varnish to beautify the pine.\(^96\)

Cupboards

Another prominent piece of furniture in the pioneer home was the cupboard. The cupboards made by Scandinavians employed traditional Scandinavian

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\(^96\) Barker, *The Legacy of Mormon Furniture*, 124.
techniques. Prior to the sixteenth century in Scandinavia, furniture-making was the craft of carpenters, and furnishings such as benches, tables, beds, shelves, and cupboards were built into the walls.\textsuperscript{97} During the sixteenth century freestanding and moveable furniture was introduced. It consisted of individual pieces in contrast to the previous built-in furniture. By the end of the seventeenth century, cupboards gained popularity in Scandinavia, and many of the items that were originally placed in trunks moved to cupboards.\textsuperscript{98} Cupboards were either built floor-to-ceiling, or as hanging three-sided cupboards in the corner of the room. Most distinctive about cupboards was the rosemaling that reflected the style of the region. The cupboard pictured in figure 5.17 from Malung, Sweden, circa mid-nineteenth century, demonstrates the decorative combination of rosemaling with woodcarving.


\textsuperscript{98} Plath, \textit{The Decorative Arts of Sweden}, 139.
This style of corner cupboard was also found throughout homes in Utah, though rarely, if ever, were they rosemaled. The cupboard pictured in figure 5.18, from Mount Pleasant, greatly resembles the Swedish cupboard pictured in figure 5.17, particularly in its dentil molding at the top combined with egg-and-dart style carving. Dentil molding was a decorative feature found commonly in Swedish furniture in the 1800s.
Figure 5.18. Cupboard with detail of egg-and-dart style carving. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Mount Pleasant, Utah.
Other tools and techniques employed in the making of this cupboard exemplify the Scandinavian tradition. Gauges and chisels were used for carving and molding work. Handplanes smoothed the doors and shelves. Shelves are secured in place by a sliding dovetail. The tongue-and-groove backing of this cupboard prevents warping. The vertical sideboards consist of one board that is dovetailed into the top and bottom horizontal boards. The shelves are rabbeted into the sideboards. The front facing boards are butted against the frame and nailed.\textsuperscript{99} Lumber, from local conifers, for this cupboard likely came from one of the local mills above Mount Pleasant. The pinkish/reddish tint of this piece shows signs of graining or staining, most likely mahogany, but it has since been stripped. This cupboard likely was used in a kitchen to hold various kitchen implements and dishes, or it may have been used to store linens.

The cupboard pictured in figure 5.19, circa 1865-70, by Iver Petersen of Spring City demonstrates perhaps the most common style of cupboard—one with an upper and lower case—found throughout Sanpete County.

\textsuperscript{99} Dale Peel, interview by author, Mount Pleasant, Utah, October 10, 2011.
This style of cupboard closely resembles the nineteenth-century matskaps ("food cupboards") found throughout Norway (see fig. 5.20).
Generally speaking, cupboards in Sanpete County, of this era between 1860 and 1880, had an upper and lower case (the bottom case typically deeper than the top one, creating a shelf at about waist-height), a long horizontal drawer, applied split spindles, and often a spoon rack. Architectural historian Thomas Carter speculated that the upper cases held fine items such as plates or silver, the lower cases most likely were used for linen storage, and the narrow drawer may have held items such as candles and napkins. The spoon rack displayed pewter or silver spoons. Decoration was limited to a symmetrical cornice on the top and a scrolled

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apron at the bottom with bracket feet. Such cupboards were placed in prominent areas of the house where items could be viewed and appreciated by family and visitors. This effort to show refinement in the rugged Western frontier responded to the landscape’s offerings and Church leaders’ calls to demonstrate cultural refinement.

Petersen’s style of cupboard employed various Scandinavian cabinetmaking traits and techniques. The cupboard illustrates a general sense of Empire-style symmetry, with the tripartite scroll cut crest cornice above and a similar scroll cut tripartite apron at the base. Mortise and tenon work joins the pieces. Corner joints are dovetailed, and millwork embellishes the door. Dale Peel, a contemporary furniture maker in Mount Pleasant, Utah, noted that Scandinavian craftsmen used hand planes for shaping wood, mauls for splitting wood, calipers to measure equal increments, and compasses for creating curves. They also used chisels, marking gauges, handsaws, and folding measuring scales. Very few of these original tools remain in Utah today, but examination of the woodcraft reveals that such tools were, indeed, employed.

The cupboard is made of Douglas fir, and painted with mahogany graining. The graining of the 1850s and 1860s was typically red mahogany while that of the 1870s and 1880s used golden oak or dark walnut. The painting of wood was not a new concept to Scandinavians. The use of bright colors, typically blues and greens,  

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102 Peel, interview.
and rosemaling had been characteristic of their furniture decoration for centuries. Nineteenth century influence from Europe brought the widespread use of veneer graining to transform non-prestigious woods such as pine and poplar into more exotic varieties such as mahogany, walnut, and oak.\textsuperscript{103}

The spoonrack has origins in Scandinavian folk tradition. Nineteenth century Danish cupboards and hanging shelves featured notched racks for displaying pewter and silver spoons, as a means to display the family’s more valuable items.\textsuperscript{104} Unique to Sanpete County, however, was the use of applied split spindles. The split spindle is the product of splitting a spindle down the middle to create two identical halves with a flat back. This technique originated in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English Mannerist style and resurfaced in the mid-nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{105} It was typically used in mass-produced and inexpensive furniture in both Europe and the United States. Furniture makers were influenced by catalogs displaying the national trends. Evidence of spindled furniture is found throughout the United States, but nowhere is the emphasis as strong as in Sanpete County.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{103} Anne Marie Franzen, Målade Kistor och Skåp. Om det Folkliga Möbelmåleriet i Skåne Under 1700- och 1800-talen (Stockholm: Nordiska bokhandeln, 1970), 73.

\textsuperscript{104} Lars Friis, Gemmemöbler: Kister, Skabe, Skuffemöbler og Chatoller på Frilandsmuseet Ved Sorgenfri (København: Nationalmuseet, 1976), 111-13.

\textsuperscript{105} Milo M. Naeve, Identifying American Furniture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, Colonial to Contemporary (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 47.

\textsuperscript{106} Carter states there was spindled work in Ohio, Iowa, and Newfoundland. See Carter, “Spindles and Spoonracks,” 47.
Architectural historian Thomas Carter, who did extensive research on Sanpete furniture, found that despite the fact that Scandinavian immigrants produced furniture with split spindles, they were not a Scandinavian trait.\footnote{Carter conducted extensive research on furniture at the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen, combined with the work on Swedish furniture by Sigurd Emanuel Erixon and Jane Fredlund and found no proof of Scandinavian influence for the split spindling. See Sigurd Emanuel Erixon, \textit{Folklig Möbelkultur i Svenska Bygder} (Stockholm: Nordisk rotogravyr, 1938); Jane Fredlund, \textit{Malade Allmogemöbler} (Västerås: ICA bokförlag, 1989).} Carter found that split spindles were the result of Scandinavian cabinetmakers synthesizing influences and adaptations inspired by Utah frontier life and creating a uniquely Sanpete County feature.\footnote{Carter, "Spindles and Spoonracks," 46.} Turning wood and creating spindles was a common woodworking technique in Scandinavia, but splitting them was not. Splitting spindles may have been the Utah pioneers' thrifty solution to producing twice the spindle effect with one piece of wood. They were formed by splitting a board in half, gluing it back together, then placing the piece on a lathe to form the design. The piece was then re-split down the glued seam and the halves were nailed to the side rails of the cupboard or other pieces of furniture. Referring to the Sanpete region, Carter suggests that "what is significant is the innovative way these elements were combined to produce a distinctive local form, instead of simply a copy of an older to a contemporary popular one."\footnote{Ibid., 48.} The combination of frontier life adaptability and ingenious application of traditions in established art and aesthetic values produced a unique furniture tradition in Utah.
Improved infrastructure in the late 1800s ended Utah’s isolation and substantially affected the furniture and cabinetmaking sector in Utah. With the 1869 completion of the transcontinental railroad, commercial goods from the East flooded into the Utah market, and by the 1880s local cabinetmakers could not compete with the imported goods. Anders Swensen wrote: “Furniture is imported from the East and from California, and windows and doors together with moldings for homes are all brought in here, so it looks like I have to rely most on remaining a farmer, tilling the earth.” This sentiment was common among Utah cabinetmakers of the time. By the 1880s, many cabinetmakers transitioned from their trade to owning furniture stores and distributing imported furniture. By the end of the century, local Mormon furniture manufacture had ended.110 The surviving pieces today reflect inheritors’ appreciation of the objects and desire to preserve history in material culture form.

Historian Richard Oman suggested that the Utah furniture tradition was “intimately linked to missionary work and gathering, expanding Zion, provident living, religious and temporal cooperation, and—as a way of expressing the importance of homes and families and churches—beautifying Zion.”111 Each of these functions relates, directly or indirectly, to the landscape. Pioneers strove to create


111 Oman, "The Homemade Kingdom," 159.
order and beauty out of the otherwise untamed landscape. Furniture reflected the landscape from the local woods used to the purposes of each piece. The craft traditions of Scandinavian immigrants transferred well as they learned to incorporate new woods and other resources into their work.

Analysis of the nineteenth-century furniture tradition in Utah demonstrates a strong Scandinavian influence with Scandinavian visual preferences and styles incorporated in the furniture production of the period. Scandinavians learned to adapt to local resources to create furniture that resembled their homeland versions while also creating a new local style.

Pottery

Like furniture making, pottery production reflects a people's interaction with the landscape. The resources used to make the pottery and the uses of the pottery convey that relationship to the land. Pottery as both a craft and an industry indicates core components of a culture's values and cultural development. A pottery in a community represents both self-sufficiency and permanence. In ancient cultures, pottery manufacture contributed essential tools for agricultural uses, food processing and preservation, and hygienic uses and storage. Potteries contributed to

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and solidified economic exchange systems.\textsuperscript{113} Because of the facilities pottery production required, they also demonstrated the intention to be permanent.

In the case of the Mormon pioneers, early pottery symbolized self-sufficiency by allowing settlers to preserve their foodstuffs and thus to survive.\textsuperscript{114} The foods the settlers grew and preserved reflected their relationship to the land by illustrating what they valued and chose to cultivate in this setting. The most typical food items preserved in clay pots were fruits (apples, plums, peaches, apricots, cherries, pears, grapes), berries (raspberries, strawberries, elderberries), vegetables (cabbage, cucumbers, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes), jams, and jellies. Dairy production was also essential in pioneer Utah; most farms had at least one cow. Wide mouthed milk pans, used for cooling the milk and separating the cream, were prevalent pottery items. The preservation of food and dairy was essential to surviving on the Utah frontier where the winter months provided no fresh produce and dairy products had to be handled carefully so as not to spoil or freeze.

In accordance with the goal of complete self-sufficiency among the Mormons, both as communities and as individuals, in August of 1849, the European-based \textit{Millennial Star} encouraged skilled craftsmen “to emigrate in preference to anyone else, ... that a good foundation may be laid against the time that others of the poor


\textsuperscript{114} Psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed in his theory of “Hierarchy of Needs” that physiological needs (i.e. food, air, water) must be met first for survival. See Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," \textit{Psychological Review} 50, no. 4 (1943): 377.
shall go.”115 The following October, Brigham Young specifically told missionaries in England, “We want a company of Potters, we need them, the clay is ready, and dishes wanted. Send a company . . . if possible, next spring.”116

Over the next five decades Mormon immigrants and American converts responded to Brigham Young’s call for potters. By the late nineteenth century, at least one hundred potters had worked in more than forty-five potteries in more than twenty-six towns throughout Utah.117 Likely even more potters came to Utah but chose to establish themselves as farmers or laborers in other industries. As archeologists Glascock, Speakman, and Scarlett have explained, the many who maintained their potter profession, “re-created their craft in new and different ecosystems within a new matrix of social relations.”118 Indeed, the clay components and the production process varied somewhat from their homeland resources and required potters to innovate, but they also reflected homeland traditions.

Pottery was a productive industry in Utah, more so than in the neighboring states.119 Archaeologist Timothy J. Scarlett estimates that by 1930, Utah potters had

115 The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star, 10 (1848): 249.
116 The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star, 12 (1850): 141.
118 Ibid.
manufactured and distributed at least 10 million objects.\textsuperscript{120} Utah potters created a variety of utilitarian earthenware and stoneware products: kitchen crockery, storage jars, drainage pipes, flower pots, roofing tile, brick, plates, and even piggy banks. Pottery was sold and bartered; selling was done both locally and through peddling, and trading was done by labor exchanges or with commodities.\textsuperscript{121} Many potters paid their ten percent tithing to the Church in pots. Church leaders would then distribute the pottery to communities without potteries.\textsuperscript{122}

The first potter-converts to respond and immigrate to Utah were the British. Britain long had a pottery tradition, but after the Industrial Revolution production was concentrated in mass manufacture of fine china and decorative figurines. Many potter-converts in the pottery center of Staffordshire, England emigrated to Utah and set up their own potteries. From 1848 to 1853 a British-style pottery, Deseret Pottery, operated in Salt Lake City.\textsuperscript{123} Problems arose with this and other British-style potteries, however. Brigham Young had hoped for fine white china manufacture, but the clay in the Salt Lake City area was high in iron and alkali

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{120} Timothy James Scarlett, "What if the Local is Exotic and the Imported Mundane?," in \textit{Trade and Exchange: Archaeological Studies from History and Prehistory}, ed. C.D. Dillan and C.L. White (New York: Springer, 2010), 169.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 170.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Scarlett, "Pottery in the Mormon Economy," 77.
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content, and the impurities did not allow production of fine china. Many of the British potters, familiar only with assembly line mass production of fine china, were unfamiliar with the complete process of utilitarian pottery production, and as such, were unable to adapt to the local resources and demand. Many of the British potters turned to other industries, and after a few years the Church withdrew its financial support for their facility and the Deseret Pottery ceased production.

The other main immigrant group to respond to the call for potters was the Danes. Utilitarian pottery production was a prominent trade among the peasant class in Denmark in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; most villages had a pottery. People used pottery to store dairy products, fruits, pickles, and baked goods. The history of shaped and baked pottery in Denmark extended to ancient times. Lead glaze was introduced in the mid eleventh century, and by the early twelfth century the wheel was being used. During the Middle-ages a black burnt unglazed earthenware for kitchen use, called *jydepotter*, was widely used. By the mid-fifteenth century, pottery making had spread to cities and by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries numerous villages housed potteries (see fig. 5.21).125

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124 Emma Cynthia Nielson, "The Development of Pioneer Pottery In Utah" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1963), 77.

Figure 5.21. Locations with pottery workshops in Denmark from 1700-1900. Source: Louis Ehler, *Dansk Lertoj*, (København: Thaning and Appels Forlag, 1967), 6.

Figure 5.22 shows representative pots from the Thisted Lervarefabrik of northwest Denmark, circa 1900. Anders Søndergaard Jacobsen established the pottery in 1870 and it operated till 1958 under various other potters. The pottery ultimately closed due to a ban on lead glaze. The most common pots produced were flower pots, vases, mugs, cups, and jugs. Rudolf C. Kirkegaard, who acted as head
potter, created the pots in figure 5.22 which are nearly identical to pots in Utah (see fig. 5.25).126

Figure 5.22. Syltekrukke “jam jar” by R.C. Kirkegaard, circa mid-late nineteenth century. Source: Sønderjylland Museum, Haderslev, Denmark.

Sorring was one of the most famous pottery villages in Denmark. Beginning in the seventeenth century, Sorring supplied an assortment of pottery to the region in the form of coffeepots, fish platters, jugs, and jars. By 1870, seventy workshops existed in Sorring.127 Many of the first Danish Mormon converts hailed from this


127 Den Store Dansk, “Sorring,” http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Kunst_og_kultur/Kunsth%CE%A5ndv%C3%A6rk_og_design/Keramik_(porcel%C3%A6n,_fajance,_stent%C3%B8j,_lert%C3%B8j)/Sorring?highlight=sorring (accessed March 2, 2011).
region. An examination of records of the Thisted Lervarefabrik and potteries in Sorring sheds light on the techniques and processes also employed by Danish potters in Utah.

Of the first twenty-eight Scandinavian immigrants to Utah, four were potters. Neils Jensen and his three apprentices, Frederick Petersen, Jacob Hansen, and Frederick Ferdinand Hansen maintained a pottery near Copenhagen in the village of Birkerød. There, Jensen was trained in pottery manufacture and in turn trained his apprentices. After hearing the Mormon message and joining the Church, Neils Jensen, his family, and three apprentices emigrated to Utah. Shortly thereafter, Jensen set up a pottery on the south side of Salt Lake City by the confluence of various creeks that created a good source of clay. They built a home and workshop, firing kiln, throwing wheel, and various tools, and quickly adapted their Danish-style techniques to their new surroundings and resources. When several industries were competing for the limited supply of firewood in Salt Lake, Jensen tuned to sagebrush to fire his wares.

Jensen’s pottery produced a variety of utilitarian pots and containers, and was known for its craftsmanship. The tabernacle in Salt Lake City displayed some of its work. Heber C. Kimball, a prominent Church leader noted: “There is a Dane who has established a pottery in the south part of the city, and is making beautiful brown

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128 The pottery was located at 725 South 300 East by Red Butte, Emigration, and Parley’s Creeks.

ware . . . He has made four large tankards of earthen, that we set upon the tables in
the Tabernacle, two on each side of the stand, that will hold from six to eight gallons
each. They have brass crocks to draw out the water for the sacrament. They are
glazed on the inside, and painted on the outside very beautiful."\(^{130}\) Having work
displayed and used in the Tabernacle was a great honor. The public nature of the
Tabernacle, coupled with its religious significance in a highly religious community,
furthered the reputation of Jensen’s craftsmanship and Danish techniques.

Later, Jensen moved his shop fifty miles south to Spanish Fork, and his
apprentices opened their own shops elsewhere. Frederick Petersen established a
shop in Salt Lake City, Ferdinand Hansen moved sixty miles north to Brigham City,
and James Hansen also transferred north to Hyrum, twenty miles from Brigham City.
These potters continued to produce utilitarian pottery. They also created terra cotta
roofing tiles, as pictured on the pottery’s roof in figure 5.23, which were common in
Denmark in the mid-nineteenth century, but rare in Utah.

Business flourished, especially when people needed crockery after the fall harvest. The distribution of these potters promoted the spread of Danish techniques.

Over the next forty years approximately twenty-five Danish potters immigrated to Utah and produced pottery throughout the state. These potters used skills acquired in Denmark, adapting them to the natural resources available in Utah and the needs of the Mormon pioneers. The large percentage of Danish potters in Utah (approximately twenty-five percent of all potters), contributed to significant

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Scandinavian influence on pottery produced there. A blending of Danish tradition with Western frontier pottery resulted, with the creation of a unique Utah folk tradition. The æbleskiver form, pictured in figure 5.24 exemplifies the use of Utah resources to create a traditionally Danish object. An æbleskive is a Danish pancake in the shape of a sphere.

Figure 5.24. æbleskiver form. Source: Brigham City Museum, Brigham City, Utah.

The most prominent Danish potter in Utah, and exemplar of the Danish tradition, was Erick Christian Henrichsen, who was born in Vejle, Denmark in 1847. His father was a leading businessman, and Henrichsen followed his example by attending school and studying the business methods of pottery manufacturing and sales. As a journeyman, he travelled throughout Denmark for two years, visiting the larger potteries of the country and learning important details information regarding
production techniques and business practices. By the time Henrichsen was twenty, he managed his father’s pottery. In 1867 he met Mormon missionaries, and he joined the Church a year later. In 1869 he left his father’s pottery and served a mission in Norway and Denmark for a year and half. In 1871, after completing his mission, Henrichsen left for Utah with his newly converted brother, Sigfried August.

Shortly after their arrival, the two brothers began work at a pottery in Provo, forty-five miles south of Salt Lake City. In 1872, a column in the *Deseret News* stated that Sanpete County requested more potters: “a potter would be found delighting to us.”\(^{133}\) According to the 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses, numerous Danish potters resided in the town of Ephraim, in Sanpete County.\(^ {134}\) In 1872, the Henrichsen brothers moved to Sanpete County and established a pottery in Fountain Green where there was high-quality natural clay.\(^ {135}\)

In 1873, the brothers relocated in Provo to join their mother and three youngest siblings who had recently immigrated, along with E.C. Henrichsen’s fiancée, Albine Jensine Pauline Jensen. Henrichsen and Jensen married within five days of her arrival and the family established shortly thereafter the Provo Pottery, directly across the street from Henrichsen’s previous employer.\(^ {136}\) The pottery operated

\(^{133}\) *Deseret Evening News*, June 26, 1861.

\(^{134}\) *Portrait, Genealogical and Biographical Record of the State of Utah: Containing Biographies of Many Well Known Citizens of the Past and Present* (National Historical Record Co., 1902), 439.


\(^{136}\) The Provo Pottery was located in Union Hall on 500 West.
from 1872 to 1927 and became the largest and longest running pottery in the state. The Provo Pottery typically produced utilitarian pottery: fruit jars, butter jars, cream jars, bean pots, pickling crocks, butter churns, milk pans, flowerpots, pitchers, wash basins, jugs, and vases (see fig. 5.25).

![Various pots by E.C. Henrichsen. Note the similarities to Kirkegaard pots in figure 5.22. Source: Henrichsen, “Pioneer Pottery,” 376.](image)

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In his later years Henrichsen experimented with decorative pottery such as umbrella stands, foot warmers, and piggy banks. Henrichsen enjoyed a reputation as a superior potter. In both 1889 and 1890, the Provo Pottery was awarded first prize at the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Fair in Salt Lake City (see fig. 5.26), and in 1895 it received a silver first place medal at the Territorial Fair for “best display of glazed ware.”

Figure 5.26. E.C. Henrichsen’s display at the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Fair, 1889 and 1890, Salt Lake City. Source: Henrichsen, “Pioneer Pottery of Utah,” 384.

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139 "City and County Jottings," Daily Enquirer, February 26, 1895, Provo, Utah.
The shop and its production exemplified many characteristics of a typical Danish pottery. In 1983 Kirk Henrichsen, great-grandson of E.C. Henrichsen, travelled to Denmark to study the rural peasant pottery of the nineteenth century. He visited both Frilandsmuseet, a historical museum near Copenhagen, and Sørring, not far from E.C. Henrichsen’s hometown. These museums display recreations of nineteenth century potteries. Kirk Henrichsen found that the pottery in Sørring resembled that of E.C. Henrichsen’s in Provo and other Danish potteries in Utah. From interviewing older Henrichsen family members who had worked in the pottery, and by checking historical records, Henrichsen found that in Utah his great grandfather had employed standard techniques common to nineteenth-century Danish peasant pottery production from the processing of clay to its throwing, glazing, and firing.140

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One noted similarity Kirk Henrichsen found between the Provo Pottery and its Danish counterparts was the design of the pugmill, or æltemaskine (see fig. 5.27). After E.C. Henrichsen mined the clay from nearby tracts of land that he purchased, the clay went through a series of washings to remove rocks and other impurities. That clay was then placed into the pugmill.

Figure 5.27. Pugmill sketch. Source: Henrichsen, “Pioneer Pottery of Utah,” 372.
A 1924 account from Sorrning described the pugmill: “The kneading machine is outside the house and is drawn by horses. You put the clay in at the top and it’s kneaded inside and comes out the bottom”\textsuperscript{141} (see fig. 5.28).


Using horsepower, the steel paddles inside the pugmill slowly rotated, mixing the clay and forcing the prepared clay downward.

After pots were formed by hand or thrown on a wheel, they had to dry partially before being glazed and fired. Henrichsen employed drying racks in the workshop and similar drying techniques as were done in Denmark. Potters lined

\textsuperscript{141} Niels Asbaek, “Potttemageriet paa Sorrningengen,” in \textit{Aarhus Stifts Aarborger XVII} (Aarhus: 1924), 2. A translation by Peter Linden is in possession of Kirk Henrichsen.
their wares on shelves towards the ceilings where they could dry. After pots had dried and were glazed, potters then loaded them into the kiln (see fig. 5.29). The Sorring kiln was described as follows:

The Kiln looks very much like a bakers oven but it's a lot larger. It's about three meters long and two meters wide and the height inside is about one and one-half meters. Crocks, pots, and bowls are put on top of each other inside the kiln. Then it is closed with a big piece of iron plate, which is sealed with clay around the edge. At the same end as the oven opening there are air channels of the size of a roof tile. And at the other end of the oven there are three places where you build a fire.

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142 Descriptions from Sorring stated that "[a] thrifty potter can make about ten plates, bowls or crocks an hour which he puts on a removed shelf plank. When a plank is full it is moved up to the ceiling on some wooden rods or dowels, where they are dried. There are usually two rows of shelves above each other all over the workshop." Asbaek, "Potttemageriet paa Sorrirangen," 4. In a similar manner, the Provo Pottery had three layers of such drying shelves in both the throwing room and the kiln room. See Henrichsen, "Pioneer Pottery of Utah and E.C. Henrichsen's Provo Pottery Company," 377.

143 Asbaek, "Potttemageriet paa Sorrirangen," 5.
Henrichsen carefully stacked thousands of pots (up to five thousand) into his kiln of similar dimensions to the one in Sorring, before plastering shut the kiln door.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{144} Henrichsen, "Pioneer Pottery of Utah and E.C. Henrichsen's Provo Pottery Company," 377-78.
The firing lasted three or four days and required around-the-clock attention. When the preferred apple wood was not available, Henrichsen used whatever wood he could find, including scraps from a nearby lumberyard or even sagebrush.

The firing event was a social gathering for the community. One witness remembered, “The heat was intense but they would sit by the hour and watch and talk, tell stories and laugh. The Second Ward (a Scandinavian congregation) choir loved to come after rehearsals and sing, as they enjoyed this unusual relaxation.”145 Danish historian, Niels Asbaek, similarly noted that in Sorrings “everybody got together to watch the kilns and entertain themselves telling stories and singing to

each other. It would become a community party. In earlier times, ... they would
drink several buckets of strong beer and the party would get out of hand a little bit
and get very noisy and raw.”

A pottery firing in Utah, then, carried similar social
relevance to those in Denmark. This activity based around pottery production
demonstrates the value in examining the performance aspect of material culture. It
is not simply the objects themselves that tell the story. The performance involved
also elucidates the value of the traditions surrounding production and that of the
wares themselves. In the case of a pottery firing, a community was brought together
to celebrate and perpetuate community ties and culture.

After the kiln had reached the necessary temperature (nearly 2,000F) and
the pots had vitrified and the glaze had matured, the fire was extinguished. Then,
after the kiln had cooled for up to ten days, the kiln door was opened and the potter
removed the pots to be prepared for marketing. E.C. Henrichsen peddled his wares
in a traditionally Danish fashion: *potkørere*, or “pot drivers,” loaded pots onto horse-
drawn wagons and transported the goods to individuals and markets. Pots were
packed in wild hay to prevent breakage, and Henrichsen delivered many of the pots
to mercantile establishments, florists, and individuals. Delivery trips lasted for
weeks, and as he traveled, Henrichsen stayed with Scandinavian friends throughout

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147 Silkeborg Museum, Keld Dalsgaard Larsen, "Pottemageri,”
Utah. Later, as business grew, pots were shipped by train also. As the demands of
the industry changed, largely due to the introduction of glassware (Mason jars) and
denameled tinware for enhanced food preservation, E.C. Henrichsen and other
potters adapted their wares. Henrichsen engineered a flowerpot throwing machine
that enabled him to stamp pots through a press rather than throw them.148 He also
produced chimney flues and sidewalk edging, as well as more decorative items such
as umbrella stands and piggy banks (see fig. 5.31).

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148 Lynn Henrichsen, “Lucky Was the Town that Had a Potter” (paper presented at the annual
meeting for the Utah State Historical Society, 2009), 26.
Although the arrival of the railroad introduced competition from elsewhere, it did not halt the production and usage of pottery in Utah immediately.
Contemporary archeologist Timothy Scarlett noted that some devout Mormons viewed pottery as a spiritual endeavor and contribution to “building up the Kingdom of God against the globalized forces of Babylon.” Since the establishment of Mormon communities, leaders had encouraged Church members to buy from local craftsmen and support the home industries. As Timothy Scarlett explained, buying local had “sacred and moral echoes;” that is, “the local was exotic and the imported generally mundane.” The eventual demise of the pottery industry in Utah occurred when these pioneer potters retired. New technologies for food preservation eliminated the need for local pottery production.

Comprehensively assessing pioneer pottery poses various challenges. Most notably, pottery artifacts are difficult to find in Utah today owing to pottery's fragility and because such ceramic wares were not typically seen as valuable heirlooms to be passed down to future generations. Like most utilitarian objects, once they no longer functioned they were discarded. Similarly, attributing artifacts to certain potters is challenging, as most of the pottery these early potters produced was unmarked, and few business records have survived. Furthermore, assistants, apprentices, and laborers assisted in tasks such as digging clay, throwing pots, and peddling wares, so it is erroneous to attribute individual pots to specific

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149 Scarlett, "What if the Local is Exotic and the Imported Mundane?," 170.

150 Ibid., 165.
individuals. Instead, as Timothy Scarlett pointed out, “the pottery artifacts must be understood as the products of all these individuals working together,” rather than the creations of individual artisans. This understanding of artisanship embodies the Mormon ideology of group unity and identity.

Conclusion

Folklorist Richard Dorson claimed, “in the folk region, people are wedded to the land; the land holds memories.” The relationship between the land and the people who live on it is a reflexive one; the land influences and affects how people live and what objects they produce, and those objects, in turn, reflect the land and affect how people use the space around them. Objects made from the land, then, are literal historical records of the interaction between a people and the landscape.

In the case of Scandinavian immigrants in Utah, the geography and arid climate of the three main valleys they settled varied greatly from their homeland terrain and weather. Most immigrants came from damp coastal areas that had been cultivated for centuries. Utah farmers had to negotiate extreme climate differences between seasons and learn the techniques of desert-condition farming and irrigation. Though many immigrants continued with the farming and trades they

151 Scarlett, “Pottery in the Mormon Economy,” 77.
152 Ibid., 75.
practiced in their homelands, they altered their techniques and materials in response to the Utah landscape.

In addition to farming, artisans were sought by Church leaders to assist in cultivating refinement on the frontier while also providing functionality. This chapter expounds how these artisans—particularly painters, furniture makers, and potters—maintained homeland traditions while adapting to the demands of the frontier. Folk painting, for example, exemplified homeland artistic philosophies that elevated the common folk and nature. Immigrant artists combined this thinking with their Mormon ideology to document Mormon history. Furniture makers demonstrated the perpetuation of skills acquired in their homelands and applied them to different woods and styles in Utah, aiding in the creation of a unique Mormon furniture style in Utah. Mormon couches and cupboards exemplified Scandinavian designs blended with existing forms in Utah. Similarly, Scandinavian immigrant potters employed techniques learned in Scandinavia and adapted them to the natural resources of Utah. Their ability to modify methods and resources proved them among the most successful potters in Utah. In short, the immigrants' resourcefulness was, as folklorist Barbara Hargis noted, a “fusion of frugality and desire,” that echoed Scandinavian tradition. Rather than discarding their homeland traditions, they adapted techniques and styles to create a unique intermingling of Scandinavian tradition and Utah frontier lifestyle.

Chapter 6
Gendered Identity as Reflected in Scandinavian Material Culture in Utah

Introduction

This chapter examines, through the lens of gender, objects Scandinavian immigrants in Utah used that demonstrate the maintenance of homeland gendered identities, along with enhanced complementarity of male and female work. In Utah, Scandinavian immigrant men and women experienced gender norms similar to those in their homelands in some ways, but Church expectations and the physical environment led to some divergence from the homeland. Both Church doctrine and the challenging Utah landscape fostered interdependence between men and women. This chapter begins with an explanation of men’s and women’s involvement in Church administration, with emphasis on the women’s organization, the Relief Society, and the impacts of polygamy on men and women. An overview of men’s and women’s general gender norms in Mormon culture follows. The body of the chapter highlights various objects that were gendered male or female; i.e. objects that Scandinavian immigrant women and men made and/or used in their daily lives. Many of the objects made and used by Scandinavians reflected the complementarity of men’s and women’s work, while also conforming with prescribed gender norms. Tools in particular demonstrated the interrelatedness of men and women’s work;
men made the tools and women used them. Though the objects highlighted here—household tools and textile production—are not all uniquely Scandinavian, their value to immigrants and the reasons that they brought them to Utah reveal gender norms of the time and within the Mormon culture. These objects demonstrate the maintenance of Scandinavian culture in Utah and the blending of Scandinavian and Mormon gender expectations.

Women’s Roles in the Church and the Relief Society Organization

The obvious division of gender duties within the Church’s organization lay in priesthood leadership positions held by the men, and in women’s membership in the Relief Society. The Church’s spiritual and temporal needs are directed primarily by those who hold the priesthood.¹ Women obtained ecclesiastical identity through the formation of the Relief Society in 1842.

By virtue of being women, all female Church members were members of the Relief Society. Joseph Smith established the organization and viewed it as an integral and essential part of the Church. It was to function in close connection with, rather than independent of, the ecclesiastical priesthood structure. The primary task of the Relief Society was to provide consistent attention to the spiritual, emotional,

¹ For Mormons, the priesthood denotes the power and authority to act in God’s name, meaning having divine permission to administer baptism, sacrament, and temple ordinances. Priesthood is ordained upon worthy male Church members and is practiced only through lay participation—no priesthood bearer receives pay for his service.
educational, and physical needs of families and Church members, as well as of all people with whom members came in contact. Following the teaching to "share one another's burdens, that they may be light," Relief Society members rendered care personally and jointly in times of illness, death, or other life crises.

Various Mormon historians view the role of nineteenth-century Mormon women as the “zenith of women’s institutional and leadership participation in the church hierarchy.” They argue that Mormon women were integrated into the system to insure survival against antagonism and inhospitality from external opposition. Empowered women and men supported each other in the face of social and political hostility.

In line with the Church’s view on spiritual equality, Brigham Young urged the education of women in all areas:

As I have often told my sisters in the female Relief Societies, we have sisters here who, if they had the privilege of studying, would make just as good mathematicians or accountants as any man; and we think they ought to have the privilege to study these branches of knowledge that they may develop the powers with which they are endowed. We believe that women are useful not only to sweep houses, wash dishes, make beds, and raise babies, but that they should stand behind the counter, study law or physic [medicine], or become

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2 Mosiah 18:8.

good book-keepers and be able to do the business in any counting house, and this to enlarge their sphere of usefulness for the benefit of society at large.4 Young's view that women should be active in public life, even professionally, was a progressive stance in America at the time. In response to his call, women took initiative and activity outside the domestic sphere and developed occupational and professional skills beyond those of most American women. Numerous Mormon women became nurses, midwives, and doctors, and some established hospitals and baby clinics.5 Many started schools for the young. Women also developed home industries, carried out a thriving silk industry and culture, and established a large grain-storage program.6 United with other women in the Relief Society, Scandinavian women embraced these ideals and pursuits. Professional opportunities were not as readily available or accepted in Scandinavia and as such Scandinavian women in Utah experienced professional opportunities they otherwise would not have enjoyed in their homelands.

The Relief Society also facilitated a cooperative and collaborative setting in which material culture was produced. Women would gather to make goods for those in need. The clothing, linens, and food women prepared demonstrated the skills of individual makers. Women taught each other the traditions from various countries.

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4 Brigham Young, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997), 135.


Relief Society gatherings unified women in the Church, and in places where there were many Scandinavians, women could reminisce about and produce objects that reflected homeland tradition. This communal work affirmed and perpetuated Scandinavian culture.

Polygamy

In addition to gender roles in Church administration, discussions of Mormon gender issues unavoidably include the Mormon ideology of marriage. Mormon doctrine teaches that to achieve eternal exaltation, the highest heavenly state, men and women must be married; each is considered equally necessary to the other’s spiritual and eternal salvation. Regarding marriage, one of Mormonism’s most controversial doctrines is polygyny, most commonly referred to as plural marriage or polygamy. Under the direction of Joseph Smith in the 1830s and 1840s, some followers began to practice plural marriage. Joseph Smith read passages in the Old Testament that indicated some prophets were polygynists and, according to Smith, these passages raised questions that led him to inquire in prayer about marriage in general and about plurality of wives. Smith reported that he received revelation that, in accordance with the restoration of the gospel, the Church would one day be

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7 Polygyny is a form of marriage in which a man has more than one wife.
required to live the law in order to "raise up seed unto God" in the same manner as prophets in the Old Testament.\(^8\)

It was not until 1852, when the Mormons were firmly established in Utah, that Brigham Young publicly announced the Church's stance on polygamy. Entering polygamy was presented as one of the highest forms of obedience and sacrifice for Mormons, but was not expected of all its members.\(^9\) Polygamy was a carefully regulated and ordered system, and authorized marriages had to be approved by the president of the Church. Unauthorized polygamy was viewed as adultery, and monogamy was the only accepted alternative to Church-ordained polygamy. After sixty years of the practice of polygamy in the Church, in 1890 President Wilford Woodruff issued a manifesto that ended the practice of polygamy. The primary reason for its termination was the Federal government's opposition. In 1862, the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act made polygamy a felony in America and revoked the right of polygamists to vote or hold public office, and allowed them to be punished without due process. With the 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Act, Congress disincorporated the Church, confiscated its properties, and even threatened seizure of its temples.

\(^8\) Jacob 2:30; This revelation is found in Doctrine and Covenants 132.

\(^9\) The exact percentage of Mormons who participated in the practice is not known, but studies suggest a maximum of fifteen to twenty percent of members were members of polygamous households. See Stanley Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *The Western Humanities Review* 10 (Summer, 1956): 229-239. Aside from various notable Church leaders, plural marriage generally involved only two wives and seldom more than three. Ibid. 232-33.
Since Woodruff’s 1890 manifesto, it has been uniform Church policy to excommunicate any member practicing or openly advocating polygamy.

The Mormon practice of polygamy unequivocally threatened and contradicted the revered ideal of the nuclear family and feminine virtue in nineteenth-century America. It also offended Scandinavian opinions and caused great uproar in the press and society. Not only did it provoke such sentiments within the general public, Mormon men and women struggled with its validity. Accounts tell of the struggle both men and women faced prior to their eventual acceptance of and compliance with or rejection of the practice. Immigrant Hans Zobell recorded that after returning home one evening after discussing with his wife the possibility of marrying a second wife, he found two potted geraniums on the table, one blooming and full of buds and the other nearly bloomed out. His wife asked, “Which of these will you keep? Study them, take your time, then tell me what you decide.” Zobell did not marry another wife. Many Scandinavians, however, embraced polygamy, though the numbers of those practicing paralleled the rest of Church members, from 12 to 20 percent.

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12 William Mulder, Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration From Scandinavia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 240.
Scandinavian women involved in polygamy navigated through their new identities as plural wives. Plural wives challenged the wifely stereotype of dependency; they often had to look out for themselves both physically and emotionally. When husbands were away on missions or with other wives in their homes, women learned to be resourceful, bore financial responsibilities, ran farms and businesses, and supported and reared children both alone as individuals and together as wives. Polygamous families where the wives lived together acted as miniature communes and offered assistance in household management, childrearing, and overseeing property. Historian Lawrence Foster explained that polygamy fit the Mormon context “as part of the necessary subordination of individual desires to long-term group goals that underlay Mormon success in the rapid settlement and development of the Intermountain West.” Many accounts express that acquiescence to polygamy was not just from the female side—men struggled equally and were resistant to the request. It was difficult for men emotionally and financially balance the responsibilities of having multiple wives and children.

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13 Plural wives living together or in separate houses depended on the situation and the wealth of the husband. Typically, there were no more than two wives in polygamous families (see f.n. 9 of this chapter).

Nineteenth-Century Mormon Views on Gender Roles

Mormonism’s interpretations of masculine and feminine identity state that each gender has unique roles and that women and men are interdependent.\textsuperscript{15} Church doctrine stresses the necessity of overcoming differences and forging a celestial unity. Mormon apostle John A. Widstoe stated in 1943, “In the Church of Christ woman is not an adjunct to but an equal partner with man.”\textsuperscript{16} This partnership is not limited to husband and wife but extends to women and men serving cooperatively in the community and Church.

Women and men had distinct roles in the early Church. The feminine focus on family and service in Mormon culture and doctrine paralleled the ethos of the nineteenth-century cult of domesticity. The Church readily endorsed the ideal of women as homemakers, wives, and mothers, while men’s primary roles were to lead and provide material goods for the family. Like other American pioneers, however, during certain times of early Utah history, out of necessity Mormons deemphasized the standard American sex role divisions. When men left on missions, colonized new towns, and travelled for leadership duties, women managed family farms, grew crops, and cared for houses while performing the usual domestic household duties

\textsuperscript{15} 1 Corinthians 11:11.

and raising and educating children.\footnote{This differed greatly from Scandinavia where Lutheran men were not expected to go on missions or plant new communities. Scandinavian women in Utah had to be more self-sufficient.} When men were at home, however, women seldom diverged from traditional roles of women’s work. Historian Maureen Ursenbach Beecher noted that despite the avant-garde social reforms in Utah such as women’s suffrage and women participating in the business and medical fields, women were still expected to perform child-rearing and housekeeping in nineteenth-century Utah.\footnote{Beecher, "Women’s Work on the Mormon Frontier," 282.}

Mormon communitarianism required cooperation and the subordination of individual ambition regardless of gender. Both women and men directly and indirectly produced food, clothing, and shelter. Scandinavian men and women coming from agricultural areas were accustomed to working in such relatively non-delineated spheres and fairly easily assumed necessary roles. The home economic value of Mormon women resembled that of other Western women of the day. Settling into the new frontier immersed women in activities other than housekeeping and domestic responsibilities. They participated in agricultural and professional ventures. In the early days of settlements, women gleaned wheat in the fields. They also gathered straw, which they braided or split and made into hats for women, girls, men, and boys. Just as in Scandinavia, most of the families owned a few sheep and carded wool. The women and girls spun and wove it into blankets.
and clothing. They also spun and made sewing thread from flax and cotton yarn.\textsuperscript{19} Many wives of Scandinavian potters traveled on peddling expeditions and sold pottery and other domestically produced commodities\textsuperscript{20}.

Mormon women played a critical role in home industries and provided the bulk of the labor for producing most of the products. They were encouraged to develop their abilities and skills for the benefit of the community. Brigham Young advised: “Teach [your daughters] to sew, spin and weave; to cultivate vegetables as well as flowers; to make soap as well as cakes and preserves; to spin, color and weave and knit; as well as embroidery; to milk, make butter and cheese, and work in the kitchen, as well as in the parlor.”\textsuperscript{21}

In his 1892 essay, “De Skjønne Kunster” (“The Fine Arts”), C.C.A. Christensen explicitly acknowledged the value of women’s work. Christensen defined all craft as fine art. With regard to women’s work, he noted the rugs, quilts, clothing, foods, and arrangement of furniture and decoration around the house as elements of “beauty and artistic diligence.” In such domestic objects, Christensen observed how “the useful and the tasteful are brought here into pleasing harmony without having interfered with our general ideas of what is necessary.” He concluded, “When this is


brought to the highest level of perfection it is called art, whether he or she who makes use of it is rich or poor, learned or unlearned, understands art or not. He or she who produces these beautiful and useful objects benefits mankind in general and himself/herself as well, and should be considered a benefactor of society.”

Christensen’s sensibilities regarding craft as art, and his recognition of the contribution of both women and men in the production of crafts, regardless their social standing, demonstrate the value of material culture in broader culture for him. Scandinavian immigrants’ skills contributed to the productivity and beautification of their communities.

As Maureen Beecher Ursenbach noted, Mormon pioneer women faced two forces that were sometimes in tension with one another: survival related exigencies and the desire to preserve genteel feminine traditions. Ursenbach argued that despite the times when women were required to take on men’s work, there was “a tenacious clinging to the ideal of women doing women’s work, men doing men’s.”

This notion is evidenced in the women-created objects discussed here.

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Gender Related Items Used by Scandinavians

Historians have noted that in crossing the American migrants underwent various rites of passage including separation from birth families and communities, with men and women responding differently to the prospect of beginning new lives in the West. Men typically saw the journey as adventure, while women were more likely to lament the life left behind. In his study of Utah pioneer journals, focusing on objects, Russell W. Belk found that men most commonly valued objects that represented the mastery of the outside world such as tools, guns, and horses, while women valued objects that related to the home such as spinning wheels, clothing, heirlooms, and furniture. The objects that Scandinavian immigrants brought with them illustrated the same dichotomy. Many emigrant men took carpentry tools or other tools associated with their work. However, many of the objects that Scandinavian women cherished and that represented civilization, such as furniture, china, and heirlooms were the first things to be discarded by pioneers to make room for more essential items for the journey. As historian Julie Roy Jefferey pointed out, women held onto the conventions of female culture as best as they could by decorating their homes—even if they were just wagons or dugouts—in ways that

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25 Ibid., 350.
reflected domesticity: rags were used as rugs, old dresses were used for curtains, a keg was turned into a footstool by upholstering it with old pants.26

Wooden Vessels and Axes

The choices of which household items to take demonstrated those items’ value to emigrants. Danish emigrant, Andrew Peterson made the water carrier shown in figure 6.1 in Denmark for his journey across the plains from Nebraska to Utah in 1860.27 He likely used the container to provide water for his family from nearby streams along the trek.

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27 The inscription reads: “Water carrier brought from Denmark in 1860 by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Peterson. Donated by Oscar Maurits Jacobson. This carrier was used to carry water in when Mr. and Mrs. Peterson came from Nebraska to Utah in 1860.”
As discussed in chapter four, men traditionally engaged in woodcraft. Peterson hand carved this container from a hollowed-out trunk, and he attached a braided rawhide handle. This type of hollowed-out water vessel was uncommon,  

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28 "Andrew Peterson," Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
and the research for this study uncovered no others like it in Scandinavia or in Utah. Perhaps it was Peterson’s invention or perhaps it was a design unique in his village. The fact that Peterson brought it for the journey and then kept it as a memento shows its great importance to him. It became a symbol of not only his homeland but also of the journey across the plains.

Stave construction, as in the pipeline pictured in figure 6.2, was the most common vessel form used by Scandinavians and other nationalities, as well.

Figure 6.2. Staved water pipeline. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Ephraim, Utah.

Stave construction was an ancient technique that arranged narrow, slightly arched slabs of wood staves around a wooden base, held together by wooden hoops. When
the vessel was filled with liquid and the wood absorbed water, the staves expanded
and the joints tightened. Buckets, barrels, churns, milk kegs, and drinking vessels
used this technique, seen in figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3. Staved tankard from Sweden. Source: Anna-Maja, Nylén, Swedish Handcraft (Lund: H.
Ohlsson, 1976), 377.

Stave-constructed vessels were made and used in Utah by Scandinavian immigrants,
mostly for water buckets. Coopering—the profession of making staved vessels—
was a male vocation, though primarily women used coopered objects. For example,
they carried water and milk to the home from the farm. The ubiquity of staved
buckets in frontier Utah demonstrates their widespread usage.
Another object associated with men’s work was the ax, or woodchopper. The woodchoppers pictured in figure 6.4 belonged to Svend Larsen, the first Mormon convert in Norway.

Larsen lived in Risør, a shipbuilding and trading center on the southern coast of Norway, and was a skipper for twenty years, hauling supplies to various European ports. He was baptized in 1851 and brought Mormonism to Risør and Fredrikstad.²⁹

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The inscription on the woodchopper reads: “Erindring fra Charl Hansen til S. Larsen, 1866” (“Keepsake from Charl Hansen to S. Larsen, 1866”). Not only did these woodchoppers carry sentimental significance for the owner, they also served as essential tools for the handcart journey and once settled in Utah in gathering firewood and cutting trees, both of which were men’s work.

Food Preparation Tools

Along with obtaining water and securing shelter, food preparation was essential for immigrants during the migration and early settlement. Many emigrants took with them food preparation tools that they felt would be essential. Such tools demonstrated the interrelatedness of men and women’s work; men made the tools and women used them.

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30 No records show what was being recognized.
Serens Staalson took the chopping knife pictured in figure 6.5 from Norway in 1859 and used it to chop vegetables while crossing the plains with a handcart with her four children. A chopping knife was an essential tool in the Scandinavian kitchen and would be necessary for food preparation during the trek westward.

In Utah immigrants continued to use their food processing skills learned in their homelands. One such process was the production of potato starch. Planting, tending, digging, and processing potatoes required both men’s and women’s labor. Men plowed the fields and women helped plant and tend the potatoes. In the fall, potatoes were placed in pits for preservation through the winter. In the town of

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31 "Serens Staalson," Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Ephraim, potato pits were opened in the spring and the largest potatoes were scrubbed clean and set aside for starch making, a common practice, especially among Danish immigrants. Women used the starch as a thickener in typical Scandinavian recipes such as sweet soups that had a base of berries or fruit, and in some cases the starch was used as glue.

To make potato starch, women grated potatoes on a curved tin that was punctured by driving ten-penny nails into the tin, after which it was attached to a board and set over a tub, as seen in figure 6.6.

O.W. Nielsen remembered an immigrant, Sister Hansen, who was “the best potato grater around.” He described the process as follows:

She wrapped her thumbs double their size with rags, and taking a potato in each hand, she scrubbed back and forth across the grater. When she finished, she removed the tub underneath that was usually half full of gratings and water. After stirring the mixture, she strained it through a piece of burlap stretched tightly across another tub. The next morning when the starch was
settled to the bottom of the tub, the water poured off, and the starch was scraped onto a clean cloth and put in the sun to dry.\textsuperscript{32}

Such processes were the work of women, as they could be done at home while watching children. Moreover, they typically involved numerous people working together.

Many of the objects made and used by Scandinavians reflected the complementarity of men and women’s work, while also conforming with prescribed gender norms. In Scandinavia, employing the traditional craft of woodturning, men made domestic objects such as rolling pins, bowls, drinking vessels, plates, beakers, pedestals for butter, and candlesticks (see fig. 6.7). Women used these objects in the kitchen for food preparation and presentation. These gendered norms largely mirrored those in Scandinavia.

Another commonly found object in immigrant homes that was handcrafted and reflected the complementarity of men's and women's roles was the rolling pin. The rolling pin pictured in figure 6.8 was made by Peter Mortinsen soon after emigrating with his family from Norway.
This rolling pin was turned on a lathe. The roller is a solid piece of ashwood and the handles were made separately and then attached. Records show that his daughter-in-law, Sarah, used this rolling pin for sixty-six years—evidence not only of frugality but also of the quality of the craftsmanship as well as the heirloom value the rolling pin held for the family.33 It was likely used daily and acted as a reminder of homeland skills, both in its construction and use.

The rolling pin pictured in figure 6.9 was from the home of Peder and Rikke Sorensen, pioneers of 1857, and two of the first settlers of Mendon.34 It demonstrates a different technique—hand carving—with the roller and handles in one piece.

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33 “Peter Mortinsen,” Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.

34 “Peder and Rikke Sorensen,” Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
In Scandinavia, the feast table included cheese, butter, bread, porridge, cakes, and candies that were decorated with stamps, molds, and rolling pins. Traditionally men carved these molds with designs of geometric patterns, birds, animals, or hearts that would leave imprints on the food (see fig. 6.10).35

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Women then made the butter or cheese and poured it into the molds. Many such molds were brought to America, and immigrants continued to make them, though in the new land they tended to be more utilitarian and less decorative.
The mold pictured in figure 6.11, used by immigrant Deborah Jensen, exhibits a typical design used by pioneers. It reveals the transition among immigrants to a highly utilitarian butter mold rather than the decorative ones they would have been accustomed to in their homelands. Thus adaptation to the demands of the Utah setting took place, but gendered roles remained intact.
Tools Associated with Textiles

The flat iron pictured in figure 6.12 brought from Denmark by Kathleen Jensen Marble, pioneer of 1865, was a basic essential household implement women used.36

Figure 6.12. Flat iron brought from Denmark by Kathleen Jensen Marble, 1865. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.

In Scandinavia, textiles (table cloths, runners, linens) required ironing. Marble’s iron most likely accounted for a significant portion of her allotted weight. She may have

36“Kathleen Jensen Marble,” Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
identified so strongly with her flat iron that she did not consider it to be exchangeable with another.

Textile production in both Scandinavia and Utah played essential roles in self-sufficiency. In nineteenth-century rural Scandinavia, primarily women made textiles.37 During winter months, a large portion of work was done in the main living space of the house. Peasant women spent much of the winter months sorting through the summer’s harvests of wool and flax, and working on their spinning wheels to make thread and yarn for work on the loom.38 While the women worked on spinning wheels and looms, men worked at their workbenches where they made objects for use around the home.

The products of textile production in Scandinavia included clothing, linens, wall hangings, rugs, and cushions and pillows to cover chairs and benches. The prestige of the home was measured in part by the quality of craftsmanship and quantity of these textiles. As soon as a Scandinavian peasant girl was old enough she would learn to weave and embroider items she would need later in her own household.39 Ideally a girl of marriageable age would have already made a trousseau and mastered the crafts of spinning, knitting, weaving, and embroidery so that she could make textiles for her family and household.

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38 Cotton did not come into usage until the end of the eighteenth century. Ibid., 16.

39 Ibid., 4. She would often initial her work with a J signifying jungfru (maiden), and after she was married with an H signifying hustru (wife).
Such embroidery and needlework techniques found their way to Utah with emigrants. In line with self-sufficiency, as early as 1850, Mormon leaders campaigned for home manufacture of clothing, and the milling of wool and cotton, along with dyeing, spinning, weaving, and sewing. Leaders encouraged women to make all textiles, from clothing to blankets and rugs. Most of the dye was made from local resources: rabbit brush for yellow and orange colors, barks for brown, peach leaves or sage for green, madder for bright red, indigo for dark blue, and logwood for black.

Emigrants were well-aware of the Church’s desire for self-sufficiency and took objects they felt were necessary for contributing to the effort. Many emigrants took wool carders, as they were easily portable and of great use in preparing wool for spinning. Men made the carders out of rectangular paddles and put in spike combs. Women brushed raw wool between the cards until the fibers aligned in the same direction. Then they peeled the fiber from the card into a roll of fiber called a rolag. From the rolag, women spun woolen yarn. A portable task, carding wool was an activity often done in groups, as seen in figure 6.13, and could be brought along wherever women had time to sit, visit, and be productive and contributive.

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Rasmine Johnson brought the pair of wool carders pictured in figure 6.14 to Utah from Denmark in 1861.
The carders belonged to Johnson’s mother and were used for three generations.\textsuperscript{42} Johnson took them as family heirlooms, and as a means of livelihood. She crossed the plains in a handcart company with her husband and three children and settled first in Gunnison, where her husband died the next year. She then married another immigrant and settled in Fillmore, a town with a large population of Danes. With her husband’s two other wives, Johnson employed her Scandinavian-learned skills and wove carpets and rugs to earn a living to help support the three families. Though carding wool is a process not unique to Scandinavia, the prevalence of wool carders throughout Utah demonstrates how immigrants maintained skills learned in their homelands, along with the their appreciation of home production of textile materials.

Anna Christine Forsgren brought the spinning wheel pictured in figure 6.15 from Denmark in 1852.

\textsuperscript{42} Norma Jackson, ”Rasmie Johnson,” Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
She and her husband Peter Adolph Forsgren were among the first Scandinavian emigrants to immigrate to Utah, sailing with the John E. Forsgren Company on the *Forest Monarch* in 1852. They settled in Brigham City in 1853. Separate complementary gender responsibilities manifested cooperation in producing textiles together: Anna carded, spun, and dyed wool, and John wove it into cloth. The cloth of various colors and weights was made into dresses and men’s suits for the pioneers. After Brigham Young proposed a silk industry in Utah, Anna was the first
to endeavor in the silk enterprise in Brigham City. In the 1880s she made 130 yards of silk on a loom her husband made for her. The family raised worms, produced eggs, spun and colored the silk, and wove it on the loom. She and her children picked mulberry leaves to feed the silkworms. From the silk they made underwear, satin vesting, neckties, and other clothing. She made a silk dress which became famous throughout Utah for its exquisite craftsmanship. Anna later received a prize from Young for being the first to venture into the silk culture in Brigham City.\(^{43}\)

Anna Forsgren not only supported the Church’s ideal of home industries, but also sustained plural marriage. One day after gleaning wheat, Forsgren came home and told her husband that if he were to practice plural marriage, she had found a second wife for him. Later, her husband married the woman and the three worked together for years making cloth, carpet, and a reported 150 yards of silk. Some of their carpet furnished the Logan Temple. In 1893, Forsgren’s spinning wheel was sent to the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago for the *Industry of Utah Women* display.\(^{44}\) Though Forsgren assimilated to religious Mormon norms that encouraged polygamy, she implemented those standards in a manner that employed traditional homeland skills of spinning and weaving. She perpetuated and incorporated those crafts as her marital situation shifted untraditionally.


\(^{44}\) “Anna Christine Forsgren,” Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
The majority of textile production in Utah was done by working on looms. Immigrants brought weaving techniques and traditions, including the looms themselves in the early migration. In Scandinavia weaving was primarily the work of women, and it provided a means for creating beautiful textiles to decorate their homes. Woven textiles typically adorned even peasant homes in Scandinavia and people used them for both practical and decorative purposes. Cloths, doilies, and runners adorned tables; benches and chairs displayed ornamental runners; and cushions, and bedspreads covered beds for both warmth and ornamental uses. In the nineteenth century, rugs were introduced as floor coverings. Weaving was so ingrained in the way of life of many immigrant families, that the considered the loom and the craft essential for household economy and sustainability. Those tools allowed families to create and supply their households with the needed fabrics for clothing and linens. As with other complementary male-female endeavors, the man made the loom and typically the woman used it.

Morten Iversen crafted the loom pictured in figure 6.16 for his wife, Bodell in Brigham City in the early 1860s.45

45 "Bodell Iversen," Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Figure 6.16. Loom built by Morten Iversen, circa 1860. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.
The construction and design with its framing, beams, and treadles conform with the traditional handlooms of Denmark of the period. An unusual feature of this loom is the wagon wheel hub at the end of the horizontal lathe. It is unclear what purpose this served, but it was probably remnant of a wagon wheel and suggests frugality in using available parts. The Iversons combined their skills: Morten used his carpentry expertise to build the loom and Bodell wove various textiles. This loom would have been used to create household articles such as rugs and linens for both personal use and for sale. A loom such as this represented self-sufficiency and the ability to produce income. It also acted as a vehicle to perpetuate homemade culture by producing traditional crafts.

The shuttle, or rug threader, was another important textile production tool. Johanne Thomasen Eggertsen owned the shuttle shown in figure 6.17.

Figure 6.17. Shuttle belonging to Johanne Thomasen Eggertsen. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.

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46 Most open air museums in Scandinavia, such as Hjerl Hede in Denmark, display such looms.

47 The inscription reads: “One of the shuttles used by Johanne J. Eggertsen in weaving all kinds of cloth.”
In 1857, at the age of thirty-two, Johanne emigrated from Denmark with her sister and travelled by handcart to Salt Lake City. She shortly thereafter married Simon Peter Eggertsen, and they settled in Provo. In typical fashion, Johanne helped support the family by making molasses, and soap from wood ashes and grease, as well as by selling butter and cheese, and preparing food for other pioneers. Simon Peter planted flax seed and Johanne spun the flax with a spinning wheel he crafted in the Danish tradition. She dyed wool and cotton using native barks, herbs, and minerals. Johanne wove cloth using techniques she learned in Denmark and produced clothing, linens, and towels that she sold to townspeople. The quality of her weaving was recognized as very high. She won first prizes for her bedspreads, dress patterns, table linens, and towels at the state fair in Salt Lake City.48

Knitting, Needlework, and Embroidery

The craft of knitting was also popular among Scandinavian women because it was portable, required no cumbersome implements, and could be done between

48 "Johanne Thomasen Eggertsen," Pioneer History Collection, History Department, International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
other tasks or even while walking. Knitting was most commonly used in making stockings, mittens, and caps.\footnote{Knit jackets and sweaters, though highly representative of Scandinavian knitwear today, did not appear till the late eighteenth century. See Sheila McGregor, \textit{Traditional Scandinavian knitting} (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2004), 6.}

The stockings pictured in figure 6.18 illustrate the traditional Swedish style of knitted stockings, both in technique and color selection. The navy blue and natural wool were typical colors of the time; the blue was easy to dye into wool and forgiving with stains.

Figure 6.18. Knitted stockings. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Ephraim, Utah.

The Scandinavian peasant class wore knitted legwear for centuries. It protected the feet and legs against cold and damp weather. The stocking, a single covering for both
leg and foot, arrived after other variations of leg and footwear, including footless leggings that left the feet free to wear a sock, insole, or wrap of hay. In Scandinavia, to make stockings, wool was gathered from local sheep, either after waiting for the sheep to shed the wool naturally or by shearing the sheep. The wool was then carded, spun, knitted, felted (depending on the item), and finally dyed. Surviving knitted objects in Utah demonstrate that such Scandinavian immigrants continued to employ traditional techniques. The combination of their cultural heritage and usefulness rendered knitted objects highly valued.

Women’s sewing and needlework took two forms: utilitarian and ornamental. Utilitarian household goods included clothing, linens, and knitted articles that required simple stitching. Ornamental needlework encompassed all decorative work such as embroidery and lace. Most surviving needlework is of the latter, as women cherished these difficult-to-produce items as mementos and passed them down through generations. The utilitarian needlework was reused and remodeled until remains finally became scraps for quilts. The term embroidery encompasses the techniques of free embroidery, openwork on linen, drawn-thread work, cut openwork, counted thread work, and cross-stitch. Nineteenth-century Scandinavian free embroidery patterns included curvilinear flowers, vines, and animals, while the counted thread techniques employed traditional geometric patterns and figures.

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Often base fabrics were muted tones of cream, white, or tan, while the embroidery threads ranged from gold and silver to bright reds, yellows, and blues.\footnote{Janice S. Stewart, \textit{The Folk Arts of Norway} (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953), 185.}

Scandinavian immigrant women found means of expression through their embroidery. In the needlework tradition of the nineteenth century in both Europe and America, young girls began embroidery training by creating samplers. A sampler combined samples of stitches, alphabets, numbers, motifs, and designs to act as a pattern and reference piece for future embroidering. The most common stitches employed included cross-stitch, backstitch, satin stitch, tent stitch, eyelets, buttonhole, long-armed cross, and bullion knots.\footnote{Loree An Romriell, \textit{Pioneer Memorial Museum Samplers} (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers Pioneer Memorial Museum, 2004), 65.} A sampler represented not only a needlework exercise for a girl, but also evidenced her talent and skill. She typically stitched her name and date on the sampler. Historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich observed, “To inscribe one’s name on a material object assured some sort of immortality.”\footnote{Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, \textit{The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth} (New York: Knopf, 2001), 117.} An inscription provided a reminder of the girl as long as the object lasted.

As travelling pioneer women reduced their possessions to fit limited space, whether in a trunk or on a wagon, many removed their samplers from frames and
folded or rolled them. Anna Elizabeth Johnson Tuedt, who emigrated from Sweden in 1897, created the sampler shown in figure 6.19 in 1854 at the age of thirteen.

Figure 6.19. Sampler made by Anna Elizabeth Johnson Tuedt. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.

This sampler is stitched with red wool thread on cotton cloth—referred to as redwork—a common style in Scandinavia. It includes four alphabets in different styles and numbers, typical Scandinavian motifs of crowns, a rooster, braided knots, stars, a horse, an anchor, and various types of pitchers and goblets. Notably absent is the letter “J,” as “I” was used instead in Scandinavian alphabets until the twentieth century. She included the phrase Denke mein (“my thoughts” in old German), her full
name, and her birthday. A zigzag border surrounds the work. The marking stitch renders the back a mirror image of the front and no loose threads clutter the back, the mark of an exceptionally fastidious and meticulous embroiderer. Coming from a period and culture where feminine abilities such as handwork were valued, Tuedt understandably chose to bring the sampler to Utah. The optimum execution and design surely was a source of personal pride and also conveyed cultural style and symbols that would remind her of her past and homeland.

Johanne Marie Thomassen created the sampler shown in figure 6.20 in Norway when she was a child in the early 1850s, and she later carried it with her as she walked across the plains, arriving in Salt Lake in 1860.

Figure 6.20. Sampler made by Johanne Marie Thomassen. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.
The sampler is made of linen cloth with silk thread. Thomassen demonstrated different stitches for each alphabet: the first is cross-stitched, the second is a four-sided stitch, and the third is a straight stitch. The border contains additional stitches with a drawn-thread stitch, between each of the six rows. Likely, the bottom of the sampler would have been filled with more alphabets and motifs, but she did not complete it before she emigrated. Bringing the half-finished sampler demonstrates the value she saw in it and suggests her intention to finish it. It also expresses her desire to maintain her skills despite the various unknowns of her new setting including whether she would have the resources or time to finish it. The fact that she saved it after her arrival in Utah suggest that she treasured it as a memento of her childhood and heritage with which she continued to identify.

*Hardanger,* an exquisite form of embroidery, was the most common form of embroidery among immigrants in Utah (see fig. 6.21). It is a form of whitework with stitching the same color as the foundation fabric. It employs the techniques of cutwork, counted thread, and drawn-thread. Hardanger was traditionally used on linens, caps, and especially aprons.

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55 Though the style and name of Hardanger originated in Norway, it is best known for its Danish use.
Hardanger was employed on finer articles of clothing in Utah such as Sunday clothes, temple clothing, and blessing gowns for babies, as well as for table linens or wedding gifts.

Immigrants also brought to Utah a lacemaking tradition. Lace was made and used throughout Scandinavia to decorate the edges of fine textiles, women’s church caps, and funerary clothes. Factories in the fifteenth century supplied lace to the upperclasses beginning in the fifteenth century, but by the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries the peasant class adopted the making and wearing of lace.⁵⁶ Women made lace, and the majority of lace was placed on women’s clothing and domestic items, although some men’s shirts featured modest lace around the

cuffs. In Utah, as Jude Daurelle explained, for those living in a frontier environment, lacemaking provided a link “across time and space to other times and places.” The tradition transcended class, as women from all walks of life participated in the same craft. Just as other women, Scandinavian immigrant women who lived in a challenging environment strove for civilization on the frontier. Creating and wearing such finery and displaying it in their homes likely comforted women, affirming their traditions and identities as they created new lives on the frontier. Because of the demands of the frontier, however, immigrants produced very little lace once in Utah because it was more difficult and time-consuming than other handwork. Scandinavian women’s perpetuation in Utah of this handwork that was traditional female work in their native lands, thus illustrated the satisfaction they derived from engaging in such activities that affirmed both their femininity and their heritage.

Hilda Anderson Erikson

Hilda Anderson Erikson was the last living of the 80,000 Utah pioneers. Erikson came to Utah from Sweden in 1866, and died in 1968 at the age of 108. She created the lace in figure 6.22 and also the knit and crotchet work in figure 6.23.

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58 To be considered a Utah pioneer, a person must have entered the state prior to the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.
Figure 6.22. Lace samples by Hilda Erickson. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.
Figure 6.23. Knitted and crotched samples by Hilda Erickson. Source: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.
Erikson stands out as a remarkable woman; by the end of her life she had been a seamstress, missionary, mother, licensed obstetrician, general practitioner, dentist, veterinarian, gardener, rancher, store owner, and president of her community’s children’s Primary program for twenty-five years. She exemplified the Mormon woman’s potential not only to fulfill her familial and religious duties but also civic roles.\textsuperscript{59}

Erikson’s emigration story resembles those of other Scandinavian emigrants. She left Sweden with her mother and two younger brothers while her father and two older brothers remained for two additional years earning money to join the rest of the family in Utah. They sailed for nine weeks, landed in New York, took a train to Missouri, a boat along the Missouri River to Nebraska, and then travelled by foot and ox team to Salt Lake City; a total journey of six months.

The family settled in Mt. Pleasant in Sanpete County, and Hilda’s mother supported the three children by employing her Scandinavian skills of spinning, weaving, and sewing clothes for pioneer women. She also wove carpets and cloth that she sold in markets. At the age of fourteen, Hilda enrolled in a course in dressmaking and tailoring and later supported herself by creating her own patterns and sewing dresses, overalls, suits, and overcoats for men. In 1868 Hilda’s father and older brothers arrived in Utah and the family moved to Grantsville.

\textsuperscript{59} The following narrative here is drawn from Daurelle, “Buckskin, Lace, and Forceps,” 4-51.
After her marriage in 1883 to John August Erickson, another Swedish immigrant, they were sent to teach farming and be Church missionaries to the Goshute Indians in Deep Creek Valley on the Utah-Nevada border. Erikson taught the women to read, write, spin, weave, knit, and sew. After acting as the area’s chief doctor she left for Salt Lake City in 1885 for a two-year study in obstetrics at the hospital and medical college sponsored by the Church and the Relief Society. During her sixty-eight years as a licensed obstetrician, Erikson was known for travelling twenty-five miles through the mountains on horseback to attend births and care for ill newborn babies. She also attended to those who needed teeth pulled or to animals requiring medical attention.

After ten years, the Eriksons’ missionary service ended and the family, with their two children, bought land and raised alfalfa, cattle, sheep, horse, and dairy cows. They also owned and operated a general store that supplied miners and other pioneer families. In 1903 Erikson’s husband was called on a mission to Sweden, and she assumed full responsibility of the ranch. Her remarkableness earned her a nomination by the Democratic Party to run for the state legislature in 1922.

The Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum in Salt Lake City houses various objects representing Erikson’s life experiences: a stethoscope, forceps, a buckskin mask used during dust storms in the desert, ballots showing her candidacy for the Utah legislature, scissors, needles, and knitted lace. The lace, in particular, stands out as a contrast to the demanding realities of her professional life. She may have
taken her lacemaking and knitting projects along while she waited on births and sat by ill patients. It is evident that, though she took on the American frontier lifestyle and the Mormon view that women could be involved in an assortment of activities, Erikson's Scandinavian handwork skills acted as an undercurrent throughout her life. They expressed both her Scandinavian heritage and her desire as a woman to cultivate gentility in a frontier environment.

Conclusion

Mormon doctrine recognized the complementarity of men's and women's spiritual and temporal roles. For the most part, Mormons adhered to the standard gender roles of the time in both America and Scandinavia. Men acted as providers and protectors of the family and women managed the domestic sphere of home and family. This complementarity translated into the objects immigrants made and used. Men tended to bring and continue the use of tools from their homelands, and women brought and produced items representing home, family, and tradition. Men made the tools with which women produced cultural and gendered objects. Food preparation tools, rolling pins, spinning wheels, and looms, for example, demonstrate the interrelatedness of working together to produce food, clothing, and shelter.

Scandinavians navigated through new gendered identities that being Mormon gave them. The encouragement from leaders for women to seek
professional training, as well as the Relief Society organization for women, provided a platform on which women could exercise femininity in more public spheres. Additionally, because of the challenges of the frontier and the Mormon culture of cooperation and communitarian values, the delineation of gender responsibilities was blurred at times. When husbands were absent for long periods of time in leadership callings, and in polygamous households, women exercised self-sufficiency by managing farms and finances and running the household. The objects shown in this chapter demonstrate the continuation of traditional Scandinavian gendered production and use combined with unique aspects of Mormon gender roles.
Chapter 7
Conclusion

The objective of this research has been to identify the material culture Scandinavian immigrants brought to Utah in the nineteenth century and trace its significance, gradual integration, and adaptation to the American and Mormon cultures. Previous studies of Scandinavians in Utah have concluded that immigrants, in an effort to form religious solidarity, discarded homeland traditions and identities. After conducting extensive fieldwork throughout Utah towns, archives, and museums, this analysis has found that the former assumption was inaccurate, and that there is significant evidence that Scandinavian tradition remained in Utah. Through the lens of material culture, this study demonstrates that Scandinavian immigrants in Utah did, in fact, maintain homeland traditions, crafts, and skills. It is evidenced here that rather than completely assimilating into a homogeneous culture, Scandinavians upheld traditional folkways while adapting to the culture and demands of the American frontier and Mormon ideologies.

Emigrants’ material culture reflects choices made about what to take and what to leave. Many objects could not be transported for the migration due to weight and space restrictions, but the objects and traditions immigrants brought spoke volumes about what they deemed essential and how they expected to continue their heritage. Similarly, the material culture immigrants produced in Utah
offers insight into the immigrants’ cultural identity and what they regarded worthy to continue producing. Choices of what to take and how to modify traditional objects and skills were not made randomly; sometimes consciously and other times unconsciously, immigrants made choices about what to maintain, alter, or discard of their traditions. This study examines how the material culture Scandinavian immigrants produced in Utah reflected their identities, interaction with the landscape, gendered aspects of identity.

National, Religious, and Cultural Identity

This study has examined the notion of identity on three levels: national, religious, and cultural. Elliott Oring explained that folklorists focus on the “communal . . . the common . . . the informal . . . the marginal . . . the personal . . . the traditional . . . the aesthetic . . . the ideological.”¹ Material culture methodology examines objects on each of these levels to discover evidence of individuality, group identity, and cultural tradition. Folk arts, crafts, and skills have many distinguishing characteristics rooted in traditions from family, community, and culture. The objects examined in this study represent the arts and crafts that customarily exemplify skills and techniques passed down through generations carrying familial, cultural, and national significance. These objects possess decorative and symbolic

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characteristics that convey not only individual artistic identity, but also authentic community cultural identity. Each object's use and meaning exhibits the evolution of these immigrants' identities in Utah as they took aspects of their native cultures and incorporated them into their new lives and identities. The decisions to migrate to and remain settled in Utah represented an immigrant's ultimate decision to shift and adapt his or her sense of identity. The result was not a total loss of past identity but rather the creation of a new distinct collective group identity with fellow Mormons that was in part a tapestry of the various cultural traditions brought to Utah, but which retained distinctive, clearly identifiable remnants of their homeland identities.

In terms of national identification, while the emigrants were entering a new world and a new phase in their temporal and spiritual lives, they were not completely abandoning their identities as Danish, Norwegian, or Norwegian men and women. Immigrants' specific homeland identification was strongest when they were first settled. Little material culture demonstrating national sentimentalities remains, however. This was due, in part, to the fact that Mormons from various nationalities comingled within communities which lessened national loyalty. Also, the panethnicity that existed among Scandinavians further diluted previous national loyalties. The relatively rapid rate at which the immigrants became American citizens suggests that their political/national tendencies shifted rather quickly.
Religious material culture in Utah, however, demonstrating Scandinavian tradition is abundant. Though Scandinavians assimilated religiously, it did not equate to an abandonment of tradition. Immigrants employed homeland skills to create objects that signified religious devotion while also displaying Scandinavian tradition. Like other Mormons, they consecrated their skills and talents literally to building the Church. Mormons believed in an inseparable link between daily living and spiritual life, and the objects they produced reflected this worldview. The most evident Scandinavian material culture with religious significance is found in carpentry tools and techniques employed to build Church buildings, religious clothing and furniture used in religious settings and structures, and family Bibles and other literature that emigrants brought and utilized in Utah. Each of these items demonstrates how Scandinavian tradition transferred to Utah and how immigrants employed their homeland skills and traditions in acts of religious devotion. The material culture reflects both the Scandinavians cultural identity and the Mormon religious identity of the craftsmen and women who created the work.

Cultural identity thus remained strong among Scandinavians in Utah. Immigrants clearly assumed that in their daily lives they would continue to occupy themselves in much the same ways as they had in their homelands employed the skills they had learned before they emigrated. In this way they perpetuated many cultural traditions. This manifested itself in the everyday work they carried out, and in the crafts they produced such as trunks, clogs, wooden spoons, baskets, and in
folk dress and ceremonial traditions such as Scandinavian gatherings and festivals. They treasured the handcrafted items and events that affirmed their heritage. Such items illustrate the adherence to homeland heritage, traditions, and norms.

Adaptation to Landscape

The arid landscape of Utah contrasted starkly with the mostly coastal regions Scandinavian Mormons had resided. Scandinavian immigrants learned to adapt their lifestyle to the challenges of the Utah frontier. The mountains, valleys, and desert geography and climate affected and influenced the material culture of the immigrants. Unlike many Western pioneers, Mormons did not settle on individual homesteads with little outside contact or support; they built settlements that eliminated the solitary transitioning so many other western pioneers experienced and compensated with a sense of community, common cause, and collaboration. Mormons combined their efforts to produce objects that aided in settlement and transition. Immigrants employed traditional crafts and skills and modified them to whatever wood, fiber, or clay was available. Because of the constant challenges of farm work and rural life, the crafts produced were initially utilitarian, not as products of pastime hobbies. Nevertheless, rural craftsmen used their homeland traditional skills, and their products displayed great artistry and personal expression; personal expression that reflected homeland cultural identities. This
Scandinavian cultural expression was especially evident in folk painting, furniture construction and design, and pottery production.

Scandinavian folk artists brought with them the Scandinavian art tradition of the time that focused on the portrayal of the common people and their lives. In Utah, this philosophy translated to the portrayal of the Mormon experience: migration, settlement, and everyday life. The depictions portray clearly recognizable markers of life in Scandinavia—such as Scandinavian-style cottages, clothing, and farming—within the context of the Utah landscape of mountains and valleys. Interaction with the land strongly influenced the Mormon settlement experience, and Scandinavian artists recognized the land’s role in their interpretation of the transition.

The Utah frontier demanded from Scandinavian carpenters that they adapt their traditional crafts and skills to the resources surrounding them. The furniture tradition is one of the most obvious examples of Scandinavian craft survival in Utah. Scandinavian craftsmen produced woodwork and furniture in homes, churches, tabernacles, and temples. They adapted forms from Scandinavia, like the daybed and cupboard, to their needs, abilities, and resources, and created unique Mormon-style versions. These new versions drew from tradition while introducing personal interpretation, as craftsmen worked with local woods. As in Scandinavia, artisans employed faux hardwood wood-graining to give a more refined look to an otherwise crude surface.
Similarly, pottery both directly and indirectly reflected the landscape. The actual pottery was a product of the land. People used the pottery to preserve, year-round, foods they had produced from the land. Preservation of food was essential in a climate where winter months provided no fresh produce, and dairy products had to be kept from freezing. The pottery manufactured in Utah by Scandinavian immigrants reflected production techniques and pottery style typical in Scandinavia at the time. Workshops, firing kilns, throwing wheels, and various tools, as well as the pots themselves (kitchen crockery, storage jars, drainage pipes, flower pots, roofing tile, brick, and plates) resembled closely those produced and used in Scandinavia. Scandinavian potters’ background in making utilitarian pottery and their resourcefulness and creativity with the local resources allowed them to thrive in Utah, whereas English potters, for instance, left the trade owing to their inability to adapt.

Gendered Identity

Gender roles within the Church resembled those in America and Scandinavia at the time: men acted as providers and women managed the domestic sphere. The Church had a unique doctrine and practice, however, regarding gender in terms of spiritual equality and interdependency. Mormonism’s interpretations of masculine and feminine identity state that each gender has equally valuable yet distinct roles
and that women and men are dependent upon each other to receive spiritual and temporal blessings.

Other gendered church expectations of men and women affected daily life as well. The Church required men to leave their families for long periods of time on missions or leadership callings. This required women to oversee not just the domestic aspects of a household but also the economic welfare of the home. In polygamous households, women worked collaboratively to carry out the demands of a large household. Furthermore women were encouraged to pursue education and training in the public sphere. Though Scandinavians were unaccustomed to these conditions they embraced the differences while perpetuating their Scandinavian skills and traditions in their homes. While managing households, women executed fine embroidery, needlework and knitting that demonstrated traditions of their homeland.

The material culture reflected traditional gendered roles as well as combined efforts of the two sexes. Objects thus reveal gendered aspects of identity. The division of labor and gender roles in the home were especially evident in craft making among Scandinavians: with the exception of spinning and weaving where men and women worked together, women worked with textile production such as knitting, sewing clothing, and embroidering, while men worked in carpentry with wood and carved tools and furniture. Complementarity was evident in domestic tools that men built with their traditional skills and women used to produce
traditional household items. This was apparent with food preparation items and textile tools such as wood carders, spinning wheels, and looms.

This study of material culture in Utah reveals that Scandinavians continued to employ and celebrate their homeland traditions as they negotiated an evolving balance between their heritage and their new religious community. Their traditions and skills contributed to a unique Mormon identity in Utah. This dissertation thereby advances understanding of the Scandinavian immigrant experience in America by considering the previously neglected Mormon Scandinavians. The research demonstrates the complexity of human identity and how it evolves over time. The findings illustrate how human beings, in this case both migrants and religious converts, can acculturate to new physical surroundings and belief systems while maintaining core aspects of their cultural and gendered identities. The work thus affirms the resilience of culture and cultural identity.
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