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Converts Gather from the British Isles/"Sailing from Liverpool"

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Converts Gather from the British Isles



On 23 July 1837 the Twelve Apostles, specially commissioned to proclaim the gospel to all the world, were promised that an “effectual door” would be opened unto them.⁴² In section 118 of the Doctrine and Covenants, they were instructed to depart from Far West on 26 April 1839 to go over the “great waters” to spread the gospel. Determined to keep the Lord’s commandment, seven of the Twelve, met in a brief conference at Far West in the moonlit hours of early morning on the appointed day. While those who threatened to take their lives slept, the Lord’s servants placed a large stone near the southeast corner of the temple site.

Although illness and other obstacles delayed their departure, by April of the following year, eight of the eleven members of the Quorum were in the British Isles preaching the gospel. Orson Hyde would later join them on his way to Palestine. These early missionaries experienced incredible success as they preached the restored gospel in many areas of Great Britain. Wilford Woodruff’s labors in 1840 included holding 230 meetings and baptizing 336 persons, 57 of them preachers.⁴³ From March to August he and others baptized almost eighteen hundred people as they labored in three counties.⁴⁴

In June 1840, just one week after the first issue of the *Millennial Star* came off the press, a group of 41 saints under the leadership of John Moon sailed from Liverpool on the ship *Britannia*. John’s brother, Hugh, recorded details of their departure.

We left Penworthem to go to Liverpool and take shipping for America on the 30th day of May in the year 1840. We got all our luggage on board that night. We bought some more provisions the day after. June 2 [1840] ... We found Elder Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball aboard. They had stretched a curtain across our cabin, and commenced blessing the company. They bid us walk in. They laid their hands on our heads and blessed us in the name of Jesus Christ. They showed us a map and gave us directions about the route we should take to Commerce (Nauvoo).⁴⁵

Thus was officially launched the great migration of nearly 5,000 souls who, between 1840 and 1846, left the British Isles and came to settle with the Saints in and around Nauvoo. These immigrants would be a great strength to the Church during difficult times of apostasy and persecution. As faithful pioneers they would help relocate the Church in the West. By 1890 some 85,000 converts from England and other countries of the world had gathered to Zion.

Sailing from Liverpool

This first European remnant,
facing west, is blessed
by Heber and Brigham.

Making their way
through trunks,
barrels, bundles, boxes
cumbering the dock,
emigrants speak words
strange to sailors
and merchants:
*revelation, Mormon,
Zion, Millennial Star.*

Before them lies
the Atlantic,
storms, sickness,
Joseph and Nauvoo.

Singing hymns of
Israel's gathering,
they leave
emerald pastures,
rock-walled gardens,
soot-blackened factories,
coal mine disasters,
village churches
of somber stone—
England, and
loved ones they will
never see again.

The *Brittania* glides
down the River Mercey;
her limp, white sails
catch the wind.

I, the Lord, give unto them a promise that I will provide for their families; and an effectual door shall be opened for them, from henceforth. And next spring let them depart to go over the great waters, and there promulgate my gospel, the fulness thereof, and bear record of my name (D &C 118:3–4).