

“The Miner's Ten Commandments” by James M. Hutchings

A man spake these words, and said: I am a miner, wandering "from away down east," to sojourn in a strange land. And behold I've seen the elephant, yea, verily, I saw him, and bear witness, that from the key of his trunk to the end of his tail, his whole body hath passed before me; and I followed him until his huge feet stood before a clapboard shanty; then with his trunk extended he pointed to a candle-card tacked upon a shingle, as though he would say Read, and I read the

MINERS' TEN COMMANDMENTS

I. Thou shalt have no other claim than one.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thyself any false claim, nor any likeness to a mean man, by jumping one: for I, a miner, am a just one, and will visit the miners around about, and they will judge thee; and when they shall decide, thou shalt take thy pick, thy pan, thy shovel and thy blankets with all thou hast and shall depart seeking other good diggings, but thou shalt find none. Then when thou hast paid out all thy dust, worn out thy boots and garments so that there is nothing good about them but the pockets, and thy patience is like unto thy garments, then in sorrow shall thou return to find thy claim worked out, and yet thou hath no pile to hide in the ground, or in the old boot beneath thy bunk, or in buckskin or in bottle beneath thy cabin, and at last thou shalt hire thy body out to make thy board and save thy bacon.

III. Thou shalt not go prospecting before thy claim gives out. Neither shalt thou take thy money, nor thy gold dust, nor thy good name, to the gaming table in vain; for monte, twenty-one, roulette, faro, lansquenet and poker, will prove to thee that the more thou puttest down the less thou shalt take up; and when thou thinkest of thy wife and children, thou shalt not hold thyself guiltless—but insane.

IV. Thou shalt not remember what thy friends do at home on the Sabbath day, lest the remembrance may not compare favorably with what thou doest here. Six days thou mayst dig or pick; but the other day is Sunday; yet thou washest all thy dirty shirts, darnest all thy stockings, tap thy boots, mend thy clothing, chop the whole week's firewood, make up and bake thy bread, and boil thy pork and beans, that thou wait not when thou returnest from thy long-tom weary. For in six days' labor only though canst do it in six months; and though, and thy morals and thy conscience, be none the better for it; but reproach thee, shouldst thou ever return with thy worn-out body to thy mother's fireside.

V. Though shalt not think more of all thy gold, and how thou canst make it fastest, than how thou will enjoy it after thou hast ridden rough-shod over thy good old parents' precepts and examples, that thou mayest have nothing to reproach thee, when left ALONE in the land where thy father's blessing and thy mother's love hath sent thee.

VI. Thou shalt not kill; neither thy body by working in the rain, even though thou shalt make enough to buy physic and attendance with; nor thy neighbor's body in a duel, or in anger, for by "keeping cool," thou canst save his life and thy conscience. Neither shalt thou destroy thyself by getting "tight," nor "stewed," nor "high," nor "corned," nor "half-seas over," nor "three sheets in the wind," by drinking smoothing down—"brandy slings," "gin cocktails," "whiskey punches," "rum toddies," nor "egg-noggs." Neither shalt thou suck "mint juleps," nor "sherry-cobblers," through a straw, nor gurgle from a bottle the "raw material," nor take "it straight" from a decanter; for, while thou art swallowing down thy purse, and the coat from off thy back thou art burning the coat from off thy stomach; and if thou couldst see the houses and lands, and gold dust, and home comforts already lying there—"a huge pile"—thou shouldst feel a choking in thy throat; and when to that thou addest thy crooked walkings thou wilt feel disgusted with thyself, and inquire "Is thy servant a dog that he doeth these things!" Verily, thou shalt say, "Farewell, old bottle, I will kiss thy gurgling lips no more; slings, cocktails, punches, smashes, cobblers, noggs, toddies, sangarees and juleps, forever farewell. Thy remembrance shames one; henceforth, I cut thy acquaintance, and headaches, tremblings, heart-burnings, blue devils, and all the unholy catalogue of

evils that follow in thy train. My wife's smiles and my children's merry-hearted laugh, shall charm and reward me for having the manly firmness and courage to say NO. I wish thee an eternal farewell."

VII. Thou shalt not grow discouraged, nor think of going home before thou hast made thy "pile," because thou hast not "struck a lead," nor found a "rich crevice," nor sunk a hole upon a "pocket," lest in going home thou shalt leave four dollars a day, and going to work, ashamed, at fifty cents, and serve thee right; for thou knowest by staying here, thou mightst strike a lead and fifty dollars a day, and keep thy manly self-respect, and then go home with enough to make thyself and others happy.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal a pick, or a shovel, or a pan from thy fellow-miner; nor take away his tools without his leave; nor borrow those he cannot spare; nor return them broken, nor trouble him to fetch them back again, nor talk with him while his water rent is running on, nor remove his stake to enlarge thy claim, nor undermine his bank in following a lead, nor pan out gold from his "riffle box," nor wash the "tailings" from his sluice's mouth. Neither shalt thou pick out specimens from the company's pan to put them in thy mouth or pocket; nor cheat thy partner of his share; nor steal from thy cabin-mate his gold dust, to add to thine, for he will be sure to discover what thou hast done, and will straightaway call his fellow miners together, and if the law hinder them not, will hang thee, or give thy fifty lashes, or shave thy head and brand thee, like a horse thief, with "R" upon thy cheek, to be known and read of all men, Californians in particular.

IX. Thou shalt not tell any false tales about "good diggings in the mountains," to thy neighbor that thou mayest benefit a friend who had mules, and provisions, and tools and blankets he cannot sell,—lest in deceiving thy neighbor, when he returneth through the snow, with naught save his rifle, he present thee with the contents thereof, and like a dog, thou shalt fall down and die.

X. Thou shalt not commit unsuitable matrimony, nor covet "single blessedness;" nor forget absent maidens; nor neglect thy "first love;"—but thou shalt consider how faithfully and patiently she awaiteth thy return; yea and covereth each epistle that thou sendest with kisses of kindly welcome—until she hath thyself. Neither shalt thou cove thy neighbor's wife, nor trifle with the affections of his daughter; yet, if thy heart be free, and thou dost love and covet each other, thou shalt "pop the question" like a man.

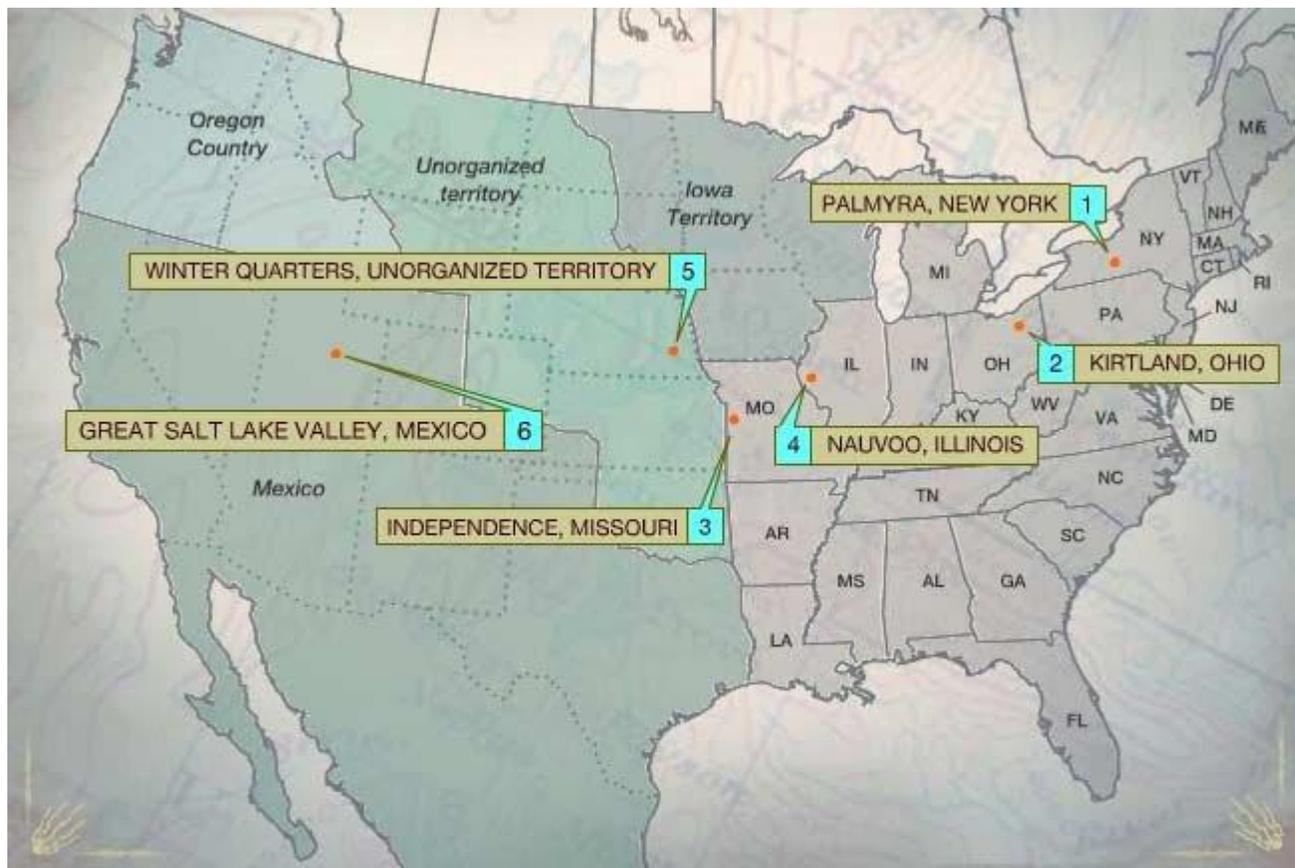
A new Commandment give I unto thee—if thou has a wife and little ones, that thou lovest dearer than life,—that thou keep them continually before thee, to cheer and urge thee onward, until thou canst say, "I have enough—God bless them—I will return." Then from thy much-loved home, with open arms shall thy come forth to welcome thee, with weeping tears of unutterable joy that thou art come; then in the fullness of thy heart's gratitude, thou shalt kneel together before thy Heavenly Father, to thank him for thy safe return. AMEN—So mote it be.

-- FORTY-NINER

These "commandments" were actually written in 1853 by James M. Hutchings (1818-1902), and first published in the Placerville Herald newspaper. This was the most popular of the hundreds of letter sheets published in the 1850-1870 era, and was so profitable for Mr. Hutchings that he was able to publish the successful Hutchings's California Magazine.

Hutchings, James. "The Miner's 10 Commandments." *Placerville Herald*, 1843. City of San Francisco Digital Museum, February 3, 2000. Accessed November 12, 2019. <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist7/tencom.html>

Mormon Migrations



- 1) Palmyra, New York, 1830-1831
- 2) Kirtland, Ohio, 1831-1838
- 3) Independence, Missouri, 1831-1839
- 4) Nauvoo, Illinois, 1839-1846
- 5) Winter Quarters, 1846-1847
- 6) Great Salt Lake Valley, 1847 to present

“Map: Forced Migrations.” *The Mormons*. WGBH Educational Foundation, 30 April 2007. Accessed November 11, 2019. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/mormons-map>

Diary of Job Smith

October-November, 1849

Job Smith was a Mormon pioneer and a basket maker. He had moved from England to join the Mormons in Nauvoo, Illinois, then made the westward migration in 1848. He traveled back East in 1849 in order to travel back to England on a mission. He kept a diary from 1849-1877.

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October 18, 1849. Having no means to cross the plains, I received the privilege to travel in Jedediah M. Grant's wagon. He was on business to the States.

18th Oct. 1849. Started as far as the mouth of the Canyon five miles. Company organised next day. Shadrach Roundy, Captain, J.H. Grant, Captain of guard. Started with ox teams besides the horses and mules designed to carry us through. Met G. A. Smith and E. T. Benson's company's 40 miles out. Left the 37 oxen with them and proceeded on our journey.

October 26, 1849. 26th passed Bridger. Encountered considerable snow a few days afterwards.

October 30, 1849. 30th Met Mr Vasquis with ^a train of goods for Bridger.

October 31, 1849. 31st Crossed the South pass. Excellent weather.

November 1849

November 3, 1849. Nov 3rd, A Buffalo was killed on Sweet water River, and four inches snow. Melted off next day. (The 4th) met a company of 17 emigrants for the gold mines Cal. Camped near Devil's Gates

November 6, 1849. 6th (Tuesday) Met 4 men, and camped with them ^near on Greasewood Creek, who had been robbed the day previous by the Crow Indians, of one mule and their blankets. They had the mail for Fort Hall. We assisted them to what they needed. Every night we kept strict guard. Each man stood 3½ hours once in three nights.

November 12, 1849. 12th Nov. At noon we were charged upon by about 200 warriors of the Cheyenne tribe. Their designed evidently was to frighten our horses off, and then round them of into the hills among the timber, where it would have been difficult for us to have found them; if they had given us that privilege. They would no doubt have robbed our wagons and left us destitute, and per- [page 80] 38 haps have taken some of our lives. President Grant when he saw them coming immediately called every man into action and directed a portion to tie up the horses and another portion, with him, to form a line of defense in front of the camp. This was done in very quick time as the Indians were not far off when they were first discovered on full lope towards us. A substantial line having been formed we refused to give back when they came up, and they were obliged to come to a dead standstill. Some re-primed their guns and all seemed to make ready for fight. We however stood firm and they after standing several minutes showed signs of peace and presently we hitched up and passed through between a crowd of them that seemed enough to have eaten us.

November 14, 1849 Wednesday 14th. Arrived at Fort Laramie. Obtained fresh supplies of Major Anderson at Government prices. The major was kind and we all felt well towards him. Travelled on same day.

November 19, 1849. 19th & 20th Snow 3 to 4 inches deep. Crossed the South Fork of Platte.

Samuel Russell to His Mother and Sisters, 1862

We began to meet emigrants from the states on Hams fork & have met them daily ever since. Mostly Horse & mule trains some of the Largest Horses Mares & Mules I ever saw & I expect they have all been jayhawked from all reports there is a heavy emigration ahead of us & after a while we hardly expect to find room to corral. 'Tis 3 weeks last friday since we left the city. all day Saturday we lay in emigration & on Sunday ascended the little mountain & began our mud & water march which held good untill we had crossed Hams fork The road from the little mountain by way of parleys park – to the weber & till we got out of Echo was one of the roads you seldom read about in that time we had 13 turnovers 30 or 40 times to unload stuck wagons, after hitching on oxen and breaking by chains 'till we found it would not pay, One individual wagon has been to unload 11 different times we crossed the weber without any trouble but Echo made up for it, on our first entrance we had to put the wagons all over a bridge by hand; then three of the upsets was in her two of which wagons were hidden almost entirely from our view beneath her waters which was then no longer a creek but a river one gun one boot 2 shoes some \$10 money and several pieces of clothing were lost, the driver of one of the wagons went down under it but Luckily for him the water was deep, he was missing sometime but at length poked his head up through a hole large enough for a prairie dog between the Oxen one of which was struggling in the water the other hanging on the Bridge.

Samuel Russell to His Mother and Sisters, 1862. Letter. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, New York. Accessed March 1, 2016.

The Great Mormon Migration

Exodus, Part One

Brigham Young, who was emerging as the church's new leader, conducted a census that fall, counting more than 3,000 families and some 2,500 wagons. He then divided church members into smaller administrative groups of tens, fifties, and hundreds (following the pattern described in the Old Testament when, after crossing the Red Sea dry-shod, the Jews went through the wilderness searching for the Promised Land). Appropriately, Young named the collective the Camp of Israel. Although Young hoped to begin the migration in spring 1846, local hostility forced the Mormons' hand. The first wave of about 3,000 people began to leave Nauvoo in early February, and their suffering was intense. They crossed the frozen Mississippi River -- dry-shod. In one evening on the trek nine babies were born, their parents barely able to provide any shelter from the elements. Wagons collapsed, people died from exposure, and it took 131 days for the Mormon convoy to travel 310 miles to relative safety on the banks of the Missouri, where the river divided Nebraska and Iowa. Still, church members kept the faith throughout their tribulations. William Clayton, who had been ordered to travel ahead of his pregnant wife, was so overjoyed to learn of his son's birth that he wrote a hymn, "Come, Come, Ye Saints," that has become a Mormon standard. Its hopeful last line: "All is well! All is well!"

Winter Quarters

All was well for a time in the area (near what is Omaha, Nebraska today) that the Mormons reached in June 1846. Local Native Americans were friendly, and Young decided they would remain in what became known as "Winter Quarters" until the following spring. But when winter came, scurvy claimed as many as 15 percent of the camp members; Young's son would later call their settlement "the Valley Forge of Mormondom." Young, himself sick in February 1847, had been plagued by self-doubt, but a vision of Joseph Smith helped him become the strong leader his followers needed for the second, thousand-mile portion of their journey.

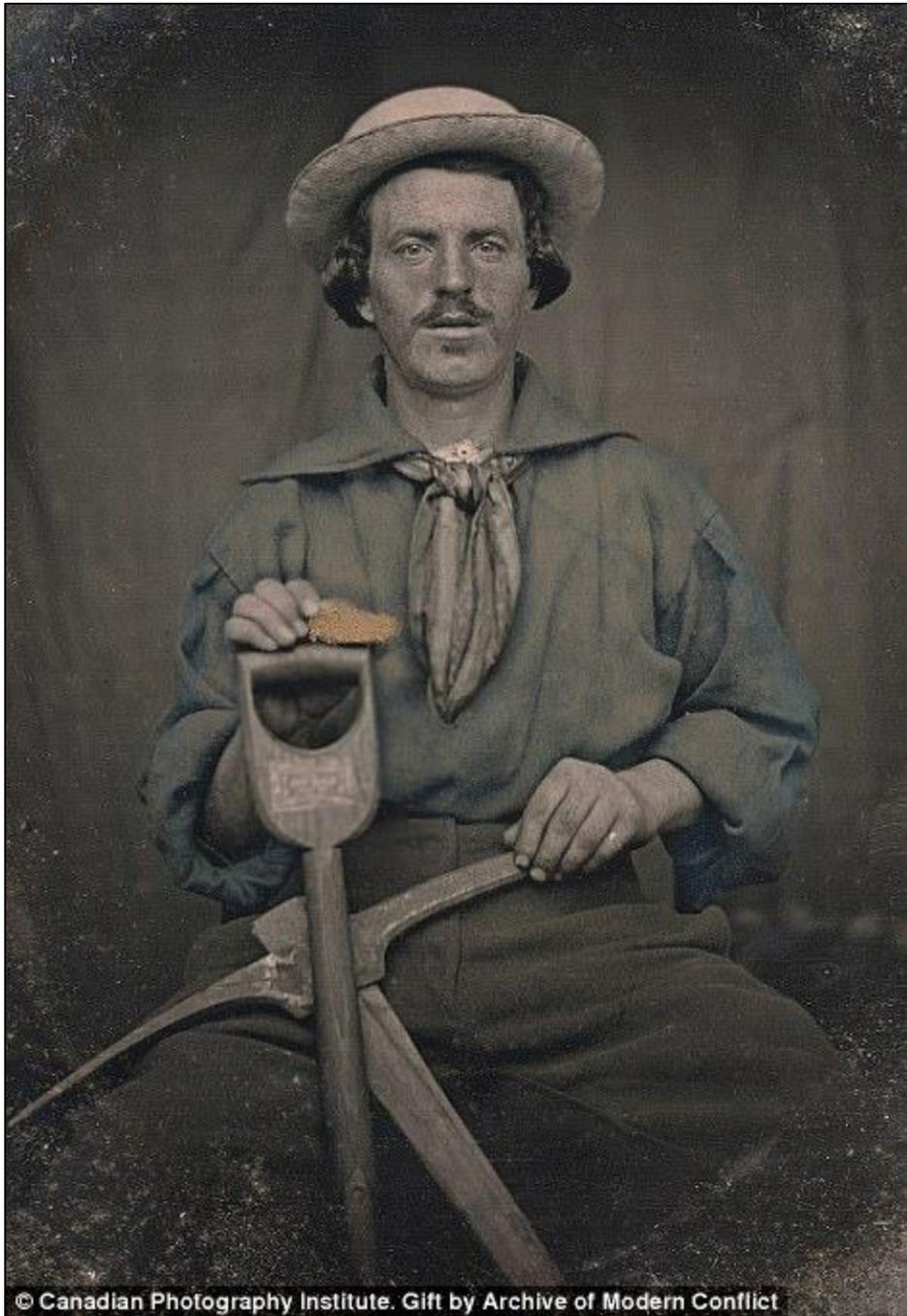
Exodus, Part Two

In April 1847, an advance party of 25 wagons led by Young left the Winter Quarters and headed towards the Rocky Mountains. They traveled along the Platte River, creating a new route on its north bank rather than risk encounters with other settlers on the Oregon Trail. The first half of the journey was along the plains and easier going than the mountains that loomed up past Fort Laramie, Wyoming. But the Mormons kept going, marching by day and leavening the evenings with campfire dance and song. There was also much sickness. Like many others in the pioneer band, Brigham Young came down with "mountain fever." On July 24, after 111 days of travel, a wagon carrying the prostrate Young reached the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Looking out on the terrain, Young declared, "It is enough. This is the right place."

A Permanent Home

As Young was reaching his destination, another wagon train with more than 1,500 people and nearly 600 cows was leaving Winter Quarters and heading west. Over the next two decades more than 60,000 Mormons would journey to the Utah Territory; thousands came by wagon, and thousands more pulled handcarts across the harsh terrain...

Daniel J. Butler with gold nugget and mining pick and shovel



“Daniel J. Butler, 1850.” Photograph. From “Going for gold! Incredible photos show the men and women cashing in on the gold rush in lawless 19th century California.” *Daily Mail*, February 16, 2018.
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5398735/Stunning-never-seen-photos-California-gold-rush.html>

Gold miners, El Dorado, California



Gold miners, El Dorado, California. California El Dorado, ca. 1848. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012646445/>.