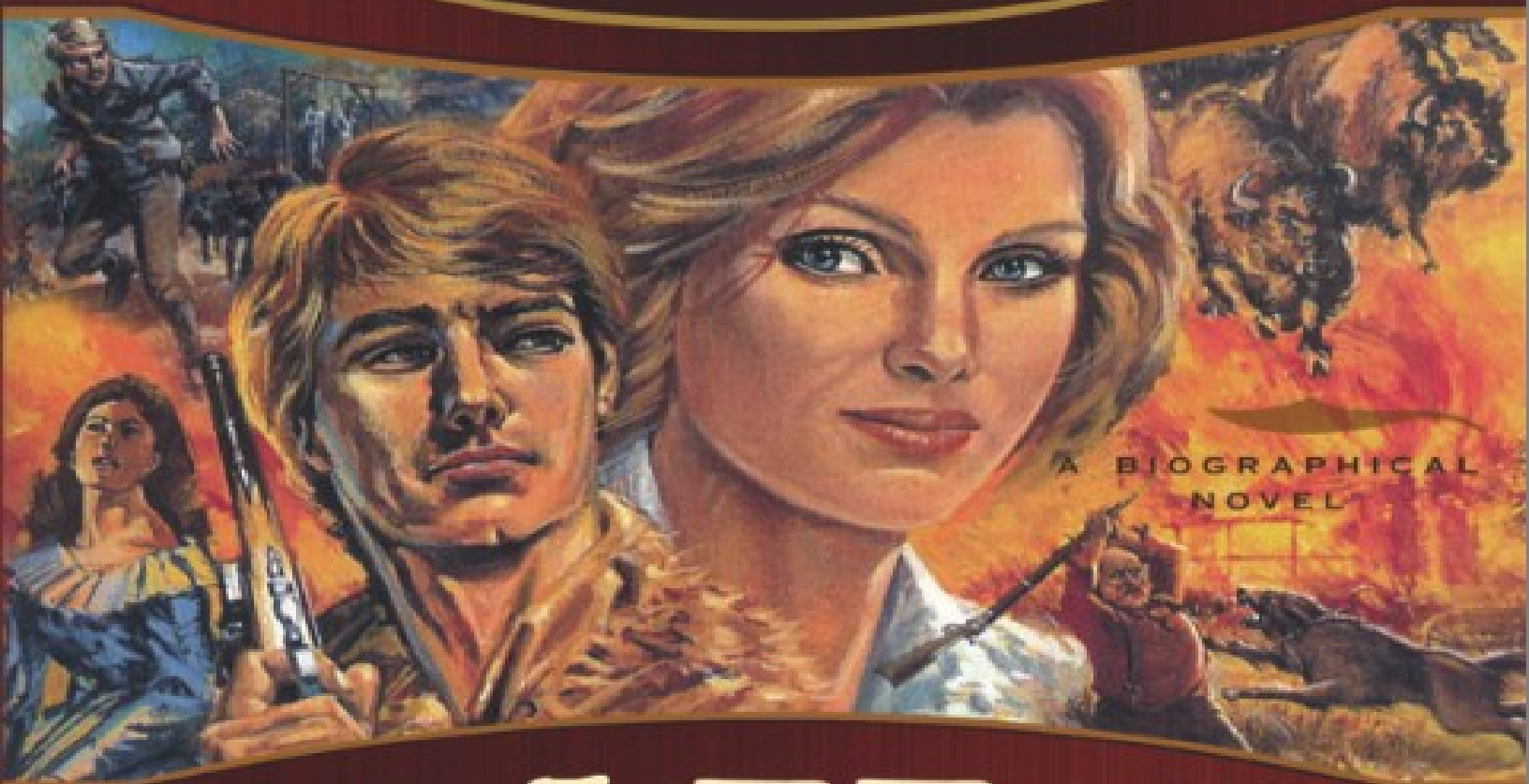


THE STORM TESTAMENT

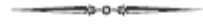
VOLUME TWO



A BIOGRAPHICAL
NOVEL

LEE NELSON

The Storm Testament II



Lee Nelson

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About the Author

Chapter 1

Caroline Logan didn't know what to think when she read the note from Henry Sears of Sears & Chadwick Publishing Company. Sears & Chadwick was a successful Philadelphia book publisher, and Caroline was a writer, but not a book writer. Yet Mr. Sears wanted to meet with her to discuss a special project. She had no idea what that project might be.

In fact, it was just within the past few weeks that one of Caroline's articles had finally made the front page of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. She had been working there almost a year, one of three female writers covering social events, weddings, garden shows, and lawn parties—the typical topics covered by female writers. Her front page story, however, was a totally different kind of article.

It was late in October 1844, a year of strife in Philadelphia, as native-born Protestants clashed with immigrant Catholics from Ireland and Europe. The development of coal mines west of Philadelphia in the early 1800s had opened the door for industrial development. Philadelphia industries produced clothing, iron, locomotives, machinery, ships, shoes, and textiles.

The rapid industrialization had attracted thousands of German and Irish immigrants. Competition for jobs between the newcomers and those already in the city, both blacks and whites, was fierce. More than thirty people had been killed in riots and street battles.

It was by a stroke of luck that Caroline had been drawn into the conflict and had been able to interview Catholic rebel leader Sean O'Connor. Sent

by the paper to Germantown to cover a harvest festival, she had retreated to the secluded area at the rear of one of the exhibit tents to write her story when young Sean burst in on her, quite by accident, scattering her papers on the ground.

Although Caroline had never seen the Catholic militant before, she recognized him immediately from the numerous “Wanted” posters throughout the city. Her first reaction was to scream, but she hesitated when the young man put his finger to his lips, signaling for her to be silent. He had scampered into the tent in an effort to avoid three constables walking through the exhibit area.

It was probably O'Connor's bright smile more than anything else that prompted Caroline to hold back her scream. And he had plenty to smile about, too. Caroline was a handsome woman, taller than most, with long blonde curls tied behind her ears with a light blue ribbon. Her eyes were blue and clear, her complexion, smooth and healthy. She was twenty years old and had a trim but full figure. She was accustomed to men turning to look at her.

The obvious absence of a wedding ring on her finger had nothing to do with lack of opportunity. In fact, she had developed a rather cool disposition toward men in an unconscious effort to discourage romantic interest.

As a gangly teenager, she had been silly about boys like the rest of her friends, but her first job changed all that. She was the only child in her family, and both parents worked from daylight until dusk in the textile mills, leaving Caroline with a lot of free time on her hands. Her earliest memories involved writing letters to everyone she knew, and often fictitious letters to people she didn't know. She became a prolific letter-writer.

At first, Caroline's father figured her letter writing a useless hobby, child's play. But he suddenly changed his mind when at fifteen Caroline landed a job copying letters for Lucretia C. Mott, head of the American Anti-Slavery Society. It wasn't long until Caroline was composing letters and working on anti-slavery flyers. Her writing skills developed quickly, but even more important, she had been exposed to a cause, a life and death struggle for freedom. A seed of idealism had been planted.

Caroline seemed to sense that a marriage to one of her childhood sweethearts would pull her back into a routine, hand-to-mouth existence

like that of her parents. No, she didn't want that. Not after a glimpse of what seemed to her a much more meaningful and exciting world.

Four years later, when she took the job as a reporter for the *Inquirer*, she moved closer to her work, into a brownstone apartment in Germantown. She was determined to keep men out of her life as she developed herself as a writer. Caroline hated covering garden shows and lawn parties but figured a price had to be paid as she developed her writing skills. She kept reminding herself that someday she would write something great.

Then she stumbled onto Sean O'Connor, or he onto her. The beautiful, educated, well-dressed female journalist was face to face with the most notorious ruffian of Philadelphia—a young bull, indomitable, crude in his dress and manners, unwilling to take his hat off to any man. He was the Catholic worker who had led his companions, armed with clubs and knives, into street battles with Protestant workers, resulting in the deaths of more than thirty men. Sean O'Connor was a wanted man, a fat prize for the approaching constables.

But Caroline didn't scream. She had another idea, and was suddenly very interested in the young rebel, more interested than she had been in any man for a long time. It wasn't a romantic interest but a professional one. In the young Irishman she saw a story, one that could further her career as a writer, one that could get her out of the society pages and into the important part of the paper, maybe even the front page.

None of the male reporters had ever been able to interview Sean O'Connor. It was doubtful that any had tried very hard. The young Irishman had a quick temper and a reputation for punching people who didn't agree with him or who asked hard questions.

There was electricity in the air as Caroline looked into the eyes of the young ruffian. He didn't look away, and neither did she, as she wondered how she might get him to answer her questions. Should she appear timid, perhaps frightened by his presence? Or should she be bold and confident? Should she just be herself, hoping his interest in her as a woman might keep him around long enough to answer her questions?

O'Connor was the first to speak.

“What kind of a lass is this?” he whispered, more to himself than to Caroline.

“Not plain like the working lasses,” he continued, finally taking his eyes away from hers to inspect the rest of her.

“Might you be a rich lady?” he asked, obviously impressed with her dress.

“No, a reporter,” replied Caroline, “and in your clumsiness you just scattered my notes all over the ground.” She wanted to sound firm, but not bossy.

“I’m so sorry,” he said, not sounding like he was sorry at all. He made no move to pick up the notes.

“Could I ask you some questions?”

“Why?” He cocked his head to one side and removed his hat, obviously enjoying the conversation.

“You are Sean O’Connor, leader of the Catholic workers.”

“So the lass knows me name, does she?”

“You have not yet been interviewed in the papers. The people want to know what you are like, what you are thinking, why you do what you do.”

“And you will help me tell them?”

Caroline nodded. “Many reporters are afraid of you.”

For the first time, O’Connor showed a look of surprise. “Afraid. Of me? Why?”

“They know about your temper. They are afraid you might hurt them.”

“Me?” said O’Connor, as if he were finding it hard to believe that all other men weren’t brave and bold like he was.

“Can I ask you some questions?”

“No.”

Caroline suddenly became tired of what seemed like senseless banter. At the same time, some of O’Connor’s boldness seemed to be rubbing off on her.

“Then get out of here so I can pick up my papers and get back to work.” She turned away from O’Connor, dropped to her knees, and began to gather the papers, guessing that he wouldn’t leave.

Almost before she realized what was happening, the young Irishman was on his knees beside her, helping with the papers. She started to protest but decided to remain silent.

When he handed her the last of the papers, she looked up into his face, hoping some of the stubbornness had disappeared.

She tried to jerk back, but it was too late. The young Irishman caught her by surprise, kissing her quickly on the mouth, before leaping away with the agility of a cat to avoid the blow she delivered too late.

Caroline was about to scream for help when she suddenly realized her advantage. Getting back on her feet, she said, "Mr. O'Connor seems to have forgotten why he came into this tent."

The Irishman didn't respond, not understanding what she was getting at.

"There are three constables not fifty feet away, sitting on a bench at the concession, drinking iced tea. A cry from me and they will be upon you."

"You wouldn't, lass."

"I will, if you won't answer my questions, or if you take one step toward me."

Sean O'Connor reached into his belt and retrieved a silver-bladed knife. He ran his finger over the blade, then looked up at Caroline.

"I could throw this into that beautiful belly of yours before you could blink."

"And I could scream loud enough for the constables to hear. They would hang you for sure."

"A waste, a real waste." He was still fingering the knife blade. "Would you give the Catholic workers a fair story?"

"If I didn't, would it be very hard for you to find me?"

O'Connor put the knife back under his belt, nodding for Caroline to begin with the questions.

Twenty minutes later, Sean O'Connor slipped under the back side of the tent and disappeared down an alley.

Caroline gathered together her notes and headed out the front of the tent, looking quickly back at the empty bench where the iced tea was being sold. She wondered how things might have turned out had O'Connor peeked under the tent to catch her in the lie about the tea-drinking constables.

The interview with O'Connor was a smashing front-page success, winning for Caroline the envy of the other journalists. Of course, she left out the part about the kiss and even the lie about the constables. The editor

paid her five dollars instead of the usual two dollars per article. Caroline felt that her career as a writer was starting to blossom. Who should she interview next?

A week later she received the letter from the Sears & Chadwick Publishing Company, inviting her to discuss a “project” with Mr. Sears. Certainly a writing project, maybe a book. But why would anybody want her to write a book?

Chapter 2

It was a sunny afternoon in early November when Caroline hired a carriage to take her to 315 South Warsaw Street, where the Sears & Chadwick Publishing Company was headquartered. She was wearing her best dress, one of peach satin with a modest neckline and full skirt, the popular style of the day. Her blonde curls were held back with a black ribbon, and a white shawl was draped lightly about her shoulders.

The streets were lined with maple and sycamore trees, already red and yellow from the first fall frosts. The noisy clatter of ironrimmed buggy wheels on the cobblestone streets was frequently muffled by a matted blanket of newly fallen leaves. The sky was blue, the air cool and crisp but pleasant, thanks to the afternoon sun.

It was a perfect day for a buggy ride, but Caroline didn't notice. She was deep in thought, still trying to figure out why Henry Sears wanted to see her. Since receiving his letter asking her to come and see him, she had thought of little else. A hundred questions had been going through her mind. Why had Mr. Sears written to her? Did he want her to write a book? Why her? She was only twenty years old and just beginning a career as a newspaper reporter. What kind of book could she write? She had only been writing newspaper articles for a year, and she had only made the front page a few weeks ago, with her Sean O'Connor interview.

An older person would have been more patient, hoping for good news about a great opportunity but ready for the disappointment of being offered a secretarial or errand-girl position. In her twenty years, Caroline had

learned the value of persistence and hard work, but patience was not one of her virtues. She was a young woman in a hurry. Still flushed with the success of the O'Connor interview, she was looking for more of the same and had convinced herself that this meeting with Henry Sears would open the door to another exciting opportunity.

Henry Sears greeted Caroline in the front office. He was a short man, maybe five and a half feet tall. His body had a thick, sedentary look from too many hours behind a desk, but his brown eyes were clear and bright, his smile spontaneous. He wore a brown tweed suit, glossy black shoes, and a white shirt with a stiff collar and ruffles down the front. What he lacked in hair on the top of his head, he made up for with thick, curving sideburns extending to the middle of his pink cheeks. His chubby hands were white, freckled, and soft like those of a pampered woman. Caroline couldn't help but contrast him with the daring, strong Sean O'Connor. The refined book publisher seemed no match for the Irish street fighter, certainly not as interesting to a woman—at least not at first appearance.

Henry Sears was a warrior of a different kind, one whose weapons were ideas and words—in the end much more powerful than Sean O'Connor's fists and clubs. Men like Henry Sears pulled the strings and made the decisions, while men like Sean O'Connor died on the battlefield.

Henry Sears was not in a hurry to uncover his reasons for inviting Caroline to see him. After the initial greetings were exchanged, he took her on a tour of the print shop and bindery, where they had to step carefully among the glue pots, then to the storage barn where the twenty-six titles published by Sears & Chadwick were stacked in neat, well-cared-for piles. Caroline was awed at the sight of so many new books.

“Why is he doing this?” she kept thinking. “Why doesn't he just get down to business and tell me why he wanted to see me?”

Mr. Sears seemed very confident, like he knew exactly what he was doing, like there was a good reason for her to see his entire operation before he sat down with her to discuss business.

It must be pretty important, thought Caroline. He wouldn't go to so much trouble if he didn't have something heavy on his mind.

Caroline's heart beat faster. Her cheeks flushed with the conviction that this meeting with Henry Sears was really going to be something big.

He ushered her into his high-ceilinged office and closed the door, asking his secretary to hold all disturbances.

After guiding Caroline to her place on a velvet-cushioned chair beside a huge mahogany desk, Mr. Sears made himself comfortable in the big chair behind the desk. Before saying anything, he bit the end from a new cigar and proceeded to light it with a wooden match. He didn't offer one to Caroline. That would have been rude.

Henry Sears puffed on the cigar, looking into Caroline's face, still not saying anything. She was beginning to get nervous but was determined not to let it show.

“You're a beautiful woman, Miss Logan,” was his first comment.

“Thank you,” she responded, trying to be nice but annoyed that he wasn't getting to the point of the visit.

“In fact,” he continued, “I think you are the most beautiful writer I have ever met.”

“You didn't bring me all the way over here to tell me that.”

“Your good looks have a lot to do with me inviting you here.”

“I'm a writer, not a mistress,” said Caroline, getting up to leave.

“Let me assure you, my intentions are honorable,” he said with a burst of sincerity that pulled her back. “I have only business to discuss with you, nothing else.”

“Then let's talk about business,” said Caroline with a boldness that surprised her. “Why did you invite me here?”

Mr. Sears snubbed out the cigar and leaned forward, placing both forearms on the mahogany desk, his hands clenched into fists.

“For several months now, our company has been looking for someone to take on a very exciting writing project. We think you might be that person.”

He paused to let his words sink in. Caroline remained silent. There was nothing for her to do but listen.

“We have been looking for a woman writer, one with good looks and courage. I was beginning to think that such a woman did not exist in Philadelphia. Then I saw your interview with that rascal Sean O'Connor. That took courage.”

“Thank you,” responded Caroline, choosing not to tell him that her meeting with the Irish rebel was accidental.

“How much do they pay you for those articles you write for the *Inquirer*?”

“As much as five dollars each, usually less.”

“How would you like to write a book that would sell thousands of copies, with you receiving a fifty-cent royalty on each copy sold?”

“Of course I would like that,” responded Caroline. “But you know as well as I do that I'm just a beginning writer. I have never even started a book. Why did you ask me to come here? You certainly can't tease me into believing I am a likely prospect to write a best-seller.”

“Don't worry about your writing ability. It's good enough. Besides, we have editors that can help.”

“Please tell me what you have in mind.”

“We want you to write a book about the Mormons.”

“Ridiculous. I don't know anything about the Mormons.”

Mr. Sears placed a black cloth-bound book on the desk and pushed it over to Caroline. Caroline picked it up and opened to the title page.

She read, *The History of the Saints; Or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism*, by John C. Bennett, Boston, 1842.

“That book has sold nearly ten thousand copies,” explained Sears, “making Mr. Bennett a nice little fortune in royalties. It could very well become the best-selling exposé ever written on the Mormons.”

“The reason this book has sold so well,” he continued, “is because Bennett got inside. He was one of them for a while, found out what was really going on.

“The thing in this book that really has people excited,” he continued, “is this polygamy business. Also, the political talk about the Mormon plan to conquer the whole world, overthrow governments, and that kind of thing.”

“What is it you want me to do?” asked Caroline.

“A few months ago we got to thinking that if we could get an attractive female writer to go to Nauvoo—the Mormon city on the Mississippi—in disguise, as a schoolteacher or something, and live among the Mormons,

she just might get a marriage proposal to become a plural wife to one of the Mormon leaders.”

Caroline was speechless, finding it hard to believe Mr. Sears was serious.

“Naturally the woman would be curious, wanting lots of questions answered before entering such a relationship. She would get the whole story, not only the polygamy stuff, but the revolutionary information too, and who knows what else.”

“Is that what you want me to do?”

“Yes,” he responded in a matter-of-fact manner. “I see a first-person story, you telling every detail of your adventure, climaxed with your escape just before the plural ceremony is to take place. You would be a national heroine. You would make a fortune in royalties.”

“I don't know,” said Caroline. “Sounds like a dirty job, not something I'd be proud to write home to Mother about.”

“Dirty!” he exploded, standing up. “Those Mormons with their plural wifery are striking a vital blow at the very institution that made this country great—the family. And they would overthrow our government, too, with their ‘Kingdom of God.’

“By exposing the Mormons you would be exposing a great evil,” he continued. “You would be a heroine, a patriot. What do you think?”

“Sounds kind of risky,” responded Caroline, wishing Mr. Sears had proposed something else for her to write. “You're asking me to be a spy, to make friends under false pretenses, to deceive people who have never done anything to me. I don't know.”

“I don't want you to do it if you don't feel good about it,” said Mr. Sears. “But should you decide to do it, we are prepared to give you a two-hundred-fifty-dollar cash advance and a ten-percent royalty on every book sold.”

Caroline had never seen two hundred fifty dollars at one time in her life. She had not made that much money her whole first year at the *Inquirer*. Maybe the project wasn't so bad after all. She decided to ask another question.

“It could be dangerous, don't you think?”

“I agree. The Mormons probably wouldn't take kindly to discovering a journalist spy.”

“In order to ensure your secrecy,” he continued, “I have arranged a contact for you across the Mississippi in Iowa. A plantation owner with a strong dislike for Mormons. You can't trust the mail in Nauvoo. When you need to get a message to me, or send some of the manuscript, you can do it through this contact.”

He sat back down in his chair, leaned forward, and looked into Caroline's eyes.

“Will you do it? For your country? For the sacred institution of the family? To further your career as a writer? For the money?”

He made it sound so appealing, so easy, so right. Still, Caroline felt uneasy. So many unknowns, so risky. But would she ever get an opportunity like this again? And a two-hundred-fifty-dollar advance! She could buy her own carriage, make a down payment on a new house or a farm ...

She caught a brief glimpse of herself, disguised as a schoolteacher, interviewing Brigham Young himself. By comparison, the Sean O'Connor interview was child's play. Could she take such a big step and not stumble?

“Could I have a few days to think it over?” she asked.

“Why don't you stop in day after tomorrow, same time,” said Mr. Sears as he stood up to escort Caroline out of the building to her waiting carriage.

“Is there anything else you would like to know?” asked Mr. Sears as he helped Caroline into the carriage.

“No, I can't think of ... yes, there is one thing,” Caroline said. “Who is this contact I would be working with? Are you sure he can be trusted, that he won't betray me to the Mormons?”

“You won't have any worry there,” laughed Sears. “I know the fellow personally. He would never willingly aid the Mormons. His name is Boggs. Dick Boggs.”

Chapter 3

When Caroline boarded the *Osprey* at St. Louis for the last leg of her trip to Nauvoo, she was surprised to see the paddle-wheel steamer so crowded. It was the spring of 1845, and she soon learned the reason for the crowd. Her arrival in Nauvoo would coincide with the laying of the capstone on the Mormon temple, an event expected to attract thousands of spectators.

Circulating among the passengers, Caroline heard gossip that the temple would never be finished. The capstone ceremony meant that the walls were completed up to the square, but the roof and spire still needed to be built, as well as all the inside woodwork and plastering.

Being a handsome woman, some of the male passengers went out of their way to make conversation with Caroline. She took full advantage of the situation to learn all she could about Nauvoo and the Mormons. One fellow said the Mormons would be expelled or exterminated before the temple could be completed. Another suggested that a single match could settle the temple question once and for all.

Some of the passengers scoffed at the Mormon belief that once the temple was completed the Saints would receive supernatural powers through the mystical bestowal of endowments.

It soon became apparent to Caroline that the protests were too vehement, too loud. The gentiles were reacting too strongly to the

upcoming completion of the temple. She concluded that they really were afraid the Mormons might receive some magical powers.

Nevertheless, most of the passengers were in agreement that the Mormons wouldn't be around long enough to finish their temple. There were rumors that Brigham Young was going to lead his people west, possibly to California.

The thing that seemed to bother people most about Nauvoo and the Mormons was the lawlessness in the area. They felt Nauvoo was a haven for counterfeiters, horse thieves, killers, and organized banditti.

After Joseph and his brother Hyrum were killed the previous summer, the Illinois legislature had revoked the Nauvoo charter. The biggest city in Illinois, a frontier city at that, no longer had any legal peace-keeping machinery—no police, no courts. It really was a haven for criminals. The gentiles in the neighboring towns blamed the Mormons for the lawlessness. The Mormons blamed the state legislature, which had taken away the charter and its power to enforce the law.

When the Mormons reorganized the Nauvoo Legion under the direction of Hosea Stout in an effort to keep the peace and reestablish law and order, the neighboring communities feared the Mormons might be preparing to avenge the death of their prophet. The gap between the Mormons and their neighbors only widened. The Nauvoo Mormons were in a no-win situation.

There was talk about a trial going on in Burlington, Iowa, just across the river from Nauvoo. Two Mormons, the Hodge brothers, were on trial for killing and robbing a Mennonite minister and his son-in-law. The conversation among the passengers was how many other Mormons were engaged in these kinds of acts and not getting caught.

When the steamer stopped at Warsaw, only two stops away from Nauvoo, Caroline obtained a copy of the *Warsaw Signal*, the local newspaper, and retired to her cabin to brief herself on the local news. She was surprised, even shocked, at the bluntness of the front page article about Nauvoo. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* didn't publish those kinds of stories, not regularly, anyway.

The story, by Tom Sharp, blasted the Mormons for running counterfeiting operations in Nauvoo. It accused them of having three coin presses and quoted the dead prophet as having bragged in public that his own mint produced better coins than the U.S. Mint.

Caroline read the paper from front to back, hoping there might be something on polygamy at Nauvoo, the subject of the proposed book. There was nothing.

She pondered the city Nauvoo, the biggest city in Illinois, with a population of more than twelve thousand people. Five years earlier it had been nothing but a swamp. She wondered about the mysterious temple, why the Mormons would put so much time and money into a building they would soon have to leave behind. She remembered reading about Joseph Smith's murder the past summer, how his death was expected to bring about the end of the Mormon movement. To everyone's surprise, the Mormons pulled together, stronger than ever, under the forceful direction of Brigham Young, a man with only eleven days of formal schooling, who misspelled his own name on his first marriage application.

There were a lot of mysteries about Nauvoo and the Mormons, many unanswered questions. One thing she did know: Nauvoo was a mighty interesting place, teeming with opportunity for an enterprising journalist. She was on leave from her newspaper with the understanding she would send in articles on the Mormons and Nauvoo under the pen name of Carol Austin. But even more important was the book contract with Sears & Chadwick Publishing Company.

Nauvoo was the place to be, where things were happening, where history was being written, possibly the most exciting place on the North American continent in 1845. And Caroline was going to write about it.

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