

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

### Exerts of the Autobiography of Joseph Holbrook 1806-1885

#### Summer 1832

In the course of the summer many vague reports were in circulation about a certain sect of people who were called Mormonites. In the course of the season my Aunt Phebe Angel and her family moved from Rhode Island to Genesee County about the 1st day of September, 1832. I heard there was to be a Mormon meeting in China, four miles distant. I said I would go and hear this strange sect but upon arriving and waiting some time at the place of the meeting, the Elder John P. Greene sent word by his son Even W. Green and Lorenzo D. Young that he would not be able to attend. Mr. Green had sent by the bearers two of the papers the Evening and Morning Star printed in Jackson County, Missouri, containing the articles of the church and also the prophecy of Enoch which they requested a Mr. Carline, a universal preacher, to read to the congregation. They made a few remarks after they were read which gave me some little light as to Mormonism. I met the young man in the floor of the school house and asked them where I could get a Book of Mormon. They said they did not know. I then told them I would go 50 miles the next day to get one if they could direct me where. They said they could not tell me. I told them where I lived and if they could direct any elder there in the future, they would be welcome as I wished to learn more about this new revelation to man.

About this moment my cousin, Mary Ann Angel heard my anxiety to get a Book of Mormon, and whispered to me and said she had one she would lend me in about two weeks as she had it promised for that time. I said I would go home with her and see it. She said I could do so. I saw the Book of Mormon and read the testimony of the witnesses and looked at some of the gospel. I felt much rejoiced - to think that an angel had come from God and brought such good news. I thanked my cousin for the favor of seeing the book, hoping she would not disappoint me in having the privilege of reading it in two weeks. The weeks passed away and I thought much of Mormonism, I believed all I heard and saw. I felt much to rejoice for the words came often to



**Judge Joseph Holbrook**

my mind. "Blessed are ye for ye believe and have not seen." The two weeks brought my cousin Mary Ann Angel with the Book of Mormon to my house with her father James Angel and the Mormon Elder John P. Greene. I spent two or three hours with them while my wife was getting dinner. This was on Friday and I commenced reading that evening, but being brought up not to spend any time on a weekday to read, I thought I must work and as my cart was in the field where I left it the day before where I was digging potatoes, I went to digging potatoes, but soon found I could not content my mind at work.

I returned to the house, took the Book of Mormon, and read for a few hours but as this was so unusual a thing for me to stop work in the daytime, my wife became alarmed and thought I had better be at work than spending the time reading such deception, which called my attention again to my potato digging. I had not dug long before I wished with all my heart I knew all there was in that book. I went out into a large place nearby where the thistles were very large and thick. I knelt down to pray. I no sooner closed my eyes than it seemed as though the whole thistle plantation was in motion. I opened my eyes. I could see nothing the matter. I closed

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

my eyes the second time when it seemed as if there was a whistle wind among the thistles, yet I felt no wind. I continued my prayer for the forgiveness of my sins and for the Lord to lead me right and show me the truth of Mormonism. When I rose, I said I would go to the house and read the Book of Mormon, work or no work. This was the after-part of Saturday. I read that day and night late. On Sunday, I read again. My wife took the child in the morning and went about 3/4 mile to my brother's, saying she would not be in the house and hear such nonsense. I read and prayed a number of times that day, being all alone and marveled much that the thistle should be so troubled at my prayers and my wife should be so disturbed she could not stay at home for she was always fond of sitting down and reading evenings and Sundays. I read the Book of Mormon through in two days and three nights and carried it home on a Monday morning to my cousin, Mary Ann Angel. She asked me what I thought of it. I told her I believed it was true and that God was at the bottom of the work. She said she felt glad for she believed also but had not said much about it. I told her I would like to see some of the Mormon elders. She said she would send them along to my house, if she had an opportunity. I thanked her and told her I was ready to fulfill my promise to her some few years before that I would have religion when the right kind came along and I believed this was the right kind.

About this time, one of my neighbors brought me a subscription paper to sign to pay a minister missionary from Massachusetts to the heathen in Weathersfield. He said he would preach one year for \$300.00 so I signed for \$1.00 which he said was liberal seeing I did not belong to any church. I told him that I did not know that I should ever hear him preach but someone else would and that would keep them out of greater mischief.

These things passed along for some time when Elder John P. Greene called and stayed all night with me much satisfaction concerning the coming forth of the Book of Mormon of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. I became more and more established as to the truth every day of my life as things came to my mind. My connections became much alarmed about my being a Mormon and my grandfather Abraham Morton on my mother's side and my Uncle Benjamin Morton called at my house one day and inquired as to my faith in Mormonism. I told them

I believed it was true so far as I could see and I was glad of it.

They then raised their objections which were, I was bringing disgrace upon myself and family and upon my connections which were, they said, there was not another young man in the country for the time had minded the public feelings that I had and they said that if I wanted to be religious they thought I could be as well suited in the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist or some other as to be led away after vain delusion.

I told them that so far as disgracing myself was concerned I cared but little ABOUT it, but for their sakes, I might feel somewhat different. I told them I would say nothing about Mormonism for two or three weeks and try my feelings but if it was true I should know it and embrace it. They went away quite satisfied for they knew my promise was good to be carried out and lived to.

But to me it was a long three weeks for when I was in company and heard derision made of Mormonism my conscience would smite me and say, "You know that it is true," but I kept my word until the three weeks were up and they thought I would never say any more about it. But at the expiration of the three weeks I was invited to the raising of a frame barn when one of the neighbors said I understand you have given up Mormonism. I told them I had been under promise of friends for a few weeks and that I was free to speak my mind again and that Mormonism was true. My grandfather Morton and uncle were in hearing [distance], and their hopes were blasted. I further said that from that time forth, I would speak of the truths of Mormonism. I felt much relieved from that time forth.

Mr. Blanchard, the missionary I had signed the dollar for his preaching, was very concerned about me and my family. He told my wife in my absence falsehoods about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., etc., which kept her in much fear also as she thought I was about to deceive her as well as myself, but still I believed Mormonism.

As there had been no meeting in this vicinity, I had to catch what I could from the Bible as the Book of Mormon had been a key to the Bible to me and it was now a new book, having the seals broken, light and life and salvation on its pages.

In December [1832] one night, I dreamed I was in

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

a certain city where people were engaged in their various business matters when all of a sudden a voice was heard from the heavens saying, "Up, get ye out of this city for behold I will destroy this people, and flee ye into the west." The people all heard the voice and knew it was from heaven. They halted, looked amazed for a moment and then pursued their course as before. Shortly the voice was heard the second time. The people were seemingly less alarmed than before and again the third time. [The voice] spoke the third time the same words with the same warning, but the people paid no attention to it, so I stopped and marveled and said I am not going to stay here so I started out of the city to the west. I found about a dozen more had taken the same warning as myself and we all met at the outside of the city. We went down a long hill when we came into a large valley running north and south and also a large river running in the midst of the valley running north. It was both wide and deep and there appeared no way to cross the river. Some said let's go up the river and others said let's go down the river, but I said we were commanded to go to the west. I am going right straight into the river. I no sooner got into the river than I found myself on the other bank on the west side and it was said unto me, you are now baptized. I thought that those who were with me on the other side were with me now, but I did not see how they came.

Now there were three large roads presented before me. One led partly up the river bearing around a hill, one partly down the river bearing around the same hill, while the other went straight forward up the hill, but the hill looked hard to ascend while those wound around to the right and left appeared easy and would finally come to the same spot at the top of the hill. The travel in each road was about equal. Those that were with me said, let's take the right or left hand road, it will take us much easier to the top of the hill, but I said we are to go straight to the west. I am going to take the middle road up the hill. As the several roads were sandy or loamy, I could see the footsteps of men and women and children who had traveled up those roads before me. And as I began to travel up the straight forward road up the hill, it did seem as though the hill became more level, but after traveling on for awhile there was a very bad place in the hill. There were roads that turned off at the foot of this

bad hill to right and left and appeared to wind around the hill and come to the top. The same arguments were used by those that were with me as before that it would be much easier for [us] to take these winding roads that lead around the hill for what is the use of being so particular which road we travel if we only get to the top of the hill.

I told them I would not turn away from the straight forward road although it did appear that nearly one-half of the people did turn away from the straight forward road. And I did not see them at the top of the hill. Thus I continued my journey finding often a bad hill in the straight forward road while the byroads at the foot of each hill took away much of the travelers and as I came near the end of my journey the obstacles in the road were much more hideous to look at while the byroads look much more pleasant. At last I came to the top of the last hill on a level plain. The road had become a small path. I turned around to see what had become of those who had left the straight forward road when it was said to me, "Few there are that will ever come to the top of the hill, few there are that will be saved." I marveled greatly and thanked the Lord that He preserved me to come to the top of the hill on a level with my brethren while thousands that had set out on the same journey had turned away at the bottom of the hill in those byroads and are lost, while the roads became as on a level with my brethren while thousands that had set out were lost, while the roads became plain before me that I saw every road that turned away was wrong. They would fork and those forks would fork again until they ended in total dimness where there is no road. And those travelers often wandering for thousands of years before they could again reach the bottom of the hill and have the privilege of coming up as before. And these that turned away near the top of the hill or near the end of the journey, it took much the longest. I looked to see if my wife was coming, saying, I think she will be along soon as she at this time didn't fully believe Mormonism, and I saw the city I had left given over to destruction of every kind by the judgments of God and the wickedness of the people and lo and behold I awoke. It was a dream.

About the last of December 1832, when going to a mill, I met two elders, Aaron C. Lyons and Leonard Rich, from Warsaw, about 12 miles distant. They in-

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

formed [me] there would be a meeting on the 6th of January 1833, at Elder Lyons' house and invited me to come down and bring my wife and those who would like to come.

### Baptism

On Saturday, January 5, 1833, I took my ox team and cart with my wife Nancy, my Aunt Phebe Angel and cousin Mary Ann Angel and went to Warsaw to Elder Aaron C. Lyons to be there on Sunday. Brother Lyons gave us a cheerful welcome on our arrival that night. In the morning I told Brother Lyons and Rich I would like to be baptized if they thought I was worthy as I had brought my clothes for that purpose. So after breakfast I was baptized with my Aunt Phebe Angel by Leonard Rich, Mary Ann having been baptized about one week before. We were confirmed by Aaron C. Lyons about 11:00 o'clock A.M. They had a meeting, the first I had ever been to. Different elders occupied the time during the day and evening. Windsor C. Lyons then spoke in tongues which was the first I had ever heard. My wife became convinced that Mormonism was true. On Monday, the 7th day of January [1833] she was baptized also by Leonard Rich and confirmed by Aaron C. Lyons. I was also ordained a teacher in the Church of Christ under the hands of Aaron C. Lyons, a high priest, and was directed to teach the principles to all who might wish to hear, and received my license which I shall enclose in this journal.

I returned home on the same day much rejoiced to think that my wife was with me in the faith of the gospel, but found that I got myself into business for I met with opposition on all hands and from every quarter, but this kept me the more faithful. I visited my brother Chandler and his wife and told them there would be a meeting the next week at my house and invited them to attend with sister, and also a meeting at my Aunt Phebe Angel's in China. I continued to go from house [to house] and carry the Book of Mormon to them and try to get them to read it. The result was that my brother, Chandler, and his wife, Eunice, my sister, Phebe, and Dwight Hardin, who was boarding at my house, father Owens and mother and many others in the vicinity were added to the church in the course of a few months. Brother Lyons and Rich and some other elders met with

us often until the church in this place numbered about 85 members. Many had the gift of tongues and interpretation with prophesying by the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the church did meet together often to preach, exhort and speak to another of the things of the kingdom which gave them much love for one another, strengthening their faith, etc.

On March 18, 1833, I took a journey on foot to Kirtland, Ohio to see the Prophet Joseph Smith. I visited the prophet's house and found him away from home. I also visited Sidney Rigdon and father Joseph Smith and some other of the elders and gained much strength and faith and hope to the comfort of myself and which I hope hereafter might be to others.

In the course of a few days, Joseph the prophet came home so that I got a chance to see him when he told me much of the work of the last days in which I hope to ever prove of great value to me. Mary Johnson, a sister of Luke and Lyman Johnson, died at the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.'s home, age about 15 years, which caused much gloominess at the prophet's house. Yet, I fully believe in the gospel of the kingdom which was being set up in the last days.

The prophet said, "Go and prosper and be faithful and the Lord would help me." I then took my leave of the brethren for home and found all well. [I] traveled 400 miles.

### First Mission

On April 12, 1833, I was ordained an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ under the hands of Reynolds Cahoon. A high priest from Kirtland in the town of Warsaw, state of New York, continued to meet with the branch twice a week and in a while we had good meetings.

On April 29 [1833], I took leave of my family for a mission to the world with brother Truman O. Angel to the east. [We] traveled 14 miles to Warsaw. On the 30th [we] traveled 26 miles. We met with the brethren of the church of Genesee, held a prayer meeting and found there was a wrong spirit with some of the brethren, the presiding elder even forbidding us to believe in the vision of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon but as there was present in the branch Lyman E. Johnson and Orson Pratt, who would stay and correct the errors. We left the

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

next day, May 1 [1833] and traveled 15 miles and held a meeting in the evening. May 2 [1833] we held a meeting in the same place by the request of the people.

May 3rd [1833] we traveled 30 miles and called a number of times, but the people were unwilling to hear of Mormonism. We took dinner in the town of Manchester where the Book of Mormon was found. The gentlemen did not believe that Joseph Smith was the author of said book as he was well acquainted with him and did not know any harm of him until the Book of Mormon came forth, but he believed the Smith family were honest, industrious farmers.

May 4th [1833] we traveled 11 miles and found where we could have a meeting. On Sunday, May 5th [1833] we held a meeting. The people came out of curiosity more than to know about the requirements of heaven.

May 6th [1833] we traveled 31 miles and found much trouble to get a place for the night as we were without purse or scrip. We were refused six times and at last were kept at a widow's house.

May 7th [1833] we traveled two miles and spoke from house to house.

May 8th [1833] we traveled 26 miles and spoke from house to house and left a warning voice. We came to my Uncle Walter Allen's and found him near his end. We stayed at the request of the friends May 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 [1833]. We held a meeting and spoke much to the people on various things of the kingdom. As uncle died in two or three days, I stayed until he was buried. The doctor held a council and opened his body after he was dead and said his death was brought on by the fever and ague in the first instances. His funeral sermon was preached by a Baptist minister. My Aunt Harriet Allen was my father's sister. He left a good estate worth about \$10,000.00.

May 15 [1833] I took my leave of my aunt and family in their deep mourning for the loss of their dear husband and father, it being the last time I ever saw her, and traveled 41 miles to Joel Holbrook, my great uncle. I stayed all night and sold them a Book of Mormon. This is the last account I have of them. May 16 [1833] we traveled 16 miles and spoke much to the people of the work in the last days. May 17 [1833] we traveled 25 miles. May 18 [1833] we traveled 20 miles. May 19 [1833] we stayed

at Mr. Woods' and had much opportunity bearing testimony to the truth of Mormonism but they were afraid it might be true, but cared little about it.

May 20 [1833] we traveled 25 miles and passed through the city of Albany to Mr. Isaac Smith and stayed with him May 21 [1833] and bore testimony to the truth of Mormonism. This [was the] place I had worked at seven and one-half months, six years before, Mr. Michael Smith being dead since I had been absent.

May 22 [1833] we traveled 38 miles, May 23 [1833] 45 miles, and May 24 [1833] traveled eight miles to Mr. Chency Olander, my brother-in-law's and reasoned with them on Mormonism of the last days, but without any hope for them being any better for our teachings. May 25 [1833] we traveled five miles and came to my grandfather Holbrook's and stayed May 26, 27 and 28 [1833] and visited some of my old acquaintances. My Uncle Erasmus Holbrook made derision and mocked at the idea of Mormonism being true. The rest of the family gave no particular heed to anything I could offer them so I left them in the hands of a merciful God who shall judge.....the quick and the dead. This is the last time I ever saw any of them although this was the place that I lived and sprung into manhood and my word would have been good for anything but Mormonism.

May 29 [1833] we traveled 42 miles in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, and came to North Providence, May 30 [1833] we conversed with the people, it being the first place we had met with where there was any attention paid to our words. On May 31 [1833] we held a meeting in the evening and visited from house to house and did what we could in this way.

June 1, 1833, we went into the city of Providence and proclaimed the word to those who felt disposed to hear. June 2, 1833, we baptized Franklin W. R. Monroe and Mary Ann Monroe, his wife, they being about 25 to 30 years old. We held a meeting at 5:00 o'clock in a factory village and had a good attention paid by the large assembly. June 3, 4, and 5 [1833] we held a meeting and baptized James Patten who had been a Methodist preacher from England. I had a dream that I was at work scoring a stick of timber that it was all rotten but that the heart was good and if I could score said stick and get rid of the rotten sap, it would make a sound stick; if not, the rot would spoil it and I awoke. I thought it was James Patten

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

I was at work with.

June 6, 7, 8 and 9 [1833] we held meetings and ordained James Patten an elder and Franklin W. H. Monroe a teacher. Brother Wilbore came and another who had been baptized a year before by Samuel Smith and Orson Hyde and they formed a branch of the Church of Latter-day Saints.

June 10 [1833] we took leave of our brethren in Providence and took the steamboat for New York City, arriving there the next morning. We took a steamboat for Albany, went on foot to Schenectady. Then we took the canal for Rochester, from whence we took it on foot to Weathersfield. We arrived June 17 [1833], being about seven weeks. We traveled about 1200 miles, held 14 meetings, baptized three, besides bearing testimony to hundreds of families, etc.

June [1833] [we met] with the brethren in the branch where I lived and found all brethren well, but some had begun to relax their duties in which they began to be somewhat cold and indifferent. I was appointed to take the presidency of the branch, it now numbering about 80 members in good standing as Brothers Lyons and Rich had emigrated to Kirtland, Ohio.

I continued to meet with the branch twice a week, administering the sacrament every two weeks. On November 26, 1833, we had another daughter born in Weathersfield. We named her Charlotte Holbrook after my Aunt Charlotte Holbrook, my father's youngest sister.

In March Orson Hyde and Orson Pratt from Kirtland visited the branch and informed us that there was revelation for the brethren to take a journey to the land of Zion. I put down my name, Chandler Holbrook and Otis Shumway, making three in all and to be in Kirtland the first day of May [1834] for to go to the land of Zion with our brethren who should assemble there. I had not sold my farm, although I had offered it for sale from the time I came into the church up to now, but I soon found a purchaser for which I received a span of mares, a good two-horse wagon (\$150.00), it being about one-third of its value. I left about 25 ton of good English hay, a new farming mill, all kinds of farming tools which I could not sell because I was a Mormon, but to obey the revelations, I was full resolved.

April 6 [1834] I baptized Margaret Francher, her

husband did not belong to the church. April 14 [1834] I started with my family from Weathersfield in company with my brother, Chandler Holbrook and his family and Solomon Angel and his family which composed our little band for the land of Zion. We arrived in Kirtland in two weeks with our brethren, Brother Shumway did not go to the land of Zion as he agreed to but Solomon Angel did which made the three from the branch and may the blessing of the Lord be fulfilled upon his head forever and ever.

After our arrival in Kirtland, we put up our teams at father Joseph Smith's and went to Newberg about 15 miles to our Uncle Noah and Joseph Morton's, my mother's brother's, who I had not seen for years, some 20 years. Although I was named for my Uncle Joseph, we had a good visit but they could not believe in Mormonism. We returned to Kirtland and paid \$5.00 cash to Reynolds Cahoon, one of the building committee for the Lord's house in Kirtland. I gave Solomon Angel \$750.00 in cash to help his family so that he could go to the land of Zion.

### Zions Camp

The first of May [1834] we left Kirtland for New Portage, about 50 miles, where the brethren were to meet with us for Missouri. At this place on May 6, 1834, the [Zion's] camp of the Saints was organized for our journey by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Every man gave into the treasury, the amount of means he had for the journey except those that had families who were directed to provide for themselves inasmuch as they had means to do so. The company was divided into messes of ten persons each with a captain to each ten, and over each five, ten or fifty persons there was a captain of fifty and over each hundred, a captain, according to the ancient order of Israel.

We were led by the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. and pitched our tents by the way as we traveled having the most perfect order in our camp, having at the sound of the bugle in the morning and evening prayers in each tent of ten men. While everyone was to be engaged in preparing food, looking after teams, etc., as they were organized and appointed their several duties by the Prophet of the Lord, who was our leader.

We had many good instructions given us while on

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

this journey which if I could have been prepared to have kept a proper record, I should have been much benefited thereby and as I have not the list of the names before me, I will give only some of those I best remember who formed a part of our company, viz: Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Joseph Young, Lyman Wight, Hyrum Smith, William Smith, Israel Barlow, Amasa Lyman, George A. Smith, Wilford Woodruff, John M. Chidester and wife, Alanson Ripley and wife, Chandler Holbrook, John Tanner, Nathan Tanner, William Smith, Herman T. Hyde, Milton Holmes, Levi Hancock, Martin Harris, Leonard Rich, Jess Harmon, Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Johnson, Luke Johnson, Zerubbabel Snow, Jacob Gates and wife, David Patten, Warren Parrish, Jackson Smith, John Fossett, Almon W. Babbit, Eleazer Miller, George Crooks [?], Zebedee Coltrin, Harvey Brown, Alden Childs, Mr. [Joseph] Nichols, Joseph Hancock, Solomon Humphrey, Martin Allred, Solon Foster, John D. Parker, Jedediah M. Grant, Frederick G. Williams, Charles C. Rich, Solomon Angel, John Carter, Ezra Thayer, Samuel Brown, Orson Hyatt, Roger Orton, Sylvester Smith, Elias F. Wells, Joseph B. Noble, James Ive, James Foster, Joseph Holbrook and family.

We having teams, we progressed on our journey at a rapid state considering the bad roads in a new country, often 40 miles per day. We generally lay by ... on the Sabbath and held meetings on the campgrounds, which was very interesting and instructive to us.

I had the bad fortune for one of my horses to die near Jacksonville in Illinois, but I bought another one for \$55.00 in cash, so I proceeded on my journey with the [Zion's] camp. When we came to the Salt River Creek in Missouri, about 50 miles west of Louisiana, we tarried for some three or four days to wash, etc. Then Brother Joseph Smith counseled those that had families to get houses for them, and for the man to go forward with the camp. So I provided a house for my family as decided and was about to leave my family as was the rest of the brethren who had wives with them. Then Brother Joseph Smith said, if the sisters were willing to undergo a siege with the camp they could all go along with it, whereupon they said they could and said they liked Brother Joseph much better than before for the privilege he gave them of continuing with the camp. At this place as at many others on the road, we had many of

the brethren who united with the camp. We were often met by strangers who would interrogate us as to where we were going and what our business was, etc. Then they would often threaten us if we went further, etc. and said that we had a standard raised with "death" on one side and "blood" on the other until we were forced to raise a standard with "peace" on both sides which they could not hardly believe when they saw it for they were so prejudiced in their feelings they could not hardly believe their better senses. And thus we continued our journey.

On the 23 mile prairie below Richmond we camped between the forks of Fishing River. One fork which we crossed this evening was about up to our axletrees of our wagons. We camped about one mile west of said fork near a meetinghouse where we were met by many of our enemies as we had been for some days past, who swore they would send us all to hell before morning and if any were left, we should not be spared in the event to tell the story alive. And thus we were threatened on every side with mobs enough to make any man quail who had not the spirit of God upon him. But Brother Joseph the prophet said, stand still and see the salvation of God.

About sundown it began to rain like torrents with thundering and lightning and dark enough to prevent anyone from being able to find their way. While the hail flew in some degree upon the camp, a mile to the north of our camping, limbs were broken off the trees, the ground covered with leaves and the herbage destroyed which made the country desolated and prevented any harm from befalling our camp that night. To our surprise we found that the two forks of Fishing River were swollen so as to be utterly impossible to pass, being it was said 40 feet deep on each side of us about one and one-half miles. We were forced to continue on those grounds the next day, there being a home mill about one mile up of us which afforded us flour for our comfort. The next day we moved north about four miles to Brethren Coopers near a prairie.

At this place we tarried some three or four days and were visited by a delegation from our enemies, consisting of Judge [John F.] Ryland [and] Colonel Sconce of Clay County and Neil Gilliam the sheriff of Clay County in which they wished interview with our Prophet Jo-

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

seph Smith which resulted in their promising protection to us in this state of Missouri, as well as our brethren whom we had come to redeem and who were driven from Jackson County the season before.

Thereupon the revelation [was] given on Fishing River, Missouri, June 22, 1834, showing the mind of God concerning the redemption of Zion, etc. About this time the cholera began to make its appearance in our [Zion's] camp and my wife was one of the first that was taken down with it, but she recovered from it in a few days, being administered to by Brigham Young and others for her recovery.

We removed from here to Clay County to Brother [George] Burketts below Liberty when a number of our brethren were taken with cholera which so frightened our enemies that they did not dare come to us or have us come near them which relieved us from further danger from our enemies. The next day the camp was broken up by the order of Joseph Smith, Jr., the Prophet of God, to meet again in one week at the house of Colonel Lyman Wight. We left the camp around June 26, 1834, and traveled about six miles and west of Liberty five miles and stopped near Mr. Michael Arthur was building a grist mill and had a number of the brethren employed in and about said mill. The next day my brother Chandler and myself went out to cut some house logs but we found ourselves too weak to chop and had to return to our wagons entirely tired out. A brother Lynes Nantels [?] being present, said he lived about a mile from that place and he had rented a stable and corn crib and that we were welcome to use them if we liked. In the morning my brother's wife, Eunice Holbrook, was very sick with the cholera. We therefore thought it best to get some place as soon as possible so we removed to the stable and corn crib, although it was raining a perfect shower. By the middle of the forenoon, my brother's wife was cramping with most violent spasms for life, but Cyrus Zaddacks [?] and Carkis Branger [?] took her into the house and nursed her with the greatest attention so that in a few days she had escaped the hands of the destroyer, but some 17 of our [Zion's] camp fell victims in a few days to the cholera. I moved into the corn crib and my brother into the stable as the brethren who had been driven from Jackson County last fall had occupied all the houses in the county, it being new but few to be had.

### Second Mission

In ten weeks I had built more houses on a piece of Congress land on Schoal Creek of 80 acres, and my brother and I moved into it. After a few weeks, I rented a farm nearby of 20 acres, improved for three years, after which I rented my house on the 22nd of December, 1834. On the 23rd of December, 1834, I took my leave of my family and started in company with Amasa Lyman, Herman T. Hyde and Milton Holmes. We preached on our way whenever we could get a privilege, sometimes going a day and night without food in the winter season across the prairies with the houses 25 miles apart which made it very severe upon me until we came to the Salt River church where there was a conference held. On account of being lame, it was counseled that Milton Holmes, my former partner, should take William Ive and go to Tennessee and that I remain a few days with the church and Martin Allred and go on a heart mission in the part of Missouri and Illinois. We preached as we traveled and in [February 1835] we settled some difficulty in that branch and left Brother Esquin Dazartha [?] and crossed the river at Quincy, Illinois. We preached a few times in the vicinity of the Mississippi River and returned by the way of Louisiana to the Salt River church and from thence to Clay County. [We found] all well but living on bread and water as there was not much chance for anything better to be had but bacon which took the money to purchase it. I was absent about eight weeks and I continued to have meetings at my house about once or twice a week, trying to settle difficulties in the church, preaching, etc. April 28, 1835, I baptized John Evans, Emily Evans and Rhoda Gifford. In June [1835] I baptized Darias Gibbs.

In July [1835] I received a letter from my brother-in-law, Dwight Harding, stating that he and Alvin Owen's family were on the way from Ohio and stopped on Chariton and were all sick and not able to take care of themselves. My brother and myself started immediately and found them all sick. We made every exertion in our power to remove them and found the consolation to bring them to Clay County, a distance of 100 miles where we could make them comfortable.

### Third Mission

On August 31, 1836 [1835], I took another mission to the east in company with Ellis Eames and Ly-

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

man Webbs. After traveling about 100 miles I became very sick so that I could not sit up much of my time and stopped with a brother Michaels for about four weeks, who paid every attention to me that they could. I had an opportunity to send for my family. My wife and Elder Evans came with a one-horse wagon with a bed in it and [I was] very glad to see her after undergoing so much sickness. I was about six days going home 100 miles. The evening before my return, my mother died of the quick consumption. My neighbors brought her to my home for burial so that I could see her remains and she was buried on one corner of a ten-acre lot on the same 80 that I first built my house upon two years before, in Clay County on a rise of ground west of a small creek on the north end of said 80, it going the only way I have of describing the spot one mile north of Shoal Creek. I was very weak and often fainted when I moved from my bed. In the course of the fall and winter, I so far gained my health as to be able to work again, which my family much needed. June 26, 1836, I married Darias S. Gibbs to Miss Lydia Evans at her father's house, Elder Evans in Clay County, Missouri.

### Far West Caldwell County

After the first of July of this same year [1836], there began to be a great excitement between the citizens of Clay County and the Latter-day Saints and it appeared that war was even at our doors, when some of the citizens of Clay County came forward as mediators and called a meeting of the citizens and some of our leaders of our church. It was agreed that one-half of the Latter-day Saints would leave the county in six months and the remainder as soon after as possible and not think of putting another crop in that county or the people would not suffer them to remain longer and they, the citizens of Clay [County] would send a delegation into the north counties of Caldwell with our leaders to induce the few settlers in said counties to sell out their possessions to the Latter-day Saints so that the Church would have the soil of the county to themselves. When a meeting was called of the citizens of Caldwell, they agreed to sell out some of the Church property, when my brother and myself proposed to take our team and go out Shoal Creek near where Far West was afterward

laid out by the Church.

We camped on the creek for about one week, exploring the county with Bishop [Edward] Partridge and John Correll, the surveyor, for the purpose of making locations for the church. Bishop Partridge counseled me with my brother, Chandler Holbrook, and Benjamin Covey and Jacob Yates. Mr. Cusie [?] [offered to sell his] place of 40 acres with ten acres of corn upon it for \$300.00. We all four went and bought it. I turned out my wagon for \$55.00 and gave my note for the other \$20.00 in six months, which gave me the right of ten acres undivided in the 4th acres.

The place I had rented was yet one year and one-half before the time expired; I had paid my rent for the whole time and I could do nothing more than give it up without receiving anything for it. We had to sell our corn in Clay County for 12 1/2 cents per bushel or haul it 60 miles and all our things in proportion which made a great sacrifice. The brethren continued moving night and day all the fall and winter until they were about all out of Clay County by spring. I was greatly blessed for in six months I had 100 acres entered and my same old wagon back again and out of debt. This was on Plum Creek, three miles west of Far West.

The whole country was soon settled by the Saints from Clay County and other emigrants from the east and everything seemed to flourish with the people that could make them happy.

My wife Nancy had a son born January 31, 1837, at about 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon and I named him Joseph Lamont Holbrook at my house on Plum Creek. I have built a house and assisted others in building so that I had plenty to do and the brethren paid me well for it. I built an office for Bishop Edward Partridge in Far West and finished it. I also built a dwelling house for him. I built two other dwelling houses, for Morgan Gardner and George Slade; I also built a school house in the district where I lived, 22 feet square, besides farming considerable each year.

I married Brother John Newberry to Miss Lucinda Williams of Clinton County, December 24, 1837. I often helped the quorum of elders in their meetings, with all other church business that I was called to act in. May 19, 1838, I was ordained into the First Quorum of Seventies under the hands of Levi Hancock at a general confer-

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

ence of Seventies held at Far West. About this time there was a military company formed in our neighborhood by electing Amasa Lyman captain and myself first lieutenant of said company and was commissioned by the Governor Lilburn W. Boggs and I gave to the church ten acres of land being in Clinton County for paying church debts, being July 23, 1838.

### Far West Temple Corner Stones

On the 1st day of July, 1838, the cornerstones of the temple were laid, they having been hauled to the spot before hand. My team helped to haul them. They were quarried from the ledge down west and were about seven feet long, four feet wide and two feet thick by the First Presidency, Joseph Smith, Jr., and counselors and others. An address of oration was delivered by Sidney Rigdon with cheering from the audience. There was a liberty pole on the public square of white oak some 60 feet in length but the lightning struck it in about three weeks and that caused it to lean about one-third way from the top and thus ended our liberties in Missouri.

### Gallatin Election Brawl

At the August election of Daviess County, the old citizens assembled and swore that no Latter-day Saint should be allowed to vote at that election, whereupon they fell upon John Butler who was unable to defend himself but others were bruised, etc. and some reported that they had killed two or three of the Mormons and would not give up their bodies to be buried, etc. I saddled my horse in Caldwell and went to Daviess County to learn how things were going as I had lately taken up some claims in that county and bought some city lots that I might have a home in that county as soon as I could build upon my claims. Upon arriving I found that no one had as yet been killed, but much threatening on the part of the old timers [had occurred]. We visited Mr. Adam Black, a justice of the peace, nearby and obtained from him a written certificate that he would administer the law in justice to Mormons or other citizens and we returned to Caldwell County with Joseph Smith and the rest of the brethren hoping that peace would again be restored. But things took a different course, for the old citizens continued their threats of driving the Mormons from Daviess County and from others out of the state as the most of the old citizens had sold their improvements

to our brethren and then they could again get back their improvements they had sold free, without any to hinder them as they had gotten their pay.

### Fort Leavenworth

About the first of October 1838, the western firm having heard that the government was about to let out a job for making roads from Fort Leavenworth south through the Indian country. They sent Esquire Bozarth [?] and myself to look out for such road and put in such bids as we might think proper. We proceeded to Fort Leavenworth on horse back from there south through the Delaware nations of Indians and stayed with them all night, and found them well to live, having good log cabins with fields of corn, etc. As we proceeded south across the Karo [?] River we came to the Shawnee Indians, the river being the line between the two tribes. We found them very much like their neighbors, enjoying civilization with fields of corn, their horses, meat stock, etc, until we came to the end of the second section on the south line of Jackson County and say the surveyors for said government road. We returned through Jackson County to Independence where said road was to be let out to the lowest bidders. We put in a sealed bid of \$14,000.00 for the two north sections of over 40 miles to grade and bridges to build. Then there were about 100 such bids put in for said road, many for double that of ours while there was some for less which relieved us from further duties.

### Missouri Mormon War

We thought of having traveled through the entire county of Jackson from the south to Independence, a distance of 25 miles on a divided ridge of prairies between the two rivers about six miles apart on a rolling divide 20 miles of which there was not an obstruction to prevent a plow, and timber on each side from two to three miles distant. This was the land once of our brethren, the first inheritance of the Saints and this was now in the hands of the enemies. We stopped and stayed all night with a Baptist who said he would not keep a Mormon in his house or on his plantation. He said many of the old chimneys were still standing where their houses had been burned and he seemed to be greatly pleased that the people of Daviess County would drive the Saints [out] as the people of Jackson had. At Indepen-

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

dence I saw the temple lot that had been dedicated and consecrated to the Lord of hosts by the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. as the capital of Zion in the last days and now the Saints are driven from Jackson County and their inheritance laid waste and no Mormon is safe in this county, if known. I being an eastern made, I said very little, but Esquire Bozarth being a southern man, passed very well. I said now the brethren are driven from Clay County and about to be driven from Caldwell and Daviess Counties and from the state. When shall we build the temple unto the most high God. I said that the Lord must truly work a work upon this land before this can be fulfilled so Lord, let it be.

As we tarried only about two hours in Independence, we crossed the Missouri River at the ferry for Clay County and felt that we were out from some of our enemies. We stayed all night in Clay and the next day went to Liberty where we heard that the mob was still raging against the Latter-day Saints with double vigor.

We hastened home as fast as we could. I got some cotton cloth and some other articles (I here enclose a bill of the goods) to take home with me. I stayed all night in the woods by some logs that were on fire. In the night it commenced snowing, [October] the 16th [1838]. The 17th of October [1838] in the morning we met General [Alexander W.] Doniphan troops of 100 men on their return home from Daviess County where they had been from Clay County two weeks before, saying they could do nothing with the mob. The trees were all loaded down with snow. In the course of two or three days, the snow had disappeared and we had good weather. I volunteered to go to the south line of the county of Caldwell next to Ray County to see what the mob in that quarter were about, with Brother Amasa Lyman. After staying about five days, we returned home without seeing anything of a mob. About this time word came that the mob had seized the public arms deposited in Richmond, Ray County, and were taking them to Daviess County to the mob. Ten of us volunteered to go in search of them. After riding about 16 miles we struck Richmond road and found they had not passed. We continued on said road about three miles on the open prairie and found a broken wagon and down in a ravine of high grass, we found hidden two large boxes containing United States rifles with their accoutrements.

In the course of another hour we found three men with another wagon on their way for the guns. We took the men and stolen guns to Far West where they were found guilty of siding and assisting the mob, contrary to law. After this I again went into the south part of the country with Brother Cudith [?]. Before we got far on our journey we heard that the mob, calling themselves militia were in that part of the country, but did not know their whereabouts. We continued on to near the county line and eight of the mob was nearby in hostile array. They stopped at a Brother [Nathan] Pinkham's, took his son [Nathan Pinkham, Jr.] and two other young men [William Seeley and Addison Green] as their prisoners, shot at and hit one of his cows, took his arms and told the old man he must leave before morning or they would kill him and his family. Upon hearing this, and that they had disarmed all the brethren in that section and threatened them with instant death if they did not leave that night for Far West as they would not come the next day, therefore, I in company with Brother [David] Juda started for Far West where we arrived about midnight.

### Battle of Crooked River

We informed our brethren of the danger there was in that quarter and about 60 men volunteered to go down and see what the mob was about. As we got near Shoal Creek one of our men by the name of [Patrick O'Banion] was fired at in the main road, and died in a few hours afterward, the 25th of October, 1838.

As we still wished if possible to learn their object in coming into Caldwell County in the form of a mob to disturb the quiet citizens and disarming them, etc. The first we knew they commenced a brisk fire upon our whole body, shooting down many of our best brethren all around us and hollering so that we had no other course to take but to defend ourselves the best way we could, which soon gave us the grounds with the spoils of the camp. Among the dead and wounded was David W. Patten, one of the Twelve, shot through the chest. He died about 4:00 o'clock that day. [Patrick] O. Bennion was shot through the chest and died about the same time and Gideon Carter was left dead on the ground through a mistake, and [Drusilla] Hendricks who was shot through the cords of the neck and was entirely help-

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

less. [William] Seeley, one of the young men they took prisoner at Brother Pinkham's the evening before, was shot through the shoulder and one Lilburn Hodges was shot in the hip and one Eli Chase was shot in the knee with a number more slightly wounded. I was wounded in my left elbow with a sword after cutting through five thicknesses of cloth. It so fractured the bone that after the doctor had placed back the bones, it was very lame for some four months and so stiff that I could not feed myself with that hand. The battle of Crooked River began October 25, about daybreak, 1838. The whole country was in motion against the Saints and all were equally threatened with death without regard to age, sex or any other relief except such as would abandon their religious faith and unite with the mob in pursuing the Saints.

### Arrest of Joseph Smith

The brethren had gathered into Far West as much as they could for safety as the whole country was filled with the mob. There arrived in sight of Far West, October 29, 1838, 5,000 Missouri militia, ordered out by Governor Lilburn W. Boggs. The next day they sent in a flag of truce south of the town. Colonel G. [George] M. Hinkle went out to meet them and a conference ensued when Hinkle agreed to deliver Joseph Smith, Jr. with the heads of the Church into their hands by strategy. That evening Joseph Smith, Jr., the Mormon prophet, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Hyrum Smith and others went out with a flag of truce to meet another from our enemies, when Colonel Hinkle, then commanding the militia of Caldwell County said to our enemies who were approaching in lines all around our flag of truce and Joseph Smith, Jr. and those that were with him.

"Gentlemen, I now deliver to you Joseph Smith, Jr., the Mormon prophet. He is now in your hands as your prisoner."

At this moment the lines of our enemies began to ring with the most hideous yells that the Saints ever heard and could be heard for some miles around, of their achieved and treacherous victory. It was with the greatest trouble that they could keep their enemies from shooting them down as wild beasts in their camp. There was a court martial held in which they condemned the prisoners to be shot on the public square in Far West.

They still continued to take prisoners and threatened all that came into their war that they might torture them and force them to leave their religion.

### Siege of Far West

November 1, 1838, the brethren laid down their arms when they wore and all the town of Far West was put under guard. That day the troops, some 5,000, all mounted on horseback, marched through the town in the principle streets, abusing the Saints when they could meet with them.

About the second day our enemies carried away our Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., his brother Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wright and others for Jackson County under guard of their numerous arms which was one of the greatest trials I had witnessed, to see them pulled away with main strength, when their wives and children, fathers and friends clinging to them and crying and taking, as many supposed, their last look of farewell upon their Prophet, fathers upon their children, their wives and husbands all calculated to draw tears from the stoutest hardened hearts. But our enemies only continued to swear that we need not ever suppose we would see them alive again or hear their voices in our midst for they should die.

All the brethren were there drawn up in a hollow square on the public square in Far West. About this time General Clark arrived with about 6,000 more militia and still threatened the brethren with further violence, making them sign away a deed of trust to defray the expenses of the mob or army, of all they possessed either personal or real estate and leave the state the coming winter or spring and no further liberty would be granted them. At the same time they called out some 75 of our best men and took them to Richmond jail and put the rest under guard so that no one was at liberty to go for work or other things without a strong guard. They continued to make all kinds of property a common plunder, taking as prisoners wherever they could find any that they had any grudge against because they believed in the revelations of God.

The mob or militia burned my house, stole a valuable horse from me, killed my fat hogs and drove off my stock. I had some 300 bushels of corn taken from the crib; they fed or rats in the stack destroyed my hay

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

and left everything in a state of desolation from one side of the country to the other. [They] abused our sisters whenever they thought it best to suit their brutal and hellish desires.

November 4, 1838, [we had] a severe snowstorm and some very cold weather for some three weeks, which drove the troops out of the county except some few companies who said they were left to see that the Mormons left the state and also to continue to take the brethren prisoners. Thus my freedom and my life for three months were in constant danger as one old resident by the name of "Snodgrass" came with eight soldiers at one time to the house where I had been stopping a few days and made diligent search for me in every house in the neighborhood from top to bottom and swore they would take me to the battleground on Crooked River and there shoot me because I was unable to defend myself at the battle against my foes.

### Leaving Missouri

My wife had very poor health during the fall and winter by being exposed much to the inclement weather by having to remove from place to place as our house had been burned and we were yet left to seek a home wherever our friends could accommodate us and for my safety but as I cannot write one hundredth part of the suffering and destruction of this people who were in a flourishing condition a few months before but were now destitute. I could have commanded some \$2,000.00 but now I had only one yoke of oxen and two cows left.

As we found that there was no more peace or safety for the Saints in the state of Missouri, and that if the Church would make haste and move as fast as possible it would do much to relieve our brethren who were now in jail as our enemies were determined to hold them as hostages until the Church left the state so that every exertion was made in the dead of the winter to remove as fast as possible and for those whom they, our enemies, held the greatest spite, to leave their families, go without them, as I left my family with only 50 cents in cash for their comfort with three small children, viz, Sarah Lucretia Holbrook, Charlotte Holbrook, and Joseph Lamoni Holbrook. My wife was confined just one week from my departure from home and had a daughter and she was named Nancy Jane Holbrook, born Jan-

uary 27, 1839. On the 20th day of January 1839, I left home in the evening with Brother Nathan Tanner and Ethan Barrus [?]. We traveled that night so that the next day we were away from those that would seek to do us harm. We traveled 23 miles each day on foot alone by ourselves and on the 28th day of January, we crossed the Mississippi River at Hannibal and the next day, January 29 [1839], we came to Quincy, Illinois and found ourselves in a land of freedom once more by the help of God and his blessings.

I stopped with Brother Heman Hyde who had come on that far and stopped because of the difficulties of the Saints in Missouri the fall before. The brethren were continually coming from Quincy from Missouri as I had done, which made it a great burden on those few families of the Saints in this vicinity. [There was] but little employment at this season of the year and as I was not able to work on account of my lame arm which was entirely stiff at the elbow joint, I employed my time in the daytime by being about the city to find work for the brethren who were continually coming from Missouri. I lived on two meals a day so as not to incur more expense than necessary.

I stayed about a week when Jacob Gates came and asked if I would go into the country with him and be in his company so we would fare alike. So we each put all our money into one purse which made about one delaware. We then bought a yard of cotton cloth and made a bag of it, got some bread and raw pork and filled our bag and started on Saturday to seek our fortune in the county seat of Quincy on foot. When we were about six miles out, we met Nathan Barrows [Barrus ?] who left me at Quincy about one week before. He said he could not get any work and that he was hungry as he had not had half enough to eat since he left. We told him to come down to the creek nearby as we had bread and pork. After eating he said he felt much better. We then told him he had better go along with us and do the best we could. From this place we went toward Fairfield, as I had heard of a Methodist priest by the name of Thompson, that wanted some rails made. We arrived there a little after dark. The old priest was on his circuit preaching but his son who had charge of the business with the family was there, but they said it was Saturday night, that tomorrow was Sunday and that they did not know

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

so well about the rails, etc. I saw very soon the trouble was we were Mormons and they did not like to employ us. I told them I had come out on purpose to make the rails and [asked if] we could sleep by the fire and that we had bread with us to last until Monday and that we would go to work. It seemed rather hard for them to consent but at last they said we could stop. They kept a good lookout to see that we did not steal anything. That night we ate our bread and pork.

They seemed a little better satisfied with us the course of the day so that on Monday Brother Burrows [Barrus?] got some shoe making to do and Brother Gates and myself went into the timber to make rails. They said we might make 2,000 for \$15.00. As my arm was still stiff and sore, Brother Gates did the chopping and I went to splitting with one hand for a few days. My arm gained strength by use so that I could do my portion pretty well in nine days. We had our 2,000 done. They paid us in money \$7.50 each which was enough to help us in this trying time and said we could have the privilege of a number of 1,000 more if we wanted, but we wished to go on to Quincy to hear from our families. We went to Quincy but could not hear anything from them. Brother Gates concluded to go to Missouri and find his [family] but I did not deem it safe for me so I returned to Mr. Thompson's and continued to make rails until I had made 7,000. They disappointed me in my pay. Instead of money, I had to take two silver watches, one for \$10.00 and one for \$22.00. About this time an old man, a Virginian, came to me and said he had been noticing me for a number of days at work and he would let me have his farm to work for any number of years I would like with teams, tools, etc. I told him my family was still in Missouri and I did not know when they would be liberated from their bondage. I further told him wherever the Church settled, I expected to go. This was about the 23rd of March, 1839.

I went to Quincy and stopped for the night with John P. Greene. About bedtime my brother Chandler Holbrook came in and said my family was about six miles on the side of the Mississippi River on the Fabius River. As the ferry boat was lost, the brethren were making a new one and as they would have to stay there for a number of days, he thought he would come over and see if he could find me. He said that Brother Truman

Angel's family was there and that his wife was very sick in her wagon. Knowing where Brother Truman Angel was at work, I started that night and traveled about six miles on foot, wading creeks, etc. and found him after midnight.

Early in the morning we started for Quincy and from there to our families across the Mississippi bottoms, wading almost through the whole district and found some hundred of the brethren waiting for the new ferry boat to be completed, which was done the next day. I found my family in good health though in the mud and snow half a leg deep in the camp. I now saw my little daughter, Nancy Jane, for the first time about two months old. She was truly carried and borne in the midst of tribulation by her mother. My family had been greatly blessed in my absence as they were able to gather up some of the fragments of my destroyed property so that my wife Nancy had about \$50.00 in cash to bear her expense out of the state of Missouri. They had not heard anything from me during this time, neither dare I write to let them know as the brethren were in constant danger of being pursued if they knew where they could be found, so that I had to keep silent.

On the 27th day of March, 1839, my family crossed the Mississippi River into Illinois and in crossing the slough I lost my silver watch that I had allowed \$10.00 and never found it. From Quincy we traveled about 50 miles north to Fountain Green, hired a log house for \$2.00 a month.

### Nauvoo

In the month of May we went to Nauvoo, then called Commerce, and saw Brother Joseph Smith, the Prophet of God and his brother Hyrum, the first time since they were taken from Far West to jail by the mob. Brother Joseph Smith said that if the mob had gotten me they would have killed me instead of taking me to prison. He also wished to know where I lived. I told him back in the country about 25 miles from this place. He asked me if I could get corn meal and flour and bring into this place so that the brethren could buy it of me as there was no one bringing any in for sale. I told him I could if I could get the money to begin with. He told me to look around and borrow the money if I could.

I borrowed \$7.00 from Brother Covey for a few days

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

and bought corn for 25 cents per bushel, shelled it, took it to the mill and from thence to Nauvoo and let the brethren have it for 50 cents per bushel. After taking two loads of meal, I bought wheat at \$1.00 per hundred. This was in Hancock and McDonough counties. I was the only one engaged in the business which followed about six weeks and which kept up nearly night and day, as I got the most of going nights besides camping out on the prairie. And I over-heated myself in the latter part of July which brought on a burning fever which brought me low upon my bed of sickness in a few days so that I could not help myself anymore than a child. I had to be lifted on sheets from one bed to another. My family's health was also poor, having the fever and ague much of the time.

I built a small log house on a piece of vacant land in the fall and moved into it for the winter. I had to run in debt for all my living means were expended. The next summer, I so far gained my health so as to be able to work. My wife became very sick and was confined February 1840 with a son. He was stillborn. We named him, as we did not know what was for the best, David Holbrook.

I was able to pay up all demands against me. There was a small branch of the church organized nearby containing some 200 members appointing Jack H. Johnson president and I was selected as his first counselor and set apart by Brother Hyrum Smith to that office. There was a small town laid off by the name of Ramus of some 250 lots containing one acre each. The brethren gathered into the branch very fast. This was the summer of 1840.

### Nauvoo Legion

In February [1841], I received orders from Nauvoo to raise a company of mounted lancers for the Nauvoo Legion. I went immediately to work. I raised said company and I was nominated at Nauvoo for the office of captain but someone wished to make a division in said company. I declined accepting the office and another was elected in my place, but in a short time I received orders from Nauvoo to raise a company of mounted riflemen and again [I was] nominated for a captain to which I was elected by unanimous vote. I received a commission from the governor of the state which I en-

close in this journal with many other licenses and commissions. This was the year 1841, August 31. We had a son stillborn and named him Moroni.

The company met in Nauvoo a number of times for inspection and drills all of which were performed with credit to said company. In the course of the summer the times became very hard so that many of the brethren were much put to it for clothing, etc., and as there were among us some that were not exactly honest, who brought in damnable doctrine so that with others I was brought into bondage to my enemies. But Charles Shumway, an old school mate, came forward together with Anson Call, William Wigham and others and nobly released me from my difficulties to my great joy.

### Employment in Wisconsin

I thought it best to go to Galena for a short season so I paid all my debts at much sacrifice. Then I took my leave of the branch with two brethren, John Wightman and Ebenezer Page, who went with me and my wife and four small children in the month of December [1841]. We traveled through the snow and mud some 200 miles. I found a Brother Wright who exchanged a yoke of oxen with me for my horse team and gave me \$25.00 in the trade which helped me for the present.

I soon found a place on the Mississippi River in the timber about one mile north of the Illinois line in Wisconsin territory to build me a cabin where I found employ in hauling wood to a smelting furnace for \$1.12 1/2 per cord. After laboring for the winter and spring, I received my pay in money on the State Bank of Illinois, which broke in a very few days after and I could not get over 50 cents on the dollar in goods. I still continued to labor and was forced to take my pay in bank bills on the Showius [?] Town Bank which soon failed. The Dubuque Bank had also failed in Iowa, so there was no currency to be depended upon so that business became very dull. I was forced again to take a lot of work by the cord at 62 1/2 [cents] per cord in the timber. I hauled about 80 cords to the river and could only get 50 cents a cord for it when placed upon the bank of the river. It was a continual series of losses.

### Return to Nauvoo

In June [1842] I received a letter from Anson Call to come to Nauvoo so I purchased a small flat boat about

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

six feet wide and 22 feet long. I left my oxen with Brother Wight and 50 cords of wood on the bank of the Mississippi River and took my family on board with all my effects with Brother John Telford who had lived with us all the time since I left Ramus.

We let the boat go with the current which took about ten days to go 250 miles, laying by night and cooking victuals on the bank of the river, catching catfish, etc. We arrived in Nauvoo, July 6, 1842, and were glad to meet once more with the Saints whom I loved, for this was the first time I had undertaken to make a living away from the Saints and it did not prove very prosperous to me; besides I did not feel myself at home or contented away from church. I immediately moved with my family to Dwight Hardin's about two miles from the river.

### Death of Wife - Nancy Holbrook

My wife was taken very sick on the 7th of July [1842] and grew worse until she died, being taken sick nine days (July 16, 1842), aged 37 years, 11 months and two days. The disease was cholera merbus [?] and inflammation on the lungs. She had left four children, Sarah Lucretia, Charlotte, Joseph Lamoni, and Nancy Jane. Thus I had in an unexpected moment been deprived of one of the best wives and the best of mothers. She had stood with me in six troubles and in the seventh she did not forsake me. She had passed through the Missouri troubles with all the attendant evils with fortitude and forbearance. Her faith had always been firm and unshaken in the cause of God in those last days without a murmur or a reflection. She had firm hopes in a glorious resurrection for which she had obeyed the gospel and lived and spent her life for, in the most perfect understanding, for almost twelve years. My wife was buried in the east part of the city of Nauvoo in the public burying grounds on block 5, lot 5, grave 2; Nancy Jane on the same block and lot, grave 1. I put up good grave stones at their graves. She had hoped to live and enjoy the society of the Saints and hear the words of our beloved Prophet Joseph Smith, in whom she had full faith. But I am glad that she lived so that she had a good burial in the burying grounds with the Saints, where she may rest until the morn of the first resurrection, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

After my wife's death, I was rebaptized in the Missis-

sippi River by Brigham Young. I continued in the house with my brother-in-law, Dwight Harding, when I purchased a small fraction of a lot near Sunholand Street, 3 1/2 rods in front, 4 1/2 rods back for \$50.00, off my brother, Chandler Holbrook. When my wife's funeral expenses were paid, I had \$15.00 in cash left besides my small flat boat, which I sold for an old wagon worth \$30.00, which constituted my worldly possessions at this time, except my oxen and wood I had left in Mississippi.

I gave Brother Harding a part of the money to go out in the country to buy corn, which I gave him one-half for his trouble. I and my family lived on corn bread without but little else. I got my sister Phebe Harding to look after my children and do my cooking. I went out ten miles east of Nauvoo on the prairie, cut grass and had it hauled on the halves, while I camped on the ground. I dug a well ten feet deep for water. My living consisted of one pint and a half of molasses per week and cold corn bread, brought to me twice a week. My health was good. I worked all day and much of the night when the moon shone and I could cut grass.

I now began to gather materials to build on my little lot by selling my part of the hay delivered in Nauvoo at \$5.00 per ton. I continued in this way for seven weeks. When I had paid for bricks for a house 30 by 15 feet and also a mason to lay them up with lime, etc., I went to work and laid the foundation myself and soon had the body of the house up.

### Married to Hannah Flint

About this time I became acquainted with Hannah Flint, a sister to brother Anson Call's wife, about my age, which I afterward married. In October [1842] I took the steamboat and went up the Mississippi River to Wisconsin and found the man had sold my 50 cords of wood for \$25.00 in goods. I found my oxen at Brother Wright's in good condition. I then started for Nauvoo on foot, it being over 225 miles, driving my oxen with me, tying them up at nights after stopping to feed them and sleeping out of doors. I drove my cattle some days 35 to 40 miles. When about 16 miles within Nauvoo, I came to E. Page's and as he was making shingles, he said if I would stop and help him a few days, he would let me have shingles for my house. I did so and on my return, I

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

found my children well.

I then commenced on my house in good earnest. I went to the river and helped take out a raft of lumber which was frozen in and took lumber for my pay. I soon had my house covered in and floors laid, etc. On the first day of January, 1843, I was married to Hannah Flint (born July 18, 1806) by Heber C. Kimball at the house of Anson Call in Nauvoo. She had spent most of the time in school teaching. We now moved into my house and in about one month my wife commenced a school in one of the rooms.

In the spring I went grafting fruit trees with Anson Call down in Pike County and saw the mound on the bluffs of the Mississippi near a little town by the name of Kinderhook, where Mr. Wiley with others, took some plates a week or so before.

### Nauvoo Temple

On May 25, 1843, I left Nauvoo for the Black River pinery with Bishop George Miller for the purpose of helping bring down lumber, etc. for the temple and Nauvoo house. We went as far as Prairie La. Cross on the Mississippi by the steamboat, then took it on foot for 100 miles up the Black River. There being no regular trail we could find, we were lost some two days, but at length found ourselves within 40 miles of the mills on the Black River Falls.

Immediately, the next day, we started down the Black River with a raft with Henry W. Miller, when at the lake at the mouth of the river we met Brother Cunningham with his boat load of provisions which started from Nauvoo some six weeks before. We had a small keel boat with us that we had brought down to take back provisions which were much needed at the mills. So we took a part of Brother Cunningham's provisions from his boat and then both boats started up the river, manned with about ten men to each boat. The river being high and the current strong, we were forced to bushwhack our way by taking hold bush at the bow of each boat and running back to the stern and so continuing through the day. We were 25 miles per day. After arriving at the mills, all hands were employed in rafting logs to the saw mills and rafting lumber, shingle square timber, etc., for about six weeks when we had a raft of 150,000 feet.

The water privilege at the falls is as good as can be found in the western world. The country is much broken being somewhat mountainous, with long, tedious winters. There is some land that might be fertile in the valleys. The streams abound in fish. Brother Cunningham was drowned this summer above the mills. In rafting logs, he got in a whirl in the river and was seen no more. I returned with Bishop Miller to Nauvoo on the raft and arrived at Nauvoo July 8, 1843.

### Death of Daughter - Nancy Jane Holbrook

In August [1843] my family became sick with the measles and Nancy Jane Holbrook died on the 7th day of September, 1843. She died of the measles and canker, aged four years, seven months and ten days. She was an uncommon good child, pleasant in her temper. She was buried in the public burying grounds beside her who had not been buried 14 months yet. This life is uncertain at any age, and all being subject to death is our common lot.

I cut hay out on the prairie about ten miles. I bought a small farm with Brother Anson Call about four miles up the river from Nauvoo with a log house containing 18 acres and paid \$100.00.

By the request of Brother Joseph Young, the president of the Seventies, all the Seventies in the kingdom of God used to meet once in two weeks at my school room. I furnish wood, etc. We had a common school with prayer meetings in the evening and with other meetings for the brethren to speak on principles, etc.

On the 7th day of January, 1844, I was received in the quorum of high priests and ordained under the hands of Elder Bent and Fulmer and on the 9th day of January, 1844, I united with the lodge of ancient york masons in Nauvoo. My health was rather poor so that I was not able to do but little work but I went and prepared grafts for grafting of the following choice fruit, viz:

Roxbury Russett, Rhodiland Grunin, Big Romanite, Pair Main, Seeknofurther, Upide Apples, New Town Pippin, Early June, Fall Beds Winter, Winter Brown, Cheese Apples, Pandiver, Schoonamocker, Extra Fall Pippin, Bellflower, Red Sweet, Black Annie, Golden Pippin, Yellow Milam, Rumbow Green Apple, Limber Twigg, Gentten, Big Red Fall.

## Joseph Holbrook

1806-1885

### Fourth Mission

My health being still poor, Brother Anson Call took with him Truman Barlow but found him a plow hand. At the business about the last of April [1844] Brother Charles Shumway came and said if I would go on a mission, I should have my health. I said if I was wanted, I would try and go. He told me to meet that night at Brother John L. Butter's in the north part of Nauvoo and I would learn more about it. I went and found many of the brethren present whom I knew. Brother James Emmett then arose and said he knew that some of the brethren would be disappointed for he was going on a mission west and didn't know how long he would be gone but he was going to the counsel of Brother Joseph and Hyrum Smith. He wanted to know if all present would be willing to go on his return if they were needed as he wished to take their names as it was to be kept a secret outside of this meeting as this was council and this was the beginning of Emmett's leading off a company in the wilderness.

The council of Nauvoo nominated Joseph Smith, our prophet for a candidate for the President of the United States of America and wishing to support him in that office, I was appointed to go to Kentucky and hold forth Brother Joseph Smith's views and policy of government. I started on the 28th day of May, 1844, in company with Brother John Couthouse, my partner on that mission, with about 50 other elders to various other states of the union on board the steamboat Caprgy [?].

I left St. Louis the 30th [May 1844] on the Goddess of Liberty for the mouth of the Cumberland River on the Ohio at a town by the name of Smith and traveled through Livingstone, Caldwell, and Frigg counties and continued to preach and put forth Joseph Smith's views which the people generally liked well but didn't know so much about "your Mormon prophet for president of the United States, etc." We continued to preach almost daily.

### Martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith

On Friday, July 12 [1844] at a little town on the Cumberland River, we saw the paper called the Nashville Banner that gave an account of the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. I filled a few appointments and on the 22nd day of July [1844] started for Nauvoo, and all the papers confirmed the murder of our Prophet

and Patriarch. We took the steamboat Smithland on the Ohio River and arrived in Nauvoo on Saturday, July 27, 1844, just one month from the time of the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and found the people in deep mourning for our Prophet and Seer, and Patriarch and found my family well.

I was present at the October conference when I was called to go where the Twelve sent me. Monday, October 21 [1844] I went to Carthage in company with about 150 of the brethren to attend court in case we should be needed. We stayed there three days and nothing occurred so we returned home.

\*\*\*\*\*

Following much more deprivation by mob action against the Saints, Joseph Holbrook and his family came to the Utah Territory September 20, 1848. He moved to Bountiful in the spring of 1850 where he served as a Judge in Davis County from 1851-1859. He also served as a member of the Utah Territorial Legislature from 1857 to 1859. He died in Bountiful, Utah Territory.

