

Seymour Brunson Defender of the Faith

Seymour Brunson was born 1 December 1798 in Plattsburgh, New York to Reuben and Sally Clark Brunson. On 23 March 1813 he enlisted in the War of 1812 with his father and older brother Lemuel. Rueben, his father, was wounded and died three months later of his wounds. Lemuel was also wounded. Seymour remained in the Army until the end of that conflict.

In about 1822 Seymour Brunson and Harriet Matilda Gould were married. Harriet was born August 11, 1802, in Hector, Schuyler County, New York. They immigrated to Northern Ohio where their first child, a son Rueben, was born 20 March 1825.

Early in the year 1831 Joseph Smith sent missionaries, John Corrill and Solomon Hancock, to Northern Ohio. Seymour was baptized on 17 January 1831 in Strongsville, Cuyahoga, Ohio by Solomon Hancock. He was ordained an Elder about one week later by John Whitmer. Harriet was not baptized at the same time because she was expecting their second son, Lewis, who was born just ten days later. Seymour and Harriet both embraced the gospel with heart and soul and never wavered in their new found religion.

Less than one year later, Seymour was ordained a High Priest by Oliver Cowdery and was called to serve a mission with Luke S. Johnson in Ohio, Virginia and Northern Kentucky. During the time Seymour served a mission, he organized several branches of the church, baptized many saints, and was called to be the Presiding Elder in Southern Ohio. In 1834 he and Harriet had another son, named Joseph.

Seymour obtained a License to be a Justice of the Peace and performed marriages and various other duties to maintain his family. By 1835 Seymour and Harriet moved back to Northern Ohio to be near the main body of the saints. He received his Patriarchal Blessing on 4 May 1835, given by Joseph Smith, Sr. Seymour moved his family from Ohio to Illinois where Seymour Jr. was born in November 1836 and then to Far West, Missouri, in the Spring of 1837.

In the Fall of 1838 Seymour was appointed by the Prophet Joseph to be a Captain in the Missouri Militia along with David Patten and Alexander McRae. Seymour was captured by Captain Samuel Bogart, a leader of the mob forces in Missouri, and was held captive in

the enemy camp. One night when a light snow fell, Seymour tied his shoes on backwards, and walked out of camp. When it was realized he was missing, no one paid attention to the footprints leading into camp, so he was never recaptured.

In his own words: "I remained in Far West doing whatever was necessary for the protection of the saints, I was on guard much of the time." Seymour carried information to and from the imprisoned brethren at the risk of his own life. Seymour helped many cross the Mississippi River into Illinois in the dreadful winter of 1839. He also returned to Far West many times with a wagon to help saints when they were driven out. Lucy Mack Smith tells of Seymour and Samuel, her son, helping them cross the river. She and her other family members had been sleeping under frozen bedding awaiting their turn to cross the river until they were rescued by her son Samuel and "their friend, Seymour Brunson."

Seymour was able to remove his family from Far West into a cabin on a homestead just north of Quincy. With four little boys, the oldest 14, his wife waited for their youngest son, William Morgan, to be born on 3 March 1839. Seymour later settled his family in Commerce [Nauvoo].

Seymour and Harriet had five sons, only three of whom reached adulthood. William Morgan died two months after his father, and Joseph in 1842 at eight years of age. Rueben, the oldest, remained in Illinois on the homestead granted the family when his grandfather died and his uncle was wounded in the War of 1812. Only Lewis and Seymour, Jr. remained in the church and traveled West with Harriet.

Seymour Brunson died August 10, 1840 at the age of 41 years, 8 months and 9 days. He was a member of the Church for only nine years. When the Nauvoo Stake of Zion was organized in October 1839, Seymour Brunson was chosen as a member of the High Council and served in that capacity until the time of his death which occurred August 10, 1840. It was at his funeral that the Prophet Joseph Smith first taught publicly the doctrine of Baptism for the Dead.

"Once the processional reached the site, mourners listened as the Prophet eulogized his bodyguard. Although there is no known text of his discourse, the His-

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tory of the Church states: “[Seymour Brunson] has always been a lively stone in the building of God and was much respected by his friends and acquaintances. He died in the triumph of faith, and in his dying moments bore testimony to the Gospel that he had embraced.” Although his statements were grand, it was the Prophet’s announcement of the doctrine of baptism for the dead that captured the imagination of the mourners...”

Seymour was buried with military honors, having received a commission as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Illinois Militia in the Nauvoo Pioneer Cemetery. Heber C. Kimball wrote in a letter to John Taylor: “Seymour Brunson is gone. David Patten came after him. The room was full of angels that came after him to take him home...The procession that went to the grave was judged to be one mile long...”

Harriet married an older widower, John S. Elmer, in 1841, and their one daughter, Jerusha Elmer, married and became the mother of fourteen children. Harriet came to Utah, with John, Jerusha, and her two sons in September 1851 in the John G. Smith Company. She was able to make sure temple ordinances were completed for herself and Seymour before she died. Harriet lacked 12 days of being 78 years old when she died in Fillmore on the 31st of July 1879. She had found peace and contentment in this little town which had been her home for nearly 17 years. She died true and faithful to the Church for which she had sacrificed so much. She is buried in the old portion of the Fillmore City Cemetery.

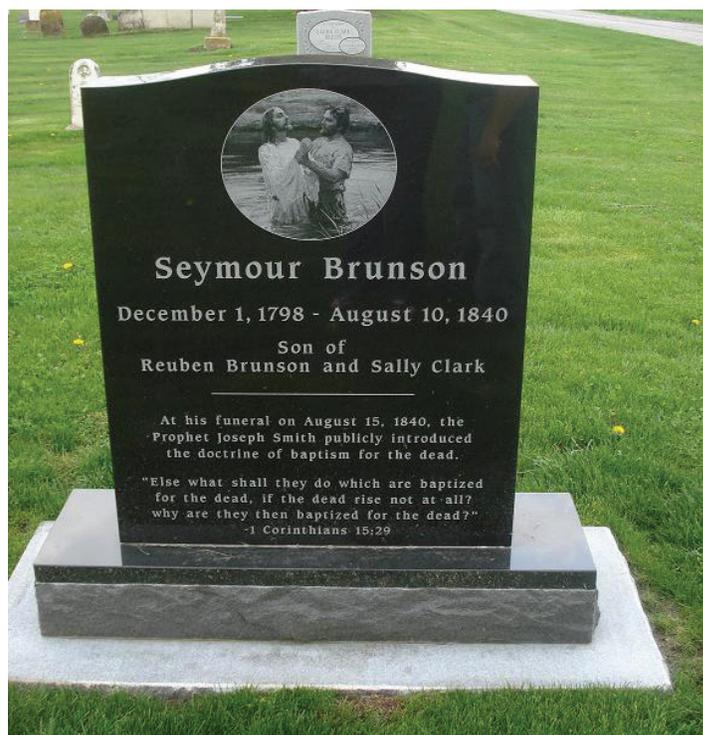
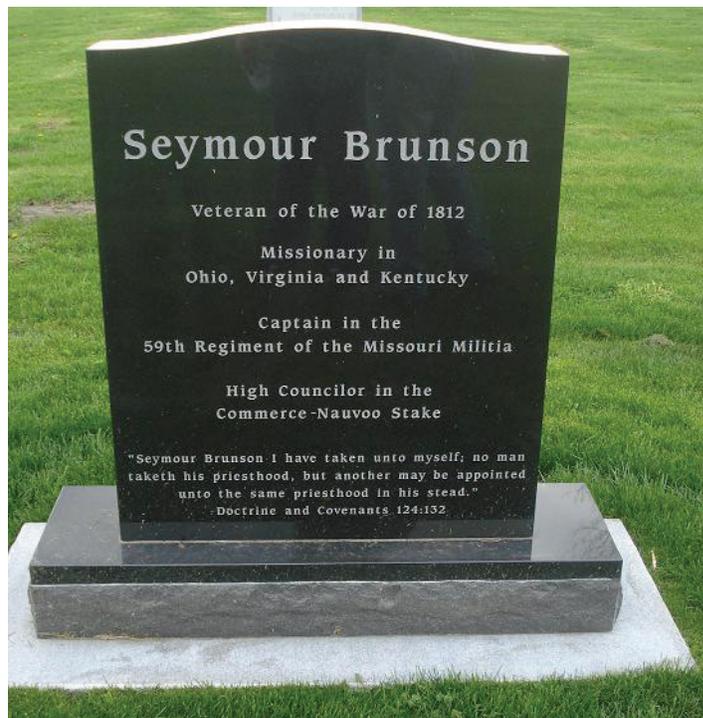
Source:

Lois J. Sager, Great-great-great granddaughter of Seymour and Harriet Brunson.

Funeral Service and History of Baptism for Dead, “A Voice of Gladness for the Living and the Dead” (D&C 128:19), by Dr. Susan Easton Black, BYU Family History Fireside - Joseph Smith Building, February 21, 2003.

Note:

Seymour Brunson is mentioned in D&C 75:33 and D&C 124:132.



**Seymour Brunson grave
Nauvoo Pioneer Cemetery**