

Samuel Henderson,
Mary (Goforth) Henderson,
and Elizabeth (Harris)
Henderson



A Family History

by Shelley Dawson Davies

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Chapter 1

Frontier Fortitude

The Edge of the Wilderness



Along the banks of the Nolichucky River.

It was dangerous living in the raw, wooded wilderness along Tennessee's Nolichucky River when Samuel Henderson's¹ father James² moved his family there in 1787.³ White settlers had been streaming into the hills and river valleys of Tennessee for years, but now that the state was offering land at ten pounds for every one hundred acres,⁴ violent skirmishes and raids became constant as whites and natives struggled for control of the area. Four years after the Hendersons claimed their farm on the Nolichucky's south bank, hostilities erupted into all out warfare when the Cherokee lost claim to some of their richest hunting grounds, resulting in numerous and severe attacks by Indians hoping to drive the settlers out. It was illegal to retaliate against the natives, but that didn't stop the residents of Tennessee's isolated back country, who knew they could not count on a distant and complacent government to protect them from increasing atrocities all along the frontier.

The Hendersons and their neighbors⁵ became particularly concerned during the summer of 1793 when a party of Indians attacked the nearby Cloyd plantation,⁶ killing two children and “wound[ing] a third, whose recovery is doubtful,” according a report published by the *Knoxville Gazette* on 13 July. “They also carried off the wife of Mr. Cloyd about half a mile, where they put her to death, with the tomahawk, stripped her, ripped open her bowels, and otherwise mangled her in a manner too shocking to relate.”⁷ Several weeks later the Cherokee mounted numerous raids on plantations all across the area, stealing horses and burning homes and crops. “In consequence of the depredations committed by Indians...a number of the inhabitants, alarmed by these enormities, assembled together to consult for their common safety. They concluded to follow the trail of these daring barbarians and discover from what source their miseries originated,” reported the *Gazette*.⁸

James, an experienced scout, joined a group of one hundred eighty mounted men under Colonel George Doherty in an organized raid on nearby Indian villages. The Doherty Company rode out Sunday, 4 August, on an eight-day sortie, burning crops and villages as they went. They wounded a number of natives, killing eleven, and took as prisoner seven women and children. James himself was mortally wounded on 10 August when the Cherokee fired on the whites in camp. He was carried out of the mountains on a stretcher two days later and taken home where he survived long enough to write a will.⁹

Samuel, only eight years old when his father died, inherited fifteen acres of property, as did his two-year old brother James¹⁰ and twelve-year old sister Jenny.¹¹ John,¹² the oldest, received one hundred acres as well as his father’s brown mare and colt, saddle and gun.¹³ Their mother Hannah¹⁴ received the remainder of the property and the responsibilities that went along with managing it.

Hannah was faced with raising four children on the frontier without a man to protect and provide for the family. Within a year or so of her husband’s death, Hannah found comfort in a relationship with one William Love, who in 1795, was court-ordered to pay her the sum of two hundred dollars “for the maintenance of a bastard child,”¹⁵ a daughter who may have been named Ellen.¹⁶ By the time Samuel was fourteen years old, his mother had found a more stable relationship with James Tallent,¹⁷ who married her in December, 1799.¹⁸

Forging a Family

Samuel felt ready to support a family of his own at the age of twenty. He chose Mary Goforth¹⁹ to be his wife in December, 1804.²⁰ Mary had also lost her father²¹ as a child. His death in 1796 left his six children in such “suffering and distressed conditions” that the local court ordered them bound out to work until they reached adulthood.²² Mary was more than happy to become a homemaker and mother, giving birth to James,²³ Elizabeth²⁴ and William²⁵ over the next five years on her husband’s farm in Green County.

There had been talk about the new frontier lands in Missouri for some time before John and his family left to settle there in 1802. Reports from John encouraged Jenny and her new husband Philip O’Haver²⁶ to relocate, and not long afterwards, James and Hannah Tallent followed. By 1807, only Samuel and Mary remained in Tennessee. When John returned to Tennessee in 1809 to settle land issues, Samuel and Mary decided to pull up stakes and join the rest of the Hendersons near Sainte Genevieve, Missouri.²⁷

Sainte Genevieve, initially a small frontier outpost settled by the French, changed dramatically in 1803, when the Louisiana Purchase opened the territory to Americans. Soon the population was a cosmopolitan mix of French, African, Americans, Germans and Native Americans, and while some were transient adventurers ready to move on to the next opportunity, others like the Henderson clan were willing to invest their lives in farming and community building. Samuel bought a farm in nearby Bellevue and settled into the community not long before Mary bore their fourth child, a son John,²⁸ in November, 1810. Eight more children followed over the next fifteen years. The Hendersons were content to live quiet, productive lives among family and friends, watching as their children matured.

The Bellevue Valley was so wild and unsettled at the time that a man could collect a two-dollar premium for every wolf he killed,²⁹ but the fertile farmland was too rich to ignore, and with increasing commerce generated by river traffic and new settlements cropping up across the land, the Hendersons were among those who prospered along the frontier. Bellevue was attractive for another reason: members of the extended Goforth family lived there as well, providing the comfort of neighbors who cared in the way only family could.



Potosi, twelve miles north of Bellevue, as it looked in 1819.

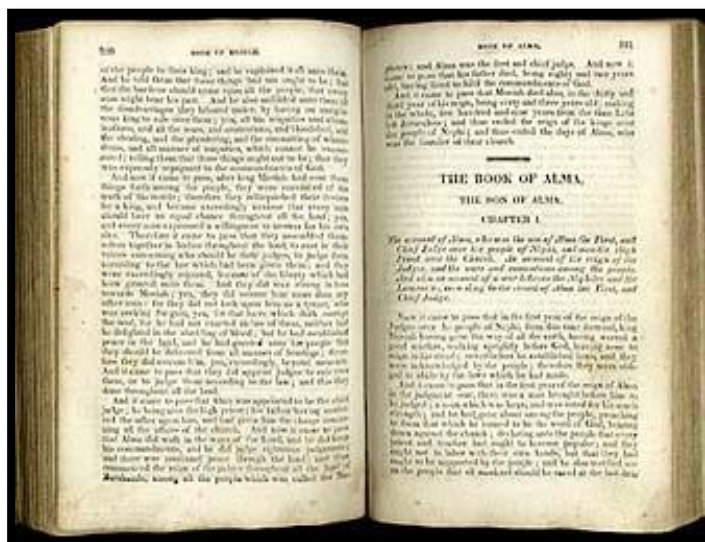
Also needed by these farming families was spiritual comfort, something hard to come by in the isolated valleys west of the Mississippi River. Steamboats brought constant new arrivals from every part of the country, many of them “gamblers, tipplers, tricksters and con artists looking for action on every landing.”³⁰ Little respect was paid to the Sabbath and “the sacred hours were given up to mirth and pleasure...I do believe there is no place more in need of missionary aid than the Territory of Missouri,” wrote Salmon Giddings, one of the handful of trained ministers who sought to remedy the situation. Reverend Timothy Flint noted that “an average of one hundred emigrants a day passed through the town of St. Charles, but not one family in fifty carries a Bible....Many of them live and die without any thought eternity. So engaged are they in making new settlements in the woods that they seem to regard nothing besides.”³¹

The Hendersons and their neighbors in Bellevue were pious people who made do with visits from itinerant preachers and informal prayer meetings,³² but the settlers yearned for something more. Finally, in the summer of 1816, there were enough worshipers to form a real congregation. Salmon Giddings organized the territory’s first protestant church on 31 July; those in attendance were administered the sacrament the following Sabbath, “a solemn and delightful season to many,” including Samuel, who one of the original members of the congregation.³³

The Bellevue Presbyterian Church became a center of learning with the construction of a log building serving as both church and school. Bibles and tracts were distributed among the valley's residents. Eventually a small graveyard was dedicated to receive the faithful as they went to their rest. It was in this quiet cemetery where Samuel buried Mary in December, 1825, after both she and her ten-month old baby George,³⁴ died the same day.³⁵

A Fullness of Truth

Samuel, now a widower with eleven children, drew strength from his faith and carried on the best he knew how until he remarried two years later.³⁶ With so few families living in Bellevue, intermarriage among them was common, so there was little surprise when Samuel chose Elizabeth Harris,³⁷ his daughter-in-law's sister, as his new wife.³⁸ Elizabeth stepped in to fill the role of homemaker and mother to the youngest seven of Samuel's children. Elizabeth, fifteen years younger than her husband, was not only up to the task of running Samuel's household, but she added six more children to the family over the next ten years. She was a good mother, making sure all of her children attended to their chores, their studies and their spiritual education.



An 1830 edition of The Book of Mormon.

While the Hendersons continued to worship at the Presbyterian church, they also happily welcomed any travelling preachers making their way through the Bellevue valley. By the early 1830s, there was talk among the preachers about a new and strange religion claiming the Lord was gathering His elect in western Missouri, where Zion would soon be built. Newspapers reported the travel of missionaries travelling “two and two...they persist in their power to work miracles. They say they have often seen them done—the sick are healed and the lame walk, the devils are cast out—and these assertions are made by men heretofore considered rational men,” cautioned one publication in 1831.³⁹ The next few years brought many more reports and warnings about the Mormons, as they were called, who were generating fear and suspicion among the old settlers along the Missouri frontier.

Samuel and Elizabeth finally decided to listen to what the Mormons themselves had to say when they passed through Bellevue in 1838, and it didn’t take them long to understand the truth. The Hendersons were not only eager to be baptized, but to share the gospel’s good news with the rest of their relatives and friends, hosting meetings in their home and boarding the Elders while they taught the doctrine of the Restoration.⁴⁰ Many of the extended family joined the church that same year.⁴¹

It was both an exciting and perilous time to accept membership in the Lord’s Kingdom and be “numbered among the Saints” in Missouri. Mormons were being driven out of towns along the western border almost as soon as they settled in them. Mobs had forced the entire Mormon population out of Jackson County in 1833, burning homes and crops as they went. When the Saints regrouped in nearby Caldwell, Carroll and Daviess counties, they received similar treatment. By the time the Hendersons accepted baptism, Governor Boggs had declared “the Mormons must be treated as enemies and *must be exterminated* or driven from the state.”⁴² Despite these growing threats, the Hendersons were determined to follow the Lord at all costs. They sold their land in Bellevue and travelled west to join the Saints, sadly leaving behind a number of relatives who elected to remain loyal to their protestant faith.⁴³



Nauvoo, Illinois, as seen in a period engraving.

Refuge in Nauvoo

Like all other Mormon refugees crowding the roads out of Missouri, the Hendersons didn't really know where they were going or how they would support themselves once they arrived, but they continued on to Illinois, where the charitable residents of Quincy offered food and shelter until church leaders could arrange for permanent settlement.

By the spring of 1839, land on both sides of the Mississippi near the small town of Commerce, Illinois, had been purchased by the church and members began to stream into the area. Samuel and Elizabeth were among the first to build their home in what was to become Nauvoo, choosing a lot not far from the riverbanks at the corner of Hibbard and Durphy Streets.⁴⁴ It was a good location for Samuel to set up a sawmill in the growing city with its flood of newcomers, all of them needing building materials for homes and businesses.⁴⁵

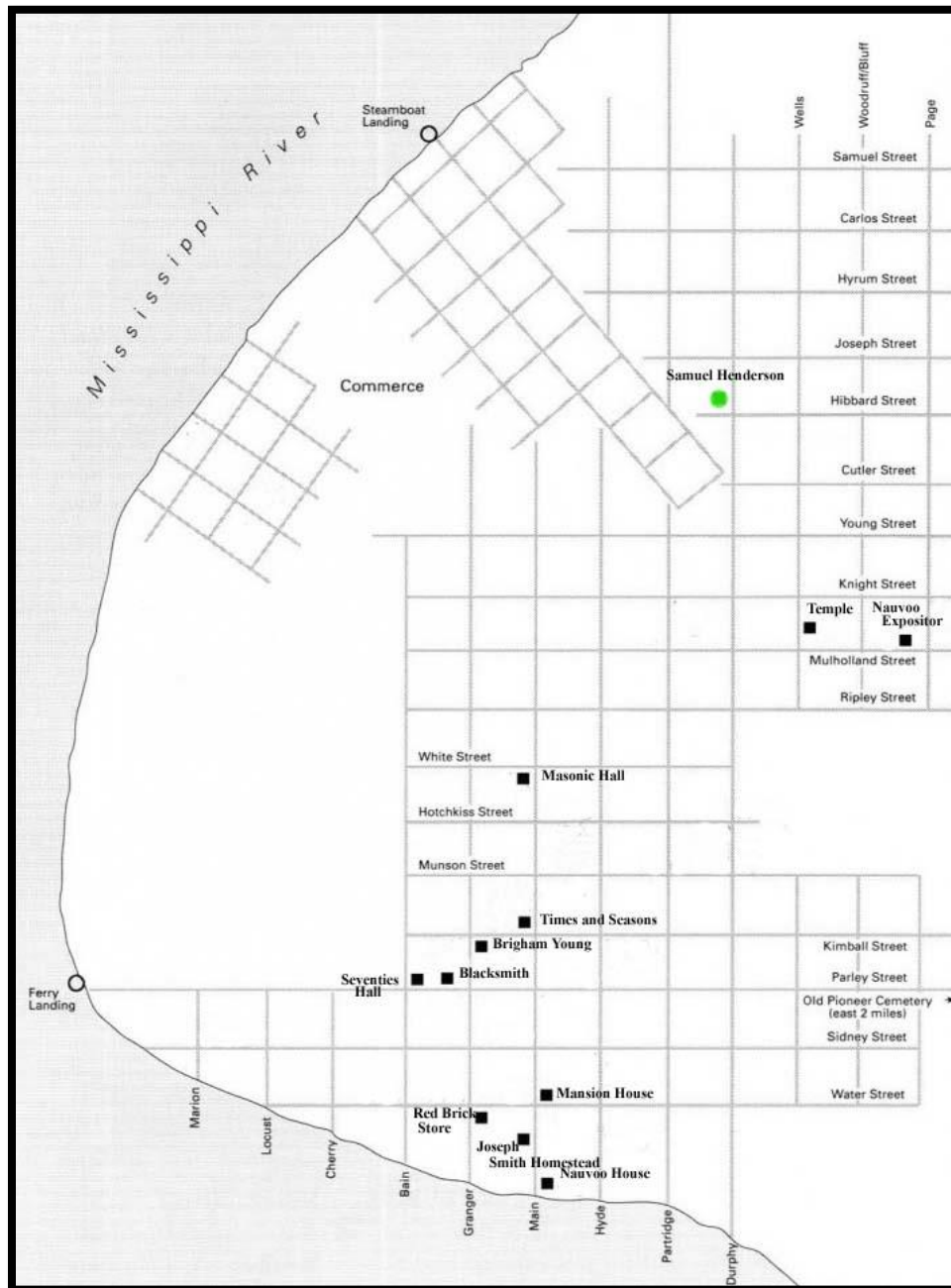
Elizabeth had her hands full at home, attending to the daily needs of her large family in less than ideal circumstances. Like almost everyone else in Nauvoo, she spent the first few months living in a makeshift tent, storing her household goods in the back of the wagon until Samuel could build a rough cabin. As if her situation wasn't difficult enough, Elizabeth was also pregnant with her seventh child. She gave birth that June, naming her son after the prophet Joseph,⁴⁶ followed by another son the next December, named for Joseph's

brother Hyrum,⁴⁷ and little Ira⁴⁸ in 1842. She would bury two of her three babies in Nauvoo, but for the time being, her thoughts were for the future.

Nauvoo was brimming with promise and excitement from the moment the Prophet announced the Lord's desire for a temple in January, 1841. Construction began immediately and dominated the Saints lives for the next five years. Solid blocks of limestone were quarried nearby, then dressed and polished at the temple site on Mulholland Street, but timber for the building was harder to come by. The problem was solved when the church purchased a saw mill along Wisconsin's Black River, where a ready supply of pine trees could be easily harvested and floated down river to Nauvoo. Samuel's second son, Samuel Jr.,⁴⁹ who worked alongside his father in the Henderson mill, was a natural addition to the "Pineries Mission," and was among those men who journeyed several hundred miles up the Mississippi to obtain and mill lumber for construction of the temple.⁵⁰

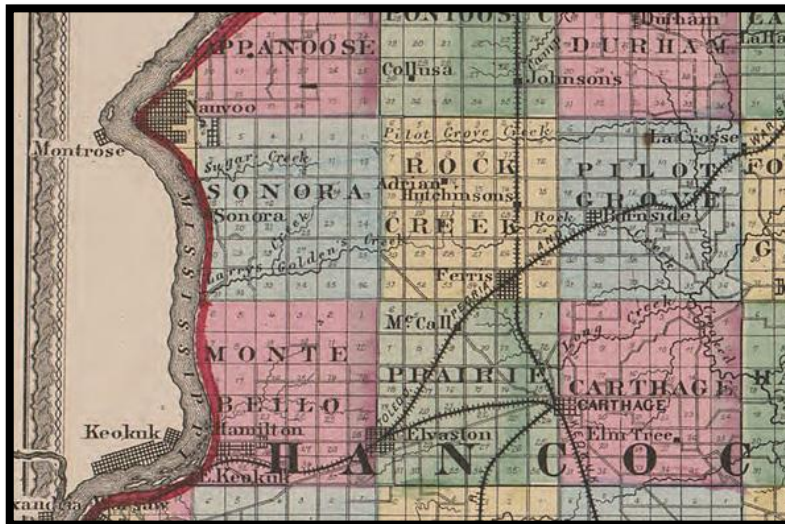
Continual revelations from the Lord could not wait for the temple's completion, however. When Joseph Smith taught the doctrine of baptism for the dead at a funeral sermon in 1840, overjoyed Saints immediately began performing the ordinance in the Mississippi. Performance of baptisms was moved to the temple as soon as the basement was finished and a temporary wooden font dedicated in November, 1841. Samuel joined hundreds of Saints in proxy baptism for his parents, grandparents and many other relatives.⁵¹

With the most important religious structure under construction and no public building large enough to hold a congregation, Sunday services were often held in several wooded areas near the temple site. The Hendersons joined with thousands of Nauvoo's residents who attended a general meeting in the morning followed by private evening prayer meetings in individual homes. Samuel was also among those who sought further spiritual strength through a patriarchal blessing, given to him by Patriarch Hyrum Smith. The blessing promised Samuel he would be "be numbered in the covenant in the fullness... and you shall go and come and be preserved and you shall be blest also in future, spiritually and temporally. Spiritually to your full satisfaction, with joy and consolation in the Holy Ghost and with knowledge of the things of God."⁵² Both Samuel and Elizabeth would need additional spiritual succor in the face of the trying events they were to about to pass through



Samuel Henderson's lot in Nauvoo was in an advantageous location near both the river and the business district.

During the winter of 1842, a terrible wave of illness struck the family of Samuel's oldest son James and Anna Henderson,⁵³ who were by then living on a farm thirty miles from Nauvoo near La Harpe. Anna herself became bedridden with fever after caring for her sick children, finally succumbing to the disease on 8 December. James, already suffering from rheumatism, wore himself out trying to care and provide for his nine children. His health gradually deteriorated over the spring and summer until he died in early September.⁵⁴ The orphaned children tried to keep what was left of their family together, but soon found it impossible. Elizabeth finally stepped in to raise the youngest of the children, to whom she was both aunt and grandmother, bringing the Henderson household to fourteen members.⁵⁵



The farming community of La Harpe was located twenty-five miles east of Nauvoo and twenty-one miles north east of Carthage, Illinois.

ENDNOTES

¹ Samuel Henderson (1784-1856). #KWJY-85Q, www.familysearch.org where verification of all vital dates can be found. Also see family group sheets at

www.DaviesDawsonHistory.weebly.com

² James Henderson (1759-1793), #LCB4-2PK, www.familysearch.org

³ James was given a land grant by the state (then North Carolina) at ten pounds for every hundred acres. James bought a two-hundred acre tract of land in Greene County on the south side of Nolachucky River. Esther M. Ziock Carroll, "James Henderson, Sr.,"

<http://www.carrollscorner.net/HendersonHannah&James.htm>

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Among the Henderson's neighbors were John and Rebecca Crockett, who lived about ten miles from Greenville in the foothills of the Great Smokey Mountains, where their famous son Davy was born in 1806.

⁶ The Cloyd family lived ten miles from Greeneville, the same distance as the Hendersons, although perhaps in the opposite direction. See: Email message from John Nash to Esther M. Ziock Carroll, <http://carrollscorner.net/HendersonIndians.htm>

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ James Henderson (1791-1865), #LWNH-6YW, www.familysearch.org

¹¹ Jenny Jane (Henderson) O'Haver (1793-), #L7BT-VFB, www.familysearch.org

¹² John Henderson (1778-1838), #LVQL-TQN, www.familysearch.org

¹³ Email message from John Nash to Esther M. Ziock Carroll, <http://www.carrollscorner.net/HendersonHannah&James.htm> and <http://www.carrollscorner.net/HendersonJames1793Will.htm>

¹⁴ Hannah (Sollars) Henderson (1761-1841), #LZJ9-V7H, www.familysearch.org

¹⁵ Esther M. Ziock Carroll, "James Henderson, Sr.,"

<http://www.carrollscorner.net/HendersonHannah&James.htm>

¹⁶ Esther M. Carroll, "Henderson History of Southeast Missouri,"

<http://carrollscorner.net/HendersonHistoryOfSoutheastMissouri.htm>

¹⁷ James Lucas Tallent (1757-1853), #LCZV-4LX, www.familysearch.org

¹⁸ Esther M. Ziock Carroll, "James Henderson, Sr.,"

<http://www.carrollscorner.net/HendersonHannah&James.htm>

¹⁹ Mary "Polly" (Goforth) Henderson (1784-1825), #LCJR-TGH, www.familysearch.org

²⁰ Esther M. Carroll, "Samuel Henderson: 1785-1856,"

<http://www.carrollscorner.net/hendersonsamuel1785.htm>

²¹ John Lewis Goforth (1757-1796), #LZJZ-G9K, www.familysearch.org

²² Mary was "bound out unto Jesse Lynch until she attain to the age of 18 years to learn to read." A local doctor provided medicine for the children with court funds and boarding was also funded by the court from county taxes. Minutes of the Green County, Tennessee, Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions from 1783-1796, as quoted in "History of Mary (Polly) Goforth: 1784-1825,"

[https://familysearch.org/photos/stories/4440935?returnLabel=Mary%20Polly%20Goforth%20\(LCJR-TGH\)&returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Ffamilysearch.org%2Ftree%23view%3Dancestors%26person%3DLCJR-TGH%26section%3Dmemories](https://familysearch.org/photos/stories/4440935?returnLabel=Mary%20Polly%20Goforth%20(LCJR-TGH)&returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Ffamilysearch.org%2Ftree%23view%3Dancestors%26person%3DLCJR-TGH%26section%3Dmemories)

²³ James Goforth Henderson (1805-1844), #KWJY-8NT, www.familysearch.org

²⁴ Elizabeth (Henderson) Goforth (1807-1851), #LKVY-1GD, www.familysearch.org

²⁵ William Henderson (1809-1851), #L71C-XVN, www.familysearch.org

²⁶ Philip O'Haver (1770-1837), #LCPG-M8P, www.familysearch.org

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- ²⁷ Esther M. Ziock Carroll, "James Henderson, Sr.," <http://www.carrollscorner.net/HendersonHannah&James.htm>. Also see: Email message from John Nash to Esther M. Ziock Carroll, <http://www.carrollscorner.net/HendersonHannah&James.htm>
- ²⁸ John Henderson (1810-1861), #KWV7-K4B, www.familysearch.org
- ²⁹ Samuel's brother James collected the premium for a wolf killed in 1818. See: Esther M. Ziock Carroll, "James Henderson, Sr.," <http://www.carrollscorner.net/HendersonHannah&James.htm>
- ³⁰ Bonnie Stepenoff, *From French Community to Missouri Town: Ste. Genevieve in the Nineteenth Century* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2006), pages 77-78.
- ³¹ Ezra Hall Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, Vol. 2 (Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 1864), pages 424, 427-428, 431.
- ³² Adella Breckenridge Moore, *History of the Bellevue Presbyterian Church Cemetery at Caledonia* (Farmington, Missouri: Elmwood Press, ca 1960), <http://stlouis.genealogyvillage.com/bellevue.htm>
- ³³ Esther M. Carroll, "Samuel Henderson: 1785-1856," <http://www.carrollscorner.net/hendersonsamuel1785.htm>
- ³⁴ George Henderson (1825-1825), #L71C-X55, www.familysearch.org
- ³⁵ Mary Goforth Henderson, www.findagrave.com
- ³⁶ Henderson-Harris marriage, 1 March, 1827, Missouri Marriage Records, 1805-202 *Missouri Marriage Records, 1805-2002*. www.ancestry.com
- ³⁷ Elisabeth (Harris) Henderson (1800-1884). #LW1Y-YR6, www.familysearch.org
- ³⁸ Elizabeth's sister Sarah Anna Harris married Samuel's first born son James Goforth Henderson 9 July, 1826.
- ³⁹ Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle, *Old Mormon Kirtland and Missouri* (Santa Ana, California: Fieldbrook Publications, 1991), page 159.
- ⁴⁰ Alice S. Pizza and Enid H. Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982* (Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1983), page 194, 198.
- ⁴¹ Notes from researcher John Nash at <http://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Henderson-334>
- ⁴² *Church History in the Fullness of Times* (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), page 201.
- ⁴³ Pizza and Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 194.
- ⁴⁴ Block 51, Lot 4. Samuel Henderson file, Nauvoo Land and Records Office, 8 May, 2014.
- ⁴⁵ Email message from John Nash to Esther M. Ziock Carroll, <http://www.carrollscorner.net/HendersonSamuel1785.htm>. See also: Pizza and Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 194.
- ⁴⁶ Joseph Henderson (1839-1842), #L4HJ-D3B, www.familysearch.org
- ⁴⁷ Hyrum Henderson (1840-1919), #KW8P-BDF, www.familysearch.org
- ⁴⁸ William Ira Henderson (1842-1842), #LHC4-CZ6, www.familysearch.org
- ⁴⁹ Samuel Goforth Henderson (1820-1904), #KWNH-ZQX, www.familysearch.org
- ⁵⁰ Thomas A. Howel, "Genealogy of Samuel Henderson, Jr., Given by his Wife, Harriet Hawkins Henderson, as Far Back as She Could Remember," typescript, 2 March, 1911, Clifton, Idaho. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- ⁵¹ Email message from Vickie Miller, subject Samuel Henderson-Nauvoo, Illinois, posted to TNGREENE-L Achieves, Rootsweb, 16 April, 2007, <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/TNGREENE/2007-04/1176745826>
- ⁵² Patriarchal Blessing of Samuel Henderson, given by Hyrum Smith, 14 March, 1842, Nauvoo, Illinois. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- ⁵³ Sarah Anna (Harris) Henderson (1808-1842), #L6B8-MHH, www.familysearch.org
- ⁵⁴ Pizza and Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 194.
- ⁵⁵ Added to Elizabeth's seven children were grandchildren Nancy (8), Martha (7), Sarah (6), Samuel Newton (4), William (2). Reta Davis Baldwin and Laura Jane Davis Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* (self-published, Ogden, Utah, 1982), page 179-180.

Chapter 2

Gathering Toward Zion

Building the Kingdom



One of three surviving sunstones from the Nauvoo temple.

Nauvoo in 1842 was a bustling and increasingly civilized city, rivaling even Chicago. New converts to the church were arriving daily, pushing the population past twelve thousand souls. A variety of businesses lined the streets, including mercantile stores, grist mills, bakeries, potteries, tanneries, and foundries. Several brickyards turned out thousands of rusty red bricks for residents who were quickly replacing rough log and frame buildings with attractive, more permanent structures all across the city.

It was both the astonishing progress and sophistication of Nauvoo which threatened so many of the original frontier settlers, who found the growing dominance of the Saints a threat to their backwoods lifestyle and political support of slavery. The relative peace the Mormon community had enjoyed in Nauvoo began to fray with increasing hostilities from neighboring citizens, who launched vicious attacks in the press, denouncing Joseph Smith and warning residents against the church's economic and political power. Opposition intensified over the next year and a half until anti-Mormon passions

peaked and the Prophet, his brother Hyrum and other leaders were jailed in Carthage on 25 June, 1844. Two days later an enraged mob surrounded the jail and murdered Joseph and Hyrum.

The Saints were stunned by the loss of their prophet, but even as their enemies continued to fight against them, they rallied under the leadership of the Twelve Apostles, headed by Brigham Young. Church members were urged to continue gathering in Nauvoo and to complete the temple, whose capstone was laid in May, 1845. At the same time, the church leadership was making plans to move the Saints to a safer location farther west, and committed to begin evacuation of the city by the next spring.

Brigham Young was determined to give the Saints temple blessings and rooms were dedicated for ordinance work as soon as they were completed, beginning with the attic in December, 1845. Nauvoo's faithful flocked to the temple to receive their endowments. During the next two months over fifty-six hundred members were endowed, including Samuel and Elizabeth, who received their endowment and were sealed in eternal marriage on 16 January, 1846.⁵⁶

Increased activity in the temple only served to arouse greater opposition among the church's enemies, who began attacking Mormon farms outside the city, burning barns, crops and even homes. The violence increased as threatened farmers fled to Nauvoo. The government of Illinois refused to intervene. Finally, in February, 1846, Brigham Young organized several wagon companies to begin the evacuation earlier than planned. Soon there were hundreds of refugees huddled in temporary camps across the Mississippi in Iowa, followed by steady streams of evacuating Saints during the spring. By mid-May an estimated sixteen thousand residents had fled the city, leaving behind a small number who were too sick or too poor to travel.

Although Samuel was considered old at the age of sixty-one, he may not have remained in Nauvoo due to health or lack of finances, but to sell his remaining properties and bring in one last harvest.⁵⁷ Harassment by mobs continued all through the summer in an effort to drive out any remaining Saints, culminating in a siege on Nauvoo in early September by a group of eight hundred men who fired on the city until the residents surrendered. Samuel, Elizabeth and the children in their charge were among those forced across the Mississippi at gunpoint with little more than the clothes on their backs. Years later, William Jasper Henderson,⁵⁸ who was five years old at the time, recalled being forced out of Nauvoo with his grandparents. "The mob drove out the widows and orphans, plundered their houses and rushed them, including me, on flat boats

that were moored at the banks of the Mississippi River,” he said. “They actually drove us out of our homes, down the streets of Nauvoo onto these flat boats and sent us adrift. The current carried us across to the Iowa side. While we were on the river they continued to fire their cannon balls, some going over our heads and some falling into the river. They continued firing until we had landed on the other side of the river.”⁵⁹

Small knots of people clung together for support as they made their way to a temporary camp along the Iowa shore at Potter’s Slough. “We were driven like a band of sheep before ravenous wolves,” said William. “We fled into the timber along the river banks, and the trees was all the covering we had for many days. To make our situation worse, a chilly rain started in with snow. We had no provisions and very little clothing, except what we patch up in our haste when we were driven from our homes.”

By mid-September almost seven hundred destitute people found themselves stranded there, too poor and sick to move forward. Starvation was facing the camp as their supplies, meager to begin with, were quickly exhausted. Then, a remarkable thing happened. A cloud of quail fluttered into camp, falling to the ground in great numbers, so exhausted even children were able to catch them. “We would have surely starved to death had it not been for our kind and Heavenly Father in sending flocks of quail into our camps, some being docile and fell into the laps of the women,” said William. “I remember Grandmother filling her apron with them, and that is what we lived on for three days.”⁶⁰



C.C.A. Christensen's painting depicting the miracle of the quail.

Preparations in Iowa

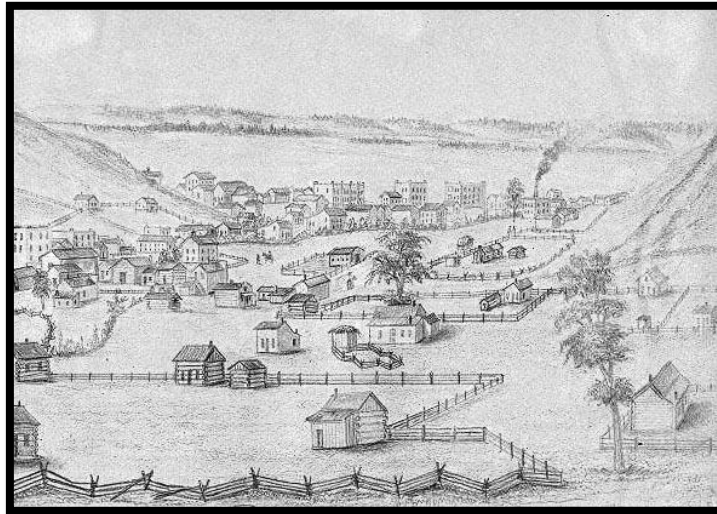
Thousands of refugees were scattered across Iowa that autumn, all preparing as best as they could for the coming winter. Temporary church headquarters was centered in Winter Quarters, Nebraska,⁶¹ surrounded by many smaller communities that sprang up as people gathered to fortify themselves for the final push westward. The Hendersons eventually made their way as far as Kanessville, across the Missouri River from Winter Quarters, where Samuel settled on a piece of land outside of town. "There was lots of timber growing there so he built a log house there in the woods," said William. "This house had just one big room in it with a fireplace built in the middle of it, one small window in the gable end near the roof and a door on one side. The door was made of hewn logs and was hard inside with the same kind of material, so as to make it safe as possible from the Indians, as they were very hostile in that part of the country. They had some work horses and one cow, but not many provisions. They lived on hominy and what milk the cow furnished. I remember seeing my grandmother cooking or making hominy in a large kettle hanging over the fireplace. That was the only convenience for cooking at that time among the poor people.

"Well, everything went smoothly for a while, but to their horror one day they heard Indians whooping, they peeked out and saw the Indians driving away the horses. One of the Indians came to the door and could not get in, so they shot the cow and went away. George⁶² was about eighteen then and he decided to go for help. He climbed

out of the window, which was on the opposite side of where the Indians were, so he got away unnoticed, went to the nearest settlement for help and got it. They came the next day and moved us to the settlement.”⁶³

Samuel arranged for housing in the Kanesville’s Blockhouse Branch,⁶⁴ where there was enough property to grow produce for sale. The entire family worked, even young William, who recalled carrying vegetables to market with his cousin, Riley.⁶⁵ “For this we got five cents a basket and made two trips a day. We also picked and cleaned vegetables...[We] had to work hard for a meager living.”⁶⁶

Plans were finalized over the winter for moving the Saints westward. Brigham Young’s trailblazing pioneer company made the trek from Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake valley in the summer of 1847, followed by ten other groups that year. Preparations were immediately made for the rest of the church membership to follow as quickly as possible, but moving thousands of people across the vast prairies would take both time and resources. Kanesville, with its location on the Missouri River, became the main outfitting point for the journey to Utah. Samuel and his family were among the thousands of people who remained in Kanesville, growing crops and preparing supplies for the migration. Samuel took on added responsibilities for both local members of the church and incoming immigrants when he accepted the calling of bishop’s counselor in December, 1847.⁶⁷

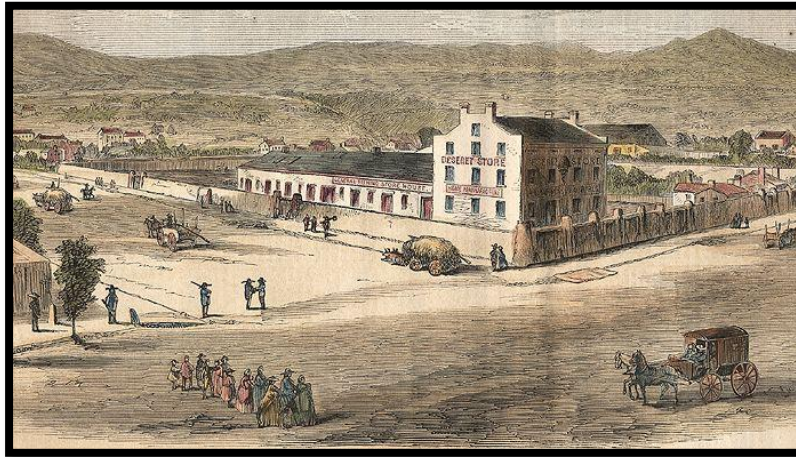


Council Bluffs (formerly Kanesville) in 1850.

Samuel and Elizabeth spent the next three years farming and raising stock in Kanesville, until they themselves were ready to make the journey. They joined the Easton Kelsey Company, bringing along with them their youngest and unmarried children, Nancy,⁶⁸ twenty-three, Martin,⁶⁹ fifteen, Charlotte,⁷⁰ thirteen, Hyrum, ten, and their grandchildren Sarah,⁷¹ fourteen, William, eleven.⁷²

The company of one hundred wagons pulled out of Kanesville on 29 June, 1851, on a twelve-week trek that passed through deserted country one member of the train remembered as “a wild country as ever I saw.”⁷³ The crossing held the usual difficulties of bad weather and bad roads, along with repeated cattle stampedes, and on one occasion, a stampede of buffalo. “The stampede ran providentially just in head of the train with the fierceness of the rush and tramp and as it appeared almost a cyclone of dust,” recalled fellow immigrant Augusta Stevens. “This caused a great commotion and almost stampeded among the oxen and horses of the train. The few rifles available were used and fortunately enough for the emigrants, a few buffalo fell which were prepared and this gave us extra provisions on the long journey in head of us.”⁷⁴

Even with supplemental buffalo meat, food supplies were exhausted by the time the train reached Green River, Wyoming. To make matters worse, a “cold blizzard and wintery blast...added to the perils of the journey,” according to Augusta Stevens. “It became necessary to send a man with the best and fastest equipment on to Salt Lake City to get flour and rush back to Green River, which was only sufficient to sustain the party in the train for the balance of the trip.”⁷⁵ With one hundred and seventy miles to travel and no further incidents, the weary pioneers arrived in Salt Lake City at the end of September.



Salt Lake City as it appeared in the mid-1850s.

City of the Saints

Sam Jr., who had immigrated in June 1850,⁷⁶ was waiting for his family when they trudged out of Emigration Canyon, ready to take them to his home north of Salt Lake in the farming community of Kaysville. There was only a log cabin on Sam Jr.'s property, but it wasn't long before the Henderson men replaced it with a warm, sturdy adobe home.⁷⁷

Samuel and Elizabeth shared their son's Kaysville home for several years before buying a lot in Salt Lake City's Sixth Ward in 1854.⁷⁸ Samuel had just celebrated his sixty-ninth birthday, and was ready to retire to an urban setting where he could spend the remainder of his days puttering around his small garden. Elizabeth hosted the festivities when her children Martin and Charlotte and granddaughter Sarah married in Salt Lake City that year, and Martha⁷⁹ the next February.

Samuel's healthy gradually faded soon afterwards, and by February, 1856, he was gravely ill. He had led a remarkable life over his seventy-one years, taming the wilderness and pioneering along four different frontiers. He was father to twenty-one children, and protector and provider to the orphaned children of his son. He was deeply missed by his large and loving family when he died on 21 February. Elizabeth arranged for a tribute to be printed in the *Salt Lake City Deseret Weekly*. "He has gone to join the saints in the

spiritual world, where his good works will follow him, and with who he will have part in the resurrection of the just,” affirmed the obituary, one of the first published in the valley.⁸⁰

Elizabeth spent her remaining years as matriarch of her large family, travelling to visit with her children and grandchildren who had spread out across the territory. She was in her eighties when she settled with Charlotte and her husband Isaac Allred⁸¹ in Spring City, a small farming community in the center of Utah. It was in Spring City where she died in February, 1884, at the age of eighty-four. Charlotte buried her mother in the pioneer cemetery under a tall column of pale gray marble lovingly decorated with leaves of ivy and fern.



Elizabeth poses with her son Hyrum, his wife Julia and their children in 1879, only months before a diphtheria epidemic would claim the lives of twelve-year old twins Elizabeth and Harriet (back row), five-year old Samuel (far left), eleven-year old Nancy (center) and eight-year old twin Hannah (bottom right).



*Above: Elizabeth's headstone in Spring City. Below:
Samuel's grave in the Salt Lake City cemetery, plot F-4-11.*

ENDNOTES

- ⁵⁶ “Samuel Henderson-Elizabeth Harris family group sheet,” supplied 1997 by Reta (Davis) Baldwin. This sheet offers only a generic list of materials consulted.
- ⁵⁷ Esther M. Carroll, “Samuel Henderson: 1785-1856,” and email message from John Nash to Esther M. Ziock Carroll, <http://www.carrollscorner.net/hendersonsamuel1785.htm>
- ⁵⁸ William Jasper Henderson (1840-1919), #KW81-S95, www.familysearch.org
- ⁵⁹ Reta Davis Baldwin and Laura Jane Davis Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* (self-published, Ogden, Utah, 1982), page 179-180.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁶¹ Winter Quarters is located at today’s Florence, Nebraska.
- ⁶² William’s older brother, George Washington Henderson (1828-1901), #LWYL-2F3, www.familysearch.org
- ⁶³ Baldwin and Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 180-181.
- ⁶⁴ Today located on East Pierce Street between Franklin Avenue and Union Street in Council Bluffs. See Samuel Henderson (1785) entry, <http://www.earlylds.com/getperson.php?personID=I631&tree=WinterQuarters>
- ⁶⁵ Riley Henderson (1838-1860), #L3X1-KGP, www.familysearch.org son of Samuel and Hannah (Harris) Henderson.
- ⁶⁶ Baldwin and Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 180-181.
- ⁶⁷ Samuel Henderson (1785) entry, LDS-Blockhouse Iowa Branch Records, LR 482521, <http://www.earlylds.com/getperson.php?personID=I631&tree=WinterQuarters>
- ⁶⁸ Nancy (Henderson) Simpson (1828-1863), #M98C-S4V, www.familysearch.org
- ⁶⁹ Martin Henry Henderson (1835-1907), #KWN2-DXK, www.familysearch.org
- ⁷⁰ Charlotte (Henderson) Allred (1837-1916), #KWVZ-ZFL, www.familysearch.org
- ⁷¹ Elizabeth Sarah (Henderson) Lindsay (1836-1911), #KWJZ-ZWZ, www.familysearch.org daughter of James Goforth Henderson and Sarah Anna (Harris) Henderson.
- ⁷² Passenger list, Easton Kelsey Company, Kanessville, Iowa, to Salt Lake City, Utah, 29 June-22 September, 1851, <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companyPioneers?lang=eng&companyId=175>
- ⁷³ Ira Ames, “Autobiography and Journal,” 1851, <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=175&sourceId=5453>
- ⁷⁴ Augusta Dorius Stevens, “Autobiography,” <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=175&sourceId=1794>
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ Thomas A. Howel, “Genealogy of Samuel Henderson, Jr., Given by his Wife, Harriet Hawkins Henderson, as Far Back as She Could Remember,” typescript, 2 March, 1911, Clifton, Idaho. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- ⁷⁷ Baldwin and Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 180-181.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁹ Martha Ann (Henderson) Day (1835-1922), #KWJX-TVD, www.familysearch.org
- ⁸⁰ *The Salt Lake City Deseret Weekly*, 24 February, 1856. Samuel’s obituary “is noteworthy because it is one of the first published as the Deseret Weekly newspaper was just getting started,” according to family researcher Rand Henderson. See: Email message from Rand Henderson to Esther M. Ziock Carroll, <http://www.carrollscorner.net/HendersonSamuel1785.htm>.
- ⁸¹ Isaac Morley Allred (1833-1916), #KWJ1-XP9, www.familysearch.org

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