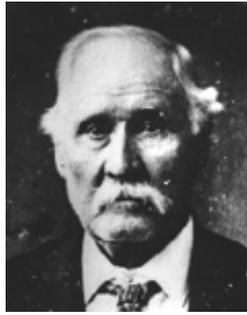


# BIOGRAPHY OF PHILEMON CHRISTOPHER MERRILL

A faithful servant of the Lord and of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.



This sketch was taken from bits of history which have been gathered from here and there; different ones of the family, the Autobiography of Christopher Layton – his account of the March of the Mormon Battalion of which Philemon was a member; the Life of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Historian's Office and the history of Arizona by the different authors. It is believed that Philemon had an autobiography but that it was burned at the home of those in charge of his records after the death of his wife. This history comes not from the pen of an experienced writer, but from one of his descendants who has a desire to have something to hand down to the posterity of this honorable pioneer who with his beloved wife and loved ones went through the early hardships, persecutions and trials of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ restored in this last dispensation. The trials he went through made it possible for us as his descendants to enjoy the blessings of the gospel today. May we carry on the work he so nobly started? His life with that of his wives should give us the courage to stand true to the faith until the end.

Philemon Christopher Merrill was born November 12, 1820 at Byron, Genesee Co., New York. He was of old New England stock, his father, Samuel Merrill, being a native of Massachusetts. Samuel Merrill was born September 28, 1780 and his mother, Phoebe Odell, was born April 29 1788, in New York. At the age of eleven years, Philemon accompanied his parents to Michigan and from there to Nauvoo, Hancock Co., Illinois, arriving in 1837.

He was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in March 1839 near the town of Carthage, Illinois, by Joel H. Johnson. Philemon was ordained an Elder on June 2, 1840 by the Patriarch Hyrum Smith. He filled a mission to Wisconsin from 1840 to 1841 with his old friend Stephen Markham. Joined the Nauvoo Legion in the spring of 1841. In 1843. Philemon was ordained a Seventy.

It is not known where his family first heard the gospel. It may have been in the east as the Church sent out Missionaries soon after the Church was organized. No doubt the family was living in Michigan at the time of their conversion, but Philemon was baptized in Illinois.



We next hear of him at the time of his meeting Cyrena Dustin who became his wife. Here is the way it happened as told by his wife, Cyrena Dustin. Sometime in February 1840 Philemon was passing through Nauvoo from Fort Madison to Carthage and he stopped to see his friend, Stephen Markham, who invited him home for dinner. Cyrena who was working in the Markham home waited on the table. After dinner, Philemon asked Brother Markham who the young lady was.

When told he remarked, "I'll be back here some day for she will be my wife." Brother Markham laughed at him, but so it proved. On September 20, 1840 they were married and went to live in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Between 1839 and 1845 the river-bound wooded flatland of Hancock County drew settlers faster than most areas of the United States, especially around a small town once known as Commerce. Renamed Nauvoo – Hebrew for "beautiful" – in 1839, the town grew from about 2,400 settlers in 1840 to more than 11,000 inhabitants in 1845, with thousands more residing in the local environs. The city was a flurry of activity, and the flats – the lowland along the river – bustled with construction, farming, and religious work.

On August 21, 1841 a daughter, Sobrina Lodena, was born.

The Saints toiled and sacrificed, working quickly to complete the temple before being forced westward. Philemon worked on the Nauvoo Temple which the saints were trying had to complete. On November 18, 1843 a son, Philemon Alisandre, was born. At this time the storm clouds were gathering around the Prophet who never had a very long period of peace.

Philemon Christopher Merrill was very closely associated with the Prophet Joseph Smith. The family has always understood that he was one of the Prophet's bodyguards, although it is not found in history, but this incident will prove how close he was to the Prophet. In June of 1843 the Governor of Missouri issued a writ for the person of Joseph Smith. A sheriff by the name of Reynolds of Missouri was appointed to get him. On this same day, June 13th, Joseph with his wife Emma and children, started to Dixon, Lee Co., Illinois to visit Emma's sister. Five days later on the 18th of June when word was received in Nauvoo that Governor Ford of Illinois had issued the writ for Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum immediately sent Stephen Markham and William Clayton on horseback to find and warn the prophet. The officers wanted to drag him to Missouri to kill him. They charged him with treason on the grounds that he was a fugitive from justice. Two of the villains, Wilson and Reynolds, took it upon themselves to go after the Prophet. They disguised themselves and proposed to be Elders of the Church. Following Joseph to the home of his sister-in-law, they kidnapped him and started for Missouri. Joseph had many friends along with him, Philemon being one of them.

These outlaws didn't want to go to Nauvoo. They said they never would get through alive. The friends of the Prophet held out and said that they would go with them till the end of the journey. While on this journey and resting in a little grove of trees where the ground was well sodded, one of the lawyers for Reynolds and Wilson began to boast of his prowess as a wrestler. He offered to wager any sum that he could throw any man in the state of Illinois at side-hold. Stephen, a side-hold wrestler, told the lawyer that he would not contest for money but would try a bout for fun. They grappled and the man threw Markham. When a great shout rose from Joseph's enemies and they began to taunt the Prophet and his friends, Joseph turned to Philemon C. Merrill, a young man from Nauvoo, and said "Get up and throw that man." Merrill was about to say that side-hold was not his game, but before he could speak, the Prophet commanded him in such a way that his tongue was silenced. He arose to his feet, filled with the strength of a Samson. Merrill lifted his arm and told the Lawyer to take his choice of sides. The man took the left side with his right arm under. The company all declared that this was not fair as he had an advantage. Merrill felt such confidence in the words of the Prophet that it made no difference to him how much advantage his opponent took and allowed the hold. As they grappled, Joseph said, "Philemon, when I count three throw him." On the instant after the word dropped from Joseph's lips Merrill, with the strength of a giant, threw the lawyer over his left shoulder and he

fell striking his head upon the earth. Awe fell upon the opponent of the Prophet when they saw this and there were no more challenges to wrestle. (George Q. Cannon, pp. 448-449, copied (this from the Life of Joseph Smith.)

Persecutions continued. Joseph Smith was haunted and abused. On June 16, 1844 the Prophet Joseph Smith preached to the assembled Saints in the grove east of the Temple, while the rain fell heavily, from the revelations of St. John, the divine. After the city had been declared under martial law the legion was drawn up in front of the Mansion House. The Prophet, standing upon the framework of a building opposite, addressed the Saints. He asked the Saints if they loved him, if they would stand by him and sustain the laws of our country and they all answered, "Yes, Yes." Then he said he was content and would die for them. He also said, "I love you, my brethren. Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friends. You have stood by me in the hour of trouble, and I am willing to sacrifice my life for your preservation." Then drawing his sword and presenting it to heaven he said, "I call God and Angels to witness that this people shall have their legal rights or my blood shall be spilt upon the ground like water and my body consigned to the tomb. Peace shall be taken from the land, which permits those enemies against the Saints to go unavenged. May the Lord God of Israel bless you forever and ever? I say this in the name of Jesus of Nazareth and in the Authority of the Holy Priesthood, which he hath conferred upon me. "All the people cried, "Amen." (Copied from the Life of Joseph Smith, pp. 498-499.)

On June 27, 1844 the beloved Prophet of this dispensation with his brother Hyrum were assassinated. There was great excitement throughout the city but the Saints obeyed the voice of the Twelve Apostles when they told them to be peaceable, quiet citizens and hold out faithful to the end. During the next year, 1845, the Saints were preparing to leave Nauvoo for the Rocky Mountains, pushing the work on the Nauvoo Temple. May 24th, the walls were finished and the Apostles administered to hundreds of the people. The services often continued all day and all night. Philemon and his wife, Cyrena received their endowments in the last part of December 1845, going through at night. The mob had said that they would drive all the Mormons into Nauvoo and all Nauvoo into the Mississippi River.

Preparations were made immediately for evacuating the city. Philemon C Merrill was one of Captain Alpheus Haw's company of fifty men to prepare to emigrate. He was also one of the guards under Hosea Stout to cross the Mississippi River, with the records. This was November 6, 1846. They camped several miles from the river on Sugar Creek, then on to Garden Grove, leaving his wife with their little ones in Nauvoo. He returned the last of April of 1846 with a team and wagon, to find a daughter, Lucy Cyrena born on April 7, 1846. Now taking only their clothing and their bedding, leaving everything else in the house, they started on their journey.

When they were within a few miles of Council Bluffs they were met by a United States Officer to enlist men for the Mexican War. The Battalion of Iowa was organized on June 26, 1846 at Mt. Pisgah. Philemon enlisted as a volunteer in the Mormon Battalion with his brother-in-law, Philander Colton, and Thomas S. Williams. His captain was Jessie D. Hunter. In Company B, as 2nd Lieutenant, these brethren left their wives and children and took up a march to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Previous to taking up their line of March on July 20, 1846 the men of each company subscribed liberally of their wages to be sent back for the support of their families and to aid in the gathering the poor from Nauvoo. Five days later on July 25 the command being out of flour, some of them went to bed fasting while others made supper on parched corn. No flour was obtained for two days, during which time they traveled in the heat and dust for thirty-eight miles and many were sick from the long forced marches. When they had crossed the

Nowadays River and camped at Oregon, Missouri, a man who had a load of flour for them stopped outside of Camp and refused to deliver it to the quarter-master because he was a Mormon saying he would deliver it to no one but the Colonel. That Noble officer, however, was highly insulted and ordered him to bring the flour into camp and deliver it immediately or be put under arrest and guard. "Good for the Colonel and God bless the Colonel" were repeated from one end of the camp to the other.

Passing through the country they saw many of the old mobocrats that regretted that they had persecuted the Saints. They would be glad to have their Mormon neighbors back again. They were dumbfounded to see the Battalion march with so much order and civility. On July 29 they marched through St. Joseph, Mo. To the tune of "The Girl I Left Behind Me." On the 30<sup>th</sup> of July they marched through Bloomington; on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July, through the thriving town of Weston. Then to Ferry opposite Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Here they were five hours crossing. They camped on the public square of the Fort, and tents were given them which added much to their comfort and the many songs which sounded through the camp made all feel like casting dull care away. The distance from Council Bluffs to Fort Leavenworth, in round numbers, is about two hundred miles directly down the Missouri River. On the day of arrival in Garrison they received orders that Dr. George B. Sanderson was appointed surgeon to serve the Mormon Battalion and would have medical supplies for their trip to California. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of August Companies A, B, and C drew their arms, which consisted of U.S. flintlock muskets with bayonet; they also had their knapsacks, one blanket and provisions. Col. Allen accompanied the officers who issued the arms. Seeing the men all around the door, each one anxious to receive the first gun, Capt. Allen said, "Stand back, boys, don't be in a hurry to get your muskets, you will want to throw the dam things away before you get to California. On the 5<sup>th</sup> they drew \$42.00 each as clothing money for the year, the most of which was sent back by Elder Parley P. Pratt for the support of their families and for gathering the poor from Nauvoo.

After the Battalion had been gone for three days some men returned and stated to the camp that Capt. Allen had sent them to gather up fifty families of the Battalion boys and told them that they could travel with their husbands to California as the government would pay all the expenses. When first told Cyrena Dustin Merrill did not wish to go but being over-persuaded she joined the company to follow her husband. Her driver was Monroe Frick, a boy of 14 years. He was such a good, kind boy. She arrived at Fort Leavenworth about August 1, 1846. The joy of once more meeting her husband was of short duration for he could not consent to her traveling with them with her little children, her baby being just three months old. So after fitting up a wagon with 18 months provisions and two yoke of oxen, she and the boy started back over that lonely road of two hundred miles to the Camp of Israel. This was done by the advice and counsel of Parley P. Pratt. Philemon went a day's journey with them and when he left them in the morning Cyrena said it was the hardest of all her trials. They had to travel through Missouri whose swamps were full of malaria, and several times they came to places where the rain had washed out the road and had to unload the provisions, get the wagon across then carry the things over and reload. It seems a miracle that they ever succeeded in reaching Winter Quarters. But in God was their trust and he protected them and cared for them. Cyrena took sick and her children also. Her young baby took croup and died on September 6, 1846.

Capt. Allen was taken seriously ill after the arrival at Fort Leavenworth so he entrusted Capt. Jefferson Hunt to advance while he remained to recruit and complete the business pertaining to the outfitting of the Battalion. On August 12, 1846 the companies of A, B, and C, took up the line of march for Santa Fe, New Mexico. On the 27<sup>th</sup> they received the sorrowful news of the death of Capt. Allen who died August 23, 1846. Things looked dark for these men of the

Battalion, for the man who took the place of Capt. Allen was hard and ruthless and hated the Mormons. Dr. Sanderson was of the same caliber. But the instructions from President Brigham Young had been if you are sick, live by faith and let surgeons and medicine alone if you want to live, using only herbs and mild food as are at your disposal. If you hold to this counsel you will be all right. But the doctor and the lieutenant compelled them to take their drugs and that, out of an old iron spoon, which they considered good enough for the Mormons.

The first division arrived at Santa Fe on the evening of October 9, 1846. The Second division arrived three days later. On the approval, General Bonham, the commander of the post ordered a salute of a hundred guns to be fired in honor of the Mormon Battalion. Colonel George Cooke who was awaiting them at Santa Fe took command on October 13, 1846. Starvation staring them in the face, they marched on. Their prayers were answered many times. On November 1, 1846 Adjutant Dykes resigned his position and Philemon Christopher Merrill, who was acting as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant of Company B, was appointed adjutant of the Battalion which change gave general satisfaction to all. The men liked Col. Cooke very much. Orders came from the commanding officer that felt it his duty, on report of his principle guide, for the safety of the Battalion, to make further reduction of its rations. Hereafter will be issued ten ounces of pork, 9 ounces of flour, fresh meat at a pound and a half, by order of Lt. Cooke, Philemon C. Merrill, and Adjutant.

They traveled on in dust and wind, then snow, until they reached the backbone of the Rocky Mountains on November 28<sup>th</sup>. They reached the summit of the Rocky Mountains on December 9<sup>th</sup>. They nooned at San Pedro Creek; there they had good for their animals; continuing their journey down the Sand Pedro they camped on the night of December 11<sup>th</sup> where, in a canyon, there occurred the famous bull fight. They followed on down the river and soon passed near the base of the mountain, which extended towards the Gila River, traveling northward. The orders were "We will march to Tucson, Arizona. We came not to make war on Sonora and less still to destroy and important outpost of defense against the Indians. But we will take the straight road before us and overcome all resistance, but shall I remind you that the American soldier ever shows justice and kindness to the unarmed and unresisting, the property of individuals you will hold sacred. The people of Sonora are not our enemies." By order of Lieut. Col. Cooke signed Philemon C. Merrill, Adjutant.

When they reached Tucson the people all left the city leaving their homes and property, nut not a thing was molested by the Battalion. They traveled through the town and down a stream about a half mile, and then made camp. During the night an alarm was sounded and all jumped to their arms, but nothing came of it. They felt that the prophecy of Brigham Young was being fulfilled, as they had seen no fighting except with wild beasts. On they traveled to the Gila River, then halted. While there hundreds of Pima Indians came into camp. They seemed to be honest and industrious and glad to see them. They went through one village of them containing nearly four thousand Pima Indians. They were peaceful and contented. They engaged in agriculture and making blankets. Here they traded buttons out from their clothing for cakes of bread and some old clothing for corn, beans, molasses and squash. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of December 1846 we camped at a Maricopa Indian village. We then moved on to towards California. Many sad things could be told as they traveled on. On January 17, 1847 a letter was received from the Governor of San Diego promising them assistance. Resting on the 18<sup>th</sup> they spent the day cleaning up their arms and in the evening they sang songs and played the fiddle. The Colonel expressed great surprise at seeing these half-starved men singing but they were thankful to their Heavenly Father and rejoiced that the journey was nearly finished. They arrived at San Luis Rey, a deserted Catholic Mission about or on January 27, 1847 and on climbing a bluff near the Mission, the long stretch of the Pacific Ocean was before them. What joy filled their souls.

None but worn out pilgrims nearing a haven of rest can imagine. As they stood on its borders, looking at its beauty, admiring its peaceful serenity, a cheer arose from their hearts and found utterance as one voice and they gave thanks to God who had preserved their lives amid such sufferings and had enabled them to endure to the end of this perilous journey. And they prayed for safety and comfort of their loved ones whom they had left so far away. But they knew God would care for his Saints and they went on their way rejoicing, and took up their quarters five miles from San Diego. They no longer suffered from the hardships of deserts, of cold atmosphere of the snow-capped mountains, for January here was as pleasant as May in the northern states. They traveled in sight of the ocean in the mild climate and clear sunshine, with wild oats, grass and mustard growing around them, around them the soil being very rich and the water clear and good. The birds sang sweetly and their hearts were happy as they joined all nature in praising the giver of all good. On January 27, 1847 they came in light of the long-talked of, San Diego. They camped at the Old Catholic Mission and for the first time in their lives saw olives, dates, and other palm trees. They had traveled about one thousand four hundred miles in one hundred and four days, and after enduring so much suffering, it cheered their hearts to hear the following orders which were read to them February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1847 and were received with a hearty cheery by the Battalion.

Headquarters of the Mormon Battalion  
Mission of San Diego, Calif.  
Jan. 31, 1847

#### Order No. 1

“The Lieutenant Colonel Commanding congratulates the Battalion in their safe arrival on the shores of the Pacific Ocean and the conclusion of their march of over two thousand miles. History may be searched in vain for an equal march of infantry. Half of it has been through a wilderness where nothing but savages and wild beasts are found, or deserts, where for want of water, there is no living creatures. There, with almost hopeless labor, we have dug deep wells, which the future traveler may enjoy. Without a guide who had traversed them we have ventured into trackless tablelands where water was not found for several marches. With crowbar, pick and axe in hand we have worked our way over mountains which seemed to defy ought save the wild goat and hewed a passageway through chasm of living rock more narrow than our wagons, to the Pacific. We have preserved the strength of our mules by boarding them over large tracts, which you have laboriously guarded without loss. The garrison of four presidios of Sonora concentrated within the walls of Tucson gave no pause. We drove them out with their artillery, but our intercourse with the citizens was unmarked by a single act of injustice, thus marching half naked and half fed, and living upon wild animals, we have discovered and made a road of great value to our country. Arrived at the first settlement in California after a single day of rest you cheerfully turned off from the route to this point of promised repose to enter upon a campaign and meet, as we supposed the approach of our enemy; and this, too, without salt to season your sole subsistence of fresh meat. Lieutenant A.J. Smith and George Stoneman, of the first dragoons have hared and given valuable aid in all these labors. Thus, volunteers, you have exhibited some high essential qualities of veterans, but much remains undone. Soon you will turn your attention to the drill to system and order to form also, which are all necessary to the soldier.”

By order of Lieut. Colonel P. St. George Cook  
Philemon C. Merrill, Adjutant

Philemon stayed at headquarters in San Diego, California until he was discharged from the Battalion on July 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>, 1847. Many of the men re-enlisted but Philemon made his way to the Salt Lake Valley with Captain Jefferson Hunt and seven other men. They arrived in the valley on October 11, 1847, where he found his Father and Mother and two sisters.

After visiting a while he went on to Winter Quarters where he had left his wife and three children. "Philemon C. Merrill with fifteen others of the Mormon Battalion arrived in Winter Quarters; they left Great Salt Lake City, October 8th." (History of the Church, Vol.7, Ch.41, p.622) He found that the baby had died soon after he left with the Battalion.

He arrived at the place called Kaneshville on December 11, 1847. Here he spent his time in getting land warrants for the Battalion boys, and assisting President Young to get immigrants across the plains.

On Sunday, June 8, 1848, at Winter Quarters, Brother Heber C. Kimball preached to the Saints. In consequence of depredations committed by the Indians the Saints on the Pottawattomie side of the Missouri prepared to organize themselves as militia by electing Charles M. Johnson, Colonel, Abraham C. Hodge, lieutenant-colonel, and Philemon C. Merrill, major. (History of the Church, Vol.7, Ch.41, p.627.)

On September 10, 1848 a daughter, Melissa Jane, was born. In the spring of 1849 Brother Young sent their teams back from Salt Lake and they made ready and crossed the plains to the Salt Lake Valley, arriving October 16, 1849. They were very happy now at last to be together again. Their faith was strong and they loved each other, therefore they were enabled to endure all their trials with cheerful hearts. While passing through the Rockies they encountered many severe snowstorms. Many of their cattle perished but the Lord helped them by sending help. Samuel Merrill, Father of Philemon, sent their teams, which he had crossed the plains with in 1847, with a nephew to assist them into the City of Salt Lake. Here they build a log cabin. Their first Utah baby, Morgan Henry, was born February 17, 1850. Philemon kept a ferry on Green River for a while. In 1851 he went back to the states and brought 44 wagons loaded with goods for Thomas S. Williams.

While living in Salt Lake City they went through the old Endowment House and were sealed for time and all eternity on April 6, 1851, at which time he took a second wife, Mary Jane Smith. On October 31, 1851 a baby girl, Albina Altamire, was born to Cyrena Dustin Merrill. In 1852 he took charge of Thomas S. Williams' store. On January 3, 1853, Thomas Stephen, was born to Cyrena and in 1853 a son, John Smith, was born. He was a son of the 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, Mary Jane Smith, while living in Salt Lake City.

A general conference of the Church was held, as usual, in April, 1851, and it was celebrated by the laying of the four corner stones of the Temple (Salt Lake). At that conference (on the 8th) Philemon was appointed a mission to England. The beautiful block of stone contributed by the State of Deseret to the Washington monument was entrusted to the care of Elder Philemon C. Merrill to deliver to the committee at Washington to Pres. Franklin Pierce and Hon. John M. Bernhisel, he carried letters of introduction from Governor Brigham Young. The block mentioned was three feet long, two feet wide, and six and a half inches thick. In the center stood the beehive, the emblem of industry. Over it was the motto "Holiness to the Lord." Above this was the all-seeing eye with rays; beneath the line was the word "Deseret;" over that (springing from the ground which was covered with different kinds of foliage) was a semicircular arch, enriched with the convolulus. On each side were spandrels; in one was the symbol of union, with

foliage; in the other was the cornucopia. Near the edge was a fillet, one and a half inches wide and three-quarters of an inch deep. After being set apart for his mission, he bid his family and friends good bye June 21, 1851, and started on his journey with his missionary companion, Andrew Jenson. They arrived in Washington September 23rd, presented their letters of introduction and the stone to the committee, who received us in a very kind and affectionate manner. After doing their business, they went to Baltimore and took passage for Philadelphia, whence they started on the steamer 'Glasgow' for Liverpool, where they landed Oct. 25, 1851.

Again his families were left alone, for in June 1851, he was called on a mission to Europe. They had bought a farm on Big Cottonwood, which they rented out, as the women were not able to attend to it. Philemon wrote them to sell it. It was traded for stock which was put out to range, it being the years of famine, 1854-55. The stock all died. Being deprived of any means of support Cyrena took in washing to provide for her children. It isn't known what Mary Jane did. She had only one child. Philemon's mission ended in 1856.

On Friday, November 30, 1855 the first ship "Emerald Isle" sailed from Liverpool England with 349 Saints under the direction of Captain Philemon C. Merrill and arrived at New York on December 29, 1855. (Church Chronology, p. 88, 34, 55, 56.) Philemon C. Merrill was the presiding Latter-day Saint authority aboard the Emerald Isle, an immigration ship that carried Bloomfield ancestor Harriet Wilkinson in 1855 from Liverpool, England, to New York, N.Y. The ship carried a total of 350 immigrating Saints.

Sailed—1855	Port	Ship	Leader	People	Landed
Nov. 30	Liverpool	Emerald Isle	Phil C. Merrill	350	New York

(Our Pioneer Heritage, Vol. 6, p.262.)

About 200 continued the journey to Florence, Nebraska and departed there on June 5<sup>th</sup> in a wagon company, again led by Philemon, bound for Salt Lake City, Utah. On Monday August 18, 1856 the last of Philemon C. Merrill company of Saints arrived at great Salt Lake City. When Philemon arrived home on September 15, 1856 he found his wife' (Cyrena) health gone because of the work and worry of caring for the children.

He served as a Colonel in the Echo Canyon Campaign. The Church was having a lot of trouble at this time. The government was threatening them with the army under Captain Johnson. "Colonel Philemon C. Merrill, commanding the Davis county militia troops, passed the governor's office for the mountains with 242 men, 56 mounted; 17 officers of the line and 4 of the colonel's staff. They had 23 baggage wagons. After stopping a short time in front of the governor's office, they continued their march towards the mountains of snow, as near 2,000 of their brethren had done before, to meet the enemy. Many went with wet feet, poor shoes and straw hats on, without tents or fire at night, as they could not reach timber until next day. Yet it shows the willingness the saints have to maintain the kingdom of God, and defend themselves against their enemies. It was a very cold night." (B. H. Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, Vol.4, Ch.107, p.780).

In 1857 – 1858 Philemon took his families and went South with the exodus and got as far as Provo; but after the treaty they returned and settled in Farmington, Utah. Here a son, Jedediah Grant, was born to Mary Jane (2<sup>nd</sup> wife), on December 14, 1857. On September 29, 1858 their daughter, Sabrina, died from consumption, the results of exposure. In Farmington on August 10, 1859 a son, Seth Adelbert, was born to Cyrena. On January 24, 1860 a daughter, Hannah Ann, was born to Mary Jane. On March 25, 1860 a daughter, Albina, died n Salt Lake City. Their

next move was to Webber, now called Morgan City. Philemon had a contract from President Brigham Young to grade for the Union Pacific Railroad. While living there, their son Philemon, Jr. married Lucinda Potter Brown, early in 1868. At this time Mary Jane, 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, had three children; John Smith, born March 5, 1853, Salt Lake City; Jedediah Grand, born December 14, 1857; Hannah Ann, born January 24, 1860. Morgan, son of Philemon and Cyrena, married Emma Orilla Perry, October 1869. While living in Morgan City five other children were born to Mary Jane: Cyrena Imogene, born November 5, 1861; David Elmore, born May 4, 1863; Joseph Lott, born June 5, 1865; Henry Morgan born March 4, 1867; and Peter Hurbert, born June 6, 1869. The little girl, Cyrena, died August 3, 1865. When baby Peter Hurbert was only six weeks old they moved to Liberty, Bear Lake County, Idaho in 1869.



On this journey, according to the journal of Cyrena, Philemon's first wife, Mary Jane's life ended. Cyrena wrote of the move to Liberty, Bear Lake, Idaho in July 1869. "This was a hard trip for all of us, though it was only a hundred miles. Mary Jane's baby Herbert was only six weeks old, and Mary Jane was not strong." Cyrena continues, "I took little Lot in my wagon. He was just recovering from Typhoid Fever and was peevish and fretful, and I could do no more with him than anyone else." He would have been four years old, having been born in 1865. "We felt worn out when we reached our destination. We lived here only two years when, on June 2, 1871, Mary Jane died, leaving seven children, who now looked to me for a mother's care, the oldest being eighteen and the youngest only two years old." She finishes simply, "I prayfully undertook this charge."

Philemon took a third wife, Rhoda S. Collett, widow of John S. Eldridge, on October 9, 1873 at Salt Lake City, Utah. They had one son; Adrian Merrill, born November 3, 1876 at Bear Lake Co., Idaho.

While in this part of Idaho, in Nowan Valley another son, Thomas Stephen, married on January 14, 1874 to Esther Ann Collett. Sometime after this marriage Philemon was called by the church to organize a Branch at Georgetown, Bear Lake Co., Idaho and to organize a Branch at Soda Springs, Caribou Co., Idaho. The Saints who had settled on Twin Creek, Bear Lake Co., Idaho, were organized into a branch of the Church, called the Georgetown branch, with Philemon C. Merrill as presiding Elder. (Our Pioneer Heritage, Vol. 16, p.9) The family went with him and lived there until 1876. In Paris, Idaho, on October 28, 1876 a double wedding was prepared. Seth Adelbert and Lucy Ann Merrill and Hannah Ann and Charles C. Collett.

Philemon was called from Soda Springs to go to Arizona to settle. They left Soda Springs, Idaho, November 15, 1876 and traveled by team through Utah, going south. They encountered some very cold weather. At times the frost was so heavy they could not see a quarter of a mile ahead of them. They arrived at St. George, Utah only ten days after the first temple in Utah was completed. It had been dedicated and by direction of President Brigham Young, they were the first ones to receive administrations in this Temple. January 11, 1877, sons Thomas and his wife and Adelbert and his wife went through the temple and were sealed for time and eternity. Philemon and Cyrena had their second anointings. They left St. George on January 17, 1877 with a company organized under the United Order, with Daniel W. Jones as President, Philemon C. Merrill as Counselor. They arrived on the Salt River, near Teme, March 7, 1877. The place was later called Lehi. They lived in tents and made bowers. Having no trees for shade, the summer was dreadfully hot; sandstorms, lizards and Gila Monsters kept them company. Philemon helped in settling Lehi, clearing land and making irrigation ditches.

In August 1877 Philemon and his family along with others, who wanted to go, left Lehi, bound for the San Pedro Valley, in the southeast part of Arizona. His reasons for leaving Daniel W. Jones at Lehi were the distinctions that follow. There were objections on the part of the majority to the rulings of the stout old elder whose mind especially dwelt upon the welfare of the redskins. Philemon consulted the Church Presidency before leaving Lehi and Daniel Jones party. So they started on their way. They had a great deal of faith for the departure from camp was with provisions only enough to last two days. They knew that much wild country would need to be passed through before they would arrive on the San Pedro. One of their members loaned his wages, which he had worked for. This man was A.O. Williams. The journey was indirect. They camped at Tucson where employment was offered for men and teams by Thomas Gardner who owned a sawmill in the Santa Rita Mountains. It was here they received the sad news of the death of their beloved leader and prophet, President Brigham Young. This was a sad blow to them.

Much of the money earned was saved, for the party lived under the rules of the United Order and very economically. So in the fall with the large joint capital of \$400.00 in cash, they added two teams and wagons and with a great deal of industry and health they left the Santa Rita for the San Pedro, 45 mile distant. The river was reached on November 29, 1877. The first settlers comprised: Seth Adelbert Merrill, Philemon C. Merrill, Dudley Merrill, Thomas Merrill, Orin Merrill, George e. Steel, Joseph McRae and A.O. Williams and all their families. Ground was broken at a point, on the west side of the river, on land that had been visited and located October 14, 1877 by Philemon C. Merrill, on an exploring trip. The first camp was about a half mile South of the present town of St. David and soon was given permanency by the erection of a small stone fort with six or eight rooms. The common interest that winter was planting 75 acres of wheat and barley irrigated from springs.

In the latter part of October 1878, nearly all the settlers were prostrated with the malady of chills and fever probably carried by mosquitoes from stagnant water. That year, also, it was soberly told that fever and ague even spread to domestic animals. At times the sick had to wait on the sick and there were none to greet Apostle Erastus Snow (see picture) when he arrived. Here is an account of Brother Snow's coming, being sent by the authorities of the Church at Salt Lake City, Utah. Some of this account was copied from the Journal of Jessie N. Smith:

October 6, 1878, off early, crossing a divide we followed a dim road down the wash to the San Pedro, reached Philemon C. Merrill's camp, afterwards St. David, and found all, old and down with ague and chills and fever. On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> two meetings were held. Jessie N. smith spoke at the second one. On Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, Brother Erastus Snow set apart Philemon C. Merrill to preside over the Saints in this region of the country, with Dudley C. Merrill and Joseph McRae as Counselors. Only 38 people heard his sermon. Many of them had been carried to the meeting on sick beds.

It is chronicled by Elder McRae that not withstanding those conditions, the Apostle blessed the place, prophesying that the day would come when the San Pedro Valley would be settled from one end to the other with Saints and that we had experienced the worst of our sickness. It was a decidedly hot season. Vegetation grew so rack that a horseman mounted on a tall horse could hardly be seen at a distance of a quarter of a mile. Hay could be cut a stone's throw from the door. The mental and spiritual encouragement by Apostle Snow was needed, for more than a year had passed of hardships and of labor; and, including the Lehi experience, there had been no recompense unless it might have been in the way of mental and moral discipline. According to Merrill, March 26, 1879, the sick and weary settlers went in to the Huachuca Mountains to

summer but the wind blew so hard and much that they moved back to the river near where Fairbanks now is; rented some land and put in crops. This location is just above where the members of the Mormon Battalion in 1846 had their memorable fight with the wild bulls. In May 1880 the present St. David town site was laid out. John S. Merrill built the first house. The year following an adobe schoolhouse was built and used for public gatherings until shaken down by an earthquake on May 3, 1887. Happily the children were at recess. Much damage was done to the town. Older than St. David itself, however, is its Sunday School, organized in 1875 in the old rock fort.

John Smith Merrill, son of Philemon and Mary Jane, came with his family from Bear Lake, Idaho, to St. David in the spring of 1878. They came through Utah and stopped at St. George and was married to Esther Eldridge in the Temple as his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, being married first on October 29, 1871 in Soda Springs, Coribou Co., Idaho, to Rebecca Weaver. As has been stated he built the first house in St. David. They were all living in the old rock fort as protection against the Apache Indians, which was a savage tribe with old Geronimo as their leader. Many are the hair-raising stories told by those pioneers. It seems they were more harassed by Malaria than by Indians. Still they had to be on their guard night and day. They were not free from fear until old Geronimo was captured sometime in 1885.

On March 16, 1881, Philemon asked that he be relieved of his responsibilities as Presiding Elder over the Saints. Morgan Henry, son of Philemon and Cyrena Merrill, came with his family to St. David from Box Elder Co., Utah in 1881. Also, his brother Philemon, Jr. and his family came with him. Henry and his family moved to Thatcher, Graham co., Arizona the latter part of 1887. Philemon, Jr. and family settled in Pima, Arizona.

Pima is situated on the south side of the Gila River, six miles northwest of Thatcher; it is the oldest Latter-day Saint settlement in the Gila Valley and was founded in 1879 and following years by families of saints who became discouraged on account of the difficulty of raising crops in the valley of the Little Colorado River. These first settlers, being pleased with the fine climate and beautiful valley of the Gila River, decided at once to make their homes there. Prior to their arrival on the Gila River, the intended settlers were organized into a branch of the Church with Joseph K. Rogers as presiding Elder. After arriving on the Gila, the branch was more fully organized and Bro. Rogers took charge of the settlement until it was organized as a regular bishop's ward Sept. 26, 1880, with Joseph K. Rogers as Bishop. He acted in that capacity until 1885, when he was succeeded by John Taylor, who in 1901 was succeeded by David H. Weech, who in 1902 was succeeded by Philemon C. Merrill, who in 1918 was succeeded by Charles E. Ferrin, who in 1920 was succeeded by Reece Green, who in 1927 was succeeded by Isaac B. Blake, who presided Dec. 31, 1930. On that date the Pima Ward had 666 members, including 154 children. The total population of the Pima district was 1,260 in 1930, of which 980 resided in the town of Pima. (Andrew Jenson, Encyclopedic History of the Church..., p.654.)

Philemon left St. David in 1890, settling in Safford, Graham Co., Arizona. He held the office of Patriarch, being ordained to this office by John Henry Smith. Since the formation of the Republican Party he had given it his allegiance. He was two terms a member of the Territorial Legislature of Utah. In 1892-93 he served as treasure of the county (Graham) and the fact that he was chosen for so responsible a position demonstrates the confidence placed in his financial ability and strict integrity. For about three score years he was identified with the Masonic Order having united with in Nauvoo, Illinois. He was highly respected throughout the Gila Valley. Many are living today who have had Patriarchal Blessings by him. He was a very good speaker and loved to talk of his experiences and of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It has been written that he

was of the Venerable and Highly Honored Pioneers of Southeastern part of Arizona. This Veteran of the Mexican War who passed through Cochise County on his way to the Pacific Coast fully fifty-five years ago with the first expedition which ever proceeded by wagon on this long and hazardous journey over mountain and plain. His memories of the days long gone by are full of interest to those fortunate enough to hear his account of them. And in addition to these, his experiences in the West of the half century and more ago, were such that all of his courage and strength of character were called into requisition upon many an occasion.

About 1900, Philemon moved to San Jose, Arizona. After an illness of about two months, as the natural result of old age, Patriarch Philemon C. Merrill died at his home in San Jose, Arizona on Thursday night, September 15, 1904, at the age of eighty-four. The remains were embalmed and kept until Sunday, giving time for his absent relatives to arrive. The funeral services were held in the Layton Meeting House at two o'clock PM on Sunday September 18, 1904. The house was crowded with friends of the deceased from one end of the valley to the other. There were eight or ten speakers, most of them old men who had been friends and comrades of the deceased. Everyone spoke in the highest terms of the character of Brother Merrill, of his devotion to his family and friends and of his integrity to his fellow men. Many touching tributes were paid to his memory. The music for the occasion was furnished by the Layton choir and it seemed that never did that group of splendid singers sing more sweetly or with better effect. The remains were interred in the Union Cemetery. Another tribute was paid in the story "Handcarts Westward," by Helen Kimball Orgill, where we read that Stephen Weilder spoke in this manner of Philemon Christopher Merrill: "What a man he is. I was proud to be fighting along side of him in that tragic Crooked River Engagement, and what a loss to the Church was our dearly beloved Apostle David W. Patten, who was injured fatally at the time. (Improvement Era, March 1953.) From the Book "Essentials in Church History," pp. 223-224, we find that the battle of Crooked River was fought on the night of October 24, 1838. Also it was stated in the above mentioned Era that Philemon C. Merrill had been shot through the body at the same time that Apostle W. Patten had lost his life.

A Few Lines Written About Philemon Christopher Merrill on his Birthday, November 20, 1890

This night we've met in festive throng to celebrate the birth  
Of one who fills a place among the worthy sons of earth.

Just three score and ten years today, dawned that a specious morn  
When earth in darkest slumber say, our Patriarch was born.

Though cradled not in luxury nor reared mid pomp and state,  
He early proved himself to be a hero good and great.

One of heaven's nobility reserved by God's own plan,  
To help to usher in the Gospel unto man.

When Joseph first the truth proclaimed, he hailed it with delight.  
And until now remains a champion of the right.

He loved the Prophet Joseph as dear as his own life,  
And until now remains a champion of the right.

And if onward now as in the past his course will ever be,

He will reign a King and Priest, throughout eternity.

When while we celebrate his birth with honor and with love,  
Oh may we emulate his worth and follow him above.

Mrs. Cyrena Dustin Merrill, wife of the late Patriarch Philemon C. Merrill, died at Layton, Arizona, aged 90 years. (Andrew Jenson, Church Chronology, February 3, 1907 (Sunday))