

## Life Sketch of Edmond Nelson

Edmond Nelson was the fourth son of Thomas Nelson and Martha William. He was born in Orange County, North Carolina 12 December 1799. He was still very young when his family moved west from North Carolina. Thomas Nelson sold his property to William Edwards on 10 March 1802 - this was the old Nelson home that he had purchased from his Father, Abraham Nelson a few years before his death. He loved his Father dearly, and when he sold the old home he reserved a small section where his parents were buried, never to be sold. Later many other people were buried there.

Thomas Nelson Jr. the youngest son of Thomas and Martha was born 28 July 1802 in Orange Co. It was shortly after this date that Thomas and Martha with their five sons went to Tennessee, where Martha was born in Bedford County. About 1816 they moved to Monroe County, Illinois. In 1823 they moved to Jefferson County, Illinois and lived near the county seat of Mount Vernon (Above summary by Mansel H. Nelson)

The following life of Edmond Nelson is recorded and told to Taylor Nelson by William Goforth Nelson, son of Edmond Nelson:

My father was a farmer and stock raiser by occupation. The family lived in Jefferson County about nineteen years. I can remember witnessing my father's baptism about the year 1836 - an elder by name of Burq()jett officiated. My mother was not baptized until the year 1838.

In the spring of 1836 In the spring of 1836 my father sold his home in Illinois and his livestock, with the exception of five head of horses, and started, together with the Church, to Missouri. My father and his three brothers; James, Abraham and Hyrum, and their families also went. The four brothers located within two miles of each other. James and Hyrum located on the west bank of the Grand River; Abraham bought a ferry right, and one flat boat, and one canoe, on the Grand River one mile below. My father filed on a quarter section of land one mile from the river. He then bought quite a number of stock and a head of hogs. It was while we lived here that the Prophet Joseph Smith stayed overnight with us. That was the first time any of us had ever seen him.

We lived there one year and a half when in the fall of 1838 a general conference of the Church was held at Far West, Missouri. My father was one that attended. The Prophet counseled the Saints to gather there at Far West, Missouri, forthwith. My father was the only one of the four brothers to immediately comply with the counsel of the Prophet. He started at sunrise the next morning after getting home; taking a wagon in which his family could ride comfortable. He took five horsed, one yoke of oxen, three cows, and a small bunch of sheep. He left 34 head of cattle and fifty head of hogs in the woods. His brothers were slow to comply with the word of the Prophet and the mob robbed them of nearly all their property. They took possession of Abraham's ferry and charged him for crossing on it when he started to Far West.

Our first days travel was through thinly settled country - we often saw, in a distance, the smoke rising from burning houses and we frequently saw members of the mob riding through the fields on horseback, but we were not molested by any of them. At night we camped with a family whose house was then burning, having been set on fire by the mob. My father helped the man, whose name I do not remember, to build a rack to take the place of his wagon box which was also burned. The man traveled with us one day and then went on another road so as to travel with some of his relatives.

On the third day my father sold one horse for \$30.00 and loaned the oxen to another man to drive. I do not remember how many days we were on the road to Far West, but it was not many. When we reached Grand River, my mother was baptized by Lyman Wight. Far West was soon packed with people, so that before we

reached there instructions had been given for the rest of the saints to camp at Shoel Creek, two miles from Far West, so we remained there for the winter. All who camped there lived in their own wagons and tents. I do not know of one house being built.

It was during this winter that the Saints were called upon by the governor of Missouri to deliver up their arms which request was complied with. My father and oldest brother being among those who delivered their guns to members of the mob. The mob was on horseback - the men all had painted faces. The next coming were three light wagons, each pulled by two large horses. Our brethren were commanded to follow in behind the wagons. The next company of the mob came in behind our wagons. They stopped in a little prairie about half a mile below, and our brothers were ordered to lay their guns and ammunition in the wagons. When the third party came up, half of the men dismounted, leaving two horses and two guns with one man and then the footmen started to plunder the wagons in the camp, claiming that they were hunting for ammunition. Our people had their homes and cattle all tied up because they had no other place for them and thus were our wagons searched and much property stolen by the mob.

It was while camped on Shoel Creek that Joseph Smith Nelson was born. My oldest brother Price was sick nearly all winter. My father could not find employment of any kind by which to help secure a living so that our food during the eventful winter consisted entirely of beef and boiled corn. On December 6th, father, in company with sixty of the brethren were taken prisoners by General John E. Clark and were held for two days. They were released by a Court of Inquiry held in Far West under the direction of Judge Adam Black.

In the early spring of 1839 we started for Quincy, the place which had been designated by the Prophet Joseph for the Saints to cross the Mississippi River. But before we reached there we were compelled to stop on account of the sickness of Price and myself. Father rented a house in which we lived until we had regained sufficient strength to continue on our journey. We crossed the river at Quincy and then started north. But we traveled very slowly, it being spring and the rainy season of the year. We rented a house about thirty miles east of Commerce, (afterwards called Nauvoo). Father helped a man fence a piece of land and then got the privilege of planting six acres of corn which yielded an abundant crop.

Late in the fall father and Price went to Nauvoo and built a two roomed log house but we did not move to Nauvoo until early the next spring ( 1840). Father bought a lot and a half in Nauvoo which ran east and west. The house referred to was built on the east end of the plot. We opened a rock quarry on the west end. Hyrum and I helped father quarry rock, most of which we sold in the city. Father paid his temple work and most of his tithing in rock from this quarry, all of which was used in the temple. We also rafted a great deal of wood and saw timber down the river. We at one time went eighteen miles up the river after a raft of saw timber which we sold to a man by the name of Ellis for three dollars per thousand feet. He ran a sawmill on the bank of the river. Hyrum and I spent one summer in Nauvoo working the brick yard, making brick which was used in building the Nauvoo House. We remained in Nauvoo until the first day of May 1846, at which time we started west with the church. During the six years we lived in Nauvoo I had the privilege of almost daily seeing some of the leaders of the Church. I was personally acquainted with the Prophet Joseph and his brothers Hyrum and William. I was personally acquainted with Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, President William Marks, Wilson and William Law, Chancy Higly, John C. Bennett, and other leaders of the Church at that time. I have upon different occasions heard all of these men speak to the people in meetings, the Prophet more especially. I well remember many of his sayings, many of which are now on record in the church. But one which I will mention here is, "I will give you a key that never will rust-if you will stay with the majority of the Twelve Apostles, and the records of the Church, you will never be led astray."

I was also one of the hundreds who saw the Prophet and Patriarch after they were martyred and we circumstances as they were brought from Carthage and prepared for burial. They were placed in the west room of the Prophet's house, which was a two roomed building and was long ways east and west. The people came in the lot at the west gate, then in the west end of the house, viewed the remains of the Martyrs which lay to the right of the first door, they passed to the next room and out the south door, and out the south gate into the street.

There were three natural water courses that drain Nauvoo and the surrounding country. One of these runs about one and one half miles south of tile city and empties into the Mississippi about three miles below, near the Castoro farm. It headed in what was called the "Big Field", a field owned by the Church which was about five miles east of the city. The next one on these drains emptied into the river a little ways from Nauvoo, which was built on the north bank. A little ways north of Nauvoo house this drain forked, the one running east and the other due north. The latter headed a few hundred yards of the temple block, in the head of which was an oak grove where the Saints held many conferences and other public gatherings. The next one headed nine miles east of the city nearly due north of Carthage near what was known as the Little Mound, it passed ,just north of the temple block and turning north emptied into the river, just above what was known as the Upper Stone House. This was a building erected during the days of Commerce and was a soldiers quarters during Indian troubles. The Mississippi runs in a bowing shape, encircling the city on the north-west and partly on the south. Just below where the main street runs into the river on the west there are some shoels over which but little water runs during the high water season. The main street runs west a short distance and then turning gradually southeast until it passes a little east of the main part of the city and then almost due south.

On May 1, 1846, father's family, excepting Price and Hyrum, who remained to work on the steam boat, started west with the Saints. We started with two wagons, one of which had no tires on the wheels. It was drawn by four cows and two two-year old steers, the other by two ponies. We led on cow behind the wagons. We crossed the Mississippi during the first day's travel from home just above the shoals at the main crossing. On the third day father traded the ponies for a yoke of oxen. We traveled on the main road leading to Council Bluffs. We crossed the Des Moines River on the fifth day of travel and camped for the night about four miles from the river. Late that evening the oxen we had traded for started to run back. I got on the pony and started after them. They ran a mile or more along the road and then went into the woods to the north of the road. I finally got them hemmed up between a large tree and some limbs of another tree. It was then getting dark and raining very hard. I knew that the only way I could get the oxen would be to stay and keep them hemmed in by the tree until morning which I finally decided to do. The one ox, which had a bell, had lost it and the wind blowing from the south made it quite impossible for any of my folks to hear me holler from the road. The prairie wolves were howling in the woods so near me that I thought the safest thing for me to do was to sit on the pony all the time. I partly consoled myself by thinking the wolves would take the little colt which was following the pony before they would me. I had lost my hat during the run and had got one of the stitches broken loose on my leg which had been taken when I cut my foot some time before. This caused it to bleed freely until I could get it bound up the next day. It continued raining all night accompanied by heavy thundering and lightning which helped to make my already miserable condition worse. But morning found me alive and able to get the cattle back to camp. My father had been hunting for me a good share of the night.

The Saints had been counceled to camp and remain at least one summer any time after crossing a small stream called White Breast. Just after we crossed this stream we found a camp of the Saints south of the road

called Garden Grove, and another on the north of the road called Lost Camp. We continued on our journey until we reached Mt. Pisgah, on the Grand River.

We lived there for about four years. As soon as we camped we plowed some ground and planted three and one-half acres in corn, and one-half acre of buckwheat and a good garden. Shortly after locating there Father and most of the children took sick with the chills and fever, and did not recover until September. During the month of July, I was bit by a rattlesnake on my heel, but was only laid up for about ten days. Late in the Fall of the same year I was bit by a dog on my right leg just below where it had been cut with the foot-ads spoken of above. I got along pretty well for about two weeks at which time Father and Mr. Mansfield went hunting. While they were away the children were playing near the house when a small tree fell. A limb hit my brother, Mark, who was then about two years old and broke his skull. Father was sent for and got home in about forty-eight hours after the accident. All was done for him that could be, but he was left a cripple for life, his right side being paralyzed. It was about one year before he could walk at all.

During the next three years that we lived at Mt. Pisgah I worked away from home about two and a half years. The first three months I earned twenty-five cents a day, and the balance of the time I averaged fifty cents a day. The greater part of my work was chopping timber and splitting rails, while I worked on the Des Moines River for about two months. All my wages went to the support of the family.

It was on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1850, that we started from Mt. Pisgah to Council Bluffs; thence across the plains to Salt Lake Valley. We started with two good wagons and good ox teams. We also had a number of cows. We traveled pretty much alone until we had come four miles west of Council Bluffs, where we found a camp of Saints. On June 4th the camp was organized with Thomas Johnson as Captain, ready to start on our journey West the next day. There were fifty wagons in the company. My brother, Price, met us at Council bluffs and came to the valley with us while Hyrum came in another company the same year.

Our journey was quite a pleasant one. We had good luck. There was no Indian trouble at all, and only three deaths occurred in our company on the trip. The first one of these was a woman, the wife of a man named Wilkinson. She was buried on the west bank of the mouth of the Ash Hollow. The next was my cousin, Dr. Thomas Goforth. He was buried a little east of Chimney Rock. (NOTE: Dr. Thomas Goforth was the son of Martha Nelson Goforth, sister of Edmond Nelson). The next, a few days later, was a Brother Borum's little child. Melvin Ross and I dug the grave and buried it. These persons were buried in graves made with a vault in the bottom, the bodies were wrapped in a blanket or wagon cover, and placed in the grave and then timbers were placed across, and then straw, and then filled with dirt.

(NOTE: Let us pause to insert a note from the life sketch of Lydia Ann Lake Nelson, which applies to the trek west. "The vivid event of the journey occurred at Green River in Wyoming. In crossing the river a wagon box floated the wagon and began drifting down stream. In the box were a young woman, named Snider, and a girl about nine years old. All was excitement for a few minutes. The only man of the company who dared to swim the stream and effect a rescue was a youth named Price William Nelson, a young man, who up to that time, I had paid no particular attention to. He was of a quiet nature, and I knew nothing of him except that he drove his aunt's team. (This was the team of Martha Nelson Goforth, who lost her son, Dr. Thomas Goforth) After this event we two became better acquainted, which resulted in our marriage after arriving in Salt Lake Valley.")

When we were at Sweet Water my Father contacted the mountain fever and never fully recovered. We reached Salt Lake City on September 9, 1850. We camped on the public square for two days. My brother, Hyrum, was taken sick during the winter of 1850. He was bedfast a great deal of the time up to his death, which

occurred February 19, 1856. He was buried at Alpine. He did not have a family.

My father wanted to live on a farm; accordingly we went about thirty miles south, to Mountainville (Alpine) which is about four miles northeast of American Fork . We built a long house and moved the family into it. Price, Thomas, and myself then went to the Mill Creek Canyon and began getting out shingle timber. We cut and hauled two loads into the mill in a day. The miller sawed and packed the shingles and sold them at \$10.00 per thousand, paying us half. We worked eighteen days and cleared \$300.00.

Father's health was still failing him, so we stopped logging and went home. He died on December 13, 1850 and was buried on December 15th on a little knoll just north of Alpine City. Hundreds have been buried there since, but he was the first.

AND NOW a few comments by Mansel Nelson: The Daughters of the Utah Pioneers erected a plaque at the gravesite . This is what it said: "Edmond Nelson, born 12 Dec 1799 in North Carolina. He and his wife, Jane Taylor Nelson, and 12 children left Ft. Pisgah May 8, 1850, arriving in Salt Lake Valley Sept 9 and continued on Mountainville (Alpine) Utah, Sept. 13, 1850. While living at Mt. Pisgah Edmond and most of the family were stricken with chills and fevers, from which He never fully recovered. He died Dec . 13, 1850 and was buried here on December 15 on a little knoll north of Alpine. Hundreds have since been buried here but Edmond Nelson was the First."

Edmond Nelson gave his life to stay with the church he loved. He gave his life that his family would be associated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

At the time of his Father's death, Price Williams Nelson and Lydia Ann Lake had set their wedding date for December 31, 1850. His first thought was the care of his mother and brothers and sister. But they all urged him to go ahead with the wedding.

William Goforth Nelson and his brothers continued to stay with the farm in Alpine until about March of 1851, when Price Williams Nelson, who was still very much concerned about his family, persuaded them to come to Brown's Fort [unreadable text] where they rented a house from the Steward family, which was located near the Southeast corner of the old Fort Square. They rented sixteen acres and planted wheat. Meantime, they received supplies from Captain Brown for which they paid in work. They also paid the rent of the sixteen acres in work.

After the harvest was stacked, they went back to Alpine and built a house and moved the family into it. When they went back to thrash the wheat they got 100 bushels of wheat and had seventy-five bushels ground into flour. William Goforth and Joseph Smith Nelson were the ones who went back and brought the flour home.

If Edmond Nelson were alive today, he would be proud of his posterity. Today they number into the thousands. We find them in nearly every walk of life, industrious, hard-working, intelligent, true Americans. Many of them have fought and died defending their country. Many of them, hold high offices in the Church that Edmond Nelson gave his life to stay with. His sons and daughters chose their mates with care. They proved to be the best blood of all times -true sons and daughters of Israel.

Price Williams Nelson was the oldest son. His bride was a princess. We trace her lineage back to Israel through five tribes. She was the 15th g.g.daughter of King Edward I of England and Eleanor of Castile. She was the 16th g.g. daughter of the great Spanish King Ferdinand III (Or El Santo as he was called) Kuncan I, King of Scotland, who was killed by McBeth, as told by William Shakespeare, was her 25th g.g. father. Her royal lines

lead us to many countries. Besides England, and Scotland we find them in France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Sicily, Sweden, Russian, Wales, and many others, almost all of them leading back into the tribes of Israel.

Many others are m doubt the same. If you have some interesting facts of this kind or any other kind, send them in right away, so we might have them for the book of the Nelson family, "The Ancestors and Descendants of Edrrond Nelson and his wife, Jane Taylor Nelson."