

Zerah's Story

The following story was written by Zerah Pulsipher. It was found by his family, after he died in 1872, in an old trunk where he kept his papers. The words are his. I have edited them slightly, broken some of the sentences in half and put the spellings into the ones used today, to make it more readable.



Zerah Pulsipher

I was born June 24, 1789. The name of my parents were John and Elizabeth Pulsipher. My grandfather, whose name was David Pulsipher, was supposed to be a descendant from Ireland. I have not much knowledge of his ancestors. He brought up a family in Connecticut, New England. In the year 1769 he came to a new state called Vermont, went up the Connecticut River to Bellows Falls, went five miles back to a place afterwards called Rockingham, an entire wilderness country, where seldom a blow had been struck by a white man. There he selected and obtained 500 acres of land and prophesied or predicted things that would take place in years to come, which was a site for a meeting house, burying ground back of it and a town site where water power was erected. He cleared some land, built a public house or tavern, helped establish a

settlement and converted the wilderness into a fruitful field. This is where I was born.

When the Revolutionary War commenced, my father was very young, and being away from home one day he heard that the British army had destroyed some military stores at Concord, New Hampshire. Being fired with indignation, he sought for a recruiting officer and enlisted for one campaign. When he returned home and informed his father of the circumstances, the old gentleman told him that he was too young and that he would enlist and go with him. Accordingly he did, and they both went to Boston, Massachusetts. In the memorable battle of Bunker Hill, the seventeenth of June 1775, there they stood side by side and fought with about 13 Americans against 3000 of the British for about two hours. When the enemy, after firing Charleston and wending around under the smoke, had nearly surrounded that wing of their own army, they saw but a small gap to retreat through, which was then continually plowing the ground with balls from the shipping. But while they were going out, my grandfather saw one of our men wounded and crawling away on his hands and knees. In the meantime a British soldier ran him through with a bayonet. Being filled with indignation at such rank breach of the laws of all civilized nations he immediately stopped, and amid scenes of death and carnage, loaded his gun and shot that man down before he left the ground and then obtained a safe retreat. I speak of this to let my posterity know that our ancestors were clothed with that steady unshaken determination in time of the most imminent dangers that are incident to human life.

In a few weeks after this my grandfather died with cramp rheumatism (probably a heart attack) in his breast. My father served his time out and returned

home and attended to the cares of a family, married Elizabeth Dutton and raised a family of seven sons and three daughters.

My oldest brother's name was Oliver, who raised a large family in the state of New York on Lake Ontario. The second was David, who raised a family, living with my father in Vermont, where he died. John also married, but had no children. Solomon married and died in the war of 1812 with England – without child. I am the next, have raised a large family. Elijah has raised a family. Arunah, the seventh, has a family. My oldest sister, Elizabeth, married and raised a family by a man named Lloyd E. Archer. Polly, my second sister, married a man by the name of Dexter Newton, and raised a family in the state of New Hampshire. My sister Sybbel, married a man by the name of Abram Newbury and lives in the state of Iowa.

My father was absolute in his family government, kind and affectionate to all his friends. His common practice was to make a feast once in a year and invite some of the poorest people there were in the town and he seemed to take pleasure in their company. I lived with him twenty-five years and never knew him to turn a beggar away empty. He lived to the age of seventy-eight and my mother to eighty-six.

But to return to my own history. When I was but a child I frequently had serious reflections but never prayed. When I was a small boy my father was taken sick for some time. I was not much concerned till I heard some of the neighbors say that Mr. Pulsipher must die. This put me to thinking that if my father should die, a large family of small children would be left without a head to the open winter, subject to many disasters that were incident to human life. I could not bear the thought. An impression immediately came to

me that I must go to the barn and there pray for his recovery. I turned and ran as fast as I could. When I got there I was about to bow down when something informed me that if I did I should die there and never return, which scared me so that I turned and ran back as fast as my legs would carry me. But my Father in Heaven took the will for the deed and restored my father to health.

Nothing of important nature happened for a number of years till I think I was about fourteen or fifteen years of age. When one evening as I was sitting by the fireside in my father's kitchen alone, a sudden influence overpowered my mind to such an extent that I lost sight of everything on earth for some time. I never knew how long. Suffice it to say that it was necessary that more preparation should be made before I should be willing to pass the vale of death. Though I could not be reconciled to souls left in hell fire to all eternity as I had been taught by the sectarians, still there were some things among the sects that appeared reasonable. I have often heard my father say that the signs of Christ's second coming were often seen and that Christ would come before many years should pass away. And if he did not live to see it, likely his children would.

However, when I was about twenty-one, I married a very agreeable companion, lived with her about one year when she died, leaving one child which we named Harriet. After the death of my wife I had some anxiety about her state and condition. Consequently, in answer to my desires, in a few weeks she came to me in vision and appearing natural, looked pleasant as she ever did. She sat by my side and assisted me in singing a hymn beginning thus, "That glorious day is drawing nigh when Zion's light shall shine." This she

did with a seeming composure. This vision took away all the anxiety of my mind concerning her, inasmuch as she seemed to enjoy herself well. This hymn, which she introduced and sang with me, applied to the great work of the last dispensation of the fullness of times. This transpired about the year before Joseph Smith had discovered the first revelation of the work of the last days. My mind became calm as respecting her condition in the spirit world.

In the year 1814 I hired a farm at Bellows Falls on the Connecticut River, and being alone, gave my brother John the privilege to work it with me. In the fall of that season there were the most extraordinary northern lights that I had ever seen. It was the cause of many speculative notions among the people, but my father said it was the signs of the last days and of Christ's second coming. I regarded my father's remarks as specimens of good sense.

I soon wound up my business in that country and went to Pennsylvania, in Susquehanna County, a new country where there was much good timber. I built a mill, cleared a farm and married a wife by the name of Mary Brown, a very agreeable companion by whom I have a large family of kind children. I labored very hard rafting on the Susquehanna River. Many times my life was much exposed, but I stayed in that country about eight years and removed to Onondaga County in the state of New York. I then lost my only son by the fall of a tree which caused much grief to me in that place.

I had many agreeable friends and a good society there. I bought a farm and built a mill. I also built a meeting house for the Baptist Church which I was then associated with.

In the summer of 1831 I heard a minister say that an ancient record, or golden bible, was found in

Palmyra, near Manchester, which remark struck me like a shock of electricity. At the same time I thought it might be something that would give light to my mind upon principles that I had been thinking of for years. Many times I had remarked that the pure church with its gifts and graces was not on the earth. If so, I had not found it, but I should be happy enough to find it in my day. I embraced it accordingly.

In the fall of 1831 there was a Book of Mormon brought into town. I succeeded in getting it. I directly read it through twice, gave it a thorough investigation and believed it was true. The winter following Jared Carter came that was from a mission to Vermont or Lake George. As soon as he came into town, I, with two Methodist Preachers, went to see him. After a reasonable introduction I questioned him upon the principles of the ancient gospel with all its gifts belonging to it. I asked him if he believed it? He answered in the affirmative. I asked him if he had ever laid hands on the sick and they had recovered. "Yes," he said, "I have in many instances."

He preached the following evening to a crowded congregation, held up the Book of Mormon and declared it to be a revelation from God. I could not gain-say anything he had said. He sat down and gave liberty for remarks. The congregation seemed to be in a maze not knowing what to think of what they had heard. I arose and said to the congregation that we had been hearing strange things, and if true they were of the utmost importance to us. If not true, it was one of the greatest impositions. And, as the preacher had said that he had got his knowledge from heaven, and was nothing but a man, and I the same, that I had just as good a right to obtain that blessing as he. Therefore, I was determined to have that knowledge for

myself, which I considered it my privilege. From that time I made it a matter of fervent prayer.

I think about the seventh day, as I was thrashing in my barn with doors shut, all at once there seemed to be a ray of light from heaven which caused me to stop work for a short time, but soon began it again. Then in a few minutes another light came over my head which caused me to look up. I thought I saw the angels with the Book of Mormon in their hands in the attitude of showing it to me and saying, "This is the great revelation of the last days, in which all things spoken of by the prophets must be fulfilled." The vision was so open and plain that I began to rejoice exceedingly so that I walked the length of my barn crying, "Glory Hallelujah to God and the Lamb forever."

For some time it seemed a little difficult to keep my mind in a proper state of reasonable order, I was so filled with the joys of heaven. But when my mind became calm I called the church together and informed them of what I had seen. I told them of my determination to join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which I did and a large body of my church went with me. I was ordained to the office of an elder and went to preaching with considerable success at home and abroad. I had the privilege of baptizing Wilford Woodruff on the thirty-first of December 1833 at Richland, New York.

At length there came one or two elders there with enthusiastic spirits which led the church into diversions which caused me a journey of 325 miles to get counsel to settle the difficulty. I remained in that part preaching in regions around and had the privilege of baptizing many into the kingdom till the spring of 1835, in which I gathered up the remnants of that church and went to Kirtland. There I assisted in the

building of the temple. In the winter of 1836 I received my first endowment in that house, with about 300 elders.

I labored to support my family, and in the fall of 1837 I went to Canada on a mission, raised a branch of twenty-nine members. I returned January 29, 1838, to Kirtland. I was ordained to the Council of First Presidency of Seventies. I took a mission south of the Susquehanna and Delaware Rivers, preached considerably, and established a branch with some persecution. One day I stopped my carriage at the hitching post before a large house where I saw a number of women looking out the window. They were entire strangers too, as I had never seen them before. One woman met me at the door, called me brother, and said she had seen a vision where she saw a Mormon Elder drive up to the yard. She observed the horse and carriage and person, and as soon as she saw me she knew I was the one. We called a meeting and I preached there that night.

The season following there arose a great persecution. The saints were able to escape in the best manner they could. Joseph was carried away in a box nailed on an ox sled to save his life. Old father Joseph was taken out of a window in the night and sent away horseback. After the most of the saints were gone to Missouri, I remained in Kirtland with about four of the First Presidents of Seventies. We continued to hold our meetings in the temple. Accordingly, while at a meeting one Sunday, we took a notion to put our property together and remove in that way, when, notwithstanding the great inconvenience we labored under for want of means. We lacked means to move ourselves and many poor that were yet remaining that had neither clothing nor teams to go

with. But when they heard that we were going together and would help one another they wanted to join us and get out of that hell of persecution. Therefore, we could not neglect them, for all there was against them was that they were poor and could not help themselves.

We continued to receive them till we got between five and six hundred on our hands. According to our covenant we had got them to move or stay there with them so we found we had got a job on our hands. We counseled together from time to time on the subject and came to the conclusion that we could not effect the purpose short of the marvelous power of God by the power of the priesthood. Therefore, we concluded it best to go into the temple in the attic story and pray that our Father would open the way and give us means to gather with the saints in Missouri, which was nearly a thousand miles away. Accordingly, one day while we were on our knees in prayer, I saw a messenger apparently like an old man with white hair down to his shoulders. He was a very large man nearly seven feet high, dressed in a white robe down to his ankles. He looked on me then turned his eyes on the others and then to me again and spoke and said, "Be one and you shall have enough." This gave us great joy. We immediately advised the brothers to scatter and work for anything that they could get that would be useful in moving to a new country. Some went to making staves to sell on the lake shore, among which I was one.

I think it was in the month of March that I was at work in the woods about nine o'clock in the morning when there appeared to be a mighty rattling of wagons at the south. I suppose it must be as much as a dozen wagons rattling on pebble stones. It continued to draw nearer till I discovered it to be in the air, and as it drew

near I heard the sound of a steamboat puff. It passed immediately over our heads and went on about one mile to the Kirtland Temple. There it appeared in the form of a steamboat loaded with passengers. Old Elder Beamen, who was the president of the elders, had anointed them a few months before, but had been dead a short time, he was in the bow of the boat. He was singing and swinging his hat till it came in front of the temple. It then divided in two parts, the one was black and the other white. The white went west and the black went north. The explanation of the phenomenon we saw with much clearness. When within a few months from that time there was a division of the authorities of the church. A number of the twelve and first presidents of seventies descended (or apostatized) and led many after them, but the pure in heart went west.

We observed while we were attending to our prayers in the temple from time to time there was a curious circumstance transpire. A Methodist meeting house stood a few rods from the temple which took fire one night. There was a brand of fire thrown into the temple at a window, but it went out. Most of the people being very hostile, the mob laid the charge of burning the house to the council of seventies. There was no doubt but that they fired it themselves hoping by that means to get a pretext for our destruction, but we knew we were innocent and trusted in God. We continued our course steadily along and paid no attention to them. There was a universal determination that we should never leave that place in a company and they knew as well as we that the poor could not go out alone. Therefore, they had a deep plot laid for our destruction.

But we knew where our hope was grounded and

kept our steady course preparing to go out in a company well organized. But as I related to the burning of that house, they raged to a great extent because most of them supposed that we had actually done it. But as the Lord dictated, the great leader of that mob, who had once been a Mormon and well calculated to carry out his devilish designs, was held by the power of God so that he had a vision and saw those that fired the house. He seemed to be greatly astonished for a while and then met with the mob and informed them that it was not the council that burned the house and knew who it was. But he dared not tell on account of the law because he could prove it only by vision, which they would not believe and still swore vengeance on us. But he swore by all the Gods that lived that he would have revenge on them if they lost a hair of our heads. He had a large store of goods and could swear and get drunk. He had some influence with them so that we were preserved by the hand of God.

We obtained money and clothing for the company and the fourth day of July this man that had led the mob invited me to take all our teams and company and camp in a clover field which was about one foot high. I thanked him and embraced the officer. The next day we all went out all in order as we said we would in the beginning with about sixty-five teams and seventy cows. Nothing transpired for some weeks until we got to Dutton and got out of money. The people would take nothing of us but money for our expenses, and at a high price too. We went into council and prayed to God for money and provisions. Accordingly the Lord sent a turn-pike jobber after us to get us to do a job for him. We therefore agreed with him for a job of twelve hundred dollars which we did in good order with his

acceptance. He then wanted us to do another job.

It was then very dry and the wells were so low that it was difficult to get water for our animals in the dry part of the country if we should go on. But we inquired of the Lord for what was best and we were impressed to go on, not knowing what we should do for drink. The day following there fell such a flood of water that the low places in the country were filled and we got along very well.

When we got into Illinois a few of our company stopped, and further on in Illinois, Joseph Young with others stopped. The remainder of us went on continually hearing reports that there was war in Missouri and if we went on we should be killed by the mob. But we went in good order, keeping guards all the time. When we arrived within five miles of Far West, which was the metropolis of the church in Missouri, there Joseph and Hyrum met us, greatly pleased that we had arrived with so large a company. They conducted us on to Far West and we camped around the temple cellar as they had it dug.

In the morning, the first of October, 1838, Joseph came to me and said he wished me to take the company and go to Diahman, Daviess County, about twenty-five miles north, which would take us two days, and advised us to guard our wagons during the night. I informed him that his advice was good, but we had not been without a guard since we left Kirtland. However, we went on to the place appointed and found a few brethren there surrounded by numerous mobs. Being greatly rejoiced to see us come, we were as glad to get through, for we had been on the road with a large company from the fifth of July to the third of October. We suffered the perils of a hard journey for near one thousand miles among a hostile people, but

the Lord had brought us to try us to see what our faith was made of. We expected we had got home where we could locate our families and prepare to build up Zion, therefore, we sold our loose property for improvements subject to free nation rights.

The people being much opposed to our faith decided to drive us out of the country and obtain their farms back again that we had paid for. To carry this out they began to burn their houses and then go to the governor and swear that we had driven them out of their settlements and burned their buildings.

Daviess County was a beautiful place situated on the Grand River. First rate land and plenty of good timber where we supposed there had been an ancient city of the Nephites, as the hewn stones were already there in piles. Also the mound or alter built by father Adam, where he went to offer sacrifices when he was old. Leaning on his staff, he prophesied the most noted things that should take place down to the latest generations. Therefore, it was called Adam-ondi-Ahman.

There we stayed about a month, being continually annoyed by mobs and thieves stealing everything that they could lay their hands upon that belonged to people of our church. In the time I was there I assisted to build sixteen houses and the longest that I lived in one was four days. I had a large family with an aged mother. I think I never slept many nights while I was there without having my sword and pistols by my bed and frequently I was called by the sound of the bugle to defend the people from mobs. Yet all the while we expected to stay there and by faith and works retain our places.

Then one day there came two messengers from Far West and informed us that Joseph, with others of the

authorities of the church at Far West, were delivered into the hands of the mob. The mob had 3000 men and the word from Joseph to us was that they would likely come here soon. He advised us to lay away our arms, go to work, and submit to anything that they should say. This struck us with a great depression of spirit, not knowing how to comprehend the ways of God. We had expected to stay there, locate our families and preach the gospel, but we were disappointed, and right afront us we knew not and were left in a perfect state of suspense. But we knew nothing than to abide by the word of the prophet.

In this conflict of feeling, I walked away from the company where I had received the above information, toward the grove and said in the anguish of my soul, "Lord, what does all these things mean?" The answer to me was instantaneous, though in-expressed, "Be still and know that I am God." In a moment I was at rest and happy in my condition.

I returned immediately back to the company that I had left and said to them, "Have no fear, for God will provide a way for our escape." So we trusted in Him, but if we had not received word from Joseph we should have been very likely to have sent hundreds of them to hell, cross-lots, for there were about 130 of us well armed. There was but one place where they would be likely to cross the river in a line exactly in front of our cannons, well loaded with small slugs of iron. We had not only our houses, lands, wives and children, but the house of God to fight for. But the Lord's, "Be still and know that I am God," was with us. Therefore, we were quiet, bearing the afflictions that were laid upon us.

We went to our labors. Soon after this, I, with other people, went across the river three miles to gather corn, when 800 of the mob were seen coming upon us.

As they came up to the gate where we were at work, they halted and sent a messenger to inform us that we were their prisoners. I happened to be on a load the nearest to them. They directed their attention to me and said we must go with them. I observed to them that we were there gathering for our families and cattle which they were in view of. They then said we might fill our wagons, get some boys to drive them home, and go with them.

Accordingly we did. They went about a mile and halted. We were surrounded by a strong guard for some time and then discharged and sent home to await their trip into town. We had not gone more than fifty or one hundred rods before we heard a volley of guns fired. I would think from fifty to one hundred. The balls came there among us. We looked around and saw a company supposed to be one hundred men paraded a little to the south of the main camp. They also gave a second shot. We kept a sturdy walk as though nothing had happened, for they hurt none of us. We went home the same day into Diahman, took all arms from the people and then put a strong guard around us.

In that time we were often insulted by scoundrels. One of them in the shape of me (in my image) which brought us near a fight, but the commander stopped it. However, he prowled around there for a number of days and then gave us ten days to get out of that place or the mob would be set loose upon us. This had been the case all the time, but now we had nothing to defend ourselves with. Besides, there were many poor people that had no teams and many widows that had nothing but small children.

I immediately got my horse shod and took my family, a widow and family, and another family all to one lead, moved to Far West, then returned back after

another family. These were among the last that went out while the mobs were prowling about stealing all they could find, but although I was alone, the last night I lay down by the side of my horses and saved them and went the next day and got the other family and carried them to Far West. This was the last of November. We were all destitute for grain or feed for our teams. Our fields of corn were twenty miles off among the mobs as was also what few cattle we had. But the most of our corn was destroyed before we could get it. We therefore had hard living through the winter. After I had obtained a little meal for my family I went away up to the Platt country with my team to get work for money to move out of the state in the spring as the edict of the governor was that we should never raise any more crops in that state.

I obtained some money and returned to my family, but while I was gone I was obliged to stay at a mob tavern one night, alone, where they were very hostile. I did not like their appearances, but I was obliged to stay there or run the risk of freezing on the great cold prairie. Therefore, I had to watch as well as pray. But in the later part of the night I heard people in the lower part of the house in much commotion. I heard them saying they never saw such things before. They seemed to be much astonished at what they saw in the heavens. I raised myself up in bed and looked out and saw a very bright circle around the moon with a very bright half circle at the outside of that with a very bright spot at the side of that nearly as big as the sun. Then another apparent sun was in the northwest with another in the southwest, which gave a very extraordinary appearance. This gave them such a fright that they could pay no more attention to me, so I went on in peace.

I prepared to move to Illinois. I took my horse and rode to Richmond to get my gun that they took from me at Diahman in the war. I obtained it and prepared to move in March. I buried my mother there on a divide near Plum Creek. We succeeded in moving to Gurney where I found rents on houses so high that it would be hard for a poor man with a large family as I had to obtain a living and get anything ahead. Therefore, I took my horse up the river to Lyma and found a forest of about eleven miles square and considerable game in it. I went into the timber with Brother Burgess. I lost one horse moving from Missouri. My son-in-law lost one too, and had to stop among strangers with my daughter who had given birth to a child on the prairie.

I borrowed another horse and went to Illinois with my family and then returned for the remainder. We went into Bear Creek timber, and with one horse and our hands, built three homes, cleared thirteen acres of land and put it into crops, but we had nothing to live on until the crops were ripe. Brother Burgess and boys were strong to work out, but I was not able to do so on account of the exposure that I had past. Therefore, I could not do a days work in a day. I knew not how to obtain food for my family.

While hesitating upon these things, I dreamed that I was going to make boxes and measures, and also dreamed that my women and children were making baskets, and that I went to sell them. In the morning I went and found some excellent timber for that purpose and made the frame according to the pattern that I had seen and also found some suitable timber for baskets. The women went to work according to their direction from me. We soon obtained a small load and went out into the settlement and sold them directly for every kind of provisions that we wanted to live upon and

some money. In this way we got along until harvest.

This season one of our neighbors from Nauvoo came for help in sickness, and informed us that there were not well ones enough to take care of the sick. I sent my daughter and sister there to help take care of the sick. I promised them that I would come to conference and see them. Accordingly, when the time came, I took my carriage and went up. I went first to the place where my daughter was, and found the house shut up with window curtains drawn. I knocked at the door and a faint voice answered. I went in and found a large family and every person laying prostrate. My daughter was the last one that came down. She had been down about one week. Having the whole family to nurse night and day, she could not endure it. When I entered the house she heard my voice, sprang up from the bed and said, "Father, you have come. I want to go home." I told her to get ready and I would go and look for my sister. I went where she was and found her and the family in the same situation. I put a bed into the carriage and went home the same day and nursed them three months before I could heal them.

It was thought that my daughter would die, but I did not give her up. I called to the bed one day to see her close her eyes in death. I was seeing her apparently breathing her last. At that instant the Spirit of God came upon me. I said, "Mariah, do you want to live to raise a family, keep the commandments of God and do all you can to build up Zion?" She opened her eyes and said she did. I said to her, "Then you will live." That hour she sat up in bed and immediately got well, as did also my sister.

I would like to tell another little incident that happened. There was a man with a family come into the church, who lived about fifteen miles from me, who

had a brother-in-law that was possessed with the devil, and was chained in a tight room. Numbers had been there to administer to him, but to no effect. I went there to preach in the after part of the day. The man got loose and was breaking down the ceiling. They had been in the habit of getting a very strong man to help on such occasions, and were about to send for him in a hurry. I desired them to let me see him before they did. They were afraid he would come out and kill some of them. With much persuasion I got them to unlock the door of his room. All the rough language and profane swearing, and threatening anyone who came in sight I had never heard before. They said he was dangerous to encounter with, but I entreated him to let me open the door. I had full confidence that I could handle him, with the help that God would give me. I was satisfied that they did not understand my intention. I looked through the crack of the door. When he caught my eye he bawled out, "Old Pulsipher, I know you of old." At that instant I burst the door open. He stood with a sharp stick in his hand drawn back ready to stab me. Although he was a stout man and full of violent passion, I closed in with him so quick that he did not know what was up till he lay on his back, and I holding him while they bound him again. The family seemed a little surprised.

Before I left the next morning, the man, whose name was Samuel Newcomb, wished me to come and stay with him one year. He would give me large wages for he said that I could handle the sick man with ease, and he could leave his family and home with more safety. He was a man of considerable business and property to manage. I asked him if he wished to gather up to Kirtland with the church. He said he would if he could sell his farm. He wanted \$1,611 for all. We

arranged for him to go the next spring, and I took the whole care of the wild man.

I recollect at one time upon the matter of his feeding, he flew into a rage all at once and broke loose. I was at work in the barn and a messenger came running for me, and said the man was killing his mother. I rushed into the room, took him by the shoulders, shook him and said, "Sam, what are you about?" He in a moment left his raging, dropped his head and became docile till he was bound again.

Later on we counseled with old Father Smith and he advised us to get seven elders of good report and fast and pray till he was delivered. We consulted the family, who had not kept the word of wisdom, but they agreed to do it. We therefore took the man, loosened his hands, administered to him in a room by ourselves, and I do not remember of him having a raving spell after that for six months. Then the devil entered him again. We were called for the second time. The family had promised to keep the covenants, but we found they had returned to the old practice of breaking the word of wisdom. We therefore sent a message to Father Smith, and he said if they would not keep the covenants we might go about our business and let them all go to hell together.

I labored to support my family and in the fall of 1837 I went to Canada on a mission, raised a branch of twenty-nine members, and returned January 29, 1838 to Kirtland. I was ordained to the council of the first president of seventies.

After we had lived in this place near two years, Joseph requested the first presidents of seventies to come to Nauvoo. I being one of that number I immediately repaired to Nauvoo and located in its vicinity, made a farm, lived comfortably and assisted in

building the temple.

The Missouri mobs were continually seeking the life of Brother Joseph. I think there had been some risings against him without success. These mobbers finally came to the conclusion that the law could not reach him, but powder and ball could. Therefore, they organized a mob of about 200 men, and put him in Carthage jail with Dr. Richards, Hyrum Smith and John Taylor. The mobs came and broke into the jail, shot Joseph and Hyrum and wounded John Taylor by shooting four balls into him. The fourth saved his life, striking his watch which was in his vest pocket. After Joseph had fell dead one of the ruffins made a move to take off his head, but a singular light shown around him that struck the man with fear. They therefore flew in every direction and disappeared. This being done it gave us a hard shock and caused much mourning. Our brethren went and brought them home and buried the dead and restored the wounded.

At this time the mob expected we would rise and give them battle. We thought best not to do it. We just kept still, continued our work on the temple, finished it and got our endowments. At that time most of the twelve were absent on missions. Sidney Rigdon, who aspired for the presidency, came and called the church together and presented his claim for the presidency. But the twelve soon came home and appeared on the stand at the day appointed for choosing. Sidney made his plea. Brigham Young began to speak and at that time I sat with my back towards the stand as did many others. When Brigham spoke he spoke with the voice of Joseph and we turned around to see Brigham speaking in Joseph's voice and beheld Joseph's mantle had fallen on him. The people understood it in the same way. Brigham stood at the head of the twelve,

therefore the church turned to him.

Persecution continually waxed against the church. They thought it best to go to a more secluded land. Accordingly in January of 1846, I had notice to be ready at three days notice to leave on account of so many attempts to destroy the church.

At length I had the notice and started with a good team the second day of February, crossed the Mississippi River and went as far as Sugar Creek, until the cold weather broke. There were about 500 of the heads of the church here. I went back once, gave my son orders to sell what property he could and take the family and follow as soon as the spring opened. We went on from Sugar Creek in the spring, but streams and tempests opposed our march till late in the season.

I frequently went forward to pioneer the way and organize places for the poor to stop that were not able to go any further. In May I took my team and went back to meet my family and found them in Lee County, with two teams, a few cows and a few sheep. My sacrifice there was about two thousand dollars. We went on and crossed the Missouri River that season and established a place called Winter Quarters.

That fall and winter, which was 1846 and 1847, the church suffered exceedingly. When we got there we found so many sick and dying from exposure that I took my team and what help I could raise and drew timber four miles and built six houses. Then I was obliged to go down to Missouri for provisions, was gone about six weeks in winter, camping out, and exposed to all the storms that are common in that season of the year.

I brought home what I could. When I got home I was so far exhausted from exposure that I could not walk one step without two crutches. I then sent my boys again, while I took care of the cattle which

amounted to eighteen head. Many times I went on my crutches to get on my horse, then rode all day to save my cattle from the Indians, who were continually killing them.

That winter was a sorrowful time for the church. 500 of our young men were demanded by the general government through the influence of old Tom Benton, who was a noted mobber in the first Missouri persecutions, and was then in the senate. This left the church with old men, children and many poor women, while their husbands were fighting the battles of the United States.

There were not well people enough to take care of the sick and dying. My boys continued to team through the winter till they both got sick. John was laid on the bed and was near the gate of death for a long time, when I was called in to see him breath his last. He was taken with pneumonia which many people think to be a certain sign of death. He looked very much like it to be sure. When I came in the doctor and my family stood around the bed. I called to him and he opened his eyes. I said, "John, you are not going to die now. I cannot spare you now. You must get well to help us move through the mountains." He immediately began to vomit a large quantity of the most filthy matter I ever saw come from any person's stomach, as black as ink. From that hour he began to recover and soon was able to drive a team.

In the spring the church leaders organized a company of about fifty wagons and we started for Salt Lake. I was advised to take ten wagons and go ahead and assist in making roads, but such storms followed us as I never saw. The highest and driest land in the country was soaked with water so that it was difficult to get along with a wagon. One morning I got on my

horse and rode back a few miles to see how the company was getting along. I saw a man walking with a rubber coat on. I asked him how they got along and he said, "First rate." He put his hands in his pockets and they were full of water.

Parley P. and Orson Pratt and myself went forward to look for a location for the poor, and such as could not go on. We found a grove of timber and called it Garden Grove, a convenient place for a settlement. I then unloaded my wagon and delivered my load of flour and bacon and went back to look after my family. I met them not far from the Mississippi River in the year 1847. One boy got his leg broken and one man broke his arm in my company, but I set them and they soon got well.

We arrived in the valley about the twenty-third of September, 1847, with all our stock except the sheep. Those we lost at Winter Quarters. We immediately prepared to build. I found grain scarce and hard to get. John Kneff was building a mill, the only one in the valley. I sold three cows to pay his workmen that I might get grain after he got his mill to running. I went to him for twenty dollars in grain, but he said he could not let anyone have more than half that sum, and that was not half what I had paid for. This made me feel very disagreeable because I had a large family and three other families of my friends that had no way of helping themselves and money would not buy it.

I thought on it one night and then came to the conclusion that I would build a mill and take a part of the toll of the grain that was in the valley. Accordingly I rallied my help, went onto the mill site, dug a hole in the bank to live in through the winter about the first of December, and we commenced getting timber, without feed for our cattle and but little for ourselves. We

continued our labor with about half rations upon all the different branches of the work till the first of March. By that time we got the first grist mill started and timber out for a sawmill. When done I ground for one-sixteenth, while others ground for one-twelveth. From that time we had bread to eat with all our families. I have seen the hand of God in preserving ourselves and cattle while the snow was three feet deep in the canyon where we got the timber and some of the time more than one foot in the valley, and we had not as much fodder as could be carried in one load. When I looked upon the circumstance I could not comprehend it in any other way but the marvelous power of God in sustaining them.

1850 was a hard season for many. After we got our mill running we had enough, but lived prudent on account of so many that had none. Indian meal would command five dollars a bushel, but so many poor had none that I sold all that I had to spare at one dollar a bushel, though I was offered five dollars by those that were going to California. But their gold would not buy it of me when so many poor were starving. There were some informed me that they had not any bread in their houses for six weeks and came to me to buy bran, but I sold none – I gave them that. This scarce time caused people to scratch for life to raise grain, but the crickets were very troublesome and destroyed many crops in 1851. But in 1852 the gulls came and destroyed them according to the word of the prophet.

We built a house thirty-four by thirty feet on the corner of block eighty-two on Jordan Street. The next season we built a large barn and made a farm over Jordan about two miles off which gave us a good chance to keep cattle. There was nothing then of a very extraordinary nature with exception of Brother

Brigham preaching continually to bring the church to obedience, but they were growing rich and careless till about the time of the October conference in 1856 when I understood Brother Brigham to say that the Lord would wait no longer. I think he did not define what chastisement testimony that some uncommon event was near at hand, but I was not aware that I had become so dull and careless relative to my duty till Brother Kimball called on me in public to awake to my duty. I began to call more fervently on the Lord. I soon saw that Brother Kimball was right and that I was holding a high and responsible station in the church as asleep with many others.

Brother Grant, who was one of Brigham's counselors, was authorized to preach repentance to the people and to a good effect. I with the associates of my council went before Brother Brigham and informed him that if he knew of any others that would take our places better, magnify it for the interest of the kingdom than we could, he was perfectly at liberty to do so, but he told us to go and magnify our calling ourselves. There was much confessing among the people of their faults.

Brother Brigham gave some strong prophetic language relative to the United States of America. I think not far from this the president and congress became very hostile to us and seemed to have designs to brand us like themselves or destroy us. Therefore, they sent an army to bring us to or destroy us, but we thought it not best to bring them in among us because we did not like their hostile spirit nor their habits. Therefore, we sent a few of our young men to meet them, which brought them to a stand for further consideration.

In the spring following, all the north part of the territory moved south till the army passed through to

their quarters at Camp Floyd. But previous to this the president and congress saw their mistake in sending the army here. Notwithstanding, they had charged us with treason and many other offenses. They sent commissioners here, forgave all our sins against them and wished peace and tranquility. Accordingly we all moved back to our possessions peaceably.

In the meantime, we were rather destitute of clothing, but speculators followed the army and brought more goods to the valley than was ever brought before so that the people were decently clothed. All this we considered direct from the hand of God to supply our wants. But evils have followed the army. Such a herd of abominable characters have come in their wake, that lying, gambling, robbing, stealing, and murdering till it seemed as though they were determined to break up all law and order in the territory. They brought with them much liquor which still furthered them in their abomination, and many of our people who were weak joined with them in their wickedness, especially the rising generation who imitated their habits. This gave us some trouble to keep the church in order. Brother Brigham preached continually to bring the church to obedience, but they were now careless.

We had some trouble with the Indians, but nothing in consequence of our being driven out from the United States. I think all the wars we have had with the Indians have not as yet made us so much trouble as the army sent from the United States.

I still continued my labors in town and on my farm – what time I could get. I had much labor too among the seventies, remaining a counselor. I was frequently out four or five evenings a week besides day meetings.

In March of 1857 I married Martha Hughes,

daughter of James and Ann Picton Hughes. She bore me five children.

I discovered that with the age that I had approached that it began to wear upon my constitution. I was advised by some to give up my presiding and let a younger man take it that invoked upon it. I therefore gave it up, with the privilege of remaining in the body of the seventies or join the high priest quorum. I, therefore, have yet remained in the body of seventies. Considering they were both embraced in the Melchizedek Priesthood it was a matter of indifference to me.

However, the southern mission that had been in action for some time had some influence with me, partly on account of its necessity and partly on account of some of my boys that were called there. Therefore, I said I did not know but that I would go there if the presidency thought it best. No sooner than they heard of it they sent me an order to go with my family. I, therefore, put myself in the way of selling my property. My boys heard of it and came to help me move to Dixie. Accordingly in the fall of 1862 I removed to Shoal Creek, where my boys were keeping a herd for the southern people. I found it to be a very healthy section, and I enjoyed myself very well, considering the obscurity of the place. We were a great distance from the abode of the white men in the very midst of the roving red men.

I will now reflect back to the time our family meetings convened. The first was in February, 1855. I called my children together at my home in Salt Lake at this meeting and said, "I want to instruct you a little and give such advice which I hope you will remember. First get the spirit of the Lord and keep it. The most of you have the priesthood and you will be likely to use it

to govern your families and bring up your children. When a man has a number of good children he loves all of them. If the destroyer comes to take one of them, which will he give? Most likely the one he cannot keep, of course. Which child can't you keep by the prayer of faith and the authority of the priesthood? Pray mighty to God, let your thoughts be raised in prayer day and night, that you may have the spirit of the Lord to be with you. Never speak till you know what you are going to say. Never whip a child in anger. Be sure that the spirit of the Lord dictates to you when you groom your children. Never let your girls go with men that you do not know for some men have the fever of seducing, therefore, beware who they go with. Some women think if their husbands get another wife they cannot love them anymore, but they are under a great mistake, for he can love one hundred as well as the sun can shine upon each of them in a clear day – if God requires you get them. Such idle thoughts should be banished from their minds forever. Why is it so? Because it is God's order. A man may love his wives just in proportion to their acts of kindness to him. I beg of you mothers to take care of your children while they are with you. I now will give way for you to speak." Then each child would bear their testimonies. These meetings were held regularly once a year and recorded.

Zerah Pulsipher was instrumental in building the town of Hebron. There he died January 1, 1872, at the age of eighty-four. This day closed another chapter in the book of life for one of God's chosen and noble sons. He was remembered at his funeral with the following poem.

ZION'S NOBLE SON

Zion's noble son is sleeping
Neath the sod of Zion's land.
Chosen by the great Creator;
And by the strength of nature's hand.
 To the just his spirit has wafted,
 Not to rest, but plod along;
 In the quest of the resurrection,
 Which God says is in the morn.
Among the rocks, amid the desert
He has striven to maintain
Zion's standard in the mountains,
And to honor his Maker's name.
 Scores of branches from the honored
 Taught by him to reverence God;
 Have sprung up and dwelt in Zion
 And sing their praise with one accord.
Through a useful life he's passed,
Bearing Temples unto God;
Have sprung up and dwelt in Zion
And sing their praise with one accord.
 Through a useful life he's passed,
 Bearing Temples unto God;
 Choosing right; maintaining justice;
 Taking this path for his abode.
Like the rock of Gibraltar
He has stood from first to last;
Through the blast of persecution
And to God his anchor cast.
 Companions of the dear departed,
 One with tottering steps and hoary hair;
 Sons and daughters of the shepherd
 Weep not for thy father dear.

Author unknown