

ELLIS MENDENHALL SANDERS

*Ellis Mendenhall Sanders father of Anne Sanders Wiltbank
Anne Sanders Wiltbank mother of Rachel Ellen Wiltbank Lay
Rachel Ellen Wiltbank Lay mother of Wilhelmina Lay Woolsey
Wilhelmina Lay Woolsey mother of Gaitha W. Butterfield
Gaitha W. Butterfield mother of Darrell H. Butterfield*

Ellis Mendenhall Sanders was born near Strauton, New Castle, Delaware on Dec 5, 1808. He was married to Rachel Broome Roberts on Nov 9, 1830 in Wilmington. To this union seven children were born. Six children were born while the family was living at Winter Quarters. Annie married Spencer Watson Willtbank, Elizabeth R. married Lenord Conger, Hannah married Olivere Huntington, Rachel married Schuyler Everett, Sarah Jane married Neilson Merkley, Ellis M. married Mary Ann Smith, and Ellen married W.J. Conningham.

Ellis received the fullness of the gospel and was baptized in the year of 1843 by William A. Moore. He visited Joseph Smith at Nauvoo, Illinois in the spring of 1844 where he received a patriarchal blessing by Hyrum Smith and was ordained an elder at that time. He returned to Wilmington, Delaware where he presided over the branch.

Ellis Mendenhall Sanders was a personal friend of the prophet Joseph Smith. He also acted as the prophet's protector in time of danger. Many times saving him from the hands of the mob.

At one particular time, Joseph was so closely pursued by the mob that he went into hiding in the Sander's home. The ruffians being convinced that he was in this home, gathered and began pounding on the door demanding that Joseph come out. To their surprise the door opened and instead of Joseph, there stood Sanders with a gun in each hand. He told them to leave at once or he would shoot and shoot to kill.

In his daily diary kept during the time he was appointed Branch president, he tells of the following experiences:

"March 24, 1845 we packed part of our goods and took them to Brother Hall. We stayed there two weeks and appointed Brother Joseph Hall to preside over the Branch. We then started for Nauvoo on April 10th. We came the same day to Columbia, stayed there till the next day waiting for a boat. On the 12th we reached Newport in the night and stayed there over Sunday. Tuesday the 14th we reached Holidaysburg. We left there and reached the Foot of Plains Nov 2nd in the evening. Wed. at noon we reached Johnson. We left there in the evening for Pittsburgh on the steamboat Defiance. The date was April 21, 1845.

On April 23rd we landed in Cincinnati, there we took passage on board steamboat Majestic. Saturday morning we got to Lursbill. We were all day getting through the canal because of the foundry raking fire. Our boat had to run in the canal for fear of fire and then back out to let the other boats out. The next day our boat ran on a sand bar and was there for five hours.

Tuesday evening we reached St. Louis and took passage on board the Merimaid, got to Warsaw at daybreak and landed in Nauvoo at 8 o'clock. On Friday morning we moved into Elias Hariners house. Next day we went with brother Kinball to Nauvoo Temple Lot, that being the

3rd day of May 1845. On May 24 we went to the Temple at 6 o'clock to see the corner stone laid."

Grandfather Sanders told how in Sept. he took cold in his head and suffered much, and how H.C. Kimball and Orson Whitney came and administered to him and he received relief instantly. This was just before the mob commenced threatening the leader and Saints in general. Nothing transpired after the mob was quelled excepting the governor troops being here everyday with their foolery until we commenced to give out.

In the house of the Lord, conference was held Oct 6, and we were organized to companies with captains over hundreds, fifties, and tens. About the 6th of Dec. they dedicated the Temple and on Monday commenced giving endowments. On Thursday Dec 18, 1845 Brother Kimball sent for us and Rachel and I received the first part of the Endowment.

On Jan 20, 1846 we went to Nauvoo Temple in the evening and assisted in the wash room. On Wed we were there and assisted in the same place. I sent for my wife Rachel and she was sealed to me for time and for all eternity by Brother Brigham Young. We both did ordinance work whenever called upon. On Feb 13, I was called for again and in the evening was adopted into Heber C. Kimball's family and after that was called on for a witness on the end seat. They held meeting at my house twice a week until the persecutions began to get worse and the Council of the Twelve began to get ready to leave Nauvoo.

We cast our lot with the rest of the Saints, sharing all their trails and hardships. I drove one of the teams and Annie, being the oldest daughter, drove another mule team. These two teams carried my family and all our worldly possessions.

On the 9th of May we crossed the river with Elder Hyde and Elder Woodruff of the Twelve. At that point there was an attachment put upon my mules and wagon by James Mendenhall, who was a Strangelite, he claimed I owed him a debt for a house and lot of William Mendenhall. I had a receipt to show that I had paid him in full. Mr. Hyde counseled me not to return to Nauvoo, as it was a scheme to trap me. Next day we moved up to Black Sack Grove in company with Brother Woodruff, Smoot and Elijah Sheets and others whom we had remained with for the past few weeks. At Montrose, Brother Hyde borrowed \$50.00 for me from a man who did not belong to the Church. Later this good man was baptized by Brother Hyde. On the 18th of May they left Montrose and moved to Charleston where they stayed over night at a small creek. We were to let the women wash but there was no pasture for the cattle so we had to move on and cross the river at Farmington. Here we bought badly needed flour at \$3.25 a barrel.

We were caught in a storm just after we left Hoger Log Town, which was within eight miles of Heviogia. Here we had to put all the teams on one wagon to get up the hill. We remained there several days to repair. On May 24, Elder Woodruff, Brothers Shurtliff, Billings and others joined the company. On account of dispute, the company was thrown into confusion. When we stopped, I moved that Brother Woodruff take lead which he did and appointed myself and Brother Shurtliff his counselors and every man his place. We moved on in order till we camped about 2 miles from the forks of the river. Here we remained two days at Bloomfield, we did some trading and moved up to the Fox River. My axle broke about 7 miles from Soap Creek. When I repaired it I moved on and joined the company.

We all traveled together except Brother Shurtliff who would not start with us and who did not travel much with us after. The road was rough and had to be repaired at the creek just before we

reached Mt. Pisquah on the 20th of June. We came on to a twelve-mile swale, a few of us got through by 12 o'clock midnight, but most of them were stalled until morning in the middle of the miserable mud. We remained at Mt. Pisquah until the 6th of July when we started for Council Bluffs, Iowa. We reached there on July 11, where we remained until the 25th. The 26th we crossed the Missouri River and came to the big springs. Here I joined Heber C. Kimball Company.

We remained at the springs 10 days. Every day we took our teams and went to the Missouri River to help other pioneers to cross.

On the 16th of August, our camp moved up to Cutlers Park where we commenced to cut hay. Our division started on the 17th of August and continued to cut till the 17th of September. Then we moved down and built a camp called Winter Quarters. Here in our spare time from the hay cutting, I cut logs for my house which my children helped me build. We moved into it on the 14th of November.

Our 7th child, whom we called Ellen, was born November 24th. From then on, I continued to haul hay and wood until the end of the year.

On Monday, January 5, 1846, I baptized 3 of my children, Annie, Elizabeth, and Hannah in the Mississippi River.

Brother John Little confirmed them members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Ellis Mendenhall Sanders and family stayed in Winter Headquarters until 1848. They traveled from Winter Quarters to Salt Lake City with the Heber C. Kimball Company. They located in the 19th ward in Salt Lake City, where Ellis continued to labor in Zion's cause. He was a high priest, and went on a mission to southern Utah. He lived in St. George during the fall of 1862 and 1863. He was the assessor, collector and road supervisor for Washington County and water master on the Rio Virgin and Clara Rivers.

Ellis Mendenhall Sanders died on Jan 15, 1873. The funeral services were held in the St. George Tabernacle. President Brigham Young was one of the speakers. The prayer was offered by Patriarch William Perkins and the choir did the singing.