

---

# Samuel Bent

---

1778–1846

D&C 124:132

Samuel was a colonel in the Massachusetts militia before moving his family westward to Pontiac, Michigan. In that thriving northern community, Samuel gave up his military leanings in favor of the Presbyterian faith. By the early 1830s, Samuel had received the appointment of deacon in the Presbyterian Church in Pontiac.

While visiting relatives in Pontiac, Lucy Mack Smith was introduced to the Presbyterian pastor of Samuel Bent—Mr. Ruggles. “And you are the mother of that poor, foolish, silly boy, Joe Smith, who pretended to translate the Book of Mormon,” the pastor said to her. Lucy, ever ready to defend her son and her faith, replied, “Mark my words—as true as God lives, before three years we will have more than one-third of your church, and, sir, whether you believe it or not, we will take the very deacon, too.” A few months after Lucy Mack Smith’s visit, Elder Jared Carter preached the message of the Restoration in Pontiac. “He went immediately into the midst of Mr. Ruggles’ church, and, in a short time, brought away seventy of his best members, among whom was the deacon, just as [Mother Smith had] told the minister.”<sup>1</sup>

That deacon, of course, was Samuel Bent. His conversion to the faith was reported by Edward Stevenson:

Some, even his own wife, thought [Samuel] was losing his mind. She came to my mother. . . . My mother asked, “Does your husband continue to pray to the Lord?” “Yes,” she said, “more devoted than ever, but he

---

<sup>1</sup> Lucy Mack Smith, *History*, 1845, 212. Joseph Smith Papers.

only thinks to join this new delusion." "Well," said mother, "let us wait and see what will follow if it is of God it will stand: if not it will fall."<sup>2</sup>

In January 1833 Samuel Bent entered baptismal waters and was ordained an elder by Jared Carter. The day after his baptism, he went on a missionary journey to Huron, Michigan. There he organized a small branch of the Church. "Quite a number of people in that vicinity embraced the new faith," due to the efforts of Samuel.<sup>3</sup> Several of his converts enlisted in Zion's Camp to help religious exiles from Jackson County regain their property. Samuel was assigned to the Hyrum Smith division of the camp and served as a moderator or presiding officer.

When Zion's Camp was disbanded, Samuel was called to serve another mission. Before he was up and on his way, he heard a voice say, "Samuel, arise immediately, and go forth on the mission which thou wast commanded to take."<sup>4</sup> He arose from his bed and set off without further delay. After this mission, Samuel settled in Kirtland, Ohio, near other Latter-day Saints. He attended the School of the Prophets for a season.

Samuel settled among Latter-day Saints in Liberty, Missouri. Unfortunately, in a town named for freedom, he was tied to a tree and whipped by a mob because he would not deny his faith. Surviving the ordeal, he moved on to Far West, Missouri, where he served on the high council and declared before that council "that his faith was as ever and that he [felt] to praise God in prisons and in dungeons and in all circumstances whatever he might be found."<sup>5</sup>

As if in fulfillment of his own words, Samuel was imprisoned in Richmond Jail for nearly three weeks. After being released on bail, he was warned in a vision to leave Missouri. He left posthaste, traveling as fast as he could through woods, narrowly escaping from those who sought to detain him. In his Missouri Redress Petition, Samuel expressed concern for wrongs committed against other Latter-day Saints: "Saw them shoot down one of [Gad Yale's] hogs, saw them take his corn and believe they destroyed about ten acres, and

---

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Grant Stevenson, ed., Edward Stevenson, *Selections from the Autobiography of Edward Stevenson, 1820–1897 (1820–1846)*, (Provo, UT: Stevenson's Genealogical Center, 1986), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Lyman Omer Littlefield, *Reminiscences of Latter-day Saints* (Logan, UT: The Utah Journal Co., 1888), 28–29.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, History, 212. Joseph Smith Papers.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Bent quote, in Donald Q Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds, *Far West Record Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 222.

likewise a small stack of Hay. . . . Saw some of the Troops in possession of Mr. Cyrus Daniel's house for several days."<sup>6</sup>

On January 10, 1841, Samuel Bent was appointed by revelation to serve on the Nauvoo High Council (see D&C 124:132). His appointment to serve a mission with George W. Harris to Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio for the purpose of collecting funds to cover the cost of printing the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, hymnbooks, and the new translation of the scriptures brought high praise from Church leaders: "[They praised the elders'] zeal for the cause of truth, and their strict morality and honesty [and] cheerfully recommend[ed] them to the Saints of the Most High."<sup>7</sup>

Samuel fled from Nauvoo in 1846. At age sixty-eight, he died in the temporary encampment of Garden Grove in Iowa. At the time of his death, he was serving as the presiding officer of the encampment. His counselors wrote to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles informing them of his passing:

Garden Grove is left without a president, and the Church has sustained the loss of an undeviating friend to truth and righteousness. The glory of his death is, that he died in the full triumphs of faith and knowledge of the truth of our holy religion, exhorting his friends to be faithful; having three days previous received intimations of his approaching end by three holy messengers from on high.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Bent, Missouri Redress Petition, as cited in Clark V Johnson, ed. *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992), 419.

<sup>7</sup> History, 1838–1856, volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842], 1083.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901), 1:368.