
Solomon Hancock

1793–1847

D&C 52:27

Solomon and his wife, Alta, sang at Methodist camp meetings until a minister failed to answer their question about “the place in heaven for children and infants who died.”¹ Being unchurched, however, didn’t satisfy their religious yearnings. It was not until Solomon listened to the preaching of Parley P. Pratt and witnessed him baptizing converts in the Chagrin River that Solomon asked “if he would baptize me. He said he would if I believed. I told him that I believed that Jesus is the son of God, and felt within my heart that the things he had told us were the truth. He then baptized me” on November 16, 1830.² Solomon composed a poem of his baptism day:

Once I was Methodist, Glory Hallelujah,
Then I thought it was best, Glory Hallelujah,
But when I read my Bible right, Glory Hallelujah,
I found myself a Mormonite, Glory Hallelujah!³

In June 1831 Solomon was ordained an elder. At the fourth conference of the Church, held in Kirtland, he was ordained a high priest by Lyman Wight. The next day, Solomon was called to journey to Missouri with Simeon Carter: “And let my servants Solomon Hancock and Simeon Carter also take their journey unto this same land, and preach by the way” (D&C 52:27). The two brethren journeyed through Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana before reaching Missouri. Along the way, they organized several branches of the Church.

¹ “A Brief Outline on Solomon Hancock of D&C 52:27.” Church History Library.

² “Biographical Note, Solomon Hancock,” 2. Church History Library.

³ Solomon Hancock, in “Grandfather,” 48. Church History Library.

By 1832 Solomon and his family had joined the Saints in Jackson County, Missouri. George A. Smith reported that Solomon helped protect the Saints in Jackson when they were driven from their homes by mobs:

[Solomon Hancock] with the assistance of two or three others, protected one hundred and twenty women and children for the space of ten days, who were obliged to keep themselves hid from their pursuers, while they were hourly expecting to be massacred, and who finally escaped into Clay County, by finding a circuitous route to the ferry.⁴

That was not the only time Solomon stood up in defense of the Saints. When malcontents spoke against the Prophet Joseph Smith and the First Presidency, "Elder Solomon Hancock pleaded in favor of the Presidency, stating that he could not raise his hand against them."⁵ According to the Far West High Council minutes of December 13, 1838, "Solomon Hancock says he is a firm believer in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, and that Brother Joseph is not a fallen prophet, but will yet be exalted and become very high."⁶ When Latter-day Saints were fleeing from the government-sanctioned extermination order in Missouri, Solomon covenanted to assist them. Mosiah Hancock reported, "The Hancock brothers, Levi, Joseph, and Solomon, with their guns guarded and fed 600 men, women, and children while camped in the woods after they had been driven from their homes."⁷

Solomon escaped from hostilities in Missouri and settled in Illinois. There he served on the high council in Lima and as the president of the Yelrome Branch. In 1845, when mobs threatened to destroy the Saints in Yelmore, Brigham Young advised Solomon,

It is wisdom for you to remove the women and children from Yelrome as fast as you can. . . . We think it best to let them burn up our houses while we take care of our families. . . . Employ the best scribe you have, or half a dozen of them, if necessary, to pen minutely all the movements of the enemy.⁸

⁴ George A. Smith, "Historical Address," *Journal of Discourses*. 13:107.

⁵ Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:4.

⁶ Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:225.

⁷ Mosiah Hancock Autobiography, typescript, 13. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

⁸ History, 1838–1856, volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842], 867. Joseph Smith Papers.

Solomon's home was burnt to the ground, as were many others. He and his family resided in Nauvoo for a season before being forced, once more, to flee for their safety to Iowa. They traversed the loess hills of Iowa, stopping at temporary encampments, before reaching Council Bluffs. Solomon died on December 2, 1847, near Council Bluffs at age fifty-four.