
Samuel Jones Rolfe

1794–1867

D&C 124:142

In 1835 Samuel entered baptismal waters in Rumford, Maine. Soon after his baptism, he packed up his possessions, including his carpentry tools, and moved to Kirtland. In that city of the Saints, Samuel worked as a carpenter on the Kirtland Temple. He contributed to the Prophet Joseph Smith a dollar and twenty-five cents. Of his contribution and that of other Saints, the Prophet wrote that they “opened their hearts in great liberality, and paid me.”¹ On January 15, 1836, Samuel was assigned to be an assistant doorkeeper of the Kirtland Temple.

When religious persecution raged in Kirtland, Samuel moved on to Caldwell County, Missouri. Before he was well-situated, he was “compelled by the Exterminating order ... to leave” his property in Caldwell “in the hands of the mob” and flee out of Missouri to Illinois.² He settled for a season in Clayton, Illinois, before moving on to Nauvoo.

On January 19, 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation calling Samuel to preside over the Priests Quorum (see D&C 124:142). He was also called to use his carpentry skills in the winter of 1841 “to prepare the timbers for the [Nauvoo] Temple, so as to have them all ready when the stone work was finished.”³ In December 1841, while working on the temple, Samuel was “seriously affected by a felon,” a painful

¹ Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:327.

² Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992), 743–744.

³ Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:326.

inflammation on his finger. On December 13, 1841, he was told to “dip his finger in the [baptismal] font and be healed and he was healed.”⁴

In February 1844, when Joseph Smith was seeking volunteers for an exploring expedition to California and Oregon, Samuel was numbered among the first to submit his name. None of the volunteers ended up going on the expedition due to events that led to the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

On November 12, 1845, Samuel was ordained a high priest. Within weeks of his ordination, he fled from religious bigotry in Nauvoo across the Mississippi River to Iowa and then on to Winter Quarters. He served as a bishop in Winter Quarters from 1846–47 before being appointed a captain in the Abraham O. Smoot Company heading west. Samuel arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in September 1847.

Four years later, he moved on to the Latter-day Saint settlement of San Bernardino, California. Before returning to Utah, he was elected a county treasurer in San Bernardino and served in a stake presidency in Los Angeles. Samuel died in July 1867 in Lehi, Utah, at age seventy-two.

⁴ Joseph Grant Stevenson, ed., *Selections from the Autobiography of Edward Stevenson, 1820-1897* (Provo, UT: Stevenson’s Genealogical Center, 1986), p. 83.