
George Washington Harris

1780–1857

D&C 124:132

In 1834 George, a jeweler by trade, was baptized in Terre Haute, Indiana, by Orson Pratt. Two years later, he and his family moved to Far West, Missouri. There, in the city of the Saints, George was appointed to serve on a high council and ordained to the office of high priest. On March 14, 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote of being “received under the hospitable roof of Brother George W. Harris, who treated us with all possible kindness.”¹

In 1839 George denounced mob violence in Missouri and the government-sanctioned extermination order, even though he contended that “the scourge which has come upon us [has] the hand of God” in it.² In a Missouri Redress Petition, George itemized his losses as a result of being forced to flee out of the state:

Quincy Illinois May 8th, 1839

The State of Missouri to Geo W Harris Dr

to one lot in Far West with hous and barn and frute trees on	\$1,000.00
the Same	
to another lot in Far West unoccupied	600.00
to a wood lot of forty acres Joining the City	1,000.00

¹ Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:9.

² 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.

To a lot of land in Adam on Diammon Joining Square	1,000.00
To three Sections of land that I improved on for my Self and famely in Daves County	3,000.00
To fals imprisonment for rising of thre weeks in an unfinished Coart hous with the windows broken out of about avery window and very Coald wether	3,000.00
Say worse than laying out in the woods in the same kind of weather	3,000.00
	\$9,600.00

Geo W Harris

[Not sworn.]³

George was never reimbursed for his property, personal holdings, or suffering in the state of Missouri.

George and his family settled in Nauvoo, Illinois. There he was called to serve on the Nauvoo High Council (see D&C 124:131–32) and as president of the Nauvoo Coach and Carriage Manufacturing Association. At the time of the martyrdom of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, George was serving as an alderman and president pro tem of the Nauvoo City Council.

In February 1846 George joined the Latter-day Saint exodus from Nauvoo to the Territory of Iowa. He journeyed across the loess hills of Iowa, stopping in temporary encampments along the way until reaching Council Bluffs. In that remote outpost, he was appointed a bishop and a high councilman.

George never journeyed from Iowa to the Salt Lake Valley. He lived out his days in Council Bluffs. Brigham Young said of him,

There are a great many who profess to be still in the faith, neglecting to gather, and waiting for the time when Zion will be redeemed George W. Harris, whom many of you remember, was going to wait in Kanesville

³ Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992), 226.

until we returned. Brother George A. Smith told him that the nearest way to the centre Stake of Zion was through Great Salt Lake City. Harris has gone to the spirit-world, and where his circuit will be I neither know nor care.⁴

George died in 1857 in Council Bluffs at age seventy-seven.

⁴ Brigham Young, "Persecution—The Kingdom of God, &c.," *Journal of Discourses*, 8:198.