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# John Sims Carter

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1797–1834

D&C 102:3

In 1832 John was baptized and ordained an elder. He was called to preach the message of the Restoration with his brother Jared Carter. Harrison Burgess joined the Carter brothers and wrote, “I started in company with Brother John S. Carter to the state of Vermont where we labored about two months.”<sup>1</sup> In summer of 1832, John helped his brothers Simeon D. Carter and Jared Carter establish branches of the Church in North West Bay and Bolton in Chittenden County, Vermont.

On February 17, 1834, John was ordained a high priest and asked whether he would act as a high councilman in Kirtland, Ohio, “according to the law of heaven” (D&C 102:4). His response was a positive affirmation “according to the grace of God bestowed upon [him]” (D&C 102:4). His service on the high council was short-lived at first, for three days later he was called to accompany Jesse Smith on a missionary journey to the eastern states.

In May 1834 John joined Zion’s Camp and departed from Kirtland. On the journey toward Missouri, John got in a spat with Sylvester Smith:

Sylvester lost the spirit of peace and became dissatisfied with John Carter and called him an old jackass and many other names which soon brought dissatisfaction in our tent. Some dared to express their feelings until Joseph [Smith] rebuked them and told [Sylvester Smith] that he was guilty of sowing the seeds of discord.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Harrison Burgess Autobiography, as cited in Kenneth Glyn Hales, ed., *Windows: A Mormon Family* (Tucson, AZ: Skyline Printing, 1985), 100–101.

<sup>2</sup> Levi Ward Hancock Autobiography, typescript, 53, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

On May 19, 1834, Nathan Baldwin wrote of Zion's Camp being "divided into two or three divisions with a commander to each. ... A general engagement was brought on which was soon decided by a hand to hand encounter in which I was confronted by John S. Carter."<sup>3</sup> John proved the victor. Nathan Baldwin was ordered to surrender, stack his arms, and march off the mock battlefield as a prisoner of war.

Heber C. Kimball penned on Sunday, June 1, 1834, while the camp was about one mile from Jacksonville, Illinois, "We preached all day, and many of the inhabitants of the town came out to hear. Brother John Carter preached in the morning."<sup>4</sup> George A. Smith recorded that John "delivered a very eloquent discourse on 'Practical Piety.'"<sup>5</sup>

Twenty-five days later, on June 26, 1834, thirty-eight-year-old John Carter was the first to die from cholera in Zion's Camp. Heber C. Kimball recorded,

I was left at the camp in company with three or four of my brethren in care of those who were sick. We staid with, and prayed for them, hoping they would recover, but all hope was lost, for about 6 o'clock p.m., John S. Carter expired, he being the first that died in the camp.<sup>6</sup>

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote, "When the cholera made its appearance, Elder John S. Carter was the first man who stepped forward to rebuke it, and upon this, was instantly seized, and became the first victim in the camp. He died about six o'clock in the afternoon" in Clay County.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Nathan Baldwin Autobiography, typescript, 9. Church History Library.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:78.

<sup>5</sup> George A. Smith, "Autobiography of George A. Smith," *Millennial Star* 27 (1865), 2.

<sup>6</sup> "Heber C Kimball, extract from journal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (March 15, 1845), 838-839.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:115.