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# Philip Burroughs

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(1794–1865)

D&C 30:10

Philip was a soldier in the New York militia in the War of 1812. He fought on the front lines against the British near the Canadian border. After the war, he settled in Junius, New York. In 1819 he was appointed an overseer of highways and a fence viewer in Junius, suggesting that Philip was a landed gentry. By 1830 he and his family had moved to Seneca Falls, six miles from Fayette, New York.

In September 1830 twenty-eight-year-old John Whitmer of Fayette was directed by a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith to “proclaim my gospel, as with the voice of a trump. And your labor shall be at your brother Philip Burroughs’, and in that region round about” (D&C 30:9–10).

On September 5, 1830, a Church meeting was held at Philip Burroughs’ home in Seneca Falls. Several people were present. Speaking at the meeting was Parley P. Pratt, who had been ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood just days before. Of his part in the meeting Elder Pratt penned, “The Holy Ghost came upon me mightily, I spoke the word of God with power, reasoning out of the Scriptures and the Book of Mormon. The people were convinced, overwhelmed in tears, and four heads of families came forward expressing their faith, and were baptized.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not known whether Philip Burroughs sought baptism at that time. Diedrich Willers, the pastor of Zion’s Church near Fayette and a self-appointed Seneca County historian, concluded that Philip was “at one time attracted to the LDS Church, but did not become

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<sup>1</sup> Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P Pratt Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 27.

a member.”<sup>2</sup> Missionaries Samuel Smith and Orson Hyde reached a different conclusion than that of Pastor Willers. In 1832 they visited with the Burroughs family in Seneca Falls. Samuel Smith wrote, “[Philip] was glad to see us & Sister Burroughs was strong in the faith, held a meeting in the school house, a considerable number of people came to hear & paid good attention.”<sup>3</sup> Orson Hyde observed, “Brother B[urroughs was] rather low, but left him about persuaded to go to Zion.”<sup>4</sup>

Philip never gathered with the Saints to Zion. Eight years after the visit of Samuel Smith and Orson Hyde, Philip and his family were living in Portage, New York. Twenty years later in 1860, they were still residing in Portage. Philip supported his family as a farmer on acreage valued at five thousand dollars.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Letter of Lee Yost to the Honorable Diedrich Willers, May 18, 1897, as cited in Larry C. Porter, “A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831,” Ph.D dissertation, Brigham Young University, August 1971, 262.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel H. Smith Journal, 1831–1833, microfilm, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

<sup>4</sup> Orson Hyde Journal, 1831–1832, microfilm. Church History Library; History. 1838–1836, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834]. Joseph Smith Papers.

<sup>5</sup> See US Federal Census, 1840, 1860.