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# William Huntington Sr.

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1784–1846

D&C 124:132

From 1816 to 1831, William joined with the Presbyterians in religious worship. By 1832 he was “moved upon by the spirit of God to Look into the situation of the churches. I found the ordinances changed. The Covenants broken. The fear of god was Taught by precepts of men.” What William found caused him to surrender his faith and withdraw from all religious parties. He turned his attention from spiritual matters to temporal matters. He improved his two-hundred-acre farm, his home, barns, etc. By 1833 he was “nearly out of debt in [a] comfortable Situation as I could ask for to Make us comfortable in life.”<sup>1</sup>

It was at the time when William believed all was well that he came across a copy of the Book of Mormon. After reading the book, he “preached it almost every day, to his neighbors and everybody he could see.”<sup>2</sup> He sold his farm for \$3,500 and with money in hand journeyed to Kirtland to unite with the Saints of God. Although he had thought his cares were at an end, in Kirtland he lost most of his money in business dealings and noxious lawsuits.

When William and his family wanted to leave Kirtland in 1838 and travel to Far West, Missouri, they had to borrow an ox and a wagon for the journey, as they did not own such luxuries. When William arrived in Far West, he wrote, “[I] had not one cent to help myself.” With poverty his constant companion, it might be assumed that William could escape from the extremities of mobocracy. Not so. William was persecuted by angry mobs. He wrote, “I slept in my clothes with my rifle in my arms nearly one Month. ... Our case now became alarming. It appeared the inhabitants were determined to strip us of All means of getting out of the State.” Of his trials, William penned, “I had passed from a State [of

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<sup>1</sup> William Huntington Journal, Book 1, 4–6. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

<sup>2</sup> Obituary Notice, in William Huntington Journal, Book 1.

affluence worth thousands Down to the lowest state of poverty. ... Through all our trials and scenes of afflictions ... never murmured.”<sup>3</sup>

During the few years that William spent in Illinois, he supported his family as a stonemason. He helped place the first stone for the Nauvoo Temple—and the last. He served on the Nauvoo High Council (D&C 124:131–32), as a musician in the Nauvoo Legion Band, and as a member of the Nauvoo Agricultural and Manufacturing Association. He helped bury the bodies of Joseph and his brother Hyrum Smith. He later wrote, “I was one of the sixteen who were appointed [to] Bury their bodies.”<sup>4</sup>

On February 9, 1846, William and his family crossed the Mississippi River to face the rigors of winter in Iowa. William wrote of their trek across Iowa:

The rain increased. The roads soon become impassable. Teams were stalled in every direction. Many families remained on the prairie over the night without fire with their clothing wet and cold-high wind all night. ... I am now out of provision or I have none of consequence. I have no meat, no flour, no meal save a few quarts of parched Corn meal, no milk, have a few crackers. How I shall be provided for the Lord knows. I do not.<sup>5</sup>

William served as the presiding officer of the Mount Pisgah encampment until his death on August 19, 1846, from fever and chills at age sixty-two.

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<sup>3</sup> William Huntington Journal, Book 1, 12–36.

<sup>4</sup> William Huntington Journal, Book 1, 51–52.

<sup>5</sup> William Huntington Journal, Book 2, 14.