

## THE FIRST MISSIONARY WORK DONE BY MY CURTIS ANCESTORS

(If Enos Curtis was the first to preach the gospel to Brigham Young surely Brigham Young's book of his life would say something of the man who converted him so I looked and surely on page 6 I believe Brigham Young tells of Enos. So I figured if he was there in the church in the early days when there was a temple he would have done his work. Going in to early temple records we find his work done and get his parents name.)

We do not know how Enos Curtis, my great grandfather, the first of our ancestors came into the church, but his son, Esra, said his father accepted Joseph Smith before the church was organized. He was among the first missionaries the church ever sent out.

There is a family tradition that, Enos Curtis was the first Elder that Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball ever heard preach the gospel, and although he did not baptize them, when Brigham Young came up out of the water he said, Enos Curtis should have the credit for this. The following extracts tell some of this missionary work.

In the fall of 1831, when five elders from an isolated branch of the church in Columbia, Pennsylvania, came into Brigham's neighborhood while making a short missionary tour through New York Brigham Young says of the event:

"In the fall of 1831 Elders Alpheus Gifford, Elial Strong, and others came to Mendon to preach the everlasting gospel, as revealed to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, which I heard and believed." Millennial Star Vol 25 page 424.

It may seem strange to some that while Brigham Young had access to the Book of Mormon for more than a year prior to his coming in contact with the elders he had not been led to make any thorough or extensive search or investigation of "Mormonism." But the explanation I have relied upon is this, that what profoundly influenced Brigham Young more than the reading of any book was his actual contact with men. The look of the eye, the shake of the hand, the sincerely expressed voice, the "spirit" of the person, that more than all else, impressed him. Speaking of his



conversation, President Young once said: "If all the talent, tact, wisdom and refinement of the world had been sent me with the Book of Mormon and had declared in the most exalted of earthly eloquence the truth of it, undertaking to prove it by learning and worldly wisdom, they would have been to me like the smoke which arises, only to vanish away, but when I saw a man without eloquence, or talents for public speaking who could only say, "I know by the power of the Holy Ghost, that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of the Lord," the Holy Ghost proceeding from that individual illuminated my understanding, and light, glory and immortality were before me. I was encircled by them, filled with them and I knew for myself that the testimony was true." Journal of Discourses Vol. 1 pp 90

In Heber C. Kimball's Biography, he relates as follows. " Without (print too dim to read) ..... Elial Strong, Alpheus Gilbert, Enos Curtis, and Nathaniel.....Hearing of these men, curiosity prompted me to go and see them, when from the first time the fulness of the everlasting gospel. As soon as I heard them I was convinced that they taught the truth and also that I had only received a part of the ordinances under the Baptist Church. I also heard the gifts of the spirit manifested among the elders for they spoke in tongues and interpreted which tended to strengthen my faith. Brigham Young and myself were constrained by the spirit to bear testimony of the truth and when we did this the power of God rested upon us." Deseret News Vol 8 No. 4

The five elders from Pennsylvania must have been most excellent and spiritually minded men. It was in their little branch at Columbia gift of tongues was for the first time exercised in the "Church." They also so thoroughly impressed Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball with the truth of their teachings that these two young men decided to pay them a return visit, which they accomplished a few months later.

(the above comment connected Enos Curtis with the elders that brought the gospel to Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball.)

When Enos Curtis and his family lived at Nauvoo he and his four grown boys took a contract to put up some wild hay probably 40 or 50 miles away from home.



The boys were at the hay camp and the father Enos was in Nauvoo when he heard that the mob was coming thru the country and that the camp where the boys were would be in their path and they would be in danger, so he rode horse back in the night to the camp where the boys were. They were sleeping in a barn and about two o'clock in the morning could hear the horsemen coming across the prairie. Of course, in those times they were always on the watch for danger and they knew it was some trouble a horseman coming at that time of the night so they hurried into their clothes and were somewhat alarmed. When one of the boys said don't be afraid I heard him cough and it was father. (He had a little cough that they all knew.) When he got there he said, "Boys saddle up your horses and prepare for a chase. The mob is expected through here by daylight." They were soon off and the boys were excited and started to ride quite fast when the father told them not to ride too fast on the start because they might have a real chase before they got through and would need to save their horses for the last of the chase. The mob were well mounted while the boys just had their work horses.

When it came daylight they could see the mob coming. They jogged on at easy pace but could see that the mob were gaining on them so they went a little faster and soon found out they were really being chased. They held their horses down until they got within shooting distance. They were yet quite a ways from Nauvoo. Then Grandfather said they should begin to ride faster. The mob too began to ride faster until they had the horses.....(the print is too dim to read the rest.) -----

### LIFE HISTORY OF ENOS CURTIS

(As told by Brother Harward, his grandson)

Enos Curtis was born in Holland, October 9th, 1783. He had a sister about two years younger than himself, whose name was Ruth. One night when Enos was about four years of age, his father came home from his work as usual and upon entering the house his wife met him with the statement, "Enos is yours and Ruth is mine." A quarrel followed and finally the father picked Enos up and left the home. His father then took him to the home of a good woman who cared for him until he was fourteen years of age.



At the age of fourteen years his father took him and bound him out as an apprentice to learn the carpenter trade. He was bound out for seven years. The man was very cruel to Enos and made him work very hard. He had been with this man only about three or four years when he heard of a ship that was coming to America so he decided to run away and try to get passage on this ship. He went to the Captain and asked if he might work as a servant on the ship to earn his passage. The Captain asked him questions concerning his life and people. When he related his story the Captain told him if he desired, to be there at a certain hour the following day and he could go to America. He was at the dock at the appointed hour the following day with all his personal belongings tied up in a red handkerchief. When the ship reached America the Captain offered to let Enos remain with the ship and work for them. He had served them well and they had become very fond of him, but he would not stay.

Enos was the only one of his family, so far as he knew, that ever came to America. He never heard of his mother or father after he left Holland.

He later married Ruth Franklin. Her father and two brothers were in the Revolutionary War under George Washington and were all three killed in this war.

Enos Curtis was one of the first to join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints after it was organized by Joseph Smith. He and Brother Jebediah Colton? (Zebedee Coltrin) were called on a mission in the vicinity where Brigham Young lived. They tacked up posters that they were holding meeting at a certain place. Brigham Young came to this meeting and heard them tell of this new religion and was favorably impressed. After the meeting he hurried to his home, where he had left his wife very ill at the time. He went to his room and knelt in prayer and asked the Lord if this religion was true to send these elders to his home that he might have them administer to his wife. He desired this as a testimony of the divinity of this new religion. These missionaries did come that way and as they were passing they were first impressed with the tidyness of the yards. They remarked that the man that lived there must have a lot of pride. They were next impressed to go in. Brigham Young was watching them and when they knocked he opened the door and welcomed them in. He told them how he

had prayed that they would come to his home and administer to his wife that she might be healed. They asked him if he believed that she could be healed through their administration and he told them he did. They did administer to her and she was restored to her health. This was the first time Brigham Young had heard the Restored Gospel.

When the Saints started west, Enos Curtis and his wife, Ruth Franklin, started with one of the companies, but Ruth Franklin died at the Bluffs and was buried there. Enos Curtis came on to Utah and settled in Springville. While here he became acquainted with Tammy Durfee Miner. She was the sister of Jabez Durfee and had been married to a man by the name of Miner, who had died. Enos Curtis married Tammy Miner and they had three girls, Clarissa, Malinda, and Melia. Enos Curtis later died and was buried in Springville.

Enos Curtis kept a diary of his life, but after his death the Miner boys used it for smoking paper and thus destroyed this valuable record.

P.S. Grandpa Harward's memory is surely keen and he relates so many incidents that has witnessed and also that he has heard others relate, in such a clear, concise way that one cannot help believing they are true. I have heard him relate incidents at different times, with long intervals between, and the facts are always the same. (Lue Curtis Lazenby)