

WILLIAM TAYLOR

BY: LELLA MARLER HOGAN.

WILLIAM TAYLOR WAS BORN IN THE STATE OF VIRGINIA ON MARCH 21ST, 1787. HE WAS THE SON OF JOSEPH TAYLOR, WHOSE ANCESTORS HAD COME TO AMERICA FROM ENGLAND AS EARLY AS 1635, AND SARAH BEST (TAYLOR). WILLIAM HAD TWO BROTHERS, ALLEN AND JOSEPH, AND EIGHT SISTERS, ELIZABETH, FRANCES, SARAH BEST, LOTTIE, AMY, TEMPLE, MARY ANN, AND DELILAH.

WHILE WILLIAM WAS STILL A SMALL BOY HE CAME WITH HIS PARENTS TO WARREN COUNTY, KENTUCKY. HE BECAME A WELL-INFORMED MAN AND WAS PRONOUNCED IN HIS POLITICAL VIEWS, BEING A DEMOCRAT. HE WAS MARRIED TO ELIZABETH PATRICK, DAUGHTER OF JOHN PATRICK AND ELIZABETH KINDRICK, AT BOWLING GREEN, WARREN COUNTY, KENTUCKY. THIS ESTIMABLE WOMAN BORE HIM FOURTEEN CHILDREN, SEVEN SONS AND SEVEN DAUGHTERS, THEIR NAMES BEING: JOHN, ALLEN, JULIA ANN, MARY ANN, LOUISA, ELIZABETH ANN, SARAH KINDRICK BEST, JOSEPH, PLEASANT GREEN, WILLIAM WARREN, LEVI, NANCY JANE, AMANDA MALVINA, AND JAMES CALDWELL.

THEY MADE THEIR HOME AT THE FINE OLD HOMESTEAD AT BOWLING GREEN UNTIL THE YEAR 1830 THEN, FOLLOWING THEIR INBORN DESIRE FOR PIONEERING ADVENTURE AND A BROADER EXPERIENCE, THEY SOLD THEIR PROPERTY AND PUSHED OUT INTO THE WEST, WITH OTHER PIONEERS. THEY SETTLED IN MONROE COUNTY, MISSOURI. THE COUNTRY AT THIS TIME WAS A VERITABLE WILDERNESS, INHABITED MOSTLY BY RED MEN AND WILD ANIMALS, BUT IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY. PART OF IT WAS VALUABLE TIMBER LAND AND PART OF IT WAS ROLLING PRAIRIE LAND RICH IN PROMISE OF THE GREAT WEALTH THAT LATER WOULD BE WRESTED FROM IT THROUGH THE THRIFT AND DILIGENCE AND THE HIGH AMBITION OF ITS POSSESSOR. HERE IN THE NEW COUNTRY WILLIAM TAYLOR PURCHASED SIX HUNDRED AND FORTY ACRES OF THIS VALUABLE LAND AND BEGAN THE WORTHY TASK OF CONVERTING IT INTO A BEAUTIFUL FARM.

THE LATTER DAY SAINTS HAD BECOME AN ORGANIZED CHURCH IN THE SPRING OF 1830. FROM THAT TIME FORWARD THEY HAD BEEN CONTINUALLY PERSECUTED BECAUSE OF THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEF, BEING DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOMES IN MISSOURI AND DENIED THE COMMON RIGHTS OF U.S. CITIZENS, SO IN THE SPRING OF 1834 PRESIDENT JOSEPH SMITH FORMED A MILITARY COMPANY OF ONE HUNDRED MEN, KNOWN AS ZION'S CAMP, AND STARTED WEST TO DEMAND THAT HIS PEOPLE IN MISSOURI BE GIVEN THEIR RIGHTS. ABOUT TWO HUNDRED RECRUITS JOINED THE CAMP EN ROUTE.

AT THIS TIME WILLIAM TAYLOR AND HIS FAMILY WERE LOCATED ON A SLIGHT ELEVATION OF LAND BETWEEN TWO FORKS OF THE FISHING RIVER. WHEN ZION'S CAMP REACHED THIS PLACE THEY WERE FORCED TO STOP TO MEND SOME OF THEIR WAGONS AND TO GO IN SEARCH OF SOME OF THEIR HORSES THAT HAD WANDERED AWAY. ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH HAD MADE THREATS AGAINST THE CAMP BUT BEFORE THEY COULD CARRY OUT THEIR PLANS A FURIOUS STORM AROSE. SO MUCH RAIN FELL THAT THE FISHING RIVER BECAME AN IMPASSABLE TORRENT. THE MEMBERS OF ZION'S CAMP WERE FORCED TO TAKE REFUGE IN AN OLD CHURCH AND IN THE HOMES OF THE RESIDENTS THEREABOUT. THE TERRIFIC STORM ROUTED THE MISCHIEF MAKERS, WHO FLED IN PANIC. JOSEPH SMITH AND HIS FOLLOWERS REMAINED IN THE VICINITY FROM FRIDAY NIGHT, JUNE 19TH, TILL MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 22ND. ON THE SABBATH DAY SERVICES WERE HELD AND THE DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS WERE EXPLAINED. HAVING HEARD ONE SERMON WILLIAM TAYLOR WAS CONVERTED. BEFORE THE CAMP MOVED ON HE AND ALL MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO WERE OLD ENOUGH WERE BAPTIZED IN THE FISHING RIVER. THERE WERE TWENTY-EIGHT PERSONS BAPTIZED AT THIS TIME. WILLIAM TAYLOR WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO ACCEPT THE GOSPEL AND THE FIRST MAN IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI TO BE BAPTIZED INTO THE CHURCH. SHORTLY AFTER THIS HE WAS ORDAINED AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH AND BECAME AN EARNEST PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.

TWO DAYS AFTER MEETING JOSEPH SMITH WILLIAM MANIFESTED HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE PROPHET BY FITTING UP HIS OWN SON AND HIS SON-IN-LAW WITH PROVISIONS, MUNITIONS AND EQUIPMENT, TO BECOME MEMBERS OF ZION'S CAMP.

FROM THE TIME HE JOINED THE CHURCH WILLIAM TAYLOR THREW HIMSELF INTO THE WORK WHOLE-HEARTEDLY AND FOLLOWED THE SAINTS THROUGH ALL THEIR PERSECUTIONS. HE WAS FORCED TO GIVE UP ONE HOME AFTER ANOTHER. HIS PROPERTY WAS STOLEN AND DESTROYED AND INSULTS AND INJURY WERE HEAPED UPON HIM AND HIS FAMILY, BUT THEY NEVER DOUBTED THE WISDOM OF THEIR LOYALTY TO THE FAITH THEY HAD ACCEPTED. TRIALS ONLY HELD THEM CLOSER TO THE LATTER DAY SAINTS WITH WHOM THEY HAD CAST THEIR LOT. THEY OWNED HOMES SUCCESSIVELY IN MONROE COUNTY, JACKSON COUNTY AND CALDWELL COUNTY - ALTOGETHER MORE THAN A THOUSAND ACRES OF CHOICE LAND, BUT IT WAS ALL LOST TO THEM. WILLIAM LENT A MAN \$500 IN CASH BUT WHEN HE WENT TO GET HIS MONEY THE MAN THREATENED HIS LIFE. ANOTHER MAN STOLE A HERD OF FINELY-BRED PIGS FROM HIM, WHICH HE DID NOT RECOVER.

WILLIAM FINALLY SETTLED ON LONG CREEK IN CLAY COUNTY, MISSOURI, EIGHT MILES SOUTH OF FARR WEST. HE BOUGHT A HOME AND REMAINED HERE UNTIL THE SPRING OF 1839. IT WAS A GREAT JOY TO HIM THAT ALL HIS FAMILY COULD WITNESS THE LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE OF THE TEMPLE AT FARR WEST. LATE IN THE FALL OF 1836, TO ESCAPE MOB VIOLENCE, HE MOVED HIS FAMILY INTO FARR WEST. SO MANY OF THE SAINTS HAD MOVED IN FOR THE SAME PURPOSE THAT THEY WERE UNABLE TO FIND SHELTER AND WERE COMPELLED TO CAMP IN THE OPEN STREETS AND MAKE THEIR BEDS DOWN ON THE GROUND. THE FIRST NIGHT THE SNOW FELL TEN INCHES DEEP ON THEIR BED-CLOTHES. FROM THIS TIME FORWARD THE PERSECUTIONS BECAME MORE TERRIBLE UNTIL FINALLY THE CITY WAS SURRENDERED TO THE MOB. WILLIAM TAYLOR AND HIS FAMILY MOVED BACK TO THEIR HOME AT LONG CREEK ONLY TO FIND THAT THE MOB HAD BEEN THERE AND DEVASTATED EVERYTHING THEY POSSIBLY COULD. THEY HAD EATEN FOWLS AND PIGS AND SEVERAL HEAD OF CATTLE AND HAD BURNED AND DESTROYED WHATEVER CROPS THEY COULD.

IN FEBRUARY 1839 THEY WERE AGAIN FORCED TO MOVE. AMONG OTHER THINGS THEY LEFT ONE THOUSAND BUSHELS OF CORN IN THE CRIB, FOR WHICH THEY RECEIVED IN RETURN AN OLD NECK-YOKE WORTH ABOUT \$2.50.

FINALLY GOVERNOR BOGGS ORDERED THAT ALL THE LATTER DAY SAINTS BE EXPELLED FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI. WILLIAM TAYLOR ACCEPTED HIS LOT PATIENTLY AND HEROICALLY. HE AND HIS FAMILY TRAVELLED HUNDREDS OF MILES THROUGH RAIN AND SNOW AND MUD. PEOPLE ALONG THE WAY WERE UNKIND TO THEM AND ADDED TO THEIR DISCOMFORT INSTEAD OF LENDING KINDLY SYMPATHY. AT LAST, THROUGH EXHAUSTION AND GREAT EXPOSURE, WILLIAM TAYLOR BECAME ILL OF TYPHOID FEVER, AND ON SEPTEMBER 9TH, 1839, HE PASSED AWAY, A MARTYR TO THE GREAT CAUSE FOR WHICH HE HAD SO HEROICALLY SACRIFICED. HE WAS BURIED ON THE MAIN ROAD BETWEEN LIMA AND WARSAW.

A SHORT TIME BEFORE HIS DEATH HE CALLED HIS FAMILY AROUND HIM AND COUNSELLED THEM TO RALLY ROUND THE PRIESTHOOD AND STAY WITH THE MAIN BODY OF THE CHURCH. EACH OF HIS CHILDREN PROMISED HIM THAT THEY WOULD NOT MARRY OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.

SO ENDED THE LIFE OF A GREAT AND GOOD MAN. THROUGH ALL THE YEARS HE WAS RESOURCEFUL, INDUSTRIOUS, AND PROGRESSIVE. THOUGH HE HAD A STRONG WILL HE WAS A HUMBLE AND GOD-FEARING MAN. HE HAD GREAT FAITH AND A KEEN INTELLECT AND WAS ABSOLUTELY FEARLESS IN LIVING ACCORDING TO HIS CONVICTIONS. WITHOUT HESITATION HE PLACED THE ACCUMULATED WEALTH OF A LIFETIME ON THE ALTAR. WHEN HE DECIDED TO LEAVE EVERYTHING IN ORDER TO FOLLOW THE CHURCH HIS RELATIVES CLUNG TO HIM AND BEGGED HIM TO REMAIN WITH THEM, BUT THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK FOR HIM. FROM THE DAY THAT HE ANSWERED THAT FIRST CHALLENGE OF TRUTH HIS LIFE WAS A DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE THAT TO HIM WAS DEARER THAN LIFE ITSELF.