

## History of the Life of William Wood Senior

In order that my children and others may have a short story of my life, I write this;

I was born 2 February 2nd. 1823, in the city of Hereford, England, although I have always claimed that February 3rd. was 37 birthday, being so led to believe by those who should know. My fathers name was John Wood, son of James Wood and he the son of William Wood who was buried at Marden, Herefordshire, England. My mother, Ann Wood, was the daughter of William and Nancy Lawerence of the city of Hereford and it was in that town that I received most of my schooling, traveling three and a half miles in the morning and back the same distance at night. This I did of my own choice as I could have stayed with my grandparents in town, but I preferred to go to Lugwardine to stay with my grandmother Mary Wood. She had a house and a small orchard, also two houses with gardens attached to them. I was always taught to fear the Lord and to go to church on Sundays, in short to lead a moral life. I was put to work quite young. The first thing I remember doing was keeping crows off of a field of beans, for which I received a half a crown a week and board. (About 60cts in our money) This was for a neighbor who had a small farm and kept a cow and two horses and a few sheep. His name was William Phillips. His wife's name was Mary. They had no children. I worked for one year for a gentlman at Wilcroft. His name was James. I worked in the garden, ran errands and worked some in the house. From there I went to Live at Kingston where I worked for Doctor James. I stayed with him nine months then went home to Lugwardine where I worked at various occupations, never being idle and always plenty of a chance to work, until the lwt of the year 1839, or the spring of 1840,, I am not certain as to the time.

Now previous to this I had been a regular attendant at the meetings of the United Brothern. About this time I met two Sisters going amongst the people in the neighborhood to inform them that a man from America was going to preach that night. I had no other idea but that he was one of the United Brethern, being a foriegner would probably speak some other language, so more out of curiosity than anything else I went and for the first time in my life I heard the Gospel taught as it was anciently taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. The Elder who preached that night was President Brigham Young and seemed to me that I knew that it was the truth, as I had a strong testimony of it and intended to obey it; but that was the question with me. I knew that if I did get baptized I should be turned out of work and in that country if you do not work you do not eat, so I put off going into the water. Nevertheless, I was a regular attendant to the Latter Day Saint Meetings. Some times I would make up my mind not to go to the meeting but when the time came I could not rest until I went. One time President Wilford Woodruff was going to preach at Shucknell Hill, Herfordshire and I had been laboring that day making mortar for the masons and at evening we stopped at a house where they sold cider to be drunk off the premises. We stood outside the gate by the side of a small stream and as I said I was going to hear President Woodruff preach one of the man said to me, "Damn you, if you want to be baptized I'll baptize you." He then picked me up in his arms and held me over the water and dropped me in, His name was Charles Wood. I got out and in my wet clothes went to the meeting, then walked home, a distance of two miles. I experienced more or less opposition to my Joining the church until at last I

concluded to be baptized. I was baptized by Elder Phillips Green in the River Lugg on the 23rd. day of September, 1840. This was done in the night. At the same time John Dustin and Gorneilus Tayrun were also baptized. Although done at night it was all over the neighborhood the following day. And very soon after the devil and his agents began to work. I, with two or three others, were working in a stone quarry for Mr. John Freeman and some of our church works being given to him, he became mad and frothed at the mouth and ordered us off his premises, never to set our feet on his land again. Things began to get dark, still I had a testimony within me that I had embraced the truth and no one could persuade me otherwise. I was taken back to work by Mr. Freeman twice in the hopes of reclaiming me, but when I said that I know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet I was given up and they explored other tactics. One night I went to a meeting and the next day I was ordered to leave home and not go there any more, unless I would stay away from the Mormans. There I was without money or food of any kind, no place to sleep, only in a barn. I some-times walked the road most of the night and some of the brethren gave me a few frosted pototoes. I went three days without any food, I was so weak I walked with a stick and meeting Mr. Freeman one day he thus accosted me, "Well Wood, what do you think of Joseph Smith now?" I answered him "I think he is a prophet sir". He then asked me when I had eaten anything. I told him three days ago, then he said, "Come up to the house and have something to eat." I went up and a good meal was sat before me and in front of my plate was set a book for me to read while eating. Also his wife and daughter sat near me telling me about the wickedness of the Mormans. I paid but little attention as to what was said, but after eating I departed after thanking them for their kindness to me. I being without work and could not get any there, I was persuaded by a brother and his son to join them and go to West Bromwitch to look for work which I accordingly did. His name was John Tyler and his son's name was James Tyler. We started out, the father having control and management of our affairs, of what little we had and I soon found out that I had got into the wrong pew. As public houses were very plentiful in that part of the country, John Tyler would not go by without calling to drink to their health. I supposed this continued on until he had pawned all his own clothes that he and his son could spare and also a coat of mine. Thus I was left in shirtsleeves. At length we arrived at West Bromwitch, some 58 miles from home, among strangers. The Tylers had relatives there and they got them work, but none could I get so I resolved to go back to Lugwardine. I traveled to Birmingham, a distance of six miles and stayed at a brother's house of the name of Riley. I sat up in a rocking chair all night and in the morning, having received a piece of bread with lard spread on it before starting, I traveled to Worchester some 26 miles by a little after dinner time, I had then some 24 miles to go before I could get back to Lugwardine which I did although it was sometime after dark when I reached there. The next day my feet were one solid blister on the bottoms. After going without food and shelter for myself to lay down on, for a month or two ( that is, I had little to live on) the Lord opened up the way for me and turned the hearts of the people towards me so that I had some calls to go to work, more than I could fill. When harvest time came I joined some men aud worked all through harvest earning more money, more than it took to support me and as a family by the name of Green was about to emigrate to New Orleans, they loaned me three pounds and a girl with whom I had no acquaintance came and gave me a soveriegn, so that I had enough money to come to America. We started in the year 1842, and came to Liverpool and took passage to the ship

MEDFORD, for New Orleans. She set sail from Liverpool on the 23rd. day of September, 1842. (Just two years to the day since I had joined the church.) Elder Orson Hyde, one of the twelve apostles, was President of the company which consisted of 268 souls. When I landed at New Orleans, which was on the 14th. of November 1842, I was in a strange country without means to go on up the river as the rest of the company were going to St. Louis Mo. and it looked to me at that time rather discouraging, however, I said nothing but remained on the steamer with the rest until all were ready to take ship for St. Louis. When Sister Ann Dustin came to me and asked me what I was going to do. If I wanted to go on up the river they would pay my passage to St. Louis. There were about 400 Dutch steerage passengers on board, so the Latter Day Saints had to sleep on the Hurricane deck, but this was no hardship as the weather was warm. At length we arrived in St. Louis and it was there that everybody had to look out for him or herself. As the 400 Dutch were all looking for work it was almost impossible to get anything to do. At last I met a gentleman, asked him for works and he said that he never had work, but knew a friend of his from whom I might get work. He took me down to No. 3 Water St. to a store kept by Ames and son and there I was employed until the ice broke up on the river which was about three or four months, when I with to other Latter Day Saints took passage on the steamboat "LEANDER" for Nauvoo ILL. where we landed on the 6th. day of May 1843. As soon as we arrived, Phillips Green, William Green and myself went to see Joseph Smith the Prophet.

From there on he snared the persecutions and mobbings of the Saints. He was at Nauvoo when the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother were assassinated. He was also present at the meeting when the mantle of Joseph Smith fell upon Brigham Young when he looked and spoke with the voice of Joseph Smith, the prophet. He was with the body of the Saints on their western movement when the call came for 500 of their gallant men to volunteer to fight in defense of the Government against Mexico. He enlisted in the Mormon Battalion July 16th 1846, marching with the company from Council Bluff, Iowa over a trackless plain where foot of man had never trod. On that perilous journey he helped to make roads, dig wells, and suffered untold agonies from hunger and thirst while marching on the desert day after day in the blazing sun. He was discharged at San Diego, California on July 16 1847.