

"BIOGRAPHY OF DANIEL COLLETT"

by James Chambers

CACHE VALLEY HISTORY

Prof. Jeff Simmonds

Many of my ancestors were among the first to settle the Valley of Cache. These ancestors were active in the affairs of their respective communities. They were devoted Christians and civic minded.

From a modern view, the city of Smithfield has long been a refuge for my ancestors and relatives. In Smithfield today, you will find many of my relatives continuing to lead active lives in relation to both religious and communal affairs. In this valley, when you say the name "Chambers", Smithfield will usually come to mind. The Chambers tradition in Smithfield goes way back to the early settlement of Smithfield. My great-great-great grandfather (Seth Langton) was one of the original settlers of Smithfield. He and many others have had a profound influence upon Smithfield, as well as the valley itself.

Another name that is related to Smithfield, is that of the Cantwells. The Cantwell family (whom I am related to through my grandmother, Leone Cantwell Chambers) has long run the largest lumbering company in the Cache Valley region. The Chambers and Cantwell names combined have produced many men and women of both prominence and stature in the Smithfield community. The family has produced Mayors, Stake Presidents, Bishops, City Councilmen, Relief Society Presidents, County Commissioners, and darn good men of the soil.<sup>1</sup>

Because of this rich heritage, I have taken it upon myself to trace the footsteps of one of my early ancestors from the Isles of Great Britain, to the Valleys of Utah and eventually Cache Valley.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from family records, (both Chambers and Cantwell).

FROM THE FAMILY RECORDS, (BOTH CHAMBERS AND CANTWELL).

The ancestor of whom I have chosen to write about is named Daniel Collett. He is my fathers great-great grandfather (his mother's side) and played a significant part in the roles of settling such early communities as Lehi, Plain City and Smithfield. Not only will I attempt to relate his migration to Utah from England, but I will also give in brief, a short history of his part in settling various towns and communities along the way.

In preparation for this assignment, I have taken many steps to provide the reader with a factual account of an early migration. This information has not been copied from genealogy, but has been compiled from many different sources. It is from this point that we take off on the journey of Daniel Collett.

Daniel Collett, the only son of William and Elizabeth Bromage Collett, was born on December 12, 1808, in Corse, Gloucestershire, England. He was the second of four children. The family later moved to the town of Pendock nearby, where it is said that the Malvern Hills form a grand object of scenery. The population in 1950 is listed as 177.<sup>2</sup>

Pendock and Corse are located within a radius of five miles, so there was probably much communication between these two towns. This point is significant due to the fact that my ancestors were located in both of these two towns.

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<sup>2</sup> Lewis' Topographical Dictionary of England, by Edward Chandler, (1953).

Daniel's childhood must have been spent in and around the town of Pendock. As a young man he was trained to be a wheelwright and blacksmith.<sup>3</sup> He grew to be tall and straight, with a fine physical appearance, which he developed by athletic activities. He was especially adept in the art of boxing. He was frequently asked to participate in the local boxing matches of the outlying towns.

At one of the religious meetings, Daniel met Esther Jones who was attending with her intended husband, Charles Capper.<sup>4</sup> Apparently Daniel won out, for later their marriage was published, (as is required by English law). Esther lived in the town of Corse. The little town of Corse is beautifully situated on the road from the city of Gloucester to Ledbury. Its picturesque stone-steeped 14th century parish church boasts five bells dated 1380, 1630, 1680 and 1807.

Their first child, Sylvester, was born in Pendock on December 31, 1833, but died in infancy. This was a heart break to Daniel and his wife. The family undoubtedly moved around somewhat, as Sylvanus (the second child) was born in Wellington, Herefordshire and Rhoda Sylvia, in Beckerton, Herefordshire. They were back in Pendock for the birth of Rueben on July 19, 1839.

Shortly after this, events were taking place that would change the lives of the Collett family, along with many other people in the surrounding communities.

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<sup>3</sup>A Wheelwright is, a person who makes and repairs wheels and wheeled vehicles.

<sup>4</sup>History of Daniel Collett, by Melvina Duke Collett (1938).

By this time in history, the Mormon church had been founded, and was by now sending it's missionaries to the Isles of Great Britain. In the company of Elder John Taylor and Theodore Turley, Wilford Woodruff arrived in Liverpool, England on January 11, 1840. Elder Woodruff was assigned to labor in the Staffordshire Potteries, where he was successful in converting many to the Mormon faith. In March, "the spirit of the Lord prompted him to go south. He had plenty to do where he was, but he had heard the voice of the Holy spirit, obeyed, and went south to Worcestershire, where he met with the peoples of the area."<sup>6</sup>

Through eight months of labor, chiefly by Elder Woodruff in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, eighteen hundred people were brought into the Mormon faith. In several of the letters that Daniel wrote, he speaks of Elder Woodruff very highly. These letters were written chiefly to his brother-in-law Thomas Oakey, who was the husband of Daniels sister Ann, who once converted (April 5, 1840) had already left England and was by now in America.

Daniel's baptism date, was in Eldersfield, on April 6, 1841. One month after Daniel's baptism, May 10, 1841, the Collett family, of five, Daniel, his wife Esther and the children Sylvanus, Rhoda Sylvia, and Rueben, set sail from Bristol, Gloucestershire, on the ship "Harmony" bound for Quebec, Canada. The company of fifty saints were under the direction of an Elder Kingston. From Quebec, they journeyed on to Nauvoo, Illinois, where they made their home for the next five years.

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<sup>6</sup>History of Daniel Collett, by Elizabeth Collett Anderson (1946), page 13.

Daniel knew the Prophet Joseph Smith, and with numerous others, guarded him on many occasions. At one time, there was an apostate who frequently tried to induce the Prophet to wrestle or fight him. This apparently was not Joseph's way of settling things, but the man became so abusive, that Daniel asked the Prophet to let him take up the challenger. After much hesitation, an affirmative answer was given. In relating this incident, Daniel said, "I never have had such power and strength and endurance in all my life. In a short time, I had the man crying "quits."<sup>7</sup>

Daniel and Esther recieved their Patriarchal Blessings<sup>8</sup> from Hyrum Smith, December 3, 1842. They also received their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple, February 2, 1846, just a few days before the first party left Nauvoo.

When the Saints were driven from Nauvoo, the Collett family went to Winter Quarters, Nebraska. At Winter Quarters, Daniel, being a first-class wheelwright, was asked by church authorities, to stay and build wagons, carts and other conveyances for the saints crossing the plains. Esther also did her share in this preparation by quilting many, many quilts. Rueben aided her by threading needles, so that she wouldn't have to stop to perform this tedious task.

On the way to Winter Quarters, Mary Ann was born in a wagon-box at the camp on Sugar Creek, Lee County, Iowa, September 3, 1846. It must have been extremely hard for all who experienced this migration. The Collett family had enjoyed a fairly good life back in their town of Pendock and Corse (England).

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<sup>7,8</sup>History of Daniel Collett by Elizabeth Collett Anderson (1946), page 24.

It wasn't until 1849, that the Colletts began their journey across the plains to Zion. They traveled in the "Ezra Taft Benson Company", arriving in Salt Lake City on the twenty-seventh of October, 1849. In the 1850 Census of Utah, Great Salt Lake County, Daniel's (listed as David) occupation is given as a carpenter, his age as forty-two, Esther-thirty-six, Sylvanus-sixteen, Rhoda-fourteen, Rueben-eleven, and Mary Ann, age four.<sup>9</sup>

Their first home in the Salt Lake Valley was at Mill Creek, southeast of Salt Lake City, where Julia Ann was born September 27, 1851. She became the wife of James S. Cantwell, another great-great grandfather of my father and also an early settler of Smithfield.

By this time, the Collett family was well into the ways of the pioneer life. Daniel's talent as a wheelwright and Blacksmith had gained him a reputation that was hard to beat. It was during this time that Daniel was commissioned to build a carriage for Brigham Young's personal use.<sup>10</sup>

In 1851, there came a move to Lehi, Utah County, then known as Evansville, in honor of the first Bishop David Evans, located near a spring on Dry Creek, in the bottom of the valley.

At first the families were scattered, but Indian troubles brought them together, and a fort was started on higher ground. The houses were built side by side in a square around a courtyard. Bishop Evans and others, including Daniel Collett lived on the north side on the enclosure.

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<sup>9</sup>Taken from the First Families of Utah, 1850 Census, Great Salt Lake County; page 66.

<sup>10</sup>LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, Volume 1, page 23.

A survey of the town of Evansville (Lehi), was directed by Bishop Evans, with Daniel assisting. They used a pocket compass, a carpenter's square, and the big dipper and the North Star as their guides.<sup>11</sup>

An eighteen by twenty-four foot log schoolhouse was constructed. The slab benches had no backs and the only warmth that they had came from a fireplace in one end of the room. This building also served as a meeting house, ballroom, theater and gathering place for other purposes concerned with the township. The first group of pupils included Sylvanus Collett. Not many of the students were in the same stage of learning, which must have proved to be a real challenge to Preston Thomas, the first teacher.<sup>12</sup>

Later, a second fort was begun and the schoolhouse was torn down and moved to the northeast corner. A tithing office of two stories and a basement, which also served as a jail, occupied the northwest corner. Council meetings were held in this building. In May of 1854, Brigham Young, accompanied by Heber C. Kimball, stopped at the fort and called a meeting. During this meeting, President Young advised the building of a wall around the fort. Work was begun the following day. My reference doesn't say, but the wall was probably built due to the Indian troubles that were occurring at the time?

Much of the information that I have, had to be left out, but one thing is clear. The entire settlement always worked together and all stood together when opposition opposed them.

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<sup>11</sup> History of Lehi, Memories that Live, page 246.

<sup>12</sup> History of Lehi, Memories that Live, page 246.



The farm implements were both crude and scarce. A plow, which did fairly good work, was fashioned from gnarled pieces of wood with a log for the beam. Planting consisted of wheat, corn, potatoes and squash. The creek could not be relied upon for irrigation, so a ditch was dug under the direction of Bishop Evans, from the mouth of American Fork Canyon, a distance of seven miles. This proved to be a tremendous undertaking for the poorly dressed and fed men, but it was accomplished and in August the water reached the crops and helped to save them.<sup>13</sup>

In 1852, John Taylor imported a few sugar beet seeds from France. Some sugar beets were raised the next year. The juice was extracted, boiled down and used as molasses. The first alfalfa seed was brought to Lehi by a Mr. Goodwin, who came around the Cape Horn with the Samuel Brannon Company on the ship "Brooklyn", which landed at San Francisco. After the gold rush in 1849, he came to Utah bringing some of the precious seed. He planted and cared for the crop each year until he was able to share it with his neighbors. Paulinas H. Allred is said to have put up the first stack of hay in the year 1867.

The political history of Lehi began in 1852, when David Evans, on behalf of the little colony on Dry Creek, presented a petition to the Territorial Legislature, asking that the body incorporate the community. The name Lehi was selected because, like the followers of Lehi (in the Book of Mormon), the people had moved so frequently. The petition was granted and Lehi was the sixth city in the Territory of Utah to be incorporated, having been preceded by Salt Lake City, Ogden, Provo, Manti and Parowan.

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<sup>13</sup>History of Lehi, Memories that Live, page 247.

When the city of Lehi was incorporated, Daniel Collett served as one of the councilors. On December 16, 1852, he was appointed water master and became a member of the town's first School Board. He was later elected as a counselor to the Mayor on March 16, 1854, he was also a member of the Field Committee. Sylvannus, his son, served as constable 1853-4.<sup>14</sup> Later, on March 2, 1855, Daniel received a promotion to the office of Alderman.<sup>15</sup> In the third municipal election, in February of 1856, he was again among the councilors chosen.

The first agricultural machinery brought into Lehi in 1854, included a threshing machine and fanning mill, to separate the chaff from the wheat. This machine was owned by Bishop David Evans, Thomas Karren and Daniel Collett.

The Salmon River Mission was organized at the Annual Conference of the Church, on April 7, 1855, under the direction of Thomas S. Smith of Farmington, Davis County, Utah. Twenty-seven men were chosen to go in the first group and they established a fort named "Limhi", after King Limhi (found in the Book of Mormon). Later the spelling was changed to "Lemhi". This was the first white settlement in Idaho. Sylvanus was called in March of 1856 and returned eighteen months later in October of 1857. Rueben, eighteen years old by now, left with a group for the Salmon Mission this same month and met the returning party along the way. Fort Lemhi was formally abandoned on March 28, 1858, due to the excessive Indian troubles, and the missionaries and their families returned to Utah.

<sup>14</sup> a constable is somewhat like a police officer  
<sup>15</sup> An Alderman is a municipal officer who represents  
a district or ward

In 1853, Sylvanus married Lydia Karren, the daughter of Thomas and Ann Karren. His other wives were: Sarah Jane Lawrence, Phoebe Lodema Merrill, Sarah Ellen Gee and Elizabeth Praetor. This shows that polygamy was found in my family. Many of my ancestors practiced plural marriage.

Esther Jones Collett died on June 4, 1857 and was buried in Lehi. She was a natural nurse, sympathetic and intelligent. These characteristics enabled her to care for the sick mothers and new babies during the days in Nauvoo, and later in the westward movement. She was also a singer of some notability. Mary Ann, who was eleven years of age at the time, remembered that her mother was especially skilled in preparing from herbs, roots and barks, medicines that were used in treating various diseases. Even at this early age, Mary Ann learned the mixing processes, how to administer the medicine and later used this knowledge in a life of service.<sup>16</sup>

Left with five small children, Daniel married Mary Foulk Empey, a widow with three little ones in 1857.

In the fall of 1858, an exploring party, which included Daniel Collett, left Lehi in search of a new home. When they arrived in Ogden, they consulted with President Lorin Farr, who said, "I know the exact spot which would be ideal for a new settlement. It lies approximately ten miles northwest of Ogden on a rich plain. The soil is fertile and deep. This place is situated slightly over a mile from

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<sup>16</sup>The Story of Mary Ann Collett Wamsley, Our Pioneer Heritage, Vol. 6, page 510.

the Weber River. Canals could be dug very easily. I'll go with you and show you the place."<sup>17</sup>

The exploring party rode out and looked the region over carefully. Being impressed with the appearance of the country, and its possibilities for a new home, they selected the site for their proposed settlement. Careful investigation proved that because of the lay of the land, their canal would have to be several miles in length.

Besides making this preliminary survey of the canal, the little group of men selected their farms and lots, these would later be subject to the approval of their wives and families who were planning to come later. They returned to Lehi and spent the winter months making preparations to move to Weber County the following spring.

On March 10, 1859, a company of about one hundred people, who among them was Daniel Collett and family, left Lehi and traveled northward with their teams of oxen, horses and mules. Because the roads were so muddy, the journey took the party almost seven days.

The Streets were laid off at night with the aid of the North Star and measured with a rope. So accurate were the measurements that, when surveyed later, not one line was changed.<sup>18</sup> A field, one mile square, was measured east of town and enclosed with a willow fence. Each family was given a city lot and twenty acres in the "Big Field" as it was called.<sup>19</sup> Daniel drove the oxen and his son Reuben held the plow when the first irrigation ditch was made.

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<sup>17</sup> History of Plain City, Beneath Ben Lomonds Peak, pp, 211-215.

<sup>18</sup> History of Plain City, Beneath Ben Lomonds Peak, pp, 211-215.

<sup>19</sup> History of Plain City, Beneath Ben Lomonds Peak, pp 211-215.

The Pioneers set to work planning and surveying their townsite and farming lands. The first city plat was three blocks wide and six blocks long, each block containing five acres and divided into four lots. One block, centrally located, was designed as the "Public Square." On it were built the church, the schoolhouse and other public buildings.<sup>20</sup>

The first homes were dugouts, but soon the settlers began to construct log cabins with timbers secured from North Ogden Canyon. The infant settlement was only two months old when it was organized into a branch of the Mormon Church. It began with William W. Raymond as President, Daniel Collett and Jeppe G. Folkman as Counselors. During an early council meeting, "The City of the Plains" was chosen as the name of the town. It was later changed, however, to "Plain City."<sup>21</sup>

After the death of his wife, Mary, on August 31, 1859, in Plain City, Daniel married Elizabeth Gordon on Oct. 23, 1859. One son was later born in Smithfield, Cache County, Utah, in November of 1860. Elizabeth also died in the same place in October of 1869.

The move to Smithfield came in 1860, although their membership was not recorded until June of 1861. The town, first known as Summit Creek, was named in honor of its first Bishop, John Glover Smith. Contrary to the advice of Brigham Young, the first settlers in 1859 had not built their homes in what was called a "fort line".<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>History of Plain City, Beneath Ben Lomonds Peak, pp 211-216.

<sup>21</sup>Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah, pp 815-1,318.

<sup>22</sup>History of Smithfield and Smithfield Ward Records, page 14.

When Indian troubles began and several men were killed, the settlers were compelled to build a fort for protection. Between 1860 and 1861, sixty-eight houses were built in the "Fort Line". These were mostly of logs with one room, the windows and doors faced the inside of the fort. Roofs were made of willows or long grass and dirt. The floors were also of willows or long grass and dirt, which had been hard-packed.<sup>23</sup>

Daniel, his son Sylvannus and their families occupied the houses on the south side of the fort. Sylvanus had come to Cache Valley earlier and had been living on a ranch where Cache Junction now stands.

Even after the Battle of Bear River, north of Preston, Idaho, and the signing of a treaty in October of 1863, Indians still roved the country threatening the settlers. Finally, some time in 1864, it was considered to be safe to leave the fort and live on city lots of their own choosing.<sup>24</sup>

An event took place on January 27, 1861 which was long to be remembered by the people of Smithfield, particularly Reuben Collett and Elthura Roseltha Merrill. It was the day of their marriage, the first to be performed in the town of Smithfield.<sup>25</sup>

Daniel later married other women of the community and was one of the first polygamist of the town.

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<sup>23</sup> History of Smithfield, by Wells and Carol Collett, (1971).

<sup>24</sup> The History of a Valley, by Joel Ricks et. al. (1956) page 55.

<sup>25</sup> History of Smithfield, by Well and Carol Collett, (1971)

Daniel was very active in civic and religious affairs of the community of Smithfield. In a meeting held on March 1, 1866, he was appointed water master of the district and a motion was made to pay him for his services.<sup>26</sup> He held this position for many years, during which time a canal was built to bring water from the nearby canyons.

In reading the Ward Records of early Smithfield, Daniel Collett's name is often found in the officiating position for baptisms, confirmations and other ordinations. There is also a record of the re-baptism of Daniel and Esther Collett on July 4, 1875.<sup>27</sup> He was a High Priest, endowed with great faith and healing power. He was called upon at all hours of the day and night to administer to the sick of the community. It was said that just his presence in a sick room brought a calm and healing influence.<sup>28</sup>

At one time he was asked to administer to his great grandchild, Lydia Rae Nelson, who was gravely ill. He then returned home but almost immediately took his hat again and started to leave. Daughter Julia inquired as to where he was going and he replied, "I have a feeling that the child is worse and I must go back." As he neared the Nelson home, he was met and told that Lydia Rae was dead. He exclaimed, "In the name of the Lord, she must not die." He administered to her again and she lived to testify of his great faith. Lydia Rae later married George E. Miles and passed away on December 1969, at the age of seventy-eight.<sup>29</sup>

Smithfield, by Wells and Carol Collett, (1971).

in the Library.

by Thomas Davis Kirkbride and William H. Cantwell

Daniel was very fond of horses and always had good ones on hand. He had an excellent saddle and loved to ride right up to the day he died. He traveled a great deal by horse and buggy. It was nothing for him to go from Smithfield into Idaho to visit his sons, or to go to Vernal, a distance of nearly three hundred miles. There he would visit the son of Rueben and other relatives and friends.

On the occasion of his grand-daughter Julia Cantwell's baptism, Daniel Collett bore testimony and said that he had been promised that he would live as long as he had any desire to live, then he added, "I am ready to go any time the Lord wants me."<sup>30</sup>

Death came the next day, with a heart attack on June 9, 1894 in his eighty-sixth year. He was buried two days later in the Smithfield Cemetery.

Daniel Collett was a humble man, kindly and honest in his dealings with neighbors and friends. He was a man of strong will and determination, carrying to completion anything he started, especially if he felt that it was for the common good of his family or community.

His large posterity honor him for his life of service and devotion to his church and to his fellowmen. I was really proud to learn of his life and the heritage of which he has left me.

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<sup>30</sup> History of Daniel Collett, by Elizabeth Collett Anderson (1946), page 12:  
\*Daniel was promised to live as long as he desired by his Patriarchal Blessing. This is a blessing that allows worthy individuals a chance to see what this life has in store for them in relation to family and church. It is only practiced in the L.D.S. faith.