

Biography of Daniel Collett

Daniel Collett, only son of William and Elizabeth Bromage Collett, was born 12 December 1808, in Corse, Gloucestershire, England, the second of four children. His three sisters were: Elizabeth, born 10 December 1806, in Tirley, Gloucestershire, married Robert Ruck, died 10 October 1864; Ann, born 12 January 1812, in Pendock, Worcestershire, married Thomas Oakley, died 14 April 1892; and Amy, born in 1815, at Pendock, died as an infant. Pendock is a small village ten miles northwest of the city of Gloucester, on the road from Tewkesbury to Ledbury. The Malvern Hills form a grand object in the scenery. Population was 177 in 1950.

Tirley, Eldersfield, Pendock and Corse are located within a radius of five miles, so there was definitely much communication between these towns.

Father of Daniel, William Collett, born 30 January 1780, at Charlton Abbots, Gloucestershire, England, died in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, at the home of a daughter, Elizabeth Collett Ruck 7 May 1864. Little is known of his wife Elizabeth Bromage, daughter of John and Elizabeth Bromage, except that she was of Tirley, Gloucestershire, born 1782 and died 24 May 1841 at Frogmarsh, Gloucestershire. They were married at Tirley, 7 October 1805, where their first child, Elizabeth, was born.

The marriage of William's parents, Thomas and Mary Vellender Collett, took place 3 November 1778, in the parish church at Charlton Abbots, where they both were born. Thomas, October 1752 and Mary about 1756. Much research has been done but there is no proof of their parentage.

Charlton Abbots is a tiny hamlet situated amid the lush green, rolling Cotswold Hills, five miles east of the city of Cheltenham. Most of the scattered homes and the quaint 14th century church are built of beautiful Cotswold limestone. When freshly cut it is a tawny golden hue, but weathers to a soft, silvery gray—a lovely contrast to the intense green of the surrounding landscape. The town had a population of only seventy-five in the census of 1950.

Daniel's childhood must have been spent in and around Pendock, where as a young man he was trained to be a wheelwright and blacksmith. He grew to be tall and straight, with a fine physique, which he developed by athletic activities. He was especially adept in the art of boxing to the extent that he was frequently asked to participate for the entertainment of his friends and neighbors. Later he made use of his prowess in protecting his religious friends and himself against certain enemies who endeavored to break up meetings and abuse the members of the newly formed "United Brethren" near his home.

At one of the "United Brethren" meetings, Daniel met Esther Jones who was attending with her intended husband, Charles Capper. Apparently Daniel won out

for later their banns of marriage were published, as required by English law, for three consecutive weeks in Corse Church on 31 March, 7 April and 14 April 1833. 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. Esther's birthplace was Bullingham, Herefordshire and the date 10 October 1814.

Their first child, Sylvester, born in Pendock 31 December 1833, died in infancy. The family undoubtedly moved around somewhat as Sylvanus was born 13 May 1835 in Wellington, Herefordshire and Rhoda Sylvia, in Beckerton, Herefordshire on 20 April 1837. They were back in Pendock for the birth of Reuben on 19 July 1839.

Shortly after this, events were taking place which would change the lives of the Collett family, along with many other people in the surrounding communities. In company with Elder John Taylor and Theodore Turley, Wilford Woodruff arrived in Liverpool, England, 11 January 1840. They were missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Elder Woodruff was assigned to labor in the Staffordshire Potteries, where he was successful. In March, the spirit of the Lord prompted him to go south. He had plenty to do where he was, but he heard the voice of the spirit, obeyed, and went south to Worcestershire where he met with the "United Brethren."

Through eight months of labor, chiefly by Elder Woodruff in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, eighteen hundred people were brought into the Church. In this number were Elizabeth Bromage Collett (Daniel's mother) baptized 9 March 1840, Ann (Daniel's sister) 5 April 1840. She left England for America with her husband, Thomas Oakley, and family, crossed the plains in Willie Handcart Company and arrived in Salt Lake City, 9 November 1856. Elizabeth (Daniel's sister) was baptized 9 April 1840; and William, his father, 25 November 1840. Daniel's baptism date, in Eldersfield, was 6 April 1840 and although Esther Jones Collett was baptized this same year there is no definite date given. All but one of the "United Brethren" were baptized.

Thirteen months after his baptism, 10 May 1841, the Collett family of five, Daniel, his wife Esther and children Sylvanus, Rhoda Sylvia and Reuben, set sail from Bristol, Gloucestershire, on the ship "Harmony" bound for Quebec, Canada. The company of fifty saints was under the direction of Elder Kingston.

From Quebec, they journeyed on to Nauvoo, Illinois, where they made their home for the next five years. Here two children were born: Fannie Marie, 22 November 1841 and Daniel 22 October 1843—both of whom died in infancy.

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 with him. That was not Joseph's way, 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 had such power and strength and endurance in my life. In a short time I had the man crying "quits." Daniel and Esther received their Patriarchal Blessings from Hyrum Smith, 3 December 1841, 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, where 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. Reuben aided her by threading needles, so 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, 3 September 1846. She later married William Wamsley, 1 May 1864 and died 27 November 1929. Another child, Elizabeth Matilda, was born 27 February 1849 at Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County, Iowa—married Ralph Teancum Merrill, 24 May 1869 and died 30 May 1944.

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. In the 1850 Census of Utah, Great Salt Lake County, Daniel's (listed as David) occupation is given as carpenter, his age as forty-two, Esther thirty-six, Sylvanus sixteen, Rhoda fourteen, Reuben eleven, Mary A. four and Elizabeth two.

Their first home in the valley was at Mill Creek, southeast Salt Lake City, where Julia Ann was born 27 September 1851. She became the wife of James Cantwell, 17 January 1872, and died 20 June 1933. It must have been during this time that Daniel was commissioned to build a carriage for Brigham Young's personal use.

In 1851, there came a move to Lehi, Utah County, then known as Evansville for 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 court. Bishop Evans and others, including Daniel Collett lived on the north side of the enclosure. A survey of the town was directed by Bishop Evans, with Daniel assisting. He used a pocket compass, a carpenter's square, the Big Dipper and North Star as guides.

An eighteen by twenty-four foot log schoolhouse was constructed. The slab benches had no backs and warmth 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. The first group of pupils included Sylvanus Collett. Not many were in the same stage of learning which must have proven a real challenge to Preston Thomas, the first teacher.

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 served as a jail, occupied the north west corner. Council meetings were held in this building. In May 1854, Brigham Young, accompanied by Heber C. Kimball, stopped at the fort and called a meeting, at which he advised the building of a wall around the fort. Work was begun the following day.

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. As the creek could not be relied upon for irrigation, 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 fed and scantily clothed men, but it was accomplished and in August the water reached the crops and helped to save them.

In 1852, John Taylor imported a few sugar beet seed from France and some 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 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, which he planted and cared for each year until he was able to share 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 body to 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.

While here their family was completed with the births of Charles Albert Capper, named after Esther's former sweetheart, 28 December 1853 and James Jones, 24 April 1856. Charles married Hannah Ann Merrill, 28 October 1876, died 2 October 1922. James Jones married Marietta Tidwell, 24 December 1877, and after her death in 1884 took as his second wife, Jane Wardrup, 25 July 1896. James Jones passed away 1 May 1924.

When the city of Lehi was incorporated, Daniel Collett served as one of the councilors. On 16 December 1852, he was appointed water master and became a member of the town's first School Board. Elected as councilor to the Mayor on 16 March 1854, he was also a member of the Field Committee. Sylvanus, his son, served as constable 1853-4. Later, 2 March 1855, Daniel received a promotion to the office of alderman. In the third municipal election, February 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, owned by Bishop David Evans, Thomas Karren and Daniel Collett.

The Salmon River Mission was organized at the Annual Conference of the Church, 7 April 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 Kind Limhi, a Book of Mormon prophet. 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. Reuben, eighteen years old, left with a group of the mission this same month and met the returning party along the way. Fort Lemhi was formally abandoned, 28 March 1858, due to excessive Indian troubles, and the missionaries and their families returned to Utah.

In 1853, Sylvanus had married Lydia Karren, daughter of Thomas and Ann Radcliffe Karren. His other wives were: Sarah Jane Lawrence, Phoebe Lodema Merrill (Jackman), Sarah Ellen Gee and Elizabeth Praetor. Rhoda Sylvia married John Sunderland Eldredge, 7 March 1857. Later she became the wife of Philemon Christopher Merrill, 9 October 1873.

Esther Jones Collett died 4 June 1857 and was buried in Lehi, thirteen months after the birth of her last child, James Jones. She was a natural nurse, sympathetic and intelligent. These characteristics enabled her to care for sick mothers and new babies during the days in Nauvoo and the westward movement. She was also a singer of some note. Mary Ann, who was eleven years old at the time of her death, remembered that her mother was especially skilled in the preparing from herbs, roots and barks, medicines 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.

Left with five small children, Daniel married Mary Foulk Empey, a widow with three little ones, later in 1857. She was a daughter of William and Elizabeth Turner Foulk, born 9 July 1826 at Tottersol, Bedfordshire, England, and widow of Jesse Empey. One child, Eliza, was born to this union on 3 September 1858.

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

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, subject to the approval of the colonists who were planning to come later. They then returned to Lehi and spent the winter months making preparations to move to Weber County the following spring.

On 10 March 1859, a company of about one hundred people, among them Daniel and family, left Lehi and traveled northward with teams of oxen, horses and mules. Because the roads were muddy and travel slow, it took seven days to make the journey.

The colonists 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 designated as the "Public Square." On it were built the church, schoolhouse and other public buildings.

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. 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. Daniel drove the oxen and his son Reuben, held the plow when the first irrigation ditch was made in this vicinity.

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, with William W. Raymond as president, Daniel Collett and Jeppe G. Folkman, Counselors. At this meeting "The City of the Plains" was chosen as the name of the town. It was later changed, however, to "Plain City."

After the death of his wife, Mary, 31 August 1859, in Plain City, Daniel married, 23 October 1859, Elizabeth Gordon, daughter of Joseph and Jane Stewart Gordon, born 3 May 1823 Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire, Scotland. One son, William,

was born 11 November 1860, in Smithfield, Cache County, Utah. Elizabeth died, 17 October 1869, in the same place.

The move to Smithfield came in 1860, although their membership was not recorded until 23 June 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." When the Indian troubles began and several men were killed, they 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 of willows or long grass and dirt. The floors were also of dirt, hard-packed. Daniel, his son Sylvanus and their families occupied houses on the south side. Sylvanus and come to Cache Valley earlier and had been living on a ranch where Cache Junction now stands.

Even after the battle at 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 safe to leave the fort and live on city lots of their own.

An event took place on 27 January 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.

On 6 February 1864, Daniel married Elizabeth Ward Miles, widow of Thomas Miles. She was the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Powell Ward, born 15 November 1828, Walton-le-Dale, Lancashire, England, died 25 December 1910, Raymond, Alberta, Canada. Their two sons Thomas Ward and Daniel Ward were born in Smithfield, 8 May 1865 and 4 July 1866. Thomas Ward married Eda Amelia Anderson, 11 November 1886, died 18 May 1922. Daniel Ward married, 7 March 1891, Sara Lottie Phillips, died 28 September 1932.

Martha Noble (Drury) became the wife of Daniel Collett on 4 October 1880. She was the daughter of John and Ann Wilson Noble, born 23 September 1811, Wyberton, Lincolnshire, England, died 30 June 1888. There were no children. Daniel spent the rest of his life in the home of his daughter Julia Ann Cantwell.

Daniel was very active in civic and religious affairs of the community. In a meeting held 1 March 1866, Daniel Collett was appointed water master of the district and a motion was made to pay him for his services. He held this position for many years, during which time a canal was built to bring water from 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 4 July 1875.

He was a High Priest, endowed with great faith and healing power, being called all hours of the day and night to administer to the sick in the community. It was said that just his presence in a sick room brought a calm and healing influence.

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 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 Edwin Miles on 4 January 1902, and passed away 14 December 1960 at the age of seventy-eight.

Daniel was very fond of horses and always kept good ones. He had an excellent saddle and single driving horse up to the last years of his life. He traveled alone a great deal by horse and buggy. It was nothing for him to go from Smithfield into Idaho to visit his sons Daniel and Thomas, and to Vernal, a distance of about three hundred miles. There he visited the family of son Reuben, other relatives and friends.

On the occasion of his grand-daughter Julia Cantwell's baptism and confirmation, Daniel Collett bore his testimony and said he had been promised 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."

Death came the next day, with a heart attack, 8 June 1894, in his eighty-sixth year. He was buried two days later in the Smithfield Cemetery.

Daniel Collett was a humble man, subservient to authority, kindly and honest with his neighbors and friends and possessing great faith. He was a man of strong will and determination, carrying to successful completion any enterprise 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, a heritage for which they can be forever grateful.

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Compiled and printed by Wells and Carol Collett, 1971