

ELIJAH FORDHAM 1798- 1879

Elijah Fordham was born March 8, 1798 in New York City, N.Y., son of George Fordham and Mary Baker. He married Jane Ann Fisher in 1823. They had two children. Their first child died. Their second child was George Fisher Fordham. They moved to Clinton, Mich. The following year and Elder Fosdick came to their home preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. He and his wife joined the church in 1833 and moved to Kirtland, Ohio to be with the saints. In Feb. 1835 he was ordained a seventy under the hand of the prophet Joseph Smith.

In 1837, Elijah Fordham assisted Parley P. Pratt, one of the twelve Apostles in publishing the book called "The Voice of Warning" Elijah had married the second time to Bethiah Fisher, sister of Jane Ann Fisher. They had a baby girl named Bithiah. IN 1840 he married for the third time to Anna Bibbins Chaffee, (Most of us came through this line) She had a large family by him but when he wanted to marry the fourth time, Anna Bibbins Chaffee left him and went to live with a daughter in California. She did not come back.

Elijah Fordham received his patriarchal blessing at the hand of Joseph Smith Sr. on the 18th of December 1835. From this blessing, Quote: "Thy name is written in heaven, among the sanctified, to preach the gospel, and thou shall visit a nation as one of the Lords servants. Thou shall comfort the hearts of the widows, and the orphans and shall bring many of them to the land of Zion. Thou shall have power to gaze into heaven. Thy heart shall expand, and understand the mysteries of heavenly things." Unquote.

From the Church News dated Dec. 23, 1844 telling of the New York, New York stake: Parley P. Pratt (early apostle) came to the area as the first missionary in 1837. He and his companion, Elijah Fordham held services in an upper room in the area now known as Chinatown.

Excerpts from the marvelous healing of July 22, 1839 recorded in History of the Church, Vol. 4, pg. 4: The next place they visited was the home of ELIJAH FORDHAM who was supposed to be about breathing his last. When the company entered the room, the Prophet of God walked up to ^{the} dying man and took hold of his right hand and spoke to him, but Brother Fordham was unable to speak, his eyes were set in his head like glass and unconscious of all around him. Joseph held his hand and looked into his eyes in silence for a length of time. A change in the countenance of Brother Fordham was soon perceptible to all present. His sight returned, and upon Joseph asking him if he knew him, he in a low whisper answered 'Yes'. Joseph asked him if he had faith to be healed. He answered, "I fear it is too late, if you had come sooner I think I would have been healed" The prophet said "Do you believe in Jesus Christ? He answered in a feeble voice, "I do" Joseph then stood erect, still holding his hand in silence several moments. Then he spoke in a very loud voice, saying, "Brother Fordham, I command you, in the name of Jesus Christ, to arise from this bed and be made whole" His voice was like the voice of God, and not of man. It seemed as though the house shook to its very foundations. Brother Fordham arose from his bed and was immediately made whole. His feet were bound in poultices which he kicked off, then putting on his clothes he ate a bowl of bread and milk and followed the Prophet into the street.

Elijah Fordham was a very good carpenter. He assisted in building the Kirtland Temple until it was completed. He also carved the oxen which held the baptismal font in the Nauvoo Temple.

ELIJAH FORDHAM'S TRIP WEST; Elijah Fordham and his family came to Utah in 1850 with the Edward Hunter Company. The Hunter company was the first Perpetual Emigration company to arrive in Salt Lake City. The journey was started on the 25th of June. There were 261 persons, 67 wagons, 106 yoke of oxen, 113 cows, 10 horses, 19 sheep, 19 dogs, 6 cats and 40 loose cattle. The Fordham family at that time, according to company records was as follows: Elijah, 52, Miss Fisher, George Fordham, Bathiah Fordham, Anna Bibbins Chaffee, age 39, Amos Pierre Fordham, Anna Marie Fordham, age 6, and Joseph Elijah Fordham, age 3.

From the publication, Pioneers and prominent men of Utah: Elijah Fordham came to Utah in November, 1850 in the Edward Hunter company. Married Miss Fisher. Married Anna Bibbins Chaffee Aug. 3, 1843. Married Amelia Spencer at Salt Lake City, Married Elizabeth Hughes. Assisted in building the temples at Kirtland and Nauvoo. Member of Nauvoo Legion.

From the autobiography of Joseph Elijah Fordham: I went with my parents in 1862 who was called by President Brigham Young, to help settle St. George, Utah and in 1867 I went through the Blackhawk war. Then in the year 1868 I went back over the plains with my father, (Elijah) for more emigrants.

The wives of Elijah are recorded as Bithiah Fisher, Anna Bibbins Chaffee, Jane Ann Fisher, Bethiah Fisher, Clarissa Brooks, Elizabeth Hughes and Jane McAuslan. Limited information is found on these marriages.

From the DESERET NEWS of Sept. 17, 1879: The heading, FATHER FORDHAM GONE: We have received an obituary of Father Elijah Fordham, who died at Wellsville, Cache County on the 9th at the ripe old age of 81 years and six months. In 1832 he moved to Clinton River, Mich, where he embraced the gospel the next year through the instrumentality of Elder Fosdick and moved to Kirtland, Ohio. Here he was ordained a Seventy under the hands of the Prophet Joseph and his Counselors on Feb. 28, 1835. He was a member of Zions camp to Missouri. In 1837 he assisted Elder Parley P. Pratt in publishing the "Voice of Warning". In 1839 at Montrose, Iowa, he was miraculously healed under the administration of the Prophet Joseph and afterward moved to Nauvoo where he worked on the Temple until compelled to flee with the Saints in 1846. He crossed the plains in Bishop Edward Hunter's company in 1850, and has remained in Utah ever since. He received a sunstroke in 1863 from which he never fully recovered, and has quietly passed away, firm in the faith he espoused, and whose principles he maintained through a long and eventful life. The funeral was held in Wellsville, on the 11th.