

# IN NO WAY DISAPPOINTED

## Mormon Pioneers Arza & Barnabas Adams

When Brigham Young led the 'Pioneer Company' of 72 ox-drawn wagons down Emigration Canyon and into the Great Salt Lake basin, on July 21, 1847, prominent among that vanguard of 147 Mormons was Barnabas Adams of Adamsville, Canada West (Glen Tay, Ontario). His elder brother, Arza, who was among the first Canadian missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), joined him in the valley in 1849.

Arza Matson Adams and Barnabas Lothrop Adams were, respectively, the first and fifth of 14 children born to Joshua Adams (1779-1863) and Elizabeth Chipman (1786-1856).

Their father, Joshua<sup>1</sup>, a native of Vermont, arrived in Upper Canada with his parents, Richard Saxton Adams Sr. (1734-1810) and Lucy Masson Matson (1741-1805), and two married brothers, Daniel (1763-1827) and Richard Jr. (1766-1806). They first settled, over a five-year period between 1793-1798, on a 600-acre Crown grant near Stone Mills (Delta) in Bastard Township, Leeds County.

Their mother Elizabeth<sup>2</sup>, also a Vermont native, arrived in Bastard Township with her extended family in 1795. Four Chipman brothers, Amos (1751-1831), Jesse (1755-1841), Barnabas (1762-1847) and Amni Sr. (1764-1808) came to Leeds County from Connecticut, USA. The two elder brothers apparently did not like what they found and returned to the United States, but the younger brothers took up land grants. Elizabeth's father, Barnabas, settled near Plum Hollow and Amni Sr. established a farm at Portland.

Although the Adams and Chipman families were among an influx of so-called 'late loyalists' arriving in Upper Canada in the 1790s, they actually had little attachment to the British Crown. There is no record of the Adams family being persecuted for Loyalist sympathies and two of Arza and Barnabas' paternal uncles, Parmenio Adams (1748-1809) and Oliver Adams (1750-1804), had actually served in the American Continental Army.<sup>3</sup> In the case of the Chipmans, all four of the brothers and their father had also supported the rebels, serving in the Continental Army. Like so many 'late loyalists' it was not a commitment to the British Crown that brought them north, but the lure of cheap land and low taxes.<sup>4</sup>



**Joshua Adams (1779-1863)**  
(Photo courtesy of Geni.com)

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<sup>1</sup> Joshua (born 1780, Vermont, USA – died 1863, Adamsville, Lanark County, Ontario) was the son of Richard Saxton Adams (born 1734, Connecticut, USA – died 1810, Leeds County, Ontario) and Lucy Masson Matson (born 1741, Connecticut, USA – died 1808, Leeds County, Ontario).

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth (born 1786, Addison, Vermont, USA - died 1856, Adamsville, Lanark County Ontario) was the daughter of Barnabas Lothrop Chipman (born 1762, Connecticut, USA – died 1847, Franklin, New York, USA) and Beulah Evarts (born 1761, Vermont, USA – died 1830, Connecticut, USA).

<sup>3</sup> *Arza Adams: Chronicle of a Pioneer*, by Effie W. Adams & Dale W. Adams (1982/1999).

<sup>4</sup> The Chipman's Republican sympathies were further demonstrated when two of Elizabeth's Leeds County cousins, Truman (1794-1872) and Levi (1798-1874), sons of Ammi Chipman (1764-1808), supported William Lyon Mackenzie and the 'Patriot' cause during the 1838 Upper Canada Rebellion. They were captured in arms against the Crown at the Battle of the Windmill (November 12-16,

Joshua Adams and Elizabeth Chipman were married at Elizabethtown (Brockville), in 1803 and their sons were born at Stone Mills; Arza on January 22, 1804 and Barnabas on August 28, 1812.<sup>5</sup>

At the outbreak of the War of 1812, Joshua Adams did, however, choose the King over his family's republican leanings. He was commissioned a Captain in the Upper Canada Militia and appointed Adjutant in Lieutenant Colonel Joel Stone's 2<sup>nd</sup> Leeds Regiment. The 2nd Leeds, however, saw little action, due largely to the fact that it was composed of 'late-loyalists' and their sons, 103 of whom, out of a total strength of 485, deserted to the American enemy. Nevertheless, at the end of the war, in recognition of services rendered, Adams was granted 800 acres of land at the Perth Military Settlement. Arriving in 1816, he drew a lot on Foster Street where he built one of the first inns in the village. Then, in 1820, he chose to move up the Tay River where he purchased a saw and grist mill at Bathurst C-2/L-20<sup>6</sup>. The hamlet of Adamsville, now Glen Tay, grew up around Adams' expanding milling business and, in time, boasted an oat mill, sawmill, woolen mill, fulling mill<sup>7</sup>, tannery, wagon shop, cheese factory, blacksmith shop, store, distillery and homes for the workers, much of it owned in whole or in part by Joshua Adams.

Arza was eight years of age and Barnabas just four years old when their family moved to the Tay River mill site on the outskirts of Perth. They grew up there in a deeply religious household headed by a father who was an exhorter, trustee, steward and class leader at the Perth Methodist Church. Their brother Alvah (1806-1883) became a Methodist minister, while their sisters married men of the cloth; Lucinda (1817-1852) married George Heck (1815-1900), a grandson of Barbara Heck (1734-1804) who brought Methodism to Canada, Beulah (1810-c1895) married Methodist circuit rider John Carroll (1809-1884) and Lydia Ann (1830-1914) married Methodist minister Reverend James Armstrong (1823-1875).



**Joshua Adams' Glen Tay Mill, built c1840**  
(Photo courtesy of Diane Miller Duncan)

According to his brother Alvah, Barnabas also "... at one time promised much, religiously, but went west with his elder brother under circumstances that left their religious prospects under a cloud in the minds of their friends"<sup>8</sup>. That 'cloud' was their acceptance of the restoration gospel as preached by Mormon Missionary Elder John E. Page (1799-1867) and their baptism into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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1838) but after spending some time imprisoned at Fort Henry, they avoided prosecution for treason when Levi turned Crown Witness and testified against his 'Patriot' comrades.

<sup>5</sup> Both the Adams and Chipman families claimed descent from *Mayflower* ancestors and Elizabeth Chipman-Adams was a descendent of John Lothrop (1584-1653) a famous religious dissident who was among the earliest proponents of the separation of church and state.

<sup>6</sup> Originally constructed by Private Abraham Parsall of the Canadian Regiment of Fencible Infantry.

<sup>7</sup> 'Fulling' is a step in the process of manufacturing woolen cloth which cleans the material removing oils, dirt and other impurities.

<sup>8</sup> *The Family of the Late Joshua Adams J.P.*, by Reverend Alvah Adams (1880).

The Adams brothers were educated at the Perth Grammar School and as young men worked in their father's mills and other enterprises. In 1831 Arza married Sabina Ann Clarke (1812-1861), the daughter of Nathan Clarke Jr. (1788-1819) and Nancy McEachron (1796-1853), of Augusta Township, Grenville County.

In 1827, less than 200 miles south of Perth, near Palmyra, Wayne County, New York, a young man named Joseph Smith Jr. (1806-1844) announced the unearthing of a set of golden plates or tablets he described as inscribed with a text written in 'reformed Egyptian'. Smith reported translating the plates using seer stones provided by an angel, Moroni, and in March 1830 published that translation as the *Book of Mormon*. Later that year the first Mormon congregation was organized at Fayette, Seneca County, New York and, in the same year, the first Mormon missionaries reached Canada.

Elders Hiram Page (c1800-1852) and Oliver Cowdery (1806-1850) traveled to Toronto in the winter of 1829-1830, followed in the summer of 1830 by Joseph Smith Sr. (1771-1840) and his son Don Carlos (1816-1841) – father and brother of the Prophet - who preached around Prescott and Brockville. The following summer, missionary Phineas Young (1799-1879) was in Upper Canada and in 1832 his younger brother Brigham Young (1801-1877), a who would later become LDS President, preached at Kingston. Brigham Young, with other missionaries, was back in Upper Canada in 1833 visiting areas to the north and east of Kingston.



**John E. Page**  
(1799-1867)  
(Photo courtesy of  
Mormonwiki.com)

Former Methodist preacher, John E. Page (1799-1867), was the first Mormon missionary to venture into the backcountry settlements of Lanark County. He made two trips to Upper Canada. On the first, from June through December 1836, he preached across Frontenac, Addington and Leeds Counties. As he made his way along the Rideau Canal, Page won a number of converts in the area of Portland, on the south shore of Rideau Lake. On October 6, 1836, among others, he baptized the families of Stephen Chipman (1805-1868) and Amni Chipman Jr. (1807-1891), respectively a maternal uncle and a cousin of the Adams brothers. When Page reached Perth the local Presbyterian minister, William Bell, witnessed him at work;

*A Mormon preacher came to Perth, gave a sermon, and baptized some people publicly, in the river, breaking the ice in some cases for the purposes.*

*We had heard accounts of the Mormon heresy in newspapers, but till lately knew little of its tenets. But this winter Mr. Page, one of the teachers of that imposture, came among us, and preached with a zeal worthy of a better cause. He was a strong robust man, six feet high, with a thundering voice, and consummate impudence.*

*Many attended his preaching, and some were led by his zeal and apparent piety, to believe his assertion, that true religion had been lost, and that Joseph Smith and his followers had authority to revive it. A more barefaced cheat was never attempted to be palmed upon mankind under the name of religion. Yet it made converts even here, for there is no creed so absurd as not to obtain followers. A few submitted to baptism at the hands of Page; he having assured them that without this they could not be saved.<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> Reverend William Bell Diaries, Queens University.

The editor of the *Bathurst Courier* was also witness to the Tay River baptisms of December 7, 1836.

*Yesterday, at two o'clock, we, as well as a great portion of the inhabitants, were witnesses to the baptism of four individuals (one female) into the Mormon belief by Mr. A. Page [sic]. They were led individually into the river and totally immersed in the water by being laid prostrate under it, - then brought forth, and confirmed by the laying on of hands and going through the ordinance of prayer. All unnecessary clothing is removed before baptism, and the males were immersed having only their shirt and trousers on. It certainly was a 'cold bath' to those who received it, the ice being so strong in some places as to admit of a person to stand on it without danger of going through.<sup>10</sup>*

A few weeks after the ceremony described by Bell and the *Courier*, Page baptised Barnabas Adams on December 22, 1836 and, on December 25th, 1836, baptized his brother Arza and his wife Sabina; the ceremonies performed in the Tay river near their father's mill.

*The religious message that Page brought had an instant effect on the Adamses. Only two weeks after hearing him first preach, they celebrated Christmas by being baptized in a hole in the ice in a small river near Perth, Canada.<sup>11</sup>*

In the course of two missions to Canada, Page converted over 600 people and as the result of his work in the area of Perth he established branches of the LDS Church known as Bathurst North (50 members) and East Bathurst (58 members). In February 1837 Page organized a Church conference at Portland, attended by 305 members from eight area branches. Among the attendees were the Adams brothers and their Chipman relatives, as well as Missionary Elder Wilford Woodruff (1807-1898)<sup>12</sup> who would become LDS Church President 52 years later. In the course of the conference, the new converts were encouraged by Page and Woodruff to join their co-religionists in Ohio.

A central doctrine of the early LDS Church was that the 'Saints' should 'gather to Zion', so they could provide mutual support and enjoy fellowship and instruction together. The 'gathering to Zion' by Canadian converts was driven first by their belief in millennialism<sup>13</sup> and a fervent faith in the new religion, but also by the economic depression that gripped all of North America from 1837. In Canada these hard times contributed to a waning faith in the British governing classes<sup>14</sup> centered on disputes over clergy and Crown land reserves and, for many, the associated defeat of the 1837-1838 McKenzie-Papineau Rebellion.

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<sup>10</sup> *Bathurst Courier*, December 8, 1836.

<sup>11</sup> *Arza Adams: Chronicle of a Pioneer*, by Effie W. Adams (1999), SUP (Sons of Utah Pioneers) Pioneer Series.

<sup>12</sup> A native of Connecticut, USA.

<sup>13</sup> A belief advanced by some religious denominations that a 'Golden Age' or 'Paradise' will occur on earth prior to the final judgment and future eternal state of the 'World to Come'.

<sup>14</sup> As personified by the 'Family Compact' in Upper Canada.

As the LDS church developed, 'Zion' moved from New York, to Ohio, then Missouri and Illinois, and finally to Utah, but in 1837 the church was still headquartered at Kirtland, Ohio, now a suburb of Cleveland. Although the first Mormon congregation had been established at Fayette, New York,<sup>15</sup> Kirtland was then home to the largest concentration of Mormons, including Prophet Joseph Smith Jr., and construction of the first Mormon Temple<sup>16</sup> had begun there in 1831.

In May of 1837 Barnabas Adams answered the call to Zion by joining a company assembled at Portland, Ontario, and, under the leadership of John E. Page, set out for Kirtland. The party numbered more than 50 men, women and children and included his Chipman relatives Amni Chipman Jr. (1807-1891) and Susannah Chipman-Nichols (1792-1883) and their families.<sup>17</sup> While some of the single men drove their cattle across country, over the St. Lawrence River by Coles Ferry<sup>18</sup>, and onward along the south shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie, the bulk of the company travelled by steamboat along the Rideau Canal to Kingston and then up the lakes to reassemble at Kirtland.



**Bound for Zion**  
(Photo courtesy of Cornell University)

A strong work ethic within a system of economic communalism had seen the Kirtland Mormons quickly become relatively affluent. Seen from the outside however, their community was regarded as insular, isolated, self-righteous and smug. Mormons appeared to regard themselves as unique and emphasized that status by limiting social and economic contact with outsiders (whom they termed 'Gentiles'). The exceptions were when proselytizing or taking an interest in political affairs, the latter incompatible with republican views on separation of church and state. Intolerance and suspicion of the new faith took root. Their growing numbers and concern over their political and economic influence led to conflict and persecution. The situation became volatile when a Mormon banking institution, the Kirtland Safety Society, failed in the nation-wide financial panic of 1837, leaving many Mormons unable to meet their financial obligations. Although the Kirtland Temple had only been completed, at great expense, a year earlier, Joseph Smith Jr. left Ohio to join a Mormon outpost in Missouri. Harassed by a storm of lawsuits, arrest warrants and physical attacks, the bulk of the Kirtland Mormons liquidated their property at pennies on the dollar and followed him in 1838.

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<sup>15</sup> Approximately midway between Syracuse and Rochester, New York.

<sup>16</sup> There were three early Temples - first at Kirtland, Ohio, dedicated 1836; second at Nauvoo, Illinois, dedicated 1846; and third at St. George, Utah, dedicated 1877. The Tabernacle at Salt Lake City is the fourth Temple, dedicated in 1893. The site for a temple was dedicated at the Missouri settlement in 1838, but it was never built.

<sup>17</sup> The Page company of 1837 also included families named Downey, McOlney, Myers, Lindsay, Merkley, Gurley and Kettle.

<sup>18</sup> Coles Ferry was located five miles upstream (west) of Brockville, about midway between Brockville and Mallorytown, Ontario. The ferry landing on the Canadian side of the river was near a small lighthouse (established 1856) on what is now Coles Ferry Shoal (44.53300 N – 75.75700 W). The lighthouse was retired 1927 but the structure was acquired by the Ontario Heritage Trust in 1972 and survived until struck by lightning and burned in July 2018. A subsequent fundraising campaign, however, yielded \$200,000 for its reconstruction.





**Kirtland, Ohio, Temple**

(Photo courtesy of Brigham Young University)

Barnabas Adams and his fellow Canadian converts arrived at Kirtland just as the faithful were preparing to flee westward. Joining the exodus, they hired a team and wagon to carry the women and children and continued south to the Ohio River. From Cincinnati they travelled by riverboat down the Ohio and up the Missouri Rivers to St. Louis and then onward another 400 miles up the Missouri to Richmond Landing near Caldwell County Missouri. The hostility and chaos they had found at Kirtland, however, proved to be but a faint foreshadowing of events in Missouri.

As Barnabas made his way south and west, Arza Adams was still in Canada. His diary records that he had been;

*... called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ by revelation from God, and separated for the ministry by the hands of Elders John E. Page and A. Stevens on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1837, and soon began to preach the word of life unto my acquaintances and friends ...*

Basing himself at his parents' Adamsville home, Arza preached "without purse or script" across Lanark, Leeds and Dundas Counties and into northern New York State until, on July 17, 1838, he too set out for Zion with his wife Sabina and sons Nathan (1821-1916), Joshua (1833-1906) and George (1835-1840).

*[I] continued to preach and settle up my affairs until the spring of 1838 when I started with my family, consisting of a wife and four children, to the land of Missouri where the Lord had appointed for gathering of the kingdoms and nations to serve the Lord and wait for the coming of the Son of Man.*

Like Barnabas, Arza travelled with a party of Leeds County relatives; his uncle Stephen Chipman (1805-1868) and cousins Heman Chipman (1785-1843), Amanda Chipman-Simmons (1805-1875) and Flora Chipman-Weston (1815-1876), all with large families. The company numbered between 100 and 200<sup>19</sup> and included other Leeds and Lanark County converts.<sup>20</sup> Writing many years later Arza's son Nathan recalled that,

*My father and mother joined the Church of Jesus Christ in Canada ... crossed the St. Lawrence at Ogdensburg, thence to Niagara Falls and Buffalo, and Dewitt, Missouri ...<sup>21</sup>*

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<sup>19</sup> *The Mormon Presence in Canada*, edited by Brigham Young Card, Herbert C. Northcott, John E. Foster, Howard Palmer and George K. Jarvis (1990).

<sup>20</sup> Among these Truman Beach, Lyman Beach, Truman Stoddard, Lyman Stoddard, William B. Seaman and families named Judd and Hinckley. Also, probably Susannah Wallace (1820-1892) and Mathilda Wallace (1824-1867) of Bathurst Township.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from *Arza Adams: Chronicle of a Pioneer*, by Effie W. Adams and Dale W. Adams (1982 & 1999).

Shortly after crossing into the United States they made rendezvous near Canton in St. Lawrence County, New York, with a group of American converts led by the ever-active John E. Page, just back from shepherding the first Leeds and Lanark Mormons to Kirtland.

Even while Kirtland remained the center of the LDS church, from 1831 Mormons had begun settling in Jackson County, Missouri, with the objective of founding the City of Zion at the community of Far West. But, their arrival, in a single county, in significant numbers, over a short period of time, created an almost immediate clash of cultures and attitude. Their beliefs stirred prejudice because they tended to vote in blocs and thus disproportionately influence local politics and they were accused of opposing slavery and of believing the Indians were God's chosen people, destined to inherit the land.<sup>22</sup>

There were mob attacks on Mormon settlements in Missouri from 1833 onward, although some stability was restored when the State government created two new counties, Caldwell and Daviess in 1836, with the general understanding that Caldwell County was reserved for Mormons. In 1837 the Church headquarters moved to Far West when Joseph Smith Jr. and the Kirtland Mormons arrived. The 1837-1838 influx, that included the Adams-Chipman families, pushed the Mormon population of Caldwell County to about 5,000 and some of the new arrivals began settling outside of Caldwell. Non-Mormons protested that, under the agreement of 1836, Mormons were only allowed to settle in Caldwell County<sup>23</sup>. Divisions also opened within the Church itself over the funding and ownership of church purchased land.

Tensions continued to rise until an incident on voting day, August 6, 1838, led to attacks on Mormon settlements at Adam-ondi-Aham in Daviess County, Far West in Caldwell County and De Witt in Carroll County. Vigilante bands also began harassing other Mormon settlements and looting and burning outlying farms. Mormons living on isolated homesteads soon abandoned their homes and sought refuge in the villages of Adam-ondi-Aham, Far West and De Witt.

Most of the group that had left Portland in May 1837, including Barnabas Adams and Amni Chipman Jr., undertook to create homesteads in the area of Adam-ondi-Aham, but in the summer of 1838 Chipman and his family fled vigilante attacks, trekked eastward across Missouri, and sought to escape back to Canada through the river port of Quincy on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River. At Quincy, however, they encountered the second Leeds and Lanark company that had left Canada a year behind them. That 1838 party included Arza Adams and his uncle Stephen Chipman, other relatives, friends and neighbors. The Arza Adams group was headed for De Witt, where Barnabas Adams had remained, and Amni Chipman Jr. and others were persuaded to return with them.

Shortly after arriving at De Witt, however, the Canadian party found itself under sustained attack by anti-Mormon mobs. Arza recorded in his diary that he and his family,

*... arrived at De Witt, Carroll County, September 26, 1838, but, soon surrounded by a mob, we were driven into Caldwell County, 63 miles to the main body of the Saints ...*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The LDS did oppose slavery. That they believed the Indians would inherit the earth was untrue and arose from a misreading of the *Book of Mormon*.

<sup>23</sup> An interpretation of the agreement that had no legal foundation.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted from *Arza Adams: Chronicle of a Pioneer*, by Effie W. Adams and Dale W. Adams (1982 & 1999).

Missionary Elder John E. Page recalled that,

*... we landed, in the first week of October, with a company occupying thirty wagons, at a place there called DeWitt, some six miles above the outlet of Grand River, on the north side of the Missouri River, where we were attacked by an armed mob, and by them barbarously treated for near two weeks.*<sup>25</sup>

Eventually, in mid-October 1838, Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs (1796-1860) sent a State Militia unit to lift the siege of DeWitt and defend the Latter-day Saints in Daviess County; but at the same time the irregular Caldwell Mormon Militia staged a retaliatory raid, marching on non-Mormon settlements, setting their residents to flight and plundering and burning the communities.

When the State Militia disarmed some Caldwell County Mormons, the Mormon Militia again retaliated by attacking a State Militia company at Crooked River, putting them to flight without loss but suffering two killed and nine wounded in their own ranks. The activities of the Mormon self-defence militia<sup>26</sup> and exaggerated reports of the 'Battle of Crooked River', prompted Governor Boggs to sign an executive order that charged the Mormons with,

*... open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made war upon the people of this State ... the Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary, for the public peace - their outrages are beyond all description.*<sup>27</sup>

Boggs' infamous 'Extermination Order' of October 30, 1838 also called-up the full 2,500-man State Militia and, as it mustered, vigilante mobs continued to attack Mormons across Carroll and Caldwell Counties. In one incident a band of about 250 men attacked the Mormon settlement at Haun's Mill. Less than 50 Mormons were present when the mob opened fire and, heavily outnumbered and outgunned, 18 Mormons were killed.

Having escaped De Witt, the Adams and Chipman families hid out in some woods until they were taken prisoner by the Missouri State Militia.

*At night they encamped, a small fire was built, around which was placed a guard of militia with orders to fire upon any captive who attempted to make his escape. [They were] without anything to eat during the entire day, but during the night were given some flour and salt, which they mixed with water on the end-board of a wagon, baking the mixture in the coals.*

*The prisoners were retained in custody for two days and two nights [until] a compromise was affected by which it was agreed that the heads of the Mormon Church should surrender themselves as hostages, the remainder of the Mormons to be set free.*<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> 'History of John E. Page', *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 27 (1865)

<sup>26</sup> At the center of which was a secret society of enforcers known as the 'Danites'.

<sup>27</sup> Missouri Executive Order #44.

<sup>28</sup> *History of Leeds & Grenville 1749-1879*, by Thad. W. H. Leavitt (1879).



On the same day Boggs issued the 'Extermination Order' and of the attack on Haun's Mills (October 30th), the State Militia had laid siege to Far West and Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. sent the Mormon Militia commander to "*beg like a dog*" for a cease fire, "*on any terms short of battle*". The response was that any Mormon who had taken up arms must sell his property to pay for damage to Missourian property and the expense of the Missouri Militia muster, and then leave the State. The terms were accepted and on November 1, 1838 the Mormons surrendered. Joseph Smith Jr. was arrested and charged with treason for commanding an armed force against the State. In total, 22 people died in the 'Missouri Mormon War', all but two or three of them Mormons.

In the winter months of early 1839 the Missouri Mormon community was driven back (eastward) across the width of Missouri, over the Mississippi River and into Illinois. The refugees, joined later in the year by Joseph Smith who escaped his Missouri jailers, found themselves actually welcomed in Illinois ... at least in the beginning. The people of the town of Quincy<sup>29</sup>, shocked by events across the river, generously took the refugees into their homes for the winter. A land agent shortly appeared offering property in nearby Hancock County around the small town of Commerce, Illinois, and on the opposite bank of the river in Lee County, Iowa.



**Missouri Mormon War 1838**  
(Image courtesy of Association of Religion Data Archives – ARDA)

Barnabas and Arza Adams crossed the river to relative safety on March 7, 1839 and secured a two-year lease on a farm four miles northeast of Quincy. They refurbished a run-down cabin, got some crop in the ground and only a month after arriving Sabina Adams delivered her fourth child whom they named Sidney Moses (1839-1840)<sup>30</sup>.

Amid the Missouri chaos, on January 5, 1839, Arza had been among 30 men ordained 'Seventies' ('especial witnesses')<sup>31</sup> and, although his family had hardly begun to settle-in, in May, he received a 'mission call' to return to Canada. With \$25 borrowed from Barnabas, and leaving his wife and two children in the care of his brother, Arza set out on July 11, 1839.

Most members of the Leeds and Lanark companies of 1837 and 1838 re-settled in and around the small village of Commerce, in Hancock County, Illinois, 50 miles to north of Quincy. Commerce was shortly renamed Nauvoo and the converts from Upper Canada were among the founding citizens of what would become commonly known as the 'Kingdom on the Mississippi'. Amni Chipman was not among them, however. Disillusioned and discouraged by his experience

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<sup>29</sup> At that time the capital of the State of Illinois.

<sup>30</sup> Probably named for church official Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), then imprisoned with Joseph Smith in Missouri.

<sup>31</sup> The 'Seventy' is a priesthood office of the LDS reserved for 'travelling ministers' and 'especial witnesses' of Jesus Christ charged with the mission of preaching the gospel and relates to the seventy-two disciples of Christ mentioned in Luke 10:1-2. Also ordained a 'Seventy' at the same time as Arza was a friend from Drummond Township, Lanark County, Peter Nicoll (1800-1853). Peter and his wife Margaret McPhail (1803-1843) were the parents of Alexander Nicoll (1830-1907) who married Arza's daughter, Sabina Adams (1837-1912) in 1854.

in Missouri, he built a log canoe and, with his family, paddled 350 miles down the Mississippi River to St. Louis and on to Canada by steamboat via the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. By the fall of 1839, Amni Chipman was back in Portland on the banks of Rideau Lake, where he would live until his death in 1891. His cousin Stephen Chipman remained at Nauvoo, however, and would, with his Adams nephews, become a leading figure in the LDS Church and the Utah settlement.

Between 1840 and 1846 the population of Nauvoo grew rapidly with the arrival of 5,000 converts from England and smaller groups from Canada and the eastern States. In 1841, when the cornerstone of second temple was laid, Nauvoo had a population of about 7,000 and by 1845 had grown to 12,000, at a time when the population of Chicago was only 15,000.



*The second Temple at Nauvoo, Illinois, 'Kingdom on the Mississippi', c1845*  
(Photo courtesy of Wikicommons)

Arza Adams left his Quincy, Illinois, farm on July 11, 1839 and, travelling mostly by water<sup>32</sup>, arrived at his parents' home near Perth on August 2nd. Although still faithful and dedicated Methodists, his parents welcomed him home and once again provided him a base of operations as he sought converts to the new faith. In less than a year he, and occasional companions Christopher Merkley (1808-1893)<sup>33</sup> and William Snow (b.c1817)<sup>34</sup>, baptized about 70 people. At the end of 1839 Arza noted in his diary having traveled 2,477 miles as a missionary.

As missionaries like Arza attracted increasing numbers to baptism, however, opposition to the new faith and its preachers grew in proportion. In his diary Arza records attending a prayer meeting at Kingston in 1840 where opponents railed against those;

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<sup>32</sup> Down the Mississippi River, up the Ohio River to Portsmouth, Ohio, along the Ohio Canal to Cleveland, down Lake Erie to Buffalo, New York, across Lake Ontario to Kingston and along the Rideau Canal to Rideau Ferry south of Perth.

<sup>33</sup> Born 1808, Williamsburg, Dundas County, Ontario; helped build the Nauvoo, Salt Lake, and Logan temples; Indian War veteran; missionary eight times; died Salt Lake City, Utah, 1893.

<sup>34</sup> Born in Vermont, USA.

*... that came into this country, Canada, a land of royalty, and stole away the people, and took them into a land of lawlessness, and led them into the wilderness to give all their profits to their idol.*

His diary recounts a constant struggle, in community after community across Lanark, Leeds and Dundas, to find a schoolhouse or hall in which he could preach. Most of his preaching was done in private homes or in a 'grove'. In a time when nearly everyone read their bible daily, these gatherings often became disputatious sparing matches of scriptural back-and-forth and frequently dissolved in disorder. At Williamsburg, Dundas County, in January 1840,

*The congregation was very large, and I preached about three hours, after which a Mr. Ralf, a Church of England minister, addressed them. I began to show his folly, he interrupted me, and he said I preached the truth, yet I was deluded. I told him that if I preached the gospel, he must repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. He would not stay to receive a lashing. I bid him a good evening ... the congregation, being detained a long time and uneasy, some person or persons threw several pieces of iron at me, some of which struck the stove very hard but missed me.*

A few days later, still working in Dundas County, Arza recorded that,

*Some hereabouts would be glad to have the big Mormon's head knocked off, i.e. mine. And several mobs have threatened me behind my back. Philip Empey<sup>35</sup>, it is said, threatened to put a ball [bullet] through any Mormon's heart that enters his door. He is very full of Methodism.*

Later that month Arza challenged Presbyterian minister Reverend Robert Lyle (d.1843)<sup>36</sup> at Cooper Schoolhouse, in Dundas County. As the debate became heated;

*... the people began to be uneasy and the chairmen said they would not act any longer and the chips [firewood] began to come briskly over to where I stood, the door being taken off the hinges, and the stove pipe fell, and quite a quarrel ensued. I think I had the majority in my favor, but while they were quarreling, we came out, unperceived by the mob that had gathered to drive the Mormons, the head of which was Jack Empey.*

In February 1840 Arza had 500 hymn books printed by William Buell (1792-1862) proprietor of the *Brockville Recorder & Times* newspaper at a cost of \$20. The books contained the lyrics for about two dozen LDS hymns. "I was led to this purchase", his diary notes, "because I had no hymn book of our own and many were poor and could not well afford to purchase a large one and I thought the poor had as good a right to sing as the rich".

In March Arza observed; "I find that many mobs are threatening in this region, and the newspapers teem with falsehood and abuse against the work of God". Perth's *Bathurst Courier* was frequently among the Mormon critics.

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<sup>35</sup> Probably Philip William Empey (1783-1870) who, in 1810, married Ann Eve Shaver (1787-1884).

<sup>36</sup> Reverend Robert Lyle was the minister at Osnabrock and North Williamsburg.

*The Mormons are a weak and credulous people, whose chief fault is the misfortune of having become the dupes of a villainous imposter.<sup>37</sup> That [the Book of Mormon's] claims to a divine origin are wholly unfounded needs no proof to a mind unprevented by the greatest delusion<sup>38</sup> ...*

Between missionary forays, Arza worked at odd jobs and in his father's mill and sold some property he owned around Perth. The proceeds paid for his missionary endeavors and also allowed him to buy new clothes and return to Illinois, leaving on May 6, 1840, with a team and wagon loaded with family goods left behind two years earlier. Local convert John Nicoll (1827-1918)<sup>39</sup> travelled with him. This time Arza followed a route north of the lakes through Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, Brantford, and London, crossing into the United States at Windsor.

By 1840 the Mormons were rapidly putting down roots at Nauvoo, Illinois, and the community was growing at a remarkable pace. The *Bathurst Courier* did not always present Mormons in an entirely negative light and that year re-printed an item from the *Alexandria Gazette*, that painted a rosier portrait of the Kingdom on the Mississippi.

*[Around] Nauvoo, the Hebrew term for fair or beautiful, ... they are daily gathering from almost every quarter; and several hundred new houses erected within the last few months attest to the passing traveler the energy, industry and self-denial with which the community is imbued.*

*They have also obtained possession of extensive lands on the opposite side of the river [around Montrose, Iowa] ... and there, upon the rolling fertile prairies, they are rapidly selecting their homes ... their cabins dotted in most enchanting perspective, either on the borders of the timber or beside the springs and streams of living water.*

*No sect, with equal means, has probably ever suffered and achieved more in so short a space of time. The name 'Mormon'<sup>40</sup> they disclaim and affirm that it was given to them by their enemies. They call themselves the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>41</sup>*

While Arza was back in Canada, his brother Barnabas had been cultivating the rented farm and supplementing his income by working for a Church operated lumbering operation cutting timber on islands in the river and along the Iowa shore. Within a few days of arriving back from Canada, Arza joined Barnabas floating a timber raft south to St. Louis. The brothers returned to Quincy by steamboat, but during the trip Arza contracted 'ague', a malarial type illness that periodically plagued him for many years. No sooner was Arza back in Quincy than tragedy struck. In August, a cholera epidemic swept the Mississippi valley and claimed the lives of his two youngest sons, George (5) and Sidney Moses (1).

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<sup>37</sup> *Bathurst Courier*, August 23, 1839, 'Letter from Missouri'.

<sup>38</sup> *Bathurst Courier*, December 7, 1841, 'Origin of the Book of Mormon'.

<sup>39</sup> Another son of Peter Nicoll & Margaret McPhail of Drummond Township, Lanark County, and brother to Alexander Nicoll (1830-1907) who married Arza's daughter, Sabina Adams (1837-1912), in 1854.

<sup>40</sup> In time the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came to accept the appellation 'Mormon'.

<sup>41</sup> *Bathurst Courier*, November 6, 1840, 'A Glance At The Mormon's'.

With the lease on the Quincy farm coming to an end, Arza invested funds he had brought from Canada in the purchase of some Nauvoo urban lots, several parcels of farmland to the east and south of the city, and property across the river in Iowa. He built a cabin on one of the Nauvoo lots and in March 1841 moved his family into the town. As converts poured in from the U.S., Canada and Europe, Nauvoo was in the throws of a building boom and Arza frequently worked as a carpenter. He also joined his brother, Barnabas, in harvesting timber on Madison Island in the Mississippi River and in developing a farm property near Montrose on the Iowa side of the river. A year or two later, he built a more substantial home in Nauvoo to replace the cabin built in 1841.

In 1841-1842 Barnabas also purchased building lots in Nauvoo but does not seem to have ever built on them, probably because he was still unmarried but also because, like so many at Nauvoo, he was speculating in real estate. He actually lived across the river, opposite Nauvoo, at Montrose in Lee County, Iowa.

In addition to farming and lumbering, Arza worked on construction of the new temple. But just as life seemed to be achieving some normality, he was called to the mission field for the third time. He undertook this assignment in the dead of winter, on January 25, 1843, setting out on foot for Port Huron, Michigan. Along the way he stayed with church members where he could and paid for lodging at inns when he could not by selling or trading copies of the *Book of Mormon*.

Over the next four months he preached about 100 times in St. Clair County, Michigan, converted 15 to 20 people and organized a small church branch near Newport (Marine City)<sup>42</sup>. During his time in Michigan he visited a cousin, Ervin Adams, who lived in Oakland County, Bloomfield Township, south of Pontiac, Michigan. He also crossed the St. Clair River into Sombra Township, Lambton County, Canada West, where he sold a 200-acre plot of land he owned there for the sum of \$385<sup>43</sup>. Part of the proceeds were spent on a horse that carried him back to Nauvoo in late June where, according to his journal, he found his family “*nearly naked and almost out of provisions*”. Funds from the land sale helped restore their household finances.

In December of 1843, when the councilors of Nauvoo created the city’s first police force, Arza was among its first recruits. The 40-man organization was directed to act as “*daily and nightly Watchmen*” to maintain “*the peace and dignity of the citizens*”. Joseph Smith Jr. further instructed them to “*study [and] enforce the [city] ordinances ... let no horses be taken out of the city, or anything else stolen, if you can help it*”. He also charged the police with, “*ferreting out all grog shops, gambling houses, brothels, and disorderly conduct*” and authorized them to “*cuff the ears*” of anyone who resisted arrest and “*... if anyone presents a pistol at you, take his life if need be*”.<sup>44</sup> Smith’s personal security was also a responsibility of the new police force.

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<sup>42</sup> On the west bank of the St. Clair River between Detroit and Lake Huron.

<sup>43</sup> The land in question was part of 700 acres granted by the Crown to his father, Joshua, in 1836, with title to the 200 acres passed to Arza, by purchase or gift, in 1837. According to *Arza Adams: Chronicle of a Pioneer*, by Effie W. Adams and Dale W. Adams (1982 & 1999), the land was sold to a ‘Mr. Cameron’, very possibly Malcom Cameron (1808-1876) of Perth, who had moved to Port Sarnia in 1837 and was active in various Lambton County business enterprises including extensive trading in real estate.

<sup>44</sup> *My Best for the Kingdom: History and Autobiography of John Lowe Butler*, by William G. Hartley (1993).

When fears were expressed among the population about the wide-ranging authority vested in the new force, Smith tried to allay concerns by instructing the police to “*lay up their arms [and] carry canes instead*”, but most continued to carry more lethal weapons. As a policeman Arza Adams was paid a generous one dollar a day.

The Nauvoo police force had become a necessity in the face of a growing number of enemies, both without and within. By 1845 the population of Nauvoo numbered more than 12,000, and as numbers grew, the same hostility that had driven the Mormon’s out of Ohio and Missouri was building in Illinois. One local newspaper warned of,

*... the Mormons eternal treasonable design, when they thought strong enough, of overthrowing the government, driving out the old population and taking possession of the country, as the children of Israel did in the lands of Canaan.*

Joseph Smith’s nomination on May 15, 1844 as candidate for the office of President of the United States did not help to cool such fears, especially when he began campaigning on a platform of “*theodemocracy*”. As historian John E. Hall observed, for non-Mormons in Illinois, republicanism had become the common ideology of the people and;

*... individualism became the hallmark of the American character; pluralism, at least with respect to religion, became an acknowledged facet of national life; and the separation of church and state became an increasingly important axiom of democracy. The key to Nauvoo’s fate is that it was an ambitious theocracy that asserted itself within a Jacksonian social environment deeply devoted to democracy.*

There was also conflict internal to the church. In the overheated economy of Nauvoo, some of the tensions were simply about ruthless business competition; mostly the trade in real estate. However, the first rumors of church sanctioned polygamy had begun to circulate and, combining with disagreements over other doctrinal issues, bred factionalism. One such faction was led by William Law, who had employed Arza in 1841 building a store. Law began publishing a dissident newspaper in June 1844, the *Nauvoo Expositor*, but after the appearance of just one edition Joseph Smith Jr. ordered its office ransacked and its press destroyed by the municipal police.

Arza Adams only served with the police force for a few months and was not among those that suppressed the *Nauvoo Expositor*. In the spring of 1844, he had moved his family out of Nauvoo to another rented farm, this one on the outskirts of Carthage, Illinois, the county seat of Hancock County, about 25 miles southeast and inland of Nauvoo. Arza was living on that farm when, on June 25, 1844, Illinois Governor Thomas Ford (1800-1850) had Joseph Smith Jr. arrested and incarcerated in Carthage Jail for violating the first amendment of the American Constitution (by suppressing the *Nauvoo Expositor*).



At 10:00 p.m. on the night of June 27, 1844 Arza had just gone to bed, nursing another attack of ague, when four non-Mormon men knocked on his door with news that, at about 4:00 p.m. that afternoon, a lynch mob had stormed the Carthage jail, killed Smith and his brother Hyrum (1800-1844), and severely wounded church official John Taylor (1808-1887)<sup>45</sup>. They gave Arza a blood-stained letter from church official Willard Richards (1804-1854)<sup>46</sup> to deliver to Church leaders at Nauvoo, warning that the mob was headed their way.



**Assassination of Joseph Smith Jr., June 27, 1844**  
(Image courtesy of University Missouri - Kansas City)

*Carthage Jail, June 27, 1844,  
8:05 p.m. –*

*Joseph and Hyrum are dead. Taylor wounded, not very badly.<sup>47</sup> I am well. Our guard was forced, as we believe, by a band of Missourians from 100 to 200. The job was done in an instant, and the party fled towards Nauvoo instantly. This is as I believe it. The citizens here are afraid of the Mormons attacking them. I promise them no!*

*W. Richards, John Taylor*

Fearing the Hancock County mob, Arza was hesitant to ride directly to Nauvoo, but a neighbor and fellow Mormon, Benjamin Leyland (1819-1883), agreed to guide him by way of trails and back roads. They saddled their horses and rode for the Mormon capital. When they reached Nauvoo shortly after sunrise on Friday, June 28, 1844, the city was thrown into consternation. In his diary Arza noted, *“It was a solemn time. Many a rosy cheek was wet with tears, both men and women”*.

The death of the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. sparked a succession crisis and leadership struggle from which Brigham Young, in his capacity as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, emerged as leader of the largest section of LDS church.

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<sup>45</sup> Toronto convert John Taylor survived to become the third LDS President.

<sup>46</sup> Richards had also been in the cell with the Smiths and Taylor, but escaped injury.

<sup>47</sup> Taylor had actually been shot four times.

Arza and his family spent only a few months on the rented farm near Carthage. In addition to dealing with the murder of the Smith brothers, Arza was sick off-and-on much of the time and his autumn harvest proved skimpy. These factors, combined with increasing threats from vigilantes, prompted a move back to Nauvoo in November 1844.

Arza continued to suffer recurring attacks of ague during much of early 1845, but that summer recovered sufficiently to join in the rush to complete construction of the Nauvoo Temple.

*"I took my carpenter tools on my back and commenced working on the Temple. Although hard at first, I gained strength and worked on the public works until Fall".<sup>48</sup>*

As Hancock County's anti-Mormon mobs grew more manic and ever bolder, attacking Mormons and their property with impunity, church leaders concluded they had no choice but to abandon Nauvoo and send their flock further west. A flurry of temple ordinances and frantic efforts to sell assets followed. Arza and Sabina received their endowments<sup>49</sup> on December 31, 1845, but Arza had little success selling his land. He laments in his journal that he "sold" his 40 acres, located southwest of Nauvoo, for "love and good will".<sup>50</sup> As the turmoil within Nauvoo grew more violent over the winter of 1845-1846 Arza moved his family across the river to Montrose, Iowa, close to the home of his brother Barnabas. At Montrose, Arza and Barnabas were assigned to a church workshop producing wagons and wagon wheels for the exodus.

On June 22, 1846, at Montrose Iowa, Barnabas Adams married Julia Anne Banker (1826-1915). Julia was a native of Chateaugay, Franklin County, New York, the daughter of Platt Newcomb Banker (c1796-1886) and Thankful Marshall (c1803-1882). Although her parents were Baptists, and not pleased with their daughter's marriage to a Mormon, they gave the newlyweds "over three hundred dollars in cash, one good yoke of oxen, beds and bedding, and wearing apparel enough for several years"<sup>51</sup>.

The 1846 evacuation of Nauvoo and its surrounding settlements unfolded in three phases. In February an advance party of about 3,000 Mormons crossed the frozen Mississippi River into Iowa. In early June anti-Mormon vigilantes marched into the city and gave the remaining Saints a week to leave, sending more than 10,000 fleeing across the river, floating their wagons on hastily assembled rafts. On September 13<sup>th</sup> a heavily armed mob attacked the last holdouts. About 1,000 remaining Saints surrendered the city on September 16<sup>th</sup> and were driven across the river at gunpoint. Except for a rear-guard that defended the city as the last of the Mormons fled, many



**Brigham Young (1801-1877)**  
(Image courtesy of Association of Religion Data Archives – ARDA)

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<sup>48</sup> *Barnabas Lathrop Adams, A Short History* taken from *Barnabas Lathrop Adams and His Descendants*, by Kenneth L. Rasmussen (2004), FamilySearch.org

<sup>49</sup> The endowment is an ordinance or ceremony designed to prepare participants to become kings, queens, priests, and priestesses in the afterlife. The ordinance can only be conducted in a temple dedicated specifically for the endowment and certain other ordinances sacred to Mormons.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

of the final escapees were among the poorest and most ill-equipped of the refugees. The flight from Nauvoo was described in 1899 by historian Clyde B. Aitchison (1875-1962) as,

*... an exodus unparalleled in modern times. In point of number of emigrants, in length of travel, in hardships endured, and in lofty religious motives compelling such a host to journey so great a distance, through obstacles almost beyond human belief, there is nothing in recent history with which the march of the Mormons may be compared”*.<sup>52</sup>

The first group to have fled the city turned their teams west in March. Slogging through winter snow and rain, and constantly delayed by mud and the search for livestock fodder, the lead company took 14 weeks to cover 400 miles across Iowa, arriving at the Missouri River on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Because of improved spring weather and the growth of pasture to feed their teams, most of the second group crossed Iowa in only four or five weeks. Among the last group some found refuge and employment in Iowa settlements, or downriver at St. Louis, while others sought refuge at waystations established by the advance parties as they crossed Iowa<sup>53</sup>. The remainder were collected by rescue parties sent back from the advance companies and did not reach the Missouri River until the last week of November.

Arza and Sabina set out from Montrose in the summer of 1846 with Arza driving one ox wagon, his 14-year-old son Nathan driving another, and 13-year-old Joshua herding their loose livestock. The flight from Nauvoo, and the later trek to Utah, were highly regimented operations, with the wagon trains divided into sections of ‘100s’, ‘50s’ and ‘10s’, each under a Captain. Arza Adams was appointed a Captain of 50. Departing several weeks behind Arza, Barnabas and Julia left Montrose on September 16, 1846. While remaining devout Baptists, Julia’s parents followed their daughter and son-in-law in Utah in the 1870s.



**Evacuation of Nauvoo, February 1846**  
(Painting by Grant Romney Clawson)

Arza and Barnabas Adams and their families reached the Missouri River in the late summer of 1846 and joined a refugee camp sheltering nearly 15,000 people. What would come to be known as ‘Winter Quarters’ was actually composed of several camps spread along both the east (Iowa) and west (Nebraska) banks of the Missouri around and opposite Council Bluffs, Iowa. Arza and his family located at Little Pigeon Creek, near Miller’s Hollow (Kanesville) on the Iowa bank, where he built a tiny cabin that sheltered his family of eight for nearly two years. Barnabas installed his family in a similar cabin at Farmersville, immediately northeast of Little Pigeon Creek.

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<sup>52</sup> ‘Mormon Settlements in the Missouri Valley’ - Clyde B. Aitchison (1899)

<sup>53</sup> Waystations were established along the route crossing southern Iowa where shelters were constructed, and crops planted for the use of those who would follow. The largest stations were at Garden Grove and Mount Pisgah, with others at Sugar Creek, Lost Camp, Locust Creek, Sayent’s Grove, Campbell’s Grove.

At Winter Quarters, Arza was assigned to a company of men charged with caring for a herd of nearly 30,000 cattle that were driven into the river bottoms north of the camps, there to survive on wild rushes<sup>54</sup>. In December 1846 a Sioux war party attacked a nearby camp of Omaha Indians, killing 73 men, women and children and plundering the camp of most of its valuables. A few days later, in the course of herding cattle, Arza Adams and a man named Henry Miller came across the scene and scavenged several items that had not been looted by the Sioux, including some tattered buffalo robes, cattle hides and two ponies. With thousands of essentially defenceless refugees camped on Indian land<sup>55</sup>, maintaining peace and security was a precarious balance, and protests by the Omaha ensured that Brigham Young immediately reprimanded Adams and Miller.

*It is reported that the Omahas have threatened vengeance ... if the perpetrators of this most irreligious and abominable act are not immediately given up ... give not sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids, till you have replaced every article which has been removed, and report to us on your doings thereon without delay your willingness to offer as sacrifice to the Omahas ... any property you are in possession of, to appease the wrath of an ignorant, but insulted people, and thereby, if possible, save your lives ...*<sup>56</sup>

Adams and Miller promptly returned the ponies and robes along with several of their own oxen as restitution for the insult proffered.



**Winter Quarters, 1846-1847**  
(Painting by C.C.A. Christensen)

It was a harsh and deadly season at Winter Quarters. Hunger, disease and death stalked the cabins, tents and dug-outs. Widespread scurvy was compounded by outbreaks of measles, mumps, whooping cough, smallpox, tuberculosis and pneumonia. By spring, 723 had died of disease and by 1848 the death toll had risen to more than 1,000. Over half of the deaths were children under three years of age but Arza's children, including his son Joseph Smith Adams, born at Winter Quarters on December 14, 1846, were among the survivors.

As the spring of 1847 arrived, bringing new growth on the prairie to support ox teams, mules and horses, LDS President Brigham Young organized an exploratory 'Pioneer Company' and led them westward. Among the 148-member company that left Winter Quarters on April 14, 1847 was Barnabas Adams, part of the second company of 10. In addition to provisions, their 73

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<sup>54</sup> In areas of Harrison and Monona Counties, Iowa, where a now extinct variety of rush grew in the bottoms. These rushes, though covered with ice and snow, remained green all winter.

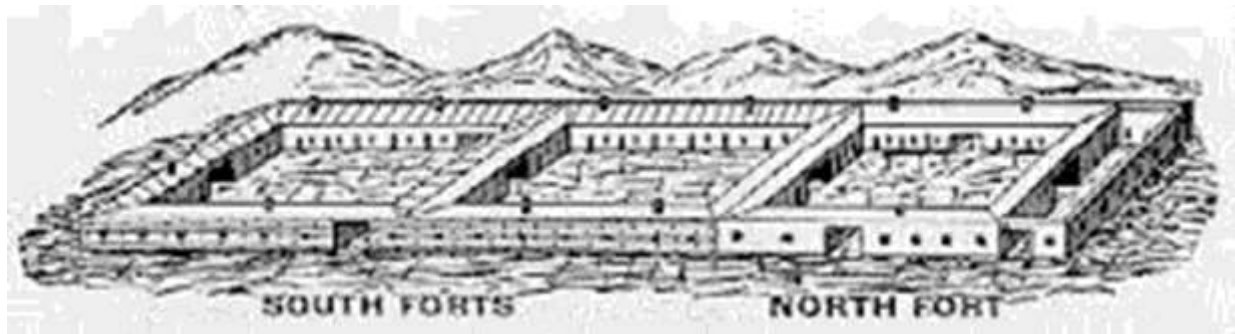
<sup>55</sup> The Adams brothers, and others camped along the banks of the Missouri River, were mostly living on Pottawatomie Indian land. Originating in the western Great Lakes region the Pottawatomie had joined Tecumseh to support the British cause during the War of 1812 but, betrayed by the British in the Treaty of Ghent (1814), they had been driven west by the encroachment of American arms and settlers. The Pottawatomie saw themselves as refugees and sympathized with the Mormons whom they regarded as having suffered the same fate at the hands of the same enemy.

<sup>56</sup> Letter dated Camp of Israel, Omaha Nation, Winter Quarters, February 1, 1847, from Brigham Young, President, to Major Henry W. Miller, Arza Adams and any and all others who may have been concerned in the matters mentioned - quoted from *Arza Adams: Chronicle of a Pioneer*, by Effie W. Adams and Dale W. Adams (1982 & 1999).

wagons were loaded with grain seed and farming implements. Even at this point Young and the church leadership had no exact idea where they were going. The plan was simply to go as far as possible before the spring was too far advanced to plant a crop, then quickly find a spot and plant the seed grain. When pressed on the subject of their destination, Young would only say *"I'll know it, when I see it"*. During the trek westward Barnabas periodically served with both the advance and night guard, despite contracting Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, a debilitating tick born disease.

After 1,031 miles<sup>57</sup> and 111 days they reached the Great Salt Lake Valley on July 21, 1847. When they first entered the valley, Brigham Young, lying ill<sup>58</sup> in his carriage, is said to have sent Barnabas Adams to conduct an initial survey of streams that would sustain mills, assess whether timber was available for building, and to generally determine if he felt the valley could support a settlement. When Barnabas reported affirmatively, Young reportedly said, *"Well, if it suits Brother Barney, it will suit me"*<sup>59</sup> and declared *"It is enough. This is the right place"*.

Two months behind Barnabas and the Brigham Young Pioneer Company, the Abraham O. Smoot company set out from Winter Quarters on June 17, 1847. Among its 95 members were the Adams brothers' uncle Stephen Chipman (1805-1868), his wife Amanda Washburn (1804-1872), and their children Beulah (1826-1851), Washburn (1829-1926), Sinah Center (1831-1895), William Henry (1833-1891), James (1839-1922), and Martha Elizabeth (1845-1907). They arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on September 25th.



*The 'Old Fort', Salt Lake City, Utah*  
(Sketch courtesy of Historytogo.utah.gov)

Barnabas helped build a fort, enclosing the first settlers' homes, on the site of what is now Salt Lake City. He then set out with Brigham Young on the return journey to Winter Quarters to collect their families and lead others to the valley. Arriving back at his Farmersville cabin on October 31, 1847, having driven his wagon more than 2,000 miles, Barnabas, found his wife, left in the care of his brother Arza, had given birth to their first child, Julia Thankful, on August 1st.

After spending another winter at Winter Quarters, Barnabas once again loaded his wagons and headed west on July 3, 1848. Assigned as Captain of the second 50, he and his family were part of the Willard Richards Company of 169 wagons, carrying 526 souls. His own outfit consisted of three yoke of oxen, six cows and 18 months of provisions. In addition to his wife, Julia (22),

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<sup>57</sup> One wagon had an odometer attached to a wheel.

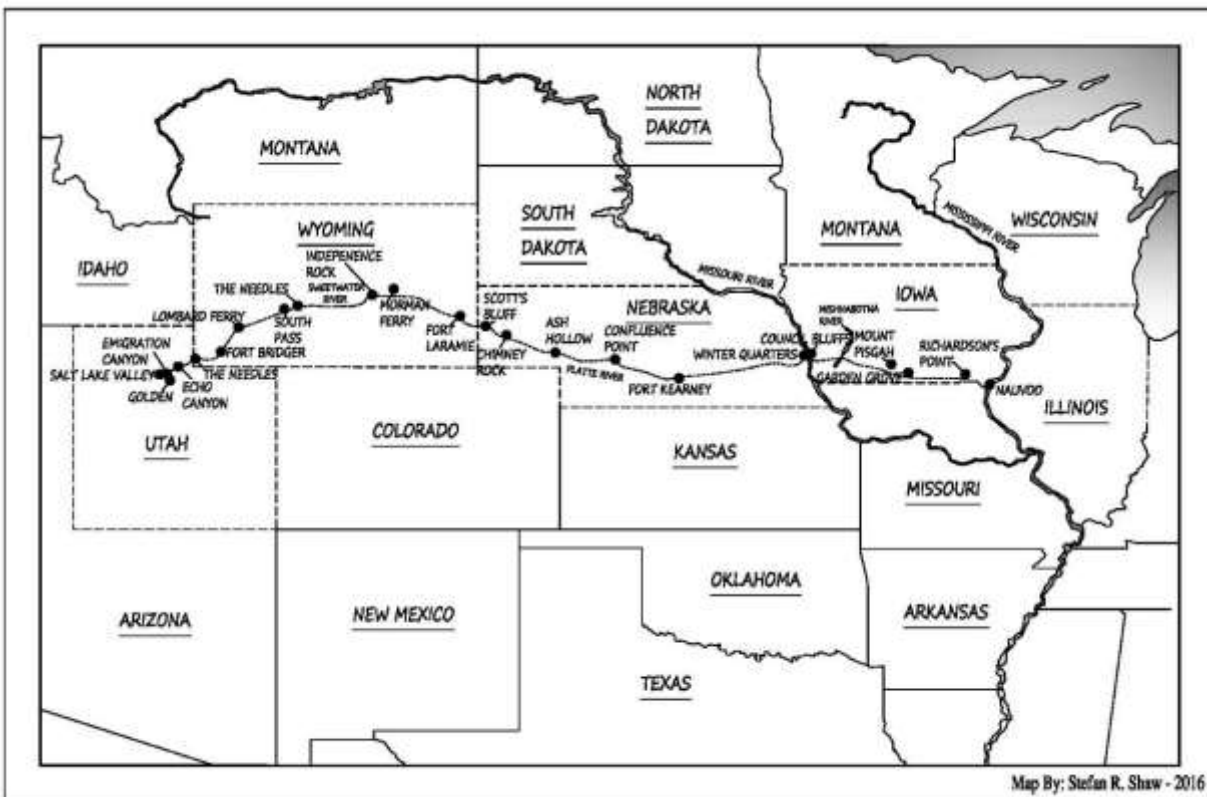
<sup>58</sup> Also suffering from Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted from *Barnabas Lathrop Adams and His Descendants*, by Kenneth L. Rasmussen (2004).

and daughter Julia Thankful (1), his wagon also transported Martha Waite (8), presumably an orphan. Barnabas reached the valley again on October 10th, camped briefly at Mill Creek and then moved to the mouth of Little Cottonwood Creek, a short distance south of the fort that would become Salt Lake City.

Arza and his family had hoped to travel west with his brother in the spring of 1848 but found they lacked the means to do so. In order to secure the resources needed, Arza went to work for the U.S. Army. In the summer of 1848, he was employed on construction of what would become Fort Kearny (Nebraska) and then, through the fall and winter, he worked at Fort Leavenworth (Kansas).

With supplies purchased from a year's earnings in hand, Arza loaded his wagons at Winter Quarters on May 28, 1849 and set out across the plains with the Samuel S. Gully Company, the first of five wagon trains to leave the Missouri that season. The Gully Company comprised 120 wagons divided into two divisions and subdivided into groups of 10, with Arza as Captain of one of the 10s. His charge actually contained 15 wagons carrying 45 adults and children. His own family's outfit comprised two wagons, 10 oxen, 12 cows and beef animals, four sheep, two pigs, one chicken, two geese, a cat, a dog and a hive of bees, and carried Arza (45), Sabina (37), Nathan (17), Joshua (16), Sabina Ann (12), Elizabeth (8), Theothan (4) and Josephine (3).



*The Mormon Trail*

Arza and the Gully company followed the by then deep ruts of the 'Mormon Trail', plodding along the north bank of the Platte River, across the Loop River at Fullerton, Nebraska, and then across to the south side of the Platte.



The first casualty was a three-month-old baby crushed by wagon wheels and by late July there had been six additional deaths due to cholera, including that of Captain Samuel Gully (1809-1849) who was replaced by Orson Spencer (1802-1855)<sup>60</sup>. The wagon train faced little 'Indian trouble' as 600 Sioux also died of cholera that summer and fear of the disease kept the Indians at a distance. One Mormon was, however, killed by the Sioux and at Scottsbluff, Nebraska, soldiers were called from Fort Laramie, Wyoming, to guard the company through the remainder of Sioux territory.

On August 3rd they passed Fort Laramie, and in mid-August started up the valley of the Sweetwater River. The first heavy snowstorm of the season occurred near the continental divide on August 29th. The wagons made it down the valleys of Little Sandy and Big Sandy Creeks and crossed Green River on September 7th. They reached Fort Bridger, Wyoming, on September 13th and, on September 25th, wound their way down Emigration Canyon into the Great Salt Lake Valley.



(Photo courtesy of Wikicommons)

The Gully Company trail diaries mention Arza Adams only twice. On June 19th his dog was shot by the night guard; rules and regulations governing wagon trains of the great Mormon trek were strict and among them was a prohibition of dogs running loose at night (lest they scare the oxen and cattle and set off a stampede). Then, on July 20th, "*At Crooked Creek<sup>61</sup> Arza Adams broke a king bolt<sup>62</sup> in crossing his team over the creek and forced the group to stop there for the night*".

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<sup>60</sup> In 1853 Orson Spencer would marry Mary Hill-Bulloch (1812-1871), daughter of Mormon converts Alexander Hill (1779-1867) and Elizabeth Currie (1775-1855), formerly of Lanark Township, Lanark County.

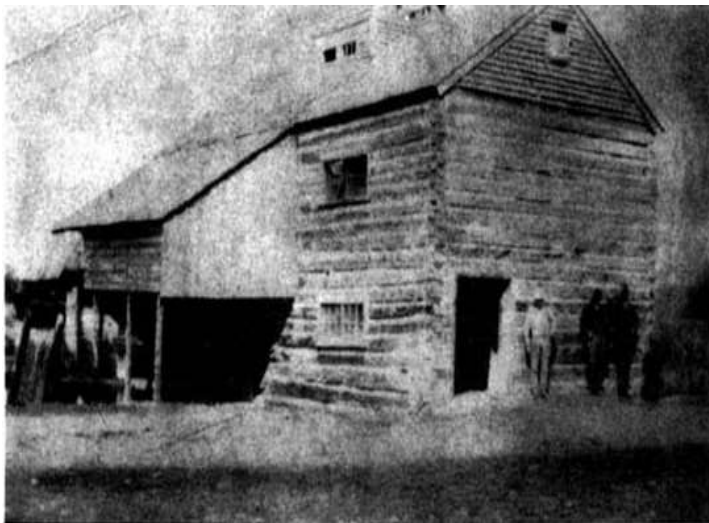
<sup>61</sup> A few miles north of what is now Ogallala, Nebraska.

<sup>62</sup> A vertical bolt connecting a wagon's tongue (pole) to its front axle.

A few days after arriving in the valley the Arza Adams family located on the lower reaches of Mill Creek, a short distance from where his brother Barnabas and his family had located at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon the year before. They lived there for almost a year and Sabina's last child, Orpha Elzeta, was born at Mill Creek in October 1849. Arza's first job in the valley was working for a miller named Giles. He also secured the use of a small farm along the creek, but produced a poor crop, in part because he had no experience with irrigation, and during the hard winter of 1849-1850 some of his livestock died.

The following year, while working as a teamster freighting goods to Fort Provo, Arza and his uncle Stephen Chipman, with their respective sons Nathan and William Henry, camped one night among some cottonwoods on American Fork Creek. Nathan is said to have commented that he, "*would like to live here*", and, because the meadows were thick with grass and the water plentiful, the men decided the location would make an excellent cattle ranch. The LDS Church reserved the right to approve all new settlements, so Adams and Chipman secured the permission of Brigham Young to settle the area along the creek and formed a joint stock company of their land claims. The first habitation at what would become the community of Lake City (1852), later named American Fork (1860), was a transient cattle herder's hut, but it was followed by cabins built by Arza Adams and his cousin Washburn Chipman. Arza moved his family to their new home in the winter of 1850-1851 and Washburn and his father moved into their house the following spring. Soon after settling at American Fork, Arza returned to the business he had learned at his father's knee, by building a small grist mill on the creek, the first such mill in the northern Utah Valley.

Other settlers soon began arriving at American Fork, including Leonard E. Harrington (1816-1883) who would serve for 29 years as American Fork's mayor, postmaster and bishop. The Adams-Chipman joint stock company was soon dissolved, and the land divided among the new arrivals. Among these was Barnabas Adams who established a 72-acre farm at American Fork, although he continued to live primarily at Salt Lake City and work in the timber trade. The Chipman and Adams families, however, maintained ownership of large sections of land and division of the joint stock company property led to a lengthy dispute between Arza and Bishop Harrington (even though Arza was, briefly, one of Harrington's nominated counsellors).



**Arza Adams mill at American Fork, built 1853, extended 1860.**  
(Photo courtesy of Highland City, Utah)

Arza Adams was an individualist who tended to react badly if he felt his rights were infringed or he was being 'pushed around'. He was often obstinate, pugnacious and cantankerous and not the sort of personality that always fit comfortably within the discipline and hierarchy of the LDS church. Indian threats in 1853 led to the American Fork settlers concentrating their homes within a fort, but Arza defied the orders of Bishop Harrington, built his home outside the fort and only moved his mill to the north edge of the fort wall. He also contested decisions by Harrington related to distribution of the land, water rights, timber rights and tithing.

In 1853 Arza was called before a Bishop's Court because he had shown "... a lack of respect for God and had said things against the priesthood." He was found guilty and cut off from the church, but the following Sunday he confessed to "speaking against those placed over him" and was granted forgiveness. Two years later, however, another Bishop's Court suspended his church membership, this time for five weeks, until, once again, Arza bowed to church authority and he and his two oldest sons were re-baptized.<sup>63</sup>

Stephen Chipman Sr., with the help of his sons, Washburn, William Henry, James and Stephen Jr., also became a dominating force in the building of American Fork. The Chipman's were prominent in business, banking, politics, farming and livestock raising. Washburn and Stephen Jr. were model farmers. Henry brought the first sheep into the valley and had herds of cattle and fine horses. James was a banker, businessman, and Utah's first state treasurer.

In 1853 Arza complied with the LDS revelation and divine commandment calling faithful Mormons to the institution of plural marriage, when he married schoolteacher Editha Morgan Anderson (1803-1872) while still married to his first wife, Sabina Ann Clarke (1812-1861), whom he had married in Canada in 1831. In his diary, Hosea Stout (1810-1889), an early leader of the LDS church, rather crassly commented upon Arza's marriage to Editha,



**Stephen Chipman (1805-1868)**  
(Photo courtesy of  
Finadgrave.com)

*... while at American Creek I had the satisfaction to witness the triumph of Mormonism over the traditions of our fathers for George A. [Smith or Stewart] sealed Arza Adams to an old maid aged 48 years, as withered and forbidding as four dozen years of celibacy might naturally be supposed to indicate. She joyfully took his hand and consented to be part of himself as number two. Thus, entering into a respectable state of matrimony under auspicious circumstances when nothing except the privileges of Mormonism would have permitted.<sup>64</sup>*

In 1857 Arza married three more wives: Marilla Olney (1833-1899), Catherine Cunningham (1838-1912) and Elizabeth Gaskill (b.1836). Catherine Cunningham and Elisabeth Gaskell were survivors of the Willie-Martin handcart company disaster of 1856. Having left England late in the season, those immigrant companies did not depart Florence, Nebraska, to cross the plains pulling their hand carts<sup>65</sup>, until late August. With provisions already running dangerously low, on October 19th a blizzard caught them approaching the continental divide in Wyoming; of the 980 trekkers who had set out from Florence, 213 died before rescuers could reach them with supplies and carry them to safety at Salt Lake City. Arza Adams' eldest son, Nathan, was one of the rescue team volunteers, as were Stephen Chipman Sr. and his sons Washburn and William Henry.

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<sup>63</sup> See *Arza Adams: Chronicle of a Pioneer*, by Effie W. Adams and Dale W. Adams (1982 & 1999)

<sup>64</sup> The *Diary of Hosea Stout* as quoted in *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism 1835-1870*, by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (2017). Stout was an early leader in the LDS movement, a Utah pioneer, soldier, chief of police, lawyer, missionary, and politician in the Utah Territory.

<sup>65</sup> Pressed to finance a flood of emigration from Europe, between 1856 and 1860 the LDS Perpetual Emigration Fund economized by having nearly 3,000 converts cross the plains on foot, from riverboat ports on the Missouri to Salt Lake City, pulling their effects and supplies in hand carts.

There was no issue of Arza's union with Editha and Elizabeth, those apparently being 'spiritual wives' only, but he fathered 27 children by his three other wives, the last being born when he was 72 years of age. Seventeen of those children lived to maturity and produced 139 grandchildren.

Barnabas Adams also practiced polygamy<sup>66</sup>. In addition to his first wife, Julia Ann Banker (1826-1915), whom he married in Iowa during the 1846 exodus from Nauvoo, Barnabas took two plural wives in Utah; Hannah Grove Chase-Blair (1834-1897), married in 1856, and Elizabeth Ellen Nelson (1847-1888), married in 1865. Julia bore Barnabas 12 children, Hannah six children and Elizabeth, one child. In time he was grandfather to at least 62 grandchildren<sup>67</sup>.



**Willie-Martin Hand Cart Company, 1856**  
(Etching by T.B. Stenhouse)

The Adams brothers' uncle Stephen Chipman Sr. also took a plural wife. In addition to Amanda Washburn (1809-1872), whom he married in Canada in 1825, he married Phoebe Davis (1828-1894) in 1852 at Salt Lake City. With Amanda he fathered seven children and with Phoebe another six.

In 1856 Arza was among a pioneer team sent by the Church to establish a new settlement at Fort Supply, Wyoming (near Fort Bridger). He made several trips to Fort Supply, built a cabin there, moved some of his livestock and laid plans to construct a grist mill, but at an altitude of 2,130 meters (7,000 feet) the climate proved too harsh for agriculture. In any case, in 1857, the U.S. Government's attempt to subdue the Mormons abruptly terminated the Fort Supply experiment as Arza's party was called home to defend the Salt Lake Valley.<sup>68</sup>

With the Federal Government chastened by Mormon resistance, Arza returned to his grist mill and farm at American Fork where he raised cattle and sheep and at one point experimented with Angora goats. In the 1860s he was made a Justice of the Peace, elected a city alderman and served as a director of the local Cooperative Store.

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<sup>66</sup> Strictly speaking Mormons did not practice 'polygamy', wherein men and women both have multiple spouses, but practiced 'polygyny', where men have multiple wives, but women have only one husband.

<sup>67</sup> One of those grandchildren was Maude Ewing Adams-Kiskadden (1872-1953), known professionally as Maude Adams, an American actress who achieved her greatest success as the character Peter Pan, first playing the role in the 1905 Broadway production of *Peter Pan or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*. Wildly popular with audiences she became the most successful and highest-paid performer of her day, with a yearly income of more than one million dollars during her peak in the first decades of the 20th century.

<sup>68</sup> With Brigham Young having essentially unified church and state by holding the roles of both civil Governor and Church President, following a dispute over the appointment of Federal judges, in 1857 Washington sent an army to impose Federal control over the self-declared Mormon state of Deseret. The Nauvoo Legion (the Mormon militia) met that force on the plains of Wyoming, captured its supply train, burned all forage around the column, torched Fort Bridger and left 2,400 U.S. soldiers to pass a very cold and hungry winter stranded in the ruins of Fort Hall. In the spring of 1848, an accommodation was negotiated, the Mormons agreed to accept a Territorial Governor appointed by Washington and a U.S. Army detachment was allowed to enter the valley but forced to establish its base far from Salt Lake City.

Most 19th century families who experienced the conversion of relatives to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were profoundly and harshly impacted by the event; often torn apart as converts were cast out, ostracized, even declared dead, and lopped off the family tree, never to be spoken to or of again. Not so the Adams family. Even as their parents and siblings remained committed and leading members of the Methodist Church in Canada, they maintained the closest contact possible with Arza and Barnabas in the American west, across a distance of 3,500 kilometers (2,000 miles).

Family and LDS archives hold a small collection of letters, exchanged over more than four decades between 1840 and 1882, among Arza and Barnabas living in Illinois and Utah, and their mother at Adamsville, their brother Joshua Jr., a Sarnia lawyer, and their brother Alvah, a Methodist preacher at Maberly. The warm and affectionate contents of those letters also show that family contact was much wider and more regular than the few surviving letters themselves. In 1869, Barnabas ensured that his brother Joshua, at Sarnia, could keep up to date with developments in Mormon Utah but taking out a subscription to the *Desert News* in Joshua's name.<sup>69</sup>

In February 1868 the Adams brothers' uncle Stephen Chipman died at the age of 62 years. He had lived at American Fork since he and Arza Adams founded the community in 1850 and was buried there in the Pioneer Cemetery.



**Barnabas L. Adams (1812-1869)**  
(Photo courtesy of WikiTree)

Stephen Chipman's death was closely followed by that of Barnabas Adams who died aged 56 years in June 1869. As at Nauvoo, in Utah Barnabas' primary employment was in the timber and lumber trade. He is credited with cutting and furnishing lumber for the Salt Lake Tabernacle, the Salt Lake Theater, and other public buildings. While hauling logs for Brigham Young's sawmill in City Creek Canyon north of Salt Lake City, Barnabas was injured when he lifted the bed of a wagon bed and died two days later. His obituary noted that there were,

*... few men in the community better known than Brother Barnabas L. Adams. He was a faithful, kind-hearted, unobtrusive, industrious man and was much respected and beloved by a large circle of acquaintances.*<sup>70</sup>

Barnabas Adams was buried in Salt Lake City Cemetery.

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<sup>69</sup> In Barnabas Adams' obituary the editor of the *Desert News* wrote, "We think that it was on Monday [June 7, 1869] that we saw him in this office ... he came for the purpose of having a paper sent to a younger brother of is, a lawyer, who resides in Sarna, Canada". 'Younger brother' Joshua Adams Jr. (1825-1906) sat on Sarnia city council 1859-1860, served as Mayor 1862-1863 and was a prominent member of Sarnia's Central Wesleyan Methodist Church, frequently serving as Recording Steward. In the late 1890s to early 1900s he was also the Canadian Government Indian Agent to the Chippewa at Sarnia.

<sup>70</sup> *Deseret News*, June 9, 1869.



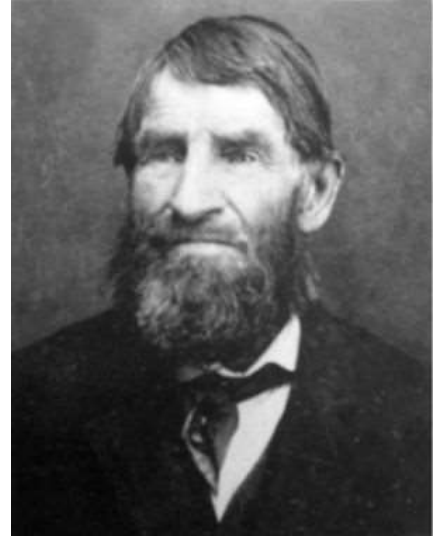
Although still in good health, Arza semi-retired at age 69 when he sold his grist mill and parts of his farm in 1873. Perhaps because he was, by then, more than 80 years of age, he was not harassed when Federal Marshals undertook enforcement of the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887 aimed at stamping out polygamy. His son Joshua, however, was convicted of 'unlawful co-habitation' in 1888 and fined \$100. Arza was described by his children as,

*... a wonderful father; kind and loving ... a good provider. We always had plenty to eat ... generous ... whenever they would ask for supplies for emigrants, he always gave, two or three loads sometimes.*<sup>71</sup>

*Pa was quite a fancy man. He always had good clothes and we always had good clothes such as they was in those days.*

*Pa was a good-sized man, a raw-boned fellow. He always wore a beard. I guess it was black when he was young. He was about six foot. Pa didn't go to church much in his last years. I guess he just lost interest; got too old".*<sup>72</sup>

At the age of 85 years Arza Adams died at American Fork, Utah, on April 15, 1889, and was buried in the local Pioneer Cemetery, his grave marked by two millstones.



**Arza M. Adams (1804-1889)**  
(Photo courtesy of Geni.com)



**Arza Matson Adams**  
(1804-1889)

(Photos courtesy of Findagrave.com)



**Barnabas Lathrope Adams**  
(1812-1869)

<sup>71</sup> Mary Adams Anderson, 5th child of Arza and Catherine Cunningham – quoted in *Arza Adams: Chronicle of a Pioneer*, by Effie W. Adams and Dale W. Adams (1982 & 1999).

<sup>72</sup> Daniel Adams, 11th child of Arza and Catherine Cunningham – quoted in *Arza Adams: Chronicle of a Pioneer*, by Effie W. Adams and Dale W. Adams (1982 & 1999).



The *Utah Enquirer* marked his passing with an obituary recalling that,

*Brother Adams was widely known in consequence of his noble and heroic deeds in defense of his religion in times of persecution. He has ever been found between his hearth and enemies. During the persecution in Missouri he was many times fired upon by mobs. Father Adams built the first grist mill known to have been run by the waters of American Fork. Just previous to his death he said that he was ready to die and would go perfectly satisfied with his religious belief; 'Mormonism' had in no way disappointed him.<sup>73</sup>*

- Ron W. Shaw (2019)

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<sup>73</sup> *Utah Enquirer*, April 23, 1889.