

# TENNESSEE

1838-1839 John H. Redd began selling his lands in North Carolina and buying acreage in southwest Rutherford County, Tennessee. John's half-sister, Mary and her husband John Holt had moved to this area around 1820. The Redds followed the Holts into Tennessee and began farming about twenty miles away from Murfreesboro. The crops they farmed are unknown, although tobacco is a possibility.<sup>1</sup>

1841 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints send 13 missionaries into Tennessee.<sup>2</sup>

1842 June 20. Benjamin Jones Redd was born.

1843 John Doyle Lee formed a branch of 28 converts in western Rutherford County, but almost all had emigrated to church headquarters.<sup>3</sup>

1843 The following accounts are from the Diary of John D. Lee.

May 17. "But in consequence of the day being so rainy & disagreeable, but few Persons turn out. However I Preached to them, among the number that composed the audience was 2 gentlemen who had rode

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<sup>1</sup> Lura Redd, *The Utah Redds and Their Progenitors*, edited by Amasa Jay Redd (Salt Lake City: privately published, 1973), 182.

<sup>2</sup> Lamar C. Berrett, "History of the Southern States Mission, 1831-1861" (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960), 188. (Courtesy of Amy Tanner Thiriot.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 297. (Courtesy of Amy Tanner Thiriot.)

17 miles to hear a Mormon preach (viz. Mr. John H. Redd & John Hoatts [Holt]. After meeting Mr. Red bought some books of me & requested me to visit his neighborhood & lecture to them. Accordingly I sent an appointment by them for the Sunday..."<sup>4</sup>

Lura Redd thought Redd and Holt rode so far because John and Mary Holt's son, William, had joined the Church the previous summer.

May 20. "Casting myself upon the pure mercies of God I again pursued my way being conveyed over stones river on horseback...Directly after I had crossed this stream Mr. John H. Redd rode up & kindly offered to carry my valace also to ride in tie with me. I cheerfully except his proposals & went to his house where I spent the night..."<sup>5</sup>

May 21. "...Before I left I exhorted them to Obedience to the Mandates of Heaven."

June 6. "I baptised John Holt & Mary his wife."<sup>6</sup>

June 7. "In the morning before I left them Mrs. Redd gave me her hand as a token of her sincerity in the cause of truth, But was not prepared to be Immersed at that time."<sup>7</sup>

June 17. At 8 AM we repaired to first convenience & after Making such remarks as was necessary to proceed the ordinance of Baptism. I administered or inducted the following persons into the Kingdom or church militant on earth--JOHN H. REDD a sea capt  
ELIZABETH REDD  
VENICE & CHINEA.  
2 servants belonging to Br. J. Redd.<sup>8</sup>

June 19. "Br.Redd & sister Holt between gave me a pair of drawers worth \$.50."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> John D. Lee journal, 1842 March-1843 August, MS 2092, image 94, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>5</sup> Lee journal, image 97.

<sup>6</sup> Lee journal, image 107.

<sup>7</sup> Lee journal, image 108.

<sup>8</sup> Lee journal, image 110. Marinda and Amy were baptized in Utah. There is no record of Luke's baptism, but he must have been baptized at some point because we know he paid tithing in Utah.

<sup>9</sup> Lee journal, image 112.

June 29. "I attended a reaping made by Br Redd & assisted him in cutting and saving his wheat."<sup>10</sup>

August 6. Sunday. At 4 PM I called the members together. Partook of the Lord's supper and organized them into a branch and called it the Friendship branch of Rutherford-set apart & ordained the following officers...Bro John H. Redd Teacher & Clerk.<sup>11</sup>

In his later autobiography, *Mormonism Unveiled*, John D. Lee wrote again about his experiences in Tennessee in the early 1840s. He described John H. Redd maintaining order while Lee preached. Redd used his "peace-makers" to keep the rowdies at bay.<sup>12</sup>

Ca. 1843-1846      After his baptism, but before 1846, John H. Redd was ordained to the office of Seventy. He was a member of the 7th Quorum.<sup>13</sup>

Ca.1843      Redd family and DUP traditions hold that after he joined the Church, John H. Redd freed his slaves and those that came to Utah with him and Elizabeth did so out of love and loyalty. They pled to remain with the family. Newer research indicates this was a misunderstanding of history. Manumitting slaves in the antebellum South was not as simple as is often assumed. When descendants of LDS slaveholders began writing family histories in the 1950s and 1960s, many attempted to "prettify" or whitewash the past, creating stories describing Southern progenitors as

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<sup>10</sup> Lee journal, image 117.

<sup>11</sup> Lee journal, image 149.

<sup>12</sup> John D. Lee, *Confessions of John D. Lee*, a photomechanical reprint of *Mormonism Unveiled: Or the Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee*, 1880 Edition. The pictures, preface, introduction, and all the pages at the back of the book, which were not written by John D. Lee, have been omitted in this reprint. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Modern Microfilm Co., [19--?], 135-137. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.aa0009154410&view=1up&seq=12> (accessed 13 Jan 2021).

<sup>13</sup> Harvey B Black, *Seventy Quorum Membership, 1835-1846: An Annotated Index of Over 3,500 Seventies Organized into the First Thirty-Five Quorums of the Seventy in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois*. (Provo, Utah: Infobases, Inc., 1996) available on Ancestry.com. *Seventy Quorum Membership, 1835-1846* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012, (accessed 26 Jan 2021).

owners of large plantations who began to see the evils of slavery and manumitted their enslaved servants upon joining the Church. They thought that was what good Latter-day Saints would do, but they were wrong. Slaveholders wanted to use the labor of their slaves and they made up a large portion of their wealth.

“Under Tennessee State law of 1831, amended in 1842, no slaves could be freed in the state unless they were immediately taken from the state. As per the 1842 law, they had to be freed through the county court, and could possibly remain in the state, but must post a bond.”<sup>14</sup>

When searched, indices to records housed in the Tennessee Library and Archives revealed no manumission records.<sup>15</sup>

A search of the Rutherford County Archives also yielded no manumission information about any of the Redd family or slaves.<sup>16</sup>

- 1844      April 3. John H. Redd received a patriarchal blessing in Nauvoo, Illinois from Church Patriarch, Hyrum Smith. John is declared a member of the House of Levi. And told “your name shall be perpetuated from generation to generation and you shall be blessed in your house and habitation... honor shall crown your head notwithstanding the wickedness of The World”
- 1845      April 3. John H. Redd and John Holt returned to Nauvoo. This time they brought tithing from family and branch members. A record of their contributions is found in the Nauvoo Daybook C held in the Church History Library.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Amy Tanner Thiriot, “Redd Timeline,” unpublished manuscript. She quotes Acts of 1842, CH, 191, Sec 1 as quoted in C. Perry Patterson, *The Negro in Tennessee, 1799-1865: a study in southern politics*, ((Austin: The University, 1922), 157.

<sup>15</sup> Trent Hanner, email message to Tonya Reiter, 29 May 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Beth Cavanaugh, email message to Amy Tanner Thiriot, 8 Dec 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Tithing and Donation Record, 1844-May 1846, CR 5 85, item 149, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

John H. Redd paid “in kind” with two guns.

Elizabeth paid \$1.00 in silver.

Ann Moriah paid “in kind” with socks.

Ann Elizabeth paid \$.25 in silver.

Venus paid \$1.00 in silver.

- 1847 July 4. Those Saints who have chosen to follow Brigham Young and the Twelve were preparing to cross the plains to reestablish a home in the Rocky Mountains. John D. Lee was working Brigham Young’s farm called Summer Quarters, about thirteen miles north of Winter Quarters. John H. Redd and Isham Gilliam visited him there to retrieve Isham’s wife, Caroline. Lee described John H. Redd as “considerably diffculted in his mind with reference to removing W[est].”<sup>18</sup>

Having reestablished a homestead and investing in a large farm, John H. Redd must have seriously weighed the cost of leaving it all and starting over in the West where the climate and conditions would be so different.

- 1848 May 30. John H. Redd wrote to George A. Smith and suggested he send an elder to North Carolina. Redd said he planned to go West the next spring and would be occupied until then with the necessary preparations.<sup>19</sup>

- 1848 December 27. John H. Redd wrote his niece, Drusilla Holt Pearson. By 1848, she had already immigrated to Great Salt Lake City as a widow. Her seven-year old daughter had died at Winter Quarters in 1847. Her father, John Holt, John H. Redd’s brother-in-law was also in the valley when JH Redd wrote this letter,

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<sup>18</sup> John D. Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee, 1846-47 amd 1859*, ed. Charles Kelly (Salt Lake City: Western Printing Company, 1938), 185.

<sup>19</sup> John H. Redd, Rutherford County, Tennessee, 30 May 1848, George A. Smith Papers, Ms 1322, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=871140e5-eca8-43f8-9e61-4b2cf2e79d48&crate=0&index=15> (accessed 28 Jan 2021).

“We was truly sorry to learn of your afflictions but glad to learn that your health was improving. We was also Glad to hear good news from the Valley. Of the health a prosperity of the Saints. We are also very sorry that we are not there with You, but we still trust that the Lord will provide for each and every one who has a desire to come, and with the help of God we expect to do our part in trying to Git there and if we should not Git off this Spring we shall make the attempt next & at the hazard of a Great Sacrifice, for according to the times this will be the case.”

“We are all enjoying tolerable health at present but know not how soon the Colera may be amongst us we understand it has arrived at Nashville. Brother H. B. Hall is very low he has been confined to his bed nearly six month...almost lost the use of himself but at times he seems to cherish a hope that he will reach the Valley.”

“Your mother wishes you in your next letter to give your Opinion as regards to her coming to the West as she will Confide in your Council. We wish to be remembered to your friends there and receive to yourself the love of your mother[,] brother and sister and lastly the love of myself and family both white and black so I remain your ever loving uncle and aunt in the Faith.”<sup>20</sup>

1849-1850 The Redds prepared to leave Tennessee and join the Saints in their new settlement in the West. The last 150 acres of Tennessee land was sold and the deed recorded January 4, 1850.

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<sup>20</sup> Letter from John H. Redd, Rutherford County, Tennessee to Druzilla Pierson, Deseret, 1848 December 27, MS 3663, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

