

DAVID FOOTE, A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

from Latter Day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia

Person #24 on chart #1

David Foote, a veteran in the Church, was born Aug. 7, 1768, in Harwinton, Litchfield County, Conn. He was the fourth son of Ebenezer Foote and Rebecca Barker, and the fifth in the line of descent from Nathaniel and Elizabeth Deming Foote, who came from England about the year 1633 and settled at Wethersfield, Conn., in 1635. David's father was a soldier in the army of the Revolution. He died while in the army at Mud Fort, Horse Neck, Conn., in June, 1778, when David was in the tenth year of his age. His mother married Ezekiel Sanford Jan. 1, 1781, who was also a soldier in the revolution, and a widower. Soon after peace was declared with Great Britain, the family emigrated to Windsor, Broome County, N.Y. At this place David married Miss Irene Lane, daughter of Nathan Lane, Esq., a pioneer settler of Windsor. Mr. Lane was a soldier in the Army of the Revolution and a descendant of William Lane, who came from Dorchester, England in 1635, and settled in Dorchester, Mass. Nathan Lane's wife's maiden name was Dorcas Muscroft. Much of David's time was occupied, with others, in cutting saw logs and rafting down the Susquehanna river, (This country was then new. Here he worked for some time by the month or by the job and had the name of being a very steady young man.) until 1798, when, in company with his step-father and brother-in-law, he removed to Dryden, Cayuga (now Tompkins) County, N.Y. The following is an extract from the Centennial History of the town of Dryden N.Y., published 1897: "In the fall of 1798, three families settled at Willow Glen (Dryden). They consisted of Ezekiel Sanford, his wife and one son. David Foote, his wife and three daughters, Ebenezer Clauson, his wife, one son and two daughters, making in all a party of thirteen persons. They came from Windsor (60 miles distant) with a single team of oxen drawing a heavy ox sled of the olden times, which was made with wooden shoes and a heavy split pole for tongue. This conveyance carried all the household furniture of the three families, which from the fact could not have been very rich in housekeeping materials.... They were said to have passed a very 'comfortable winter,' subsisting largely upon the abundant game found in the new country, the oxen being supplied with plenty of browse from the trees." This country was a dense forest, and there were but two families in Dryden, when the foregoing named families arrived there. (*This country was entirely new and covered with woods. Here he got a piece of land and cleared it off and got it under cultivation which required a great deal of hard labor.*) After a sufficient number of families arrived in the settlement, a Methodist religious class was organized, and David made a class leader. Although his scholastic education was very limited, the Bible was his chief study. (*He had a dream or a vision by which it was shown to him that the true church of Christ would soon be established on the earth. About this time there were many reformers who came out from the various denominations. He went to hear all who came into that region of the country but he finally rejected all of them. He began to drift towards universalism who believed that all mankind will be saved.*) He became dissatisfied with the creeds of the various sects, and sought to find the true church of Christ, as it existed in the Apostles' days. While his mind was very much exercised with regard to religious matters, he had what he termed a vision, in which it was told to him, among other things, that the true church of Christ would soon

be established on earth as it was anciently. A number of religious 'reformers' came out from the churches about this time, claiming to be the true church. David investigated their claims, but none of them satisfied him. In the spring of 1830, he borrowed a Book of Mormon from a neighbor and read it carefully and testified that it was a true record. *(In the winter of 1829 and 1830 there began to be rumors of a golden Bible said to have been in Ontario County, New York. By some means John Taylor (mentioned above) obtained one of the books. David borrowed the book from Taylor.)* But no Elder came to Dryden, and he knew nothing concerning the doctrine they preached. In the spring of 1832 he removed to Greenwood, Steuben County, N.Y. In the fall of 1833, two men professing to be "Mormon" Elders came to Greenwood from Geneseo, Livingston County, N.Y. They held one or two meetings, and invited David and others to visit them at Geneseo. Accordingly, David and his brother-in-law (Josiah Richardson), and his nephew (Moses Clauson), went to Geneseo in November, 1833, for the purpose of investigating the new religion. On arriving there, they found the large branch of Saints somewhat divided, and some had been cut off from the Church and among them the two Elders who came to Greenwood, and Elder John Murdock was presiding over the branch. (The trouble in the branch arose with regard to the vision of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon of the three glories. Some could not receive it as from the Lord.) After Elder Murdock had expounded the gospel to David, to his satisfaction, he was baptized and returned home rejoicing that he had found the true Church of Christ, as it was promised in his vision several years previously. In the spring of 1834 Elders Orson Pratt and John Murdock came to Greenwood and stayed with David two or three days and preached in the neighborhood, and explained the gospel more fully to him. In the following August he visited Geneseo again, and was ordained an Elder by Joseph Young, Aug. 17, 1834. He now began to preach the gospel to his neighbors, some of whom began to investigate, and one was baptized by him. In the latter part of the winter following, Elders John Gould and Amos Babcock came to Greenwood, and held several meetings, and baptized a few. In April, 1835, David attended a conference of the Church at Freedom, Catteraugus County, N.Y. He presented his certificate of ordination by Joseph Young, and received an Elder's license, signed by Sidney Rigdon, moderator, and Warren A. Cowdery, secretary. During the spring and summer, several elders visited Greenwood and a branch of about twenty members was organized, and David was appointed president. In the fall he, in company with his brother-in-law (Josiah Richardson, who had been ordained an Elder), took a mission to Dryden, and preached the gospel to his old neighbors, and was successful in baptizing his daughter Betsey, and her husband, Thomas Clement. In the spring of 1836, the most of the Saints in Greenwood emigrated to Kirtland, and some to Missouri. David went to Kirtland and became acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith, and received a patriarchal blessing by Patriarch Joseph Smith Sr. He returned to Greenwood in the fall, and in May 1836, again went to Kirtland, and returned the latter part of the summer, preaching by the way. In October, following, he with his family (which now consisted of his wife, one daughter and one son, only), removed to Kirtland, and obtained a house for the winter of Stephen Markham in Chester Township, seven miles from Kirtland. May 26, 1838, David with his family started for Missouri, in company with Stephen Markham and family and some others. David and family arrived at his brother-in-law's place, ten miles east of Far West, Aug. 30, 1838. He passed through the mobbings safely and only

sustained a loss of property, (On the 30th, 3000 Militia arrived within 1/2 a mile of Farwest with orders from the Governor to exterminate the Mormons. Also on the night of the 30th, 300 ruffians from Livingston County came on a party of 40 Mormons (at Haun's Mill in the eastern part of Caldwell County) and killed about 15 and wounded a few. David received word of the battle about 1 o'clock at night and also heard that they (the mob) were coming up through there on their way to Farwest and swore that they would kill every man they found. So he and his son Warren took their blankets and went with a Mr. Ives to the woods where they stayed till daylight. It was clear and frosty. They then got their breakfast and then retired again to the woods but no mob came. All communication was now cut off from Farwest and it was expected that there would be a battle fought there. David and his son lay in a hollow Sycamore tree 3 nights, he then heard that they had made a treaty and the Latter Day Saints had surrendered themselves prisoners, and had agreed to leave the state by the first of the following April.) and on the first day of April, in company with Stephen Markham's family, and two others, started for Quincy, Ill., where they arrived the 14th. He located at a point twelve miles east of Quincy. He was ordained a High Priest at a conference held at Nauvoo April 6, 1844. He was a member of the Freedom branch of the Church, until the spring of 1845, when he removed into Hancock County, in obedience to the proclamation of the Twelve Apostles. He located in a little branch of the Church called Montebello, twelve miles south of Nauvoo. In August he took the chills and fever and passed peacefully away in a profound sleep in the night of Aug. 22, 1845. His wife followed him to the spirit world March 5, 1846. They were both buried in the Nauvoo cemetery. (On the 14th of August he had a severe shake of ague and a violent fever after it. The next day he was better. He traveled about 1/2 a mile and laid his hands on a sick woman who had fever. Her fever was rebuked. He was not willing to take any medicine and did not want his wife to take any. She continued to grow worse. On the 16th David was very sick. He had a shake first and then a very hot fever and was delirious. The 17th which was Sunday he went 1/2 a mile to meeting and seemed to be very much affected there. He was very much concerned about his wife and said he had prayed the Lord to put some of her sickness on him saying that we should bear one another's burdens which he considered the cause of his wife's being sick one day and he the next. He also desired that if either was taken that it might be by him. The night of the 16th his son Warren having moved into his own house, David attended a prayer meeting. He seemed to be deeply affected. He prayed the Lord to spare his wife for she was the one that he had chosen from amongst all others to be his companion in this life and that which is to come and he wanted her life spared that she might have an opportunity to come into the Church of Christ and many things he prayed which was truly affecting. He and his wife continued to grow worse. On the 22nd David was very low. He was delirious when his fever was on him. His son Warren asked him in the morning if he was willing to go. He said that he must be reconciled but he desired to live to get his endowments in the Temple at Nauvoo. He said but little through the forenoon. In the afternoon his fever came on again and he was somewhat delirious. About 3 o'clock he fell asleep and about sundown they tried to wake him but could not. At 10 o'clock at night he began to breathe very hard and there were signs of approaching death. His breath now began to grow shorter and shorter till about 11 o'clock when his spirit left the body without a struggle or groan. His countenance remained calm and

tranquil. There was no one present when he died but his son Warren and a brother in the Church whose name was James Wright. He was buried in the city of Nauvoo (now called city of Joseph) on 24th of August 1845. David was 76 years and 15 days old when he died and he died as he had lived a faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He never was arraigned before the Church for misconduct and no man can find a stain on his character. He was affectionate, tender hearted and always ready to forgive an injury. To the poor and afflicted he was wont always to afford them relief as much as was in his power. The Scriptures, the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants was his daily study. But I trust that he is now at rest in the Paradise of God, there to await till the morn of the Resurrection when he will be brought forth triumphant to meet his Savior in the air and so ever with the Lord.)

David was 77 years and 15 days old when he died, and his wife was 71 years 4 months and 3 days old at her demise. David Foote was a stout, robust man about 5 feet 8 inches tall, very compactly built, and his average weight was about 175 pounds. He was very faithful in the Church, and in keeping the law of the gospel, the Word of Wisdom, etc. He enjoyed the gift of healing in a remarkable degree, through the anointing with oil and the laying on of hands. He was honest and upright in all his dealings and would suffer wrong rather than do wrong, and always had the good will of his neighbors.

Italics are taken from Warren Foote's history of his father.