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HISTORY

ORSON PRATT.

(WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, MARCH, 1858.)

I, ORSON PRATT, for the information of my descendants, and kindred, and all others interested, give the following brief sketch of my Ancestry and Genealogy.

A few centuries ago, when the old world groaned under the hand of tyranny and oppression, when persecution raged against those who desired to be the humble followers of Christ, a great western continent was discovered, to which a few hardy brave pioneers sailed and commenced the colonization of New England. Among these humble pilgrim fathers were my ancestor, William Pratt and his older brother John. In February, 1639, these two brothers received a portion of land in the first distribution made to the colonists, located at Hartford, Connecticut. This is the first reliable information that I have concerning them. This little colony was founded in June, 1636, which was a little less than three years, before they drew their portion of land. It is supposed that they accompanied the Rev. Thomas Hooker and his congregation, about one hundred in number, from Newtown, now called Cambridge, Massachusetts, through a dense wilderness, inhabited only by savages and wild beasts, and became the first settlers of Hartford. The ancient records at Newtown or Cambridge, show that John Pratt owned land in that town.

My ancestor, William Pratt, was a member of the Legislature some 25 or 30 sessions: and the General Court gave him one hundred acres of land in Say Brook, Connecticut, for service performed as Lieutenant in the Pequot war. He was one of the Judges of the first Court in New London County. His ancestry is not yet discovered; neither is it known from what town or shire in England he emigrated. He married Elizabeth Clark, daughter of John Clark, of Milford, Connecticut, who was formerly from High or Great Munden, Hertfordshire, England. The date of William Pratt's birth and marriage is unknown. He had eight children: of these, two were born in Hartford. He removed to Say Brook in 1645, at which place the other six children were born.

I will now give the names, dates of births, marriages, and deaths of some of the descendants of Lieutenant William Pratt in the line of my ancestry:—

FIRST GENERATION.

Lieut. William Pratt, of the first generation, married Elizabeth Clark, about, as is supposed, the year 1640. He had eight children, which I shall call the

SECOND GENERATION.

1. Elizabeth, born Feb. 1, 1641, at Hartford,
2. John, " Feb. 20, 1644, [Conn.]
3. Joseph, " Aug. 1, 1648, at Say Brook,
4. Sarah, " April 1, 1651, "
5. William, " May 5, 1653, "
6. Samuel, " Oct. 6, 1655, "
7. Lydia, " Jan. 1, 1659, "
8. Nathaniel, "

3. Joseph Pratt, of the second generation, married a wife, name unknown, by whom he had five children. In Sept., 1686, he married a second wife, Sarah Chapman, daughter of Robert Chapman. She was born Sept. 25, 1657. By the latter he had eight children. These thirteen children are called the

THIRD GENERATION.

1. Joseph, born in 1672: Died May 11, 1740.
2. William, " [Not married.]
3. Sarah, "
4. Experience,
5. Margaret,
6. Ann-1st, " Aug. 12, 1687. Died Dec. 1,
7. Ann 2nd, " Oct. 7, 1688. [1687.]
8. Susannah, " March 16, 1690.
9. Robert, " Oct. 26, 1691.
10. Caleb, " 1692.
11. Elizabeth, " Sept. 6, 1695. Died Jan. 21,
12. Hannah, " Feb. 27, 1699. [1715.]
13. Temperance, Feb. 15, 1700. Died Oct. 781

2. William Pratt, of the third generation, married Hannah Hough, Oct. 8, 1700, by whom he had six children of the

FOURTH GENERATION.

1. Joseph, born April 13, 1703.
2. Ephraim, " April 1, 1705.
3. Margaret, " April 1, 1708.
4. Christopher, Nov. 4, 1712.
5. Elizabeth, " Jan. 20, 1717.
6. Experience, Sept. 28, 1720.

4. Christopher Pratt, of the fourth generation, married Sarah Pratt, June 14, 1739. She is supposed to have been the daughter of David Pratt, and grand daughter of Samuel Pratt, the sixth child of Lieut. William. She was born June 17, 1718. Christopher had six children of the

FIFTH GENERATION.

1. Stephen, born June 30, 1740, at Say Brook,
2. Obadiah, " Sept. or Oct. 14, 1742, "
3. Sarah, " March 28, 1745.
4. Hannah, " Aug. 6, 1747.
5. Chalker, " Feb. 14, 1750. Died Feb.
6. Samuel, " [14, 1828.]

2. Obadiah Pratt, of the fifth generation, married Jemima Tolls, daughter of Ebenezer Tolls. She was born in New Haven, Connecticut, Aug. 11, 1754. The date of marriage unknown. Obadiah had eleven children, called the

SIXTH GENERATION.

1. Jared, born Nov. 25, 1769, in Canaan, Co. [Columbia Co., N. Y.]
2. Barnabas, " March 4, 1771, "
3. Samuel, " Feb. 2, 1773, "
4. Rhoda, " May 30, 1775, "
5. William, " May 21, 1777, "
6. Sarah, " Sept. 3, 1781, "
7. Obadiah, " July 30, 1784, "
8. Lovina, " Aug. 6, 1787, "
9. Ira, " Oct. 10, 1789, "
10. Ellen, " Oct. 10, 1789, "
11. Allen, " May 3, 1793, "

Obadiah, of the fifth generation, died March 2, 1797, in Canaan. Jemima, his wife, died Nov. 24, 1812, in Washington, Dutchess County, N. Y.

1. Jared Pratt, of the sixth generation, married Polly Carpenter, daughter of Samuel Carpenter, of New Lebanon, Columbia County, N. Y., by whom he had one child. His wife, having died, he married Charity Dickinson, July 7, 1799. She was the daughter of Samuel and Huldah Dickinson, of Bolton, Warren Co., N. Y.; and Samuel was the son of Christopher and Mary Dickinson. Charity was born Feb. 24, 1776. Jared Pratt had five children by her. The following are the names of his six children of the

SEVENTH GENERATION.

1. Mary Pratt, born Feb., 1793.
2. Anson, " Jan. 9, 1801.
3. William D., " Sept. 3, 1802.
4. Parley P., " April 12, 1807, in Burlington, Otsego Co., N. Y.
5. Orson, " Sept. 19, 1811, in Hartford, [Washington Co., N. Y.]
6. Nelson, " May 26, 1815, "

Jared Pratt, of the sixth generation, died Nov. 5, 1839, and was buried some three or four miles north or north-east from Detroit in Michigan. Charity, his wife, died of cholera, in the town of St. Joseph, Missouri, May 20, 1849, and was buried in the grave yard of that town, and a tomb-stone erected to her memory. Her oldest son, Anson Pratt, died of cholera May 26, 1849, and was buried by her side, and a tombstone also erected to his memory.

5. Orson Pratt, of the seventh generation, married Sarah Marinda Bates, July 4, 1836. She was the daughter of Cyrus and Lydia Bates, of Henderson, Jefferson County, N. Y. Cyrus was the son of Oliver and Rebecca Bates. The marriage was celebrated at her father's house in Henderson, Elder Luke Johnson officiating. She was born in Henderson, Feb. 5, 1817. By her I have had children of the

EIGHTH GENERATION.

1. Orson Pratt, jr., born July 11, 1837, in Kirtland, Geauga Co., Ohio.
2. Lydia, born Dec. 17, 1838, in St. Louis, Missouri.
3. Celestia Larrissa, born May 10, 1842, in Nauvoo, Hancock Co., Illinois.
4. Sarah Marinda, born Oct. 27, 1844, in Nauvoo, Hancock Co., Illinois.

I have thus briefly given my ancestral or genealogical chain for eight generations, or from the year 1639 to the year 1844. For the information concerning the first three or four generations, I am indebted to the Reverend F. W. Chapman, of Ellington, Connecticut, who has been employed, for several years, in collecting information relative to the descendants of Lieutenant William Pratt, preparatory to publishing the Genealogy and History of the same. This general history will, very probably, be issued from the press during the present year (1858,) to which I refer my kindred, and all interested, for further particulars.

My parents, Jared and Charity Pratt, were numbered among the poor of this world. To procure the comforts of life, they were necessitated to labor for the rich. At times, bright prospects of wealth seemed to open before them; but a succession of misfortunes kept them down in the low vales of poverty. The only occupation followed by my father was the cultivation of the soil. To this laborious method of procuring a living he was unaccustomed in his youthful days. Being the oldest among eleven children, his father, Obadiah, made him, in early life, a weaver for the family. But hand looms were mostly dispensed with, and steam power substituted, to supply clothing for man. Weavers, therefore, were thrown out of employment, and however inexperienced, were obliged to adopt some other business to sustain themselves and families. Under these disadvantageous circumstances, my father, by hard labor for others, earned the scanty means of subsistence.

My brothers, when young, were sent from home to labor at farming in the service of others; after which they looked after their own welfare and education, living sometimes in one place, and then in another, without the advantages of parental instruction at a time when they most needed it. While blessed with the privilege of living at home, we were diligently taught in every principle of morality and honesty; for although my parents had no faith in the modern sectarian principles of Christianity, yet they looked upon the history of ancient Christianity, as recorded in the Bible, as something most sacred and worth possessing. These Bible doctrines, they diligently instilled into the minds of their children, so far as they understood them; and often expressed themselves as desirous of belonging to the Church of Christ, if it could be found.

As stated in my genealogy, I was born September 19, 1811, in Hartford, Washington county, New York. When I was about three or four years old, my parents removed from Hartford to New Lebanon, Columbia county, where I was sent to school for several months, each year, until the spring of 1822. During this interval I often had many serious impressions in regard to God and a future state. And being very young, my parents instructed me to read the Bible, which I often did, with much interest, asking a great variety of questions, concerning what I found written. It was seldom that I attended any religious meetings, as my parents had not much faith in them, and were never so unfortunate as to unite themselves with any of the religious sects.

In the spring of 1822, being in my eleventh year, I went to live with a farmer whose name was Justin Jones: this was in the neighborhood of my parents. I continued at this place until the autumn of 1823. The preceding winter, I also went to school. I next engaged to labor at farming for Mr. Church at Canaan, Four Corners, Columbia county, New

York, and continued with him about seven-teen or eighteen months; three or four of which I went to school, and became quite familiar with all the rules in Daball's arithmetic. In the spring of 1825, I accompanied my oldest brother to Hurlgate, Long Island, about six miles from New York city. Here I engaged myself for one year to Mr. Greenock, a farmer; three months of which I went to school, and studied arithmetic and bookkeeping. In the spring of 1826, I was recommended by Mr. Greenock to a large cabinet making establishment in New York city, where I intended to remain until of age; but after tarrying a few months, I was taken violently sick and brought very low, so that my recovery, for some time, was considered doubtful. When my strength permitted, I went into the country, to Hurlgate, and tarried with my brother Anson, until the spring of 1827, when I returned to Canaan, about 150 miles north of New York city, and engaged myself to labor for seven months, on a farm for Mr. Noise; at the expiration of which, I accompanied my brothers Parley and Nelson Pratt to Lorain county, Ohio. We performed the journey by canal boat from Albany to Buffalo, and thence by schooner up Lake Erie. I boarded with Mr. Redington during the winter and went to school.

In the spring of 1828, I started east in search of employment, came to the village of Chagrin, now called Willoughby, Ohio, where I labored a few months at a hotel; the most of my time being occupied at farming. I also labored a few months at farming for Mr. Norris, a few miles east of Painesville. In the autumn of this year, I performed a lengthy journey of some six or seven hundred miles to the State of Connecticut, where I labored a short time; and then took a steam-boat for New York city, and thence to Long Island, and resided, during the winter, with my brother Anson.

In the spring of 1829, I again returned to Canaan, and commenced farming for Mr. Haight. The following winter I spent four months at a boarding school or academy, during which I made myself thoroughly acquainted with geography, grammar, and surveying.

In the spring of 1830, I engaged myself to Mr. Joshua Lord, with whom I tarried and labored on a farm, until the following October. This was in Canaan only one or two miles from the old homestead of my grandfather, Obadiah Pratt.

From the age of ten to nineteen I saw much of the world, and was tossed about without any permanent abiding place; but through the grace of God, I was kept from many of the evils to which young people are exposed; the early impressions of morality and religion, instilled into my mind by my parents, always remained with me; and I often felt a great anxiety to be prepared for a future state; but never commenced, in real earnest, to seek after the Lord, until the autumn of 1829. I then began to pray very fervently, repenting of every sin. In the silent shades of night, while others were slumbering upon their pillows, I often retired to some secret place in the lonely fields or solitary wilderness, and bowed before the Lord, and prayed for hours with a broken heart and contrite spirit: this was my comfort and delight. The greatest desire of my heart was for the Lord to manifest His will concerning me. I continued to pray in this fervent manner until September, 1830, at which time two Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, came into the neighborhood, one of which was my brother Parley. They held several meetings which I attended.

Being convinced of the divine authenticity of the doctrine they taught, I was baptized September 19, 1830. This was my birth-day, being nineteen years old. I was the only person in the country who received and obeyed the message. Shortly after my baptism the Elders left.

In October, 1830, I traveled westward over two hundred miles to see Joseph Smith, the Prophet. I found him in Fayette, Seneca county, N. Y., residing at the house of Mr. Whit-