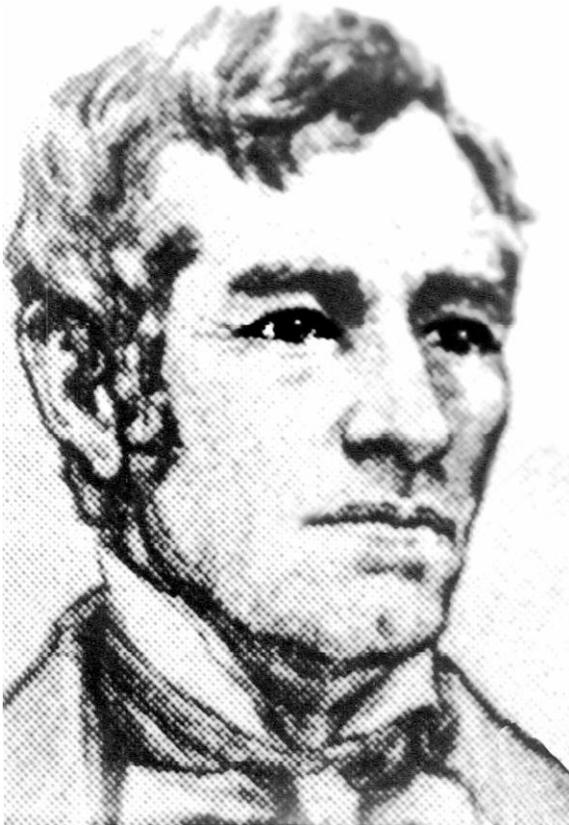


## EZEKIEL JOHNSON



Ezekiel Johnson was born January 12, 1773 in Uxbridge, Worcester, Massachusetts to (father unknown) and Bethiah (Sethier) Gansey. Married Julia Hills January 12, 1801. They had sixteen children: nine boys and seven girls. Died January 13, 1848 in Nauvoo, Hancock, Illinois. Buried in the Old Mormon Cemetery.

### COURT RECORD

"Bethiar Ganzee of Uxbridge in the County of Worcester spinster comes into court to answer to a presentment found against her by the Grand Jurors for said body of this county for that she did on said last day of May Anno Dom 1772 at Uxbridge aforesaid commit the crime of fornication, with a male person to the said jurors The following summer when Ezekiel was not so bitter about the church he went to Ohio to see the Prophet, then sold his home and moved to Chicago. But all hope that he would join the church soon vanished. What little light there had been soon disappeared

unknown whereof she there afterwards had a bastard child born of her body against the peace to which she pleads guilty.

The Court having considered of her offense order that she pay a fine of five shillings to the king that she pay cost and stand committed until this sentence is performed."

Ezekiel was the child. As an adult he was described as being of "full middle stature", about 5'10" tall, and of solid build. He had fine light-brown hair, and mild, but piercing blue eyes. He was loved by all who knew him.

Ezekiel left the home of his mother and his step-father when he was fourteen years old.

It is said he preferred to be on his own rather than endure the presence of his step-father whom he disliked. It appears that he never saw his mother again.

Little is known of Ezekiel from then until he married Julia Hills when he was 28 and she was 17.

Ezekiel was born with a restless spirit that kept the family always on the move looking for the perfect location. His love for new places was not held down by his growing family. Ezekiel would usually go ahead, find a good piece of land, clear the land, plant a garden, and if possible build a rough cabin. As soon as the homestead was ready he would return for his family.

When his family joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and moved to Kirtland to be with the prophet, Ezekiel felt so disgraced that he went on a "drunk" for three days to drown his sorrow.

and so great was his darkness that he seemed possessed of the devil. Julia would not leave Kirtland to go with Ezekiel to Chicago. When Ezekiel found his family would not go with him to Chicago he tried to stay with them in Kirtland. However, there

was so much strife over his refusal to join the church that he soon left.

Ezekiel was never baptized into the Church and remained quite bitter until the time of the martyrdom. The death of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum Smith impressed Ezekiel as being so unjust that his feelings mellowed greatly toward the Mormons. He was full of remorse and from that time on he stopped drinking and started fighting the mobs.

“On one occasion it was reported that a company of soldiers, under a captain, was marching on Nauvoo to compel the Saints to leave the city at once, even before the set time by the agreement of the commissioners who made the treaty of expulsion. Ezekiel heard of this treachery on the part of the mob, and his anger knew no bounds. He swore by all the powers of good and evil that those soldiers should not come into the city of Nauvoo that night. Acting on his word, which he was never known to break, accompanied by his ever present companion ‘Old Bess’, a small double barrel shot gun with silver mountings, that Ezekiel had carried for years, he met the men just as they were entering the city. He stepped behind a tree until the captain came close to him. Cocking both barrels of his gun he stepped out in front of the captain and ordered, ‘Halt! Hands up!!’ The captain at once saw his disadvantage and with hands high in the air ordered, ‘Halt, Attention.’ It is said by those who listened that Ezekiel, in his wrath, poured forth such a tirade of abuse and vituperation, together with warnings that they must pass over his dead body before they entered further into the city, and as he was homeless, and friendless and cared nothing for life, said that if they did not face about and march out of the city limits, he would pull the trigger and blow the head off the captain, and to make no argument, but go. The captain realizing his helpless position, ordered them to about face and march. They did this until they were out of sight. They again entered the city on a side street, where Ezekiel again covered the captain as before. He told

them he would shoot him on the spot if he tried to say one word of explanation, and if he tried again to enter the city he would shoot him from behind a tree, without further warning. The mob seemed to believe what he said, for they went into quarters outside the city limits for the night.

This delay gave the Saints time to prepare for the surprise that was intended by the soldiers, who after the conference held with the leading men of Nauvoo the next morning, decided to return home without firing a gun.

That episode was not kept a secret and Ezekiel became a “marked man.”

The circumstances attending his whipping by the mob are not known, but whipped he was, and beaten so brutally that after a period of suffering he died from the effects.

Although Ezekiel did not always share his family’s views on the kind of life they followed, he always had love and devotion for his family.

His temple work was done in 1879, and the sixteen children were all sealed to their parents in 1926.