

HISTORY OF THE CUTLERITE FACTION OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS

BY EMMA L. ANDERSON

Alpheus Cutler was born in Plainfield, Cheshire County, New Hampshire, February 29, 1788. Of his early years I have heard but little, except that he was a soldier in the War of 1812. I believe that one of his grandsons, Freeman E. Anderson, of Bemidji, Minnesota, has a sword in his possession that belonged to Alpheus Cutler in 1812. He married Lois Lathrop, also of New Hampshire. To them were born eleven children, some of whom died in childhood.

In 1833 they were living in Chautauqua County, New York, where the restored gospel was presented to them by David Patten and Reynolds Cahoon. It was accepted by the family. They moved to Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835, and to Missouri a few years later, locating near Richmond. They were driven from the State when the Saints were driven to Illinois.¹ There they lived at Nauvoo until some time after the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

Doctrine and Covenants 107: 41 shows that Alpheus Cutler was one of the High Council. After the death of the Martyrs the Cutler family lived for a time at Kanesville and at Winter Quarters. Along about 1847,² they moved to Silver Creek, Iowa, where a branch of the church was already located.

Soon Alpheus Cutler was chosen president of the branch. At this time George A. Smith and others were sent to that place to investigate conditions there. They called a meeting and bore testimony to the truth of what had been given them before: that Alpheus Cutler had been ordained and set apart

¹He was with the Twelve on its return to Far West after the Missouri exodus, April 26, 1839. He was a member of the high council of Nauvoo Stake from 1841 to 1846. H. H. S.

²He organized a branch at Kanesville April 6, 1847. H. H. S.

by Joseph Smith, before his death, to a mission among the Indians, and that he was instructed to go forth upon this mission, choosing whom he would to go with him. I have heard the widow of Alpheus Cutler bear testimony to this: that Alpheus Cutler was set apart to this mission the same as Lyman Wight was set apart to a mission in Texas, and others to missions elsewhere.

Accordingly, in 1850 or 1851, Alpheus Cutler and a chosen few went to a place called Grasshopper, on the Grasshopper River, to prosecute this mission. The place is now known as Valley Falls, Kansas, and was on land belonging to the Indians. The Indians did not seem to appreciate having the white people moving in among them, and building log houses and mills. They were not ready to be converted. In this little handful of Latter Day Saints were the family of Alpheus Cutler; his two sons-in-law, Franklin Pratt and Calvin Fletcher; Nicholas Taylor and family; a Mr. Patten and family; Hyrum Murdock and family; and a few others. They were poor in this world's goods and affliction came among them. Death claimed a number of them, among whom were Mrs. Franklin Pratt, Mrs. Calvin Fletcher, Mrs. Henrietta Cutler, and several children. Thus, when they moved away a few years later, they left some lonely graves.

By 1855 my parents had moved to Manti, Iowa, where Alpheus Cutler and quite a number of church members were located. Among them were the Fishers, Shermans, Andersons, Whitings, Calkins, Tophams, Taylors, Murdocks, Ecclestons (by some called Egglestons), Redfields, Mathews, Sperry's, Stillmans, Fletchers, Burdicks, and perhaps others whom I do not now recall.

About this time the theory became rife among them, that when the Gentiles rejected the gospel and killed the prophets, no more preaching should be done to them, that the gospel was now taken from the Gentiles, and had turned to the Jews and

the house of Israel, among whom were the Lamanites.

As Alpheus Cutler's mission was to the Lamanites, they believed that he now held the highest authority, and he was appointed by his followers, president of the high priesthood. Twice a year, on April 6 and October 6, they would vote to uphold him in that office—an office to which he was never at any time ordained.

Some time after the Reorganization began, a very kindly letter was written to the Saints at Manti, inviting them to unite with the Reorganization. As that people had already reorganized and chosen a leader, they had no use for this appeal. Copies of this letter and the reply can be produced if needful. Alpheus Cutler chose his eldest son, Thaddeus, as first counselor, and Chauncey Whiting as second counselor. After Joseph Smith, son of the Martyr, came to the church and was chosen leader, missionaries were sent to Manti, and many of their members united with the Reorganization. Among those who did so were Thaddeus Cutler and most of his family, Wheeler Baldwin and wife, Nicholas Taylor and family, William Topham and family, William Redfield and family, William Mathews and family, and perhaps others I cannot recall—nearly all of what had been the Farm Creek Branch. This, together with the war, caused a feeling of discontent.

Alpheus Cutler died on June 10, 1864, and the fall following a committee consisting of my father, Francis Lewis Whiting; my uncle, Sylvester Whiting; Jesse Burdick, and Marcus Shaw, was chosen to start north and find a new location for the church. We traveled in covered wagons as far as Redwing, Minnesota. Several other families followed in the winter and we finished our journey, locating at Clitherall, Minnesota, where the main body of the faction found us in July.

Chauncey Whiting was chosen and ordained president of

the high priesthood, and chose his eldest son, Isaac Morley Whiting (named for his grandfather, Isaac Morley of Church History mention), as first counselor, and Lyman Murdock as second counselor. They still believed Alpheus Cutler's mission was their mission, and several attempts have been made since moving to Minnesota to present the gospel, as believed by that faction, to the Indians of the Chippewa Nation. However, it has been with no success. Many of this faction have since united with the Reorganization.

After the death of Chauncey Whiting, Isaac Whiting was chosen and ordained president of the high priesthood. He chose as his first counselor, Emery Fletcher; and as his second counselor, Erle Whiting. At present they are the highest quorum in the remaining remnant of the Cutlerite faction. Though I believe they are deceived as to authority, yet they are respected as an honest, virtuous, temperate, industrious, frugal, and Godfearing people.

Many of the Cutlerite members were buried at Manti, Iowa, and at Clitherall, Minnesota, and many of the old church at Silver Creek, Iowa.