

BADGER

JOHN BADGER, father of Lydia Ripley Badger, and father-in-law of Jerome Napoleon Remington, was born in Waterford, Caledonia County, Vermont, 12 September 1800, the first child of James and Hannah Sawyer Badger.

John lived in Waterford until 1829, when he moved to Charleston, in Orleans County, Vermont, some 40 or 50 miles to the north. There, in 1831, Lydia Ripley was born; and there, in June of 1832, John and his wife were baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Orson Pratt and Lyman E. Johnson. These two missionaries had been holding meetings in the Charleston area for some time, and John and Lydia were among the first converts to be baptized in that region--their conversion possibly being a direct or indirect result of the miraculous healing of Mrs. Winslow Farr by Orson Pratt, an account of which appeared in the DESERET NEWS Church Section of June 27, 1936.

Apparently John became one of the pillars of the Church in the Charleston region, for Orson Pratt, in his journal, referred to John's baptism and ordinations in detail while merely mentioning others in a general way. He was ordained an Elder by Brothers Pratt and Johnson during the month following his baptism, and on Saturday, 8 June 1833, he attended a church conference at Bath, New Hampshire, as one of five High Priests and seven Elders. Orson Pratt officiated then at several ordinations to various offices in the Priesthood. The following month, on 24 July 1833, at a conference held in Charleston, John was ordained a High Priest by Lyman E. Johnson; and "after attending five meetings Elder Pratt left Charleston for Danville."

Several years later, under date of Monday, January 26, 1835, John wrote the following letter from Danville, Vermont, to Church headquarters in Kirtland:

"I have baptized a few in this region. The Stone continues rolling; the glorious work, though slow, but unshaken, continues progressing; many enquiring souls are among the multitude; but a multitude of priests, professors, and people of every order, sect, party, denomination and grade, are striving with all the combined powers of darkness to stop the progressive work of the King of Kings, yet, I realize, amid all this flood of persecution and commotion, that the God of Heaven will turn and overturn, combinations, powers, and kingdoms, until the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our God and his Christ. To all appearances there is a great field open for labor in this region, and as we have had some encouragement that some of the first Elders are coming this way, we shall look for them in the spring."

This letter indicates a little the depths of religious feeling in the character of John Badger. Later, true to his faith and the call of gathering, he disposed of his property in Charleston in 1836 or 1837 and made his Hegira to the holy city of Kirtland. Lydia Ripley tells us in her autobiography of how she attended meetings with her parents in the Kirtland Temple (she would have been only seven), and of how she attended school in the upper story of that building; how she, with her parents, went to visit Father Smith, the first Patriarch of the Church, and how they viewed the mummies and ancient records in his care. There in Kirtland John and his wife received their patriarchal blessings; there they became closely acquainted with the family of the Prophet. Rodney, their oldest son, lived with the family of Hyrum Smith; and their youngest son, John C., lived with William Smith and went with him to Far West, Missouri.

John and his family suffered with the rest of the Saints at Far West, where their faith was tested brutally and proved enduring and pure. At a meeting of the High Council held in Far West on Thursday, December 13, 1838, "John Badger says his confidence in the work is the same as ever, and his faith, if possible, is stronger than ever. He believes that it was necessary that these scourges should come." Several members of the High Council were absent from this meeting, some of them because they had been forced to flee for their lives. The minutes read in part: ". . . Therefore it being necessary that those vacancies be filled, the meeting was called for that purpose, and also to express each other's feelings respecting the word of the Lord; President Brigham Young presiding. The council was opened by prayer by Elder Kimball. . . (later John made the remarks quoted above) . . . The Council was organized as follows: Voted that . . . John Badger (fill) the place of George Morly, No. 7 . . . The Council adjourned until Friday evening, six o'clock. Closed by prayer by President Brigham Young. /s/ E. Robinson, Clerk." John's name was also shown as No. 7 on the High Council at their meeting Wednesday, December 19, 1838. (There were 12 members on the Council.)

John and Lydia and their family, along with the hundreds of other Saints, were victims of the mob violence that raged in Caldwell County during the winter of 1838-39, and John and Rodney were called out to help protect the members. John was among the signers of the covenant drawn up on 29 January 1839 pledging mutual assistance in removing the Saints from Missouri, and soon afterwards he and his family journeyed to their new promised land, Nauvoo.

Lydia R. says that her parents were compelled to cross the Mississippi to Montrose, Iowa, to find shelter for her mother, who was desperately ill. Apparently they remained in or near Montrose, for several years at least, as Lydia Ripley was baptized there by her father in the spring of 1840 (March), and he died there that fall. TIMES AND SEASONS, the early Nauvoo newspaper, had notice of John's death in its January 1841 issue: "John Badger of Vermont, died 30 October 1840 in Lee County, Iowa, age 40"; and another reference gives the exact place of his death as Ambrosia, Lee County. Lydia says that he died of "lung fever" caused by exposure—a tragic story repeated a thousand times in these days.

Widow Badger survived her husband nearly four years, but she finally passed away in 1844 in Nauvoo, her death hastened by persecution. In its issue of 18 September 1844, the NAUVOO NEIGHBOR marked her passing: "Lydia Badger died during the week ending September 9, 1844, age 46 years, 4 months and 25 days, of dropsy." So Lydia Ripley and her young brothers were orphans—she, at 13, older in the experience of suffering, persecution, death and sorrow than many of us will ever be.

We should feel honored to have as our forefathers such people as John Badger and his wife, Lydia Chamberlain. Whether we agree with their religious convictions or not, we must revere their memory and respect them for their fortitude and unflinching devotion to a cause which they had embraced with their whole heart and soul in the belief that it was Good. How many of us, their descendants, have such devotion to any cause?

The children of John and Lydia Badger:

1. Rodney, b. Waterford, Vt., 4 Feb 1823/4; d. 29 Apr 1853; m. Nancy Garr.
2. John Chamberlain, b. Waterford, 12 Sept 1825; d. 15 Nov 1888; m. Kindness Ann Hanes.
3. Lydia Ripley, b. Charleston, Vt., 16 Mar 1831; d. 9 May 1906; m. Jerome Napoleon Remington.