

Samuel Jackson
Mission to the Southern States
(1881-1883)

Sometime in the late spring or early summer of 1881 thirty-six year old Samuel Jackson received a call from President John Taylor to serve in the Southern States Mission. Samuel was a farmer living in Nephi, Utah and the father of five children ranging in age from 11 to one year. He and his wife, Hannah, also cared for his elderly father, Benjamin, who lived with the family. The call was not unexpected but Samuel was not home to receive it. He had been called away by other responsibilities. His wife Hannah opened the letter, read it and then penned the following response:

Nephi City June 28th

President Taylor

Dear Brother

I received your letter requesting my husband to be prepared for his mission. I regret to say he is not at home he is 350 miles west from here but I will communicate with him immediately. He was obliged to go but left word with me if word come to let him know. He will have to come home with a team he cannot be here for that date.

*Your Sister in the Gospel
Hannah Jackson¹*

While the letter hints matter-of-factly at the heavy responsibilities born by both Samuel and his young wife, the affirmative response to the call is clear. Three weeks later, Hannah again wrote to President Taylor, explaining that her husband would be ready to leave for his mission as soon as he returned home.

Nephi City July 13

President Taylor

Dear Brother

I have just received an answer from my husband he says he will be home about the first of August. He says he will be ready to go on his mission when he gets home. He did not get my letter until the 11th.

*Your Sister in the Gospel
Hannah Jackson*

About six weeks later, in response to another letter from President Taylor, Samuel himself declared himself ready and willing to depart:

*Nephi Juab Co.
August 23rd/81*

President John Taylor,

¹ This and the following two letters are found in *First Presidency missionary calls and recommendations, 1877-1918*, microfilm CR 1 168, reel 1, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Dear Brother

I received your welcome letter, dated 18th and contents noted. I am ready and will be in Salt Lake City at the appointed time.

*I am your brother in the covenant
Samuel Jackson*

Samuel was set apart in Salt Lake City on Saturday, 17 September 1881 along with his brother-in-law, Charles Andrews, and James Jenkins, also of Nephi, Utah.² He left for the Southern States Mission, along with Elders Andrews and Jenkins, by train the following Monday morning and on arriving at his destination was assigned to labor in Alabama.³ No mission journal has yet come to light so what follows has been gleaned from the history of the Southern States Mission, much of which in turn is based on reports published in the *Deseret News*.

After arriving in Alabama, Samuel was assigned to labor with Elder Benjamin L. Bowen from Tooele, Utah. For the first eight months their efforts were focused in Cullman and Morgan Counties, two contiguous counties located in north central Alabama. In a letter of May 25, 1882 written at Falkville, Morgan County, Elder Bowen reported on the progress of the work that he and Samuel were doing. According to a report in the *Deseret News*,

He states that he and companion had the pleasure of adding five members to the Church by baptism lately, and the prospect is good for more in Morgan and Cullman Counties. A recent trip to Franklin County also indicated that a good work is probable in that part of the state.⁴

Soon after this, John Morgan, President of the Southern States Mission, visited Alabama and assigned Samuel to work with Charles Andrews in Morgan and Cullman counties. While Morgan County was established in 1818, Cullman County was relatively new, having been established only four years prior to Samuel's arrival by German immigrants from Cincinnati, Ohio. It was here, while traveling with Elder Andrews that they were mobbed.⁵ The *Deseret News* reported the incident this way:

**THE MOBOCRATIC SPIRIT
ELDERS PERSECUTED IN CULLMAN
COUNTY, ALABAMA**

From Elder Charles Andrews and Samuel Jackson we have received the following statement of an exhibition of mobocracy, manifested to them in Cullman County, Alabama:

² Mission Record, 1881-1890, nos. 106, 107, 108. Charles Andrews was the husband of his wife Hannah's sister, Sarah Ann Jaques.

³ *Deseret News*, September 19, 1881. All newspaper citations are reproduced in the Southern States Mission manuscript history and historical report 1832-1964, v. 3, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. This document is available online at <http://churchhistorycatalog.lds.org/>.

⁴ *Deseret News* 31:305.

⁵ *Deseret News*, November 21, 1883 and *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, November 21, 1883.

"On Sunday, June 4th, we held two meetings at the house of Brother Harris, one of the members of the church in that part. About ten o'clock the same night we were attacked by a mob of eight or ten men, with rocks. They were ambushed behind some trees that had blown down. We had just stepped outside when they commenced throwing at us with great fury. But only one missile struck Brother Jackson on the leg after it had struck the ground and lost its force. As soon as the mob had thrown the rocks they ran off and did not return that night.

The next day we left that county and went on to Morgan County. We returned into Cullman County on Sunday, June 25th, to hold meeting, where we had an appointment to fill, ten miles from where we were mobbed. We filled the appointment but heard of some threats being made against us. They did not bother us, however.

The next day we were advised by some influential men to leave the county; they said if we did not they would use violence on us, so we thought it best to leave for a while.

We are now in Wilson county, Tennessee, where I labored before going to Alabama. We both feel well in the work of spreading the gospel among those who have not had a chance to hear it.⁶

Samuel and Charles continued to serve together in Wilson County, Tennessee until Charles was released, "on account of failing health." He returned to Nephi in August of 1882, but not before the pair baptized two new members there.⁷ Next Samuel was paired with Elder James Jamison Adams from Parowan, Utah. The two opened up a new field of labor in Jackson and Putnam Counties. On 20 March, 1883 Samuel was appointed president of the East Tennessee Conference and served as such until he was released to come home on November 15, 1883.⁸ He returned to Utah along with James Jenkins and Charles F. Martineau from Logan, Utah. The latter had spent his entire mission in Tennessee. Twenty-two immigrants from Elder Martineau's district accompanied these three returning missionaries and part of them went to the San Luis Valley, Colorado.⁹ Perhaps this accounts in part for the relocation of Samuel and his family to the valley a few years later.

On November 21, 1883 the *Deseret News* reported that Samuel " baptized in all 13 souls and assisted other brethren to perform that ceremony in numbers of other cases. As a general thing he was treated very kindly, and he . . . places high value on his missionary experience."¹⁰

⁶ *Deseret News* 31:393. Based on the last paragraph, the letter quoted in the article seems to have been written by Charles Andrews who was first assigned to Tennessee.

⁷ *Deseret News* 31:508.

⁸ *Deseret News*, 21 November 1883, *op. cit.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*