

**Autobiography of Roxena Mecham Carter**, as recorded by her daughter daughter, Anelia (Carter) Van Ausdal, 7 October 1916. My name is Roxena Mecham Carter, daughter of Edward Mecham and Irena Currier Mecham. My father joined the Mormon Church when I was seven years of age. he sold his farm in Pennsylvania to go with the Saints to Missouri in September 1837. We traveled two months, stopping in Indiana three weeks with my father's brother Moses Mecham. My father persuaded him to go with us to Missouri although he hadn't yet joined the church. My father's brother, Ephraim, came with us also. Dimick Huntington came to father and told him not to cross the river for the mobs were killing the people. They had killed fifteen that night. I stayed out with father in the rain all night in a wheat field when he was guarding our house. Mother was too sick to leave the house. They killed our neighbor's 15 year-old boy that night along with a little boy and girl and threw their bodies in an old dry well. The older boy's name was Alfred Nelson and I used to go to school with him. The little boy was named Smith. They also killed his father. Joseph Young covered them up with brush. When we arrived there the people that had been expelled by the mobs were sitting on the banks of the Missouri River and many were sick with the fever and ague. It was the last of November! My father drove to a place called Quincy and stopped all night. The family who took us in had just had the cholera one month before. Her husband and twelve children had all died but one. The next morning my father drove 30 miles to a small town called Columbus. He moved us into a house in a field on my birthday December 2nd. The house was very open and cold and we sure suffered. We only stopped there two weeks, then moved into the town of Columbus, Illinois and rented a house from a man named Mr. Chapps. We didn't dare let them know we were Mormons as they were gentiles. We lived in Columbus until spring, then we moved across the Mississippi River to Iowa. It was a fine place with plenty of deer and wild game. Father would go out every few days and shoot the wild turkeys. Deer were as numerous as cattle. They came in herds around our place to eat hazel brush and other browse. I gathered hazelnuts there. We lived there five years as did father's brothers, Uncle Moses and Uncle Lewis. Mother was so frightened of the mobs that father moved us across the Mississippi River. I used to go to the edge of that river and get mud with my toes to make play dishes, then I would bake them. Father put up a house five miles from Nauvoo. We lived there four months and all took sick with the fever ague. Father went away one afternoon and didn't get back until late in the night. While he was gone a big thunder storm came up. It happened that a young man named Henry Snelson was plowing in the field. It rained so hard mother got him to come in the house and the storm was so bad he stayed all night because we were alone. Father came at eleven o'clock. Just then the house was struck by lightening and nearly all torn from over our heads. I was struck and to all appearance I was dead. For a half hour my eyes were knocked loose from my head. Father pressed them back as he laid hands on my head. He sent Henry Snelson a half mile away to get a brother Chase to come to our assistance and he told him I was killed. Mother was burned by the lightening and stunned. Father was also stunned for a few minutes. He laid hands on me and asked the Lord to restore me to life three times before brother Chase got there. He and mother would not give me up, and his faith brought me back. I began to struggle for breath just as brother Chase got on the door step, and he moved us to his house in the night. I was blind for four weeks from the effects of the lightening. We all went into Nauvoo to hear Joseph Smith, our beloved prophet, preach his last sermon before he went to Carthage Jail to give himself up. It was just one week and one day before he was killed. He preached under a bowery. I had come to my eyesight just enough to see the wave of his

hand through the light, but I slowly recovered my sight and the Lord heard our prayers. We then moved into Nauvoo the day he was killed. I went with my parents and the saints to meet them as their bodies were brought into his mansion. We went about two and one-half miles to meet them. We went the next day to view their bodies as they lay there, an embodiment of all that was good and pure. It was a sad day, one never to be forgotten. We also attended their funeral. My father, with twelve other men, buried them in the Nauvoo house cellar at the hour of midnight, and after they heard the mob had found out where they were they took them and buried them in another place. Even after they had so brutally killed them, the mob was not satisfied. The blood thirsty villains were still wishing to do more, for they offered a big reward for their heads. Father rented a house in Nauvoo. The mobs had given orders for all the Mormons to get out of Nauvoo or they would kill us all. There were seven hundred of them. My father and many others moved out the first of June. We crossed the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and stayed at Mount Pisga awhile. Five or six hundred members of the church came on to Council Bluffs. We then went to a place called Bonaparte. My grandfather, Joshua Mecham, died there and grandmother, Permelia, was left there alone; but some of the saints brought her with them to a place called Garden Grove. It was in the fall of the year. Father went with an ox team and brought her to our house in Council Bluffs. The place we lived in there was called Parley's Springs, but after that it was called Carterville. We lived there two or three years and became acquainted with William F. Carter. He played the drum in the Nauvoo Legion Band. We were married on the 13 of March 1846. We crossed the Missouri River on the ice and were married by Brigham Young and then went back to Carterville (which was named for my husband), and lived there for two years. Then we moved to Cainsville, and my husband set up a big blacksmith shop and the mobs burned it to ashes. Also his first wife's house when her baby was only three weeks old. She was ordered out by the mob and she sat on a goods box and watched her house burn. Just before I was married, my father was so sick with measles I had to drive three ox teams and yoke them up. I drove them 500 miles. I drove two yoke of oxen and one yoke of cows all on one wagon. Mother had two small children and father was too sick to drive. The measles settled in his back. Sometimes the young men of the camp would come and help me yoke up the cattle. When we got to the Bluffs six hundred Mormons were called on by the governor to go and fight the Mexicans. President Brigham Young told them to go and there would not be a drop of blood shed and his prophecies were correct. They beat the drums for volunteers and my mother and I saw father fall in to line in the ranks, although he was weak and could hardly walk. Then Brigham Young sent for him to come to his camp that night and he said to father, "Brother Mecham, I don't want you to go with the Battalion. You are too weakly a man. Stay behind and help build houses for the widows that will be left." And he did. He went into the timber and cut logs for two houses, one for us and one for William F. Carter's first wife Sarah York. He built her house adjoining ours. He would cut logs and I would haul them with an ox team. The six hundred volunteers went and we stayed there three years. In Cainsville my husband made hobbles and horse shoes, and many garden hoes for the gold diggers that were enroute to California. He sold them and got plenty of money to go on our journey to Salt Lake City (they arrived in time to be counted on the 1850 census). I carried my baby across the plains. She was so small and weak. When we got there he gave one thousand dollars for one home and he sold stock for another home. We lived there fourteen months, then sold out and moved to Provo. He rented a farm from Isaac Robbins. We lived there three years. My husband went up on the east bench in Provo and took up one hundred acres of land where the asylum now stands. He built two houses for his families to live in. In

1852 he was called on a mission to the East Indies. He and Brother Forthingham went from Provo to California in an ox team. He sold his oxen and violin for transportation across the ocean to Calcutta, and he stayed there three years. As soon as he left home, there was trouble with the Indians, and the Blackhawk war broke out. My father and Uncle Lewis Mecham lived up by us. One day some Indians came up there. They looked angry, and they muttered something to themselves. Father and Uncle Lewis took their families and ours that day and went down to the town of Provo for fear of being killed, and I believe we would have, for the next morning they went up there and the Indians had shot arrows into our pigs and chickens. So we had to move to town to stay. I am the mother of ten children, 100 grandchildren and a good many great grandchildren and great great grandchildren. I was born in Salem Township, Mercer County, Pennsylvania. My name is Roxena Mecham Carter. My father's name is Edward Mecham, my mother's name is Irena Currier. My father's mother is Permelia Chapman Mecham. His father was Joshua Mecham. My mother's father was John Currier and his wife was Sally A. Silver. My husband was William F. Carter. Our children were: Irene Chatwin b. 1849, Elvira Houghton b. 1851, Edward M. Carter b. 1853, Arletta Chatwin b. 1855, William F. Carter b. 1858, Meribah Clemens b. 1860, Sally A. Richmond b. 1862, Junietta Wall b. 1865, Amasa Carter b. 1868, Anelia Van Ausdal b. 1872. My mother and I were baptized into the Mormon Church when I was ten years old in 1840 by Nathan Tanner. We both were confirmed by the Prophet Joseph Smith. We were baptized in a big creek in Iowa and we were confirmed on the bank of the stream. I was 16 years old when I was married 13 March 1846, and was endowed in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City, 25 October 1869 by Brigham Young.