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**ACCOUNT OF SAMUEL WHITNEY RICHARDS, AGE NINETEEN  
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In the winter of 1843-44, about six months prior to the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, a messenger was sent to me from Nauvoo, to ask me if I would be one of a company of twenty-five young men whom he wished to send out to pioneer the Rocky Mountains and Lower California, to find a place for the Church to go to. The persecution was getting so strong then in Nauvoo that the Prophet Joseph foresaw that the Church would have to leave, retire from the civilized world, and go into the mountains.

I am thankful that I can say I was quite intimate with the Prophet. My acquaintance up to this time was of a most endearing character.

I gladly responded to the request. Weekly meetings were held for the purpose of instructing the company thus selected. These meetings were attended by the presiding authorities, including the Prophet's counselors, Sidney Rigdon and Hyrum Smith--also several of the Apostles. I attended four meetings and at one of them which was in charge of Hyrum Smith, and three or four of the Twelve were also present, it was said that Joseph had remarked he wanted young men for that mission who could go upon the mountains and talk with God face to face, as Moses did upon Mount Sinai, and learn from Him where His people should make a home. My first thought was to resign at once.

The idea of going into the mountains and talking with God face to face, was more than I, as a boy, could think of encountering. But after a few moments' reflection I thought I would ask my heavenly Father before I decided the matter.

I went home and upon my knees by my bedside I prayed for some manifestation that would satisfy my mind as to what I should do. My prayer was answered. I retired to my bed and remained there for about four hours, and when I awoke I was prepared to go upon that journey and do just as the Prophet wanted me to do. During that four hours I saw all that I expect to see if I

should live thousand years. I came to this valley and went down into Southern California. Then I was prompted to go father, and I went into the northern part of Mexico. I returned from there to Jackson County, Missouri, and there I stayed and helped build the temple. I saw that temple thoroughly completed. When this was done, the vision continued, and I went and laid down my body in the ground, and my spirit left this tabernacle. Then I traversed this continent from end to end. I saw the Garden of Eden as it was in the beginning and as it will be restored again. It was a land filled with verdure and vegetation and all manner of fruits, on which man was living. I saw it filled with cities, towns, and villages, and people happy, living under the administration of divine Providence--resurrected beings enjoying immortality and eternal lives. It was a Garden of Eden in very deed. No ploughing, sowing, reaping or mowing, but trees bearing fruit of all kinds, and vines and small fruit among the green grass.

All this was given to me as a result of responding to the wishes of the Prophet to go to the mountains. The outfit of the party was to be two animals for each man, one to ride and one to pack; a double-barreled gun, one barrel for shot and one for ball, with which we were to provide our living on the way; and each one to take no less than five hundred dollars in cash, with which to purchase lands to settle upon if necessary.

When this was properly understood, he went with his brother Hyrum across the river, in a westerly direction, as was supposed by some to escape the pending trouble seemingly coming upon the people; but by others it was supposed that his intention was to join the pioneer party when it should go out, and be their leader to the mountains. But he was followed by those who didn't like the idea of his leaving, and while they were pleading with him to return, he told them, "If I go back, I go as a lamb to the slaughter." Nevertheless, they were determined he should return and he went back to Nauvoo. From there he went to Carthage and we all know the history of what followed [his martyrdom].