

HISTORY OF  
ORMUS EPHRAIM BATES

PIONEER OF 1851

WRITTEN BY  
ORMUS A. BATES, GRANDSON



## A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ORMUS EPHRAIM BATES

BY

ORMUS A. BATES

Ormus E. Bates, son of Cyrus Bates and Lydia Harrington, was born 25th of March 1815 at Ellisberg, Jefferson County, New York.

He married Phoebe Mariah Matteson, born 31st of Jan. 1817, in (probably) Jefferson County, New York, in 1835 at Ellisberg of same county and state, by whom he had five sons and four daughters:

Orson Parley, b 3rd of March 1836 at Ellisberg N. Y.  
Erin Lafayette b. Dec. 23, 1838 at Ellisberg, N. Y.  
Loverne Emerette, b. Feb. 4, 1841 at Henderson, Jefferson Co. N. Y.  
Mary Elizabeth, b. Dec. 5, 1842 " " " " "  
Ormus Elias, b, April 11, 1845 at Nauvoo, Illinois.  
Orissa Mariah, b. Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> at Winter Quarters, Nebraska.  
Arlin Henry, b. Feb. 14, 1851 at Council Bluffs, Iowa.  
Marintha Altheria, b. March 14, 1853 at Batesville, Utah.  
Myron William, b. Oct. 18, 1857 at Batesville, Utah.

With his family of wife and four children, he moved from Henderson, Jefferson County, New York to Nauvoo, Illinois in 1843. Here he was active in church affairs, was appointed by proper authorities of the Church, with others, to collect as agents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, donations and tithings for the Temple in the city of Nauvoo and for other purposes, and having complied with all necessary requirements by entering into bonds to our entire satisfaction. ( Ref. Journal History Jan. 31, 1845)

He is mentioned as one taking part with a group of 24 elders who met in prayer circle in the Temple March 24, 1846.

While in Nauvoo he married Morilla Spink on Dec. 23, 1844, whose son Orville E. was born on October 21, 1845.

The next year, probably the latter part of 1846, he took his family, under threat of mob violence, to Winterquarters, Neb.. where on January 24, 1847, he was a member of a company of armed men under Hosea Stout, chosen to participate in an expedition against the Indians. Just what the results of this expedition were is probably recorded in the history of the Church.

During this year, 1847, he married a third wife, Matilda Reeves, from Rochester or Hartland, New York, at Winter Quarters.

As the movement was ever westward, we find him next in Council Bluffs, Iowa, where he kept cattle and horses for the Church, reserved to equip the trains for migrating Saints, some for Orson Pratt whose first wife was Ormus Bates' sister; he had a considerable number of stock of his own.

Because of this occupation, he remained here about four years. In the meantime, the Saints under Brigham Young's counsel were using every effort to leave the states because of a growing bitterness and restlessness in both North and South, and to gather to Utah and help in the building up of Zion in the tops of the mountains.

Accordingly, the Bateses joined the company under William Cummings, and with his stock left Council Bluffs in the spring of 1851, arriving in Salt Lake City on October 5th. of the same year. To be more specific, the Cummings company left the last outpost, Kaneshville, June 21st 1851, divided into several units of fifty and subdivided into tens. ( See Hammond's Document in Church Emigration MS Vol. 2 ) a diary of a part of this company recorded each day.

Ormus E. Bates remained in the Salt Lake valley during the winter of 1851 and in the spring of 1852 took his family and herds westward, around the point of the Oquirrh range of mountains to the group of tule springs and located a tract of land  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of Tooele and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of the Ezra T. Benson saw mill.

Here he built a house and began the erection of a fort near a large spring of pure, clear water that bubbled up through moving, turbulent quicksand.

The fort was built of adobe mud laid to a thickness of two feet, and 12 ft. high, enclosing a court five by six rods in dimension with a gate through which teams could be driven on the east side.

In my memory, it seems the fort was never finished on the *sides* which was flanked by sloughs of standing water - partially, at least - no doubt a reasonably safe protection against the Indian raids and an excellent home or retreat for ducks and mosquitoes.

Indians, at this time, were not friendly, to speak mildly, and on one occasion, at least waylaid and killed a herder who attempted to trail and recover his cattle.

Ormus E. Bates was a believer in the counsel of Brigham Young, " It is better and cheaper to feed them (the Indians) than to fight them".

The surrounding tract of land was for many years known as Bates Ranch, but oftener called "The Ranch" by people on the east side of Tooele valley. On November 1, 1855, the county court set aside another tract to be named the Rose Springs Forting District, described as follows:

Commencing at S.W. corner of the Ormus E. Bates Forting District, thence north along the county road to the Ezra T. Benson District (Head of the Mill Springs) thence east to the foot of the mountains, thence south along the foot of the mountains to a point directly east of the southeast corner of the Ormus E. Bates Forting District, thence west to the place of beginning. The springs at the foot of the mountain were first called Rose Springs, afterwards, the Sellwood Place, and later Bryan's Springs.

The Batesville School District and Precinct later established, to include these two forting Districts, the East Side and West Side. There was, no doubt, an understood line on the south side of these Forting Districts.

Ormus was at that time active in civic affairs. He was named Orator of the Day at a celebration of the 24th of July 1856 at Tooele City.

He was appointed to succeed John Rowberry as Probate Judge of Tooele County in 1859 by the Territorial Legislature (Journal History Jan. 24, 1859) and was regularly reelected to succeed himself the next year 1860.

The County Seat was located at that time at Richville (Milton) the settlement consisting of five families, a gristmill, the remains of a sawmill and a Court House. This was three miles north of the Ranch.

During these few years, Bates and his sons built two homes in the fort and one a short distance south near a small spring which we boys called Grandma's Spring.

He was set apart September 9th and left on a mission on Sept. 22nd 1860 to the United States with a large group including Orson Pratt. On this occasion President Young appealed for funds from Bishops and families in Zion to aid these missionaries who were unable to provide for themselves, naming Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow as needing such help; but stated, "Such men as Ormus E. Bates can take care of themselves." (Journal History Sept. 13, 1860).

1862 Mar. 17 ( From Mill. Star)

" News from New York " " Brother Ormus E. Bates who has just returned from the West ( perhaps on a special mission to Florence Neb.) reported the way open and favorable prospect for our emigration and Rail Roads would provide transportation to Florence."

The 13th of June 1862, he, with Elder H. S. Eldredge met the Elders and Saints arriving at Castle Gardens on the Ship Manchester and arranged for their trip to Florence.

He returned, probably with this company, across the plains during 1862.

Finding the stock range unsatisfactory in Tooele Valley, he moved a part of his family south into Rush Valley, where feed conditions were more promising and located on the East Canyon Creek, which was later Bates' Creek and now Ophir Creek, a short distance below the mouth of the canyon. Here he built several cabins to accommodate his now augmented family.

He had acquired a large herd of sheep, about 3,000 head, with cattle and horses ranging in the hills in summer and out in the valley during the winter. Little snow ever fell in this valley, but white sage and budsage furnished the finest of winter feed.

Here he prospered with his several wives and families. The boys herded the sheep, tended the cattle, rounded up and "busted" broncos. The girls helped their mothers cook, keep house, scour, card and spin wool and make clothing; so that Ormus, like Abraham of old, became prosperous, with his flocks and his herds and his wives and daughters and his sons; but, too bad, there came the Ophir mining excitement, right to his door. His young son Cyrus about 18, discovered a vein of rich horn silver, which he named the Mountain Lion and located with the father as co-owner. The mountain is still called the Lion Hill. There were taken from near the surface many thousands of dollars in horn silver pickets almost pure silver were shoveled out without blasting. Excitement ran high and Salt Lake mining men commenced bidding for the property. Cyrus sold his half to the father for \$10,000. Ormus held for \$50,000. He refused a bid of \$40,000.

In the meantime much money was spent in development and pockets of ore petered out. In 1872 silver was demonetized and dropped too low for mining, leaving Ormus heavily in debt. His cattle and sheep helped to ease his finances but the worry and trouble undermined his health and he was suddenly stricken with heart failure and on August 4, 1873, 58 years, 4 months, and 19 days of age, leaving six widows and 40 children.

Physically he was well set up, six feet tall, weighed 240 pounds. His complexion was light, eyes grey and piercing, his strength almost prodigious. It was said of him that no man in the county could handle him. Yet he was always affable and pleasantly agreeable, when not aroused, but like a lion when attacked.

He was pleasant and affable with his friends, sociable and hospitable with strangers or friends, but firm and forceful when crossed.

His wives, though sometimes complaining respected him; His sons and daughters loved and obeyed him.

His was the life of a Pioneer, from Pioneer stock of Massachusetts coming from England in 1633 to Boston; and rugged frontiersmen keeping abreast of the ever westward movement- Massachusetts, Vermont, Western New York, Illinois, thence to the territory of Utah. A colonizer, he, who sought not comfort and ease, but space for expansion. Like Jacob of Old, he needed room for his flocks and his herds, his wives and his sons and their sons.

He was always friendly with the Indians when they were not hostile. He fed rather than fought them, and though they raided the herds of others in Tooele County, no one ever knew of their stealing a horse or steer branded with the familiar "O.B", Ormus Bates' brand

The Deep Creek and Skull Valley Utes, numbers of them, came to the Bates Ranch on East Canyon creek every fall to gather pine nuts. (Pinyons- so-called by the Spanish). Every time they greeted him with, "How, Bitch, (Bates) and called him, "Heap Wino Bitch" (Very good Bates). Of course, they came to beg something, everything. "Shay, gimme biscuit. Me pappose hongry, heap cry. Me wan' um prow, (flour) sugha (sugar)

After a time of gathering and roasting the nuts and begging what they could around the country, then perhaps the chief came to the house: " Shay, Bitch, me wan'um shteeh (steer) heep waino meet." Ormus would laugh a little and hesitate. " What you want of steer, Tabby?"

"Me wan'um heep meat, pix um shmoke. Me squaw (imitates cutting up meat) waino pix um, shmoke, pack um ,uh ! (grunt meaning over mountain) Shkurr-Warrey.( Skull Valley) " All right", Ormus would agree. "One steer, see?" (holding up one finger) " You ketch 'um, waino pix um."

That was enough. Soon the young braves were astride their mustanges and off they would go into the hills among the cedars. When the steer was found they herded him out of the cedars onto the flat, then- " Yip! yi! Yip, Yip, yi! Yi! Yi! Round and round they chased the poor beast until he was hot and winded. Then followed the kill. Squaws were immediately at hand with knives to skin and butcher the carcass, then they cut the lean flesh into narrow strips which was carried to camp, hung onto horizontal willows resting on forked stakes, under which a slow fire was made and the meat was thus dried as the fir was kept going several days, until the meat was hard and black. Then it was packed in blankets or bags, packed on ponies. Then the camp broke up and the company "Pikeway" for their wickieups over the mountains to the west.

Grandma Bates (Phoebe Mariah) told this story in which it is evident Grandpa was not always mild where Indians were concerned.

One day an arrogant buck came into the fort in Tooele Valley from a band of Indians camped some distance from the fort. He strutted around asking and demanding everything in sight, and picked up some article as though to take it, anyway. Ormus walked up to him. "You pike way! Git!" Then seizing him by the shoulder and legs, boosted him up and threw him over the gate out of the court. The gate was eight feet high. It was done so suddenly that the Indian had no time to get out of the way or defend himself. Grandma chuckled and laughed in her reminiscence.

Another similar case occurred not far from Kaneshville, a band of warriors appeared one morning before the train had started, probably to beg and to size up the company. The young leader, evidently a chief rode forward to "pow wow". Some of the leaders of the company stood out a short distance from the camp to size up the braves and find out what they wanted. Ormus E. Bates was one of these men. A circumstance of which the following scene was the sequel, occurred a month or so later earlier while Mr. Bates was gathering up the cattle. In his absence from his herder's cabin, one day, some Indians broke in and stole everything they could carry off; among which were some clothes.

Ormus now discovered this young chief had on one of the shirts. Without further parley, he stepped up to the Indian with the command, " Give me my shirt!" Then he seized his leg, jerked him from his pony, tore the shirt from his back, cuffed him several times, then throwing him back on the horse, gave the pony a slap on the hip, with, " Now git, pike way and stay away!"

The other braves sat on their horses and laughed and jeered as their leader was being man handled, deeming it great sport to see their young leader get what was coming to him.

One other incident of the journey across the plains was told to us by Grandma. Ormus was driving ahead of the train one day, accompanied by his youngest wife, Matilda, in the open carriage. They had gotten perhaps a half mile ahead of the train over a hill, when suddenly two Indians rode down from ambush upon the couple in the carriage. Ormus was surprised but not unprepared. As the Indians dropped from their ponies, one on each side of the team, with their hunting knives in hand about to be used to cut loose the team from the wagon, Ormus crew his two "six shooters" called "beaver boxes", held them forward, one pointing to the left and the other right. He had some knowledge of the Indians tongue and threatened to kill if they cut the harness, so they remounted their ponies and Bates turned back to the company. "Forewarned is forearmed", and the train passed on unmolested.

Ormus E. Bates became a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, being baptized by Orson Pratt, July 4, 1838, at Henderson, Jefferson County, New York, and held the office of Elder until his death.

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ORMUS EPHRAIM BATES

On the first page of this sketch are names of his first family.  
Here are recorded those from later marriages.

- (Morilla Spink M. Nauvoo, Ill. 23 Dec. 1844.  
(Issue - Orville E. B. Nauvoo, Ill. 21 Oct. 1845  
(Sarah Marinda b. Winter Quarters 9 June 1847 - Iowa  
(Angenette M. b. . . .
- II. (Onley . . . .  
(Lansing . . . .  
(Aretha M. b. Tooele, Tooele Co., Utah 6 Feb. 1855.  
(Marian Pauline b. " " " " 22 Aug. 1865
- (Matilda Reeves b. 11 Apr. 1828, Rochester N.Y. M. 1847 W.Q.  
(Issue-Cyrus James Bates b. 3 June 1849, Harris Grove, Iowa.
- III. (Lydia b. 14 Aug. 1853, Batesville, Tooele Co.  
(Irene Larona Bates b. 17 May 1856 Batesville, Tooele Co., Utah.  
(Julia Bates b. 18 Feb. 1861, Batesville, Tooele, Utah.
- (Ellen Meham b. 4 July 1836 m. Salt Lake City  
(Issue - Armintha
- IV. (Oliver M.  
(Albert  
(Lillie May b. 8th May 1868.
- (Margaret Busenberk 29 Dec. 1836 Hartland Niagara, N. Y.  
( m. 23 June 1853 Salt Lake City, Utah.  
(Lucelia Abigail b. 1st Apr. 1854 Batesville, Tooele, Utah.
- V. (Orin William b. 1 May 1858 " " "  
(Isaac b. 21 April 1864 " " "  
(Jane Margaret b. 3 May 1866 " " "  
(George Moroni b. 21 Apr. 1870 " " "
- (Sarah Hymas b. . . . (m. Oct. 10, 1862, Salt Lake City  
(Issue - Lolla (married second husband at Hyde Park,  
VI. (Ormus Ernest (Cache Co., Utah. Moved to Alberta, Canada.  
(Herman  
(Otena
- (Sarah Weir (Ware) b. 18 Dec. 1841 Dayton, Devon, England  
( m. 1862, Salt Lake City.  
(Celestia Bates b. 12 June 1864 Batesville, Tooele, Utah.  
(Annie Bates b. 23 Mar. 1866 Ophir, Utah " Co.  
VII. (Arthur Bates b. 14 Feb. 1868 Ophir, Utah " "  
(Almeda Bates b. 8 May 1871.  
(Helaman Bates Child

Sarah Weir (Ware) Bates married William Edwin Hall, July 23,  
1875, at Ophir, Tooele, Utah. Issue - Ella Hall who married George Hannahs.