

to Jackson county, Missouri, where they subsequently suffered during the persecutions. They were also identified with the Church in Clay and Caldwell counties, but in 1838 nearly the entire Whitmer family turned away from the Prophet Joseph, and never afterwards became identified with the Church. Peter Whitmer, sen., died in Richmond, Ray county, Missouri, Aug. 12, 1854, and his wife died in January, 1856. Their earthly remains rest on the old Richmond graveyard, side by side of their son Jacob (one of the Eight Witnesses) and their son-in-law, Oliver Cowdery. Next to the Smith family the Whitmers are prominently connected with the early history of the Church. Of the Three Witnesses, one (David) was a Whitmer, and another (Cowdery) afterwards married one of the daughters of the senior Peter Whitmer. Of the Eight Witnesses, four were Whitmers, and the fifth (Hiram Page) married into the Whitmer family.

WHITMER, Mary Musselman, the only woman who saw the plates of the Book of Mormon, was born Aug. 27, 1778, and became the wife of Peter Whitmer. Together with her husband she was baptized by Oliver Cowdery in Seneca lake, April 18, 1830. Among the early members of the Church she was familiarly known as Mother Whitmer, she being the wife of Peter Whitmer, sen., and mother of five of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon. Her son, David Whitmer, before his death, testified on several occasions that his mother had seen the plates, and when Elders Edward Stevenson and Andrew Jenson visited Richmond, Missouri, in 1888, John C. Whitmer, a grandson of the lady in question, testified in the following language: "I have heard my grandmother (Mary Musselman Whitmer) say on several occasions that she was shown the plates of the Book of Mormon by a holy angel, whom she always called Frother Nephi. (She undoubtedly refers to Moroni, the angel who had the plates in charge.) It was at the time, she said, when the translation was going on at the house of the elder Peter Whitmer, her husband. Joseph Smith with his wife and Oliver Cowdery, whom David Whitmer a short time previous had brought up from Harmony, Pennsylvania, were all boarding with the Whitmers, and my grand-

mother in having so many extra persons to care for, besides her own large household, was often overloaded with work to such an extent that she felt it to be quite a burden. One evening, when (after having done her usual day's work in the house) she went to the barn to milk the cows, she met a stranger carrying something on his back that looked like a knapsack. At first she was a little afraid of him, but when he spoke to her in a kind, friendly tone and began to explain to her the nature of the work which was going on in her house, she was filled with unexpressible joy and satisfaction. He then untied his knapsack and showed her a bundle of plates, which in size and appearance corresponded with the description subsequently given by the witnesses to the Book of Mormon. This strange person turned the leaves of the book of plates over, leaf after leaf, and also showed her the engravings upon them; after which he told her to be patient and faithful in bearing her burden a little longer, promising that if she would do so, she should be blessed; and her reward would be sure, if she proved faithful to the end. The personage then suddenly vanished with the plates, and where he went, she could not tell. From that moment my grandmother was enabled to perform her household duties with comparative ease, and she felt no more inclination to murmur because her lot was hard. I knew my grandmother to be a good, noble and truthful woman, and I have not the least doubt of her statement in regard to seeing the plates being strictly true. She was a strong believer in the Book of Mormon until the day of her death." Mother Whitmer died in Richmond, Ray county, Missouri, in January, 1856. (See also sketch of David Whitmer and Peter Whitmer; "Historical Record," Vol. 7, p. 621; "Juvenile Instructor," Vol. 24, p. 22.)

MARKS, William, president of the Nauvoo Stake of Zion from 1839 to 1844, was born Nov. 15, 1792, in Rutland, Rutland county, Vermont. His name occurs for the first time in the history of Joseph Smith under date of May, 1837, when "the 'Messenger and Advocate' office and contents were transferred to William Marks, of Portage, Allegany county, New York; and Smith and Rigdon continued the office, by power of