

Erastus P. Williams' Diary – 1841
Transcribed by Paul G. Zeller & LDS missionaries & Ruth Finn with Judy Safford

February 1841

February 1st warm and pleasant I went to mill this afternoon and left my grist; settled with Mr. Chase -snowed very fast this evening, in consequence I did not go to the Monthly Concert.

2nd Clear and very cold, a poor “Candlemas” drew in pine logs to the saw mill

3rd carried wife and Mrs. Dutton to Mr. Brooks.

4th drew wood for Mr. Grow, clear and cold; found 4 dead pigs and 2 live in the hog pen this morning

5th Finished drawing for Mr. Grow Amasa Dutton took my sleigh this morning and gone a visiting voyage hope he will have a good journey and profitable job

6th Saturday evening I have fixed the stable in the farther barn, and tied up the cattle there tonight for the first time; warm and pleasant cloudy this afternoon, this week is fast drawing to a close and where am I? is my weeks work done and well done? what have I done for Eternity? am I any better prepared for death or to live than I was last week? Oh God! help me to feel the worth of time, help me to remember that life is short and uncertain and that Eternity is long, help me to feel my need of a Saviour; help me to throw myself at the feet of the Saviour, and from this time live, and act for eternity; help me to realize how many blessings and how much mercy I have received and that soon the day of Judgment is coming when I must give account of my stewardship Amen.

7th Sunday cool and cloudy; have been urged by our minister to more humility, prayers and earnestness in Christian duties; exhortations which I need very much; for I am cold and stupid, careless and lazy in religion; how long shall I remain in this frozen state? Oh that I could this night brake from my icy lethargy and live for Eternity and heaven

8th went to the woods, on the hill and cut 8 basswood logs; warm and pleasant

9th drew logs to the mill -a conference meeting at the schoolhouse this evening father came from Granville: stormy this evening

10th father went uncle Davids I went to see Geo Davis but could not trade with him

11 father and Isabel went home I went with them to the West part of Bethel and drove a cow home, cold and blustering

13th very cold and tedious; I went to Dea Kinneys after a pig; Cousin John came here this afternoon and brought Eliza and Miss. *Phila*; had a good visit *considering*

14th Sunday pleasant but cold; very cold for several days past I have been to meeting and carried a letter from Patten Davis to Mr. Drake requesting his attendance at a discussion of principles at East Bethel next week -hope that meeting will be productive of good;-Mr. Drake's text was part of the 6th verse of the 32nd Psalm;a very good discourse and he preached to me

15th Mr. Wight, and David Dutton helped me cut and draw logs David came after a load of hemlock for his sheep, but went to work for me.

16th the *Conference of Churches* commenced today Mr. Sparhock of Pittsfield and Mr. Abbott of Bethel preached the meeting interesting

20th I have been to meeting every day this week but Monday and truly 'twas good to be there, the churches have been awakened and most of them revived; many of the careless and thoughtless are beginning to think and feel Heavenly Father wilt thou bring all the careless to think; may all thy professed followers be revived and strengthened; and Oh! may I be revived, may I be brought humble- may I be willing to be any thing or nothing just as thou shalt order, wilt thou give me patience and a forgiving spirit and may I from this time forth be ready to take up every cross and do every duty with an eye single to thy glory for Christ's sake

21st Sunday Charlotte and Desire went to meeting; I staid with the children, went to meeting this evening Mr. Clark preached from -and that servant that knew his masters will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes he was preaching to me and Oh that I might lay it to heart.

22nd Drawed wood for Mr. Wright. warmer with signs of a thaw.

23rd a conference meeting at our schoolhouse last evening. very warm and pleasant. this morning- about nine o'clock the wind began to blow from the N.W. and the weather grew cold very fast a sudden change in the weather known for many years I went to meeting this afternoon- Mr. Sprout went to Randolph.

25th Mr. Eddy and Mr. Sprout came today went to Bethel to the Nonexistant discussion this afternoon; father and Mr. Paige came here this evening.

26th went to meeting; Mr. Sparhawk and Mr. Cook preached.

27th I have had rather of a lazy time today. the snow fell fast most of the day. Hopson and Desire went to Pomfret this afternoon.

28th Sunday warm and pleasant. I have been to meeting- what good has it done me? it seems as if my heart grew hard every day.

March 1841

Monday March 1st, 1841 *warm and pleasant as a lamb*. Mr. Wright cut and drawed popple logs for me.

2nd went to Mr. Davis, this afternoon. *did not trade with him.*

4th clear but cold and blustering. Mr. Wright and Mr. Wight helped me today. have drawed 18 logs to the mill Marter Van gives up the great chair to Harrison.

6th very cold for a few days past; have drawed 62 logs to the mill this week. Mr. Wright helped me this afternoon.

7th Sunday the snow fell a foot deep last night which made it bad going to meeting. I went, but got there late the sermon was half out. the Communion this afternoon did I indeed commune with my Saviour? am I at all prepared to come to the Lord's table? Lord help me to be more prayerful more watchful more devoted to Thee. help me to love Thee more and serve Thee better than ever yet I have done help to do my every duty with one eye single

8th went to town meeting. is it duty of a Nonresistant to vote at town meeting.

9th a lecture at our schoolhouse this evening just as I was getting ready to go, Mr. Fiske came in and I bought a load of lime. at our schoolhouse this evening Mr. Drake made us a short call this afternoon his text evening was, "What must I do to be saved?" I would that all would make the inquiry in earnest.

10th a meeting at the village today.

12th drawed stone til I broke the sled and then went and got it mended, Dea Flynn and wife came here this evening.

13th the snow fell over foot deep today. went to Paul Flynn's in the storm a visiting hope they were glad to see me.

14th Sunday pleasant after the storm went to meeting Mr. Morse preached.

15th last night Persia was taken with the Croup I went after the doctor as quick as ever I went. he came and relieved her very soon. today she shows but very little symptoms of it

April 1841

April 11th 1841 Sunday evening have not been to meeting today although the day has been very pleasant; very cold last night and probably will be as cold tonight. the season is backward and cold the ground generally covered with snow, hay is very scarce and high, and I am one of the unlucky ones, have bought what I have used for a week and pay \$10.00 per ton rather costly keeping stock, but better than to see them starve yesterday I drawed a load of wood for Mr Grow and a log to the mill and found pretty good sleding; friday, fast day H.B. Dutton's child, a very interesting girl not quite two years of age, was buried. she died of consumption I went to the funeral Mr. Abbot preached his text was "It is good for me that I have been afflicted" it was a solemn and interesting meeting. to me I felt I could sympathise with the bereaved; I too have buried a darling child- an only son but why do we mourn? they have only gone *home* before us

and our loss is their gain; and Oh! that we might lay it to heart and live so that our hopes of meeting them in Heaven may grow brighter and brighter.

11th last thursday James came here brought the news of President Harrison's death. a week ago thursday Rufus Grow died of the canker rash. he was sick but 36 hours the Monday before Dea. Gillett of Sharon died very sudden, last week Dr. Hibard of East of Bethel buried a little girl, she died very sudden of a canker rash; Death is all around us on every side and yet how little do I realize that I may die; Oh! that I could have a realizing sense of my situation- that I could feel my obligation that I would be more faithful in the discharge of every duty especially of self examination. Ryland came from Hartford the 2nd of April he has been there 3 years, but thinks that he has got through there now. last week he went to Granville last Wednesday I sold the Davis' cattle to T.H. Stafford for \$58.00 and he agreed to give them into the list- he sent a boy after them and it took him most of the day to get them home. what more shall I write? nothing. I will go to bed.

December 1841

12th Sunday pleasant and windy but not very cold. yesterday the rain fell moderately, but steadily. all day. yesterday another daughter was added to our family another immortal soul was commuted to our are to train for eternity Shall we train it for heaven or hell? how great are our responsibilities! how great are the mercies and blessings that surround us and how have I improved these mercies how often have I forgotten that it is God that giveth me all things- March 10 1808 Charlotte Stafford was born in Royalton; June 26th 1809 I was born in Barnston Canada when I was 2 ½ years old my father moved to Colebrook N.H. he staid there one year and moved to Plainfield Vt. where he resided three years and then moved to this town when I was 15 I began to *work out* by the month thus passed ten long years the two last of which I worked for T .H Safford. February 25th 1835 I was married to Charlotte Safford, she being in her 27th and I in my 26th year and though brought up under the sound of the gospel we were without God, without hope in the world in June and July of this year a great meeting was held in this town Mr. Birchard attended it and in consequence of that meeting many were added to the church; on the 10th of August 1835 my wife and I made a public profession of our determination walk by faith and live for God- and with about 50 others united with the Congregational Church in this town under the care of Reverend Azel Cornwall Washburn- May 25th 1836 Persia Anna Williams, our first child was born August 8th 1838 Cyrus Stafford Williams, our 2nd child was born: and died Oct. 15th aged 10 weeks- November 8th 1839 Mary Elizabeth Williams was born. November 8th 1841 the day Elizabeth was two years old we moved into our new house- Dec. 11th yesterday our 4th child was born and now we are surrounded with prosperity, peace, plenty, and as good health as we can reasonably expect my parents, brothers, sister, and wife and 3 children are alive, and excepting sister Henrietta are situated near me- who has done all this for me? how can I distrust the goodness of God? –or remain ungrateful or forgetful? Oh! for sovereign grace to subdue this hard and strong heart.