

**Erastus P. Williams' Diary – 1837-1838**  
Transcribed by Paul G. Zeller & LDS missionaries & Ruth Finn with Judy Safford

**January 1837**

January 15<sup>th</sup> 1837 Sunday mother is 57 years old today and grandpa Davis is 84 and is it possible that my mother is so near three score years *time what an empty vapor tis*. it seems but as yesterday my mother was 40 and I a little boy by her side, and now she is old, I am a husband and father, and I add with confidence, a christian.

**April 1837**

April

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday rained all day I was sewed for a rumbill last week and the court was appointed today and had I not settled it we should have had "*cold water*" plenty but it is settled and I am glad of it; the first time I ever was sewed and hope it will be the last but perhaps it is only the beginning of trouble who knows.

10<sup>th</sup> Mrs. Kibbee <Clarissa H.> killed herself last night; what she has suffered no one knows but we know a drunken husband, poverty, hunger, ill health, etc will make misery enough for anyone but her "mortal" rests.

10 Spent the day, most of it at Mr. Kibbees, attending the Coroners inquest the jury brought a verdict. "Guilty of self murder by hanging in a state of mental derangement".

11<sup>th</sup> James sugared off 10 lbs sugar warm and pleasant the snow melts fast sleighs have done running for this winter.

12<sup>th</sup> Mrs. Kibbee was buried today Mr. Abbott preached her funeral sermon his text was "What I do thou knowest not now but shalt know hereafter".

13<sup>th</sup> drew rail timber up from the meadow sold the oxen this afternoon to D. Williams for \$56.68 all the team I have is "*the old mare*" but horses are plenty and cheap.

15<sup>th</sup> borrowed an old horse of Mr. Kinney for the season drew rails on the hill James sugared off 33 lbs and worked on the road, the roads never were worse cut up and torn to pieces than now

16<sup>th</sup> Sunday very pleasant this morning but cold and rainy this afternoon Sam and I went to meeting and left Charlotte and uncle Daniel to keep house, old Mr. Washburn preached he was rather tedious but was the fault in him or me

29<sup>th</sup> Saturday, another week has fled, and so has another month almost and how much work have I done, the ground is froze too hard to mend fence and to wet to plough (the "*old sow*" had four pigs today)

**May 1837**

May 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday evening this is the first warm "*May*" day we have had this spring a fear such a day will start the grass which is very much needed as hay is scarce and feed has not grown any yet the spring is very backward but very little planting is done yet and many have not began their work yet. I have sowed a bushel of rye planted a little the garden and ploughed some, and have not half done mending fence; have drawn part of the manure last wednesday James started for the west the next day at 6. P.M. left Whitehall

**September 1837**

September 13<sup>th</sup> grandpa Davis died this morning last night he complained of a pain in his side but went to bed as usual, slept but little and got up this morning and dressed himself as usual, washed him, and set down on the bed and said "how dreadfully I feel I never felt so before" and lay down. N. proposed calling Uncle Wright's folks but he said "no" he then sat up in bed and said "Nancy I am dying, prepare to meet me in heaven-farewell" lay back on the bed folded his hands and breathed his last like one falling asleep; death had no terrors for him he lived an exemplary life and died as he had lived, he was in the 85<sup>th</sup> year of his age. "*May my last end be like his*"

26<sup>th</sup> Finshed hanging "*money makes the marrige*"

28<sup>th</sup> Lewis S Fish was this day elected Capt

**October 1837**

October 12<sup>th</sup> Mr. Drake was ordained as pastor over the Congregational church in this town-sermon by Mr. Merrill

15<sup>th</sup> Sunday Mr. Drake preached form 2 Cor 4-5 "For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord" and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake"

**January 1838**

January 1<sup>st</sup> my pen has lain idle a long time and it is high time resume it-but what shall I write? shall I write of the goodness of God to me through the past year? where shall I began? I have blest in every thing of we have enjoyed health, our friends are spared us have plenty of food and clothes and have been prospered in all our ways and Oh! how little do I realize how highly I am privileged whilst all my temporal wants are richly supplied, how fares my soul alas I am cold and indifferent careless and stupid my heart is hard and ungrateful and should I longer stay? with the help of God I will be more faithful; will do every so far as I am able will more time in secret prayer, meditation and self examination yet vain are my endeavors without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Almighty God, help me to keep and perform this my vow, keep me in the path of duty and stay the flood of sin within for Christ sake

1<sup>st</sup> warm and pleasant. sleighing good snow 5 inches, fathe helped me on the shed D.S. Turner was married this evening

2<sup>nd</sup> Finished the shed. Hopson came home from Walden, wind south and chill

3<sup>rd</sup> I went to her mothers I went to mill sleighing poor road bare most of the way

4<sup>th</sup> did chores and carried wife to Capt Duttons visiting, rainy sleighing spoilt

5<sup>th</sup> made a lye leach and then went to preparatory lecture and conference Mr. D's text was "let your light so shine others seeing your good works may glorify your father in Heaven" how much has my light shined the year past? it looks dark

-on my way stopt at Bradstreets and bought a sleigh neap and pair of tugs whole cost \$4.25 very hard shower mud deep wagon rolls hard - meetinghouse in Sharon was dedicated today.

6 Froze a little last night I fixed the stable and puttered around hardly thinking this weeks, account is almost sealed for eternity have I done every duty this week.

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday Mr. Fowler preached from these words "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven &c" Communion this afternoon

8<sup>th</sup> Rainy sowed grass seed and made a sleigh seat cleared off this evening

9<sup>th</sup> Froze hard last night I chopt and piled brush on the meadow, gave Mr. Peck a note for \$9.50 for a plough

10<sup>th</sup> Went to singing school this evening a Canada Meeting at the village schoolhouse this evening very cold.

12<sup>th</sup> watched with Mr. Skinner last night he died this morning a few minutes before 6 I have done my chores and slept the rest of the day Mr. Brewers child died last night.

13<sup>th</sup> Mr. Skinner was buried today Mr. Drake preached his funeral sermon this is fourth old man who has died this month. Mr. Havens, Mr. Sumner, Mr. Bowen, Mr. S, "death will invade us by the means appointed"

14<sup>th</sup> Sunday Mr. Drake preached from Matthew 7:7

20<sup>th</sup> Finished cleaning up oats drawed a load of wood &c I can hardly tell what I have been doing through the week and it matters but little in one point of view I have accomplished but little yesterday it rained hard did but little of course -Thursday evening went to singing school wife went as far as Mr. Parkhurst -the darkest night I was ever out in

21<sup>st</sup> Sunday cold with signs of snow went to meeting in the wagon. Mr. D. finished the discourse he began last Sabbath his text this afternoon was "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon"

**May 1838**

May 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday Mr Drake preached from the text "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" the week past will long be remembered by some of our town, M. D Rix's house was burnt; Miss Eliza Hamilton a sprightly young lady died after a short illness of 3 or 4 days. I bade my sister Harriett farewell., she starts for Michigan tomorrow. probably our next meeting will be at the judgment seat of Christ, and Oh Almighty Father keep us, and ours through the journey of life and prepare us both for judgment and for Eternity.

**October 1838**

October 17<sup>th</sup> This day will long be remembered by my wife and I. we this day buried our only son. he was 10 weeks old the day he died he was a large babe, was always well and grew fast. he was pleasant and good natured. *he gained our hearts.* we loved him, never shall I forget his looks and actions last Friday. he appeared to be in perfect health and little did we think our fond hopes were so soon to be blasted, but God has done all things right. friday night he was restless and the next morning the fatal disease showed itself. he died yesterday morning his disease was whooping cough his funeral was attended today at 1 o'clock Mr Drake took for his text "It is appointed unto men once to die," Heb 9:27. the hymns he uses were 83<sup>rd</sup> 1st book, 32<sup>nd</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 225<sup>th</sup> select.