

Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter Day Saints

Office Of The Presiding Bishopric

40 South Main Street

Salt Lake City. Utah

May 11, 1934

Mr. William Pilkington,
Smithfield, Utah

In planning for the services and program at the grave of Martin Harris, we find there are so many features which are important and necessary that the time is to be very crowded. We have however arranged to introduce you and have you say a few words. At the time when those who heard the testimony of Martin Harris are being introduced. The program committee has found it necessary to limit you to two minutes, this will provide only for reference for the personal contact with Martin Harris, and particularly a statement of his last testimony.

Will you please write out your statement and go over it several times, in order that you may be sure that it can be presented in two minutes, and that you can be prepared to read it. There are several to be presented at the same time, and as the entire congregation will be required to stand in the sun an hour or more. It is necessary to place limitations.

We sure look forward to the pleasure of having you with us and will provide a seat for you on the speakers stand, alongside of Bishop Cannon. We will make you feel as proud as President Grant.

With best wishes we are

Sincerely you Brethren

The Presiding Bishopric of the Church
Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

The The following is just as I read the testimony before 10,000 people on that occasion, as I stood on the stand by the side of Presiding Bishop Sylvester G. Cannon.

A living and dying testimony given by Martin Harris to William Pilkington, July 9th, 1875. My dear Brethren and Sister, I am sure pleased to be here on this auspicious occasion. I first became acquainted with Martin Harris in the fall of 1874, in the early part of October, when I was 14 years of age, I was hired out to work and live in the Harris family for one year. I was not paid at the end of the year, so worked another six months, they then lived in Smithfield, Cache County, Utah, he was living with his wife, Caroline, also the following sons and daughters, Martin Harris Jr., John, Solomand, Ida, Julie. They sold out in Smithfield soon after I commenced to work for them, and moved across the Valley, to a small town called Clarkston, this was in Nov. 1874. On the 9th day of July 1875 while he was dying, as he died the next day the 10th day of July 1875. I held up his right hand, in the presence of two witnesses, while he bore the following testimony.

I did go inthe woods with Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, and beheld an angel descend from heaven in a dazzling light of glory, and stood about two feet from the ground. I saw the Golden Plates. I saw him turn the leaves one by one. I saw the engraving, I saw the Urim and Thumin, the breastplate, and sword of Laban. After the angel had delivered his message. I saw him ascend up into Heaven, and I heard the voice of God in the midst of the dazzling light declare that the Book of Mormon was translated correctly, and I was commanded by God's voice to testify to all the world what I had heard and seen. I cried out in my ecstasy, "It is enough, it is enough, My eyes have beheld the glories of God, Hosanna, Hosanna, to God and the land. Jumping up I praised the Lord.

Remarkable Story of Martin Harris As Told to Young Friend

JHIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD Willie Pilkington sat at the little, round table eating bread and milk from a bowl. The feeble glow of an oil lamp barely lighted the table and Willie's face. He felt alone and a little frightened in this strange, dark place.

This was to be his home for a year. His father had hired him out to the cabin's owner as a farm hand. Willie's new master had put the food on the table then retired to bed. Everyone else must be asleep, Willie thought.

But as he got up from the table, wiping his mouth with his sleeve, he was startled to see a little, old man who had been sitting in the darkness watching him.

"What's your name?" the old man asked. Willie told him.

"Willie, tomorrow night, after your chores are done and we have had supper, and all the folks have gone to bed, I want you to sit down in this chair, close to mine, for I have lots to tell you."

The old man did, indeed, have a remarkable story to tell, Willie found. His birthplace was some 3,000 miles to the east in Easttown, N.Y. He had been christened Martin—Martin Harris.

When Martin was nine or ten, his family moved to the new settlement of Palmyra. Here Martin grew to manhood, married his cousin, Lucy Harris, and became a prosperous farmer.

He often hired Joseph Smith Sr. and his boys, Joseph and Hyrum to work for him. From them he learned the facts about the marvelous calling Joseph Jr. had received.

He donated \$50 to assist the Prophet in the translation of the Book of Mormon. Later, he volunteered to act as scribe to the Prophet, but was dismissed when he showed part of the manuscript to unauthorized persons and carelessly allowed it to be stolen.

Martin still maintained his interest in the Prophet's work and was allowed to be one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon. He mortgaged part of his farm for \$3,000 to pay for the printing of the first 5,000 copies of the book.

When the Church was organized, Martin was baptized. His wife was violently opposed to his interest in the Church and left him. He then moved to Kirtland where he became a member of the high council. With the other two Book of Mormon witnesses, he selected the first Twelve Apostles of the new Dispensation.

He married Caroline Young, a niece of Brigham Young, acquired a farm and again began to prosper.

When the body of the Church moved to Missouri, Martin stayed behind. He affiliated with apostate groups and was excommunicated by the Kirtland High Council.

He stubbornly rejected his wife's entreaties to join the rest of the saints. She left him in 1856 and took the children to Utah. Martin became a poor and broken man.

In August, 1870, Martin was persuaded to travel to Utah. He was again baptized and spent his last years in the Clarkston home of his son, Martin Jr.

On July 9, 1875, the day before he died, Martin Harris called Willie Pilkington to his bedside and repeated his testimony.

"Yes, I did see the plates on which the Book of Mormon was written; I did see the angel; I did hear the voice of God. . . ."

