

The following information on George Denis Keaton comes from a compilation of emails from Norman F. Keaton Feb. 2013. nfkeaton@att.net

Keaton, George Dennis, jun., president of the French Mission from 1856 to 1858, was born June 27, 1828, in Buckleberry, Berkshire, England, a son of George Dennis and Mary Jane Keaton. He was appointed to fill a mission in Italy Dec. 11, 1852, from England, and labored in that mission till June, 1854. On Dec. 8, 1855, he was appointed president of the French Mission, and as late as July, 1858, was still acting as president of that mission.

This answers a question about his missionary travels. The note says that he labored in Italy "from England" which suggests that he didn't leave England. George married in 1853 and had a son in 1853 in England. His Italy mission was from 1852 to 1854.

Also, as late as July 1858 he was still working as president of the French mission. George and his wife left for the States in 1859.

There is some evidence that he converted in 1849.

I have a date for the mission to England. Compare with George Denis Keaton's family papers: Family Records, Vision Reports and Brigham Young Materials (1844-1931) and George Dennis Keaton's Letters and Documents (1849-1890). Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

It has already been noted that the work in England was begun in 1837, under the direction of Heber C. Kimball and others; but the mission of the twelve to England, as a quorum, established the work in the British Isles on a broader and more permanent basis.

Another event that made the summer of 1839 a memorable one, was the departure of the twelve upon their mission "over the great waters," to England.

Elder Woodruff arrived in England in January. 1845

The twelve apostles returned in July, 1841. "The total membership in the British Mission at that time," writes Elder Wilford Woodruff, "was represented as 5,814; and 800 besides had emigrated to America under the transportation of the church. There were also 136 elders, 303 priests, 169 teachers, and 68 Deacons.

George Denis was an Elder by 1851, but he would have needed time to work his way up from priest, teacher, deacon, etc.

Branch, Ivins; Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

At a conference held in Great Salt Lake City in October, 1849, a number of Elders were called to different nations to open up L. D. S. missionary fields. Among others, Lorenzo Snow, who had recently been ordained one of the Twelve Apostles, was called to go to Italy, and Joseph Toronto, a native of Sicily, was appointed to accompany him. Traveling via New York, Liverpool (Eng.), and Havre, Paris and Marseilles (France), these two Elders arrived at Genoa, Italy, June 25, 1850, accompanied by Elder Thomas B. H. Stenhouse, who had been called by Elder Snow, while passing through England, to join them. Piedmont Valley, at the foot of the Alps, was chosen as the place in which to commence their activities, this locality being occupied by a Protestant community known as the Vaudois or Waldenses. On Sept. 18, 1850, Elder Jabez Woodard, who also had been called by Pres. Snow to labor in the Italian Mission, arrived. The next day (Oct. 19, 1850) these four Elders ascended a high mountain, where they offered prayer and formally dedicated the land of Italy as a missionary field; it was a solemn occasion. They named the mountain „Mount Brigham“ and the rock upon which they stood the „Rock of Prophecy.“ On Oct. 27, 1850, Elder Snow baptized Jean Antoine Box at La Tour, as the first fruits of their labors in Italy. Other baptisms followed and three branches of the Church were subsequently raised up, namely, Angrogne, St. Germain and St. Bartholomew, all in Piedmont. The people there being largely a French-speaking community, Elder Snow wrote a tract for their benefit, called „The Voice of Joseph,“ which was translated into French and printed in England. Another tract, entitled „The Ancient Gospel Restored,“ was published in Turin, in the French language. In January, 1852, Elder Snow left Italy for a time, after appointing Jabez Woodard to take charge of the work in Italy, and Elder Stenhouse to open up a missionary field in Switzerland. Soon afterwards Elder Snow published the Book of Mormon in the Italian language, it being printed in England. Two more Elders, Thomas Margetts and George D. Keaton, came to assist Elder Woodard in the Italian Mission and labored with great fidelity. In 1854 Elder Woodard returned to America, and in 1855 Elder Stenhouse, who was presiding over the Swiss Mission, was appointed to take charge also of the work in Italy, the two missions being amalgamated under the name of the Swiss and Italian Mission, and Elders Margetts and Keaton continued their labors in Italy under the direction of Pres. Stenhouse. At that time there were three branches of the Church in Italy with a membership of 64. During the previous three years 50 members of the Church in Italy had emigrated to America. There are still a few scattered members of the Church in Italy.

I thought George Denis worked in Switzerland, too, but apparently only in Italy. This account suggests George actually went to Italy but then returned to England briefly to marry Ellen Maria Collins in 1853.

Comments: Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Fresno District

Following are the names of the presidents of the French Mission: John Taylor, 1850^1851; Curtis E. Bolton, 1851^1853; Andrew L. Lamoreaux, 1853^1854; Wm. C. Dunbar, 1854^1856; Geo. L. Keaton, 1856^1858; Mark Barnes, 1858; Louis A. Bertrand, 1859^1864; Edgar B. Brossard, 1913^1914; Benjamin F. Howells, 1914; Russell H. Blood, 1923^1925; Ernest C. Rossiter, 1925^1928; Peter Rulon Christensen, 1928^1929, and Golden L. Woolf, 1929^1930

George D Keaton with a wrong middle initial