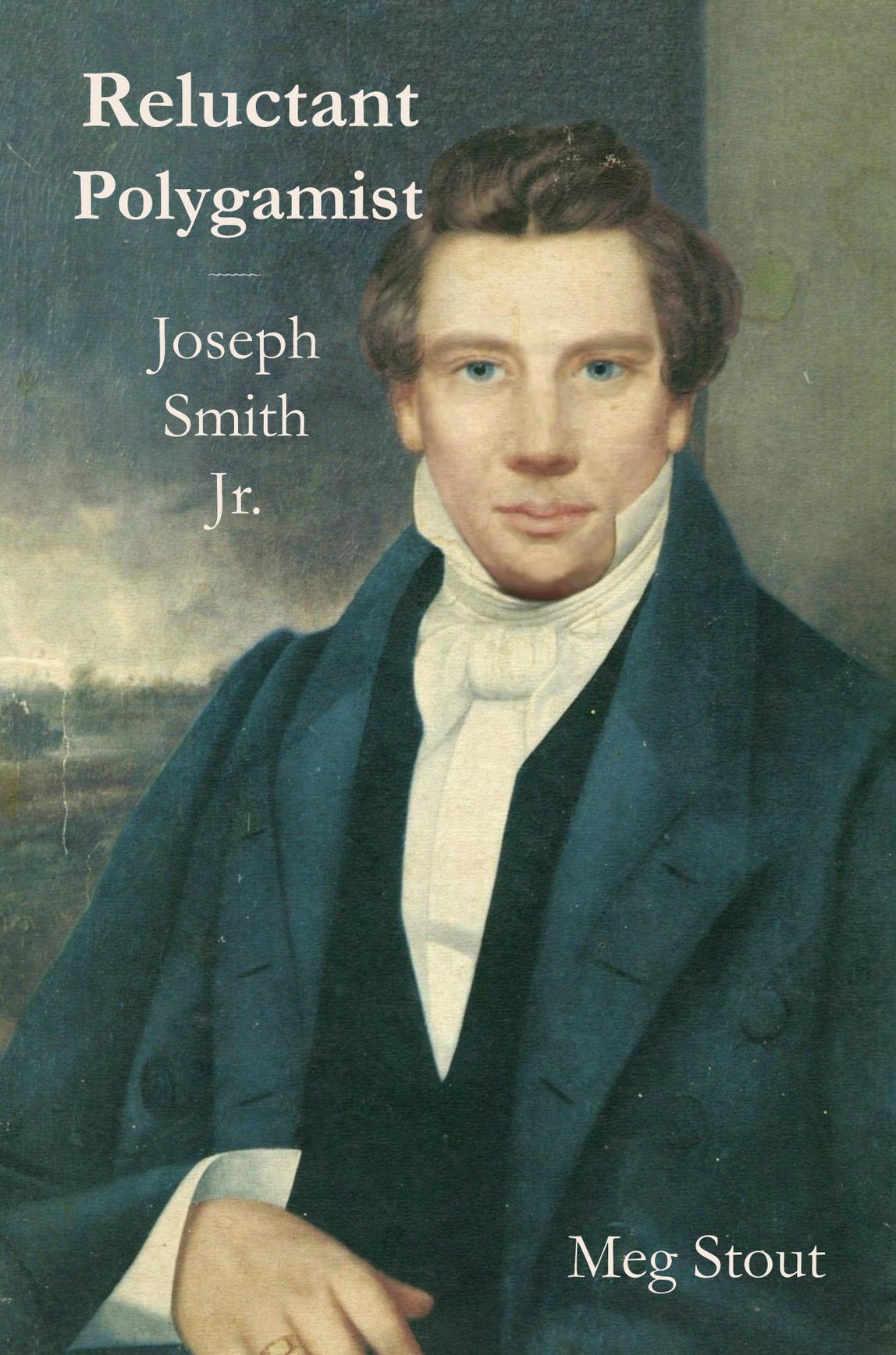


Reluctant Polygamist

Joseph
Smith
Jr.

Meg Stout





Joseph was killed in 1844,
accused of treason and debauchery.

Joseph's wife, Emma, maintained at her death that Joseph was innocent, and that she had been his only wife.

Joseph's successor, Brigham Young, declared Joseph had taught plural marriage was crucial to salvation.

Brigham's followers and Emma's descendants would honor Joseph's memory, while believing entirely divergent versions of his history.

Critics, meanwhile, maintained that Joseph had been an utter scoundrel.

Stout explores the intrigue that would fundamentally divide those who claimed to know what Joseph Smith had taught and done regarding marriage.



Reluctant Polygamist is a remarkable example of investigative journalism, almost a murder mystery or spy thriller in the making... There are some very scary bad guys in this story—and Joseph is not one of them.

—Jeff Lindsay, *LDS FAQ: Mormon Answers, Mormanity Blog*

Reluctant Polygamist asks the reader to accept the complexity and ambiguity of LDS plural marriage, rather than going for a simplistic explanation. I think that's a real service.

—Gregory A. Prince, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*

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Reluctant Polygamist

Joseph Smith Jr.

Meg Stout

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Dedication

To my family,
those I love,
who teach me
to yearn for those
without whom heaven
would not be heaven.

About the Covers

The front cover features an altered copy of the 1842 portrait of Joseph Smith, the founding prophet of Mormonism.

The 1842 portrait, now owned by the Community of Christ, is apparently the only full face image created of Joseph Smith during his lifetime.

Decades after Joseph's death, copies of the portrait were produced by Herald Publishing House. Daguerreotypes were made from of these copies, one of which is now in the possession of the Library of Congress. It is often mischaracterized as a daguerreotype of Joseph during his lifetime.

Joseph reportedly didn't feel the painting was an accurate likeness. Modern comparison of the painting with Joseph's death mask shows that the portrait departed significantly from the placement of features on Joseph's actual face. Profile portraits painted by Sutcliffe Maudsley show Joseph to have been a dignified but portly individual. Maudsley's profiles happen to correspond closely with the profile of the death mask.

I was given an image of a painted copy that had been cherished since the late 1800s. The painting shows signs of wear, and the chin and nose were rather petite. But the face was more kindly than the original painting.

For the cover, I modified the digital copy to better match the dimensions of the death mask. I also took the liberty of reflecting that Joseph was a healthy eater, as seen in the Sutcliffe Maudsley profiles.

The back cover features a detail from *Martyrdom of Joseph and Hiram Smith in Carthage jail, June 27th, 1844*, painted by G.W. Fasel; lithograph by Charles G. Crehen ; print by Nagel & Weingaertner, N.Y., c1851. The digital copy was obtained from the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, reproduction number LC-DIG-pga-02259. This lithograph reflects an attempt to depict the craven fiend mentioned in Lyman O. Littlefield's version of William Daniels' court testimony regarding the killing of Joseph Smith.

Advance Praise for Reluctant Polygamist

For an unexpected look at the secrets lurking around Nauvoo in the days of Joseph Smith, I highly recommend the Reluctant Polygamist as a very good place to start. Meg Stout has provided us the opportunity to see Joseph in a new light. — Gerald A. Smith, historian, blogger

Praise for Meg Stout's Faithful Joseph series at millennialstar.org, Dec '13 – Aug '14

[Meg Stout] surprised me when she mentioned that her studies had suggested to her the possibility that Joseph Smith rarely consummated his plural marriages — with even a chance that maybe he consummated none of them. Now of course this view easily falls into the 'too good to be true' category, so I politely asked her a few more questions out of curiosity but also to gently challenge her.

She promptly proceeded to bury me.

As I stood gasping for air and trying to spit factoids out of my teeth, I realized that this wasn't just someone that was naively choosing to see what she wanted to see by ignoring all inconvenient facts. Meg was clearly someone that had done her homework and knew what she was talking about. — Bruce Nielson, Dec 16, 2013

Meg deserves more praise than could ever be given for her faithful Joseph series... Her inclusion of John C. Bennett's participation in the history of Nauvoo was one of the most original yet seemingly obvious and logical aspects of her series... How other scholars glossed over this despite the overwhelming evidence presented by Meg is likely one of the tragedies of how the traditional narratives have been developed. — Jess W.

Thank you! Your posts continue to provide an astounding amount of information. — John S.

Meg, thank you for some basic common sense on this... — Geoff B.

A tad more complicated than the 'history' we usually hear about, but very informative and useful. — John H.

Thank you Meg Stout for putting together such an interesting, plausible, and faithful reconstruction of events! — Tom D

I stayed up all night reading your faithful Joseph posts... really great stuff. I don't know how to say this. It's like watching Ancient Aliens on the history channel or a 9/11 conspiracy documentary, but not silly. — Sam C.

I have personally found [Meg's] narrative to be the *only* one that actually makes any kind of sense from a faithful perspective, tying up all sorts of loose ends. — Jeff C.

Your ability to gather facts and interpret them in a way that feels genuine to who I believe Joseph (and the others mentioned) to really be is invaluable. So. Invaluable. This feels more complete than other pieces I've found; more transparent, and, as mentioned, I think does a better job filling in the information gaps with guesswork that is both natural and intuitive. — Mickelle

Just finished your series at Millennial Star and wanted to say how much I appreciate the mental effort that went into your thoughtful examination of LDS polygamy. I'm one of those who struggled for years with the cognitive dissonance of keeping a picture of the Joseph who had the first vision and translated the Book of Mormon alongside a picture of the Joseph who took 27 wives in my head... I will be one of the first in line to buy the book, which I believe will be a landmark in Mormon literature. — Michael K.

Your series has opened my eyes to possibilities that I had never considered and which, in light of everything, make perfect sense. So count me among those who finds the study of this history as being full of secret honor and selfless sacrifice. I love that quote. So thank you and know how much I look forward to each post in this series. — Joey K.

[Meg's] analysis of the cultural setting in which polygamy was introduced and the details of the life of her polygamous ancestor add several new dimensions to our understanding of polygamy... — Jeff L.

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Acknowledgments

I owe a great debt to all who have documented Joseph Smith's life, particularly those who were his contemporaries.

Among modern polygamy researchers, I owe a particular debt to Todd Compton for his 1997 *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*, Brian Hales for his 2013 *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, and Ugo Perego, for his ongoing genetic research into the alleged biological children of Joseph Smith by plural wives. Andrew Ehat, George D. Smith, Gary Bergera, and Richard S. Van Wagoner have contributed greatly to knowledge of the polygamists other than Joseph Smith. Don Bradley's analysis of the Fanny Alger relationship is exceptional. Michael Quinn has done much to illuminate the existence of documents unavailable to geographically-disadvantaged researchers.

I am indebted to recent biographers of key Nauvoo figures, including Andrew Smith for his *The Sainly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett*, Kyle Walker for his *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*, and the inimitable Richard Bushman for his *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. I am indebted to Valeen Tippets Avery and Linda King Newell for their biography *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* and the extensive raw material in their research papers that did not make it to the final book.

In thanking each of these, I am necessarily also indebted to each of the individuals who assisted them in their researches. Further, I am indebted to Susan Easton Black, Fred E. Woods, William G. Hartley, and others who documented Early LDS members, Mormon Migration, and Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel. I am particularly indebted to the many individuals who have made their ancestors' stories public via Family Search and other ancestor-oriented websites.

Finally, I owe a great debt to Bruce Nielson and the fine folks at millennialstar.org for inviting me to put my research before an audience of thousands, ultimately leading to the book you have before you now.

Conventions and Terminology

Evidence. If the source of a tale claimed first-hand knowledge, the term reportedly is used, so long as there is a credible provenance for the report. The term allegedly will be used to denote times when someone is describing events about which they either lack first-hand knowledge, their description is not credible, or the provenance of the tale is suspicious.

Joseph's revelations are often expressed as the words of Jesus Christ, the Lord. There is no indication he believed himself to be a fraud, nor do his followers believe he was a fraud. Though non-believers would cast these revelations as being not credible, I will report his words as he wrote them, without inserting qualifiers such as "allegedly."

Women's Names. There are many individuals involved in this history. Many of the women were married to multiple men over the course of their life. The typical convention is to refer to a woman as First (Maiden) Married. However nicknames are also sometimes put in parentheses. Women are therefore identified by their maiden names, following standard genealogical practice. For married women, surnames of husbands are in brackets. For example, Joseph's wife, Emma, is called Emma Hale [Smith].

Quotes. Quotations will contain the original spelling present in the source of the quotation. Elisions are used for brevity.

Polygamy Terminology. Eternal marriage, where a man and his wife or wives would be together in heaven, was variously called Celestial Marriage, plurality of wives, plural marriage, and sealing. Only after the Nauvoo era would eternal marriages involving plurality of wives be referred to as polygamy.

Sexual intercourse without benefit of marriage was termed spiritual wifery, illicit intercourse, adultery, and polygamy.

During the Nauvoo era, Joseph Smith, Emma Hale [Smith], and others understood polygamy to be illicit and promiscuous sex. Emma Hale [Smith] allegedly said spiritual wifery came straight from hell. Yet she also reportedly participated in ceremonies uniting her husband to women in Celestial marriage. Joseph, Emma, and others likely did not see themselves as practicing polygamy. What they were doing was sealing themselves and others together in Celestial marriages.

Preface

The subject of Joseph's plural wives is not a topic casually broached in faithful Mormon circles, even among those who are aware of Joseph's many wives. Correlated lesson materials tend to minimize discussion of important historical points relating to plural marriage in order to avoid distracting from discussion of core gospel truths.

Unfortunately, this has led to polarized versions of early Mormon history. One is the sanitized hagiography familiar to modern Mormons, featuring a Joseph who appeared to be monogamously devoted to his beloved Emma. The other is the bawdy and smug tale accepted by non-Mormons and some Mormons, where Joseph deceived Emma and his followers to justify slaking his sexual appetite on dozens of women.

Joseph covenanted with dozens of women, based on the affidavits these women signed in the late 1860s and 1870s. Those familiar with the affidavits have presumed Joseph was married to these women, with all the conjugal privileges marriage implies. Thus both those who attack the LDS Church and those who defend the LDS Church have presumed that Joseph had sex with his plural wives unless the relationship was explicitly described as only for "eternity."

Importantly, no one has both embraced the information regarding Joseph's covenants with women yet questioned whether many or all those covenant relationships might have been celibate. It has simply been an unexplored possibility. If it is a false possibility, it should be easy to dismiss.

Nightfall at Nauvoo

I was fourteen when I first came face to face with unpleasant possibilities regarding the life of Joseph Smith. My mother had just finished reading *Nightfall at Nauvoo*, then a newly-released novel written by her uncle, Samuel W. Taylor.

She put the thick paperback down and cocked her head. "I think Sam presents an overall positive view of Joseph Smith," she said.

Presuming Sam's book was therefore "safe," I began reading. I was a child who was shocked to hear detractors had called Joseph Smith "Joe." I

was completely unequipped to deal with the salacious accusations made by John Bennett and Thomas Sharp, which Sam repeated in his book. The testimony of my teenage self was crushed.

I white-knuckled for two decades harboring serious doubts about Joseph Smith and the Church. Even so, I went on to graduate from Seminary, earn the Young Womanhood in Recognition Award, be a Relief Society President, serve a mission, and marry in the temple.

In 1999 I realized that the God at the center of Joseph Smith's theology is the God I had experienced in my life. But I still had no acceptable explanation for Joseph and polygamy.

Elvira Annie Cowles

In 2001 a friend asked me to present a 5-minute spotlight in Relief Society on a notable Mormon woman. As she rattled off the names on her list, I recognized the name of my ancestor, Elvira Annie Cowles. Elvira Annie was the treasurer for the first Relief Society when Emma Smith was Relief Society President. I remembered my mother telling me as a teenager that Elvira Annie was one of Joseph Smith's plural wives.

By 4 am the Sunday of the presentation, I had pieced together the fact that Elvira Annie Cowles was mother of the three women who married Job Welling and grandmother of two women who married rogue Apostle John Whitaker Taylor in 1901. As I sat looking at the short history I had assembled, I knew I had to write about these women. Yet I also feared writing about these women, certain that the story of Joseph's plural marriages necessarily involved sexual relations that moderns would consider inappropriate.

In the years since 2001, I threw myself into the history and documents related to early Nauvoo events. I initially despaired of ever being able to write a serious history. So I attempted to tell the story in novel form. Revisions conducted with dozens of advanced readers forced the story to take on a life of its own. One reader criticized my villain, Dr. Bennett, as one-dimensional. Another said I should tell the story from a male point of view to retain male readers. One non-Mormon man said the sexual tension between my heroine and Joseph Smith was uncomfortably intense, even though I did not portray them as sexually intimate. As I expanded and modified the story in response to these comments, I had to dig deeper into the history, delving beneath the facile understanding I'd had of events and motivations. Causalities emerged to which I'd previously been blind.

No Sex?

Some of my friends live without any form of birth control. I saw in their lives the typical pattern for most married couples in the 1800s. A child is born within the first year, and other children arrive every two years thereafter. Watching these friends, I realized something was wrong with Elvira Annie's reproductive history.

Elvira Annie's first child was born in October 1845, nearly three years after her public marriage to Jonathan Harriman Holmes and over a year after Joseph's death. Elvira Annie continued to bear children regularly whenever Jonathan was around. For example, Elvira's second daughter was born nine and a half months following Jonathan's return with his Mormon Battalion unit. Elvira Annie bore her final child when she was 43 years old.

Elvira Annie and Jonathan were fertile. Joseph was also virile, producing children with Emma regularly. Yet Elvira Annie did not produce a child for years after the ceremonies I presumed would legitimize intimacies between Elvira Annie and either Joseph or Jonathan.

Around this time I came across Ugo Perego's DNA research looking into possible offspring of Joseph Smith by plural wives.¹ Not a single suspected child can be proven to have been fathered by Joseph on a plural wife. None of Joseph's otherwise single wives appear to have conceived children prior to Joseph's death.

Perhaps Joseph wanted to avoid engendering children with his plural wives while enjoying sex. But if this were the case, there were few methods of birth control available to Joseph, and these were considered criminal.² The rhythm method would not be generally understood until the 1930s.³ While lack of children does not prove lack of sex, it leaves lack of sex as a potential cause for the available data.

Modern belief in Joseph's sexual activities with women other than Emma, therefore, is based on rumor and written reports, rather than objective evidence.⁴

There are three prominent views of Joseph Smith.

1. He was a practicing polygamist who was loved and honored by his followers. Many of his covenant wives so testified in seemingly unambiguous terms, including under oath in 1894. ⁵
2. He was a monogamist who rejected polygamy. His wife, sons, and thousands of others supported this view. ⁶
3. He was an abusive philanderer. Two men who had served as Assistant Presidents of the Church made these accusations, as did numerous others of his contemporaries. ^{7,8}

To quote Joseph's own words, "I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together?" ⁹

Is there a way that each of these contradictory testimonies might have told a species of truth? What is the common truth that can explain these divergent viewpoints?

Modern Mormons don't talk of polygamy, don't preach of polygamy, and they most certainly don't rejoice in polygamy. And yet it is crucial that we understand our past, so that we and our children may know which assertions regarding polygamy are true, and which are lies.

Meg Stout
Annandale, VA
April 6, 2016

2nd edition: corrected miscellaneous errors.

3rd edition: added Joseph's alleged children by plural wives, Appendix C

4th edition: added the hypothesis that Esther Dutcher [Smith] was the Esther Smith who testified before the Nauvoo High Council. Also added a table showing which of Joseph's plural wives may have given birth as reported by George Albert Smith.

5th edition: added confirmation that Josephine Lyon was not the biological daughter of Joseph Smith, as well as the hypothesis that Dr. Bennett's 1843 visit informed Joseph Smith of William Law's adulterous past.

Preface – Notes

There are widely divergent versions of Joseph Smith, from righteous man second only to Christ (e.g., John Taylor, D&C 135) to evil villain second only to Lucifer (online commentary for just about any Mormon-themed news story).

Stout first encountered troublesome possibilities regarding Joseph Smith when she was a teen, reading *Nightfall at Nauvoo*. She stayed within the Mormon faith tradition, but harbored major doubts about Joseph Smith and the religion he had “restored.” Even after eventually coming to peace with Mormonism as a religion, Stout could not reconcile the stories of Joseph Smith’s polygamy with the loving God she knew.

In 2001 a friend requested Stout present a vignette on a famous Mormon woman. Selecting an ancestor, Stout realized that her own ancestry contained women at the very beginning and very end of Mormon polygamy. She felt she had to write about these women, but dreaded the task.

Over the years, Stout realized her ancestor who was Joseph Smith’s plural wife ought to have conceived before 1845 if she had been engaged in intimacy with either her public husband or Joseph Smith. Around this time, Stout learned that DNA research has failed to confirm Joseph engendered any of the children of his plural wives.

As Joseph said, “I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together?”

Considering the grossly different historical interpretations of Joseph’s life, Stout devoted herself to finding a common truth that could explain all the evidence. Appendix A contains a summary of the principles Stout used in her efforts.

1 – Prelude to a Killing

On the evening of March 31, 1844, ¹ Joseph Smith crouched in a skiff floating in the Mississippi river. Just upstream stood the large brick home ² of William Law, former Assistant President in the Church Joseph had founded. According to Joseph's informants, the brick home was filled to bursting with hundreds of men ready to swear an oath to kill.

Joseph's informants were two youths, Dennison Harris and Robert Scott. They had been among those invited to the first of the seditious meetings. Prompted by Dennison's uncle, Emer Harris, the two young men told Joseph Smith of the invitation. Joseph forbade Emer from participating in the meetings, predicting the conspirators would kill Emer if they determined he was not a full sympathizer. Dennison and Robert, however, were young. Joseph asked that the young men attend the meeting, pay strict attention to what was said, make no commitments, and report the entire matter back to him.

The first meeting involved a lot of organization, with talk denouncing Joseph as a fallen prophet abusing his powers. Joseph was head of the Mormon Church, Mayor of Nauvoo, Lieutenant General of the Nauvoo Legion, and recently announced candidate for the Presidency of the United States. ³ Beyond the unusual concentration of power that resided in Joseph, there were stories that Joseph had secretly married several young women. Those assembled argued that Joseph must be overthrown.

By the end of the second meeting, the conspirators began to say that Joseph would have to be killed. Reporting this to Joseph, Robert and Dennison discussed what they should do about the third meeting. We can infer what they considered.

If the young men failed to show up, it seems they might have feared the conspirators would kill them for what they had already heard. If they did attend, they would be pressed to be part of the planned murder. If they refused to agree with the planned murder, it was possible they would be killed.

Joseph hoped the conspirators would spare the young men because they were so young. But he counseled them: “Don’t flinch. If you have to die, die like men, you will be martyrs to the cause, and your crowns can be no greater. But I hardly think they will shed your blood.”⁴

Sitting next to John Scott⁵ in the skiff, Joseph was likely concerned the two young men could be killed, despite his earlier assurances. If the young men were killed, the conspirators could dispose of the bodies in the river that ran so conveniently behind William Law’s large brick home. Joseph stood ready to retrieve the young men if necessary.

To Joseph’s relief, he eventually saw the two youths emerge and run down the river’s edge about a quarter mile. Joseph Smith and John Scott joined the young men near the Red Brick Store, hidden from view by a board fence, orchard trees, and shrubbery. In the chilly warmth of that late March evening, Dennison and Robert recounted what had occurred.

As anticipated, the hundreds who attended the third meeting were asked to swear a solemn oath to destroy Joseph Smith. Robert and Dennison reported they had evaded the matter as long as possible. When they could delay no longer, they refused, saying Joseph had never harmed them, and they were unwilling to participate in killing him.

“If you do not take that oath, we will cut your throats,” one of the leaders said. Knives were drawn and muskets cocked. The young men were forced to the cellar. Once more they were told to take the oath or die. They refused again. But before the fatal blows, someone cried out, “Hold on!” Though roughly two hundred men had signed the oath to kill Joseph, at least one of them was not ready to kill these two young men. Not only might the violence

shatter the group's murderous resolve, there would be bodies to dispose of. Dennison or Robert's families might know enough to make accusations.

Robert and Dennison had been threatened with certain death if they ever revealed what had transpired in the meetings or who had participated. With that, they were escorted away from the Law home.

Robert and Dennison had suggested they could take a dip in the river to explain the delay getting home. ⁶ With this, their guards had let them go.

Despite their promise to the conspirators, Robert and Dennison reported everything, including the names of leaders of the group ⁷ and the fact that at least 200 men had signed the oath.

In the light of a waxing gibbous moon, Joseph whispered his response to the conspiracy and their accusations:

“They accuse me of polygamy and of being a false prophet. But I am no false prophet... I am no imposter. I have had no dark revelations. I have had no revelations from the devil. I made no revelations—I have got nothing up of myself.

“The same God who has thus far directed me and strengthened me in this work gave me this revelation and commandment on Celestial and plural marriage.

“This same God commanded me to obey it. He said unless I accepted it and introduced it and practiced it, I and my people would be damned and cut off from this time hence.

“There are those who say that if I do so, I will be killed. What am I to do?

“If I do not practice plural marriage, I shall be damned, along with my people.

“If I do teach it and urge it and practice it, they say I will be killed. And I know they are right.

“But we have got to observe it. It is an eternal principle. It is given by way of commandment, not merely by way of instruction.” ⁸

Before letting the young men go, Joseph counseled them not to speak of this to anyone, not even their own fathers, for 20 years or more.⁹ Dennison Harris would keep the secret regarding the conspiracy for decades.¹⁰ There is no record suggesting Robert Scott ever told the tale.

In three months Joseph would be dead, shot by a mob of over one hundred men, many with blackened faces to hide their identities. Yet those who picked up the baton of leadership from Joseph would continue undeterred. Joseph's successor, widower Brigham Young, would publicly proclaim plural marriage a central tenet of the Mormon faith. But the number of polygamists was never more than a minority of all Mormon men. In the meantime, Celestial marriages would become the norm for all Mormon couples, uniting husbands and wives for all eternity.

The tension evident in the months prior to Joseph's death would expand, eventually provoking extreme national opposition to Mormons and their "polygamous" lifestyle.

Then, during the lifetime of Joseph's contemporaries, plural marriage¹¹ was put aside with the Manifestos of 1890 and 1904. For the modern student seeking understanding over a hundred years after the Manifestos, the origins and purposes of plural marriage are a murky matter, provoking titillation, disgust, outrage, and disbelief.

Despite this troubling past, the modern Mormon Church continues to thrive, even as some other Christian denominations have gone into decline. Yet for many, the secretive past regarding plural marriage festers like a wound, denied the light and air that might allow it to heal.

This book attempts to shed light on this troublesome subject, airing out a space in Mormon history and doctrine that has been kept dark and closed.

Prelude to a Killing – Notes

A few months before Mormon founder Joseph Smith died in June 1844, he learned of a conspiracy among his followers. Hundreds of men had sworn an oath to participate in his murder. Despite acknowledging that death was certain, Joseph maintained that his actions related to Celestial Marriage and plural marriage were commanded by God. Joseph and his entire people risked damnation if they did not embrace this commandment.

2 – Why Would God Command Polygamy?

Throughout the Bible, God promises to save all mankind. One of the most famous of these promises was captured by Luke as being spoken by the angel announcing Christ's birth:

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,
which shall be to **all** people.

For unto you is born this day
in the city of David
a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. ¹

Another passage, less famous but perhaps more clear, states:

For this is good and acceptable
in the sight of God our Saviour;

Who will have **all** men to be saved,
and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

For there is one God,
and one mediator between God and men,
the man Christ Jesus;

Who gave himself a ransom for **all**,
to be testified in due time. ²

Throughout scripture, God and His prophets speak of the salvation of all mankind, of whosoever believeth in God.

Yet when Joseph knelt in the grove to pray as a boy, there was no theology that had a mechanism that might save all mankind. On that bright spring day in 1820, ³ Joseph only knew that God lived and there was something missing from the religions of the day. The glorious being he saw in vision had declared: “they were all wrong; ...their creeds were an abomination in my sight;” ...that “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” ⁴

Mormons believe God mourned the loss of doctrines that could save all mankind, doctrines they believe were present during Christ’s day, which are now only found in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the LDS Church.

Lest the World be Wasted at His Coming

Joseph’s life work began in earnest years later, in September 1823. Reportedly in response to Joseph’s prayers, an angel named Moroni appeared to Joseph several times in one night. Each repeat visit covered additional material. Yet the angel’s initial description of Joseph’s missions remained the same.

Joseph’s first mission was retrieval and translation of a book written on golden plates containing the fullness of the Gospel. ⁵

Next the angel spoke of Elijah, who would come and plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children would turn to their fathers. ⁶

If the children did not fulfill the promises made to the fathers, the whole earth would be utterly wasted in the great and dreadful day of the Lord, when the wicked would be left without branch or root. ⁷

The angelic message would eventually be understood in these terms: “If the people of your day do not fulfill the promise God made to save all mankind through baptism, those unable to be cleansed by baptism will remain in their wickedness. They will remain cut off from God and from both their parents and their children in eternity.”

However, Moroni spoke in language close to the biblical original, using the symbolic language characteristic of Jewish culture. ⁸ Joseph would not comprehend for many years how God could keep the promises made to the fathers, or even how one could be saved with their fathers and their children.

Any modern Mormon child can explain how deceased ancestors can be baptized by proxy, allowing those who were not baptized in life a chance to embrace this saving ordinance prior to final judgment. But Joseph had not known this. When Joseph's older brother, Alvin, died without being baptized, the Smith family presumed that Alvin would be damned.

Weaving the Family of Mankind Together

In 1835 Joseph had a vision of Alvin in heaven. ⁹ This was his first understanding that it was possible for those who had not been baptized in life to attain heaven.

An understanding that proxy baptisms could be performed on behalf of the dead arose in response to the grief of Jane Nyman, a mother who believed her teenage son was condemned to hell because he had died without baptism.

¹⁰

But in the theology Joseph revealed, it was not sufficient to be saved alone. We were to be saved as families, with our root and branch, as prophesied by Malachi and others. Baptism was a pre-requisite to a higher good, rejoining God in Heaven with our fathers and mothers, our sons and daughters. Thus the entire family of man could be offered the saving ordinances, throughout all history and all nations.

The work of Joseph's life was restoring the mechanisms to eternally join parents and their children throughout all the generations of mankind. To those of the LDS faith, this is the clear meaning of the prophesy about Elijah. This was the work of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

The binding of children to their fathers was a work so sacred that Joseph would not allow the ordinances to be performed outside a temple of God. ¹¹ These ceremonies would not be performed until after Joseph's death. But merely binding parents and children across generations would not be sufficient.

Binding husbands and wives together for eternity was required to weave the family of mankind together. Joseph could not imagine being bound to his children without also being bound to Emma, their mother and his beloved. He could not think of being bound to his father without also being bound to his mother.

Orphans without Root

If Joseph had lived a thousand years earlier, he could have restored these binding or sealing ordinances without any complication. A thousand years earlier, the occasional polygamous marriage was accepted. All wives would have been able to be sealed to their respective husbands. There would have been no cognitive dissonance if existence of a prior wife transformed a man into a “polygamist” in eternity.

But in the 1050s the Roman pope strengthened the impediment of affinity, which holds that the union of a man and woman creates a blood bond. This prohibited marriages between the couple’s respective kin.¹² In following years, the Catholic faithful would adjust their laws to align with the realities of the impediments of consanguinity and affinity.¹³ Over the succeeding centuries, polygamous marriages would almost entirely cease to exist in Western Europe.¹⁴

By the lifetime of Joseph Smith, monogamy was the only allowable form of marriage in Western civilization. Widows and widowers were permitted to remarry. But with the introduction of eternal marriage, a remarried widower would be transformed into a polygamist. If monogamy were allowed to remain as the only valid form of marriage in eternity, all but first wives and their children would remain stranded, cut off forever.

It’s not clear Joseph understood this at first. He initially tried to teach eternal marriage without teaching polygamy. One early saint, William W. Phelps, wrote his wife in 1835. “Sally, you will be mine in this world and in the world to come... I have no right to any other woman in this world nor in the world to come according to the law of the Celestial Kingdom.”¹⁵

Romantic though Phelps’ statement seems, this idea of eternal marriage would prohibit him from remarrying were Sally to die, or would have cut him off from a previous wife had he been a widower.

A belief that only eternal monogamy was permitted would have caused grief when proxy work was done for remarried ancestors or in the case of

remarried converts. If a loved ancestor was not the first wife, she might not have been able to be sealed to her husband for eternity. The children of women who could not be sealed might have been considered eternal orphans, never to be sealed to the family of mankind.

Mormons believe all are spirit children of God who lived before this life. Mormons believe that each soul only came to earth through an explicit decision to trust Heavenly Father and the promise that Christ would be our Savior. This Mormon God could not allow any of us to become eternal orphans, unless it was by our own choice.

The work of uniting all mankind into one great family in Celestial marriages required God's people embrace the possibility of plural marriage. Only through this accommodation would none be categorically excluded from the fulfillment of the promises made to us before our mortal lives.

Other reasons have been given for Joseph's teachings regarding plural marriage. Critics claimed Joseph was motivated by lust and greed. Believers proposed plural marriage protected women or allowed more children to be born. But these reasons fail to explain such a radical institutional practice involving thousands of families over several decades. None of those reasons explains why modern temple practices allow a widower or divorced man to be sealed to another wife. None of these other reasons is sufficient to justify Joseph's willingness to die rather than disobey.

The only logical reason for the God Mormons worship to command plural marriage was to permit universal salvation through baptism and sealing for all who love God.

Why Would God Command Polygamy? – Notes

The Bible repeatedly affirms that Christ sacrificed himself to save all mankind. Yet the Christian denominations of Joseph Smith's day did not retain the mechanisms to permit salvation of the unbaptized dead. Joseph instituted proxy baptism on behalf of the dead, but went further to state that individuals must be united to their parents, spouses, and children, else "the whole earth would be utterly wasted at [Christ's Second] coming."¹⁶

The medieval rulers of Europe had changed marriage laws. By the lifetime of Joseph Smith, monogamy was the only permissible form of marriage. Restoration of plural marriage was required to allow the entire human family to be joined together via posthumous sealing ordinances.

3 – Guns, Germs, and Sex

In 1998 Jared Diamond won the Pulitzer Prize for his non-fiction book, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. Diamond argued that Eurasian civilizations survived and conquered due to environmental factors. Diamond's text emphasized the role of real physical conditions, and how important it is to consider these realities when interpreting history and constructing hypotheses.

Though Joseph Smith lived a mere two hundred years ago, the modern student needs to be reminded of the differences between Joseph's time and our day. Weaponry was primitive. Medicine was primitive. Sexual innovations had emerged in the name of religion. However there were many beliefs that worked to persuade men and women to be circumspect even within marriage. Hypotheses about what happened in Nauvoo during the 1840s must take these realities into consideration.

Guns

On June 27, 1844, Hiram Smith died while in custody at Carthage Jail after being shot by several balls. One ball entered his back and shattered his pocket watch after having passed through his entire body.

Roughly a minute later, Joseph Smith was shot while poised in the second-story window of the jailhouse sitting room. Two balls hit him in the back, shot from the doorway inside the jailhouse. One ball hit his shoulder

and another hit him in the chest. The facts regarding the deaths of the Smith brothers are not striking unless one understands the limited range and accuracy of guns in 1844.

Most guns used by armed forces in 1844 were smooth bore muskets. The musket's smooth bore made the gun easy to load and shoot.¹ But such muskets were significantly inaccurate by modern standards.

Rifled guns were invented by Germans in the late 1400s.² By creating twisting grooves inside the barrel of the musket, the ball could be made to spin like a fletched arrow. A ball shot from a rifle should have increased accuracy due to gyroscopic stability. The spinning eliminated sources of variation such as the Magnus effect. In addition, early rifle balls were loaded with a patch of natural fabric, to ensure the ball took the spin. Thus more of the energy from the ignited gunpowder was imparted to the ball.

But accuracy and ability to kill at range came at a price. Rifled muskets took more time to load due to the tight fit of the patched ball, and the grooves could be easily fouled with unexploded gunpowder. For these reasons, George Washington argued that rifles were militarily inferior to smooth bore muskets. In 1844 there were many more muskets in circulation than rifles. For example, in the year ending June 1844, the United States disbursed 5,750 muskets and only 680 rifles.³

John Taylor took the time to calculate the distance from which the shot must have been fired to hit Hyrum on the far side of a second-story room.⁴ John was only able to infer that someone at least 100 yards to the east had fired the shot that pierced Hyrum's torso. On that basis, Taylor came to the conclusion that the ball that hit Hyrum must have been shot by a member of the Carthage Greys, stationed some distance to the east of the jail. But the accuracy of the shot suggests more about the shooter.

Small arms trials conducted by the U.S. Army in 1860 demonstrated that over a quarter of the balls shot from a smoothbore musket at a range of 100 yards didn't even hit a 10 foot by 10 foot target, a target as large as the side of a barn. An NRA B-18 torso target placed at the middle of the 10 foot target would have been hit by only one ball in ten, and no balls shot in the trials would have hit the inner core of a torso target, associated with a lethal hit.

Despite the theoretical advantages of the rifle, when multiple men shot using rifles, they also missed the 10 foot target more than 25% of the time.

Again no balls hit close enough to the center of the target to suggest a lethal hit.

It was only when a single individual shot using rifles braced on a rest that the center of the target could be consistently hit from 100 yards. ⁵ This use of an unusually accurate weapon braced for enhanced stability would eventually give rise to the military specialty of sniper. Appendix B contains charts showing representative targets from the 1860 Small Arms Trials.

Anyone other than a rifleman using a rest would have endangered the co-conspirators attacking the Smith brothers from the inner door. We know of a man using a rifle who claimed to have murdered the Smith brothers. John C. Elliott used a borrowed Neimeyer, reportedly a .49 caliber private weapon that may have had a hair trigger. ⁶ John C. Elliott was reportedly an undercover U.S. Marshall at the time ⁷ and would go on to become a noted slave chaser prior to his death in the Civil War. John C. Elliott was celebrated by his peers as the man who killed the Smith brothers.

The coroner who examined the four wounds on Joseph Smith's body found that the fatal ball was the one that had pierced his right breast, shot from the east, outside the jail. ⁸ While the most noticeable wound on Hyrum was the wound to his face, it was arguably the body shot from the east that caused his actual death.

The contemporary testimony of William Daniels, who had been watching across the road from Carthage Jail, suggested that a firing squad of four men shot at Joseph after he fell from the jailhouse window. ⁹ However it seems unlikely that a firing squad shooting at a man propped against a wall could have inflicted two wounds in that man's back. It seems more likely that the marksman shooting from the east was merely gathered with others who wanted to claim they'd fired the fatal shot. A gathering of men, examining their handiwork and demonstrating their techniques could have appeared to a distant observer to be a firing squad.

The constraints of a prior time inform our understanding of that time. The killing shots from the east were almost certainly from a rifle, shot by a person using a rest. Death was thus delivered with chilling pre-meditation. The report that four men gathered around the body combined with later certainty that Elliott had inflicted the fatal shot evokes a scene of men jovially evaluating the evidence and then congratulating the winner.

The gun John C. Elliot had used on June 27, 1844, was cherished as “the rifle that killed Joe Smith” until at least the 1890s. ¹⁰

Germ

Someone e-mailed me privately recently regarding a rape that had allegedly rendered a 19th-century woman infertile.

My correspondent postulated the woman had realized she was infected with a venereal disease, then selflessly decided to avoid sexual relations for the rest of her life, to spare a future husband any risk of infection.

The problem with this theory is that it presumes a modern understanding of disease and a modern ability to diagnose disease and its consequences.

The concept of bacteria was unknown in 1844 and would not be known until Lister's experiments with *penicillium glaucum* in 1871. Even then, it would take well over a decade before doctors accepted Lister's theories regarding bacteria.

The term infection was used in 1844 to refer to illness caused by bad air. It was not understood how illness affected the air. But serious concern regarding infection was associated with superstition. This is demonstrated in Jane Austen's book *Sense and Sensibility*, in the scene where Marianne Dashwood becomes ill. When the doctor mentions infection, the reasonable characters dismiss the possibility of risk to the infant in the home. These reasonable characters were the doctor, Eleanor Dashwood, Colonel Brandon, and Mister Palmer. It is only the ridiculous characters who are concerned (Mrs. Jennings and her daughter, Charlotte Palmer).

It was believed placing aromatic or pungent herbs near the nose could prevent illness. Children would be sent out with pungent bags of asafetida around their necks to ward off colds and influenza. These "asfeddi" or "acifidity" bags were being recommended as late as 1918 to combat the Spanish Influenza. However the National Institutes of Health webpage on asafetida dismisses the medicinal benefit of wearing the pungent spice, stating "Whatever effectiveness it had was probably due to the antisocial properties of the amulet rather than any medicinal virtue."¹¹

Florence Nightingale, the famed nurse of the Crimean War during the 1850s, rejected germ theory. Nightingale did not believe that disease could be spread by physical contact, referred to as contagion. Instead she advocated patients be kept warm and clean in well-ventilated facilities.

Many casual students of Nauvoo presume there was frequent sexual activity between men and their plural wives, with instances of technical polyandry suggesting women might have been having sex with more than one man. It is sometimes asserted that the unusually low number of children associated with the many presumed liaisons was due to surgical removal of the unborn infants.

In the 1880s, long after Sarah Bates [Pratt] had given up any pretense of believing in Mormonism, she gave an interview to Wilhelm Wyl¹² for his 1886 expose of Mormonism, *Mormon Portraits*. Sarah claimed to have seen Bennett with a long metal implement used to perform abortions, explaining he had just performed such an operation on one of Joseph's wives. By implication, other pregnancies were also surgically terminated, explaining the lack of offspring from the presumed liaisons.

However doctors in the 1840s would not have sterilized their instruments. Surgical termination of pregnancies should have resulted in statistically significant rates of maternal death.

Widespread non-exclusive sexuality should also have resulted in evidence of venereal disease, even if the mechanisms of venereal infection would not have been understood at the time.

Ironically, beliefs in the 1840s regarding the causes of illness would have discouraged un-necessary sexuality between married couples. Cholera in particular was believed to be associated with intemperate sexuality, including unnecessary sex in marriage.

Cholera first appeared in India in 1817. By 1832 cholera epidemics broke out in New York and London. The linkage between cholera and water would not be discovered until 1849, when Dr. John Snow was able to use statistics to construct a theory linking the spread of cholera to contaminated water. The existence of the micro-organisms causing cholera would not be confirmed until bacteriologist Robert Koch observed them in an advanced microscope in 1883.¹³

Lacking a medical context for the scourge of cholera, leaders in both London and New York “attributed the disease to poor morality, because outbreaks clustered within the poverty stricken sectors of the cities. Specifically, Irish immigrants were regarded as second class... their vice was considered a contributing factor to their high mortality rates. Americans saw neither poverty nor wealth as accidental conditions. The affluent classes

viewed success as testimony of their virtuous habits and poverty as a product of vice, idleness, intemperance, and immorality.”¹⁴

The meaning of the term “intemperance” is illuminated by considering the epithet “Irish twins.” An Irish twin is a child born within a year of a preceding sibling. In an age where birth control was not considered moral, the only sure way for a husband to protect the health of his wife and a nursing infant was to avoid intercourse until pregnancy would not create a health burden. The intemperate Irish were being derided for engaging in married sex when a mother was newly delivered of a child.

Sex

With the advent of DNA analysis, we can now evaluate the biological parentage of the few children historically believed to be engendered by Joseph Smith with his plural wives. None of the children whose claim has been tested has been found to be Joseph’s biological child. Specifically, Joseph could not have been the father. In other testable cases those asserting a biological link have not bothered submitting their claim to DNA testing.¹⁵

Yet casual scholars of Joseph’s life persist in trying to maintain that Joseph was manipulative and libidinous by putting forward seemingly plausible explanations for Joseph’s alleged sexual activity and the lack of children. Such modern scholars live in a world that elevates sexual satisfaction to the status of an inalienable right, where people regularly tinker with fertility. But Joseph lived in a grossly different world. Thus we need to review the sexual realities, mores, and folkways of the 19th century.

Birth Control. Moderns typically achieve desired intervals between children by using birth control. But in the 1800s birth control was considered to be criminal. In 1832 atheist physician Charles Knowlton published *The Fruits of Philosophy, or the Private Companion of Young Married People*. Knowlton’s little book described what was then known about the process of conception. He gave suggestions on treating infertility, overcoming impotence, and preventing conception. Knowlton was prosecuted and fined for the initial publication. A second printing earned Knowlton three months imprisonment at hard labor. Subsequent attempts to publish the book would result in the publishers being convicted of obscenity. It was not until 1877 that the conviction of activists Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant was overturned on a technicality. The publicity of the Bradlaugh/Besant case turned Knowlton’s little birth control pamphlet into a best-seller. Britains strove to

eliminate the poverty attributed to ‘excess births’ and avoid Malthusian catastrophe.

However the American frontier of the early 1800s was not overly concerned about overpopulation. The average citizen would have been horrified at the thought of promoting sex for purposes other than conception.

Procreative Sex. Considering the belief that sexual excess contributed to the cholera epidemic of 1832, it is not unreasonable to hypothesize that many married couples in 1840s Nauvoo limited sexual activity to the minimum required to produce children. The legacy of such restraint or prudery was still manifest in Mormon circles over a century later. In some Mormon circles, the cultural habit of restricting sexual contact to the production of children was still in force well into the 1980s.¹⁶

Joseph Smith and Emma Hale apparently refrained from sexual contact until the prior child was at least a year old, limiting their conjugal activities to key dates.¹⁷ While far from sufficient to confirm sexual restraint, an analysis of the pregnancies of Joseph’s wife, Emma Hale, demonstrates that in only one case did Emma become pregnant sooner than two years after her prior conception. In addition, six of her children appear to have been conceived around the time of year she and Joseph retrieved the golden plates (September 1827). Two were conceived around the time of her wedding anniversary (January 18, 1827) following a possible failure to conceive the previous September. The only exception to this pattern was Emma’s son Don Carlos, who was conceived as soon as Joseph reunited with Emma after escaping from Liberty Jail in April 1839.

Infertility. As none of the few child born to Joseph Smith’s plural wives can be confidently attributed to Joseph, some suggest that infertility may have been the cause.

Yet Joseph Smith engendered children with Emma Hale on a regular basis throughout their marriage. Emma first conceived within a year of the date Joseph and Emma married. She was pregnant with their final child when Joseph was killed.

Similarly many of the women with whom Joseph Smith covenanted during his lifetime went on to bear children. They usually conceived within weeks of re-marrying after Joseph’s death. In the case of Louisa Beaman, Joseph Smith’s first plural wife in Nauvoo, she remained childless during the period of Joseph’s life. After marrying Brigham Young in 1846, Louisa gave

birth to five children in a period of five years before her death of cancer in 1850.

It is certainly possible to argue that something could have gone wrong in individual cases with the typical reproductive patterns. However Joseph Smith and those who believed in his teachings gifted us with dozens of such instances. Therefore theories as to what could have been happening must take into account this large and fertile data set.

Infertility is not sufficient to explain why so few children were born to plural wives prior to Joseph's death (with apparently none engendered by Joseph with his plural wives). Meanwhile, sexual abstinence in the service of religion was a commitment other respected Christians were making.

Shakers and Celibacy. The Christian sect most associated with celibacy was founded by English-born Ann Lee. Born in 1736, Ann Lee taught her followers that it was possible to attain perfect holiness. One aspect of gaining this holiness involved giving up sexual relations.

Ann was forced to marry against her wishes. Her four children all died in infancy, informing her radical rejection of sexuality and marriage. In 1774, Ann Lee and some followers emigrated from England to Albany County, New York, and formed the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing. They were also referred to as the Shaking Quakers or Shakers because their worship services involved dance and charismatic shaking. The community grew from converts and from taking in children who had been abandoned by others. However the unwillingness of Shakers to engender children has led to near extinction of practicing Shakers. ¹⁸

In 1831 Leman Copley, a Shaker from the Cleveland area, became a Mormon. Copley sought to bring Shaker beliefs into the Mormon faith. These beliefs included the idea that Ann Lee was the incarnation of Christ's Second Coming, that it was wrong to eat meat, and that it was wrong to have sex or enter into marriage. D&C 49 specifically refuses these Shaker doctrines for the LDS faith. The revelation was sent to the Shaker group in Cleveland, but the message was rejected. ¹⁹

Since 1831, Mormon doctrine has clearly been built around the idea that families are ordained of God and that sexuality within marriage is righteous. And yet the example of the Shakers demonstrates that sexuality could be deferred for extensive periods of time or even denied entirely in the service of God.

There are those, however, who point to the aberrant sexual practices of other Christian sects as the source of Joseph Smith’s supposed activities.

Spiritual Wives. Jacob Cochran, like Ann Lee, formed a denomination that worshipped using dancing and charismatic shaking. Cochran’s initial settlement was located in Saco, Maine, and his denomination was called The Society of Free Brethren and Sisters. Like Ann Lee, Cochran taught that marriage was not valid. Cochran taught that believers should hold everything in common. However instead of teaching celibacy, Cochran allegedly taught that intercourse could occur between “spiritual” husbands and wives, pseudo-marriage arrangements that were temporary. Care for children resulting from these short-duration “spiritual marriages” would theoretically be provided by the entire community.

Rival preacher, Ephraim Stinchfield, published a pamphlet in April 1819 exposing the sexual habits of the Cochranites. Stinchfield wrote:

“each brother and sister in this fraternity, has a spiritual husband, wife, mate, or yoke fellow, such as they choose, or their leaders choose for them. These spiritual mates, dissolve, or disannul, all former marriage connections; and many of them bed and board together, to the exclusion of all former vows.”²⁰

Later that year Cochran was arrested for lewdness. After his release, he relocated his community to Grove township, in Allegany, New York.

Various high profile Mormons such as Warren Cowdery came from the areas near the Cochranite settlements. Austin Cowles was a former neighbor of the Cochranites who would aggressively reject Joseph’s teachings regarding plural marriage.

The term “spiritual wifery” would be used by most in Nauvoo to describe sexual intercourse that was not part of a marriage.²¹ Secondary documents describing the marriage situation in Nauvoo tend to simplify the confusing terms by referring to everything as “polygamy.” Yet we see time and again that spiritual wifery was rejected by the same people who had embraced Joseph’s teachings regarding plural wives. We never see Joseph refer to his teachings regarding Celestial Marriage as spiritual wifery. Even though Joseph’s own brother advocated spiritual wifery, Joseph’s most trusted intimates, including his plural wives, rejected spiritual wifery. An example of this is Zina Diantha Huntington’s strong negative reaction when William Smith preached in 1845 regarding spiritual wifery.²²

Complex Marriage and Social Intercourse. Another relatively well known group sometimes cited as Joseph Smith’s inspiration was the Oneida community formed by John Noyes. Noyes claimed “his new relationship to God canceled out his obligation to obey traditional moral standards or the normal laws of society.”²³

John Humphrey Noyes was born in 1811. In the early 1830s he attended Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut. In 1834, Noyes declared himself perfect and free from sin. This outraged the Divinity School. Noyes’ license to preach was revoked. Undeterred, Noyes returned to his native Vermont and established a religious community committed to his unorthodox views. Regarding sex, Noyes would teach that sexual intercourse could be separated into two components: the social and the procreative. By 1844 the community became a formal organization where the pursuit of perfection was facilitated by male continence (sex without ejaculation) and complex marriage, where persons were permitted to engage in “social” intercourse with individuals to whom they were not married.

Noyes felt it was a positive social act for everyone to participate in intercourse starting at puberty, which Noyes considered began at age 14. Young men were initially to have intercourse with older women past the age of bearing, to avoid “sexual starvation” at a time when the sexual appetite is at its peak. Only men like himself, who had perfected the skill of engaging in intercourse without ejaculation, were permitted to have intercourse with nubile teens and women who were not married.

Noyes fled the United States in 1879 when he was told he was going to be arrested for statutory rape. Two months later, Noyes directed his followers to abandon complex marriage and revert to traditional marriage practices.

Noyes is sufficiently late that it is not clear that his sexual experiments would necessarily have informed the origins of Mormon polygamy. However the key technique Noyes used to achieve social intercourse without risking pregnancy was a variation of onanism, the practice of having intercourse without allowing the man to ejaculate during penetration. Onan and sufficient detail regarding what he did are discussed in Genesis 38:8-10. On the other hand, the Bible record of onanism claims that Onan was killed for this behavior. Thus it seems a stretch to presume that a people who embraced the Bible would embrace onanism at that time, unless it was specifically documented as a practiced behavior.

Onanism was explicitly rejected by Mormon leaders as part of the 1885 excommunication of Albert Carrington. Carrington thought sex was not

adultery unless the man ejaculated during penetration. On that basis, he had been “friendly” with young ladies to whom he wasn’t married. This was a time when the LDS Church still practiced polygamy. Yet Carrington’s onanism was considered adultery, fornication, and “lewd and lascivious conduct.”²⁴

Illicit Intercourse. There is documentation confirming that many individuals in Nauvoo were engaging in promiscuous sex in 1841-1842. Though rarely mentioned in discussions of Mormon polygamy, this epidemic of illicit intercourse must be considered to fully understand why Joseph acted as he did to establish covenants between himself and so many women and, via these women, with many of his male and female followers.

Treatment of Hysteria. Given the discussion of the sexual prudery of the 1800s, it may seem incomprehensible that individuals in 1840s Nauvoo could embrace promiscuous sex to any significant degree. However a treatment for hysteria used since the time of the Greeks could have been the precursor to Nauvoo promiscuity.

As seen in the writings of Hippocrates (before 370 BC), medical literature had promulgated the idea that women were prone to a variety of disorders caused by the uterus, *hysteria* in Greek. The uterus would supposedly wander about the body like a living creature, causing disease, blocked passages, and obstructed breathing.

The wandering of the uterus could supposedly be cured by causing it to become sufficiently lubricated. This occurred as a result of sex or pregnancy. Cappadocian physician Aretaeus, writing in the 1st century BCE, described the uterus or womb as “closely resembling an animal... It delights also in fragrant smells, and advances towards them.” Aretaeus’ views would become more influential in Medieval and Renaissance medicine regarding “hysteria” than the more biologically correct gynecological writings of Galen of Pergamon and Soranus of Ephesus. The idea of the wandering womb was still in vogue when Sigmund Freud described the wandering mind.²⁵

By the 1800s, the recommended remedy for female hysteria was to massage the genitalia to produce a uterine paroxysm. Such a “paroxysm” was believed to cause the wandering uterus to become lubricated and to reseat itself in the proper position. The medical literature of the day did not refer to this as orgasm.

It was believed a woman with an attentive husband would become regulated in the normal course of marital relations, as had been described in

the Hippocratic corpus. However even a married woman might become hysterical in high stress situations. Treatment was administered manually by practitioners of either sex. This was considered an honorable task.²⁶

In the latter half of the 1800s, a new device unimaginatively referred to as a vibrator was developed to assist healers. The vibrator helped relieve the repetitive stress a doctor incurred by treating hysteria manually. These new devices also allowed women to treat their own hysteria without having to resort to medical professionals. Vibrators were widely advertised in respectable periodicals of the day for medical use.

It was not until the advent of film that this practice of treating hysteria was questioned. When the process of treating hysteria was shown on film in the 1910s, it was deemed to be offensive, obviously more of a sexual act than a medical act. This is reflected in the precipitous drop of medical papers describing hysteria and treatment of hysteria after 1900.²⁷ Not only was the traditional treatment for hysteria now considered to be immoral, doctors began to be more exact about female ailments, rather than attributing every possible problem to hysteria.

In the early 1800s, when Mormonism was forming, it would have been perfectly respectable for a doctor to treat his female patients for hysteria. This becomes important as we consider recollections regarding early interactions between Dr. Bennett and Mormon women. It is possible that during Dr. Bennett's early days in the community, his interactions with women were legitimate. He could have been performing a "proven" medical procedure on women who were experiencing stress.

Dr. Bennett's medical experience would later give him the confidence to persuade appalling numbers of people that they could indulge in sexual activities outside of marriage. Dr. Bennett promised that it was acceptable, that it was safe, and that there would be minimal risk of pregnancy.

Guns, Germs, and Sex – Notes

Joseph Smith's death was not the result of impulsive anti-Mormon mob action, but was apparently the result of a concerted conspiracy that included a pre-meditated killing by a highly-skilled marksman using state of the art weaponry.

The people of 1840s did not believe in germs. Therefore they would not have taken any of the sanitary precautions required to avoid infection. Given the ignorance regarding germs, surgical abortion should have produced a statistically noticeable number of deaths if it was a common practice. On the other hand, terrifying illnesses such as cholera were believed to be caused by moral depravity and excess, including excess sexuality within marriage.

Sexual mores and folkways of the 1840s were very different from modern practices and beliefs. Birth control was considered obscene and criminal. Frontier pioneers, specifically Joseph Smith and many of his plural wives, were not afflicted with infertility. Sexuality within marriage was often limited to intentional procreation.

Joseph Smith and the male and female leaders who succeeded him specifically rejected the celibacy of the Shakers, the spiritual wifery of Jacob Cochran, and the male continence or onanism taught by John Humphrey Noyes. Yet time-honored medical procedures for treating hysteria may have paved the way for gross sexual misbehavior in Nauvoo during the early 1840s.

4 – The 1831 Revelation Regarding Plural Marriage

Many presume Joseph was marrying women to justify libido-driven actions. Yet Dennison Harris' report indicates Joseph considered plural marriage a commandment from God which he must obey or be damned. It was a commandment he said he would obey even if it led to his death.

The only canonized document discussing plural marriage is found in D&C 132, which was not published during Joseph's lifetime. The RLDS Church questioned the legitimacy of this revelation, bolstered by the deathbed claim of Emma Hale [Smith] that she had never seen the revelation.

However Erastus Snow wrote that Joseph had received the revelation while translating a passage in the Old Testament where "one of the Old Prophets was dividing His property to His offspring," likely Genesis 17. ¹ We know Joseph abruptly ceased translating the Old Testament at Genesis 24:31 prior to March 7, 1831. ² When we consider the initial revelation regarding plural marriage likely occurred at that time, the historical and revelatory record comes to life.

The Context for the 1831 Revelation

Several historical events occurred prior to March 1831 that provide us insight into the relationship between Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma Hale:

- Joseph married Emma Hale over her father's objection (January 1827).
- Joseph obtained the golden plates and began to translate them (September 1827).
- Emma's first child, Alvin Smith, was born and died when Martin Harris lost the first 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon (June 1828).
- Believing himself under condemnation for having allowed the pages to be lost, Joseph started attending the Methodist church. Emma's uncle kicked him out (summer 1828).
- Translation resumed and The Book of Mormon was published (May 1829–March 1830).
- The Hale family decided to let Joseph farm a parcel near their home (summer 1830).
- Joseph formed the Church of [Jesus] Christ [of Latter-day Saints] (April 1830).
- Joseph was commanded to tend to the Lord's work. He neglected the farm (summer 1830).
- Joseph came home to find Emma talking with her father and uncle. Hale kicked Joseph off the farm, demanding that Emma leave Joseph (September 1830). Emma stayed with Joseph.
- Emma became pregnant with twins (likely in September 1830, presuming typical twin gestation of 36 weeks).
- Joseph began his translation³ of the King James Bible (NLT Dec 1830).
- Joseph and Emma traveled to Kirtland, Ohio (February 1831).
- Joseph resumed his work on the King James Bible, translating from Gen 5:29 through Gen 24:31 prior to March 7, 1831.

Emma had given up the family of her birth for a husband who had dedicated his life to God's work. Yet Emma had also heard the vehement objections her father and uncle had to Joseph Smith. They considered him a heretic unfit to support a wife. Tales of religious innovators, such as Jacob Cochran, may have entered into these family conversations. Emma was noticeably pregnant with twins by March 1831 and was likely feeling vulnerable.

Based on the Genesis account up to the death of Abraham's wife, Sarah, Joseph went to God and seems to have asked how it was that Abraham and other honored Bible figures were justified in having many wives and concubines.

Emma seems the most likely person to have discussed Old Testament polygamy with Joseph in March of 1831. She had the strongest motive to question the institution of polygamy in the Old Testament. She certainly would later question whether polygamy could be the will of God. Other people close enough to Joseph to discuss these things in 1831, such as Oliver Cowdery, or Newell K. Whitney, would likely have left a record of the interaction. Yet there is no such record.

We can infer that the initial verses of D&C 132 reflect the answer Joseph received in March 1831:

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines—

Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter.

Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory. ⁴

Whether or not this revelation came as a result of a discussion between Emma and Joseph, it seems natural that Joseph would have shared something about the answer with Emma. There is no indication Emma agreed to the requirements of this revelation and covenant at this time, however.

Arguing with God

Even though Joseph did not write down the revelation related to plural marriage at that time, we see the continued argument Joseph and God engage in at this point. Section 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants, received March 7, 1831, is the first revelation that mentions the New and Everlasting Covenant:

...I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people...to prepare the way before me [Jesus Christ]...in the day when I shall come in my glory in the clouds of heaven, to fulfil the promises that I have made unto your fathers... ⁵

After numerous verses describing terrible events that would precede the time when Christ will come in glory, the Lord tells Joseph:

“[It] shall not be given you any further concerning this chapter, until the New Testament be translated, and in it [the New Testament] all these things shall be made known... I give unto you that you may now translate it, that ye may be prepared for the things to come. [Verily], great things await you. ⁶

Joseph stopped translating Genesis and began working on the New Testament. As per direction in the revelation, Joseph moved his family from the Whitney home in the center of the village to a cabin on the Morley Farm. Here Emma's pregnancy continued. On April 30, 1831, Emma gave birth to her twins, Thaddeus and Louisa. The two infants would die hours later.

Thaddeus and Louisa were the second and third children taken from Joseph and Emma when they could have believed they were flouting commandment. Joseph and Emma may have therefore seen these deaths as a rebuke from God. ⁷

Take Unto You Wives

It is only after the revelation in early 1831 that we see mention of men having more than one wife. The first instance is a revelation remembered by William W. Phelps as occurring in July 1831. According to Phelps' later record, Joseph Smith reportedly suggested seven married elders being sent to

the American Indians should “take unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites.”⁸

It seems Phelps did not even bother asking Joseph what he’d meant in July 1831 until three years later. There is no indication that any of the men present in July 1831 courted or married an Indian woman.

In the New Testament These Things Shall be made Known

Joseph worked his way through translation of the New Testament Gospels until he got to the Gospel of John. At this point Joseph was working on his Bible translation with Sidney Rigdon in an upper room of the Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio. A little less than a year had passed since Joseph was told to shift his translation work to the New Testament. Joseph and Sidney were translating John chapter 5 and came to verse 29:

Speaking of the resurrection of the dead, concerning those who shall hear the voice of the Son of Man:

And shall come forth; they who have done good, in the resurrection of the just; and they who have done evil, in the resurrection of the unjust.⁹

Prompted by this mention of the dead who would hear “the voice of the Son of Man,” Joseph and Sidney proceeded to record a revelation now canonized as D&C 76. This is one of the most important revelations regarding Mormon eschatology (Greek for “last study”), or beliefs regarding the ultimate destiny of mankind. The vision describes a heaven of many degrees based on earthly faith and works. The highest, or celestial, heaven would be reserved for those who were baptized and sealed¹⁰ by the Holy Spirit of promise.

D&C 76 answered some of Joseph’s questions about the New and Everlasting Covenant he’d been asked to restore the year earlier. This revelation, prompted by the translation of the New Testament, answered Joseph’s question about the fate of mankind when the end would come. While Joseph’s vision did not answer all Joseph’s questions, it was an initial answer to Joseph’s turmoil about the revelation regarding the New and Everlasting Covenant and plural marriage.

By 1831 and 1832, then, it appears plural marriage may have become convolved with Joseph Smith’s beliefs regarding the salvation of mankind

and the terrible happenings predicted for the end of times, described in D&C 45.

Mormon eschatology would evolve further after 1832, to include proxy ordinance work on behalf of the dead, ¹¹ multiple degrees of glory within the Celestial Kingdom, ¹² and the sealing of all mankind together via biological and adoptive family lines. ¹³

Mormonism also developed a unique origin narrative, or protology ¹⁴ (Greek for “first study”). Joseph taught that individuals were eternal and uncreated, given spiritual form by God the Father. Citing Jeremiah, ¹⁵ Isaiah, ¹⁶ and John the Revelator, ¹⁷ Joseph taught that each of us made a choice before this life to trust Christ’s atonement and accept the risk of mortality and sin to gain physical form. This protology elevated mortal and eternal conjugal marriage to a divine partnership with God. ¹⁸

Biblical Marriage

When Joseph Smith eventually began to solemnize plural marriages, the seeds of his actions can be found in the Bible, particularly the Old Testament. Many of the biblical marriage patterns followed by Joseph and his immediate successors can be seen in the marriages of the patriarchs about whom Joseph had asked God, listed in D&C 132:1.

Abraham. Abraham was married to Sarah, who offered Abraham her servant Hagar as a wife. We see in this two important ideas, both a wife offering her servant and a wife being the one to select the additional woman for the husband.

After Sarah’s death, Abraham married Keturah and had five sons with her. Thus we see an Old Testament patriarch re-marrying after the death of his wife.

Isaac. The inclusion of Isaac in D&C 132:1 is curious, as there is nothing in the Bible account that leads us to think Isaac was married to anyone other than Rebekah. Thus we see one of the key Bible patriarchs who is only married to one woman.

Jacob. Jacob returned to the household of Rebekah’s brother, Laban. Jacob labored in Laban’s household for seven years for the hand of his cousin, Laban’s daughter Rachel, the woman he loved. But Laban, on the wedding night, switched Rachel for her older, unmarried sister, Leah.

Jacob proceeded to commit himself to another seven years of labor to obtain the hand of Rachel. With Jacob, then, we see the third of the key Old Testament patriarchs married to sisters.

Both Rachel and Leah would offer Jacob their servants as wives. Here we see a repetition of women encouraging their servants to marry the family patriarch.

Moses. The Bible record only mentions Zipporah, the Israelite, as Moses' wife. Again we have an Old Testament prophet apparently married to only one wife.

David. King David married several women, though the number is not clear. In the story of David we see wives shifted between husbands in the case of Michal. In the case of Abigail, David married her after the death of her husband, who the Bible claims was smitten by the Lord. This marriage of a widow resembles the levirate marriage customs codified in the Levitical law. Biblical examples of levirate marriage include the union of Tamar and Judah and the marriage of David's great-grandparents, Ruth and Boaz.

However David caused the death of Uriah to have Bathsheba. D&C 132 explained that for this murder David "shall not inherit them [his wives] out of the world, for I [the Lord] gave them to another." This introduces the belief that a sinful man's wife could be taken from him in eternity.

Solomon. David was succeeded by Bathsheba's son, Solomon. The only wife of Solomon mentioned by name is Naamah, mother of Solomon's successor, Rehoboam. But the Bible states that Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. In the wives of Solomon, we see a pattern of creating alliances through ceremonial marriage and concubinage. The number of wives and concubines suggests sexuality may not have played a role in all these relationships.

And Eve did labor with him. As has been discussed, it appears the covenants Joseph entered into with women other than his legal wife were rarely, if ever, consummated. If the marriages were not initially for pleasure or procreation, then we must consider that some of the marriages were merely to create a bond wherein a man and his plural wife would assist one another within a relationship of complete loyalty.

Joseph entered into the vast majority of his plural marriages between November 1841 and November 1843, a period of only two years. Few

understand the devastation caused when John Bennett and his followers seduced unknown numbers of women during 1841-1842. John Bennett and his acolytes taught their victims that “it was right to go to bed to a woman if not found out.”¹⁹

Most of Joseph’s plural wives fit one or more of the biblical archetypes. But some of the women who became plural wives prior to Joseph’s death were vulnerable, specifically to seduction. Joseph and other church leaders appear to have spoken with or “married” these women to provide for them and to protect them, as in the case of the orphaned Partridge sisters.

A few other women appear to have served as detectives seeking to uncover the corruption created by Dr. Bennett and his acolytes. Emma was one of those seeking to end the corruption in her role as Relief Society President. It is likely that she knew about the other “detective-wives,” including friends Elizabeth Davis [Durfee] and Sarah Kingsley [Cleveland].

If Joseph had married a plural wife shortly after receiving the 1831 revelation, plural marriage would have been well established by the arrival of Dr. Bennett in 1840. If so, the heresy of illicit intercourse could have been avoided. But it would take far more than revelation and biblical precedent to persuade Joseph to marry someone in addition to Emma Hale.

The 1831 Revelation Regarding Plural Marriage – Notes

Joseph Smith initially received a revelation commanding him to embrace plural marriage in February or March 1831 while translating Genesis. The first suggestion that married men consider taking other wives occurs after this time.

Published revelations indicate that Joseph may have believed the New and Everlasting Covenant and plural marriage would play an important role in preparing the world for the Second Coming of Christ (D&C 45) or that the highest heaven was reserved for those who had been baptized and sealed by the holy spirit of promise.

Early LDS plural marriages resemble biblical archetypes. However the timing of Joseph’s plural marriages suggest many of them occurred in reaction to the illicit intercourse taught by Dr. John C. Bennett.

5 – Mormon Polygamy Prior to 1841

There is no doubt Joseph Smith began covenanting with women in 1841, eventually entering into dozens of such covenants. The history of Mormon polygamy for the decade between 1831 and 1841 is less clear.

Marinda, Tar, Feathers, and Death

On February 16, 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon had a glorious vision of a three-tiered heaven. ¹ This appears to be the answer to the question Joseph had asked in 1831, the answer God had promised in D&C 45:60-62. Joseph's question may well have involved plural marriage, inspired as it was by the Genesis account of the Abrahamic Covenant. The February 1832 revelation marks the beginning of when we might have expected to see Joseph seeking a plural wife.

In the winter of 1831/32 Joseph and Emma were living in the Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio. Years later, Joseph would covenant with women he reportedly had felt prompted to marry during the 1830s. Nancy Marinda Johnson, who would covenant with Joseph in the 1840s, did not explicitly confirm Joseph had considered marrying her in 1832. But she was a marriageable single woman in the household where Joseph was living at the time of the February 1832 revelation. In 1843 she would covenant with Joseph instead of the good man she married in 1834, Apostle Orson Hyde.

Mere weeks after receiving the revelation regarding heaven (D&C 76), Joseph Smith was pulled from his bed in the dark of night. The attackers attempted to pour tar down Joseph's throat, attempted to administer poison, and had a physician on hand to castrate Joseph. The murderous violence could have been caused by any of a variety of perceived wrongs. The attempted castration hints the attack could have been inspired by some sex-related provocation. ²

The story of this mobbing is well known. Emma was particularly terrorized by the brutal attack and the resulting death of their adopted son, Joseph Murdock Smith. Sidney Rigdon was badly beaten and would never fully recover. Joseph escaped castration. However the mob broke his front teeth in the beating and the hair never did grow back on the side of his face. When Emma saw her tarred and feathered husband, she thought he was covered in blood and near death.

It is reasonable to suggest Joseph and Emma saw this attack as a direct result of an early attempt to practice plural marriage. If so, it would be no wonder they would subsequently approach plural marriage as though it could lead to Joseph's death.

Mr. Smith

According to the recorded genealogies, Miss Hannah Dubois married a John F. Smith and bore him two children during the 1830s. Mr. Smith allegedly died circa 1840 in Nauvoo. Hannah Dubois then married widower Philo Dibble, to whom she was sealed in the Nauvoo temple in January, 1846.

Despite this history, family rumors have persisted that there was no John F. Smith. Hannah's descendants claim the children born in the 1830s were the result of liaisons between Hannah and Joseph. ³ Historians have typically discounted Hannah as a wife of Joseph Smith. However explanation of this dismissal involved discussion of the children born in the 1840s during Hannah's marriage to Philo Dibble. ⁴

It was a descendant of the mysterious John F. Smith who told me they are descended from Joseph Smith. They cited the inability to find a John F. Smith ⁵ and the close relationship between Hannah's oldest children and members of the Smith family, such as Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack [Smith]. There is also a patriarchal blessing William Smith, Joseph's brother, pronounced on the head of one of these early children, a blessing reportedly closely held at Church Headquarters. Benjamin Winchester proposed that a

Mrs. Smith had been Joseph's lover and then married Dibble. ⁶ Another unnamed man alleged in 1969 that Dibble's household was one of three in which a wife of Joseph was harbored. ⁷

It is unlikely the mystery regarding the father of Hannah's children will be something DNA analysis can unravel, unless the mysterious John F. Smith and his descendants did not share ancestors with the sons of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack. However this demonstrates a problem related to unraveling the tangle of Mormon polygamy. Far from being horrified at the thought of a Joseph Smith who loved many women, some Mormons would love to find that they had a biological link to Joseph Smith. A list of children allegedly engendered by Joseph Smith with various women is found in Appendix C. Most are simple speculation, based on the mere possibility that a woman might have been in the vicinity of Joseph Smith.

Time and again, then, situations and statements that have a non-sexual explanation have been imbued with sexual significance. Despite the number of amateurs hoping to prove a biological link to Joseph Smith, prominent Joseph Smith scholars who have written regarding this earlier period of Joseph's life are skeptical of the popular view that Joseph was a sexual opportunist. ⁸

Zion's Camp, Cholera, and Wishful Thinking

By 1834 tensions had arisen in Missouri, prompting Joseph to raise a group of men to defend the members of the Church in Missouri, or Zion. Zion's Camp was important for many reasons, but a little known event was the death of John Sims Carter from cholera.

John Sims Carter was a widower, so his death cast the responsibility for his seven orphans (six of them girls) on his surviving brothers, Gideon and Jared. Jared appears to have caught wind of plural marriage. He had a double family now, with several young women. If he could get a second wife, he would have another set of adult hands to handle the young people.

Jared was so confident that he could obtain another wife that he built a second home in preparation. But his hope was ill-founded. In September 1835 Jared was chastised. ⁹ Of interest, Jared's ward Marietta Rosetta Carter is sometimes listed as one of Joseph Smith's wives, possibly because her surviving daughter would become a member of the Smith household. ¹⁰

Exchange of Women

It appears Joseph Smith entered into a covenant relationship with Fanny Alger by the summer of 1836. In September 1836 Fanny left the Mormon community amidst a storm of controversy. It is unclear if Fanny conceived a child as a result of her interactions with Joseph during this period of time.

Todd Compton makes a solid circumstantial case for the involvement being an actual marriage, an example of what anthropologists might refer to as trading women. It seems Joseph offered to help Levi Hancock obtain the hand of Clarissa Reed. Levi, in turn, would “get Fanny Alger” for Joseph as a wife.¹¹ When Fanny fled the Smith household in 1836, she stayed with the Chauncey Webb family. Chauncey Webb’s family would later characterize Fanny’s relationship with Joseph as a marriage.¹²

Compton supposes the relationship between Fanny and Joseph occurred around the time of the marriage between Levi Hancock and Clarissa Reed, in March 1833. It does appear that Fanny began to work as a servant in the Smith home around 1833.¹³

Don Bradley, like Compton, finds that the relationship between Fanny Alger and Joseph Smith was probably a marriage, likely solemnized in 1836. A marriage would explain all the accounts. An illicit affair would not be able to explain the accounts asserting the relationship was honorable.¹⁴

Both Compton and Bradley lend credence to the idea that sexual intercourse occurred between Fanny and Joseph. They suggest it was extra-monomamous sex between Joseph and Fanny that caused Oliver Cowdery’s outrage over what Oliver considered adultery. Bradley cites Chauncey Webb’s 1872 assertion that Fanny was pregnant when she stayed with the Webbs just prior to leaving Kirtland.

However Oliver Cowdery was not an eye-witness to the scene that caused Emma such distress. Chauncey Webb was an embittered opponent of Mormonism when he claimed decades later that Fanny had been pregnant. His understanding of the matter could have been caused by circumstances other than actual pregnancy.¹⁵ Given Chauncey’s opposition at the time of giving his testimony, the story lacks nuances that might permit us to examine the reliability of Chauncey’s observation.

No one has considered another possible reason for Emma’s rage and Fanny’s stress. There was at least one eligible bachelor living in the Smith home during the sixteen months prior to Fanny’s departure from Kirtland,

Jonathan Harriman Holmes. He was the same age as Joseph Smith. It seems reasonable that Jonathan could have fallen in love with Fanny. If Fanny asked Joseph for a release from their possibly unconsummated covenant marriage in order to marry another, an informed Emma might well rage. Similarly, Oliver Cowdery, the most obvious officiant at a plural marriage at that time, would have been outraged that a supposedly eternal union could be cast aside in a matter of mere weeks.

The Algers left Kirtland in September 1836, in part to remove Fanny as a source of controversy. The family stopped in Indiana on the way to Missouri. Fanny married Solomon Custer, who wasn't a Mormon. She remained in Indiana for the rest of her life. When asked about Joseph Smith in later years, Fanny would neither confirm nor deny whether she had been married to or intimate with Joseph Smith. ¹⁶ Neither Joseph Smith nor Emma Hale would ever document the nature of the situation with Fanny.

Apostasy and Prison

Oliver Cowdery had known the Smiths for almost ten years and was possibly Joseph's most trusted associate. Joseph had turned to Oliver when Emma became upset about the situation with Fanny Alger.

But Oliver's brother had been a neighbor of Jacob Cochran. Thus Oliver may have been predisposed to suspect immoral behavior from a religious leader. Oliver, without having seen anything, inferred a sexually inappropriate relationship between Joseph and Fanny. Oliver's belief in an affair eventually caused Oliver to break with Joseph and the Mormons. Oliver relocated to Missouri.

Certain members of the Church, including Jared Carter and Sidney Rigdon, believed Oliver's alienation was dangerous to the cause of the Gospel. They decided that Oliver must be driven from the society of the Saints and even killed. Verbal hostility between members of the Church and non-Mormon residents of Zion would cause Missourians to attack numerous homesteads. The Mormon town of DeWitt was put under lethal siege. Three Mormons died at the Battle at Crooked River. The Governor of Missouri sided against the Mormons and issued the Extermination Order. Mormon men and boys at the settlement of Haun's Mill would be brutally murdered. Throughout the area Mormons were hunted and killed, their women raped, their homes burned. Claims that Mormons inflicted similar outrages on their Missouri neighbors were rarely substantiated. ¹⁷

Joseph was taken into custody, as supposed instigator of the Missouri troubles. General Doniphan refused to execute Joseph in cold blood, but Joseph was imprisoned for months in a cramped jail in Liberty, Missouri.

As Joseph languished in Liberty, he cried out,

Oh God, where art thou? ¹⁸

In answer, Jesus responded,

Peace be unto your soul... you are not yet as Job. ¹⁹

God shall give unto you knowledge... that has not been revealed since the world was until now, which our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation to be revealed... which their minds were pointed to by the angels. A time to come in the which nothing will be withheld. ²⁰

The Joseph languishing in Liberty Jail had not embraced the commandment to teach plural marriage. Fanny Alger, even if she had been a fully conjugal plural wife, departed under a cloud of secrecy. Nothing had happened to model the acceptability of plural marriage.

Mormon Polygamy Prior to 1841 – Notes

It is uncertain whether Joseph Smith asked any woman to be a plural wife prior to 1841. Later events suggest Joseph may have considered asking Marinda Johnson to be a plural wife in 1832. Modern descendants of Hannah Dubois claim she had children in the 1830s by Joseph Smith, but scholars dismiss these claims.

It is likely that Joseph married Fanny Alger by 1836, but Fanny left the Mormon community amidst suggestions the relationship was improper. Despite later allegations asserting Fanny was pregnant, it is unclear if the relationship between Joseph and Fanny included a sexual element.

Oliver Cowdery's disgust over the Fanny Alger matter fueled existing tensions with inhabitants of Missouri. Violence escalated and Joseph was jailed. While in prison, Joseph was told he would be given knowledge which the forefathers were anxious to see revealed, presumably related to the promise of Malachi that the hearts of the children would turn to the fathers.

6 – Six Funerals and a Blessing

Some scholars have presumed Joseph initiated marriages whenever there was an opportunity for Joseph to be in the same town or house or room as a putative wife. This seems to be the rationale behind the belief that Joseph fathered children with Hannah Dubois in the early 1830s or Compton's suggestion that Joseph married Lucinda Pendleton in 1838.

In focusing on sexual desire, scholars have ignored the deaths that ripped Joseph's soul and informed his vision of family and eternity. There may have been more heart-rending funerals than the six enumerated here: brother, son, friend, wife & mother, daughter, and father. ¹ But these six deaths occurred at key times. It appears these deaths informed Joseph's evolving understanding of God's promise to the fathers and children written in Malachi and quoted by the Angel Moroni.

Beloved Brother: Alvin Smith

Alvin was Joseph's eldest brother, a man Joseph both loved and respected. The Angel Moroni told Joseph that Alvin was to be the one who must accompany Joseph if he was to retrieve the ancient record from the Hill Cumorah. ² Alvin's death devastated Joseph.

When Joseph directed the people to complete the first temple in Kirtland, he had no knowledge that the unbaptized dead could be redeemed or that families could be bound together. Joseph was therefore completely surprised

when he saw Alvin in a vision of the Celestial Kingdom. ³ The vision showed Joseph there was a way for those who died without baptism to be accepted into heaven, but the revelation did not explain how this was to be done.

Beloved Son: Cyrus Livingston Nyman

Jane Harper [Nyman] and William Nyman appear to have joined the church in the early 1830s. Before they accepted the gospel, however, two of their sons had died. ⁴ Their son Frederick had died in infancy. Son Cyrus Livingston was a teenager when he died. ⁵ As was common for early Latter-day Saints, Jane would have presumed Cyrus was damned, since he was someone of age who had never accepted the gospel in this life.

In April 1840 Joseph Smith spoke to the Saints at the tenth anniversary of the formation of the Church. His text was the story of Nicodemus and the need for baptism. Those who documented Joseph’s comments said Joseph’s observations were “very beautiful and striking... throwing a flood of light on the subjects which were brought up to review.” ⁶

For Jane Nyman, however, the sermon rekindled her grief about her son’s damnation. Jesus had told Nicodemus:

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁷ And “except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” ⁸

History does not capture how Joseph became aware of Jane’s torment. But later events indicate it likely weighed on his mind from April 1840 to August 1840. ⁹

Alvin would be saved. Why not Cyrus Nyman? Yet how could they be born again, these mature loved ones who had died without baptism?

Beloved Friend: Seymour Brunson

Seymour Brunson joined the Church in early 1831. He had served several missions and endured the hardships of Missouri. By 1840, Brunson was one of Joseph’s body guards, a member of the High Council, and a Lieutenant Colonel in the Hancock County Militia. When he died on 10 August, 1840, Brunson was only 42 years old. ¹⁰

Seymour's funeral was held on a Saturday, August 15, 1840. The line of mourners stretched for a mile. ¹¹ The mourners would have comforted Seymour's family, honoring his life of sacrifice and reassuring them Seymour would be saved.

Jane Nyman was there as well, ¹² and likely comforted those in need of comfort. But she would have been torn. Seymour would be saved in God's Kingdom. Her son, Cyrus, she believed, would forever be damned.

Then Joseph began to speak. He talked of the resurrection, reading from the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 15, where Paul wrote to convince the Corinthians of the resurrection:

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

But now is Christ risen from the dead...

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

...[Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. ¹³

It was a typical Christian funeral. But Joseph saw Jane Nyman in the crowd and knew that he needed to comfort her as well. So he continued:

Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? ¹⁴

Joseph said, "Paul was clearly talking to a people who understood baptism for the dead, for it was practiced among them."

He spoke of Jane, "This widow ¹⁵ [has read] the sayings of Jesus 'except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.' Not one jot nor tittle of the Savior's words should pass away, but all shall be fulfilled." ¹⁶

Joseph would later write:

“If we can, by the authority of the Priesthood of the Son of God, baptize a man in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, for the remission of sins, it is just as much our privilege to act as an agent, and be baptized for the remission of sins for and in behalf of our dead kindred, who have not heard the Gospel, or the fullness of it.”¹⁷

“Shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem [the dead] out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free.”¹⁸

Those who heard these teachings were filled with joy, but none more so than Jane Nyman. Less than a month later, Jane Nyman asked Harvey Olmstead to baptize her on behalf of Cyrus. Brother Olmstead did as Jane asked, performing the proxy baptism in the Mississippi River. Vienna Jacques¹⁹ rode her horse down into the river so she could hear the ordinance.²⁰ This baptism where Jane Nyman acted on behalf of her son was the first proxy baptism performed within the Mormon faith.

Afterwards Joseph Smith asked what words were used in performing the ordinance. When Joseph heard what had been done, he approved what had taken place.²¹

Ordinances on behalf of the dead could be performed by proxy. In less than a week, the power of this principle would explode in terrible urgency.

Beloved Wife & Mother: Marietta Rosetta Carter Holmes

In 1837 Joseph Smith arranged to officiate at the marriage of Jonathan Harriman Holmes and Marietta Carter in a double ceremony with Wilford Woodruff and Phoebe Carter.²²

Marietta was the ward of Jared Carter, he of the two Kirtland homes and schemes to obtain a second wife.²³

By August 1840, Marietta and Jonathan had two daughters: a toddler named Sarah and a newborn named Mary. They lived very close to Joseph

and Emma Smith, about two blocks east of the homestead, off Water Street.²⁴ Emma herself had recently given birth to a son, Don Carlos.

A strong summer storm hit Nauvoo in the days after the Brunson funeral. What happened next would remain a guarded secret. The only record survived in the stories Marietta's toddler was told to explain where her mother had gone. Sarah's stories about her mother's death are shrouded in the trappings of the Missouri persecution narratives, telling of burned cabins and mob attack.²⁵ But Sarah's stories describe events that happened in August 1840, a time frame of supposed peace in Mormon history.

That fateful day late in the August of 1840, a group of men from Missouri approached Water Street. Their logical target would have been the distinctive two-story homestead where Joseph and Emma lived. But in the storm they became confused and attacked the Holmes cabin. They found Marietta there, almost certainly with her infant daughter. Eventually the men fled, leaving the cabin in flames and the mother fatally wounded.

In Sarah's subsequent stories her mother took shelter with neighbors who fetched her father. Marietta died August 20, 1840,²⁶ only twenty years old.

Sarah's Nauvoo stories talk about living in the Smith home, playing alongside the Smith children, mistaking Porter Rockwell for an enemy while keeping watch for those approaching the Smith homestead, kneeling in prayer alongside Joseph Smith and Joseph's son, Joseph III, and stealing cookies from the Black cook, Jane Manning.²⁷

Clearly, Sarah was an intimate of the Smith household following the death of her mother. So it seems reasonable the tragic fate of Sarah's mother was of particular concern to Joseph Smith.

Joseph knew of the New and Everlasting Covenant that could bind husbands and wives together for eternity. He had received the keys of that power more than four years earlier, but had yet to use that power to bind his own marriage. As they buried Marietta, Joseph could have realized the ordinance of eternal marriage could also be performed for those now dead, just as baptism could be performed by proxy.

Though there is nothing written in 1840, there is a hint that Jonathan Holmes was the first widower offered the possibility of being reunited with his deceased spouse in eternity.²⁸ Eliza Snow would write a poem in September 1842 that she would dedicate to Jonathan, inspired by a sermon on the resurrection. Eliza modified the poem shortly thereafter, but the

original manuscript of the poem appears to have concluded with these stanzas:

Like two angels that kiss each other
In the presence of the sun—
Like two drops that run together
And forever are but one,

May your mutual vows be plighted—
May your hearts, no longer twain
And your spirits be united
In an everlasting chain. ²⁹

Beloved Daughter: Mary Holmes

It is not clear whether Joseph and Emma expected the infant Mary Holmes to survive her mother. In the weeks between Marietta's death and the death of her baby, Emma Hale [Smith] likely nursed the motherless child alongside her own son. ³⁰

Mary passed away on September 10th, ³¹ her death echoing the many infant deaths Joseph and Emma had suffered. When a baby stops nursing suddenly, a mother's body goes into mourning. ³² So even though Mary was not Emma's child, the loss would have been profound. Beyond the Smiths' grief was the grief of their friend. Jonathan Harriman Holmes returned to the Smith household, having lived in the Smith's household in Kirtland for roughly two years prior to his marriage.

Joseph, seeing the suffering of his close friend, may finally have seen how the sealing power could bind parents to their children and children to their parents. It could seal infant Mary to Jonathan and Marietta. It could seal his own departed children to himself and Emma. It could seal him to his own father, bedridden since March 1840.

No sooner was Mary buried than Joseph's father took a turn for the worse.

Beloved Father: Joseph Smith Sr.

Joseph Smith's father was a weak and flawed man. ³³ Yet Joseph loved his father, and sought to honor him whenever possible. Joseph had confided in

his father regarding his boyhood visions. As Father Smith neared death, it seems reasonable Joseph would have talked with his father about the New and Everlasting Covenant and his reluctance to obey.

On September 12, 1840, Father Smith began vomiting blood. Until that day the family had hoped Father Smith would recover. ³⁴

Joseph's mother Lucy documented the scene. The recent attack on the Holmes cabin was clearly a concern to the Smiths. Lucy recounts Joseph promising to stay by his father's side, saying that "Bennett is here and he will fix things so that we will not be in danger of being disturbed by the Missourians." ³⁵

Father Smith proceeded to bless his family, first his wife, then his sons, and finally his daughters. But it is the blessing on Joseph that is of particular interest.

"Joseph, my son, you are called to a high and holy calling. You are called to do the work of the Lord. Now, hold out faithful and you will be blessed, and your family shall be blessed, and your children after you. You shall live to finish your work."

At this Joseph cried out, "Oh, Father, shall I?"

Father Smith continued:

"Yes, you shall. You shall live to lay out all the plan of all the work that God requires at your hand. Be faithful to the end. This is my dying blessing on your head in the name of Jesus. I also confirm your former blessing upon you, for it shall be fulfilled. Even so. Amen." ³⁶

Lucy's record suggests Joseph did not cry out because of his father's imminent death, but because Father Smith told him he would have to finish "the work" before he could die. If Father Smith's blessing were true, this work was not something Joseph could hope to leave to his successors.

After the blessings were done, Father Smith comforted Lucy. The frailties of old age slipped away as he died, for he remarked, "Why, I can see and hear as well as ever I could." Minutes later Father Smith remarked "I see Alvin." Shortly thereafter he quietly stopped breathing. ³⁷

Joseph's renewed attempt to obey the 1831 commandment regarding plural marriage and the New and Everlasting Covenant would start in earnest after the 1840 blessing he received from his dying father.

Six Funerals and a Blessing – Notes

Joseph first taught it was possible to perform proxy baptisms on behalf of the dead at the 1840 funeral of Seymour Brunson. The doctrine was inspired by Jane Nyman's grief for her deceased teenaged son and Joseph's 1835 vision of his deceased brother, Alvin, in heaven.

The violent murder of Marietta Holmes days after the Brunson funeral caused great concern, likely heightened by the death of her infant daughter less than a month later. Marietta's death, from an attack likely intended for Emma Hale, may have finally allowed Joseph to understand the importance of joining families together for eternity despite the separation of death.

Finally, the blessing Joseph received from his dying father emphasized that Joseph would live to "lay out all the plan of all the work that God requires." In response, Joseph cried out, suggesting this was a duty he dreaded. Minutes later, Joseph's father sealed the blessing with his death.

7 – A Doctor and His Beloved

Dr. John Cook Bennett arrived in Joseph Smith's Nauvoo in August 1840. ¹ The educated newcomer swiftly rose to the pinnacle of the civic and military society of Nauvoo. Dr. Bennett was even briefly asked to be an Assistant President of the Church during the illness of Sidney Rigdon.

Dr. Bennett would be a Mormon less than two years. ² The initial seed of conflict between Dr. Bennett and Joseph Smith appears to have involved Dr. Bennett's desire to marry a young woman.

Dr. Bennett's activities within the Mormon community and his public attacks after his excommunication arguably deformed Mormon history more than the actions of any other individual. If Dr. Bennett's anger was inspired by thwarted love, it may well be said of his beloved that hers was the face that launched a thousand lies.

John Cook Bennett, MD

John C. Bennett was born August 3, 1804 in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, a natural port near the site of the first naval battle of the Revolutionary war. The Bennett family were shipbuilders. Blockades associated with the War of 1812 destroyed the family's fortunes. John's grandfather narrowly escaped debtor's prison. ³

John's widowed mother returned to Ohio. In time John became the apprentice of his uncle, Dr. Samuel Hildreth. After passing his medical examination, Bennett married Mary Barker.

There were few doctors and fewer institutions of higher learning in those days. John became an expert at setting up "universities" on the barest pretext. Bennett's biographer suggests John might have been the first individual to run what would now be called a diploma mill. ⁴ It seems John was expert at self-promotion and placing himself in high positions.

Medicine in the early 1800s involved practices that today would be considered sexual abuse, such as genital massage to treat hysteria. As the years passed, Mary Bennett began to suspect her husband of infidelity, seeing marriages end as a result of what she suspected was John's interference. Eventually Mrs. Bennett felt she had proof of John's adulterous behavior. She asked her brothers to take her entirely from her husband, "which they immediately done, they being leading members of the country and not wishing to be connected with so base a character..." ⁵

When Bennett arrived in Nauvoo, he did not inform his Mormon colleagues that he had a family. The omission is understandable. He had no wife with him. They apparently didn't ask. He certainly didn't tell.

Then Bennett fell in love with a young woman, a woman he reportedly wished to marry. ⁶ History has remained unusually quiet on the subject of which woman Dr. Bennett desired to marry. Aside from Joseph Smith's 1842 assertion that Dr. Bennett had desired to marry a young woman, there is no documentation regarding who that young woman might have been.

It would later be reported that during this early period Dr. Bennett had interacted in a scandalous manner with two women, both married.

The first was Sarah Marinda Bates [Pratt], whose husband was apostle Orson Pratt. Orson Pratt was out of the country, serving a mission in Europe. It was arranged that Sarah would mend Bennett's clothes and do his laundry. The Goddards, with whom Sarah lived in October 1840, would claim in 1842 that Dr. Bennett came to the house frequently. Concerning the conduct between Dr. Bennett and Sarah Pratt, Zeruah Goddard wrote, "I would further state that from my own observation, I am satisfied that their conduct was anything but virtuous..." ⁷

An 1888 account by Lyman O. Littlefield reports there was a married woman Dr. Bennett would visit in the evenings when her husband attended a Lyceum.⁸ The Lyceum began in January 1841, suggesting this woman was not Sarah Pratt, whose husband was abroad until July 1841. The unnamed woman tried to dissuade Dr. Bennett from visiting. When this failed, she persuaded her husband to remain home from the Lyceum one evening. When Dr. Bennett arrived and found the husband at home, he presumably ceased his attempts to visit that married woman.

In early 1841 Joseph Smith wrote a letter to Vilate Kimball regarding a young woman and an event that apparently was deemed “painful to every lover of Truth and Holiness.” Brian Hales suggests this letter might be referring to inappropriate sexual behavior involving Dr. Bennett.

In the letter Joseph wrote:

“Whether they were guilty of crime or not I do not say, but this I must say that their imprudence was carried to an unwarranted extent.

“I do not desire that you should turn the young woman out of doors, far be it from me to advise any such course. I think it would be well for her to remain with you at least until Bro Kimball comes home, because I think that your advise [sic], may be a blessing to her, and your council and advise such as will tend to her future welfare and happiness...”⁹

Unfortunately, the letter does not specify who the young woman was, whether she was married or single, nor the identity of the other individual(s) who had exhibited an imprudence bordering on the criminal. Therefore it is not certain the imprudence was sexual, much less whether Dr. Bennett was involved in the matter of the young woman boarding with Vilate.

It is possible that Dr. Bennett’s early interactions were legitimate. He was a trained physician specializing in the treatment of female complaints, particularly hysteria. It should not be surprising that he might attend to women. Given the nature of the medical remedy for hysteria in the 1800s, Dr. Bennett’s efforts to treat female patients could well have seemed inappropriate to an observer commenting after the scandal of 1842.

Certainly neither Sarah Pratt nor the woman whose husband frequented the Lyceum could have believed Dr. Bennett intended to marry them. Who, then, was the woman Dr. Bennett had courted?

Housemate

As will be discussed later, Joseph Smith would learn in early 1841 that Bennett was still married. He immediately acted to end Bennett's relationship with the young woman to whom Bennett had proposed marriage. In the spring of 1841, Bennett moved out of the Smith household. The young woman was therefore likely living in the Smith home. If not, Bennett's departure would have increased, rather than decreased, the opportunities for him to continue the courtship.

The Face that Launched a Thousand Lies?

It appears Elvira Annie Cowles may have been the woman who was taken from Dr. Bennett in spring 1841.

Elvira Annie Cowles was the eldest daughter of Austin Cowles by his first wife. In the spring of 1840, when Elvira Annie was 27, she was hired to be the governess for the Smith children. She would eventually agree to become one of Joseph Smith's plural wives. But in 1840, she was simply a single woman in the Smith household, a woman of health, position, skill and learning. Other young ladies living in the Smith household during those months were orphaned or otherwise disadvantaged. When Bennett arrived in Nauvoo and was welcomed into the Smith household, Elvira and Bennett became housemates.

Aside from her name allegedly missing from a petition decrying Dr. Bennett ¹⁰ and a suspicious letter from a man who would later align himself with known seducers, ¹¹ it appears Elvira was protected within a pretend marriage solemnized by Joseph Smith in December 1842.

Several known or possible victims of seduction were pregnant in 1842. Married men opened their households to at least three such women: Mary Clift, Sarah Peak [Noon], and Lucina Roberts [Johnston]. Jonathan Holmes, as a widower, would have been in a position to stand as public husband for one of these women so there would be no hint of impropriety. Yet he was assigned to Elvira rather than any of the several pregnant woman where the cover of a monogamous marriage could have been useful.

Though neither Jonathan nor Elvira ever wrote theirs was initially a pretend marriage, their descendants and neighbors would clearly indicate that

the marriage between Jonathan and Elvira was not in force until after Joseph's death.

In 1931 John Fish Wright's son, William, brought a letter to LDS Church Headquarters. The letter read:

"I was well acquainted with two of Joseph's wives, LaVina and Eliza... ¹² Before Joseph was shot, he asked Jonathan Holmes if he would marry and take care of LaVina, but that if LaVina wanted him to take care of her he would take her. He would fill that mission to please his Father in Heaven."¹³

Jonathan's descendants, including daughter Phebe, clearly understood that it was only after Joseph's death that Elvira had become Jonathan's wife, "probably at his direction":

"I heard my mother testify that she was indeed the Prophet Joseph Smith's plural wife in life and lived with him as such during his lifetime. ¹⁴ The Prophet Joseph Smith held Jonathan H. Holmes in the highest regard and he acted as one of the 'bodyguards' of the prophet."¹⁵

"When Joseph Smith was martyred, [Jonathan with others] buried his body and later moved it to a more secure resting place. Certain it is that after the Prophet's death, probably at his direction, my grandfather married one of his (Joseph Smith) plural wives, Elvira Annie Cowles Smith."¹⁶

"After the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Elvira Annie Cowles (Smith) married young widowed, Jonathan Harriman Holmes, who had served faithfully as a bodyguard of the prophet."¹⁷

Parted Lovers

Whoever Dr. Bennett had desired to marry, his courtship was abruptly terminated once George Miller confirmed Dr. Bennett's wife was still living. As Joseph would explain in 1842, a respectable person had written that:

" [Bennett] was a very mean man, and had a wife...

Joseph would continue:

“[Dr. Bennett] intended to marry [a young lady, one of our citizens]... I, seeing the folly of such an acquaintance, persuaded him to desist; and, on account of his continuing his course, finally threatened to expose him if he did not desist. This, to outward appearance, had the desired effect, and the acquaintance between them was broken off.”¹⁸

Showing Forth Afterwards an Increase of Love

The initial attempt to end Dr. Bennett’s courtship likely occurred in the latter portion of March 1841. Joseph Smith had been unquestionably harsh with Bennett in order to end the fraudulent courtship.

Two years earlier, Joseph had written a letter from Liberty Jail, containing divine guidance on wielding power within the Church:

Power ought only be maintained “by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness and pure knowledge...

“Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy...”¹⁹

Aside from the fraudulent courtship, Dr. Bennett’s activities had either been washed away by baptism or had an innocent medical explanation. With the courtship ended, Joseph showed forth an increase of love by publicly appointing Dr. Bennett to stand as Assistant President of the Church, a position which Sidney Rigdon was no longer able to fill due to ill health.

He hath requited me evil for good...

Despite Joseph’s public show of favor, Dr. Bennett would proceed to indulge in extreme depravity. Joseph would apparently remain ignorant of the extent of Dr. Bennett’s “base and wicked conduct” until roughly a year had passed. When the extent of the damage was known, Joseph would refer to Dr. Bennett as “a being totally destitute of common decency, and without any government over his passions... that others had been led by [Bennett’s] conduct to pursue the same adulterous practice.”²⁰

There never would have been a good time to restore the principle that plural marriage was permissible. However Dr. Bennett's campaign of wanton seduction would cast a pall over the topic that continues today.

A Doctor in the House – Notes

Dr. John C. Bennett arrived in Nauvoo, Illinois, around August 1840. He immediately came to the defense of the Mormons, succeeding in getting a powerful city charter passed. Reports that Dr. Bennett behaved badly during these first months could have arisen from medical procedures to relieve hysteria. Though Dr. Bennett may have initially been innocent of sexual sin in Nauvoo, he did fraudulently pass himself off as a bachelor.

By February 1841 Joseph Smith received a damning report regarding Dr. Bennett's past sins and poor treatment of his wife, to whom Bennett was still married. When the report was verified, Joseph forced Dr. Bennett to break off his engagement with a young woman, possibly housemate Elvira Annie Cowles.

Joseph resorted to threats to break off the engagement between Dr. Bennett and his beloved. Perhaps as a show of kindness, Joseph elevated Dr. Bennett to the position of Assistant President of the Church. Joseph may have hoped this public honor would retain Dr. Bennett's friendship despite the harsh rebuke. But Dr. Bennett began a campaign of secret seduction that would eventually corrupt unknown numbers of Joseph's followers, male and female.

8 – The Angel of the Lord

From the fall of 1840 through February 1842, Joseph would reach out to two men regarding what he termed Celestial marriage. Each of these men and their extended families had roots in New York and had been staunch supporters of Joseph Smith and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints despite terrible hardship.

The Alvah Beaman family had supported Joseph’s work while he was translating the Book of Mormon. The William Huntington family had earnestly sought out the restoration of Christ’s Church before finding the Book of Mormon in 1833.

In the accounts told by each of these families, Joseph Smith said that an angel of the Lord had commanded him to move forward in establishing Celestial marriage.

Fall 1840: The Noble House of Beaman

In 1869 Joseph Bates Noble wrote out an affidavit claiming Joseph Smith had approached him in the fall of 1840. Joseph taught Noble “the principle of celestial or plural marriage, or a plurality of wives,” saying “the angel of the Lord had commanded him (Smith) to move forward in the said order of

marriage.” Joseph continued, “In revealing this to you, I have placed my life in your hands, therefore do not in an evil hour betray me to my enemies.”¹

Joseph Bates Noble had been a member of the Mormon Church since the fall of 1832, when he had been taught the gospel by Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball. He had been a missionary for the Church before ever meeting Joseph Smith. Noble had marched to Missouri with Zion’s Camp, a pseudo-military effort Joseph Smith headed up to relieve the suffering of Mormons in Missouri circa 1834.

Joseph Bates Noble’s importance, however, was more due to the family he had married into. In 1834 Joseph Bates Noble married Mary Adeline Beaman, a daughter of Alvah Beaman and Sarah Burtt. The Beamans had been acquainted with Joseph Smith and “the work” since the time that the Book of Mormon was being translated.²

After August 1843, Joseph Smith would also confide in another Beaman in-law, Erastus Snow. Erastus would document that Joseph had first received the revelation on “the principle of the Celestial Order of Marriage” while translating the Old Testament. Erastus would also claim Joseph had affirmed to him “the time had come now when the principle should be practiced.”³

Louisa Beaman’s mother died on September 29, 1840. Louisa was twenty-five. She moved in with her sister Mary Adeline and Mary’s husband, Joseph Bates Noble.⁴

In a separate 1869 affidavit, Noble would affirm to Andrew Jensen that “Elder Joseph B. Noble swears (the affidavit I have on hand) before a notary public, on June 6, 1869, that he did on April 5, 1841, seal to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, Miss Louisa Beaman, according to the revelation on plural marriage.”⁵

Joseph Bates Noble had taught Louisa about the doctrine of Celestial marriage and the possibility of plural marriage. Louisa had prayed and received a testimony that the principle of plural marriage emanated from God.

Joseph Smith met Joseph Bates Noble and Louisa in a grove near Main Street. Louisa was disguised as a man. Joseph Smith dictated the words of the ordinance to Joseph Bates Noble, who performed the ceremony sealing Louisa to Joseph. The three of them then traveled across the river to the Noble home.⁶

During the Temple Lot trial, when it was deemed important to prove that Joseph Smith had been a practicing polygamist, Joseph Bates Noble testified regarding that night, how he said “Blow out the light and get into bed, and you will be safer there.”

The cross-examination between the sharp lawyer and the guileless Mormon is almost humorous. The lawyer destroyed the certainty Joseph Bates Noble had conveyed that Joseph Smith and Louisa Beaman necessarily consummated their Celestial marriage:

Q. Well did you stay there until the lights were blown out?

A. No sir I did not stay until they blowed out the lights then.

Q. Well you did not see him get into bed with her that time?

A. No sir.

Q. And so you don't know whether he followed your advice from your own knowledge?

A. No sir, I did not see him, but he told me he did. ⁷

Q. Well, you know from your own knowledge that he did?

A. Well, I am confident that he did.

Q. But you don't know it of your own knowledge from seeing him do it?

A. No sir, for I was not there. ⁸

Louisa would not become pregnant during Joseph's lifetime. By contrast, Louisa would bear five children in five years (including two sets of twins) between her marriage to Brigham Young in 1846 and Louisa's death of breast cancer on May 15, 1850. ⁹

Zina Diantha Huntington

The William Huntington family had been actively looking for a return of the Church of Christ in 1832. In 1833 the Huntingtons found the Book of

Mormon. In April 1835 the Huntington family formally joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Zina was nineteen the summer of 1840 when her mother passed away of a “congestive chill,” likely malaria. Zina herself was so sick she could not attend their mother’s funeral. Around the end of July, Joseph Smith told Zina’s father to bring the family to the homestead so the Smiths could care for them. Zina and her family lived with the Smiths until the latter part of August.¹⁰ While convalescing at the homestead, Zina met Henry Jacobs, and they began courting.

In the fall of 1840, Joseph taught Zina’s brother, Dimick Huntington, the principle of plural marriage and asked to marry Zina. However it is not clear that Dimick found an opportunity to share this doctrine with Zina at the time. Possibly uninformed that she had the option of entering into Celestial marriage with Joseph Smith, Zina married Henry Jacobs on March 7, 1841. The ceremony was performed by Dr. John C. Bennett.¹¹

Unbeknownst to Joseph, Dr. Bennett would start in motion terrible abuses of traditional morality after March 1841. Following Zina’s marriage to Jacobs, Joseph Smith would report that the angel returned. This time the angel bore a sword, swearing that Joseph and his people would be cut off if Joseph Smith did not restore Celestial marriage.

This time Dimick did talk to Zina, though she was now married and pregnant. Zina would later record her prayers during that time:

“O dear Heaven, grant me wisdom! Help me to know the way. O Lord, my god, let thy will be done....”¹²

Zina became Joseph Smith’s plural wife on October 27, 1841.

Nine and a half months after marrying Henry Jacobs and weeks after covenanting with Joseph, Zina gave birth to a son. DNA analysis indicates this son was not the biological child of Joseph Smith. Zina’s first son had the same father as his brother who would be born in 1846, Henry Chariton Jacobs. Presumably that common father was Zina’s legal husband, Henry Jacobs.¹³

Zina named her first son Zebulon, after the son of biblical polygamist Jacob and his less-loved wife, Leah. She would not conceive again until after the death of Joseph Smith.

Presendia Huntington [Buell]

Dimick Huntington had arranged for Joseph to covenant with his sister, Zina Huntington [Jacobs]. Now Dimick asked Joseph to covenant with his other living sister, Presendia Huntington [Buell] (b. 1810). The reward Dimick desired for giving Joseph his two sisters was “that where you and your fathers family are, there I and my father’s family may also be.”¹⁴

Presendia had married Norman Buell in the 1820s, bearing him their first child in 1828. Norman migrated with the Huntington family, but was never baptized. In the fall of 1841, Presendia lived 60 miles from Nauvoo. Four of Presendia’s six children had died in infancy. The promise that Celestial marriage could bind children to parents would have had a strong appeal to Presendia and to Dimick. Presendia covenanted with Joseph on December 11, 1841.

Presendia and Zina would travel to Utah and become leaders amongst the Mormon woman.¹⁵ Dimick and William would assist in the secret burial of Joseph’s remains in the summer of 1844, and would be part of the even smaller group entrusted to relocate Joseph’s remains in February 1845. Oliver, the youngest, would inherit and cherish a cane containing Joseph’s death locks.¹⁶

The Huntingtons would thus remain utterly loyal to Joseph Smith throughout the turbulent years that would come.

The Angel of the Lord – Notes

Following the death of his father, Joseph Smith broaches the topic of plural marriage with two long-time Mormons, asking each to discuss the matter with a female relative who was unmarried at the time. In each case Joseph claimed that he had been commanded by the angel of the Lord.

After learning of the request and angelic command, both Louisa Beaman and Zina Diantha Huntington [Jacobs] eventually agreed to covenant with Joseph Smith. Zina’s brother, wishing to further secure his family’s bond to Joseph, asked Joseph to covenant with his thirty-one-year-old sister, Presendia Huntington [Buell], married to a non-Mormon.

Neither Louisa nor Zina would conceive a child during their marriage to Joseph Smith. It is unlikely Presendia’s children born prior to Joseph Smith’s death could have been engendered by Joseph, see Appendix C.

9 – Fall of the Doctor

In the five months between August 1840 and February 1841, Dr. John Cook Bennett had risen from Nauvoo's newest immigrant to Mayor of the city¹ and General of the Nauvoo Legion.

By April 1841, Dr. Bennett had been installed as Assistant President of the Church. Only a select few knew Dr. Bennett was anything but an honorable man. But by the summer of 1842, hundreds if not thousands of Nauvoo's residents would revile Bennett as "a most consummate scoundrel... a vile wretch."

Bennett's initial embrace of Mormonism may have been sincere. Bennett had begun by securing freedom for his adopted people. He could have been one of the greatest leaders of the Mormon movement. Yet line by line, Bennett would fall from trusted friend to foul traitor.

Solace in the Arms of the Laundress

In the spring of 1842, Joseph Smith had quietly but forcibly put an end to Dr. Bennett's fraudulent courtship. Meanwhile, Joseph had elevated Dr. Bennett to the post of Assistant President of the Church. Dr. Bennett was therefore installed at the highest level of power in military circles, ecclesiastical circles, and political circles. Furthermore, he was a trained physician and the hero who had won passage of the Nauvoo charter.

Power and position, however, appear not to have been sufficient. Bennett had hoped to love, and he wished still to love. Dr. Bennett found a partner in Sarah Marinda Bates [Pratt], the woman who had been caring for his mending and laundry. Sarah was a married woman, but her husband was absent and would be gone for months.

It seems possible the initiation of intercourse between Sarah and Dr. Bennett may have been accidental. Panic over an accidental intercourse may have prompted Dr. Bennett to reassure Sarah she need not fear becoming pregnant when her husband could not have engendered the child. Bennett had tools to end pregnancy. Whether after an unplanned moment of intimacy or not, it seems that at some point Dr. Bennett showed Sarah the tools that are used to surgically induce abortion. There is no indication the tools were used as often as Sarah would imply in the 1880s.

We do not know how long Sarah and Dr. Bennett continued their affair, or how many times they engaged in intercourse. However the Sheriff of Hancock County would provide an affidavit in 1842 accusing “Doctor J. C. Bennett, with having an illicit intercourse with Mrs. Orson Pratt, and some others, when said Bennett replied that she made a first rate go, and from personal observations I should have taken said Doctor Bennett and Mrs. Pratt as man and wife, had I not known to the contrary, and further this deponent saith not.”²

It appears the affair was discovered in early July, 1841. In extensive 1844 municipal court testimony regarding Francis Higbee, it is possible to glean information regarding Dr. Bennett’s disgrace in the summer of 1841.

Hyrum Smith would testify “I recall Dr. Bennett asking forgiveness of the Lodge when there was about sixty present.”³

Apparently referring to the same episode, Joseph Smith testified “a long time before John C. Bennet left this city... I brought Francis M. Higbee before Brigham Young, Hyrum Smith and others; Bennet was present, when they both acknowledged that they had done these things, and asked us to forgive them... Higbee had been guilty of adulterous communication, perjury, &c.; which I am able to prove by men who heard them confess it.”

Brigham Young provided the 1841 date for the confessions, testifying, “I knew of the whole affair, it was on the 4th of July, or a few days after—it was shortly after I came from England.” Continuing under cross-examination, Brigham would say, “I have heard Dr. Bennet say all these things were facts;

he acknowledged that Higbee had the [pox, ⁴ slang for syphilis] and that he had doctored him, he acknowledged that and a great deal more.”

By 1844, Joseph and his trusted circle would not have wanted to mention Sarah’s name in connection with Dr. Bennett. Nor, indeed, would it have been necessary after the shocking public disclosures of 1842.

These statements against Dr. Bennett and Francis Higbee suggest that significant sexual misbehavior was already occurring by July 1841. However within a few days, Joseph had cause to show mercy to Dr. Bennett, sparing him public exposure.

The Widow Fuller

Sarah Bates [Pratt] knew her husband would be returning to Nauvoo at the end of his mission, as did Dr. Bennett. Based on affidavits that would be sworn out in 1842, it appears that Dr. Bennett proceeded to arrange for another woman to continue as Sarah had begun.

The woman Bennett selected was a widow living on the other side of town, in the northeast quadrant of Nauvoo designated the Second Ward. ⁵ Joseph Smith’s home was located in the southwest quadrant of town. Sometime in June Bennett started to visit the widow, likely saying he wanted to help her. By the end of the first week, Dr. Bennett revealed his true intent.

Catherine’s Widowhood. In the fall of 1838, Catherine Laur [Fuller] and her family had lived near the banks of Shoal Creek in Missouri. Their village boasted a smithy and a mill. The mill was owned by Jacob Haun. There were roughly 30 Mormon families living in the village.

In October 1838 a militia of roughly 250 men threatened to attack the Mormons living near Haun’s Mill. A truce was called, and negotiations appeared to have secured a reprieve. Even so, the Mormon villagers gathered to the relative safety of the village center. Earlier attacks on solitary Mormon households showed that Mormons were very vulnerable when isolated. Animals were scattered or killed, homes were burned, and other unspeakable horrors were alleged.⁶

On the afternoon of October 30, 1838, the militia attacked. The women and children fled to the woods. The men and boys in the village took shelter in the smithy, a crude log structure with hardly any chinking. At least seventeen Mormon men and boys would be shot and killed that day. In later

months men who had participated in the attack on Haun’s Mill would brag of their actions to their Mormon prisoners. Hyrum would testify that the guards boasted of “their great achievements at Haun’s Mill and at other places, telling us how many houses they had burned... how many rapes they had committed.”⁷

Josiah Fuller was one of those killed. Catherine may have been one of the women reportedly raped that day. Those who had not experienced the brutality were slow to believe it was not mere boasting. When the truth was known, delicacy forbade mentioning the names of the victims.

Catherine had no choice but to gather her five children and survive. With the rest of the Mormon refugees, Catherine fled Missouri. She and her children settled in the flat lands northeast of the bend in the Mississippi that would become Nauvoo.

Unlawful Intercourse. During Dr. Bennett’s third visit to Catherine’s home, he explained that he desired to have sex. He wished to have the widow grant his desires.

Catherine attempted to refuse, saying it was contrary to her feelings.

Bennett assured her there were others of higher standing than she who “would conduct in that way.” Bennett was presumably referring at least to Sarah Pratt. In case this was not persuasive, Bennett assured Catherine there was no harm in it. If the behavior was sinful, and he undoubtedly assured her it was not, he claimed any sin would fall upon his head, not hers.

Catherine told Dr. Bennett that she was not a loose woman. He was undeterred, continuing to press her to yield to his desires.

Catherine finally fell back on what she no doubt thought was her sure defense. She explained that were she to become pregnant, the scandal would bring disgrace on the Church. As Bennett was a Church official, she must have supposed he cared.

Bennett had her. He was a medical doctor. He knew how to avoid pregnancy. She would later testify “I understood that he would give me medicine to prevent it.”⁸ She allowed Bennett to have his way with her.

Dr. Bennett now had a comfortable mistress, one who had no husband who might inconveniently return, one who was not in a position to make

demands. Bennett could be mayor and general and Church leader by day, then visit “the needy” at night and have his desires satisfied.

The Honorable Higbee Family

By July 1841, Dr. Bennett had discovered Francis Higbee was actively seducing women in his own right. Francis was the son of Nauvoo’s judge, Elias Higbee. The other scion of the Higbee family was Chauncey Higbee, a handsome young man who was an aide-de-camp in Dr. Bennett’s Nauvoo Legion unit. John Higbee, uncle to Francis and Chauncey, was an honored and staunch member of the community and a member of the Nauvoo Legion.

The Higbees had been part of the Mormon movement since the early 1830s. It is unclear how Francis, Chauncey, and John became involved in Bennett’s brave new world of no-consequence sexuality. However by the middle of the summer, John Higbee’s closest associates detected that he was living with two wives. It is not clear if Judge Elias Higbee knew what his brother and sons were doing.

The Suicide Attempt

Dr. Bennett may have originally planned to keep Catherine Fuller as his personal mistress. But as Catherine would testify, George Thatcher came to her home in mid-July 1841 and insisted she have sex with him. We don’t know what arguments Thatcher brought to bear. Catherine had already yielded to Dr. Bennett. She never mentions whether she attempted to resist George Thatcher’s advances.

Thatcher had his way with Catherine. At some point he would return and have his way with her again.

In mid-July Dr. Bennett would attempt suicide. It seems Bennett’s despair had arisen from difficulties related to love. A remembered mock epitaph was inscribed “In memory of Major General John C. Bennett; who died at the seoge [sic] of Philter,⁹ in the defence of the cause of Venus, July 17, 1841.”¹⁰

The public story, related by Joseph Smith in the *Times and Seasons* in July 1842, was that Hyrum Smith and William Law had sent a letter, recounting that Dr. Bennett appeared to have a wife.¹¹ Joseph implied the June 1841

discovery of Bennett’s attempted bigamy was the cause of Dr. Bennett’s despair. Ebenezer Robinson would repeat this explanation for Bennett’s suicide attempt many years later.

However Lorenzo Wasson would write a letter in 1842 reporting that he’d overheard Joseph shouting at Bennett in the summer of 1841. Joseph dished out “a tremendous flagellation for practicing iniquity under the base pretense of authority from the heads of the Church.” Lorenzo’s letter was one of many published to document Dr. Bennett’s bad behavior. But Wasson’s letter doesn’t match the tale about Hyrum’s letter.

The tremendous flagellation Lorenzo overheard was most likely associated with the July discipline involving Dr. Bennett and Francis M. Higbee. From Joseph’s language during the reported “flagellation,” Bennett had apparently used his authority as a Church leader to coerce someone, presumably Sarah Bates [Pratt], to yield to him.

Another possible cause for Dr. Bennett’s suicide attempt was the mid-July interaction between George Thatcher and the widow Fuller. What might have started as Bennett’s personal wish to have his desires granted had ballooned. Perhaps Dr. Bennett hoped his death might stop the intrigue he had helped start.

Joseph had been undeniably furious with Dr. Bennett based on the adultery with Sarah [Pratt]. But Joseph had compassion on the suicidal man. As soon as practicable, Bennett was again involved in the duties of his offices. No mention was made publicly at this time of Bennett’s abandoned wife and children, his shady past, or the adultery with Sarah [Pratt].

Joseph was apparently not aware in July 1841 that Bennett had seduced Widow Fuller. He was also apparently ignorant of the burgeoning heresy regarding illicit intercourse, which was spreading through his people.

Colleagues, Friends, and Neighbors

Catherine Laur [Fuller] first slept with Dr. Bennett around June 1841. She subsequently slept with George Thatcher in mid-July 1841. It is not clear when Catherine slept with the others she would name as sex partners.

Several of the men were colleagues of Dr. Bennett in the Nauvoo Legion. The testimony of Jacob Backenstos, non-Mormon sheriff of

Hancock County and an aide-de-camp in the Nauvoo Legion, had provided an affidavit affirming that he found John C. Bennett:

“having an illicit intercourse with Mrs. Orson Pratt, and some others... and further this deponent saith not.”¹²

If only Jacob Backenstos had said more. Catherine Fuller would list Jacob Backenstos as one of the several men with whom she had illicit intercourse. This suggests a scenario where Bennett, discovered in the midst of intercourse by some colleague from the Nauvoo Legion, lied to prevent disgrace. The spread of the promiscuity is explained if Bennett made his lie plausible by promising the colleague that he, too, could participate in free access to female charms.

A key portion of Backenstos’ testimony was “having an illicit intercourse with...**some others**...” Among the unpublished notes recording Matilda Nyman’s confession, Matilda would say “Widow Fuller is guilty of the same [engaging in illicit intercourse]. Dr. Bennett was with her... Saw Bennet in the act with Sis Fuller.”¹³

Unlike the amusing testimony where Joseph Bates Noble was forced to admit he had not actually seen what he presumed must have occurred, it appears there were many who had seen sexual acts being performed by their fellows in the home of Widow Fuller.

Such an explosive “secret” did not stay secret for long. Orange Wight reported that by the summer of 1841, girls in Nauvoo were referring to one another as “spirituals.” Orange Wight was the teenage son of Apostle Lyman Wight. In the summer of 1841 Orange learned that John Higbee was keeping two wives. John Higbee had been a protector and mentor to Orange Wight since the expulsion from their Missouri home in 1833. In his 1903 letter to Joseph I. Earl, Orange Wight would assert that “the young folks was in advance of me [because] my work was in the machine shop 22 miles above Nauvoo where I spent nearly all my time. But when at Nauvoo in the winter of 1841 and 1842, I became fully initiated...”¹⁴

Reports that Joseph Taught Polygamy

In July, 1841, Orson Pratt returned to Nauvoo after a successful mission to Britain. Orson was perturbed to find his wife living as a tenant, without the level of support other missionaries’ wives were receiving. However no one appears to have told Orson at that time about Sarah’s infidelity. Orson

re-established his household and looked to re-integrate himself into Nauvoo society. Orson's interest in founding a University led him to Bennett. When Orson learned of Bennett's care for Sarah while Orson was absent, he insisted Bennett come live with them.¹⁵

Bennett was forced to be friends with the man he had cuckolded. Despite Bennett's access to the widow Fuller, his coercion indicates that he never intended for her to be his public wife. The woman Bennett had loved was in the city, forever in sight, but never to be his. Bennett may well have been concerned that his illicit intercourse scheme might come to the attention of someone who could expose the whole thing as a fraud.

In the meantime, Bennett had to go through the performance of his duties knowing that Smith would not permit him any more opportunities for advancement. The suicide attempt had stopped Joseph from exposing Bennett. But there is little reason to think Joseph would trust Bennett with important matters after discovery of Bennett's adultery in July 1841. Still, Bennett had to pretend to be good, surrounded by the righteous who were forever attending Church meetings in the groves of Nauvoo.¹⁶

Bennett was likely at one of these morning Church meetings during the latter part of 1841. Joseph was preaching, and mentioned that it might be necessary for the Saints to embrace the possibility of a man having multiple wives when the gospel was taught in Turkey or India.¹⁷ After lunch the meeting reconvened, and Joseph recanted his words. But the sermon may have planted the seed of an idea in Bennett's mind. Documents indicate people were claiming no later than September 1841 that Joseph Smith taught the acceptability of spiritual wifery.¹⁸

Another possible source for Bennett's use of Joseph's name is suggested by Bennett's later exposé of Mormonism. As Bennett began naming names, he includes Joseph Bates Noble as having performed the marriage between Joseph Smith and Louisa Beaman. Bennett's likely informant in this was Joseph Bates Noble rather than Joseph Smith. Noble may have presumed Bennett already knew about plural marriage and thought it safe to share information regarding Joseph's covenant with Louisa Beaman.

No matter the source of Bennett's inspiration, Bennett and his fellow seducers began to aggressively press the claim that Joseph Smith himself taught it was acceptable for women to yield. We see this in the extended testimony of Catherine Laur [Fuller Warren]:

“Sometime last winter I became alarmed at my conduct and told him [Dr. Bennett] I did not wish his company any longer. He told me that the heads of the Church were conducting in that manner ^and specified Joseph’s name^ I think this happened last October. He said that Joseph taught and conducted in the above manner.

“He also was with Mrs. Shindle now living beyond Ramus and also with the two Miss Nymans...”

“L. O. Littlefield had been at my house and made propositions to have unlawful intercourse – he urged hard. This was about the last of January or first of February, had been 3 or 4 times in course of 2 or 3 weeks. He urged doctrines such as the following, namely that there was no harm in having unlawful intercourse, that others conducted in the same way, there should be no sin come upon her—if there was any it should come upon himself, that the heads of the church now practicing the same things – named Joseph Smith – he urged this doctrine – was there about the first of February about 8 in the evening.”¹⁹

From the affidavits sworn out during 1842, it seems at least a dozen men had either seduced women or were attempting to pressure women to yield to them. The common thread in the testimonies was the men’s assurance that it was right to engage in intercourse as long as it was kept secret.

There have been several interpretations of these accounts.

First, it has been presumed that these men were operating with the full authorization of Joseph Smith, but had the misfortune to be discovered. Thus they sacrificed themselves and their good names to protect the secret of polygamy.

Second, it has been presumed that the men had learned something of Joseph’s doctrine permitting plural marriage, but over-reached Joseph’s intent.

Third, it has been presumed that the affidavits accurately portrayed exactly what happened. This paints the men as vile seducers operating without authorization.

Unfortunately, few scholars have taken the affidavits at face value. For the most part, stories regarding any form of non-monogamous sexuality in

Nauvoo have been presumed to be in some manner related to Joseph Smith’s teachings regarding Celestial marriage and plural marriage.

Even the Very Elect?

Rather than look at the 1842 Nauvoo High Council testimonies as careful lies to hide Joseph’s polygamy, let us look at tales regarding polygamy that have previously been presumed to reflect Joseph’s teachings. Is it possible some of these instances of “legitimate” plural marriage might be describing instances of spiritual wifery?

Here are some proposed tells that a story might be discussing spiritual wifery:

1. The women are not named or numbered.
2. Crude terminology is used.
3. Women are shared between multiple men.
4. Joseph calls the person to repentance or otherwise suggests that they risked damnation.
5. They themselves claim that it is acceptable for a man to engage in sex with a woman without benefit of marriage.
6. The man in question is sent away from Nauvoo.

William Smith. Joseph Smith’s younger brother had been a problem for years, certainly since initially refusing to ally himself with Mormonism in order to continue sowing his wild oats. Joseph Smith had insisted on selecting his problematic brother as one of the initial twelve apostles over the objections of others, indicating it would save William’s soul. Yet when William felt he was being disrespected, he could become violent. He once beat Joseph so severely that Joseph appears to have suffered broken ribs.²⁰ When others betrayed Joseph in 1838, William called for Joseph’s death.²¹

The women’s affidavits in 1842 claimed that William had been involved in persuading women to participate in illicit intercourse. Catherine Fuller claimed that on the morning of her marriage to Brother Warren, William Smith came to her to get her to abandon marriage and remain available to himself for unlawful intercourse.²²

Joseph attempted to reform his young brother. Despite Joseph’s best efforts, it became clear after Joseph’s death that William continued to teach and practice unlawful sexual intercourse. In September 1845 William would openly proclaim to believers in Nauvoo that he believed in spiritual wifery.

William would be excommunicated by the LDS Church and by all the LDS sects with which he subsequently affiliated in the decade after Joseph's death. Late in life he would join the RLDS Church. William would never be granted the leadership position he continued to believe was his blood right.

John Snider and Joseph Kelly. In 1850 John Snider's son-in-law, Joseph Ellis Johnson, submitted to Church discipline related to his seduction of a plural wife of Lorenzo Snow. In the course of the testimony, the seduction of Johnson's mother-in-law was entered into evidence. Johnson would state "He was familiar with the first frigging that was done in his house with his mother in law—by Joseph." Frigging is a pejorative term for illicit sex. It appears the individual frigging Johnson's mother-in-law had believed Dr. Bennett's tales that there was no harm in sex if no one found out.

Joseph Kelly, like Johnson, had been specifically brought to Salt Lake City for this trial by Orson Hyde. Orson Hyde would say "[Joseph] Kelly told him John [Snider?] knew what he was about—it was done in [Snider's] house by bro Joseph [Kelly?]..."²³

Given the crudeness of the term used (frigging), it seems unlikely that there is an honorable interpretation of this sordid tale involving Joseph Kelly, John Snider, and Mary Heron [Snider]. In addition, the implication that John Snider knew what Joseph Kelly "was about" is troubling.

If Joseph Ellis Johnson was talking about John Snider and Joseph Kelly, it appears they subsequently repented and remained faithful Mormons.

Joseph W. Coolidge. In August 1870, Joseph F. Smith was attempting to collect any information regarding plural marriage that might refute the claim that Joseph had never taught plural marriage. Coolidge claimed "Joseph Smith had sealed more than one wife to Jos. W. Coolidge, and he 'knew' as he said, what he spoke."

Though the testimony seemed to support Joseph F. Smith's agenda, he was wary of the story. He wrote, "I record this as the testimony of a man who has not been with the Church for more than 20 years."

One might argue that Coolidge's participation in temple sealings in 1846 showed him to be an upstanding participant in plural marriage. Yet proven debaucher, William Smith, had also been readmitted to the society of the Saints for a time. Unlike Coolidge, the men known to have learned of plural marriage directly from Joseph Smith would all follow Brigham to Utah.

Vinson Knight. In 1843 Joseph Smith “conversed considerable concerning some delicate matters” with William Clayton. One of the assertions written in Clayton’s diary said, “Also Brother Knight he [Joseph Smith] gave him one but he [Knight] went to loose conduct and he [Joseph Smith] could not save him.” Vinson Knight died in July 1842, supporting the past tense used in the Clayton diary, along with the implication that “Brother Knight” had died, and Joseph “could not save him.”²⁴

Neither Vinson Knight’s wife nor the widow he cared for, Philinda Eldredge [Merrick], were sealed to Vinson in the Nauvoo temple.

John E. Page. John E. Page was baptized by Emer Harris in 1833. The deaths and defections associated with the 1837-38 troubles in Kirtland and Missouri had drastically depleted the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Page and John Taylor were ordained apostles on December 19, 1838, to fill vacancies in this leading body of the Church.

Despite being designated an apostle, Page repeatedly rebelled against Joseph Smith and the rest of the apostles. Page failed to embark on a foreign mission as called. After returning to Nauvoo in the 1841/1842 timeframe, John E. Page tended to disagree with Joseph and his fellows in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Following Joseph’s death, Page is one of the myriad leaders who attempted to claim leadership of the LDS Church. He was finally dropped from the Quorum of the Twelve on January 9, 1846, for failing to sustain the exodus from Nauvoo. Less than three weeks later he was excommunicated for urging the saints to abandon Brigham Young’s leadership and align themselves with James Strang.

Page’s association with Emer Harris and James Strang puts him squarely in the circle of those willing to conspire against Joseph Smith circa 1844, many of whom had been involved in spiritual wifery circa 1841/1842.

In 1904 Joseph Fielding Smith, then 28 years old, visited Mary Judd [Page],²⁵ a resident of St. Louis and third civil wife of John E. Page. Following up on his father’s efforts to document any instance that resembled polygamy in Nauvoo during Joseph Smith’s lifetime, Joseph Fielding Smith questioned the aged woman:

Q. Did John E. Page have wives other than you?

A. Yes.

Q. How did he get them?

A. I gave them to him.

Q. How come you did that?

A. Well, he wanted them and I gave them to him.

Q. Well, that was in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith[?]

A. Yes, it was. ²⁶

It is possible that John E. Page's "plural wives" were granted to him within the context of Joseph Smith's teachings. Yet there is no documentation confirming when Page would have been united with the women historians list as his plural wives. Mary Judd [Page] did not name the wives she "gave" to John E. Page, who included two of her sisters. Nothing about the Joseph Fielding Smith interview distinguishes John E. Page's acquisition of "wives" from Bennett's heresy.

Robert Thompson. In the William Clayton journal entry discussing delicate matters, R. Thompson is also mentioned. Clayton specifically mentions that R. Thompson had died. ²⁷ The likely identity of R. Thompson is Robert Thompson, Joseph Smith's scribe prior to Thompson's death in August 1841. Robert Thompson was married to Mercy Fielding, sister of Mary Fielding [Smith], the wife of Hyrum Smith. Robert Thompson was so close to the Smith family that he is the only non-Smith to be buried in the Smith family plot in Nauvoo.

Brigham Young. In the same journal entry where William Clayton mentions Brother Knight and Thompson, he refers to B. Y. as having transgressed and yet having claimed that he had not transgressed. The only individual with the initials B. Y. in Hancock County for the 1840 census was Brigham Young. ²⁸

There is a story regarding Brigham Young that might account for this claim that B. Y. had transgressed, yet not transgressed.

Martha Brotherton arrived in the Nauvoo area in November 1841, after leaving England with her parents and two sisters on September 21, 1841. The leader of her party was Joseph Fielding, brother-in-law to Robert Thompson.

At some point roughly three weeks after arriving in the vicinity of Nauvoo, Martha Brotherton was invited to visit Joseph Smith's store. She knew Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, who had been missionaries when she and her family joined the Mormon Church. Upon arriving in town, she apparently saw William Clayton, a fellow-convert from England who had arrived in Nauvoo a few months earlier and was then working in the tithing office.

Two contemporary versions of this story exist. First is the rumor that can be inferred from the rebuttal issued during the April 1842 general conference, reported in the *Times and Seasons*.²⁹ Second is an affidavit sworn out by Martha and provided to a disgraced Dr. Bennett. Bennett would publish Martha's affidavit as part of the body of calumny Dr. Bennett flung at Joseph Smith and his followers after May 1842.³⁰ The original affidavit is not extant. Both the April 1842 rebuttal in the *Times and Seasons* and the affidavit published by Bennett mention both Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball.

According to Martha's tale, Martha was asked to wait in a room for a period of time. Then Brigham Young came in and asked her to be his partner. Martha asked for time to consider the offer. When she was allowed to leave the room, she fled. She and her parents left the Mormon community nine weeks after arriving in the Nauvoo area and stayed in St. Louis before leaving the United States and returning to England.

The combination of the Clayton journal with the Brotherton story suggests Brigham Young could have been temporarily misled regarding spiritual wifery. Brigham's interview of Brotherton caused Martha and her parents to leave the Church. However Brigham Young does not appear to have actually committed sexual transgression.

The Brotherton interview appears to have occurred early in December 1841. Martha had arrived in Nauvoo in November, 1841, met with Brigham three weeks after arrival, and was still in Nauvoo for the 1842 census (early February 1842), even though leaving with her parents nine weeks after arrival. In December, 1841, Brigham Young could have been receiving his guidance about extra-monogamous activity from someone in Dr. Bennett's circle, such as William Smith. Brigham apparently repented. In January 1842 Brigham Young would become the first non-relative to officiate at a ceremony uniting Joseph to a plural wife.

Heber C. Kimball. The Martha Brotherton story named Heber C. Kimball as implicated in the attempt to, as she believed, pressure her to yield up her virtue.

Heber C. Kimball would carefully avoid documenting the early dates of his personal interactions with Celestial marriage. He never confirmed when he was sealed to his own wife, Vilate. There is no precise dating regarding when he became a husband to Sarah Peak [Noon], a deserted English convert.

Family stories relate that Heber had been informed that he had a responsibility to take on additional wives. Heber formed a plan to approach the Pitkin sisters, elderly spinsters who had cared for him when he was on his way to England in 1840.

Heber presented his plan to Joseph Smith, who promptly proceeded to forbid such a course. According to Stanley Kimball, “Joseph had to warn him [Heber Kimball] that he could lose his apostleship and to command him three times to obey.”³¹

Stanley B. Kimball clearly believed the command to obey related to entering into the practice of plural marriage. However, the extreme nature of the threat makes more sense if Heber was on the verge of committing a sin, rather than merely not embracing Celestial marriage.

Lyman Wight. Lyman Wight was an apostle, like William Smith, John E. Page, Brigham Young, and Heber Kimball. However it does not appear that Wight’s “polygamy” occurred in 1841-42. Lyman’s wives were women he took to himself in Wisconsin, with no indication that Brigham Young had granted Wight permission to administer to himself in this manner.³²

It seems a possible cause for Lyman’s beliefs in this area arose from the example of his son, and information his son had obtained that Joseph Smith had married several women.

Orange Lysander Wight. Orange Wight was the teenage son of Apostle Lyman Wight, member of a family which had been part of the Mormon movement since the earliest days of the Church. In 1841 Orange learned that John Higbee had two wives. John Higbee, brother to Nauvoo judge, Elias Higbee, had protected young Orange and his family in Missouri.

There is no indication that John Higbee’s extra wife was duly provided to him within Joseph Smith’s system of Celestial marriage. As John Higbee was uncle to two men deeply involved in Dr. Bennett’s spiritual wifery, it seems most likely that John Higbee himself was engaged in spiritual wifery.

Orange mentions girls calling themselves “spirituals” in summer 1841, indicating that he was well behind his teenage peers when he himself was fully initiated in the winter of 1841/42.³³

Sometime in the spring of 1842, Orange was sent on a mission to the Eastern States. He was on this mission for 13 months before returning to Nauvoo in 1843.

Horace Whitney. It is not clear that Horace actually embraced illicit intercourse. However on May 12, 1842,³⁴ Horace was sent away from Nauvoo. The trip was ostensibly to visit his mother’s parents in North Canaan County, Connecticut and other relatives in Ohio. Horace would be kept from Nauvoo for over two years. Horace would not return to Nauvoo until after the death of Joseph Smith.

Helen Mar Kimball [Smith Whitney] wrote in 1881 about her husband’s departure from Nauvoo as a young teenager. Helen’s future sister-in-law, Sarah Whitney, had covenanted with Joseph Smith in 1842:

“but had to do it unbeknown to her brother, which grieved her most, and also her mother, that they could not open their hearts to him. But Joseph feared to disclose it, believing that the Higbee boys would embitter Horace against him, as they had already caused serious trouble, and for this reason he favored his [Horace’s] going east, which Horace was slow to accept. He had had some slight suspicions that the stories about Joseph were not all without foundation, but had never told them, nor did he know the facts until after his return to Nauvoo, when Sarah hastened to tell him all.

It was no small stumbling block to him when learning of the course which had been taken towards him, which was hard for him to overlook. But Joseph had always treated him with the greatest kindness from the time that he came to live in his father’s house in Kirtland. In fact they had attended the same school and studied Hebrew together, and had pitched quoits and played ball together many a time there and in Nauvoo, and he could hold nothing against him now he was dead.”³⁵

Writing four decades after the events of 1842, Helen is gentle to the memory of her long-time husband when describing the urgency with which Horace was sent from Nauvoo. Even so, it is clear that Horace’s opposition to Joseph, in light of the rumors Horace had believed, was only softened in 1844 because the man he had known so well was now dead.

Fall of the Doctor – Notes

Dr. John C. Bennett had, in the course of a mere year, gone from simple adulterer to leader of a sexual underground of vast proportions.

Bennett's seductions may not have started until after Joseph terminated his courtship, likely in the April 1841 timeframe. Bennett's affair with Sarah Bates [Pratt], wife of Apostle Orson Pratt, may have started by accident in May. By June Bennett had cultivated a safer liaison with an obscure widow, Catherine Laur [Fuller]. But what might have started as a private arrangement for personal sin quickly ballooned as others learned about the acceptability of sex without commitment. Bennett's various positions of authority gave him scope to spread the sexual heresy throughout all aspects of Nauvoo society. Nauvoo's elite were not exempted. Joseph's brother, Apostle William Smith, was definitely ensnared. Teenage boys, respectable women, and leading men in the Mormon community had been affected.

It was only after the seducers began to attribute their evil to Joseph that we see Joseph claim that the angel came again, this time bearing a sword and commanding him to obey. If Joseph would not restore a proper understanding of Celestial marriage, with its allowance for plural marriage, he and his people would be cut off. It appears Joseph Smith was not aware of the illicit intercourse heresy or how his name was being used until December 1841.

By the time of Joseph's thirty-sixth birthday in December, 1841, he likely knew terrible things were being taught in Nauvoo. According to the journal of William Clayton, Joseph pled with the Lord on behalf of B. Y., who had started down a path of transgression. Brigham Young is the only known "B. Y." to fit the context of the Clayton journal. The window when Joseph's pleading occurred likely fell between Brigham's attempt to acquire Martha Brotherton as a partner in early December 1841 and the date we see Brigham officiating at Joseph's sealing to Agnes Coolbrith [Smith] in January 1842.

10 – The Pending Storm

The angel's fury at Joseph's delay regarding plural marriage had caused Joseph to attempt obedience. Joseph had entered into covenant with Louisa Beaman and two sisters of Dimick Huntington. Joseph would also approach Mary Rollins [Lightner] and Agnes Coolbrith [Smith]. Joseph had initially felt impressed to ask Mary Rollins to be his plural wife in 1834. Agnes Coolbrith was the widow of Joseph's brother. These plural marriages with Rollins and Coolbrith appear to be the last where Joseph's initial intent was uninformed by the actions of Dr. Bennett.

Then Heber C. Kimball came to Joseph Smith, requesting permission to marry the Pitkin sisters. Joseph forbade this course. Perhaps in this context, Joseph learned Brigham Young had detained a girl for the purpose of asking her to be an extra-monogamous partner. With Heber successfully turned away from spiritual wifery, Joseph pled for the soul of Brigham. Joseph believed Brigham would have died had he continued his wrongful course.¹ Yet in all this, Joseph may not have been aware that actual seductions were occurring or how his people were being corrupted.

Agnes Coolbrith [Smith]

Agnes Coolbrith was the widow of Joseph's brother, Don Carlos Smith. Don Carlos had died in September, 1841.

Don Carlos and Agnes had three daughters. The youngest, Josephine Anna,² was born only a few months before Don Carlos' untimely death.

Agnes did not record whether the tale of the angel and the sword played a role in either Joseph's decision to ask her to become his celestial wife, or her decision to agree. However the date of the sealing falls in the midst of other sealings that were expressly in response to the angelic threat. On January 6th, the day of the sealing ceremony between Joseph and Agnes, Joseph wrote:

“Truly this is a day long to be remembered by the saints of the Last Days; a day in which the God of heaven has begun to restore the ancient order of his Kingdom...all things are concurring together to bring about the completion of the fullness of the gospel.”³

Notably, Brigham Young performed the ceremony where Joseph and Agnes covenanted with one another. Brigham's participation in the ceremony between Joseph and Agnes signaled the first known involvement of someone other than Joseph Smith and a family member of the wife in a Celestial marriage ceremony. It also likely signals that Joseph Smith felt B. Y. was no longer in mortal peril for his errors.

With Agnes, we arrive at a seeming contradiction. Agnes told Mary Ann West, who lived with her after Don Carlos' death, that Don Carlos wished for Joseph to marry Agnes after Don Carlos' death.⁴ However in 1890 Ebenezer Robinson would recount a time when Don Carlos said, “Any man who will teach and practice the doctrine of spiritual wifery will go to hell, I don't care if it is my brother Joseph.” Robinson added, “[Don Carlos] was a bitter oppose of the ‘spiritual wife’ doctrine.”⁵

However the contradiction evaporates when we consider Don Carlos would have seen his brother providing for Agnes within a biblical levirate marriage, while his statements regarding spiritual wifery referred to illicit intercourse, adultery, and fornication.

Shortly after Joseph's death, the only Smith brother remaining was William Smith. There is no indication Agnes wished William to step into Don Carlos' place in Joseph's stead. Agnes married a convert, William Pickett. In time Pickett fell away from the Church. By the time Agnes separated from Pickett, she and her children were stranded in California, near San Francisco. Agnes' youngest daughter grew to be ashamed of her father's family and her

Mormon heritage. But Agnes retained her fondness for her husband's relatives.

On May 30, 1864, Agnes wrote to Joseph F. Smith, son of Hyrum Smith.

“Joseph, my Dear Nephew I acknowledge none greater than yourself none greater than those that belong to the household of Joseph our Dear Dear Dear departed one Joseph there is none greater there is none better none more honest and upright...

“I could say many things to you Joseph that I know and that has been told me by those that are dead and gone but perhaps you would not believe me no I know that you would not so it is best for me to keep silent.”⁶

It is clear Agnes still honored Joseph Smith, her one-time levirate husband. It is unclear whether Joseph F. Smith ever took the time to learn the secrets Agnes hinted she could share.

Mary Elizabeth Rollins [Lightner]

Joseph had been impressed with Mary Rollins from the time she was a pre-teen, in 1831. While in Zion (Missouri), there was a time folks were speaking in tongues, but without interpretation. Mary provided the interpretation: mobs would drive the Saints from Jackson County. The leaders were upset and wrote Joseph, asking that Mary be reprimanded. Instead, Joseph backed her up.⁷

A few years later Mary was on hand when the mobs did attack. Their target was the Mormon printing press. Mary and her sister, Caroline, saw the mob throw the unbound pages out the window as they set the press ablaze. Mary ran to the precious sheets, containing the initial pages of the Book of Commandments. The mob saw the girls and gave chase. Mary and Caroline dove into the cornfields, clutching the pages to their bodies. Somehow the mob failed to locate the girls.⁸ Mary surrendered the pages to Sister Phelps, who had the surviving pages bound into books. One of these books was presented to Mary, who prized it very highly.⁹

The destruction of the printing press in Zion occurred by 1834. Joseph would relate he was strongly prompted to ask Mary to be his plural wife in

1834, the first year he indicates the angel appeared and commanded him to act. But Joseph would fail to act at that time. ¹⁰

The following year in August, 1835, Mary became the bride of Adam Lightner, who was not Mormon. ¹¹ Despite her marriage to Lightner, for several years Mary would have dreams in which she was the wife of Joseph Smith. ¹²

In the fall of 1841, when the angel's threat prompted Joseph to act, Mary Rollins Lightner was one of those he spoke with. She would refuse him until February 1842, when she agreed to allow Brigham Young to perform the ceremony linking her to Joseph Smith. As in the case of Zina Huntington [Jacobs], Mary Rollins [Lightner] was in the third trimester of pregnancy when she covenanted with Joseph Smith. Algernon Lightner was born and died in 1842. Florentine, a daughter conceived after Algernon's death, died in 1847. Mary never suggested her children were fathered by Joseph Smith, though speculating about the possibility of other children.

In 1905 Mary Elizabeth Lightner stood before a group at Brigham Young University and spoke of her interactions with Joseph Smith.

“An angel came to him [Joseph Smith] and the last time he came with a drawn sword in his hand and told Joseph if he did not go into that principle, he would slay him. Joseph said he talked to him soberly about it, and told him it was an abomination and quoted scripture to him. He said in the Book of Mormon it was an abomination in the eyes of the Lord, and they were to adhere to these things except the Lord speak... [The Prophet said ‘the] angel came to me three times between the years of 1834 and 1842 and said I was to obey that principle or he would slay me.’ ” ¹³

But there was more.

In the summer of 1905 Mary wrote to Emmeline Wells, saying:

“I could tell [Joseph F. Smith] a great many Some things about his Father that Joseph said he does not know about the early days of the Church...” ¹⁴

Elsewhere Mary would also write:

“I could tell you why I stayed with Mr. Lightner. Things the [current] leaders of the Church does not know anything about. I did just as Joseph told me to do...”¹⁵

By February 1842, as Mary Elizabeth Lightner hints, Joseph seems to have learned that terrible liberties were being taken with women in Nauvoo.

The Pending Storm – Notes

Joseph Smith entered into plural marriages with Agnes Coolbrith [Smith] and Mary Elizabeth Rollins [Lightner] in the first two months of 1842. Each marriage fulfilled angelic or biblical mandate. Though Mary [Lightner] had a daughter following her covenant with Joseph, there is no reason to believe the child wasn't fathered by her legal husband, non-Mormon Adam Lightner.

Both these women would hint that they knew something about those early days that later Church leader and historian, Joseph F. Smith, knew nothing about.

11 – Hunt in the City Beautiful

In the spring of 1842 Joseph is reported to have rapidly increased his attempts to teach the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage, also referred to as Celestial Marriage or plural marriage. At the same time, Emma Hale [Smith] was preaching against sexual sin. Many researchers have been certain these were signs of Joseph’s sexual cupidity and Emma’s hostility. Yet a fuller understanding of the history shows Joseph and Emma knit together in the same purpose. They were each on a hunt to uncover the seducers in their midst and save the women and men of Nauvoo.

Debauchers and Strikers. In 1844 conspirators would claim Joseph was leader of the seducers. In the *Nauvoo Expositor*, the conspirators decried the activities of these predators. They wrote, speaking of the new converts that would arrive in Nauvoo, “But what is taught them on their arrival at this place? They are visited by some of the Strikers, for we know not else what to call them...” Striker is an archaic synonym for debaucher, one who actively defiles rather than merely seducing. The men involved in illicit intercourse may not have considered themselves to be debauchers. But Emma and Joseph most certainly would have considered these seducers to be without any redeeming merit. Joseph and Emma would likely have used words like debaucher or Striker to describe the seducers.

As Emma and Joseph became aware of the activities of Bennett and his strikers, it seems Joseph went from sealing women to himself for the purpose of obeying commandment to sealing women to himself as part of either securing their loyalty or offering them protection. As some of these women

were also working closely with Emma, Joseph was likely keeping Emma informed of the situation. She had an absolute and clear need to know, particularly after March 17, 1842.

Who could Joseph and Emma trust in this investigation? By the beginning of January 1842, Joseph had complete trust in those he had taught about the New and Everlasting Covenant. These women included his wife, Emma, and his plural wives, Louisa Beaman, Zina Huntington Jacobs, Presendia Huntington Buell, and Agnes Coolbrith. The men Joseph knew he could trust included those who had participated in the marriage ceremonies linking him to the women: Joseph Bates Noble, Dimick Huntington, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball.

Emma similarly had complete trust in those women who had stood by her in times of past need: Elizabeth Whitney had taken Emma in when she first arrived in Kirtland, Sarah Cleveland had sheltered Emma when she arrived in Nauvoo after fleeing Missouri. Elizabeth Davis [Goldsmith Brackenbury Durfee] also figures among the circle of Emma's trusted friends. The Smith governess, Elvira Annie Cowles, may also have been one of Emma's confidantes.

Some of the women Joseph Smith would allegedly covenant with may have been victims of abuse at the hands of John C. Bennett or his Strikers.

Nancy Winchester is one of the least well-known of Joseph's wives, and yet she was one of the youngest of all his covenant wives.¹ Of all the women Joseph covenanted with, Nancy is the one whose life most reflects the trauma one would expect to see in a victim of abuse.

Nancy Mariah Winchester

No one now alive knows the date when Joseph covenanted with Nancy, but she was only 15 years old when Joseph was killed.

In January 1841, Benjamin Winchester, Nancy's brother, was abruptly excommunicated. He would not be restored to the Church until July 1842. The July 1842 announcement restoring Benjamin Winchester to fellowship in the Church also warned him to leave Nauvoo immediately.²

It seems that events related to Benjamin's excommunication may have prompted Joseph and Emma to reach out to protect Nancy. It is troubling that Nancy was barely 13 years old when her brother was excommunicated

in January 1841. Nothing is known of Nancy's covenant with Joseph other than the fact that it happened. Heber Kimball would take over responsibility for Nancy Winchester after Joseph's death.

While it may be mere coincidence, the Winchester family had employed Clarissa Marvel, the first person investigated by the newly formed Relief Society. Clarissa Marvel was an orphan girl who had moved on to live with Agnes Coolbrith [Smith]. From this position of trust, Clarissa was allegedly spreading rumors about Joseph Smith and his widowed sister-in-law.³

Whether young Nancy or some other woman was the first actual victim to come to the attention of Emma and Joseph, it appears Emma and Joseph decided to add medical expertise to their team.

On January 13th Joseph pulled Willard Richards into his inner circle, having Willard move into the Smith home.⁴ Willard was a Thomsonian⁵ physician who had saved Joseph's life in Kirtland. In the following months Joseph would pull in the wife of the town druggist, Sylvia Lyon, and a respected midwife, Sylvia's mother, Patty Sessions.

Nancy's later life hints at trauma, possibly sustained in early 1842. On December 8, 1845 Heber rushed to Steven Winchester's home to bless Nancy, who was having fits.⁶ While the fits may have been merely associated with a commonplace illness, it is possible that either Nancy was prone to fits, or had developed a susceptibility to fits from some trauma.⁷

Heber Kimball never consummated the marriage between himself and Nancy Winchester. Kimball would eventually arrange for Nancy to marry another man, Amos Arnold. Nancy would bear one child by her final husband when she was nearly 40 years old.⁸ Nancy would continue to live with her parents for the remainder of her life, even after marrying Amos Arnold and finally allowing the level of sexual contact that is required to conceive a child.

Patty Sessions and Sylvia Lyon

As Joseph and Emma learned about more seductions, it seems they suspected the women were being made vulnerable due to medicine. Laudanum was a common medicine used at the time. Based on opium, laudanum could "initiate, sustain, or lengthen sleep." Alternately, Joseph and Emma may have learned medicine could be used to prevent conception.⁹ Willard Richards was a Thomsonian and therefore would not have first-

hand knowledge of medical contraception. But Richards may have heard of Charles Knowlton's scandalous birth control manual. Richards was likely aware that medical measures could prevent pregnancy.

Patty Bartlett [Sessions]. The next medical individual Joseph pulled into the investigation after Willard Richards was Patty [Sessions]. Patty was in her late forties at this time. An experienced mid-wife, Patty had been delivering children regularly since 1812, when she'd been a teenage newlywed.¹⁰ In approximately 1867 Patty would write in her journal that she had been sealed to Joseph on March 9, 1842. Willard Richards officiated. Patty's daughter, Sylvia, reportedly stood as witness to the covenant ceremony.¹¹

Informing Patty [Sessions] of Celestial marriage could indicate Joseph and Emma now feared the seductions had resulted in pregnancies.

Sylvia Sessions [Lyon]. Sylvia was the wife of Windsor Lyon, who was the town store clerk and druggist.¹² In March 1842 Sylvia had reportedly stood as witness when Joseph Smith covenanted with her mother. It is often presumed that women who witness plural marriage covenants had themselves entered into covenant with Joseph previous to standing as a witness.

Sylvia was likely sworn to secrecy as one of those informed of Celestial marriage, as had occurred with Dimick Huntington. But it is possible Joseph asked Sylvia to assist him without any initial marital intent.

Windsor Lyon was excommunicated from the Church in November 1842 and would not be rebaptized until 1846. The most widely accepted reason for the excommunication was Lyon's attempt to sue William Marks over a financial agreement. Allegedly the discipline had been intended to punish Lyon for bringing legal charges against a fellow member of the Church. However many of the other men excommunicated in 1842 had been teaching and practicing illicit intercourse. If Windsor had been providing Bennett medicine to prevent conception, such assistance may have been considered an offense worthy of excommunication. Gustavus Hills had been using medicine in his illicit intercourse activities confessed in fall 1842. Late discovery of this possible medical complicity on the part of Windsor may account for the late date of Windsor's excommunication.

Sylvia would tell her daughter, Josephine, that Joseph Smith was her father. Sylvia explained she had been sealed to Joseph Smith at the time Windsor was cut off from the Church. This deathbed confession has been interpreted as confirming biological fatherhood. But Sylvia was likely merely

been telling Josephine of a covenant relationship she had with Joseph Smith. Josephine should have learned about this covenant relationship in the temple when she was married. Except Josephine had not been initially married in the temple like her younger half-sisters. Her full-siblings died as children. It is not clear what, if anything, Josephine's never-married half-brother was told about his covenant relationship with Joseph.

Sylvia would continue to conceive children between the time she reportedly witnessed her mother's covenant with Joseph in March 1842 and Joseph's death in June 1844. Asa Windsor Lyon, conceived in late March 1842, died as an infant. Josephine Lyon was conceived in May 1843.

Brian Hales proposed that Windsor Lyon and Sylvia Sessions [Lyon] became separated during Lyon's excommunication, preventing the sexual interaction Hales believed occurred between Sylvia and Joseph Smith from technically qualifying as polyandry.¹³ However Brian Hales' logic cannot extend to the conception of Asa Windsor Lyon, who was conceived after Sylvia reportedly witnessed her mother's sealing to Joseph Smith.

Analysis of Josephine Lyon's DNA proves Windsor Lyon was the biological father of Josephine Lyon. The unit of genetic similarity between cousins is the centiMorgan (cM). Two grandchildren of the same individual would share roughly 1700 cM, with the amount of shared cM declining by roughly a factor of two with each generation. The amount of shared genetic material between Joseph Smith's closest descendants and Josephine's closest descendants should have been roughly 106.25 cM. Despite the fact that up to 7 cM of similarity can naturally occur between unrelated persons, the amount of shared autosomal material with known descendants of Joseph Smith was 0 cM for each of Josephine's five closest descendants. Joseph therefore could not have been Josephine's biological father.¹⁴

Johnson and Johnson

Two women with the maiden name Johnson next enter the story. As will be true of most women who become "plural wives" in 1842, very little is known of the circumstances under which they entered into covenants with Joseph.

Marinda Johnson [Hyde]. Marinda Johnson [Hyde] was the wife of Orson Hyde, an apostle who was serving as a missionary in Palestine. In December 1841 Joseph Smith became concerned about Marinda, who was living in life-threateningly poor conditions. In an uncanonized revelation, Joseph was

advised to “say unto my servant Ebenezer Robinson, & To my handmaid his wife, Let them open their doors and take [Marinda Johnson Hyde] and her children into their house...” Ebenezer Robinson managed the Nauvoo paper, the Times and Seasons, prior to January 27, 1842. His family lived on the ground floor of that establishment.¹⁵

On Christmas Eve Willard Richards had escorted Marinda to a holiday party with several of the twelve apostles, including Orson Pratt and his wife Sarah. It appears Marinda may have been invited to represent her absent husband. Their host, Hiram Kimball, proceeded to give “each of the 12, a Lot of Land & supper of Turkeys.”¹⁶

On January 13th Willard Richards moved from the home of Brigham Young to live with Joseph. Willard was the Thompsonian doctor who had saved Joseph’s life in Kirtland. Willard’s shift in living arrangements suggests Joseph may have become aware of abuses that would require the attention of a doctor in the January 1842 timeframe, prompting the shift in Willard Richards’ living situation.

Two weeks later, Joseph received another revelation, directing the Twelve Apostles to take charge of the Times and Seasons, where the excommunicated Benjamin Winchester had been a frequent contributor and assistant. Robinson and his family were evicted, but Marinda remained. Willard Richards moved into the lower floor of the Times and Seasons, barring the windows, and shooting off his gun. These actions are usually described by those who thought Willard and Marinda were having an affair.

Ebenezer Robinson’s later activities and writings indicate he was unusually knowledgeable about Dr. Bennett’s activities and perversions. If the Times and Seasons had become a location frequented by Bennett’s ring, the shooting could have an alternate interpretation. Willard may have been warning everyone that there was new management in the building, and that they could take their unholy business elsewhere.

By April, Marinda was assisting Joseph’s investigation.¹⁷ On April 9th, Marinda invited Nancy Rigdon to her home at the printing office to meet with Joseph Smith. Nancy believed she was being propositioned. However the alleged correspondence between Joseph and Nancy, if an actual letter written by Joseph, could be read as showing Joseph hunting out guilty men, shows a Joseph concerned for Nancy, desperately trying to win her soul back from the corrupted path he feared she was beginning to take.¹⁸

Delcena Johnson [Sherman]. Lyman Royal Sherman had been called to be an apostle during the flight from Missouri, but died before ever learning of the call. Delcena Johnson was left a widow with seven surviving children in 1839, as the Mormons were being driven from Missouri. Her youngest was only three months old when her husband died.

Joseph's concern for women living without protection (as in Marinda's case) might be the reason he asked Delcena to move in with Louisa Beaman, already his plural wife.

It is known the Strikers would approach other widows, insinuating that there was no harm in such women participating in illicit intercourse and even demanding that the women yield. It is possible the Strikers intended to approach the widow Delcena about yielding herself to illicit intercourse. Joseph's action to have Delcena move in with Louisa Beaman would give the widow protection from either potential or realized attempts on her virtue.

The Census of Nauvoo

A crucial tool in the investigation was identifying who lived where. Nauvoo was constantly changing as new converts streamed in. A federal census had been conducted in 1840, but that information was nearly useless for investigative purposes, even if the census had been available to Joseph and Emma Smith. The 1840 federal census merely identified the head of household and the number of individuals associated with the household.¹⁹

A city census would serve two purposes. It would document which persons lived in each of the four city wards. It would also provide a pretext for gaining access to each home. The census was conducted by regular male members of the Church.

Men holding the priesthood had visited members in their homes since the earliest days of the church. However this 1842 effort provided a complete snapshot in time.²⁰ The census itself contains no information about who might have been abused. However sending the priesthood into each home with the express charge to teach families their Christian duty would be an opportunity for unusual circumstances to be noted.

Dr. Lyman DePlatt's evaluation suggests the census was taken during the first two weeks in February, 1842. The census was formally presented to the City of Nauvoo on March 1, 1842.²¹

The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo

On March 4, 1842, less than a week after the census was complete, Sarah Granger [Kimball] came to Joseph Smith with a plan. Sarah was the wife of the non-Mormon businessman who had gifted land and turkeys to the Twelve. Sarah, together with Eliza Snow and others, had determined there was a need for a benevolent female society. The women presented Joseph the constitution they had drafted for such an organization.

The men working on the temple were sometimes ill-clothed. Sarah [Kimball] wished to relieve their suffering by making shirts for them. Sarah may have been inspired by the way women during the Revolutionary War had assisted the Continental Army by sewing shirts.²²

Joseph counter-proposed a woman's organization that was a formal arm or auxiliary of the Church. Around this time Joseph attempted to talk with Sarah [Kimball] about the New and Everlasting Covenant, possibly as a prerequisite for formally involving her in the investigation. But Sarah [Kimball] refused to hear such talk from him at that time.²³

At the founding meeting of the organization, Joseph said the “restored Church of Jesus Christ could not be perfect or complete without [an organization for the women].” In addition to the power of organizing women for charitable purposes, the organization had as a founding purpose to “warn the unwary.”²⁴

There is no evidence the priesthood census had been sufficiently informative in uncovering instances where women had been abused. A group of women could be much more effective. Joseph and Emma would instruct them directly, and the members of the Relief Society would in turn minister to the women of Nauvoo.

The first meeting of the women's organization was held March 17, 1842. Joseph Smith and John Taylor were present, but the reigns were soon turned over to the women. Sarah [Cleveland] suggested that Emma lead the new organization. Emma selected for her counselors two particular confidantes, Elizabeth [Whitney] and Sarah [Cleveland]. She nominated Elvira Cowles to be treasurer. Eliza Snow was nominated to be secretary²⁵ a nod to the group of women who had originally proposed the organization.

At the second meeting of Relief Society, the matter of scurrilous rumors attributed to Clarissa Marvel was brought before the group. Clarissa had allegedly claimed Joseph was spending an inappropriate amount of time in

the company of Agnes Coolbrith [Smith]. Mrs. Markam and Mrs. Billings were ultimately assigned to investigate the matter. They reported back that Clarissa was innocent. Then Mrs. Durfee and Mrs. Allred were sent to investigate the two young women who had claimed Clarissa Marvel had talked with them. Interestingly, it is Sarah [Cleveland], Emma's counselor, who reports back, saying the matter of Clarissa Marvel was settled.

By April 28th, women seeking membership in the Relief Society are being individually voted upon. Some were denied entry. However by mid-May, large groupings of sisters were being admitted without any objection.

On May 19th, Emma (Mrs. Prest.) stated:

“this day was an evil day— that said she would that this Society were pure before God— that she was afraid that under existing circumstances, the sisters were not careful enough to expose iniquity— the time had been when charity had covered a multitude of sins— but now it is necessary that sin should be expos'd— that heinous sins were among us— that much of this iniquity was practiced by some in authority, pretending to be sanction'd by Prest. Smith... [Emma] continued by exhorting all who had err'd to repent and forsake their sins— said that satan's forces were against this church— that every saint should be at the post.”²⁶

Lucy Ann Munjar was then “suspended for a time.”

In the week following this stern sermon from Emma Hale [Smith], women who had been seduced by Dr. Bennett or his Strikers confessed to the Nauvoo High Council. On May 26th, Joseph and Emma both attended the Relief Society. Joseph was almost certainly aware of the confessions that had been made to the Nauvoo High Council. It is clear that when Joseph mentions “fellows,” he is referring to women. Joseph said:

“they are our fellows — we lov'd them once. Shall we not encourage them to reformation?”

“We have not forgiven them seventy times— perhaps we have not forgiven them once. There is now a day of salvation to such as repent and reform— they should be cast out from this Society, yet we should woo them to return to God lest they escape not the damnation of hell!”²⁷

Emma took a different tack. If Joseph and Emma were playing good cop, bad cop that day, Emma clearly had the role of bad cop:

“...all idle rumor and idle talk must be laid aside yet sin must not be covered, especially those sins which are against the law of God and the laws of the country—all who walk disorderly must reform, and any knowing of heinous sins against the law of God, and refuse to expose them, becomes the offender—said she wanted none in this Society who had violated the laws of virtue.”²⁸

The next day over a hundred women sought membership in Relief Society. Membership in Relief Society was perhaps becoming seen as a declaration of virtue. Lucy Ann Munjar was re-admitted to the membership, indicating the speed with which forgiveness could be dispensed to the penitent.

By the beginning of June the bar had been raised. New members would not be admitted “but by presenting regular petitions signed by two or three members in good standing in the Society— whoever comes in must be of good report.” Even so, more than a hundred women qualified to become members of the Relief Society in a single day in early June 1842.

Joseph and Emma had together urged the ladies to forsake and expose sin. One of the women who would confess before the High Council would explicitly credit Joseph’s sermon as causing her change of heart. The words and actions of the others strongly imply that Joseph’s public sermons had brought them to repentance.

The women who would testify before the High Council in May 1842 would not be exposed at that time, despite the terrible storm that would erupt in 1842. It would only be when Joseph’s life was on the line that some of the testimonies would be published. Even then, the testimonies that were published were redacted to protect all the men other than Chauncey Higbee and Dr. Bennett.

In hindsight, it appears that the most effective initiative in the investigation was the Relief Society, headed by President Emma Hale [Smith] in full cooperation with her prophet-husband, Joseph.

Swearing Righteous Men to Secrecy

With the women mobilized to fight corruption and preach virtue, Joseph put in place two mechanisms to perform a similar function for men in the community.

The Nauvoo Masonic Lodge. First, Joseph moved forward to establish a Masonic Lodge in Nauvoo. In this, Joseph took advantage of the ground work Dr. Bennett had laid. But Bennett's attempt to establish the lodge had foundered due to reports of his past activities. Formation of the Nauvoo Lodge was irregular as there were few, if any, current Masons already in Nauvoo. One wonders what Joseph said to persuade the Masonic authorities to approve the Nauvoo Lodge under these circumstances. Masons already had an established structure that encouraged mutual support and rectitude. This would allow Joseph to involve not only Mormons but all prominent men of the surrounding area in mutual pledges of virtue and charity.

An Endowment of Power. Second, Joseph instituted the endowment, an ordinance during which the "endowed" individual is instructed in sacred history and asked to pledge obedience. Given existence of widespread illicit intercourse in the community, the most striking pledge is one related to remaining sexually faithful to one's spouse. The endowment ceremony was restricted to high profile Mormons, including Bishop George Miller and President William Law, an Assistant President of the Church.

Interviewing Suspected Victims

Some small trace remains in the extant record of the means the investigators used to determine what damage had been done. We know Joseph tried to talk to teenagers Emily and Eliza Partridge during this timeframe. Emily reports Joseph talked to her, saying:

"Emily, if you will not betray me, I will tell you something for your benefit."

When Joseph was unable to persuade Emily to talk with him, he offered to give her a letter, provided she would promise to burn it after reading it.²⁹ Emily refused the letter. Elizabeth [Durfee] was sent in next. She invited Eliza and Emily Partridge to her home where she asked what the girls might think of "spiritual wives, as they were called in those days." The girls said nothing. However the very attempt to determine if they'd been caught in the Striker's web raised additional suspicions in the girls' minds. There is no indication

the Partridge girls ever realized the questioning was in service of apprehending evil-doers.

Nancy Rigdon was reportedly interviewed by Joseph Smith. Nancy considered Francis Higbee, brother of Striker ringleader, Chauncey Higbee, to be a suitor.

It appears there was another category of interviewees: the fallen women who were now penitent. The record suggests some of the women who became plural wives in 1842 were vulnerable women who had been propositioned or seduced.

For the most part, those who had been innocently seduced were protected from exposure. But not all the women could hide their involvement. Some of the women, like Catherine Laur [Fuller Warren], had to testify, to ensure the ring of seducers was brought to justice.

Hunt in the City Beautiful – Notes

Joseph and Emma Smith worked together against the debauchery spreading through Nauvoo society. Joseph's known and inferred marriages during the first half of 1842 suggest Joseph was initially covenanting with women to establish relationships of fealty regarding the investigation and later to protect women who were actual or potential victims.

A census was taken of Nauvoo residents in February 1842, documenting who lived in which secular ward of the city. A Masonic Lodge was established in Nauvoo to support moral conduct amongst all the men. The Endowment of Power was instituted with the notable requirement that recipients swear to strict standards of morality, restricting sexuality to their spouse.

A suggestion to stand up a modest benevolent society was transformed into a powerful female organization with a founding purpose to warn the unwary. Membership in Relief Society became desired as a public declaration of virtue, despite increasingly strict requirements for membership. As the fallen were discovered, Joseph asked the Relief Society to forgive the sinners and “woo them to return to God.” Lest the women think permissiveness was acceptable, Emma insisted “all who walk disorderly must reform.”

12 – Arraigning the Band of Brothers

Joseph likely became aware that actual seductions were taking place no later than January 13, 1842, when he abruptly summoned Willard Richards to his home. This marks the beginning of when we should expect to see evidence of Joseph's concern in the official actions of either the religious Nauvoo High Council or the secular Nauvoo City Council.

As in other U.S. cities, Nauvoo reflected the political organization the founding fathers had designed for the United States. The chief executive in Nauvoo was the Mayor, who was Dr. Bennett. The legislative branch was the city council. The judicial function was filled by Nauvoo's judges, including Elias Higbee. In the matter of Bennett and his Strikers, however, these three secular branches were inadequate to rectify a gross wrong. As Dr. Bennett was the mayor, it is not surprising that the secular council had little impact on uncovering the corruption that should have been its business.

The defeat of Dr. Bennett's corruption would require the combined forces of the religious executives, Joseph and Emma, and their respective councils, the Nauvoo High Council and the Relief Society organization.

It was the Church's High Council which would initiate the Nauvoo census. When the combined efforts of Emma and Joseph had flushed out information regarding the leaders of the corruption, the Nauvoo High Council formally investigated the matter and questioned informants and witnesses.

The 1842 Nauvoo City Census

Five days after January 13th we see William Marks, Nauvoo Stake President, suggesting the bishops should have “the Priests visit from house to house...”¹

A member of the High Council wondered what response should be given if the bishops were to refuse this request. Hyrum Smith replied that the High Council had authority to deal with them for such a refusal, “that the Council should call on the Presidents of the Lesser Priest-hood to attend the Council & receive instruction... That it was necessary for them to go from house to house, to his house, and to every house and see that every family done their duty...”²

Neither Hyrum Smith nor William Marks had been read in regarding the New and Everlasting Covenant, nor had the vast majority of the members of the “Lesser Priest-hood” who would be conducting the house to house visits. On the other hand, it does not appear that Joseph had allowed anyone other than himself to enter into a Celestial marriage by January 1842. Joseph likely felt confident that he could account for his own activities. Any other activities needed to be uncovered, as none of them would have been authorized.

A contemporary living in Nauvoo at the time would have only experienced the census, perhaps noted the formation of the Female Relief Society and the Masonic Lodge, then seen this simple notice in the *Times and Seasons* issue of June 15, 1842:

NOTICE

The Subscribers, members of the First Presidency of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, withdraw the hand of fellowship from General John C. Bennett, as a christian, he having been labored with from time to time, to persuade him to amend his conduct, apparently to no good effect.

JOSEPH SMITH,
HYRUM SMITH,
WM. LAW.

The following members of the Quorum of the Twelve concur in the above sentiments.

BRIGHAM YOUNG
HEBER C. KIMBALL
LYMAN WIGHT,
WILLIAM SMITH,
JOHN E. PAGE,
JOHN TAYLOR,
WILFORD WOODRUFF,
GEORGE A. SMITH
WILLARD RICHARDS.

We concur in the above sentiment.

N. K. WHITNEY,
V. KNIGHT,
GEORGE MILLER,

Bishops of the above mentioned Church. ³

The recorded testimony that damned John C. Bennett implicated several women and many more men. Joseph would rail against Bennett in the months following June 1842. However Joseph would withhold the evidence presented to the High Council for two years, reportedly hoping to reclaim those who had fallen. Towards the end of May, 1844, Joseph would finally release a small portion of the testimonies documenting the evil that had possessed the City of Nauvoo under Bennett's corrupted leadership. ⁴ The testimony that was released was carefully chosen to implicate only one additional man in the seductions of 1842, Chauncey Higbee.

Joseph hoped confirmation of Chauncey's complicity in the 1842 seductions would erode support for Chauncey's plan to murder Joseph. But the disclosure was too little and too late. Joseph Smith would be dead at the hands of a mob in 1844, less than a month after publishing the damning 1842 testimonies against Bennett and his chief acolyte, Chauncey Higbee.

Preaching to the Choir

The 1842 break in the public case occurred because of Joseph's teachings against spiritual wifery. Joseph had addressed the Nauvoo Choir of Singers, speaking against sexual immorality, apparently using the kind of language we see Emma Smith using in her remarks to the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo. One member of the choir was Sarah Searcy [Miller], born in 1815. On May 24, 1842, Sarah gave testimony that:

“Some two or three weeks since, in consequence of brother Joseph Smith’s teachings to the singers, I began to be alarmed concerning myself, and certain teachings which I had received from Chauncey L. Higbee...

“When he first came to my house soon after the special conference this spring, Chauncey commenced joking me about my getting married, and wanted to know how long it had been since my husband died, and soon removed his seat near me; and began his seducing insinuations by saying it was no harm to have sexual intercourse with women if they would keep it to themselves, and continued to urge me to yield to his desires, and urged me vehemently...

“[Chauncey] continued to press his instructions and arguments until after dark, and until I was inclined to believe, for he called God to witness of the truth, and was so solemn and confident, I yielded to his temptations...

“Chauncey Higbee, said it would never be known, I told him it might be told in bringing forth [a child]. Chauncey said there was no danger, and that Dr. Bennet understood it, and would come and take it away, if there was any thing.”⁵

The husband of Sarah Searcy [Miller] had died the previous year.⁶ A few months later two other ladies from the choir would come forward and indicate they had similarly been taught there was no harm in have sexual intercourse if the women would keep it to themselves.⁷

The Widow’s Daughters

The widow Jane Nyman had been the first person to have herself baptized on behalf of a departed loved one. In March of 1842, Chauncey Higbee stopped by Widow Nyman’s home, proposing to walk Jane’s daughters to the spelling school. The daughters in question were Margaret, almost 30, and her sister, Matilda.⁸

Margaret’s affidavit of May 20, 1842 would read:

“My sister Matilda, and myself accompanied him; but, changing our design on the way, we stopped at Mrs. Fullers:

During the evening’s interview, he, (as I have since learned,) with wicked lies proposed that I should yield to his desires, and indulge in sexual intercourse with him, stating that such intercourse might be freely indulged in, and was no sin: That any respectable female might indulge in sexual intercourse, and there was no sin in it, providing the person so indulging, keep the same to herself; for there could be no sin, where there was no accuser;—and most clandestinely, with wicked lies, persuaded me to yield by using the name of Joseph Smith: and, as I have since learned, totally false and unauthorized; and in consequence of those arguments, I was influenced to yield to my Seducer, Chauncey L. Higbee.”⁹

Matilda’s May affidavit would read:

“During this spring Chauncey L. Higbee, kept company with me from time to time, and, as I have since learned, wickedly deceitfully, and with lies in his mouth, urged me vehemently to yield to his desires; that there could be no wrong in having sexual intercourse with any female that could keep the same to herself;—most villianously and lyingly stating that he had been so instructed by Joseph Smith,¹⁰ and that there was no sin where there was no accuser:—Also vowing he would marry me.

“Not succeeding, he, on one occasion, brought one,¹¹ who affirmed that such intercourse was tolerated by the heads of the Church. I have since found him also to be a lying conspirator against female virtue and chastity, having never received such teachings from the heads of the church; but I was at the time partially influenced to believe in consequence of the source from whom I received it.

“I yielded and become subject to the will of my seducer, Chauncey L. Higbee: and having since found out to my satisfaction, that a number of wicked men have conspired to use the name of Joseph Smith, or the heads of the Church, falsely and wickedly to enable them to gratify their lusts, thereby destroying female innocence and virtue, I repent before God and my brethren and ask forgiveness.

“I further testify that I never had any personal acquaintance with Joseph Smith and never heard him teach such doctrines as Higbee, stated either directly or indirectly.”¹²

The affidavits seem formulaic and many researchers have ignored the affidavits or presumed the women were lying. However the additional testimony written down that day is realistically chaotic, stating that Dr. Bennett had engaged in intercourse with the Widow Fuller, as Matilda had seen them in the act. The formulaic nature of the signed affidavits, then, may not have been due to the women being coached on how to accuse, but may reflect the women being coached on how to tell a sufficiently damning story without revealing too much.

The idea that the women had been in a position to watch as Bennett and the Widow Fuller engaged in illicit intercourse would have been far more shocking that we can imagine. Dr. Bennett learned this the hard way, having accused Joseph Smith of engaging in sexual relations while Dr. Bennett watched. The feedback to that early tale in Dr. Bennett’s campaign against Joseph must have been intense, as he never again would make a similar accusation in writing.¹³

The Widow Fuller

The testimony of Margaret Nyman implicated Widow Fuller. Widow Fuller’s home had been the place where Chauncey Higbee was able to interview Margaret and Matilda at length and perform his conquests.

Catherine Laur [Fuller] had been integral to the establishment and spread of spiritual wifery. But in October she unsuccessfully attempted to disentangle herself. By April she became convinced that spiritual wifery was not, in fact, a teaching approved by Joseph Smith. In late April 1842 Catherine married William Warren, ending her involvement in illicit intercourse. In May 1842 Catherine would provide extensive testimony about how Bennett and his Strikers had approached her saying illicit sex was permissible as long as no one knew about it. The published excerpt of Catherine’s statement reads:

“I have had unlawful connexion with Chauncey L. Higbee. Chauncey Higbee, taught the same doctrine as was taught by J. C. Bennet, and that Joseph Smith, taught and practiced those things, but he [Chauncey] stated that he did not have it from Joseph, but he had his information from Dr. John C. Bennet. He, Chauncey L. Higbee, has gained his object about five or six times, Chauncey L. Higbee, also made propositions to keep me with food if I would submit to his desires.”¹⁴

A More Complete Story

Based on the testimonies eventually published in the papers, one could glean that John C. Bennett had been cut off and Chauncey Higbee had engaged in illicit sexual intercourse with four women. An examination of the High Council Minutes and the handwritten statements collected during the investigation expand the field of visible damage.¹⁵

At least ten men taught that illicit sex was permissible as long as no one found out. Of these, six not only taught about illicit sex, but engaged in the proposed illicit relations with one or more of the women who testified to having ‘yalded’ to the men’s teachings. There is reason to suspect that all ten listed had participated in illicit sex, and that there were others who were simply not named by the women who testified. It seems clear from the full record that Dr. John C. Bennett was the ring-leader. The ten men named by Catherine Laur [Fuller Warren] and the other women are:

- *Dr. John C. Bennett, Mayor and General of the Nauvoo Legion
- *Chauncey Higbee, Bennett’s aide-de-camp and son of Nauvoo’s judge
- *Joel S. Miles
- *George M. Thatcher
- *Jacob B. Backenstos, non-member, another Bennett aide-de-camp and sheriff of Hancock County
- *Gustavus Hills, Nauvoo alderman
- Darwin Chase, member of the Seventy since the flight from Missouri
- William Smith, Apostle, Joseph’s brother¹⁶
- Lyman O. Littlefield
- Justus Morse

The records of the High Council¹⁷ document the following men were also among those cut off:

- F. G. Bishop
- Ardus Geere
- Orlando D. Hovey¹⁸
- William Niswanger
- John Hodson
- Windsor Lyon¹⁹

The women who confessed to having engaged in illicit intercourse with these men were:

Catherine Laur [Fuller Warren] (10-12 times with Bennett, 5-6 times with Higbee, 2 times with Joel S. Miles, 2 times with George M. Thatcher, and 1 time with Jacob B. Backenstos)

Sarah Searcy [Miller] (engaged in relations with Higbee multiple times, the first time possibly in the presence of Darwin Chase)

Margaret Nyman (engaged in relations with Higbee multiple times and possibly also with John C. Bennett, this occurred at the same time as Higbee was having sex with her sister, Matilda ²⁰)

Matilda Nyman (engaged in relations with Higbee multiple times)

Mary Clift (became pregnant with Gustavus Hills' child from a single interaction)

Other women mentioned as having been seen with members of the Bennett ring in a manner strongly suggestive of illicit intercourse include:

Ms. Shindle

Miss Lucy Munjar (also mentioned in the Relief Society minutes)

Ms. Brown (also denied admittance to Relief Society on this basis)

Ms. Barris

Ms. Gee.

Rachel Kingsley ²¹ (seen with Higbee and Littlefield)

Elenor Kingsley ²² (seen with Higbee and Littlefield)

Esther (Dutcher?) Smith (Testified Gustavus Hills had taught her it was acceptable to have illicit intercourse)

Other Victims?

Brian Hales writes that he is unaware of any evidence that Joseph's plural wives were among those seduced by Bennett and his cronies. He and all the rest of us have overlooked the possibility that the Esther Smith mentioned in the High Council record might be Esther Dutcher [Smith], who is reported to have been sealed to Joseph Smith during his lifetime. Also, simple procedural steps we take for granted in modern investigations are missing, suggesting the testimony before the High Council could not have been complete:

- There was no attempt to identify the “one, who affirmed that such intercourse was tolerated by the heads of the Church,” as Matilda Nyman had indicated in her testimony, though the Dinger edition of the High Council Minutes indicates this individual was William Smith.

- Catherine Fuller Warren indicated John C. Bennett was the first to seduce her, and had done so about a year earlier in July 1841 or before. Yet Sarah Miller, Mary Clift, Esther Smith and the Nymans had only been approached by the seducers that spring.
- Mary Heron is not mentioned in these findings, despite the 1850 testimony indicating she was “frigged” by a man named Joseph, likely Joseph Kelly.
- Sarah Pratt is not mentioned in these findings, despite Bennett confiding in Jacob Backenstos that “Sarah made a first rate go.”
- There was no attempt to get the men to yield up a complete list of the women they had corrupted. Catherine [Fuller Warren] testified that multiple men (Darwin Chase, William Smith, Lyman O. Littlefield, and Justus Morse) to whom she did not yield tried to get her to have sex with them. Are we to believe that these men never tried that line on anyone else?
- There is the curious matter of the women Bennett would later assert were part of Joseph’s “harem,” characterizing the entire membership of the Relief Society as a “seraglio”²³ presided over by Emma.
- Orange Wight wrote that John Higbee, uncle to Chauncey and Francis Higbee, had two wives in 1841. Yet John Higbee is not mentioned in the High Council Minutes.
- Neither Joseph Kelly nor John Snider are mentioned in the High Council testimony, though 1850 testimony indicates they were both involved in illicit intercourse circa 1841/42.

In Nicholas Taleb’s book, *The Black Swan*, he talks about concept of a historical “ice cube,” a postulated explanation for extant historical artifacts that constitute the metaphorical puddle of water from which we infer the truth.

A possible “ice cube” for the extant facts includes Dr. Bennett having an affair with Sarah [Pratt] before coming up with an elaborate scheme for justifying illicit intercourse. By summer 1841, Bennett had pressured Catherine [Fuller] to yield, claiming better persons that she were involved—

theoretically a true statement as Sarah [Pratt], wife of an apostle, had been willing to engage in illicit intercourse.

Rather than keep Catherine [Fuller] as his own, personal, mistress, Bennett began teaching the “doctrine” that illicit intercourse was permissible as long as no one became aware of the interactions. The pool of men and women to whom this “doctrine” spread became vast.

There is a theme in the testimonies of the seduced women that the seducers provided food to the women who yielded to their demands. Those without support would be more vulnerable to men promising food. Those who hesitated were told Joseph Smith taught such doctrines, with Joseph’s brother, William, attesting that it was a correct doctrine. Certainly by the fall of 1841, Dr. Bennett began to assert that Joseph Smith practiced illicit intercourse. We see these patterns of promised food and claims of Joseph’s blessing for the illicit sex in the case of known victims, widows Catherine [Fuller] and Sarah [Miller] and fatherless sisters Margaret and Matilda Nyman.

It is likely during the autumn of 1841 that Brigham Young and Heber Kimball became persuaded that they had an obligation to reach out to Martha Brotherton and the Pitkin sisters, respectively.

As Louisa Beaman and Joseph Bates Noble would be featured in Bennett’s later exposé of Joseph Smith, it appears Joseph Bates Noble may have confided in Dr. Bennett or one of Bennett’s Strikers regarding the marriage ceremony Noble had performed in April 1841.

Alternately, it could be that Bennett, having asserted his teachings came from Joseph, began to notice patterns that supported his claims. This could have been as simple as noting a pattern in certain rejections. Many would have simply declined to yield, the way Catherine Fuller did not have sex with every man who came at her with the story about illicit sex being fine. But those who had been taught about the New and Everlasting Covenant would reject Bennett’s heresy, possibly citing Joseph’s teachings.²⁴

From January 13th until May 20th, it seems Bennett and William were engaged in a terrible game of chess with Joseph and Emma. Joseph and Emma were conducting a sting to ensure they identified the true source of the heresy while simultaneously warning as many innocents as possible to reject the arguments of the seducers.

Though Joseph and Emma had uncovered a vast network of corruption, only Dr. Bennett would initially be exposed to public censure. When later

asked why others, such as Chauncey and Francis Higbee, had not been exposed in 1842, it would be explained that there had been hope that they would reform.²⁵

Several of those named in the 1842 testimonies did reform, at least temporarily. In 1842 we see the Higbees sign affidavits that Bennett's "secret wife system" was a disclosure of his own make. Francis Higbee would write a letter claiming he had been asked if he "would assist in... bringing into existence, a newly modeled concern against the church... But God forbid, as long as he gives me health, and strength, and vigor or mind, I scorn the idea."²⁶ Joseph's trust had been rewarded in the short term.

In the long term, we see some of the men named in the 1842 testimonies as Strikers would travel west with the Saints after Joseph's death. This includes Lyman O. Littlefield, Justus Morse, and Gustavus Hills. When we expand the scope to those, like Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, who appear to have initially been fooled regarding the acceptability of spiritual wifery, Joseph's willingness to love and forgive arguably won an impressive harvest of souls.

The Face that Launched a Thousand Lies

Bennett's energetic spread of the gospel of illicit intercourse seems to have been motivated by more than a desire for sexual gratification. A quiet affair with the pliant widow Fuller could have satisfied a simple desire for sex with relatively little risk.

Bennett had loved a young woman. That woman knew he was still married. She was probably ensconced in the bosom of the Smith family and undoubtedly aware of the teachings Joseph had been sharing with the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo. Bennett may have hoped he could find a way to persuade his original beloved to accept him as her lover. If so, it is impossible to know whether he succeeded.

With the public withdrawal of fellowship from Bennett, Joseph and Emma were left with the responsibility to care for the wives of sorrow, the women who'd been involved with Bennett and his men.

Arraigning the Band of Brothers – Notes

The Nauvoo High Council requested the visits that became the 1842 Nauvoo census expressly to “see that every family done their duty...”

When the activities of the Relief Society had flushed out evidence of wrong-doing, the Nauvoo High Council documented the testimonies given to them. Redacted testimonies were not made public until 1844, when it was hoped a partial record of wrong-doing would derail the conspiracy to kill Joseph.

The full High Council record demonstrates the activities of Bennett and his Strikers were far more extensive than conveyed in the documents published in the newspaper. A list of those cut off or excommunicated at this time includes many names implicated by testimonies provided to the High Council, suggesting the possibility that all those cut off may have been involved in the illicit intercourse heresy. If so, the High Council was acting on additional testimony not included in the women’s testimonies.

A review of other situations documented well after 1842 suggests that even the extensive lists derived from the High Council papers fail to capture the breadth of the spiritual wifery heresy of 1842.

13 – Wives of Sorrow

The most comprehensive treatment to date of plural marriages during Joseph Smith's lifetime is Gary Bergera's article "Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44," published in *Dialogue* during 2005. ¹ Unfortunately, Bergera's article was written before publication of the DNA results that have consistently contradicted the rumors that Joseph fathered children ² by his plural wives. Bergera and prior scholars therefore had no incentive to considering the possibility that early plural marriages could have been primarily ceremonial with little or no sexual element. Specifically, no one has seriously examined the possibility that some of these marriages were inspired by a need to care for the victims of Bennett's sex ring.

Let's start by looking at the first plural marriage that did not include Joseph Smith: the marriage of Theodore Turley and Mary Clift, supposedly occurring in early 1842.

Theodore Turley and Mary Clift

Theodore Turley, Sr. was born in England, then emigrated to Canada with his wife, Frances. The couple was converted to Mormonism and eventually gathered to Nauvoo. Turley had a gun shop and filled the post of Armorer General for the Nauvoo Legion. ³

Mary Clift was also an English convert, born in Gloucester. In October 1842 Mary Clift gave birth to a baby boy, Jason. In the family histories, Jason is noted as being the child of Theodore Turley, as are the three additional children Mary would go on to bear prior to her death in Salt Lake City. Mary died within a week of giving birth to her last child, the only one to survive to adulthood. Because of Jason's birth, it is presumed that Theodore Turley took Mary Clift to be his plural wife in January 1842.

However we know that Mary Clift gave testimony in August and September 1842 attesting that she had been seduced by Gustavus Hills around the time she was involved in the Nauvoo Choir. Gustavus Hills had also spoken to Esther Smith about engaging in illicit intercourse, a fact to which Esther similarly attested in September 1842. ⁴

Thus the very first supposed plural marriage that did not involve Joseph Smith is known to be a reaction to a seduction by a Striker.

Vinson Knight and Philinda C. Eldredge [Myrick]

Sometime before August 1842, Bishop Vinson Knight married the widow Philinda C. Eldredge [Myrick] (b. 1809).

Philinda had wed Levi N. Myrick or Merrick on November 18, 1827. In 1838 Philinda and Levi were at Haun's Mill when a militia of roughly 250 men from neighboring Missouri counties attacked. Levi was killed behind Mr. Haun's home in the initial volley. Philinda's oldest son, Charles, took shelter in the smithy with most the men. All would be shot, most dying immediately. Charles survived to see the militia enter the smithy. Charles took off running, likely before a militia member put his musket against another boy's skull and blew off the top of his head. The militia shot Charles down but did not follow up to finish him off. Charles lingered in pain for a few weeks before dying of his wounds. A third boy survived, though his hip had been blown clear away.

It seems likely Philinda would have remained close to Catherine [Fuller], another woman widowed at Haun's Mill. It is therefore possible that Philinda became involved in the illicit intercourse practiced by Bennett's men, given that Catherine's home was a particular gathering place for these men, and site of many sexual conquests.

Vinson Knight was one of the three bishops in Nauvoo at the time. It is not clear how Vinson Knight was involved in the activities of Bennett's men.

As bishop, Vinson was responsible for women in his congregation hovering on the edge of subsistence. These are women to whom Bennett's Strikers would give food in exchange for illicit intercourse.

It is possible Joseph Smith explained the doctrine of the New and Everlasting Covenant to Vinson, with its provision for taking more than one wife. However William Clayton recorded a conversation he'd had with Joseph in 1843 regarding delicate matters, recording that Knight "went to loose conduct and [Joseph] could not save him."⁵ Clayton's journal entry raises the possibility that Vinson Knight himself had adopted the practices of Bennett's group, possibly being brought to believe that allowing the women to participate in illicit intercourse in exchange for food was an approved plan by Joseph for taking care of the needs of indigent women.

Vinson was providing Philinda food. It is unclear whether he regarded Philinda as a plural wife or as a spiritual wife. Vinson's legal wife, Martha McBride, reportedly "knew some thing was worr[y]ing her husband and he could not seem to tell her about it. One evening as she was sitting in the grape arbor behind the house Vinson returned home carrying a basket. He explained to her that he had taken some fruit and vegetables to the widow,⁶ Mrs. Levi Merrick, whose husband had been killed at Haun's Mill, M[iss]o[uri]. He also explained to her that he had been told to [take responsibility for a woman in need].⁷ That if he had to, this Sister Merrick would be the one he could help best. He must have been greatly relieved when Martha replied, 'Is that all.'"⁸

Vinson would not take care of Philinda for long. Towards the end of July 1842 Vinson became suddenly ill. He passed away on July 31, 1842. Joseph Smith delivered the eulogy at Vinson's funeral. Joseph apparently said Vinson Knight was the "best friend he ever had on earth."⁹

Martha McBride Knight would become one of Joseph's plural wives the month after Vinson's death. This echoes Joseph's covenant with Sylvia Sessions [Lyon], whose husband had been excommunicated. Philinda Eldredge would remarry in 1843. Neither Martha nor Philinda would have themselves sealed to Vinson in the Nauvoo temple, an eternal rejection consistent with Clayton's journal entry regarding Knight's loose conduct.

Heber C. Kimball and Sarah Peak [Noon]

Sarah Peak was born in 1811 in England. Sarah married William Noon in 1829. William accompanied Sarah and their two daughters to Nauvoo when

Sarah converted to Mormonism. The Noons arrived in Nauvoo on July 1, 1841, just as Dr. Bennett's illicit intercourse activities began. Sarah would subsequently part from William because of his "drunken and dissolute habits," according to Sarah's step-daughter, Helen Mar Kimball.¹⁰

We know Bennett's Strikers were targeting widows. They had also shown a taste for new or prospective converts fresh off the boat. This was attested to with regards to Elenor and Rachel Kingsley and alleged in the case of Martha Brotherton. These new converts would have less experience with the gospel and would more easily accept illicit intercourse as a possible secret teaching.¹¹

Heber C. Kimball had told Joseph Smith of his plan to approach spinsters Laura Pitkin (52) and Abigail Pitkin (45) to be his wives.¹² When Heber told Joseph his plan, Joseph commanded Heber to not marry the Pitkin sisters. At some point thereafter, Heber was asked to marry Sarah Peak [Noon], who was 31.

Sarah gave birth to a son, Adelbert, in October or November of 1842. Heber Kimball is usually presumed to be Adelbert's father. But Adelbert was conceived when Bennett and his men were actively attempting to seduce women. Alternately, Adelbert could have been engendered by William Noon if Sarah Peak [Noon] felt it necessary to part with him only after conception.

Unfortunately we can never positively determine who fathered Adelbert, as he passed away in April 1843. Sarah Peak [Noon] would have another child in 1844, making it possible that Heber and Sarah refrained from sexual relations until after Emma Smith embraced the New and Everlasting Covenant in May 1843.

Reynolds Cahoon and Lucina Roberts [Johnston]

Lucina Roberts was born in 1806 in Lincoln, Vermont. She married fellow Vermont native Peter Henry Johnston in 1824. By the time Lucina reached Nauvoo, her husband had died¹³ and she had lost three of her six children to death.

The date when Lucina married Reynolds Cahoon is vague, reportedly during late 1841 or early 1842.¹⁴ The birth of Lucina's daughter, Lucina Johnson Cahoon, is given as "abt 1843."¹⁵ However Gary Bergera lists Lucina Cahoon as one of the children born to plural wives prior to Joseph Smith's death.¹⁶

Again we have a widow in Nauvoo as a plural wife with an unusual lack of detail regarding either the marriage itself or the date when the child supposedly produced by that marriage was engendered.¹⁷ Again the window of possible conception overlaps the peak of illicit intercourse activity in Nauvoo.

Brigham Young and Lucy Ann Decker [Seeley]

Lucy Ann Decker [Seeley], born in 1822, was abandoned by her first husband, William. William Seeley was a non-Mormon who was allegedly an abusive alcoholic. William left Lucy with the couple's three tiny children, leaving her a widow for all practical purposes.

With Lucy we have an echo of Sarah Peak [Noon], a young mother constructively abandoned by a husband who had accompanied her to Nauvoo. Brigham Young took responsibility for Lucy Ann in 1842.

Brigham and Lucy would not produce children for at least two years after their reported marriage in the summer of 1842. This suggests the possibility that Brigham and Lucy did not engage in sexual relations until after Joseph's death.

Joseph's 1842 Wives

The prior chapter, *Arraigning the Band of Brothers*, reviewed the women who either testified they had submitted to pressure to engage in illicit intercourse or women who were seen in compromising situations with men known to teach Bennett's theories regarding the acceptability of illicit intercourse. The review above of women who became plural wives to men other than Joseph Smith shows a strong pattern suggesting these women could have been victims of Bennett and his men.

Let us now look at the women Joseph Smith may have married in 1842.

Agnes Coolbrith [Smith] (m. Jan 6, 1842): Agnes entered into a levirate marriage with Joseph Smith after her husband's death. Joseph Smith's journal entry for the presumed wedding day indicates this marriage was "a day in which all things are concurring together to bring about the completion of the fullness of the gospel." There is no positive indication on January 6th that Joseph's marriage to Agnes was a reaction to Bennett, other than the

participation of Brigham Young. However it appears the Strikers had approached Agnes' late husband in an attempt to get him to participate in spiritual wifery. Clarissa Marvel would be questioned for spreading rumors about Agnes' character. Agnes would later write Joseph F. Smith hinting that she could tell him things he knew nothing about.¹⁸

Mary Elizabeth Rollins [Lightner] (m. Feb 1842): Mary Elizabeth was someone Joseph had attempted to persuade of plural marriage late in 1841, before he appears to have learned about Bennett's activities. However the circumstance of Mary's sealing to Joseph smacks of the investigation. The sealing is performed by Brigham Young with Heber C. Kimball in attendance. Mary also hinted that she could tell Joseph F. Smith things about the past that he did not know.¹⁹

Sylvia Sessions [Lyon]: Sylvia was the wife of Windsor Lyon, an apothecary.²⁰ Sylvia would never clarify when she covenanted with Joseph, apparently refusing to sign either of the affidavits Joseph F. Smith prepared in 1869. Sylvia did tell her daughter, Josephine, that Sylvia was sealed to Joseph Smith after Windsor was cut off from the Church.²¹ Sylvia was reportedly present when her mother, a midwife, entered into covenant with Joseph in March 1842. As wife of the druggist, Sylvia was in a position to assist the investigation into the activities of Bennett's men, either as they sought drugs to assist in seductions or drugs and herbs to inhibit pregnancy.

DNA analysis confirms Sylvia's daughter, Josephine, could not have been Joseph Smith's biological child and was instead the child of Windsor Lyon. Some scholars persist in believing Sylvia had sex with Joseph Smith, but was sufficiently unaware of her reproductive state that she became confused regarding whether Windsor or Joseph had fathered Josephine.²²

Patty Bartlett [Sessions] (m. March 6, 1842): Patty, as a midwife and mature woman, was in a prime position to identify women who had been seduced. If they became pregnant, she would be able to help them.

Nancy Winchester: The date when Nancy married Joseph is unknown. She never consummated her marriage with Heber C. Kimball. She remained in her parents' home for the rest of her life, even after bearing a child with a third husband when she was nearly 40. The trajectory of her life hints that something traumatic may have happened to her, possibly in January 1842.

Marinda Nancy Johnson [Hyde]: Marinda helped Joseph's investigation by inviting Nancy Rigdon to be interviewed in April 1842. Marinda herself

would attest that she was not sealed to Joseph Smith until May 1843. This paints Marinda Nancy Johnson as a trusted agent in 1842 rather than a wife.

Elizabeth Davis [Goldsmith Brackenbury Durfee]: Bennett would assert in 1842 that Elizabeth had been one of Joseph's wives. Elizabeth would have herself sealed to Joseph in the Nauvoo temple after his death. However there is no primary document indicating Elizabeth covenanted with Joseph prior to his death. Elizabeth's main role appeared to be questioning young ladies regarding what they thought about spiritual wifery. Elizabeth also helped Emma, determining the worthiness of women applying to join Relief Society or questioning those spreading rumors. Later, when Elizabeth saw how Brigham Young was conducting Church affairs, she left in disgust and returned to Quincy to be near Emma Smith.

Sarah Maryetta Kingsley [Howe Cleveland]: Researchers have inferred Sarah was married to Joseph Smith prior to July 1842 because she stands as witness for other women who marry him. Sarah, like Elizabeth Davis [Durfee], would have herself sealed to Joseph Smith posthumously. However there is only supposition to support a possible covenant between Sarah Cleveland and Joseph Smith during Joseph's life. Either way, Sarah's role appears to be that of an investigator rather than wife or lover.

Delcena Diadamia Johnson [Sherman]: Delcena was the widow of almost-apostle Lyman Sherman. She had seven children to care for. Delcena was also sister of Mary Heron's son-in-law, putting her within the circle of a woman possibly seduced by Bennett's Strikers. As a widow, Delcena may have been pressured to yield to a Striker in exchange for food.

Delcena's brother, Benjamin, returned to Nauvoo in July 1842. He would later describe the marriage between Delcena and Joseph as "tacitly admitted." Delcena was living in the home of Joseph's plural wife, Louisa Beaman. Joseph Smith may have been trying to protect Delcena from the Strikers.

Eliza Roxy Snow (m. 29 June 1842): We do not know when Eliza learned about "plurality," other than that it occurred in Nauvoo. Eliza would attest that she covenanted with Joseph on June 29, shortly after Bennett's departure from Nauvoo, with Sarah [Cleveland] as witness and Brigham Young officiating. Eliza is considered to have been entirely virtuous.

Yet sometime in 1842 Eliza had penned a sensuous and secretive poem titled "The Bride's Avowal" that concludes:

“nought but thy approving look is happiness to me. I would not sell thy confidence, for all the pearls that strew the ocean’s bed or all the gems that sparkle in Peru.”²³

This poem would be published in August 1842, a time when the only possible public interpretation was that Snow was proclaiming herself Joseph’s mistress. This publication coincided with Eliza being asked to leave the home of Sarah Cleveland, where she had been staying.

The poem was probably inserted in the paper by someone wishing to harm Joseph. This implies Eliza had originally presented the poem to Bennett or one of his Strikers. Due to Eliza’s prominence, her experiences and writings will be covered in more detail in a later chapter.

Sarah Ann Whitney (m. 27 July 1842): The marriage of Sarah and Joseph Smith is the only 1842 plural marriage covenant that initially seems untouched by the Bennett scandal. Sarah was daughter of Elizabeth Ann Smith [Whitney], Emma’s Relief Society Counselor, and Newel K. Whitney, senior Bishop in the Mormon Church. Sarah’s father performed the ceremony linking his daughter to Joseph Smith. A month later, Sarah’s parents were sealed to one another.

The Whitneys were the first married couple known to have their vows solemnized for eternity. Much is made of a letter Joseph writes the Whitneys from hiding, telling them that if Emma is not there they can come to him in perfect safety. It is usually presumed Emma was the danger, as if she were not aware of Joseph’s marriages. However the obvious reason Emma would represent danger to people visiting Joseph in hiding would be the possibility that enemies would attempt to tail Emma.

Though Sarah herself seems untouched by the Bennett scandal, it was feared her brother, Horace, would turn against Joseph Smith. On May 12, 1842,²⁴ Horace was sent away to live with relations in Connecticut and Ohio. His wife, Helen Mar Kimball, would write:

“Joseph feared... the Higbee boys would embitter Horace against him, as they had already caused serious trouble, and for this reason he favored his going east, which Horace was not slow to accept.”²⁵

Martha McBride [Knight] (m. August 1842): It appears Martha’s husband had gone “to loose conduct” and was possibly influenced by Bennett’s group to engage in illicit intercourse. Joseph’s marriage to Martha would have been

similar to the marriage of Theodore Turley to Mary Clift, a man protecting a woman who had been connected with a scoundrel.

Esther Dutcher [Smith]: In 1888 Daniel Wells wrote to Joseph F. Smith, asserting Esther Dutcher [Smith] had been a plural wife to Joseph Smith. Esther Dutcher [Smith] was probably the same Esther Smith mentioned in the High Council minutes of fall 1842. It is not entirely clear if Esther rejected the teaching regarding illicit intercourse or if she was a victim. Esther's covenant with Joseph may have occurred in conjunction with her report regarding Gustavus Hill's attempted seduction in early 1842.

Summary

All plural marriage activity in 1842 appears associated with cleaning up the secret mess Bennett and his strikers had caused by persuading men and women to engage in illicit intercourse. For those who believe in a God who might send the sword-wielding angel, every plural marriage after April 1841 was potentially caused by Bennett's secret activities. Unfortunately the spate of 1842 covenants would not be enough to cover over the wounds Bennett had caused in Nauvoo. When Bennett was cut off in June 1842, without any other man or woman being subjected to public scorn, Bennett was enraged. He immediately set in motion a plan to destroy Joseph Smith, Emma Smith, and the Mormon Church.

Wives of Sorrow – Notes

The plural wives of 1842 either manifest characteristics reflecting vulnerability to Bennett or his Strikers, or were known to have been assisting Emma and Joseph to combat the influence of the Strikers.

Three women bore children engendered during 1842: Mary Clift, Sarah Peak [Noon], and Lucina Roberts [Johnston]. Mary Clift confessed to being seduced by Gustavus Hills. It is not clear which men engendered the children of Sarah Peak [Noon] and Lucina Roberts [Johnston].

Joseph appears to have covenanted with a woman (Martha [Knight]) whose husband was reportedly involved in illicit intercourse and possibly a woman (Esther [Smith]) who had been pressed to participate in illicit intercourse.

14 – Sangamo and Pratt

Orson Pratt has figured only lightly in the account until now. But John C. Bennett's accusations following his eviction from Nauvoo would throw Orson painfully into the spotlight.

After the Church publicly withdrew fellowship from Dr. Bennett, Bennett approached the editor of the Sangamo Journal, a Whig newspaper in the Illinois state capital, Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois. The editor of the Sangamo Journal, one Simeon Francis, had ruthlessly assailed Bennett in the press only weeks before. But Bennett convinced Francis that an exposé of the Mormons could shift the balance of power between the Whigs and Democrats in the upcoming election.

The initial letter contained every accusation under the sun, including allegations of treason, political tyranny, attempted murder, sexual misconduct, and about every other un-American deed Bennett could think of. But the stories Bennett could tell most convincingly were stories related to sexual intrigue. These stories also appeared to capture the imagination of the public. The most damning of these was Bennett's tale alleging Joseph had attempted to woo the wife of one of his own apostles, Orson Pratt.

Orson Pratt

Orson Pratt was one of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in Joseph Smith's Church, ordained to his position in 1835.

Half the members of the original Quorum apostatized due to the turmoil of the financial collapse in Kirtland and Oliver Cowdery's allegations regarding Joseph and Fanny Alger.¹ One was killed in the mobbings in Missouri. Those who survived and remained faithful had been asked to serve missions abroad.

While John C. Bennett was putting in place the Nauvoo City Charter, Orson was in England, preaching and publishing in Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Manchester. Bennett was having Sarah Pratt wash his clothing, sew his shirts, and make his outer clothing² while Orson Pratt was preaching without purse or scrip.

It is likely during this period of time (May-July 1841) that Bennett formed the opinion that Sarah Pratt “made a first rate go.”³

Orson returned from England in the summer of 1841, stopping in New York on July 1, 1841, to publish a second edition of his Edinburgh tract, *History of the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon*. By July 19th, Orson was back in Nauvoo, meeting in council with other members of the Twelve Apostles. Orson returned to the arms and bed of his young wife. He apparently had no idea Sarah had betrayed him during his absence.

Bennett, Denied

Shortly before Orson returned to Nauvoo, Bennett was reprimanded strongly by Joseph Smith, apparently ending his liaison with Sarah Pratt. In 1890 Ebenezer Robinson, formerly Nauvoo Justice of the Peace, would publish an account, relating:

In the spring of 1841 Dr. Bennett had a small neat house built for Orson Pratt's family,⁴ and commenced boarding with them. Elder Pratt was absent on a mission to England.

Sometime after this, Presidents Hyrum Smith and William Law went on a mission to the eastern states. (William Law was one of the three first Presidents of the church.) When passing through Ohio, a gentleman told them Dr. Bennett had a wife and children living, but she left him because of his adulterous practices. They wrote a letter to Joseph Smith giving him this statement, which letter, Joseph says in his history, was shown to Dr. Bennett, when he confessed he had a wife and children living.

Soon after this Dr. Bennett made an attempt to commit suicide by taking poison. It required quite an effort on the part of the physicians to save his life, as he strenuously resisted their efforts to save him. ⁵

Hyrum Smith wrote from Pittsburgh on June 15, 1841 that Bennett had abandoned his wife and conducted himself in a scandalous manner. This echoed the information George Miller had conveyed to Joseph Smith in March 1841, likely arriving in Joseph's hands before April 1841.

Joseph Smith himself had originally voiced the cover story regarding the June letter prompting the suicide. ⁶ However Joseph's rebuke of Bennett covered more than just anger at Bennett's attempt to hide the fact of his marriage. Lorenzo Wasson, a Smith relative who claimed to have overheard the interchange, recalled that Joseph gave Bennett "a tremendous flagellation for practicing iniquity under the base pretense of authority from the heads of the church." ⁷ This "iniquity under... pretense of authority from the heads of the church" seems to describe the manner in which Bennett would persuade others to accept illicit intercourse.

Bennett and Francis Higbee had been found guilty of adultery around July 4, 1841. ⁸ Dr. Bennett had been called in to treat Francis Higbee, [Nancy Rigdon's suitor and brother of Chauncey Higbee] and found him suffering from the ——. This was most likely a reference to "the pox," or syphilis. ⁹ Bennett and Higbee had confessed before a group of 60-70 individuals on the third floor of the Nauvoo Cultural Hall. ¹⁰ Joseph may have only learned of Dr. Bennett's adultery with Sarah Pratt as a result of the July 1841 accusations and confessions.

Orson, the Dutiful

Given Orson Pratt's involvement in the activities of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, it seems likely that Orson was aware Church leaders had withdrawn Sarah's food allotment prior to his arrival home. However it is not clear Orson Pratt realized Sarah had been unfaithful. It is possible Sarah implied she'd merely had a falling out with Joseph, to explain the lack of support. Orson's later actions convey complete shock, as though he was completely blindsided by the disclosures Bennett and Joseph would make in July 1842.

Public documents allow us a window into Orson Pratt's life after returning to Nauvoo. Less than a month after Orson's return, it was announced that "The department of English literature and mathematics, of

the University of the City of Nauvoo, is in operation under the tuition of Professor Orson Pratt.”¹¹ Bennett was the one who had created the University charter and gotten it approved by the Illinois State legislature. Bennett had been a “getter up” of colleges several times previously.¹² The formation of the University of the City of Nauvoo shows signs of his involvement, often promising more than was actual. For example, it was fully two weeks after the announcement that Orson Pratt was heading the department of English literature and mathematics that “Orson Pratt was elected professor of mathematics in the University of the City of Nauvoo, and the degree of master of arts conferred on him by the chancellor and board of regents.”¹³

Orson was working hard on the University project during the fall of 1841, almost certainly working closely with Dr. Bennett, who was living near Orson in Nauvoo’s First Ward. When Joseph and Emma began investigating the troubling rumors regarding illicit intercourse, there is no indication Orson was either questioned or included in the investigation.

When Joseph Smith identified Dr. Bennett as a key participant in the illicit intercourse being conducted in Nauvoo in May 1842, Joseph drew up the notice withdrawing fellowship from Dr. Bennett. Over the next several days, Joseph had the leaders of the Church who were in town sign the notice. Everyone did so with the exception of Orson Pratt. Based on sealed testimony and journal entries, at least two of the men who did sign the notice had engaged in illicit intercourse themselves. But Orson Pratt’s refusal to sign the notice withdrawing fellowship seems to have been inspired by Orson’s honest regard for Bennett. Bennett had been Orson’s friend and labored with him on the University project.

When Joseph printed the notice withdrawing fellowship from Bennett, there is no doubt Dr. Bennett noted that Orson’s signature was missing. The missing signature was a sign Orson was not hardened against Bennett, the way the other men had become.¹⁴

Bennett Prepares His Attack

Dr. Bennett’s initial letters to the Sangamo Journal spewed numerous accusations at Joseph and his people. But one item hit home. It was the allegation that Joseph had seduced hundreds of single and married females, more than the great Solomon.¹⁵ Bennett specifically named Pamela [Michael], Nancy Rigdon, Martha Brotherton, and Sarah [Pratt].

Pamela [Michael]. Pamela (Pamelia) Mitchell [Michael] was about 28 years old and appears to have been a widow. In August 1842 Pamelia provided an affidavit denying Bennett’s charges and condemning his use of her name. Pamelia would pass away in 1844 of a bilious fever. Bennett’s accusation, Pamelia’s rebuttal, and Pamelia’s Nauvoo obituary are apparently all that is known of Widow Michael.

Nancy Rigdon. Nancy was the daughter of Joseph’s long-time colleague, Sidney Rigdon. Nancy was also being courted by Francis Higbee around this time. A letter Joseph allegedly wrote to Nancy, published by Bennett, makes it appear Joseph may have been attempting to explain to Nancy the difference between adultery and acceptable extra-monogamous sex:

“That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another...”

Yet this letter may have been a fabrication. Later that summer Sidney Rigdon would hesitate to share correspondence from Bennett, causing Joseph to fear Sidney was implicated in the illicit sex ring. It does not appear that Nancy Rigdon wanted the letter published. Her lack of support for Bennett reduced the utility of her tale for Bennett’s purposes.

Martha Brotherton. Martha was an English convert who arrived in the Nauvoo area around November 1841. Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and Parley P. Pratt were the missionaries that brought the gospel to Martha’s family. ¹⁶ The Nauvoo census lists Martha Brotherton and parents Sarah and Thomas as living in the Nauvoo 3rd Ward in February 1842.

The Brothertons had left England on September 21, 1841 aboard the Tyrean. ¹⁷ The presiding Elder on board was Joseph Fielding. Years later Fielding wrote of the immigrants’ arrival in St. Louis in November 1841:

“Here we saw some poor faithless Saints, something like spider webs set to catch flies. They came to us with fair words as our best friends, but their council was that of enemies, but did not prevail to stay any of our company, except two. Most of them had been to Nauvoo but had not faith enough to live there.” ¹⁸

Given the time that had passed since the events of which Joseph Fielding was writing, the two who “stayed” may have been Brother and Sister Brotherton. Or they could have been converts such as the Longstroths ¹⁹ who are known to have stopped in St. Louis rather than gathering to Nauvoo.

According to Martha's tales, Brigham approached Martha and asked if she would be his wife. Martha would indicate her interaction with Brigham Young occurred three weeks after her arrival in the Nauvoo area. Martha's sister, Elizabeth, wrote that her father only stayed with the Church nine weeks after arriving in Nauvoo, moving south to Warsaw and eventually St. Louis before returning to England. When these estimates are considered with the fact the Brothertons arrived with Joseph Fielding and were still present in the Nauvoo vicinity at the time of the 1842 census in early February, the interview between Brigham and Martha must have occurred in the first half of December, 1841.

Martha's tale of being coerced to be a secret wife was sufficiently noised about that the matter was explicitly refuted during the April 1842 General Conference. The rebuttal was published in the newspaper record of the proceedings of Conference. The original rumor claimed Martha had been locked in a room for days by Brigham Young, Heber Kimball, and other apostles. Months later, at the request of Dr. Bennett, Martha wrote an affidavit describing her ordeal in more detail. In the affidavit, Martha claimed to have been locked up only ten minutes rather than multiple days. As Martha's original affidavit is not extant, some suggest Bennett may have edited her statement for heightened effect, inserting Joseph Smith in the tale. Bennett had cast Joseph Smith as the polygamous lead in other stories in his book where more contemporary testimony indicates Bennett had been the seducer. Martha Brotherton's testimony as published in the Sangamo Journal was a powerful piece, a tale of coercion told from the woman's point of view.

Martha's sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, and her brother-in-law, John McIlwrick,²⁰ would testify Martha had lied and that she herself had behaved in a wanton manner. But the damage was done.

Sarah [Pratt]. Bennett's most explosive claim was his charge that Joseph Smith had attempted to seduce Sarah [Pratt], wife of his own, trusting apostle. Bennett would fail to mention his own dalliances with Sarah. Instead Bennett would allege that Sarah had been pressured to become Joseph's lover during pastoral visits, visits Joseph may have made as a result of the adultery allegations of July 1841. Supposedly when Sarah refused, Smith cut off Church support.

It appears Bennett sent Orson an advance copy of the Sangamo Journal exposé in mid-July. Based on the timing of subsequent events, it seems Orson shared the text with Joseph. Orson knew the fact about withdrawal of church support was true. How much else of Bennett's tale was therefore also true?

Orson Reacts

Orson had the tale from Bennett and Sarah, alleging Joseph was the one who had attempted to seduce Sarah. Orson also had the tale from Joseph, supported by an horrific number of witnesses, alleging Bennett had been intimate with Sarah. He had to choose between believing himself cuckolded in fact, or follower of a man who had tried to seduce his wife.

Brigham Young would write:

“Br. Orson Pratt is in trouble in consequence of his wife [Sarah]. His feelings are so wrought up that he does not know whether his wife is wrong, or whether Joseph’s testimony and others are wrong, and do lie, and he [Orson] deceived for 12 years or not; he is all but crazy about the matter. You may ask what the matter is concerning Sister [Pratt]. It is enough, and Doct. J.C. Bennett, could tell all about himself and his ***** enough of that. We will not let Br. Orson go away from us. He is too good a man to have a woman destroy him.”²¹

Joseph called a meeting in the grove on 14 July 1842, the day before the Sangamo Journal article was scheduled to run. Joseph laid out the story of Bennett’s seduction of an honorable woman, but did not name Sarah. The next day the Journal article appeared. Joseph called another meeting and confirmed that the woman he’d spoken of, who had been seduced by Bennett, was Sarah [Pratt].²²

Orson went missing the day the article appeared. Joseph “caused the Temple hands and the principal men of the city to make search for him.”²³ Orson was found five miles south of Nauvoo, next to the Mississippi River. Considering Brigham Young’s comments, it seems possible Orson was contemplating suicide as he stood at the edge of the river.²⁴

Orson remained in Nauvoo. A week later he voted against Joseph, presumably when officers of the church were being sustained. When Orson was questioned about his opposition, he admitted he had no personal knowledge of any immoral act on Joseph’s part.²⁵ From that time Orson did not oppose Joseph. But neither did he openly support Joseph. To do so was to proclaim Orson believed his wife, Sarah, had committed adultery.

By August Joseph Smith went into hiding, concerned that deputies from Missouri would attempt to extradite him.²⁶ In Joseph’s absence, Brigham and

other members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles attempted to get Orson to come out in open support of Joseph Smith. When Orson refused, the Apostles excommunicated Orson and Sarah on August 20, 1842. Cut off from the work that had been his life for the past decade, Orson wrote that he spent “Much of my leisure time in study, and made myself thoroughly acquainted with algebra, geometry, trigonometry, conic sections, differential and integral calculus, astronomy, and most of the physical sciences. These studies I pursued without the assistance of a teacher.”²⁷

In September 1842, leading men and women in Nauvoo drew up certificates attesting that “Bennett’s ‘secret wife system’ is a disclosure of his own make.”²⁸ Orson Pratt’s name was conspicuously missing.²⁹

Joseph, had tried to protect those who were guilty. Now he watched from hiding as an innocent man was excommunicated for the crime of standing by his wife. Joseph was determined to save Orson. But Joseph needed those who had excommunicated Orson to sustain their wounded brother with their whole hearts. It seems Joseph would resort to extreme measures to reunite the Apostles once again.

Sangamo and Pratt – Notes

Dr. Bennett attacked Joseph Smith by publishing a series of letters accusing him of all manner of evil. The most explosive charge was that Joseph had attempted to seduce Sarah Bates [Pratt].

Martha Brotherton provided an affidavit claiming Brigham Young had attempted to coerce her to be his extra-monogamous lover, an interview that must have occurred in the early part of December 1841 based on the November 1841 arrival of the Brothertons in the Joseph Fielding party and the inclusion of the Brothertons in the February 1842 Nauvoo census.

Joseph only shared the minimum information required to counter Dr. Bennett’s claims, including his reticence to explain the actual reason Dr. Bennett was believed to have attempted suicide in July 1841. But when Dr. Bennett accused Joseph of attempting to seduce Sarah [Pratt], Joseph was forced to set the record straight. Orson Pratt was torn, not sure whether to believe himself cuckolded in fact, as Joseph claimed, or follower of a would-be seducer, as Bennett claimed. Orson chose silence. In Joseph’s absence, the apostles excommunicated Orson for failing to defend Joseph.

15 – The Apostles and Their Wives

There are various stories recounting that Joseph told men to give their wives to him. Alternately, there are instances where a woman who was married to another man then entered into a covenant relationship with Joseph Smith.

Prior to March 1842, Joseph covenanted with three women who were married to other men. These ladies were Zina Diantha Huntington [Jacobs], Presendia Huntington [Buell], and Mary Elizabeth Rollins [Lightner]. DNA analysis of descendants suggests none of the descendants of these women ¹ are actually related to Joseph Smith. Therefore it is reasonable to speculate that these “marriages” were ceremonial in nature. Joseph’s “marriage” to the Huntington sisters appears to have been partially based on the command from the angel with the sword and partially inspired by Dimick Huntington’s desire to link the Huntington family to Joseph Smith in eternity. Joseph’s marriage to Mary Elizabeth Rollins [Lightner] was based on the command from the angel with the sword and possibly the urgency caused by Joseph’s early fears about the seductions taking place in Nauvoo.

In 1842, Joseph appears to have covenanted with five additional women who were already married:

- Sylvia Sessions [Lyon],
- Patty Bartlett [Sessions],
- Elizabeth Davis [Goldsmith Brackenbury Durfee],

- Sarah Maryetta Kingsley [Howe Cleveland], and
- Esther Dutcher [Smith].²

As discussed in *Wives of Sorrow*, it appears these women were acting as detectives during the hunt for the men seducing women in Nauvoo. These “marriages” then were possibly a combination of Joseph teaching the correct doctrine and swearing these women to secrecy in pursuit of the men and women teaching or believing false doctrine about the nature of marriage and sexuality. Esther and Sylvia were associated with men who would be excommunicated (Gustavus Hills and Windsor Lyon).

By summer 1842 Bennett had been exposed as ring-leader of the sexual predators. Bennett counter-attacked Joseph in the press, claiming Joseph was the one who had been propositioning women. As with most effective lies, there was a kernel of truth. Joseph had been talking with women about the New and Everlasting Covenant. But Joseph’s aim does not appear to have been the easy sex Bennett and his Strikers had elicited from the hapless women of Nauvoo. Yet Bennett spun a web of accusations anchored in the allegation that Joseph had made improper advances to Sarah Pratt, wife of his apostle, Orson Pratt.

Joseph’s response to the accusation regarding Sarah Pratt was outrage. Sarah was an acknowledged adulteress in the eyes of the dozens who heard John C. Bennett’s confession in 1841.³ Joseph initially counter-accused Bennett of committing adultery, only specifying to the general public that the woman was Sarah when Bennett persisted in publishing his allegations.

Judges in Israel

Unfortunately Sarah’s husband appears not to have been aware of his wife’s infidelity prior to Bennett’s accusations and Joseph’s defense. After Sarah’s infidelity was declared to the public, Orson chose to remain silent rather than publicly confirm he believed himself cuckolded.

The other apostles felt that Orson’s silence was tantamount to an attack on Joseph Smith. They believed Joseph’s very life was at stake. Certainly Joseph had been forced into hiding as a result of Bennett’s accusations.⁴ The Apostles did not have Joseph to guide them as they deliberated with Orson. After a short few weeks, they decided the only way to deal with Orson was to punish him. Orson was excommunicated on August 20, 1842.

Trying the Judges

There is reason to think Joseph was very distressed by the Apostles' decision to excommunicate Orson. Not only had Orson been harmed, those who acted had demonstrated a stunning lack of compassion. Joseph could have simply ordered them to re-admit Orson to their number. But Joseph's goal was not mere restitution. Joseph wished to create a quorum that was truly united, one by choice rather than by edict.

There are several reports that Joseph asked apostles to give him their wives. The timing of these requests is not known exactly. Prior researchers have not suggested that Orson's excommunication was the cause. Most have merely seen this episode as a trial of the apostles' faith, without providing a cause that might precipitate such a trial. An example of this lore is the 1854 sermon of Jedediah M. Grant asserting "Did the Prophet Joseph want every man's wife he asked for? He did not... the grand object in view was to try the people of God, to see what was in them." ⁵ Jedediah was second counselor to Brigham Young and had been sealed to Young as an adopted son. It is likely Jedediah's information on the matter came from Brigham Young.

The members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that remained in the summer of 1842 had already withstood the tempest of apostasy in Kirtland and Missouri. A list of the men who had been called as apostles in the short history of the Church leading up to 1842 ⁶ shows how many had fallen by the wayside. The reason for leaving the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is given. Remaining apostles from the original quorum are bolded.

1. ~~Thomas B. Marsh~~, (1835-1838) apostasy
2. ~~David W. Patten~~, (1835-1838) death, shot in Missouri
3. **Brigham Young**, (1835-1847) became Church President
4. **Heber C. Kimball**, (1835-1868) death
5. **Orson Hyde**, (1835-1839, 1839-1878) death
6. ~~William E. McLellan~~, (1835-1838) apostasy
7. **Parley P. Pratt**, (1835-1857) death, shot in Arkansas
8. ~~Luke S. Johnson~~, (1835-1838) apostasy
9. **William B. Smith**, (1835-1845) excommunication
10. **Orson Pratt**, (1835-1842, 1843-1881) death
11. ~~John F. Boynton~~, (1835-1837) apostasy
12. ~~Lyman E. Johnson~~, (1835-1838) apostasy
13. John E. Page, (1838-1846) excommunication
14. John Taylor, (1838-1880) became Church President
15. ~~Lyman Royal Sherman~~, (1838-1839) died before ordination
16. Wilford Woodruff, (1839-1889) became Church President

17. George A. Smith, (1839-1868) death
18. Willard Richards, (1840-1847) death
19. Lyman Wight, (1841-1848) excommunication

It is unclear how many of the 1842 apostles were challenged to give Joseph their wives. We only have information on this challenge for a few of these men.

Brigham Young, President of the Quorum

There is no colorful story regarding Joseph's challenge to Brigham Young. However the view Jedediah Grant expressed, that Joseph's request for some men's wives was simply a test, almost certainly came from Brigham Young.

Brigham's first wife had died in 1832. Earlier in 1842 Brigham had participated in sealing Joseph to some of his plural wives, and Brigham Young had sheltered the abandoned Lucy Decker. Brigham had shown time and again that he was willing to do whatever Joseph asked of him.

Assuming Joseph asked Brigham for his wife, Brigham may have agreed all too quickly. He may not have had a chance to internalize the pain Orson was feeling. Brigham would require tremendous sacrifices on the part of Church members after Joseph's death. The polygamy-related sacrifices Brigham demanded of Orson Pratt would seemingly be the final straw souring Sarah [Pratt] against her husband.

Brigham Young's trust in Orson might never have been fully restored. Late in life Brigham would announce that seniority in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles should be based on the most recent accession to the quorum. Seniority was previously based on the apostle's original ordination date. With seniority redefined, John Taylor, rather than Orson Pratt, was named President of the Church after the death of Brigham Young.

Orson Hyde

At the time Orson Pratt was excommunicated, Orson Hyde was still on his mission to Palestine. Orson's bride was Nancy Marinda Johnson [Hyde], a woman who had been a teenager in the home where Joseph lived in 1832. It appears possible that Joseph had been prompted to take Nancy as a plural wife in those early days. However a mob attack intervened.

During the investigation, Joseph asked Nancy Marinda Johnson for her help. Nancy Marinda was the one who reached out to Nancy Rigdon during the investigation.

Orson Hyde returned to Nauvoo in December 1842. Joseph broached the subject of plural marriage with him. Orson Hyde would marry two women as plural wives in March of 1843. But in May 1843, Nancy Marinda Johnson [Hyde] chose to be sealed to Joseph Smith, rather than Orson Hyde. It is possible Orson Hyde's apostasy in 1838 influenced her decision.

Perhaps Nancy Marinda Johnson, like Zina Huntington and Mary Elizabeth Rollins, came to believe that she was one who had been fore-ordained for Joseph in eternity. However Nancy Marinda Johnson spent the rest of her reproductive existence with the man she had chosen to marry when Joseph hesitated. ⁷ Orson Hyde was the father of all of Marinda's ten children. ⁸

Parley P. Pratt

The configuration of Parley's family was uniquely complicated in 1842. Parley's first wife, Thankful Halsey, had died due to complications of childbirth in March 1837. Parley then proceeded to marry Mary Ann Frost [Sterns], a young widow who had been devoted to her first husband.

We do not have a record suggesting Joseph demanded Parley's wife in 1842. However when Parley learned of plural marriage, he was overjoyed by the possibility of binding his loved ones to him for eternity.

The challenge Parley and Mary Ann suffered regarding plural marriage occurred later in 1843. Parley wished to have himself sealed to Mary Ann, ignoring the fact that she had a previous husband to whom she'd been quite devoted. Hyrum Smith, himself new to the concept of plural marriage, agreed to perform the ceremony. Joseph cancelled this one sealing Hyrum had performed, which had been done without specific authorization. ⁹ It appears Joseph then proceeded to seal Mary Ann to himself. Joseph may have sealed himself to Mary Ann to make sure Parley and Mary Ann did not again attempt to usurp the eventual place of the deceased Stearns at Mary Ann's side in eternity.

John Taylor

In the case of John Taylor, we have snippets and a rich oral history that was then published by John's grandson, noted fiction-writer Samuel W. Taylor.

John Taylor adored his wife, Leonora Agnes Cannon [Taylor]. Leonora was fully twelve years John's senior. So John had married Leonora despite the traditional folkways that would have had him seek a girl closer to his own age.

When Joseph asked John to yield up Leonora, John was tormented. He did not eat or sleep. But at last he determined to discuss the matter with Leonora.

Sam Taylor recounts that Leonora wanted nothing to do with the matter. She proceeded to lob kitchen items at John in her anger. At one point in the altercation, she reared back her arm and accidentally broke a glass window. The glass cut her badly, and Leonora would later claim she lost a finger as a result of the wound. More painfully, Leonora came to believe that her youngest child, Leonora Agnes, had died ¹⁰ because of the events of that day. We do not know enough of the dating of events and the details of Agnes' death to understand why Leonora felt that way. ¹¹

Wilford Woodruff related:

“the Prophet went to the home of President Taylor, and said to him, ‘Brother John, I want Leonora’ ... it is said John Taylor never answered the prophet, turned away and walked the floor all night, but the next morning, went to the home of the Prophet's and said to him, ‘Brother Joseph, if God wants Leonora He can have her.’ That was all the prophet was after ... and said to him, ‘Brother Taylor, I don't want your wife, I just wanted to know where you stood.’” ¹²

When John Taylor effectively told Joseph, “If you want Leonora, you can have her,” John Taylor may have been sporting evidence of the pots and pans Leonora had thrown at him or blood from Leonora's self-inflicted accidental wound. Joseph did not require Leonora at John's hand. However the circumstances hardly made Joseph's refusal to take Leonora seem like anything but self-preservation.

Heber C. Kimball

In the case of Heber C. Kimball, the tale as we have it comes from his grandson, Apostle Orson F. Whitney. The story is not the titillating human tale Sam Taylor told about John and Leonora. It is a faithful tale from a devoted descendant.

As John adored Leonora, so Heber adored his wife, Vilate Murray [Kimball]. When Joseph demanded Heber yield up Vilate, Heber went three days without eating or sleeping. Vilate became quite concerned.

Heber C. Kimball did not confide in Vilate. But finally Heber decided he must do as Joseph had asked. He took Vilate with him to visit Joseph. Then to Vilate's amazement, Heber put Vilate's hand in Joseph's, and gave her up.

With Brigham, Joseph had likely faced a follower who obeyed without delay, an obedience too quick to change the heart. With Orson Hyde, the wife in question wished to claim an eternal blessing Joseph's hesitation had denied her. With Parley Pratt, Joseph was likely trying to prevent folks from usurping a dead husband's place. With John Taylor, the wife in question had a mind of her own and clearly demanded the right to remain with the husband of her choice.

Only with Heber and Vilate were husband and wife so devoted to one another and to the Lord that Joseph's challenge was truly heart-wrenching and the decision to obey an unquestionable sacrifice.

In the face of the faith of Heber and Vilate, Joseph broke down and cried. Placing Vilate's hand back into the hand of Heber, Joseph then performed the ordinance sealing Heber to Vilate for all eternity.¹³ Heber and Vilate would therefore join Bishop and Elizabeth Whitney as couples whose civil marriages were solemnized for eternity before Joseph himself had obtained this privilege.

No one would record the date of Heber and Vilate's sealing. At the time the ordinance was so sacred that few recorded such things.

A complicating factor, perhaps, was the arrangement Heber made sometime in 1842 to take Sarah Peak [Noon] under his protection. If Heber and Vilate were to record a sealing date after Sarah Peak [Noon] entered their family, it would beg the question of why Heber and Vilate's sacrifice in giving Sarah Peak [Noon] a home had not been sufficient to warrant the sealing ordinance.

When Heber's grandson, Orson F. Whitney, wrote his 1888 biography of Heber C. Kimball, he was faced with determining how to assemble the facts of his famous relative's life. To Orson Whitney, Joseph's request for Vilate was clearly the largest challenge. It seemed to Whitney that this challenge must have been the first of his grandfather's sacrifices on behalf of restoring the principle of plural marriage. However Whitney's reconstruction of events does not fit the larger context. Whitney's chronology would place Joseph's demand for Vilate's hand sometime in early 1842, a time when there was no apparent reason for Joseph to make such a demand of both Heber Kimball and John Taylor, as suggested by the similarity of their respective stories.

Orson Pratt, Reborn

By January 1843, Joseph appears to have won over his apostles. Orson Pratt and Sarah Pratt were re-baptized on January 20, 1843. ¹⁴ Orson was immediately readmitted to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

In 1852, when Brigham Young decided to announce Mormons were practicing polygamy, Brigham selected Orson Pratt to deliver the message. Orson, the man who had endured so much and so publicly, was by far the best man for the job.

Had Orson been allowed to ascend to the position of Church President, he could have ended the practice of polygamy with authority. However Brigham's re-definition of apostolic seniority prevented Orson from becoming Church President. Orson would die in 1881, four years after Brigham Young's death.

The End of Polyandry

With this saga regarding the wives of the apostles, we effectively come to an end of the cases where Joseph Smith marries the wife of another man. There are three minor exceptions that bear mention.

Ruth Vose [Sayers] would eventually learn of the doctrine that allowed marriage to endure into eternity. Ruth craved the blessing of eternal marriage, but her husband did not believe. Mr. Sayers suggested Ruth become Joseph's wife in eternity. Thus we see Joseph extend an eternal sealing to a believing woman with the consent of her unbelieving husband. Mr. Sayers was both

aware of the eternal arrangement and happy to allow his wife to participate in a ceremony he thought was nonsense.

Esther Dutcher reportedly told her husband, Albert Smith, that she had covenanted with Joseph in Nauvoo. Esther Dutcher [Smith] may be the same Esther Smith who testified to the High Council about Gustavus Hills' teachings regarding illicit intercourse in 1842, suggesting Esther covenanted with Joseph in 1842 rather than 1843. Before Esther died, she requested the ordinance be performed to formally seal her to Joseph Smith in eternity. Albert Smith stood proxy for Esther to be sealed to Joseph in 1851. ¹⁵

Elvira Annie Cowles [Holmes] would be sealed to Joseph Smith on June 1, 1843. Joseph Smith himself had performed the civil ceremony linking Elvira to Jonathan Harriman Holmes on December 1, 1842. Elvira and Jonathan would tell their children that Elvira had been Joseph's wife, and that Joseph had requested that Jonathan take care of Elvira in the event of Joseph's death. Elvira appears to be participating in polyandry based on the available marriage documents. However it is likely Elvira intended to be sealed to Joseph before entering into the public marriage with Jonathan Holmes. There is no evidence Elvira had sex either with Joseph or with Jonathan during Joseph's lifetime. However Elvira may have implied things to her daughters to encourage them to accept the New and Everlasting Covenant. ¹⁶

In February 1843 Elvira and Jonathan would welcome Eliza Snow into their home. The lives of these three (Jonathan Harriman Holmes, Elvira Annie Cowles, and Eliza Roxcy Snow) were uniquely entwined during 1842-1843.

The Apostles and Their Wives – Notes

It was claimed that Joseph asked his apostles to give him their wives. There is reason to suspect this happened with Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor. Joseph would reveal that the request had been a test, possibly because they excommunicated Orson Pratt.

Joseph would covenant with the wives of Parley P. Pratt and Orson Hyde. This allowed the women to spend eternity with the man of their choice. Examination of the remaining instances of “polyandry” indicate these covenants were likely only ceremonial.

16 – Eliza Roxcy Snow [Smith]

Eliza Snow is arguably the most prominent woman in early Mormon history. She is like Mother Teresa, Susan B. Anthony, and Abigail Adams rolled into one. Eliza was adviser and consort to Brigham Young and frontier president of the Relief Society. Eliza was influential in the formation of both the children's ministry (Primary) and the youth ministry (now called Young Men and Young Women). Eliza presided over Utah women when they obtained female suffrage in Utah in 1870, fully fifty years before female suffrage became law in the United States. ¹

In addition to this impressive legacy, Eliza Snow was regarded as a prophetess. Her hundreds of poems were treasured, from the simple poems that might comfort those who had lost an infant to the sweeping poems that conveyed the doctrines of Zion. ²

Eliza as Deceitful Seducer

In 1984 Doubleday published *Mormon Enigma*, a biography of Emma Smith written by Linda King Newell and Dr. Valeen Tippetts Avery. In 1984 there was great excitement about a number of previously unknown documents from early Mormon history, including documents painting Joseph Smith as a being committed to a magical worldview, telling of a vision of a white salamander, and documenting Joseph's use of magic to dig for money.

As Linda Newell and Valeen Avery put together their view of Joseph's wife, Emma, they used these new documents to inform their understanding of the man Emma loved. They found Joseph to be a flawed man who wedded and bedded women behind Emma's back. The betrayal Val Avery felt Joseph had practiced caused her great distress. Avery could only write about Joseph and these women for a few minutes before she would literally feel the gorge rise within her. Avery would vomit, then lie down to regain her composure enough to write for a few more minutes.³

The women Newell and Avery believed Joseph had bedded were anathema. Of all Emma's friends Newell and Avery said bedded Emma's husband, Eliza Snow was the worst. She had been Emma's confidante in the Relief Society. Emma had taken Eliza into her own home. In return, the authors believed, Eliza had betrayed Emma by sleeping with Emma's husband under Emma's own roof.

Newell and Avery's book won the Evans Biography Award, the Mormon History Association Best Book Award, and the John Whitmer Historical Association Best Book Award. But the mainstream Mormon community was shocked by the harsh portrayal of their founding prophet. Newell and Avery were not excommunicated, but they were prohibited from discussing their research or book in Church meetings.⁴

In late 1985, seemingly unrelated to Newell and Avery, a bomber targeted Steven Christensen and Christensen's employer, J. Gary Sheets. Christensen and Kathy Sheets were killed. Investigators initially suspected the bombings were associated with a failing investment business Sheets and Christensen had been involved in. However the bomber struck again the next day, this time severely injuring Mark Hofmann. Hofmann had allegedly discovered numerous historical documents relevant to early Mormonism. Steven Christensen had been one of Hofmann's clients. As the investigation proceeded, Mark Hofmann was identified as the bomber, and his documents were determined to be forgeries.⁵

Ten years after publication of *Mormon Enigma*, Newell and Avery issued an updated edition. The 1994 edition removed the information that had come directly from the Hofmann forgeries. However the underlying structure of the book remained, portraying a good woman betrayed by a craven husband and deceitful female friends. More than a few women influenced by *Mormon Enigma* consider Eliza Snow to be a traitor and foul liar, the archetype of Emma's female friends and associates who are presumed to have lain with Emma's husband.

A Rape in Missouri

At the March 2016 Church History Symposium in Provo, Utah, Professor Andrea Radke-Moss of BYU-I presented during the Women in Danger session. Professor Radke-Moss' subject was "Beyond Petticoats and Poultrices: Finding a Women's History of the Mormon-Missouri War of 1838." The audience grew silent as Professor Radke-Moss recounted her conclusions from a recent find. Eliza Snow, she asserted, had been raped during the 1838 persecutions by a gang of eight Missouri men. The rape was said to have rendered Eliza infertile.

The news spread like wildfire, fanned by summary articles appearing in the *Salt Lake Tribune*.⁶ A few decried the violation of privacy constituted by the publication of this information. Ex-Mormons predictably considered the story a hoax. However the overwhelming response was sorrow for Eliza's suffering and fierce gratitude on the part of modern abuse survivors to find in Eliza a fellow sufferer.

Professor Radke-Moss discussed the reliability of her source, Alice Merrill [Horne]. Alice Merrill [Horne] had been an activist for women's rights and an accomplished artist. She was elected to the Utah State Legislature, had served on the LDS Church Relief Society general board, and became second president of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. Alice had learned of the rape in the home of her grandmother, Bathsheba [Smith], wife of Joseph Smith's cousin, George A. Smith. Eliza Snow was a close friend of Bathsheba [Smith] and a frequent visitor to the Smith home. So it was entirely possible Alice had heard of the reported rape. However Alice was only a child at the time she overheard the confidences that informed her mature recollection.

The pertinent excerpt from the autobiography of Alice Merrill [Horne] is a mere 200 words:

"The most important Mormon women of the nineteenth century often gathered at the Smith home abutting the Church Historian's Office."

Alice would sit on her "grandmother's lap and listen, catching . . . the whispered word unraveling, spelling, and signs made by those ladies."

Regarding the rape, Alice wrote: "There was a saint—a Prophetess, a Poet, an intellectual, seized by brutal mobbers—used by those eight demons and left not dead, but worse. The

horror, the anguish, despair, hopelessness of the innocent victim was dwelt upon. [W]hat future was there for such a one? All the aspirations of a saintly virgin—that maiden of purity—had met martyrdom!”

“The prophet heard and had compassion. This Saint, whose lofty ideals, whose person had been crucified, was yet to become the corner of female work. To her, no child could be born and yet she would be a Mother in Israel. One to whom all eyes should turn, to whom all ears would listen to hear her sing (in tongues) the praises of Zion. She was promised honor above all women, save only Emma, but her marriage to the prophet would be only for heaven.”⁷

The reported gang-rape by eight mobbers initially seems extreme. But contemporary accounts from the Missouri persecutions contain graphic details that put the reported rape of Eliza into context.

Hyrum wrote the guards in Liberty jail had attempted in vain to feed Joseph Smith on human flesh for five days.⁸ Then they:

“boasted of their great achievements at Haun’s Mill and at other places, telling us how many houses they had burned ...how many rapes they had committed... saying they had lashed one woman upon one of the damned ‘Mormon’ meeting benches, tying her hands and feet fast, and sixteen of them abused her as much as they had a mind to, and then left her bound and exposed...

“We had heard of these acts of cruelty previous to this time, but we were slow to believe that such acts had been perpetrated. The lady who was the subject of this brutality did not recover her health to be able to help herself for more than three months afterwards.”⁹

During the same series of affidavits, Parley P. Pratt explained:

“They have also named one or two individual females of our society, whom they have forcibly bound, and twenty or thirty of them, one after another, committed rape upon them. One of these females was a daughter of a respectable family with whom I have been long acquainted, and with whom I have since conversed and learned that it was truly the case. Delicacy at present forbids my mentioning the names.”

In addition to rapes, murder, and burnings, the soldiers acknowledged looting and laying waste to the money, crops, and animals of the Mormons. Parley continued:

“Of these crimes, of which the soldiers boasted, the general officers freely conversed and corroborated the same. And even General Doniphan, who professed to be opposed to such proceedings, acknowledged the truth of them, and gave us several particulars in detail.”¹⁰

In 1865 Mosiah Hancock wrote an autobiography in which he described Missouri atrocities he had personally witnessed as a child:

“I saw a thing in the shape of a man grab an infant from its mother's arms and bash it's brains out against a tree...

“I saw the fiends tie a young person to a bench—she was scarcely sixteen years of age—and fourteen things in human form performed "that" upon their victim which would cause a hyena to revolt at their fiendish orgies! It continued long after their fainting victim had become unconscious...”¹¹

The murders, rapes, looting, and wastage were intended to force the surviving Mormons from the state of Missouri. In the case of rape, women were just the vehicle by which a message was being conveyed. In the 1830s there was no point in naming the victims. Being identified as the object of such violence could do nothing to heal the hurt.

Alice Merrill did likely hear that someone had been raped. However Alice's tender age when hearing the tale combine with public silence regarding the victims' identities to permit doubt. Alice's certainty that the rape rendered Eliza infertile is an unwarranted projection. Had Eliza been the one brutally raped, it is doubtful even Eliza could have been certain the rape had rendered her infertile.

It is possible Eliza and Bathsheba had been describing the rape of another woman in terms that Alice Merrill misunderstood. For example, Eliza had been the housemate of Jonathan Harriman Holmes both in Kirtland and Nauvoo. Eliza would have been unusually aware Marietta Carter [Holmes] had been killed by a gang of men from Missouri. Though the account we have from Marietta's daughter does not specify that rape occurred, it seems the deadly attack would have involved rape. Alternately,

the victims of respectable family who had been known to Parley P. Pratt would have similarly been known to Eliza and Bathsheba.

The possible rape of Eliza must not be discarded lightly. However Alice was young and may have misunderstood. It cannot be certain Eliza herself was the victim or that the described violence necessarily rendered Eliza infertile. There are other stories to consider, including hints in poems written by Eliza's own pen.

Eliza and the Stairs

One reason so many are convinced of Emma's supposed rejection of plural marriage is a story involving Eliza. A third-hand account describes Eliza as pregnant and losing the child.

“A door opposite opened and dainty, little, dark-haired Eliza R. Snow (she was “heavy with child”) came out... Joseph then walked on to the stairway, where he tenderly kissed Eliza, and then came on down stairs toward Brother Rich. Just as he reached the bottom step, there was a commotion on the stairway, and both Joseph and Brother Rich turned quickly to see Eliza come tumbling down the stairs. Emma had pushed her, in a fit of rage and jealousy; she stood at the top of the stairs, glowering, her countenance a picture of hell. Joseph quickly picked up the little lady, and with her in his arms, he turned and looked up at Emma, who then burst into tears and ran to her room. Joseph carried the hurt and bruised Eliza up the stairs and to her room. ‘Her hip was injured and that is why she always afterward favored that leg,’ said Charles C. Rich. ‘She lost the unborn babe.’”¹²

Charles C. Rich was a member of the Nauvoo High Council and a General in the Nauvoo Legion at the time of the reported observation.¹³ He would have been aware numerous women had been seduced in 1842. The sight of a single woman who was pregnant and suffering a miscarriage would have been shocking but understandable under the circumstances. Shortly before Joseph's death in 1844, Charles C. Rich learned of the New and Everlasting Covenant. This would be the first time Charles C. Rich might have suspected Eliza's reported pregnancy was not necessarily caused by a seducer.

Charles C. Rich would become an apostle in the LDS Church in 1849. Apostle Rich told the tale to his son, Ben E. Rich, born 1855. Wallace Aird MacDonald learned the story when Ben Rich was President of the Southern States Mission. The story was likely told during the time Aird was assigned to the Mission Office starting in December 1905, when Aird was almost 19 years old. The extant written version is contained in the notes of Eliza's nephew, Leroi Snow, who had received a letter from Aird MacDonald.

As the oral history passed from Apostle Rich to MacDonald, the men projected motives, actions, and feelings onto Emma. But no observer could have confidently inferred Emma's actions and emotions at the time of Eliza's reported fall. A version cleansed of interpolation is below:

A door opposite opened and Eliza R. Snow (she was pregnant) came out... Joseph then walked on to the stairway, where he embraced Eliza, and then came on down stairs toward Brother Rich. There was a commotion. Joseph and Brother Rich turned quickly and saw Eliza tumbling down the stairs. Emma stood at the top of the stairs.

Joseph quickly picked up Eliza and looked up at Emma, who burst into tears. Joseph carried the hurt and bruised Eliza home.

“Her hip was injured and that is why she always afterward favored that leg,” said Charles C. Rich. “She lost the unborn babe.”

Anti-Mormon, Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal, under the pseudonym Wilhelm Wyl, recounted a version of the tale in 1886, where Emma feels “outraged as a wife and betrayed as a friend” and so takes a broom to Eliza in revenge.¹⁴ Eliza's nephew, LeRoi Snow, said Emma knocked Eliza down the stairs, causing a miscarriage, though this assertion may have been written after LeRoi received MacDonald's letter.¹⁵ Mary Barzee Boyce recounted a rumor from her son-in-law's mother, Aidah Clement, saying Emma pulled Eliza R. Snow downstairs by the hair of her head.¹⁶

In Utah, where Eliza was respected and Emma had refused to follow leaders of the LDS Church, these stories painted Emma Smith as crazed and violent. But today a humanized Emma is seen as the victim. Modern critics of Eliza say Emma's reaction was natural after learning her friend's unborn child had been engendered by Emma's husband, Joseph.

Mormon Enigma and an earlier article on the subject in *BYU Studies*¹⁷ cast doubt on the reliability of the staircase reports. Newell, Avery, and others pointed out Eliza was teaching school every day during the February 1843 timeframe often presumed to be the date of the fall. They also pointed out that neither the Smith homestead nor the Mansion House had a staircase that fits the narrative of the story. But it is rarely questioned that Eliza slept with Joseph. An uninformed Emma is portrayed as enraged and jealous upon learning of the betrayal associated with the sexual activity presumed to have occurred between Eliza and Joseph.¹⁸

Rumors of the alleged infertility caused by the gang rape have passed amongst female researchers for years, attributed to a tradition in the George A. Smith family.¹⁹ Thus some women have rejected the Charles C. Rich tale entirely. In a memorable encounter, a female researcher after a Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP) meeting insisted, “Eliza was never pregnant!”

However the Rich account passed from Charles C. Rich to his mature son Ben Rich, then was conveyed to Wallace Aird MacDonald when he was a mature teen. The man initially relating the oral history was an Apostle at the time of the telling and an associate of Eliza Snow. Both other men relating the story would become Mission Presidents. The tale as finally recorded therefore has a known provenance, with each raconteur a mature and admirable adult. We must consider the possibility that Eliza Snow could have been pregnant. If she was pregnant, the presumed father would be Joseph Smith. But Eliza’s writings and an understanding of Nauvoo in 1842 suggest another possibility.

Eliza as Possible Victim of Seduction

The women who became plural wives in 1842 were widows or foreigners, abandoned wives or orphans. These women had much in common with women who had been pressured to have sex with Bennett and his Strikers, suggesting they were being rescued from the seducers.

Eliza provided an affidavit in 1869 stating she had been sealed to Joseph Smith on June 29, 1842, placing her “marriage” to Joseph in the middle of the fallout related to John C. Bennett’s departure from Nauvoo. Eliza had been deserted by her father a few days before the sealing. The timing suggests Joseph married Eliza because she needed rescuing as well.

Few are willing to consider that Eliza could have yielded to persuasion to engage in illicit intercourse. But there is no reason to think Eliza was taken

in by the crude tale of acceptable illicit sex that persuaded Catherine Laur [Fuller] to allow Bennett into her bed. By 1842 Bennett had developed an elaborate taxonomy or categorization for the female participants in illicit intercourse. In Bennett's attacks on Joseph Smith and Mormonism, Bennett would describe a Mormon Seraglio with three categories of females.²⁰ Bennett's writings may suggest much about Bennett's activities, as there is no indication they were accurate reflections of Joseph Smith's teachings.

The initial "order" Bennett described was allegedly the Cyprian Saints, made up of women whose sin had been discovered and corrected by the Relief Society. The women Bennett styled as Cyprian Saints resemble those women who were not allowed into Relief Society, like Lucy Ann Munjar.²¹ Eliza was not simply a Cyprian Saint.

The second "order" in Bennett's female sexual hierarchy was allegedly the Chambered Sisters of Charity. Bennett wrote: "This order comprises that class of females who indulge their sensual propensities, without restraint, whether married or single, by the express permission of the Prophet... [They] are much more numerous than the Cyprian Saints. This results naturally from the greater respectability of their order." This second group arguably included the many women, like Catherine Laur [Fuller], who had been seduced by Bennett or his Strikers but not initially discovered by the Relief Society.²² The implied hedonism of this second category is not credible for Eliza.

The highest "order" in Bennett's female hierarchy was the Consecratees of the Cloister or Cloistered Saints. "This degree is composed of females whether married or unmarried, who, by an express grant and gift of God, through his Prophet the Holy Joe, are set apart and consecrated to the use and benefit of particular individuals as secret, spiritual wives... When an Apostle, High Priest, Elder, or Scribe, conceives an affection for a female, and he has satisfactorily ascertained that she experiences a mutual flame, he communicates confidentially to the Prophet his affaire du Coeur and requests him to inquire of the Lord..."²³

Bennett's invention of "Cloistered Saint," appears to be an adaptation to clothe illicit intercourse in more acceptable terms. We see this in the language reportedly used with Martha Brotherton:

"It is lawful and right before God—I know it is. . . . I have the keys of the kingdom, and whatever I bind on earth is bound in heaven, and whatever I loose on earth is loosed in heaven, and if you will accept of [it], you shall be blessed—God shall bless

you, and my blessing shall rest upon you; and if you will be led by him, you will do well; for I know [he] will take care of you.”²⁴

This excerpt was used by Dr. Bennett for the express purpose of attacking Joseph. Given the late date, it may represent the pinnacle of the methods used by the Strikers to clothe their seduction in language acceptable to Joseph’s most faithful followers. Despite the talk of binding, there is no indication in Martha’s account that the marriage itself was necessarily supposed to be eternal or that it tied families together in an eternal covenant. This language just tells the woman to submit to the man despite lack of legal marriage. The man would then take care of her, like a rich man might take care of his mistress.

This sort of language, derived from Joseph’s legitimate teachings and body of scripture, would permit the Strikers to continue their activities even among those who had been warned against promiscuous illicit intercourse. We see both Chauncey Higbee and William Smith asked Catherine Laur [Fuller] to become their secret spiritual wife in an attempt to prevent her legitimate marriage to William Warren in April 1842. Happily, they failed.

Might Eliza have been willing to be a Cloistered Saint? Eliza would write a poem titled *The Bride’s Avowal*.²⁵ A representative excerpt reads:

“Dearest, the hour approaches,
Our destinies to twine
In one eternal wreath of fate,
As holy beings join...

I would not sell thy confidence,
For all the pearls that strew
The ocean’s bed or all the gems
That sparkle in Peru.”²⁶

The poem appears to accept the proposal that someone, perhaps Eliza, become a secret bride. In the poem the bride has not joined herself to the beloved in the eternal wreath of fate. The poem is too sensual to suppose it was actually intended for a maidenly friend for her wedding day. It is not certain when Eliza wrote this poem, or when the woman in the poem planned to entwine herself with her dearest. Given Eliza’s later poetic language, it appears this poem could have been addressed to Dr. Bennett.

Joseph Smith publicly cut Bennett off from the Church in June 1842. Eliza’s father, Oliver Snow, decided to leave Nauvoo the day after Bennett’s

ouster, departing a week later after putting his affairs in order.²⁷ This timing suggests Oliver might have been one of the many guilty individuals who was never publicly exposed.

Eliza remained in Nauvoo and moved into the home of Sarah Cleveland, one of Emma's Relief Society counselors. If she had been willing to fulfil the promise of her poem, entwining herself with her "dearest," she could have been carrying the seducer's child.

On June 29, 1842, Eliza records the first entry in the journal she'd been given at the formation of the Relief Society on March 17, 1842:

"This is a day of much interest to my feelings. Reflecting on past occurrences, a variety of thoughts have presented themselves to my mind with regard to events which have chas'd each other in rapid succession in the scenery of human life...

"I am contemplating the present state of society—the powers of darkness, and the prejudices of the human mind which stand array'd like an impregnable barrier against the work of God."²⁸

Eliza would later state that this was the day she covenanted with Joseph Smith, with Sarah Cleveland standing as witness. Eliza's journal gives no hint of her sealing to Joseph Smith. Instead, it resembles the musings of a woman who has transgressed, a woman who has confessed her sin.

Eviction and Shelter

On August 12, 1842, Elvira Cowles visited Eliza at the home of Sarah Cleveland. The visit might not have been mentioned had it not immediately preceded disturbing events. On August 13th Eliza's sensual and secretive poem, *The Bride's Avowal*, was published in the Nauvoo newspaper, *The Wasp*.

William Smith was editor of *The Wasp*. William had been accused of being complicit in Bennett's seductions. Williams past actions showed a willingness to damage Joseph Smith.²⁹ William's future actions would demonstrate a continued willingness to seduce women. It is therefore likely William was still sympathetic to the exiled Dr. Bennett in August 1842.³⁰ Given Dr. Bennett's published accusations, those reading the poem William published could only have concluded that Eliza was Joseph's willing lover.

The day the poem was published, Sarah Cleveland made it clear Eliza could no longer remain in the Cleveland home. Eliza would write, “Mrs. Cleveland having come to the determination of moving on to her lot; my former expectations were frustrated...”³¹ Eliza’s father prepared to take his daughter away from Nauvoo to his new home in Walnut Grove.

Learning that Eliza had been evicted and might be forced to leave Nauvoo, Emma Hale [Smith] sent Elvira Cowles to extend the offer of shelter in the Smith homestead. Eliza accepted. Oliver Snow, frustrated in his attempt to retrieve Eliza, wrote: “Eliza cannot leave our Prophet.”³²

Possible Offer of Pretend Marriage

We know of at least one plural marriage that included a victim of the 1842 seductions. Mary Clift was impregnated by Gustavus Hills and would subsequently be taken into the household of Theodore Turley. Family histories indicated Mary’s 1842 child, Jason, had been fathered by Turley. But the testimonies given by both Mary Clift and Gustavus Hills before the Nauvoo Stake High Council in fall 1842 make it clear Jason was fathered by Gustavus Hills, not by Theodore Turley.

Unfortunately, Theodore Turley and Mary Clift are somewhat obscure. It can’t be certain Mary Clift was actually a part of the Turley household until the conception of her subsequent child, Ephraim, conceived in approximately May, 1844.

The first known pretend marriage occurred between Sarah Ann Whitney and her brother-in-law, widower Joseph C. Kingsbury.³³ Kingsbury would describe the matter in these terms:

“...on the 16th day Oct. [1842] Caroline My Wife Died after a Severe Sickness of three Months & being delivered of A Son the Same day of her death Which Lived Thirteen Hours (his Name is Newel)

“I remain Alone & felt as though I had Lost Some part of myself, for Truly She was a grate help meat to me and how thankful I feal thinking I Shall See & meat her again to enjoy each other Society for Ever to part no more & also my two little sons Joseph W & Newel for my desires is to live long upon the Earth to See that all things is prepared to meat them all in

the Celestial Kingdom of Glory ^in the presents of God^ Standing at their head according to the order & Glory of God and on the 29th of April 1843 I according to President Joseph Smith Council & others agreed to Stand by Sarah ^Ann^ Whitney as Supposed to be her husband & had a pretended marriage for the purpose of Bringing about the purposes of God in these last days as spoken by the mouth of the prophets Isiah Jeremiah Ezekiel and also Joseph Smith, & Sarah Ann should rec'd a Great Glory Honner & Eternal Lives and I Also Should Rec'd a Great Glory Honner & Eternal lives to the full desire of my heart in having my Companion Caroline in the first Reserection to lcaim [sic] her & no one to have power to take her from me..."³⁴

Joseph Kingsbury's record of the ceremony sealing him to Caroline further illustrates the expectation Kingsbury had of reunion with his departed wife. Kingsbury's record of the words Joseph Smith said reads:

"And thy Companion Caroline who is now dead thou shalt have in the first reserection for I Seal thee up for and in her behalf to Come forth in the first Reserection unto Eternal lives (and it shall be as though She was present herself) and thou shalt hail her and She Shall be thine and no one Shall have power to take her from thee.

"And you both Shall be crowned and enthroned to dwell together in a Kingdom in the Celestial Glory in the presents of God. And you shall enjoy each other Society & embraces in all the fullness of the Gospell of Jesus Christ Wourls [sic] without end And I seal these blessings upon thee and for thy Companion in the Name of Jesus Christ for thou Shalt receive the holy anointing & Endowment in this Life to prepare you for all these blessings even so Amen."³⁵

Kingsbury's record of his pretended marriage to Whitney and subsequent sealing to his deceased wife illustrate three features of note:

- Grief over the recent death of a wife and child
- Promise the man would be eternally united to his deceased wife and children for participating in the pretended marriage
- Description of a glorious reunion in the first resurrection, never to be parted.

Had Eliza been pregnant, she would have benefited from having a public husband who could pass as the father. But Kingsbury’s record suggests a widower willing to stand as a pretend husband was the one who stood to benefit most from an eternal standpoint in those early days of Celestial Marriage.

A poem in Eliza’s diary the month after she begins living in the Smith household may provide evidence she knew such a pretend marriage was contemplated. On September 17, 1842, following a stirring sermon on the resurrection, Eliza composed the following:

Conjugal ³⁶

Like two streams, whose gentle forces
Mingling, in one current blend—
Like two waves, whose outward courses
To the ocean’s bosom tend—

Like two angels ³⁷ that kiss each other
In the presence of the sun—
Like two drops that run together
And forever are but one,

May your mutual vows be plighted—
May your hearts, no longer twain
And your spirits be united
In an everlasting chain. ³⁸

Jonathan had lived with the Smiths from 1835 through 1837. He had returned to the Smith household after the August 1840 death of his wife and infant child. Eliza had known Jonathan in Kirtland and was now his housemate. If Jonathan were being asked to be a pretend husband, it is plausible Eliza would know. If pregnant, Eliza was likely the intended wife.

Eliza’s poetry suggested resurrection could lead to the reunion of spouses parted by death, echoing the promise Joseph C. Kingsbury received in 1843 for agreeing to a pretended marriage to Sarah Whitney.

The poem in the journal was modified at some point after composition. The word that appears to have been “angels” was scraped from the page and replaced with “rays.” The line under the title of the poem now contains a dedication “To Jonathan & Elvira.”

Scholars of Eliza's life and poetry have been content to consider the poem a simple celebration of the forthcoming December marriage of Eliza's housemates, Elvira Annie Cowles and Jonathan Harriman Holmes.

However Elvira's descendants and a family friend repeatedly confirm that Elvira was not functionally Jonathan's wife until after Joseph's death. Why, then, did Eliza write such a glorious poem about a marriage that would apparently not be consummated until 1845, over two years later? The September 1842 poem was more likely intended to celebrate the eventual reunion between Jonathan and Marietta. Two possibilities arise:

- 1) Eliza had learned of the glorious promises offered to the bereaved in association with her own sealing to Joseph Smith. For some reason Eliza had been informed the marriage between Elvira and Jonathan, months hence, would provide Jonathan the promise of eternal union with Marietta in the first resurrection.
- 2) Eliza was herself was to be party to a union that would provide Jonathan "Great Glory Honner & Eternal lives," having his companion Marietta in the first resurrection to claim her & no one to have power to take her from him.

Eliza's November 1842 Poems

The story told by Charles C. Rich indicates Eliza had been pregnant, yet lost the unborn babe. Those attempting to date the fall have assumed it was associated with a dramatic and violent rejection by Emma Smith. They have supposed the date must have been February 1843, when Eliza leaves the Smith household. But an Eliza who was cherished by Emma Smith could have miscarried without being forced to leave the Smith household.

The stories about Eliza and the staircase were written by people who had not lived in Nauvoo. They appear not to have known their versions of the story were impossible for either the Homestead or the Mansion House, which was under construction in 1842. There is no central staircase in the Mansion House. The staircase in the Homestead is a small, enclosed stair. ³⁹

However the scene Charles C. Rich reported could have occurred in the Red Brick Store. The store stood near the bank of the Mississippi River, with a staircase running from the back of the store up to Joseph's second story office. This would be a natural location for Charles C. Rich to meet with

Joseph. It was the location of the Relief Society meetings Eliza and Emma participated in. Though the original configuration of the staircase in the Red Brick Store is unknown, it was used to carry freight from the river up to the storeroom on the second story. Therefore the original staircase would have been wide and unenclosed. The reported fall could have been simply that, a fall. Eliza, if pregnant, could have just been a woman in long skirts tragically tripping on stairs she had negotiated successfully before.

In November 1842 we find a series of four poems in Eliza Snow’s journal. The first poem is dated November 16 and the date written after the last poem is November 30.

When considered as a set, it is possible these poems reflect the miscarriage reported by Charles C. Rich, Eliza’s rage at her seducer, and her decision to clothe her former error in the robes of “conscious innocence.” Rather than merely summarize conclusions, large sections of the poems are included for the benefit of readers unable to access the full poems or the journal manuscript images.

Death. The first poem lacks regular meter and rhyme. Eliza titled the poem *Apostrophe to Death*. In literature, an apostrophe is an address to the personification of an idea or an absent being. Eliza was a celebrated poet, so it is not incongruous that she would have used such a word in a private journal.

The poem is shot through with imagery from the Book of Mormon and evokes John Donne’s poem, *Death, be not proud*.⁴⁰ Pertinent excerpts of Eliza’s poem read:

What art thou, Death?—I’ve seen thy visage and
Have heard thy sound—the deep, low, murm’ring sound...

Thy land is called
A land of shadows; and thy path, a path
Of blind contingence gloominess and fear—
Thy form, comprising all that’s terrible;
For all the terrors that have cross’d the earth,
Or crept into its lower depths, have been
Associated with the thoughts of Death!

...Seen as thou art, by inspiration’s light,
Thou hast no look the righteous need to fear,
With all thy ghastliness—amid the grief

Thy presence brings. I hear a thrilling tone
Of music, sweet as seraph notes that ride
Upon the balmy breath of summer eve.
Art thou a tyrant, holding the black reins
Of destiny that binds the future course
Of man's existence? No: thou art, O Death!
A haggard porter, charg'd to wait before
The Grave, life's portal to the worlds on high. ⁴¹

There are no recorded deaths in Nauvoo during October and November of 1842 that appear to have obviously inspired Eliza's extended address on the devastation caused by mortal death. ⁴²

The Everlasting Covenant versus The Vile Wretch. Another poem is also free verse, without regular rhyme or rhythm. Based on a note written in the manuscript, this poem was published in the Times and Seasons under the title *Saturday Night Thoughts*. It seems likely that "Saturday" was a reference to a time immediately prior to Christ's anticipated Second Coming, rather than an actual day of the week.

Saturday Night Thoughts gives Eliza's testimony, and this poem was one of the two Eliza used to conclude her autobiography in 1885, titled "*Sketch of My Life*." The excerpts included here are transcribed directly from Eliza's journal.

Two aspects of this poem stand out with respect to the history of plural marriage and illicit intercourse. First is the clear reference to Abraham's sacrifice, the spirit of "Elijah's God" and the Everlasting Covenant:

God, who commanded Abraham to leave
His native country and to offer up
On the lone altar, where no eye beheld
But that which never sleeps, an only son;
Is still the same, and thousands who have made
A covenant with him by sacrifice.
Are leaving witness to its sacred truth.
Jehovah speaking has proclaimed his will
The proclamation sounded in my ear.
It touched my heart. I listened to the sound,
Counted the cost and laid my earthly all
Upon the altar, and with purpose fix'd
Unalterably while the spirit of
Elijah's God within my bosom reigns

Embraced the Everlasting Covenant
And am determin'd now to be a saint
And numbered with the tried & faithful ones...⁴³

The second striking aspect of this poem is the evocative description of the vile apostasy that attempted to seduce the faithful. While it is possible to see only spiritual assault, Eliza's words could be read as describing sexual seduction.

It is no trifling thing to be a saint...
To stand unwav'ring, undismay'd
And uneduc'd, when the base hypocrite
Whose deeds take hold on hell, whose face is garb'd
With saintly looks, drawn out by sacrilege
From the profession, but assum'd and thrown
Around him for a mantle to enclose
The black corruption of a putrid heart!

To stand on virtue's lofty pinnacle,
Clad in the heav'nly robes of innocence,
Amid that worse than every other blast—
The blast that strikes at moral character
With floods of falsehood foaming with abuse...—

Thrown side by side and face to face ⁴⁴ with that
Foul hearted spirit, blacker than the soul
Of midnight's darkest shade, the traitor,
The vile wretch that feeds his sordid selfishness
Upon the peace and blood of innocence!
The faithless, rottenhearted wretch, whose tongue
Speaks words of trust and fond fidelity,
While treach'ry, like a viper, coils behind
The smile that dances in his evil eye.— ⁴⁵

One could presume Eliza's anger at the vile wretch was only because he was peddling apostasy. However Dr. Bennett and his associates had been engaged in actual sexual seduction, literally positioning themselves upon the innocent, side by side and face to face. In July Eliza had helped present Governor Carlin a petition specifically decrying Bennett as a vile wretch.

A refuge might be found in considering that Eliza was not writing of her own innocence, that she was not herself the saint whose moral character was being blasted by the vile wretch. Yet what could occurred after November

15 to evoke such a visceral response to Dr. Bennett’s activities from so many months before? The doubting scholar must answer this question.

It has been suggested that the language of this poem merely documents a detail of the reported 1838 gang rape, where Eliza was lured into danger by an individual she trusted. Such an interpretation fails to explain the totality of the poem, the resonance with the illicit intercourse activities of Dr. Bennett, or the reason Eliza would take up that topic in her November 1842 journal.

It is striking that Eliza indicates that corruption of moral character is “worse than every other blast.” Even if Eliza herself hadn’t been raped, she knew of the rapes. Eliza clearly suggests even rape was not as damaging as the moral corruption caused by the abusive, traitorous, selfish, vile, faithless, treacherous, evil, viperous wretch “speaking words of trust.”

Conscious Innocence. In another November poem, Eliza embraces the forgiveness of Christ, the ability to return to “conscious innocence.” This poet speaks of “vile reproach” and triumphing over every ill.

The noblest, proudest joys that this
World’s favor can dispense,
Are far inferior to the bliss
Of conscious innocence...

It makes the righteous soul rejoice
With weight of ills opprest;
To feel the soothing “still small voice”
Low whisp’ring in the breast...

And when in Christ, the Spirit finds
That sweet, that promis’d rest;
In spite of ev’ry pow’r that binds
We feel that we are blest.

Though vile reproach its volumes swell
And friends withdraw their love;⁴⁶
If conscience whisper “all is well,”
And God and heav’n approve.

We’ll triumph over ev’ry ill
And hold our treasure fast;
And stand at length on Zion’s hill,
Secure from ev’ry blast.⁴⁷

Emma Hale [Smith] had used the phrase “conscious innocence” in her letters to Joseph Smith when he was confined in Liberty Jail. ⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that both Emma and Eliza use this unusual phrase.

Though this poem appears in the journal before *Saturday Night Thoughts*, the last six lines of the poem are crammed into the margin along the right edge of the poem. This suggests that the next page already had writing on it.

Retirement. In the final poem composed during these two weeks, Eliza contemplates solitude. Nauvoo and the Smith household were entirely crowded. Yet Eliza had been able to find a period of solitude. Such retirement could have been merely the artist rejoicing in a found time to think. But the solitude could also have been caused by a need to recuperate from the reported fall.

O how sweet is retirement! how precious these hours
 They are dearer to me than midsummer’s gay flow’rs.
 Their soft stillness and silence awaken the Muse—
 ‘Tis a time—’tis a place that the minstrel should choose
 While so sweetly the moments in silence pass by
 When there’s nobody here but Eliza and I...

Eliza writes “November, Wed, 30th” following this last poem. At the bottom of the page, Eliza begins her journal entry for December 12, 1842, talking about how she had commenced schoolteaching in the Masonic Hall. The ink she uses in December is distinct from the ink used in the earlier portions of the journal.

Denouement

Sometime prior to December 1842, Eliza modified the poem she had written about angels kissing each other in the presence of the sun. The modification represents the first time Eliza used scraping to alter the journal she received in March 1842. In that era, even terrible allegations regarding adultery were redacted merely by lining through still-legible words. Eliza would not use scraping again to edit for many months. No other scraping edit significant changes the potential meaning of the text.

On February 11, 1843, Eliza “Took board and had my lodgings removed to the residence of br. J. Holmes.” ⁴⁹ This date, often presumed to coincide with the incident at the stairs, appears to have been caused by Joseph’s

activity of “changing furniture in the house to receive Mother Smith in the family...”⁵⁰ Jonathan, Eliza, and Elvira were re-united.⁵¹

Eliza Roxcy Snow [Smith] – Notes

Eliza Snow is arguably the most honored woman of Mormon history. Yet she is reviled by some for supposedly marrying Joseph Smith without the approval or knowledge of Emma Hale [Smith].

A story recounted by Alice Merrill [Horne] describes Eliza’s brutal rape by eight Missouri men. A tale originating with Charles C. Rich depicts a pregnant Eliza being thrust down a flight of stairs by an enraged Emma Smith. Though there are problems with each story, it appears the original core of each may be valid.

Eliza’s Nauvoo journal contains several poems which may have bearing on Eliza’s experience as Joseph’s wife.

- *Conjugal* (September 1842) may have discussed a friend’s eternal union with his deceased wife, a glorious promise then offered only to a widower willing to be a pretend husband.
- *Apostrophe to Death* (November 1842) could have been inspired by the miscarriage Charles C. Rich reported.
- *Saturday Night Thoughts* (November 1842) celebrates the Everlasting Covenant and decries the traitorous seduction perpetrated by a vile wretch who spoke words of “fond fidelity.”

Eliza wrote “the blast that strikes at moral character” was “worse than every other blast.” It appears Eliza felt Bennett’s attack on moral character was a greater evil than rape. If Eliza was pregnant, as Charles C. Rich reported, these November poems suggest the possibility that the “vile wretch” was the father, rather than Joseph Smith.

17 – Healing Wounded Hearts

We who enjoy the benefits of the modern Church forget how much Joseph Smith still had left to do at the dawn of 1843. In Joseph's quest to restore the marriage system described in the Old Testament,¹ he had secured the support of his apostles and several close associates (male and female).

Joseph had also largely gotten rid of the “sort which creep into houses, and lead captive... women laden with sins...”² and provided for the women who had been misled. However Joseph still had to convince the thousands of Mormon converts of this marriage doctrine in the face of all the scurrilous rumors they'd heard or inferred.

From January 1843 to the end of May 1843, Joseph began to extend his teachings to those individuals who had been wounded by the rumors about “spiritual wifery.” One of these was Joseph's older brother, Hyrum Smith. Of the women who had been wounded, the best documented case involves Emily Partridge.

The Conversion of Hyrum Smith

Hyrum Smith was almost six years older than Joseph Smith, and became the oldest surviving son of Lucy Mack [Smith] and Joseph Smith Sr. when Alvin Smith died in the 1820s. Hyrum supported Joseph throughout their lives together. When it came to the Church Joseph restored, Hyrum was one of the first to be baptized and was one of the Eight Witnesses testifying of

the reality of the golden plates that gave rise to the Book of Mormon. When the Church was organized on April 6, 1830, Hyrum Smith was the oldest of the six charter members. Hyrum was an early missionary, led early congregations, marched with Zion's Camp, and was one of those imprisoned in Liberty Jail with Joseph Smith.

When Father Smith died, Hyrum became Presiding Patriarch of the Church. A few months later, on January 24, 1841, Hyrum was made Assistant President of the Church and ordained to the office of apostle in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Yet Joseph was unable to get Hyrum to accept plural marriage until May 26, 1843, though Joseph had taught plural marriage to many men by then.

Young Gideon Carter ³ wrote "Hyrum did not at first receive it [plural marriage] with favor. His whole nature revolted against it. He said to Joseph that if he attempted to introduce the practice of that doctrine as a tenet of The Church it would break up The Church and cost him his life." ⁴

Joseph asked Hyrum to ask the Lord about it. After much anguish, Hyrum confronted Brigham Young near the Masonic Hall. The two sat themselves on a pile of fence rails that lay nearby. Young would relate Hyrum's words in a 1866 sermon:

"[B]rother Brigham, I want to talk to you... I have a question to ask you. In the first place I say unto you, that I do know that you and the twelve know some things that I do not know. I can understand this by the motions, and talk, and doings of Joseph, and I know there is something or other, which I do not understand, that is revealed to the Twelve. Is this so?"

Brigham said, "I do not know any thing about what you know, but I know what I know."

Hyrum continued, "I have mistrusted for along time that Joseph has received a revelation that a man should have more than one wife, and he has hinted as much to me, but I would not bear it... I want to know the truth and to be saved."

Once Brigham was convinced that Hyrum would not work against Joseph, he confided that Joseph had many wives sealed to him. Hyrum wept like a child, and went to Joseph. Hyrum "renewed his covenant with Joseph,

and they went heart and hand together while they lived, and they were together when they died...”⁵

The Partridge Sisters

By 1843, practically all those who were members of the Mormon Church had become aware of John C. Bennett’s accusations against Joseph. However the accusations particularly affected young ladies who had been questioned during the desperate investigation that led to Bennett’s expulsion.

Edward Partridge had died of ague in May 1840, leaving his family ill and without support. Two of his daughters, Emily (16) and Eliza (20) determined to “hire out” as maids. Joseph and Emma Smith had taken them in, providing Emily and Eliza with the necessities of life in exchange for their help around the homestead.

During the spring of 1842, when Joseph and Emma were trying to uncover the seducers and identify and help the victims, Emily claims Joseph said, “Emily, if you will not betray me, I will tell you something for your benefit.”

When it became clear Emily would not allow Joseph to get a private moment to talk with her, Joseph offered to give Emily a letter if she would promise to burn it afterwards. Emily refused to accept the letter, saying she “shut [Joseph] up so quick.”⁶

Joseph was apparently still concerned that the seducers might have gotten to the Partridge girls. He apparently had Elizabeth Durfee invite Emily and Eliza to her home soon after Emily refused Joseph’s letter. In Emily’s autobiography, she writes that Mrs. Durfee “introduced the subject of spiritual wives as they called it in that day. She wondered if there was any truth in the report she heard. I thought I could tell her something that would make her open her eyes if I chose, but I did not choose to. I kept my own council and said nothing.”

As they walked home that night, Emily told her sister, Eliza, about how Joseph had attempted to talk with her. Emily wrote “She felt very bad indeed for a short time, but it served to prepare her to receive the principles that were revealed soon after.”⁷

What Emily could not know is whether Joseph and Emma and others living in the Smith homestead noticed Eliza's depression and Emily's refusal to be in a situation where she was alone with Joseph.

Emily turned nineteen on February 1843, a year after the conversation with Mrs. Durfee. During the intervening months, Emily had sorted her feelings and decided she would be willing to receive Joseph if he ever tried again.

On March 4, 1843, Mrs. Durfee told Emily that Joseph wanted to speak with her at the home of Heber Kimball that evening. When Emily asked what Joseph wanted, Mrs. Durfee replied she thought Joseph wanted Emily for a wife. Emily worried all day about the interview, to the point that she did not change out of the clothes she'd worn to do the washing. Throwing a cloak over herself, Emily told her sister Eliza she was going to visit their mother, which she briefly did. Then Emily proceeded to the Kimball home, but found only the children at home. She waited until Heber Kimball and Joseph arrived. The men sent the children to a neighbor and Kimball told Emily to leave as well. As Emily was hurrying away, Heber Kimball quietly called after her, eventually getting her to return to talk with Joseph.

Decades later when Emily testified during the Temple Lot trial, she would relate “He taught me this principle of plural marriage that is called polygamy now, but we called it celestial marriage, and he told me that this principle had been revealed to him but it was not generally known; and he went on and said that the Lord had given me to him, and he wanted to know if I would consent to a marriage, and I consented.”⁸ Elsewhere she wrote, “Well I was married there and then. Joseph went home his way and I going my way alone. A strange way of getting married, wasn't it?”⁹

On March 8, 1843, Joseph similarly “wed” Eliza Partridge. Eliza was more reserved than Emily and passed away before the Temple Lot trial, so we do not have any details specific to Eliza Partridge's March 1843 marriage to Joseph.

Emily and Eliza Partridge likely presumed Joseph would re-enact the high pressure sexual importuning they would had heard about in 1842. However the reality in March 1843 appears to have been ceremonial, unconsummated marriage – wholly other than what they had expected.

In May 1843 Emma Smith finally decided she would openly agree to Joseph marrying several young women, including the Partridge sisters. This is covered in the next chapter, “Emma's Ultimatum.”

Chronology of Early 1843 Sealings

With the background of these stories involving Hyrum Smith and the Partridge sisters, let us look at all the plural marriage activity taking place in early 1843, prior to Emma's decision to openly participate in Joseph's marriages to plural wives.

Joseph Smith asked **Willard Richards** to embrace plural marriage. In January 1843 Richards arranged to marry Sarah and Fanny Longstroth, English converts who had come to America but had failed to gather to Nauvoo. Richards went to St. Louis where the family lived and asked if he could marry the two girls, then 16 and 14. According to the family histories, the marriages were not consummated until after the Longstroths were sealed to Willard Richards in the Nauvoo temple, three years later.¹⁰

William D. Huntington was brother to two of Joseph's early wives, Zina and Presendia. On February 5, 1843, William married Harriet Clark, the sister of his first wife, Caroline Clark. We do not know how Bennett's attack on Joseph might have affected William's household and the sister of his first wife. Harriet would not conceive until after Joseph Smith's death, indicating a possibility that William's marriage to Harriet may have remained unconsummated while Joseph lived.¹¹

Ruth Vose [Sayers] alleged she was sealed to Joseph for eternity only in February 1843, with Hyrum Smith performing the ceremony. However it seems more likely she mis-remembered the year than that she mis-remembered the officiant, who couldn't have been Hyrum in February 1843.¹² It is more likely Joseph was sealed to Ruth Vose [Sayers] in 1844.

Orson Hyde first plural wife was English-born Martha Rebecca Browett, whom he married in February or March of 1843. No children resulted from this marriage. In 1850 Martha would marry Thomas McKenzie, an Irish-born convert whose wife died, leaving him with the care of their young daughter. Martha then divorced McKenzie in October 1852 after reaching Salt Lake City. Martha would live until 1904. Orson Hyde went on to marry Mary Ann Price¹³ in April 1843, another English convert. Mary Ann would conceive after Joseph's death and have a daughter, Urania, in 1846. These two English converts married Orson too late for these marriages to be likely associated with the direct activities of Bennett and his Strikers. However it seems likely that they had been affected by the stories of English-born Martha Brotherton and stories about foreign converts being exploited. Mary Ann tells of being

introduced to the idea of plural marriage by Joseph Smith, and the long weeks before she was finally satisfied that Hyde was a conscientious, upright, and noble man. ¹⁴

Flora Ann Woodworth was daughter of Lucien Woodworth, the construction foreman for the Nauvoo House, intended to eventually house visiting dignitaries. William Clayton gave an affidavit that Flora became one of Joseph's wives in the spring of 1843, and Willard Richards appears to have written "Woodworth" in shorthand notation in Joseph's journal for March 4, 1843. Sometime during the summer of 1843, Flora's mother, Phebe, told Orange Wight that Flora was one of Joseph's wives. ¹⁵ Some researchers propose Joseph also covenanted with Phebe Woodworth, Flora's mother. ¹⁶ This mirrors the way Joseph attempted to teach the true doctrine of the New and Everlasting Covenant to both the wife and daughter of Vinson Knight, who had apparently gone "to loose conduct."

As mentioned previously, **Emily and Eliza Partridge** married Joseph Smith on March 4th and March 8th respectively, a year after Emily had refused to allow Joseph to talk with her or give her a letter.

Joseph Bates Noble had performed the ceremony sealing Joseph Smith to Louisa Beaman, Noble's sister-in-law in spring 1841. We do not know what Noble thought in the summer of 1841 through the summer of 1842, as Bennett and his Strikers taught that it was right to engage in illicit intercourse as long as no one found out. However somehow Bennett learned that Joseph Bates Noble had performed a ceremony marrying Louisa Beaman to Joseph Smith. ¹⁷ It seems most likely that Noble, himself, shared the story with someone in Bennett's circle. On April 5, 1843, Joseph Smith sealed Joseph Bates Noble to Sarah B. Alley, a convert from Massachusetts who was in her early twenties. Assuming full term gestation, Sarah B. Alley apparently conceived her son, George, in mid-May. Sarah Alley's social circle included Sarah Peak [Noon], the English widow who had become Heber Kimball's first plural wife in 1842. When Alley became pregnant, the news "was committed to Sarah [Noon] and she was requested not to tell..." ¹⁸

Later that summer, Joseph took **Erastus Snow** on a walk and talked with him about "the Celestial Order of Marriage." Erastus was the brother-in-law of Louisa Beaman. Joseph confided in Erastus regarding the 1831 circumstances leading to the revelation regarding plural marriage. Joseph asserted that "the time had come now when the principle should be practiced." Erastus would not take on a plural wife until 1844. His writings on the topic would not be captured by Andrew Jensen until five years before Erastus died in 1888. ¹⁹

Joseph Smith's secretary, **William Clayton**, had married Ruth Moon in 1836. On April 27, 1843, Ruth's sister, Margaret Moon, became a plural wife to William Clayton. Margaret conceived, giving birth to a son on February 18, 1844.²⁰ Assuming a full-term delivery, this indicates conception occurred in late May, 1843.

Lucy Walker tells of being sixteen in 1842 and having a discussion with Joseph Smith where he said, "I have a message for you. I have been commanded of God to take another wife, and you are the woman."²¹ Joseph went on to explain how celestial marriage could link families together for eternity, saying that celestial marriage was restored for the benefit of the human family. It would prove an everlasting blessing to Lucy's father's house and form a chain that could never be broken. Lucy's mother had died in January 1842, a death which had fractured the family. Lucy refused Joseph's teachings in 1842 and described herself as being:

"tempted and tortured beyond endurance until life was not desirable. Oh that the grave would kindly receive me that I might find rest on the bosom of my dear mother."

Lucy's account gives a fascinating glimpse into the audacious economy with which Joseph attempted to both discover who had been victimized while also teaching about the eternal links that would bind the human family together. In April 1843 Joseph attempted to talk with Lucy again. Lucy recounts that Joseph's renewed discussion with her "aroused every drop of scotch in my veins..." Lucy told Joseph she could not marry him unless God revealed it to her, and God had not done so yet.²²

Joseph promised Lucy she would have a manifestation of the will of God concerning her, a testimony she could never deny. That night Lucy experienced her room filling with light, "like the brilliant sun bursting through the darkest cloud... My Soul was filled with a calm, sweet peace that I never knew. Supreme happiness took possession of my whole being. And I received a powerful and irresistible testimony of the truth of the marriage covenant called Celestial or plural marriage."²³

Lucy married Joseph on May 1, 1843, with William Clayton officiating and Eliza Partridge standing witness.

Lucy had a daughter, Rachel, who died at Winters Quarters in December 1847. The record of Rachel's death and interment states:

“Rachel Kimball; age 1 yr., 11 mos., 4 days; daughter of Heber and Lucy Kimball; deceased Dec. 29, 1847; disease canker; birthplace Nauvoo, Ill.; birthdate Jan 28, 1845; grave no. 147”

This record contradicts itself. Either Rachel was born January 28, 1845, making Joseph Smith the likely biological father, or Rachel was 1 yr., 11 mos., 4 days old, born in January 1846, conceived nine months after Joseph’s death. It appears more likely the age is correct and the date was a mistake. This would validate Lucy’s assertion that “It was not a love matter... [but] to establish that grand and glorious principle that God had revealed to the world.”²⁴

Healing Wounded Hearts – Notes

In early 1843, Joseph Smith reached out to a handful of men and women to invite them to enter into plural marriage. Records left by women who became plural wives in early 1843 indicate the woman had serious reservations based on rumors that Joseph Smith practiced spiritual wifery. Time and again these women did gain a testimony that the plural marriage Joseph taught was not evil and/or that the man involved was upright and noble.

English converts and sisters of first wives are disproportionately represented during this first portion of 1843, possibly reflecting the damage Bennett’s accusations had caused to English converts and knowledge of how the news had affected men’s sisters-in-law.

Marriages entered into prior to April 1843 did not appear to have a sexual component at that time, based on the reproductive history as well as written statements. In May the plural wives of William Clayton and Joseph Bates Noble conceived. This shows that sexual relations between men and their plural wives did occur prior to Joseph’s death in certain cases wholly unrelated to the illicit intercourse scandal of 1841-1842.

By May 1843, Emma Smith decided she would be willing to offer Joseph a handful of wives, and allow herself to be sealed to Joseph for not only time but for all eternity. The next four months would prove more difficult than Emma had imagined.

18 – Emma’s Ultimatum

Emma Hale had been Joseph’s wife since he was a young, poor man. Since the beginning of their courtship in the late 1820s, Emma was aware of the opposition that faced Joseph. He had repeatedly been attacked, beaten, imprisoned, held at gunpoint and betrayed into enemy hands. Joseph had returned to Emma variously bleeding, bruised, tarred, and emaciated.

Emma would ultimately receive Joseph’s lifeless body, shot in the chest.

Like Hyrum, Emma likely believed that Joseph’s teachings and actions related to plural marriage would cause his death. We see this in her vehement reaction to his sermon regarding how the Church might handle converts from countries where polygamy was practiced. ¹

Many have inferred from Emma’s silence that Emma did not know Joseph was marrying plural wives. She does not publicly acknowledge these marriages at any time. But Joseph himself frequently forbade the actual practice of plural marriage. Though Emma herself remained silent, Emma reportedly participated in select marriages starting in May 1843. Those reporting her participation included both those who aligned with the LDS who followed Brigham Young and those who aligned with the RLDS Church led by Joseph’s sons. Notably, conceptions by the plural wives of other righteous men only occur in May 1843 and after the fall of 1843, ² times when Emma was not vocally opposed to plural marriage.

Why did Emma remain silent if she knew?

Emma’s silence has been interpreted as ignorance of the commandment to restore Celestial marriage and teach plural marriage. However Emma’s silence does not necessarily confirm lack of knowledge.

The practice was initially so secretive that there are no contemporary documents at all. Emma would have learned in Kirtland how devastating it could be when she complained to even a trusted intimate (Oliver Cowdery). Emma had been angered to find Joseph alone with Fanny Alger in Kirtland, Ohio. Oliver inferred from Emma’s anger that Joseph’s relationship with Fanny Alger was a tawdry affair. But it is not certain Emma’s anger was caused by intimacy between Fanny and Joseph. Even so, the subsequent alienation between Oliver Cowdery and the Church contributed to apostasy at Kirtland and lethal violence in Missouri.

In 1838 Joseph was asked, “Do Mormons believe in having more wives than one?” Joseph replied, “they believe that if their companion dies, they have a right to marry again.”³ In light of the sealing power Joseph received in 1836, this answer is significant. Emma likely knew of the sealing power, which could bind husbands and wives for eternity, implying the possibility of eternal plural marriage when a surviving spouse remarried. However it can’t be certain Emma understood the implication of Joseph’s well-publicized answer.

Emma was witness to the provocative blessing Father Smith pronounced on Joseph’s head in September 1840, which appears to have told Joseph he wouldn’t die until “all the plan of all the work that God requires” was laid out.

Joseph could easily have kept Emma informed of his plans to restore Old Testament marriage practices. But Emma would have had no need to document or discuss plural marriages so long as the marriages remained unconsummated and completely secret.

Another possible motive for Emma’s silence is suggested by the *Nauvoo Expositor*. In a grossly mangled version of a possible legitimate explanation, the authors of the *Nauvoo Expositor* wrote:

“it was right anciently... but we must keep those... blessings from the world, for until there is a change... we will endanger ourselves by practicing it.”⁴

Emma’s silence regarding plural marriage may merely have represented her unwillingness to endanger Joseph’s life.

Emma and the Relief Society

Emma and Joseph became aware there were sexual predators in Nauvoo in January 1842. The two of them sprang into action to combat the scourge.

As Relief Society President, Emma presided over the female efforts in 1842 to flush out Bennett and his Strikers. She was fully apprised of the fact that high profile men were using their influence to persuade women to agree to illicit intercourse, referred to as spiritual wifery. A study of the Relief Society minutes shows Emma using the Relief Society to investigate irregularities, insisting she wanted none in the Society who had violated the laws of virtue. ⁵

Joseph supported Emma in this, announcing on June 9, 1842, that no one would be admitted to Relief Society unless two or three members of the Relief Society in good standing presented a petition that the prospective member was of good report. ⁶

Emma’s counselors in the Relief Society, the ones investigating the disturbing tales of seduction, were aware of plural marriage. Elizabeth Whitney, Sarah Cleveland, and Elizabeth Durfee were involved in plural marriage activities during 1842. It does not seem credible that Emma could have remained unaware of men, such as Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, who were sheltering vulnerable women in 1842.

Emma maintained silence on the topic for a year following the High Council investigation into the illicit intercourse scandal. Silence may merely have been Emma’s refusal to condone by deed or appearance the spiritual wifery and illicit intercourse carried out by Bennett and his men.

By May 1843 a year had passed. Apparently Emma finally felt comfortable allowing individuals outside her immediate circle to know of her knowledge of and involvement in Joseph’s plural marriages.

Giving Joseph the Partridge Sisters as Plural Wives

Emily and Eliza Partridge were working as maid servants in the Smith household, a position very similar to that of handmaiden in the Genesis

stories involving polygamy. When Emma decided to make her involvement in plural marriage public, Emily and Eliza Partridge were obvious candidates to become Joseph's 'public' plural wives.

Emily and Eliza Partridge had been secretly sealed to Joseph in March 1843. It appears neither Joseph nor Emma sat with Emily Partridge to explain why the ceremonies were being re-solemnized. But repeating the sealings with Emma's involvement would serve to show Emma's willingness to embrace plural marriage.

Emily presumed that Emma had been ignorant of the March sealings, and that this was the reason the ceremonies were repeated. But Emily Partridge herself was clearly ignorant of much that had happened in 1842. Later in life Emily would suggest that "spiritual wifery" and polygamy were merely alternate terms for Celestial Marriage. Emily described how Sister Durfee "introduced the subject of spiritual wives as they called it in that day." ⁷ In her autobiography, Emily wrote:

"He [Joseph Smith] taught me this principle of plural marriage that is called polygamy now, but we called it Celestial Marriage." ⁸

The plan was that the Partridge girls would be sealed to Joseph Smith, and then Emma would be sealed to Joseph. Following Emma's sealing to Joseph, those inner circle couples who were already married would be able to be sealed. ⁹

Emma was perhaps comforted by the knowledge that Joseph had already covenanted with Emily and Eliza Partridge. The girls had seemed content to remain secret wives. And so Emma went through with the repeated sealing ceremony, placing each girls' hand in the hand of Joseph.

In 1894, to keep the RLDS Church from gaining control of the Temple Lot, Emily would testify that Joseph spent that night with her. When asked if she had engaged in "carnal intercourse" with Joseph, Emily would respond, "Yes, sir." ¹⁰

Regrets

At some point a few days after the May ceremony, Emma became hardened against the Partridge sisters. Emily never understood why this might have occurred. However Emily apparently didn't know "spiritual wife"

was a bad term. All it would have taken to alienate Emma would be Emily referring to herself as a spiritual, as girls had reportedly done in 1841.¹¹ Emma would have been infuriated and frightened if Emily or Eliza Partridge equated marriage to Joseph with the sexual practices the young women had heard rumored.

There is a tale that Emma dragged Eliza down the stairs by her hair.¹² This one tale regarding Eliza and the stairs seems to refer to Eliza Partridge. Emma Smith might well react in this manner if a previously demure Eliza Partridge called herself a spiritual or openly demanded intimacy with Joseph, heedless of the danger Emma so clearly perceived.

Emma was potentially faced with two young women who risked exposing Joseph by their careless words or by becoming pregnant at a time when they lived in Joseph’s home. Emma immediately set about doing all in her power to prevent the Partridges from having intimate access to Joseph.

Emma could only hope that neither Emily nor Eliza Partridge had become pregnant as a result of their possible activities with Joseph. But as Emma herself had agreed to the sealings, it is completely understandable if Joseph and either of the Partridge sisters had presumed intimacies would be appropriate.

Roughly four months after the possible intimacies in May 1843, Emma had Joseph send the Partridge girls away. Neither young woman had become pregnant.

Marriage in the Anointed Quorum

The ordinance of sealing previously-married couples together had been performed twice before in private, with Joseph officiating. But the sealing of Joseph to Emma was something Joseph could not officiate himself.

On May 28th, Joseph and Emma became the first couple sealed together in quasi-public, at a meeting of the Quorum of the Anointed.¹³ The sealing was performed by James Adams, who was subsequently sealed to his own wife, Harriet Denton [Adams]. This matter of dual ordinances followed the pattern initially set when Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were baptized.

This matter of the pending sealings was likely the cause of Hyrum’s question to Brigham Young:

“I do know that you and the twelve know some things that I do not know. I can understand this by the motions, and talk, and doings of Joseph, and I know there is something or other, which I do not understand, that is revealed to the Twelve. Is this so?”¹⁴

Other couples in the Quorum of the Anointed proceeded to be sealed in subsequent days, a cause of great rejoicing to them. But as the cloak of secrecy was stripped away, Emma became increasingly concerned.

Emma’s Demands

In the days following the Partridge girls’ sealing to Joseph, other young women covenanted with Joseph. Sisters Sarah and Maria Lawrence were sealed to Joseph. But Sarah Lawrence would later claim there had been no intimacies between herself and Joseph. Elvira Annie Cowles [Holmes] was sealed to Joseph on 1 June 1843, seemingly having waited for Emma to embrace the New and Everlasting Covenant before entering into such a covenant herself with Joseph Smith. Though Elvira never denied she’d slept with Joseph, her reproductive history suggests her relationship with Joseph Smith was not sexual.

Heber C. Kimball proceeded to insist Joseph marry his 14-year-old daughter, Helen Mar Kimball. Though most serious scholars doubt the relationship was sexual, the ceremony at the very least circumscribed Helen’s social activities.¹⁵ Joseph also arranged for Sarah Whitney to marry her widower brother-in-law, who explicitly understood the arrangement to be a pretend marriage. The pretend marriage could have been intended to prevent a suitor from attempting to pursue Sarah. Like Elvira Annie Cowles, Sarah Whitney would not conceive until after Joseph’s death.

Faced by these additional situations where Joseph might be intimate with his wives, Emma reached a breaking point. Emma made a demand of Joseph, and Joseph was commanded to offer her the desire of her heart.¹⁶ A month later the Lord would command Joseph to revoke the offer, saying “I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else.”¹⁷

What might Emma have demanded?

The language of the revelation suggests Emma was promised another husband. Joseph H. Jackson, identified as one of those in the mob that

attacked Joseph, claimed Emma wanted to marry William Law.¹⁸ A more likely possible replacement husband for Emma would have been Jonathan Harriman Holmes, long-time housemate of the Smiths.¹⁹

Another possibility is that Emma threatened to simply divorce Joseph if he would not agree to abandon his plural wives. An August 1843 entry in William Clayton’s journal hints that Emma had demanded Joseph give up his wives.²⁰

In addition, Emma may have asked Joseph to come away with her and turn the work of the Church in Nauvoo over to others. Joseph’s actions during June 1843 support this last possibility. On June 13, 1843, Joseph took Emma and his children and traveled roughly 200 miles northeast to the home of Emma’s sister, Elizabeth Hale [Wasson], in Inlet Grove or Palestine Grove,²¹ Lee County, Illinois.

It is not clear how long Joseph intended to stay with the Wassons. A week after arriving, Joseph would tell William Clayton and Stephen Markham “I have no fear. I shall not leave here.”

Emma could have remained with her sister for an extended time without causing significant comment, making good on her “divorce” threat. Or Joseph could have planned to remain with Emma at the Wasson household, shifting administration of the Church to the Assistant Presidents of the Church, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and William Law, and the Quorum of the Twelve, headed by Brigham Young.

“I am weary of life... kill me, if you please”

On June 18th word reached Nauvoo that Governor Thomas Ford had issued a writ against Joseph. Illinois planned to honor Missouri’s request to extradite Joseph to stand trial. Stephen Markham and William Clayton were sent to find Joseph and warn him. Markham and Clayton reached Joseph on June 21st. Joseph was not overly worried, but did cancel all public speaking arrangements, including a planned sermon in Dixon.

On Friday, June 23rd, Joseph sent William Clayton to Dixon to scout. While in Dixon, Clayton met Joseph H. Reynolds, a sheriff of Jackson County, Missouri, and Constable Harmon T. Wilson, from Carthage, Illinois. The two told Clayton they were Mormon missionaries hoping to meet Joseph Smith, and Clayton told the men where they could find Joseph. Clayton did not realize they were the very men he had warned Joseph about.

Reynolds and Wilson hurried to the Wasson home, arriving around 2 p.m. Reynolds and Wilson told the Wassons they were Mormon elders, and wanted to see Brother Joseph. The History of the Church contains an account of the arrest, excerpted below:

“Wilson accosted me in a very uncouth, ungentlemanly manner, when Reynolds stepped up to me, collared me, then both of them presented cocked pistols to my breast, without showing any writ or serving any process...

[Reynolds cursed, then said,] “ ‘...if you stir I’ll shoot...’

“I answered, ‘I am not afraid of your shooting; I am not afraid to die.’ I then bared my breast and told them to shoot away. ‘I have endured so much oppression, I am weary of life; and kill me, if you please....’

“They then turned their pistols on me again, jamming them against my side, with their fingers on the triggers, and ordered Markham to stand still or they would shoot me through...

“I then said, ‘Gentlemen, if you have any legal process, I wish to obtain a writ of habeas corpus..’ [The arresting officials cursed again and answered,] ‘...you shan’t have one.’ They still continued their punching me on both sides with their pistols.”

Reynolds and Wilson forced Joseph into their wagon, continuing to beat him as they removed him from Emma and the children. After an extended period of time with the continued physical abuse and threats, Joseph asked:

“ ‘What is the use of this so often?’ said I. ‘I have repeatedly told you to shoot; and I now tell you again to shoot away!’ I saw a person passing and shouted to him through the window, ‘I am falsely imprisoned here, and I want a lawyer.’ ”²²

In the days after this arrest, we see four women knowledgeable about plural marriage visit the head of Joseph’s body guard, Cornelius Lott. These were Elvira Annie Cowles, Eliza R. Snow, Elizabeth Whitney, and Elizabeth Durfee. It was crucial that Lott rouse himself in defense of Joseph, whose life was at stake. Perhaps they were attempting to set Lott’s mind at ease

regarding rumors he had heard. Under the circumstances, it doesn’t seem likely they were visiting at that time to persuade Lott to give Joseph his nubile daughter, Malissa, as some researchers have suggested.²³

Lott and others successfully engaged in the contest to return Joseph safely to Nauvoo. As the path of Joseph, Reynolds, and Constable Wilson neared Nauvoo, they stopped at Honey Creek, at the home of Michael Crane. Joseph wrote:

“I showed my sides to Mr. Crane and the company, which still continued black and blue from the bruises I had received from the pistols of Reynolds and Wilson, while riding from Inlet Grove to Dixon eight days ago...”²⁴

Joseph was in the custody of Reynolds and Wilson. But now Reynolds and Wilson were in the custody of Sheriff Campbell and Colonel Markham. The group of them were guarded by Joseph’s friends, ensuring that none could escape. By this point Joseph was headed safely towards home, and Reynolds and Wilson were the ones who would have been afraid.

Emma and Hyrum greeted Joseph tearfully outside of Nauvoo. Joseph’s return became a great celebration, with the band playing and guns and cannon firing. Joseph mounted his favorite horse, “Old Charley.” He rode into town with Emma at his side. Triumph was tempered when Joseph rejoined his mother and children. Little Fred in particular had been terrorized by seeing his father pistol-whipped and dragged away.

The day of celebration ended with a feast. Joseph insisted Reynolds and Wilson participate.

“When I went to dinner with my family, Reynolds and Wilson were placed at the head of the table, with about 50 of my friends, and were served with the best that the table afforded, by my wife, whom they [had] refused to allow me to see, when they so cruelly arrested and ill-treated me, which contrasted strongly with their treatment to me when I was first arrested by them, and until my friends met me.”²⁵

Joseph had attempted to leave Nauvoo and spend time alone with Emma, likely at Emma’s demand. Yet Joseph had been forced back into the midst of Nauvoo and all that Emma had demanded he give up. It was now clear that Nauvoo was an island of legal safety Joseph couldn’t afford to leave.

Emma could hardly make good on her threat in light of how Joseph had returned. Emma's relief regarding Joseph's safe return soon gave way to the old emotions. Hyrum, seeing Emma's unhappiness, suggested that Joseph write down the revelation regarding the New and Everlasting Covenant.

Surely, Hyrum reasoned, if the revelation was written, Emma would read, be comforted, and obey.

Emma's Ultimatum – Notes

Emma's silence has been interpreted as ignorance of Joseph's activities. However her silence may have been primarily inspired by concern for Joseph's safety.

In May 1843 Emma agreed that it was time to openly teach plural marriage. Emma decided that Emily and Eliza Partridge would be the young ladies she would like to have become Joseph's quasi-public plural wives. But something about Emily and Eliza soon upset Emma. The number of additional marriages Joseph was entering into also may have caused Emma concern.

Emma issued an ultimatum. She wanted Joseph to give up his plural wives. If he wouldn't do so, she would divorce him. She may have also suggested that she wished a different husband.

Joseph traveled with Emma to her sister's home. The peaceful idyll was ended when Joseph was arrested for extradition to Missouri. Emma watched as Joseph was pistol-whipped and taken from her. It likely terrified her to hear him ask to be shot. As far as Emma knew, it might be the last time she would ever see Joseph again.

Several of Emma's particular confidantes helped rouse Joseph's guard to his defense. In roughly a week, Joseph was returned to Emma's side. Nauvoo celebrated. Joseph placed the pistol-whipping sheriffs in a place of honor at the celebration dinner. But Emma was concerned, possibly more now than before.

19 – Revealing the Revelation

Despite all that had happened through the end of June 1843, Joseph had never written down the revelation regarding plural marriage. Nor had Joseph spoken publicly about the doctrine involving possible plural marriage.

That was about to change.

Emma had demanded something of Joseph in June 1843. In response, Joseph had packed up Emma and the children. The family traveled about 200 miles northwest to the home of Emma's sister, Elizabeth Hale Wasson. The women Joseph had covenanted with and the burden of Church leadership were left behind in Nauvoo.

We'll never know how long Joseph intended to remain with the Wassons. Sheriff Reynolds of Jackson County, Missouri, and Constable Wilson, of Carthage, Illinois, arrested Joseph. They pistol-whipped Joseph, tearing him away from Emma. The scene was reminiscent of the horror at Far West, when Joseph's family was separated from him at sword-point and he was dragged to prison.

By the beginning of July, Joseph was back in Nauvoo, protected by the strong city charter Dr. Bennett had crafted. Emma's relief was short-lived. She was once again back in Nauvoo, with all the stresses and individuals that had caused her grief the month before. She had made a demand of Joseph, which God had commanded Joseph to grant her. It seems she planned to campaign until her promised relief was granted.

Unfortunately, we do not have Emma’s description of what she’d been promised, or the aftermath. William Clayton would not record his version of the story until decades later. Clayton’s eventual statement was clearly to counter Emma’s sons, who had come to Utah to proselyte among the Utah Saints. The Smith boys insisted their father had never taught or practiced polygamy. ¹

The Revelation is Written

William Clayton, a tithing clerk and practicing polygamist by July 1843, wrote a letter in 1871 documenting the revelation. Joseph had dictated the revelation on plural marriage to him on Wednesday, July 12, 1843. The revelation in question is now Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. ² From the wording of the 1871 letter, it is clear William Clayton was being asked to refute the claims of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS), headed by Joseph’s sons.

Joseph’s sons and other RLDS missionaries denied the revelation on plural marriage described by Clayton could have ever been written during Joseph Smith’s life. Such a revelation, they asserted, should have been recorded by Joseph’s personal secretary, James Whitehead. James Whitehead had aligned himself with the RLDS Church after Joseph’s death. Interestingly, Whitehead had told the Smith brothers in 1864 that their mother, Emma, had given plural wives to Joseph Smith on several occasions that Whitehead had witnessed.

William Clayton would write in 1871:

“I did write the revelation on celestial marriage given through the Prophet Joseph Smith, on the 12th of July, 1843.

“When the revelation was written there was no one present except the Prophet Joseph, his brother Hyrum and myself. It was written in the small office upstairs in the rear of the brick store which stood on the banks of the Mississippi river. It took some three hours to write it Joseph dictated sentence by sentence, and I wrote it as he dictated. After the whole was written Joseph requested me to read it slowly and carefully, which I did, and he then pronounced it correct... The original was destroyed by Emma Smith.” ³

Two years later, on February 16, 1874, Clayton would produce a more expansive version of the story, sworn to before John T. Caine, notary public, in Salt Lake City:

“On the morning of the 12th of July, 1843, Joseph and Hyrum Smith came into the office in the upper story of the ‘brick store,’ on the bank of the Mississippi River. They were talking on the subject of plural marriage. Hyrum said to Joseph, ‘If you will write the revelation on celestial marriage, I will take and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its truth, and you will hereafter have peace.’

“Joseph smiled and remarked, ‘You do not know Emma as well as I do.’

“Hyrum repeated his opinion and further remarked, ‘The doctrine is so plain, I can convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth, purity or heavenly origin,’ or words to their effect.

“Joseph then said, ‘Well, I will write the revelation and we will see.’ He then requested me to get paper and prepare to write. Hyrum very urgently requested Joseph to write the revelation by means of the Urim and Thummim, but Joseph, in reply, said he did not need to, for he knew the revelation perfectly from beginning to end.

“Joseph and Hyrum then sat down and Joseph commenced to dictate the revelation on celestial marriage, and I wrote it, sentence by sentence, as he dictated. After the whole was written, Joseph asked me to read it through, slowly and carefully, which I did, and he pronounced it correct. He then remarked that there was much more that he could write, on the same subject, but what was written was sufficient for the present.

“Hyrum then took the revelation to read to Emma. Joseph remained with me in the office until Hyrum returned. When he came back, Joseph asked him how he had succeeded. Hyrum replied that he had never received a more severe talking to in his life, that Emma was very bitter and full of resentment and anger.

“Joseph quietly remarked, ‘I told you you did not know Emma as well as I did.’ Joseph then put the revelation in his pocket, and they both left the office.”⁴

Joseph and Hyrum Smith were long dead by 1874. Emma Smith would die in April 1879, and William Clayton passed away seven months later. Clayton's statements in the 1870s have been interpreted to mean Emma was jealous of plural wives. Yet the statement supports a reading that Emma was concerned about than the risk to Joseph's life. The contemporary record suggests Emma may have had financial concerns as well.

The records for July 12, 1843, indicate "Hyrum took the revelation and read it to Emma. I directed Clayton to make out deeds of certain lots of land to Emma and the children."⁵ With Joseph marrying multiple young women, who could potentially bear any number of children, Emma would have an understandable concern about the property available to sustain herself and her children.

On July 13th, the journal record says "I was in conversation with Emma most of the day..." On the 14th, the record says "Spent the day at home."⁶

Brigham Young claimed Emma had the original manuscript of the revelation burned. However Bishop Whitney had reportedly made a copy while he had possession of the revelation.

In 1867 Emma reportedly told Elder Jason W. Briggs that she had never seen the purported revelation and had not burned the thing, a testimony also reported by Edmund Briggs.⁷ This could possibly be true and substantially consistent with Brigham's version if Emma had refused to look at the written words and if Joseph had been the one to burn it, at her request.⁸ Unfortunately for Jason Briggs' assertion that the revelation was merely an 1852 artifact created by Brigham Young, there are many other accounts attesting to the existence of the revelation in Nauvoo during the summer of 1843.

It might have been best if all copies of this version of the revelation had been burned. Joseph maintained that he could reproduce the revelation at any time. But a copy had been made of that particular version of the revelation, a version including very specific revelation regarding Emma and the events of summer 1843.⁹

Hyrum Begins to Share the Revelation

Almost immediately after Hyrum was himself introduced to the doctrine of plural marriage at the end of May 1843, it appears he began to officiate in marrying others.¹⁰

Howard Coray tells of an early instance where Hyrum explained the revelation:

“About the 1st of July of [1843], my wife had a peculiar dream and, believing that it had significance, she desired me to accompany her to Brother Hyrum Smith’s for the purpose of getting him to interpret it.

“We went the next Sunday to see him, but having company, he was not at liberty to say much to us; he said, however, if we would come the next Sunday, he would interpret the dream, but wished to see us by ourselves, when there was no other one present.

“Accordingly the next Sunday we went, but found as many at his house as the Sunday previous. He said to us, come again the next Sunday and probably it will be different; but in a day or so he called at our house, and invited us to take a ride with him in his buggy. We accordingly did so.

“When we had gotten far enough out of town to converse safely, without attracting attention or being understood, he commenced rehearsing the revelation on celestial marriage [D&C 132] and carefully went through with the whole of it, then reviewed it, explaining such portions of it as he deemed necessary. This was on the 22nd of July, 1843.

“The dream was in harmony with the revelation and was calculated to prepare her mind for its reception. She never doubted the divinity of it, nor rebelled against it. And while still in the buggy, Brother Hyrum asked my wife if she was willing to be sealed to me. After a moment’s thought, she answered yes. He then asked me if I wished to be sealed. I replied in the affirmative and after telling us that he knew by the spirit of the Lord that it was His will for us to be sealed, he performed the ceremony, then and there.”¹¹

Hyrum and the High Council

On Saturday, August 12, 1843, Hyrum Smith was in a meeting of the Nauvoo Stake High Council when the conversation turned to marriage.

Hyrum, apparently still of the impression that “The doctrine is so plain, I can convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth,” excused himself to obtain the copy of the revelation.

Returning to the High Council, Hyrum proceeded to read the revelation. James Allred, David Fullmer, Thomas Grover, Aaron Johnson, Austin Cowles, and Leonard Soby documented the meeting in letters and affidavits.

Perhaps Hyrum’s own faith in Joseph, supported by the faithfulness of individuals he had interacted with prior to August 12, led him to believe that everyone would be able to overcome the resistance he himself had felt towards the doctrine.

Unfortunately, the men of the High Council were the same men who had investigated the instances of illicit intercourse in May 1842. The women who testified against John C. Bennett and Chauncey Higbee had repeatedly mentioned that Bennett or Higbee or even Joseph’s brother, William, had claimed Joseph taught about illicit intercourse, but that the women had subsequently learned that Joseph taught no such thing.

Now here was Joseph’s respected brother, Hyrum, blithely claiming that Joseph indeed had received a revelation stating a man could have multiple wives.

It is not clear if Hyrum understood at the time how much the written version of the revelation shocked many hearers.

Austin Cowles was one of those in the High Council that day who would leave the Church as a result of Hyrum’s reading of the revelation. The following year, Austin wrote:

“Forasmuch as the public mind hath been much agitated by a course of procedure in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by a number of persons declaring against certain doctrines and practices therein, (among whom I am one,) it is but meet that I should give my reasons, at least in part, as a cause that hath led me to declare myself.

“In the latter part of the summer, 1843, the Patriarch, Hyrum Smith, did in the High Council, of which I was a member, introduce what he said was a revelation given through the Prophet; that the said Hyrum Smith did essay to

read the said revelation in the said Council, that according to his reading there was contained the following doctrines;

“1st, the sealing up of persons to eternal life, against all sins, save that of shedding innocent blood or of consenting thereto;

“2nd, the doctrine of a plurality of wives, or marrying virgins; that ‘David and Solomon had many wives, yet in this they sinned not save in the matter of Uriah.’

“This revelation with other evidence, that the aforesaid heresies were taught and practiced in the Church; determined me to leave the office of first counsellor to the president of the Church at Nauvoo, inasmuch as I dared not to teach or administer such laws.”¹²

Austin’s experience hearing the testimonies of the women who had been seduced by Dr. Bennett and his “Strikers, for we know not what else to call them”¹³ appears to have informed his rejection of the revelation, though he may have been a Striker himself.¹⁴ Austin was perhaps more troubled that “sealed” persons could commit any manner of sin save murder and be assured of eternal life. Yet Austin claimed to believe the new doctrines Joseph had revealed in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Covenants.

Hyrum was apparently unaware of the poor reception the revelation had received in the High Council. He took the revelation to William Law. Upon request, Hyrum left the revelation with William Law to study. William’s wife, Jane Silverthorn [Law], also studied the revelation that night. Like Austin Cowles, William and Jane Silverthorn [Law] were horrified, though their public opposition focused almost solely on plural marriage.

Austin and the Laws would eventually contribute to an opposition newspaper, named the *Nauvoo Expositor*. Even having determined that Joseph’s alleged teachings on plural marriage had to be stopped, those behind the *Nauvoo Expositor* affirmed their belief in the doctrines Joseph had originally taught:

“We all verily believe, and many of us know of a surety, that the religion of the Latter Day Saints, as originally taught by Joseph Smith, which is contained in the Old and New Testaments, Book of Covenants, and Book of Mormon, is verily true; and that the pure principles set forth in those

books, are the immutable and eternal principles of Heaven, and speaks a language which, when spoken in truth and virtue, sinks deep into the heart of every honest man. — Its precepts are invigorating, and in every sense of the word, tend to dignify and ennoble man’s conceptions of God and his attributes [sic]. It speaks a language which is heard amidst the roar of Artillery, as well as in the silence of midnight: it speaks a language understood by the incarcerated spirit, as well as he who is unfettered and free...”¹⁵

In 1866 Brigham Young would say of Hyrum, “although he was just as honest as an Angel, and as full of integrity as the Gods... he had not that ability which Joseph possessed to see and understand men as they were.”¹⁶ The cold reading of the revelation in a hot room to skeptical men was a massive mistake, for which Hyrum would pay with his life.

Joseph’s Secret Campaign

Unlike Hyrum, Joseph taught about the revelation in intimate settings. As Danel Bachman wrote, Joseph introduced the doctrine of plural marriage “primarily through private and personal interviews.”¹⁷

Aroet Hale tells of one gathering, and how Joseph explained the revelation to a group of “regular” saints:

“The Prophet Joseph was visiting at our house on one occasion and spent the evening. My father was a bishop of one of the wards.¹⁸ With the Prophet’s consent, father invited in his counselors and a few of the good old staunch brethren.

“Among the few was Uncle Henry Harriman, one of the first seven presidents of the seventies, and Jonathan H. Holmes, and several others of fathers old stand-by friends. This circumstance took place at my father’s house, Jonathan H. Hale, bishop.¹⁹ This was the first time that our parents had ever heard the Prophet speak on the subject of celestial marriage.

“During the evening, the Prophet spoke to Uncle Henry Harriman. Said he, ‘Henry, your wife Clarisa [sic] is barren; she never will have any children. Upon your shoulders rests great responsibilities. You have a great work to perform in the temple of our God. You are the only Harriman that will ever join this

Church.’ He even told the lineage that he was of and told him that he must take another wife and raise up a family to assist him in his great work, and to honor and revere his name.

“The Prophet also told Aunt Clarisa [sic] that if she would consent to this marriage and not try to hinder Henry, that she should share a portion of the glory that would be derived from this marriage. Uncle Henry Harriman was finally convinced that the command that the Prophet Joseph had given him was right. In a short time, he took a young woman [Eliza Elizabeth Jones] and was sealed by the Prophet.²⁰ He brought her to the valleys. They have raised a family of children. They have done a good work in the St. George temple.”²¹

Brian C. Hales includes many other such accounts in his book, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*. However not all who claimed they “knew” Joseph Smith taught plural marriage should be presumed to accurately reflect Joseph’s teachings. We see this in the case of Orange Wight, teenage son of Apostle Lyman Wight. Orange became aware of “plural marriage” in 1841, discovering that John Higbee²² had two wives.²³ When Orange was almost 80 years old, he would write:

“The next I noticed when in company with the young folks the girls were calling one another spirituals... when at Nauvoo in the winter of 1841 and 1842, I became fully initiated.²⁴

“Now although [I] would not be 20 until 29 November, 1843, I concluded to look about and try to pick up one or more of the young ladies before they were all gone. So I commenced keeping company with Flora Woodworth, daughter of Lucian Woodworth (called the Pagan Prophet).

“I was walking along the street with Flora near the Prophet’s residence when he, Joseph, drove, up in his carriage, stopped and spoke to I and Flora and asked us to get in the carriage and ride with him. He opened the door for us and when we were seated opposite to him he told the driver to drive on. We went to the [Nauvoo] temple lot and many other places during the afternoon and then he drove to the Woodworth house and we got out and went in.

“After we got in the house Sister Woodworth took me in another room and told me that Flora was one of Joseph’s wives.

I was aware or believed that Eliza R. Snow and the two Partridge girls were his wives but was not informed about Flora. But now Sister Woodworth gave me all the information necessary, so I knew Joseph believed and practiced polygamy.”

Orange Wight would go on to marry two cousins of Marietta Carter [Holmes], deceased wife of Jonathan Harriman Holmes. But Orange and his father settled in Texas rather than joining with the “Brighamites.” Orange Wight had not spent decades living in the shadow of the leading apostles. It is possible and even likely that much of what Orange reported as plural marriage, in his 1903 letter to Joseph I. Earl, was actually John C. Bennett’s spiritual wifery.

Further, the conversation Orange had with Sister Woodworth would have informed Joseph that enemies knew about Eliza Snow, the Partridges, and Flora. Within days all four women would leave Joseph’s circle.

Brigham Young Explains the Doctrine

On July 9, 1843, before Joseph had received D&C 132, Brigham Young reportedly had a discussion with a professor from a Southern university. The professor asked if Joseph Smith had more wives than one (as Dr. Bennett had widely claimed). Brigham admitted that he had.²⁵ To explain, Brigham asked if the gentleman believed the Bible and the resurrection:

“I then asked him if he believed parents and children, husbands and wives would recognize each other in the resurrection. He said he did.

“Also if parents and children would have the same filial feeling towards each other which they have here; and he said he believed they would, and that their affections would be more acute that they were in this life.

“I then said, ‘We see in this life, that amongst Christians, ministers and all classes of men, a man will marry a wife, and have children by her; she dies, and he marries another, and then another, until men have had as many as six wives, and each of them bear children. This is considered all right by the Christian world, inasmuch as a man has but one at a time.

“ ‘Now, in the resurrection this man and all his wives and children are raised from the dead; what will be done with those women and children, and who will they belong to? and if the man is to have but one, which one in the lot shall he have?’

“The professor replied, he never thought of the question in this light before, and said he did not believe those women and children would belong to any but those they belonged to in this life.

“ ‘Very well,’ said I, ‘you consider that to be a pure, holy place in the presence of God, angels, and celestial beings, would the Lord permit a thing to exist in heaven that is evil?’

“ ‘And if it is right for a man to have several wives and children in heaven at the same time, is it not an inconsistent doctrine that a man should have several wives and children by those wives at the same time, here in this life, as was the case with Abraham and many of the old Prophets? Or is it any more sinful to have several wives at a time than at different times?’

“[The university professor answered,] ‘I cannot see that it would be any more inconsistent to have more wives in this life than in the next, or to have five wives at one time than at five different times. I feel to acknowledge it is a correct principle and a Bible doctrine, and I cannot see anything inconsistent in it.’ ”²⁶

This account of Brigham’s early explanation of plural marriage helps us see that he originally saw plural marriage as part of an over-arching marriage construct. Other than the argument that a man should have several wives at the same time in this life, Brigham’s explanation was largely consistent with modern Mormon ideas about sealing spouses together.

For those of us attempting to understand the revelation now, it is easy to get caught up in the belief that plural marriage was about established men gathering up their pick of the available teenage girls. But if we look at these early explanations from Joseph and Hyrum and Brigham, plural marriage was explained as part of a complete Celestial marriage system. Celestial marriage allowed all members of a family to be joined together. As seen with Henry Harriman, the links establish were not only between a man and his wife, but to the future progeny of them both. Beyond the examples included here, many more exist, most of which are contained in Chapter 29 of Brian C. Hales’ book, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*.

We also see Brigham making the case that plural wives should bear children, a point on which he and Emma would disagree after Joseph's death. But Joseph was not dead yet. Carthage was still a year in his future. The actions and decisions during this last year of Joseph's life would have a profound impact on the way Joseph's followers continued Joseph's legacy.

Revealing the Revelation – Notes

From the time Emma was sealed to Joseph, the doctrine of eternal sealing, and the associated doctrine of plural marriage, began to spread among the saints. Joseph and others had previously confined their teachings to secretive meetings with individuals. This new era involved larger meetings, where the underlying reasons for the doctrine were explained.

It appears Emma was primarily concerned about the threat plural marriage posed to Joseph's life, and secondarily concerned about temporal security for herself and her children.

Emma would have happily terminated all open discussion of plural marriage. She clearly believed plural wives had no business producing children. But the teachings of Joseph and Brigham make it clear that plural wives should be permitted to have children.

Finally, Hyrum's action in sharing the revelation with the Nauvoo High Council led to disaffection of several prominent leaders. Hyrum's decision to share the written form of the revelation with William and Jane Law similarly led to rejection and disbelief. Hyrum's unwarranted trust in high-ranking Mormon men would lead to his death.

Dr. Bennett had created an environment where many in the United States were informed of possible sexual shenanigans in Joseph's Nauvoo. When the revelation fell on unbelieving ears, all of Dr. Bennett's past accusations were revived in the minds of those horrified by the prospect of plural marriage. The *Nauvoo Expositor* would be the fuse to the powder keg of suspicion Bennett had created. When Joseph and others made the decision in the summer of 1844 to destroy the press used to print the *Nauvoo Expositor*, the fuse was lit.

20 – Those Virtuous and Pure

In D&C 132, The Lord told Emma:

And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God. ¹

The Lord then went on to say:

Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him; for he shall do the sacrifice which I require at his hands for his transgressions, saith the Lord your God...

And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.

...for they are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified. ²

Who were these virgins, virtuous and pure?

Nine of Joseph’s covenant wives would marry an apostle within a year after Joseph’s death. These were Emily and Eliza Partridge, Sarah and Maria Lawrence, Lucy Walker, Olive Grey Frost, Sarah Whitney, Eliza Snow, and Nancy Winchester.^{3,4}

These plural wives may have been the ten virtuous and pure Joseph was given by the revelation. But there are several additional women who appear to fit this description, women Emma is in some cases known to have given to Joseph.

Below is a partial list of those who were single and apparently virgins when they covenanted with Joseph to be plural wives. The names of those who remarried an apostle within a year of Joseph’s death are highlighted:

Louisa Beaman (26) born Feb 7, 1815 sealed Apr 5, 1841	Eliza Partridge (22) born Apr 20, 1821 sealed Mar 4, May 11 ‘43	Emily Partridge (19) born Feb 28, 1824 sealed Mar 4, May 11 ‘43
Malissa Lott (19) born Jan 9, 1824 sealed Sep 20, 1843	Sarah Lawrence (17) born May 13, 1826 sealed May 1843?	Maria Lawrence (19) born Dec 18, 1823 sealed May 1843?
Hannah Ells (~30) born 1813 (England) sealed 1843?	Lucy Walker (17) born Apr 30, 1826 sealed May 1, 1843	Flora Woodworth (16) born Nov 14, 1826 sealed 1843
Olive Grey Frost (~27) born Jul 24, 1816 sealed 1843	Sarah Whitney (17) born Mar 22, 1825 sealed Jul 27, 1842	Helen Mar Kimball (14) born Aug 22, 1828 sealed May 1843
Rhoda Richards (58) born Aug 8, 1784 sealed Jun 12, 1843	Desdemona Fullmer (31) born Oct 6, 1809 sealed Apr 1841	Almera Johnson (30) born Oct 12, 1812 sealed Apr 1843

The following three may have been virgins when they were sealed to Joseph Smith, however there is some reason to suspect they might not have been.

Eliza Snow (38) born Jan 21, 1804 sealed June 29, 1842	Elvira Annie Cowles (29) born Nov 23, 1813 sealed Jun 1, 1843	Nancy Winchester (14?) born Aug 10, 1828 sealing undated
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Many of these women are under-documented. Several died before the major efforts attempting to document the nature of Nauvoo plural marriage. These were Joseph F. Smith's collection of affidavits circa 1869, Andrew Jensen's parallel research effort stretching into the 1880s, and the Temple Lot trial and associated testimonies of the 1890s. Todd Compton did his best to explore the life of each wife in his book, *In Sacred Loneliness*.

It is interesting that the revelation mentions “those who are not pure, and have said they were pure,” saying these would be destroyed. Illicit sex had permeated Nauvoo society the previous year. Francis Higbee was one involved in illicit intercourse who was alleged to have suffered from venereal disease. Emma and Joseph might not have believed in contagion, but an omniscient God may well have been concerned. Ensuring the purity of the women Emma was commanded to accept as Joseph's wives was potentially a matter of life and death, though Emma and Joseph were likely only concerned about spiritual corruption.

As most of these women eventually married a high Church leader, it may be that the apostles initially selected those nine in greatest need, with the intention of reaching out to Emma Hale [Smith]. There is no reason to suspect any of these women were not considered virtuous and pure.

The Hagers

We know of five women who Emma had embraced, only to evict them from her hearth. Of these, Eliza Snow was invited to return in 1844.

The first of these was **Fanny Alger** sometime in 1836. Many of Fanny's friends and family considered her relationship with Joseph to be a marriage. Joseph himself tried to thread the discord caused by Oliver Cowdery's belief that the matter was a mere dalliance by responding that intimacies Joseph engaged in the context of a marriage should hypothetically be permitted.

Fanny ended up leaving the Smith household after Emma reportedly found Fanny alone with Joseph in the barn. The only source for what they were doing in the barn is rumor and Emma's anger. But as we will see, Emma's anger could flare for reasons other than sexuality. There is scant reason to believe Fanny actually had a child by Joseph.⁵

According to the revelation on plural marriage as it was eventually recorded, the children of a woman who has been sealed in the New and Everlasting Covenant are born into that covenant. Fanny, Joseph, and/or

Emma may have determined that Fanny need not remain in the Smith household for the marriage to serve God.

Any assertions about Fanny and Emma and Joseph are tentative at best. But the pattern set with Fanny becomes important because of how it manifests for the women Emma casts out in 1843.

Eliza and Emily Partridge had seemed like they would be good wives. In fact, these were the two Emma specifically selected to be Joseph's plural wives as a symbol of Emma's acceptance of the New and Everlasting Covenant. We have evidence of the Partridge girls forwarding the plural marriage agenda, serving as witnesses for plural sealings and trying to get the daughter of Vinson Knight to accept an interview with Joseph. ⁶ However Eliza and Emily married Joseph believing Joseph was lying to Emma. Perhaps they thought this meant Emma could be safely disregarded.

Emily documents that Emma would not permit Joseph to be alone with the Partridges shortly after the ceremony where Emma gave the Partridge women to Joseph. This is ironic since Emily said she'd spent the better part of the prior year avoiding being alone with Joseph. Emma reportedly told the Partridges to marry other men, as Fanny had done.

In August 1843, Emma demanded that Joseph send the Partridges away from Nauvoo. Joseph did not send them away from Nauvoo, but he did send them away from the Smith household. There is no indication from Emily or Eliza that Joseph continued any sort of physical relationship with them after this departure from the Smith household.

Flora Woodworth had also become one of Joseph's wives. As a token of the marriage, Joseph gave Flora a gold watch. When Emma learned of the valuable gift, she demanded Flora return the watch. This conflict may have had more to do with the distribution of wealth associated with Joseph having plural wives, rather than possible sexual activity between Joseph and Flora. Flora almost immediately married Carlos Gove, a member of the Nauvoo Legion but not affiliated with the Mormon Church. Flora's flight from Joseph's side to marry a non-Mormon is strikingly similar to Fanny Alger's departure from the Smith household. Given the report that Emma tried to get the Partridge girls to marry non-Mormons, Flora's marriage to a non-Mormon may have been suggested by Emma.

Eliza Snow would also leave Nauvoo in the fall of 1843. On August 21, 1843, Emma discovered two letters from Eliza in Joseph's clothes. Something about the letters caused Emma to become "vexed and angry."

Eliza Snow would move away from Nauvoo for a period of time, but returned to Nauvoo on April 14, 1844.⁷ This would be shortly after Joseph had learned that hundreds of men had sworn an oath to kill him. It may be there was no longer be a need to avoid the appearance of a relationship, as the worst had already occurred.

Jealousy or Fear?

It is presumed that Emma evicted the Partridges and Eliza out of jealousy. This fits nicely with the prevalent hypothesis that Emma didn't know what was going on. In this view, Joseph was bravely or cravenly going behind Emma's back to acquire and bed plural wives. In this view, the Partridges and Eliza just happened to be ones Emma discovered.

But Emma had known explicitly about the Partridges. If the reported staircase incident has any validity, Emma had known about Eliza and Joseph for many months. And what of the many other women we have reason to suspect Emma acknowledged as Joseph's wives?

Fear may have been the reason for the departure of the Partridges, Flora, and Eliza Snow from the Smith household. According to Orange Wight's account late in life, Wight had been "fully initiated" into the illicit sexual activities taught by Bennett and the Higbees at some point during the winter of 1841/42, when he was a teenager.

By 1843 Orange was back in town, concerned with securing a wife for himself before they were all snapped up. In this vein he courted Flora Woodworth. When Flora's mother revealed Flora was not available, Orange replied that he had known or suspected that the Partridges and Eliza Snow were Joseph's wives, but he had not known about Flora.

In the summer of 1843 the four women Orange Wight knew of as Joseph's wives would leave the Smith circle: Eliza Snow, Flora Woodworth, Emily Partridge, and Eliza Partridge. It could be that their presence proximate to Joseph, in light of Orange Wight's comment, was too great a risk. Orange Wight's manner of describing his knowledge seemed innocuous to him, and has seemed unremarkable to prior researchers. But Orange didn't realize he was part of the Striker community, and prior researchers have ignored the underground of illicit intercourse.

In the wake of the Orange Wight incident, Joseph's journal for October 5, 1843 states, "Joseph forbids [teaching plurality of wives], and the practice

thereof—No man shall have but one wife.”⁸ Some have read this as a global rejection of plural marriage, hoping to prove that Joseph never taught a plurality of wives. However the data is overwhelming that Joseph did teach Celestial marriage and a plurality of wives. It appears the October 1843 journal entry reflected a tactical retreat from plural marriage in light of some perceived threat, likely due in part to Orange Wight’s comments.

Two weeks later, once the Partridges, Flora, and Eliza Snow had departed. William Clayton would note that Emma was now “quite friendly and kind.”

Clayton’s plural wife, Margaret Moon, was five months pregnant in mid-October. He was one of only two or three⁹ men “practicing” conjugal plural marriage. Thus it would seem that he would have been under censure. Yet Joseph passes on Emma’s advice “that I should keep M[argaret] at home and it was also his council. Says he [would advise me to] just keep her at home and brook it and if they raise trouble about it and bring you before me I will give you an awful scourging and probably cut you off from the church and then I will baptize you and set you ahead as good as ever.”¹⁰

Multiplying Talents: Joseph’s Plural Wives and Female Power

Most who learn of Joseph’s many plural wives see only an opportunity for Joseph to enjoy lots of sex. They do not know the history of Mormon women in the 1800s and the power these women would come to wield.

Joseph’s plural wives Eliza Snow [Smith Young] and Zina Diantha Huntington [Jacobs Smith Young] would preside over Relief Society through 1901. At the time Relief Society was a separate entity that reported directly to the Prophet. The youth ministry (Primary) and young women’s ministry (then the Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association) were administered by the Relief Society. Leaders of the Relief Society collaborated with leaders like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in the national fight for female rights.

In 1842 Joseph confirmed that it was right for women to perform blessings of healing, a practice Brigham Young also upheld. The wives of Joseph Smith performed blessings and spoke in tongues, meeting together regularly amongst themselves, particularly on the anniversaries of Joseph’s birth and death.

With the deaths of Joseph’s wives, there was no longer a living testimony of the power Joseph himself had granted to women. A vast congregation of

women remembered such gifts. But this coincided with a time when large cultural changes were taking place as a result of the end of plural marriage. Having ended plural marriage, the Church focused on priesthood power as the marquee rationale for why the Church was the sole organization authorized to effect the salvation of all mankind. Priesthood authority became seen as a thing vested in men, rather than the power of God available to both men and women in a glorious eternal partnership, where men happened to be assigned ecclesiastical duties.¹¹

One form of blessing uniquely performed by women was washing and anointing expectant mothers, a ceremonial blessing in some ways similar to ordinances performed by Levitical priests in the temple built by Moses.¹² This one form of blessing apparently could not be turned over to men who held the Melchizedek priesthood.¹³ The practice of washing and anointing expectant mothers continued amongst those women aware of the practice until the end of World War II.

At the start of World War II, the Relief Society President was Amy Brown [Lyman]. In late 1943, President Lyman's husband was discovered committing adultery and was excommunicated. President Lyman requested that she be released from service. She was replaced by Belle Smith [Spafford].

Soon after taking charge of Relief Society, President Spafford inquired about the practice of washing and anointing expectant mothers. Joseph Fielding Smith wrote President Spafford and agreed the practice was permitted. However, he reaffirmed the preference that the sick request blessings from priesthood brethren.

Belle Smith [Spafford] had been a mature teenager during the social transformation that occurred in conjunction with World War I. As a young woman, Belle had never wanted to be a part of Relief Society. She thought the group was old and outdated, a collection of fusty quilting circles.¹⁴ Ending the practice of females performing the washing and anointing blessing was one of many modernizations President Spafford implemented in her decades in charge of the Relief Society.

By ending the practice of washing and anointing pregnant women, President Spafford terminated the last vestige of female-administered blessings. President Spafford presided over a new age where women in the Church were asked to contribute to the overall mission of the Church rather than focused solely on initiatives of the Relief Society. It was an era where confidence in modern medicine had largely undercut the belief that a ceremonial blessing could materially change the fate of mother and child.

Sexuality in Joseph's Marriages?

For those who have studied the history, the clear fruit of Joseph's plural marriages was the establishment of a cadre of women of power. These women nurtured the rest of the Church, particularly the women. Joseph's wives established patterns of service and female community that still resonate today.

DNA research suggests Joseph did not produce any actual children with his dozens of plural wives. In fact, Emma tried very hard to convince people that plural wives were not supposed to have children.

Emma told a pregnant Lucy Meserve (secretly a plural wife of George A. Smith) that plural wives “were only sealed for eternity, they were not to live with [their husbands] and have children...” When Lucy said she did not know what Emma was talking about, Emma replied, “You do know. It's sticking out too plain.” It appears this conversation must have occurred just before Lucy left Nauvoo on February 9, 1846,¹⁵ as Lucy likely conceived her first child in November or December 1845.

Upset by the discussion with Emma, Lucy confided in her husband, George A. Smith. George comforted Lucy, telling of a time he had come upon Joseph washing his hands, likely no earlier than February 1842. Apparently to explain why he had blood on his hands, Joseph told his cousin “one of his wives had just been confined, and Emma was midwife and he was assisting her.”¹⁶

Lucy took comfort in George Albert Smith's story. The clear implication was that Joseph had engendered a child with a plural wife. The sting of Emma's criticism was softened by believing Emma had knowingly assisted in the delivery of Joseph's unidentified child.

Though it is possible Emma was helping deliver a child who has not been documented, the list of Joseph's wives believed to have given birth after covenanting with Joseph is concise and includes only one otherwise unmarried woman. In several cases the mother lived far from Nauvoo, making it unlikely that George Albert Smith could have casually happened upon Joseph immediately after assisting Emma in delivering the child of the plural wife.

**Possible “Plural Wife” Whose Birth Was Assisted By
Emma and Joseph Smith, as Reported by George Albert Smith**

Mother	Child	Discussion (unlikely cases in grey type)	
Presendia Huntington	John Hiram Buell (7/13/43) ☉	John conceived and born 60 miles from Nauvoo. Unlikely Joseph was involved at conception or birth. Legal husband was not Mormon.	☉
Zina Huntington	Zebulon Williams Jacobs (1/2/42)	Zebulon proven to not be Joseph’s child by genetic testing. Reported scenario unlikely in early January 1842. Legal husband faithful Mormon.	☉
Mary Rollins Lightner	George Algernon Lightner (3/22/42) ☉ Florentine Mattheas Lightner (?43) ☉	Lightners lived in Pontoosuc, Illinois, 17 miles upriver of Nauvoo. Reported scenario unlikely. Legal husband was not Mormon.	☉ ☉
Eliza Snow	miscarriage (?42) ☉	Possible miscarriage in Nov 1842 matches reported scenario. Father a “vile wretch”	✓
Nancy Marinda Johnson	Orson Washington Hyde (11/9/43) ☉	Child conceived before reported May 1843 covenant between Nancy and Joseph. Reported scenario possible but doesn’t make sense. Legal husband was a Mormon apostle.	?
Sylvia Sessions	Josephine Rosetta Lyon (2/8/44)	Joseph’s paternity disproved based on autosomal DNA testing. Reported scenario possible. Legal husband was excommunicated 1842 – 1846.	?

☉ - Died without producing children

In each case the child in question was not likely engendered by Joseph Smith. In the case of the wives whose husbands were faithful Mormons, the child in question was conceived before the woman covenanted with Joseph Smith. It is not clear why Emma and Joseph would be secretly assisting at the delivery of a child whose mother had a legal husband, though Windsor Lyon’s excommunication possibly impacted his living situation with Sylvia Sessions [Lyon].

Notably, all the women who both had covenanted with Joseph before the time of conception and gave birth to a child before Joseph’s death were married to men who were not Mormons at the time.¹⁷

During the Temple Lot trial and in conversation with missionaries from the RLDS Church, the women who had been Joseph’s plural wives tried to explain that the conditions had not been right, that they had been nervous.

Given that modern science has proven that even the anxiety associated with being raped does not inhibit conception, it seems unlikely that the “nervous” explanation is credible.¹⁸

We have a lack of the fruit we would expect had sex been the activity. Though largely forgotten, we have a rich history of amazing spiritual works that were the fruit particularly of those women who had been Joseph’s plural wives. These wives then taught the rest of the female Mormon community. As no children can be proved to have been engendered by Joseph with his plural wives, it is reasonable to suggest that Joseph was teaching these women rather than having sex with them during the times we know of him spending time alone with them.

The Last Straw?

The almost frenetic collection of marriages Joseph contracted as a result of the investigation into Bennett’s illicit sex was followed by a collection of marriages contracted with women suspected of having been hurt by Bennett or the investigation. A last flurry of marriages were associated with the introduction of plural marriage to an inner circle of faithful.

By the end of 1843, the requirement for Emma to grant Joseph ten virgins had been more than filled, even discounting the ladies Emma evicted from her home.

In November 1843, Joseph and Brigham were conversing with Brigham’s sister, Fanny, an older widow. In response to the discussion about the need for Celestial marriage, Fanny said:

“Now, don’t talk to me; when I get into the celestial kingdom, if I ever get there, I shall request the privilege of being a ministering angel; that is the labor I wish to perform. I don’t want any companion in that world; and if the Lord will make me a ministering angel, it is all I want.”

Joseph replied, “Sister, you talk very foolishly, you do not know what you will want.” Fanny agreed to be sealed to Joseph, with Brigham Young officiating.¹⁹ Shortly thereafter, Joseph reportedly became violently ill after eating dinner. Joseph suggested Emma had poisoned his food, possibly influenced by a dream Desdemona Fullmer had of Emma poisoning her. Emma vehemently denied she’d done any such thing.

Some have suggested this episode ended Joseph's career of marrying plural wives.²⁰ Yet Ruth Vose Sayers was likely sealed to Joseph Smith in February 1844,²¹ and there are other women identified as Joseph's wives²² who may have similarly been sealed to him in the last months of his life. It seems there might have been a fourth wave of ceremonies, where Joseph stood as Celestial husband purely so a woman could receive the blessings of accepting the New and Everlasting Covenant. This was obviously the nature of his covenant with Fanny Young. In the case of Ruth Vose Sayers, her unbelieving husband was willing for such a ceremony to occur, to make Rose happy.²³

Though Joseph was married at least ceremonially to dozens of women, there was one more woman I wish Joseph had married. It is heartbreaking to see how close she came to becoming part of Joseph's incredibly complex family, and the pattern of misunderstandings that prevented her from being sealed to Joseph decades later.

Those Virtuous and Pure – Notes

Emma had been commanded to receive those virgins "virtuous and pure" the Lord had given to Joseph. Later in the revelation, it is mentioned that Joseph would not sin if he had ten virgins given to him under the law. In the year after Joseph's death, nine of the many women who had covenanted with Joseph were taken on as plural wives by the surviving apostles.

It is presumed that Emma rejected this commandment, sending the Partridges and Eliza Snow away from Joseph. However evaluation of the details of fall 1843 suggests fear, rather than jealousy, drove Emma's actions. Teenager Orange Wight had made comments suggesting the network of Strikers was still in place and more extensive than Emma and Joseph had known.

Despite the large number of women covenanting with Joseph, there appear to have been no pregnancies caused by Joseph, other than the pregnancies of Emma Hale [Smith]. However we do see that the women who had covenanted with Joseph would subsequently fill prominent leadership roles, subordinate only to the later prophets of the Church.

It is proposed Joseph's 1843 covenant with Fanny Young was his last plural marriage. But Joseph may have subsequently married other women.

21 – Daughter of Promise

In the 1820s a little free Black girl was taken into the Connecticut household of Joseph and Dorinda Fitch, ¹ to be a companion to their daughter, Caroline. This little Black girl was Jane Manning, whose father had died.

In early 1841, when Caroline was fourteen, ² Jane joined the Presbyterian Church:

“...yet I did not feel satisfied. It seemed to me there was something more that I was looking for. I had belonged to the [Presbyterian] Church about eighteen months when an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, [who] was traveling through our country, preached there. The pastor of the Presbyterian Church forbade me going to hear them as he had heard I had expressed a desire to hear them; nevertheless I went on a Sunday and was fully convinced that it was the true gospel he presented and I must embrace it.

“The following Sunday I was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” ³

After Jane’s baptism, she shared the gospel with her family. Many were baptized, including Jane’s mother, Eliza, and siblings Isaac Lewis, Peter, Sarah [Stebbins] and Angeline. The spouses of her brother Peter and her

sister Sarah were also baptized. In the fall of 1843 the LDS converts in the extended Manning family decided to travel to Nauvoo.

“We started from Wilton, Connecticut, and traveled by canal to Buffalo, New York. We were to go to Columbus, Ohio before our fares were to be collected, but they insisted on having the money at Buffalo and would not take us farther. So we left the boat and started on foot to travel a distance of over eight hundred miles.

“We walked until our shoes were worn out, and our feet became sore and cracked open and bled until you could see the whole print of our feet with blood on the ground. We stopped and united in prayer to the Lord; we asked God the Eternal Father to heal our feet. Our prayers were answered and our feet were healed forthwith.

“When we arrived at Peoria, Illinois, the authorities threatened to put us in jail to get our free papers. We didn’t know at first what he meant, for we had never been slaves, but he concluded to let us go. So we traveled on until we came to a river, and as there was no bridge, we walked right into the stream. When we got to the middle, the water was up to our necks but we got safely across. Then it became so dark we could hardly see our hands before us, but we could see a light in the distance, so we went toward it. We found it was an old Log Cabin. Here we spent the night. The next day we walked for a considerable distance, and stayed that night in a forest out in the open air.

“The frost fell on us so heavy, it was like a light fall of snow. We arose early and started on our way walking through that frost with our bare feet, until the sun rose and melted it away. But we went on our way rejoicing, singing hymns, and thanking God for his infinite goodness and mercy to us—in blessing us as he had, protecting us from all harm, answering our prayers, and healing our feet.

“In course of time, we arrived at La Harpe, Illinois—about thirty miles from Nauvoo. At La Harpe, we came to a place where there was a very sick child. We administered to it, and the child was healed. I found after [that] the elders had before this given it up, as they did not think it could live.

“We had now arrived to our destined haven of rest: the beautiful Nauvoo! Here we went through all kinds of hardship, trial and rebuff, but we at last got to Brother Orson Spencer’s. He directed us to the

Prophet Joseph Smith’s mansion. When we found it, Sister Emma was standing in the door, and she kindly said, ‘Come in, come in!’ ”⁴

Jane Welcomed into the Smith Household

Joseph and Emma welcomed the Manning party into the Mansion House in November 1843. ⁵ The first order of business was to find room for the weary travelers. Jane says Joseph asked some “white sisters that was present” to share their room with the six Black women and three Black men in the party. ⁶ These sisters were likely Sarah and Maria Lawrence.

Next, Joseph sat the party down, introduced them to Emma and Dr. Bernhisel, then asked them to tell of their travels. When Jane was done telling their story, Brother Joseph slapped Dr. Bernhisel on the knee and said, “What do you think of that, Dr.? Isn’t that faith?”

The Dr. said, “Well I rather think it is. If it had have been me, I fear I should have backed out and returned to my home!”

Jane and her family stayed in the Mansion House for a week, by which time all but Jane had secured work and homes. The folks of Nauvoo may have hesitated to take Jane in because she was an unwed mother. ⁷ Jane’s plight was also dire as her luggage had been lost during the trip. She wrote:

“On the morning that my folks all left to go to work, I looked at myself—clothed in the only two pieces I possessed—[and] I sat down and wept.

“Brother Joseph came into the room as usual, and said, ‘Good morning. Why—not crying, [are you]?’

“ ‘Yes sir. The folks have all gone and got themselves homes and I have got none.’

“He said, ‘Yes you have. You have a home right here, if you want it. You mustn’t cry; we dry up all tears here.’

“I said, ‘I have lost my trunk and all my clothes.’

“He asked how I had lost them. I told him I put them in care of Charles Wesley Wandell ⁸ and paid him for them and he has lost them.

“Brother Joseph said, ‘Don’t cry. You shall have your trunk and clothes again.’ Brother Joseph went out and brought Sister Emma in

and said, ‘Sister Emma, here is a girl that says she has no home. Haven’t you a home for her?’

“ ‘Why yes, if she wants one.’

“He said, ‘She does.’ And then he left us.

“Sister Emma said, ‘What can you do?’

“I said, ‘I can wash, iron, cook, and do housework.’ ‘Well,’ she said, ‘when you are rested, you may do the washing, ⁹ if you would just as soon do that.’

“I said, ‘I am not tired.’

“ ‘Well,’ she said, ‘you may commence your work in the morning.’” ¹⁰

Jane’s duties eventually expanded to include cooking. Sarah Holmes had been about five years old and a constant companion of the Smith children when Jane joined the Smith household. Sarah’s record recalled the happy evenings when Emma would be about in the city with Eliza Snow on Relief Society business. Elvira Cowles [Holmes] would be at the Mansion House with the children, telling them stories. And the children would sneak cookies from the Black cook.

In 1897 at the Jubilee celebration of Brigham Young’s arrival in Utah, Sarah Holmes [Weaver] reunited with Jane. Sarah’s account describes Jane looking at her, now a great-grandmother, and saying, “Are you the little girl who used to steal my cookies!” ¹¹

Jane and the Covenant

At some point the Lawrence sisters took Jane with them on a visit to the Partridge sisters, who had moved out of the Mansion House a few weeks before Jane’s arrival. Jane recounts:

“Brother Joseph’s four wives, Emily Partridge, Eliza Partridge, Maria and Sarah Lawrence, and myself, were sitting discussing Mormonism and Sarah said, ‘What would you think if a man had more wives than one?’

“I said, ‘That is all right!’

“Maria said, ‘Well, we are all four Brother Joseph’s wives;’

“I jumped up and clapped my hands and said, ‘That’s good.’

“Sarah said, ‘She is all right; she believes it all now.’”¹²

Jane also writes in her autobiography about taking clothes down in the basement to wash and finding Joseph’s ceremonial robes. “I looked at them and wondered—[as] I had never seen any before—and I pondered over them and thought about them so earnestly that the spirit made manifest to me that they pertained to the new name that is given the saints that the world knows not of.”

By the time Jane joined the Smith Household, the written revelation had indicated that Emma was to be the one who determined which women were presented to Joseph as plural wives. We do not have any records from the women who covenanted with Joseph after July 1843 indicating that Emma approached the woman. The case of Fanny Young indicates Joseph didn’t always wait for Emma. However in other cases there is silence, rather than an active denial of Emma’s possible role, assigned by revelation.

In the account of Jane, we see a shadow of what Emma’s actions might have been for Joseph’s wives such as Malissa Lott. However Emma, for some reason, did not ask Jane to be one of Joseph’s wives. Jane wrote:

“Sister Emma asked me one day if I would like to be adopted to them as their child. I did not answer her. She said, ‘I will wait awhile and let you consider it.’ She waited two weeks before she asked me again. When she did, I told her, ‘No Ma’am,’ because I did not understand or know what it meant. They were always good and kind to me but I did not know my own mind; I did not comprehend.”¹³

Jane may have been willing to become Joseph’s plural wife, based on her reported discussion with the Partridge and Lawrence sisters. But Jane had her own parents: Eliza and the departed Isaac. She could only have been adopted to Joseph and Emma by displacing her own parents.

Emma’s offer to adopt Jane appears to be the first time a sealing between a parent figure and a child was offered. This was an ordinance that Joseph had felt was too sacred to perform outside a temple.

For Emma, sealing Jane to Joseph and herself as a daughter may have been less daunting than offering Jane to Joseph as a wife. If Joseph risked

death by marrying plural wives, what would Emma have thought the danger would be if he were known to be married to a Black woman?

Another factor in Emma's thinking may have been the fact that Jane's eight-year-old son, Sylvester, had been conceived as a result of rape.¹⁴ Emma and Joseph likely did not believe in contagion and thus would not have been concerned about venereal disease or infection. Yet there still might have been a question regarding whether Jane should be considered pure.

On the other hand, others with whom Joseph entered into covenant may have previously been raped, as reported in the case of Eliza Snow. Therefore, it is not likely that Emma offered adoption rather than marriage primarily due to the attack Jane had suffered.

Lost Opportunity

With enough time, the matter might have been reopened. Jane might have had a chance to reconsider the offer of being sealed to Joseph, whether as daughter or as wife.

But there was no more time.

Soon after Emma's offer that Jane be sealed to Joseph, the *Nauvoo Expositor* appeared, was destroyed, and martial law was put in place. Jane reports that the Mansion House was "broken up," with the previous inhabitants sent to other homes for protection.

Jane left the Smith household and moved in with her mother. As the threat of occupation by hostile forces increased, Jane suggested that she and her single sister, Angeline, leave town. Mobs had inflicted terrible violence on White Mormon women in the past. Jane and Angeline may well have feared the violence they might be subjected to would be worse. They took refuge in Burlington,¹⁵ nearly 30 miles northeast of Nauvoo in Iowa Territory, a free territory due to the Missouri compromise of 1820. Born free, the sisters had no papers that would prove they were not escaped slaves.

Jane was gone from Nauvoo for three weeks. When she returned, Joseph was dead. She wrote:

"When he was killed, I liked to a died myself."¹⁶

After Joseph's death Jane joined the household of Brigham Young. It was here that Jane met and married Isaac James, a Black man who had joined the Church in 1839.

As the years progressed, we see Jane socializing with the circle of women who had been Joseph's wives. In particular, we have a story recounting a time Jane brought Eliza Partridge [Smith Lyman] two pounds of desperately needed flour when Eliza's husband, Amasa Lyman, was gone on a mission.

The Priesthood Ban and Jane's Request

Unrelated to Jane, a scandal arose involving one William McCary. William was a mulatto who claimed Indian heritage. After his baptism, he was welcomed into the community of saints in Winters Quarters. McCary was initially seen as a good brother, with fine musical talent and charisma. He wed Lucy Stanton, daughter of a former High Councilor and President of the Quincy, Illinois Stake.

In time it was discovered that William was engaging in a number of unorthodox activities. William claimed he had the power of prophesy and transfiguration, in particular claiming he had the power to appear as various biblical and Book of Mormon figures. He had also been "sealing" himself to women, an unauthorized ceremony unlike any plural marriage sanctioned by the Church. According to Nelson Whipple, president of the branch in Springville, Iowa, McCary would "seal" women by engaging in sexual intercourse with each three times in one day while his wife, Lucy, watched.¹⁷

On April 25, 1847, Parley P. Pratt chastised the Saints in Winter Quarters for following "a new thing" led by a "black man who has got the blood of Ham in him which lineage [sic] was cursed as regards the priesthood." Those studying the history of the long-term policy in the LDS Church denying Black men access to priesthood between 1852 and 1978 note this sermon as the first recorded connection between race and priesthood by one of the top leaders of the Church.

This experience involving marriage between a Black individual and White individual(s) did not go well. Lacking the reality of a familial bond between Joseph Smith and Jane Manning, the idea emerged that the blood of Ham, believed to be the father of Africans,¹⁸ was a cursed lineage. Aside from the behavior of William McCary, many Christians believed "mixing the races" was a terrible idea. This is seen in the revulsion expressed by local Mormon

leader, William Appleby, when he found that Black convert, Enoch Lewis, had married White convert, Mary Matilda Webster.¹⁹

Despite Brigham's association with Jane, he seemed content to consider Blacks as servants, rather than equals. As various converts from the South began to arrive in Utah, Brigham had to determine how to deal with their ownership of Black individuals. Slavery had been made legal in Utah as a result of the Compromise of 1850, which brought California into the Union as a free state. Utah territory had the option of deciding the issue by "popular sovereignty."²⁰ Whenever slaves were donated to the Church, Brigham would free them. However Brigham did not force slave owners to emancipate their slaves.²¹ Brigham gave an address to the Joint Session of the Legislature in Salt Lake City, on Thursday, February 5, 1852. In this address, Brigham gave his opinion that if Blacks were to be granted the priesthood, the priesthood would be taken from the Church.²²

At the same time Brigham and the other leaders of the Church were constructing barriers to intermarriage between Blacks and Whites, the doctrines of plural marriage and proxy sealings were made public.

Enoch Lewis' father, Walker Lewis, knew that the window for obtaining temple blessings was closing quickly. Walker Lewis was one of only two Black men who had been ordained to the priesthood who were still deemed righteous. In an attempt to establish the fact of temple sealing ordinances involving a Black man and a Black woman, Walker approached Jane in 1852 and asked if she would be sealed to him as an eternal wife. Jane refused, likely because she was the mortal wife of Isaac James.²³

Yet Jane did decide she wished to be sealed to Joseph and Emma Smith as a daughter. We don't know what Jane might have said on the matter to Brigham Young, in whose household she had lived after Joseph's death. Perhaps Brigham suggested that Emma was still alive, making it improper to perform the requested sealing without Emma's participation. Or perhaps Jane knew better than to broach the subject with the man she knew so well.

After Emma's death, Jane wrote to the new President of the Church, John Taylor, requesting the sealing be performed. By this time the policy denying Blacks access to the temple and its blessings was firmly in place. Undaunted, Jane continued her requests. Finally Joseph F. Smith proposed an alternative.

Emma was pariah, having refused to gather to Utah, and similarly having failed to teach her sons about their father's legacy with respect to plural marriage. Further, Joseph F. Smith had a long-held animosity towards Emma

for her cavalier treatment of his father's remains. He recalled the trauma as a young child going to visit his father's secret burial place, only to find a rough hole, with the exposed skull of his uncle. ²⁴ Joseph F. Smith's mother, who had found the four men reburying Joseph and Hyrum per Emma's instructions, had similarly felt Emma's actions were high handed and uncalled for. ²⁵

It is doubtful Joseph F. Smith would have wanted to seal anyone to Emma. It is unlikely he would allow the faithful Jane Manning to be eternally adopted to a woman he despised, even had the priesthood ban not been in place. Further, sealings of "adoption" had fallen out of favor. In the General Conference of April 1894, President Wilford Woodruff announced the end of adoption sealings where the persons were not legally related to one another.

However Joseph F. Smith did remember Jane as a servant in the Smith home, the happy days when Jane would bake cookies and wash the laundry for the Smiths. He may have been one of the children partaking of the fresh-baked cookies Sarah Holmes would steal from Jane's kitchen.

And so Joseph F. Smith proposed that he could arrange for Jane to be sealed to Joseph and Emma as their servant. This would allow Jane to have unquestioned access to the people she had loved in life. The ceremony was performed in May 1894, weeks after President Wilford Woodruff ended "adoption" sealings. As Jane herself was not permitted to enter the temple, proxies stood in for Jane, Joseph, and Emma during the ceremony.

To modern sensibilities, excluding Jane from the sealing ordinance and sealing Jane as an eternal servant is so incredibly offensive we cannot imagine what Joseph F. Smith could have been thinking.

But Joseph F. Smith did not live in our day. His respect for Jane Manning [James] was evident in his funeral address for Jane while he was the President of the Church, a respect and regard echoed in the Deseret News article that stated:

"few persons were more noted for faith and faithfulness [than] was Jane Manning James, and so of the humble of the earth she numbered friends and acquaintances by the hundreds. Many persons will regret to learn that the kind and generous soul has passed from the earth." ²⁶

Had Jane been Wife

What if Emma had asked Jane to become Joseph's plural wife, rather than Joseph's daughter? Jane already knew plural marriage was a possibility, based on the conversation with the Partridge and Lawrence sisters about their status as Joseph's wives. There is no reason to think she would have hesitated if asked to be Joseph's wife.

With Jane a member of the quorum of Joseph's ceremonial wives, she would have almost certainly been sealed to Joseph in the temple. An important Church leader would have stood proxy, and Brigham Young would have been involved in some manner.

When William McCary engaged in inappropriate sexual relations with White women, there would have already been the example of Joseph having married a Black woman, a woman who might well have ended up married to Brigham Young. William McCary's actions would still have been considered worthy of excommunication, but it would not have come down to a matter of mixing races as the objection.

Later, a Brigham Young who knew Jane had been married to Joseph Smith would have been hard-pressed to put in place the policies he did regarding Blacks. Brigham would still have needed to put certain policies in place in response to the Compromise of 1850, which failed to outlaw slavery in Utah territory. But the fact of a covenant between Joseph Smith and Jane would have set an example that would have prohibited those policies from being mistaken for doctrine.

In science, the butterfly effect is “the sensitive dependency on initial conditions in which a small change at one place in a deterministic nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state.”

In the convoluted history of Blacks and the Mormon Church, the interaction between Emma and Jane is one such butterfly. By a small change, either Jane accepting the offer of being made a daughter, or Emma offering Jane the privilege of becoming Joseph's covenant wife, a pattern of undeniable inclusion of a Black individual in the highest ordinances would have been set during Joseph's life.

To this alternate possible history where Jane was a plural wife, I could wish for one other alteration to history, one where John C. Bennett never fell from grace. Had the illicit intercourse scandal of 1841-1842 not occurred, Joseph Smith may have enjoyed a natural life span, with decades to explore

the implications of the New and Everlasting Covenant and explain his covenants with Fanny Alger and Louisa Beaman. Without Bennett's perfidy, there is no reason to be certain Joseph would have married any of his other plural wives.

Perhaps easier to imagine is a John C. Bennett who, though fallen and evicted, returned to openly deny all his false charges. This penitent Bennett could have had a place with the Saints in the west, able to powerfully deny all the lies he had previously spread.

If Joseph had lived longer, Bennett might have been able to return. As with Jane, the record contains tantalizing hints of an inclusive, redemptive past Mormonism might have had.

Daughter of Promise – Notes

Jane Manning was a free Black woman who lived in the Smith household during the winter of 1843/1844. Emma asked Jane to be sealed to Joseph and herself as an adopted daughter. Not understanding what this might mean, Jane refused.

Later Jane did desire to be sealed to Joseph and Emma. But events had occurred that led to a ban on allowing Blacks the blessing of temple sealing. Jane was eventually allowed to be sealed to the Smiths as a servant.

22 – The Prodigal Returns

In June 1842 Dr. John C. Bennett left Nauvoo, thoroughly angry and vengeful. He had been fired as mayor, evicted from the Church, outed as a sexual predator, and thwarted at every turn by Joseph Smith and the newly-formed Relief Society.

Few realize that Bennett returned and met with Joseph in December 1843. Even though neither man recorded the details of their meeting, the record suggests Bennett was willing to repent.

The Hasidic Parable

Bennett had told terrible tales about Joseph. However individuals have long spoken ill of good leaders. An ancient Hasidic parable explores this.

Once there was a man who spoke evil of the rabbi. The rabbi had done no wrong, but the man's tales brought him fame.

Much later, the man realized the harm he had done. Weighed down with guilt for his great crime, the man returned to the rabbi to make amends. He openly admitted his wrong and offered generous payment.

The rabbi looked at the money on the table with sorrow. The rabbi picked up a pillow, stuffed to bursting with fine goose down. Curious, the man followed the rabbi outside.

Without a word, the rabbi took the pillow in his hands and ripped the ticking apart. The man cried out as the valuable feathers scattered in the wind.

The rabbi somberly turned to the man. “My friend, please bring me the feathers, and we will repair the pillow.” The rabbi hugged the man, and the man saw tears glistening on the rabbi’s cheeks. The rabbi slowly walked back to his cottage.

The man turned to his task. He quickly gathered several handfuls of the white down, and began to hope. But as the sun fell low in the sky, clouds gathered on the horizon. Rain began to fall. The man hurried back to the rabbi’s cottage with the precious few feathers he’d been able to recover.

Wordlessly, the man offered the feathers to the rabbi. Carefully, the rabbi placed the gathered feathers into the ticking. The rabbi stitched the ticking back together, and the man saw that the repaired pillow was a flat parody of its original form.

The rabbi gave the man the thin, lumpy pillow. “Now, go, and attempt to gather back all the words you have spread.”¹

The History of the Saints

Weeks after leaving Nauvoo, Bennett produced a book titled *History of the Saints*. The book largely consisted of testimonials Bennett had collected during his career, combined with a variety of fantastic tales of evil allegedly perpetrated by “the Saints.”

Bennett asked Stephen A. Douglas to help Bennett formalize the divorce from his estranged first wife, Mary Barker [Bennett].² This may have been intended to keep inconvenient truths from disrupting Bennett’s campaign against Smith.

For nearly a year after Bennett left Nauvoo, he traveled America. In each location, Bennett booked halls so people could pay to hear tales of the

supposed evils of Joseph Smith and his band of Mormons. Bennett used these events to sell his book.

After a year Bennett’s ability to attract crowds was waning. Bennett’s talk about the Mormons was old news. It also appears communities no longer wished their citizens to be exposed to tales of lurid sexuality. When Bennett attempted to speak against Mormonism at the stage barns in Fort Des Moines in Iowa, men with firearms persuaded Bennett to cease sales of his anti-Mormon book, *History of the Saints*.³

Hinkle, the Traitor

George M. Hinkle had been an early member of the Mormon Church. But in 1838 Missouri, Hinkle had turned against Joseph. Knowing the leaders of the Missouri militia intended violence, Hinkle betrayed Joseph into their hands.⁴ Hinkle proceeded to confiscate Joseph Smith’s property, confident that General Samuel D. Lucas would ensure Joseph was killed.

In the fall of 1843, Bennett decided to visit the Hinklites. Perhaps Bennett saw in Hinkle some kind of kindred spirit. Hinkle might have been able to reveal history that could revivify Bennett’s own claims of injustice.

We do not know exactly what transpired during Bennett’s visit with Hinkle. But it is while Bennett was with the Hinklites in Moscow, Iowa, that his writings for the first time reflect a correct, if still hostile, understanding of Joseph’s practice of plural marriage. On October 28, 1843, Bennett wrote about the:

“Doctrine of Marrying for Eternity... They must marry in time so as to begin to form that sincere attachment and unsophisticated affection which it is so necessary to consummate in eternity in order to [realize] the peace of Heaven... a man may select as many wives for eternity as his devotion to the interests of the Mormon Church will entitle him—and this is to be determined by revelation through His Holiness, the Prophet!”^{5,6}

There had been rumors circulating in Kirtland about Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger. So it is possible Hinkle was the sole source of Bennett’s new information about the ‘Doctrine of Marrying for Eternity.’ However it seems more likely that someone from Nauvoo was in contact with Bennett, someone who had read the revelation about Celestial Marriage.⁷

Return to Nauvoo

For whatever reason, Bennett left Hinkle and traveled back to Nauvoo, arriving in early December, 1843. Bennett would never speak of the visit, nor did anyone else describe what happened. The only historical trace is an entry in Joseph Smith's Daybook from the Red Brick Store in Nauvoo. For some reason, Bennett handed Joseph \$117. At \$0.10 to \$0.25 per head at Bennett's lectures, this represented the net profit from over a thousand lecture tickets. In the Daybook, Joseph quietly attributed it as back-payment of rent for 39 weeks' lodging at the homestead.⁸ Of note, it is only after the visit of Dr. Bennett in 1843 that we see Joseph try to teach Jane Law about the New and Everlasting Covenant and accuse William Law of adultery.⁹

It could be Bennett had returned in an attempt to make amends, as seen in the Hasidic parable. If so, Bennett's actions following this December 1843 visit could be read as an attempt to repent and set the record straight.

Grasping for Feathers

Following Bennett's visit with Joseph in Nauvoo, Bennett traveled to Boston. As he had done at the beginning of his tours defaming Joseph, Bennett booked Marlboro Chapel for the purpose of delivering a lecture.

When Bennett took the stage, he began by describing his own sins. Bennett's confession of wrong was then followed by a complaint that Mormons themselves were similarly guilty, and that Bennett should not have been the one at whom the first stone was cast.

Bennett was not lying here. The other Mormons who may have been considered similarly guilty included Francis and Chauncey Higbee, Justus Morse, Orange Wight, John Higbee, Bishop Knight, and William Smith.

Before Bennett could say more, however, the crowd turned on him.¹⁰ They pelted him with rotten eggs, rocks, and vegetables. Bennett retreated and fled the building. The "vast assemblage" chased him through the streets of Boston, running over several Boston police officers in the process.¹¹ Bennett could easily have been killed that night, had the police not intervened.

The Boston attack ended Bennett's attempts to set the record straight with the general public.

Return to the Saints

Days before Joseph's death, an unidentified "Major-General in the Illinois militia" wrote to Bennett on June 19, 1844. The letter pleaded "we need you very much in your military capacity throughout the campaign... things will come to a crisis in about eight to ten days..."¹² Bennett apparently did not respond to the letter in time to affect the outcome. In eight days, Joseph Smith was dead. With Joseph's death, the only man who might have vouched for Bennett's possible intended repentance was gone.

Joseph had once upon a time blessed Bennett, promising rewards and great glory had he accepted counsel and stood by Joseph:

Again, let my servant John C. Bennett help you in your labor in sending my word to the kings and people of the earth, and stand by you, even you my servant Joseph Smith, in the hour of affliction; and his reward shall not fail if he receive counsel.

And for his love he shall be great, for he shall be mine if he do this, saith the Lord. I have seen the work which he hath done, which I accept if he continue, and will crown him with blessings and great glory.¹³

But the moment was lost. Bennett had absented himself. During that absence, the mantle was conferred on another. Bennett would return to Nauvoo, but Brigham Young wanted nothing to do with him.

The Prodigal Returns – Notes

After leaving Nauvoo, Dr. Bennett wrote a book, *History of the Saints*. Bennett proceeded to canvas the United States, selling his book and regaling all willing to pay with lurid tales of seduction.

In October 1843, Bennett wrote of the "Doctrine of Marrying for Eternity." The article was still hostile, but marks the first time Bennett conveys an accurate understanding of Joseph Smith's doctrine. In December, Dr. Bennett returned to Nauvoo and gave Joseph \$117, the profits from over a thousand tickets to Bennett's lectures.

In the spring, Bennett attempted a lecture in Boston, confessing his sins. Before he could proceed, he was mobbed, ending a possible attempt to take back his lies. When Bennett returned to Nauvoo, Joseph was dead.

23 – Conferring the Mantle

In July 1843, Joseph Smith recorded a revelation regarding plural marriage. Critics would focus on the mention of ten virgins, criticism of Emma, and impunity for wrongs short of murder. But the revelation forecasts Joseph's impending death:

Behold, I [Jesus Christ] have seen your sacrifices, and will forgive all your sins; I have seen your sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you. Go, therefore, and I make a way for your escape, as I accepted the offering of Abraham of his son Isaac.

Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him; for he shall do the sacrifice which I require at his hands for his transgressions, saith the Lord your God. ¹

What had been Joseph's transgressions? What was this escape Joseph was offered? And what was the sacrifice God required at Joseph's hands?

Many hold that Joseph transgressed in marrying so many women, with the assumption that the marriages involved sexual coercion. However that narrative is inconsistent with the language of the revelation (D&C 132).

An alternate view is that Joseph transgressed by putting his wife above God. His escape could have been establishing Celestial marriage without being forced to act in a way that would break Emma's heart. But the sacrifice required would be his death.

Beginning of Troubles

In the fall of 1843, Hyrum Smith lent William and Jane Law the revelation on Celestial marriage. Hyrum likely also shared the good news that William and Jane could be sealed to one another for all eternity.²

William Law met with Joseph. Years later, Law claimed Joseph confirmed “he had several wives sealed to him, and that they afforded him a great deal of pleasure... [but] Emma had annoyed him very much about it.”³ However the events of 1844 make anything William Law might subsequently say about Joseph suspect.

It appears William and Jane initially wished to be sealed. But Joseph apparently became informed William was not worthy, that Law had been guilty of adultery.⁴ Joseph may have learned of this through revelation, but the timing suggests the possibility his informant could have been Dr. Bennett. In any case, William had been an aide-de-camp in the Nauvoo Legion along with known participants in illicit intercourse, such as Chauncey Higbee and Jacob Backenstos.⁵

Joseph told the Laws he would not perform the requested sealing. When Jane Law asked why she could not be sealed to her husband, Joseph refused to tell her it was because of her husband’s adultery.

Later Jane came to Joseph. Embracing him, she said, “if you wont seal me to my husband Seal myself unto you.” Joseph gently pushed her away and refused to perform the sealing.⁶ This account is similar to the request of Ruth Vose Sayers to be sealed to Joseph, when her husband refused to believe in marriage in eternity. Unlike the husband of Ruth Vose Sayers, however, William Law would not have willingly allowed his wife to become Joseph’s eternal bride.

William Law wrote in his diary months later, characterizing the encounter between Joseph and Jane as attempted adultery. He wrote Joseph had “lately endeavored to seduce my wife and ha[s] found her a virtuous woman.”⁷

By the end of December, William Law failed to attend a meeting of the anointed quorum. This group of men and women had received the ordinance of the endowment. A week later, Law became the first endowed individual to be dropped from the anointed quorum.⁸

The next day, January 8, 1844, Joseph informed William Law that he was no longer a member of the anointed quorum and was no longer a member of the First Presidency.

Shocked, Law argued that the procedure used to drop him as a member of the First Presidency was incorrect. Reconciliations were attempted over the following months. At Law's request, his case was tried a second time in April 1844. This time Law was excommunicated on grounds of apostasy.

I Now Roll Off the Care of the Kingdom of God

During the tension leading up to William Law's excommunication on grounds of apostasy, it became clear that only one organization could be trusted to follow Joseph's lead. The Quorum of the Twelve had endured the troubles surrounding John C. Bennett's teachings of illicit intercourse together. The leading apostles had fully accepted the doctrine of plural marriage. Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball had been intimately involved in the investigation that uncovered John C. Bennett's guilt. They had been actively involved in spreading a correct understanding of Celestial marriage and plural marriage.

During the late winter of 1844, Joseph turned to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. As Wilford Woodruff related:

Joseph "called the Twelve Apostles together in the City of Nauvoo, and spent many days with us in giving us our endowments, and teaching us those glorious principles which God had revealed to him. And upon one occasion he stood upon his feet in our midst for nearly three hours declaring unto us the great and last dispensation which God had set His hand to perform upon the earth in these last days. The room was filled as if with consuming fire; the Prophet was clothed upon with much of the power of God, and his face shone and was transparently clear, and he closed that speech, never-to-be-forgotten in time or in eternity, with the following language:

"Brethren, I have had great sorrow of heart for fear that I might be taken from the earth with the keys of the Kingdom of God upon me, without sealing them upon the heads of other men. God has sealed upon my head all the keys of the Kingdom of God necessary for organizing and building up of the Church, Zion, and Kingdom of God upon the earth, and to prepare the Saints for the coming of the Son of Man. Now, brethren, I thank God I have lived to see the day

that I have been enabled to give you your endowments, and I have now sealed upon your heads all the powers of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods and Apostleship, with all the keys and powers thereof, which God has sealed upon me; and I now roll off all the labor, burden and care of this Church and Kingdom of God upon your shoulders, and I now command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to round up your shoulders, and bear off this Church and Kingdom of God before heaven and earth, and before God, angels and men; and if you don't do it you will be damned.' ”⁹

It appears Joseph organized the Council of the Kingdom within a month of April 18, 1844, the day William Law was excommunicated. When Joseph had tried to create a written constitution for the Council, he said the Lord responded, “Ye are my Constitution and I am your God and ye are my spokesmen, therefore from henceforth keep my commandments.”

John Taylor said: “It is expected of us that [we] can act right—that our interests [are] bound up in the K[ingdom] of God. That we should consider we are not acting for ourselves, but we are the Spokesmen of God selected for that purpose in the interest of God and to bless and exalt all humanity. We acknowledge him as our God and all men who enter this body must acknowledge him here.”

Orson Pratt said, “In the Church we take the Law of God and his Priesthood as the Constitution of his Church—here in this Council we have a living constitution not a written one—which we must conform to.”¹⁰

The Conspiracy of Nauvoo

After being dropped from the Anointed Quorum in January 1844, William Law reached out to those of his former colleagues in positions of Church leadership and members of the Nauvoo Legion. William's message was clear: Joseph had to be removed to preserve the purity of the Church.

The key conspirators were William and Wilson Law, Austin Cowles, Francis and Chauncey Higbee, Robert and Charles Foster, John A. Hicks¹¹ and his brother, and two merchants named Finche and Rollinson.¹² The conspirators sought to enlist others who were also disaffected to join them in the conspiracy. A series of meetings would be held to commit the conspirators to action.

Austin Cowles approached 19-year-old Dennison Lott Harris,¹³ nephew of Martin Harris. Cowles asked Dennison to invite his father, Emer Harris, to the initial meeting as well. The Harris family, like Austin, had been staunch believers. But Martin Harris had been excommunicated in 1837.

Soon Dennison discovered that his good friend, 20-year-old Robert Scott, had also been invited to the meeting. Robert Scott, born to Irish parents, had known the Irish William Law since his infancy in Ontario, Canada. Robert Scott had often stayed in the home of William Law.

Emer reported the matter to Joseph, who counseled the older man to avoid the meeting. But Joseph asked that the young men attend the meeting, pay strict attention to what was said, make no commitments, and report the entire matter back to him.

In the first meeting, the conspirators spent a lot of time organizing themselves, denouncing Joseph as a fallen prophet and discussing how Joseph could be overthrown.

By the end of the second meeting, the conspirators began to say that Joseph would have to be killed. When Joseph heard this, he said he hoped they would be spared because of their youth. Nevertheless, he advised:

“Don’t flinch. If you have to die, die like men, you will be martyrs to the cause, and your crowns can be no greater.”

Those who attended the third meeting were required to swear a solemn oath to destroy Joseph Smith. Robert and Dennison reportedly refused, saying they were unwilling to participate in killing Joseph.

They were told, “If you do not take that oath, we will cut your throats.” The young men were forced to the cellar and again told to take the oath or die. They refused.

Then someone cried out, “Hold on!” Someone suggested the boys’ families might know enough to make accusations. Robert and Dennison were threatened with certain death if they ever revealed what had transpired in the meetings or who had participated. With that, they were escorted away from the Law home.

Approaching the river, the young men saw Joseph Smith in a skiff waiting with Robert’s brother, John.¹⁴ After running down river to a secluded

location, Robert and Dennison made their report. At least 200 men had signed the oath.

Joseph spoke, denying the charge he was a false prophet or had gotten revelations from the devil. He affirmed that he was under commandment to accept and introduce and practice Celestial and plural marriage. If he did not do so, Joseph insisted, he and the Mormon people would be damned and cut off. He acknowledged the threat he would be killed. But if the choice was between death and damnation, Joseph would choose death.¹⁵

Before letting the young men go, Joseph counseled them not to speak of this to anyone for 20 years or more.¹⁶ Decades later Dennison told the tale to Brigham Young, who said the story clarified matters he had never understood before. In 1884 Dennison related the story to Horace Cummings. Horace wrote the story down, conferring with John Taylor. Like Brigham before him, John Taylor both confirmed aspects of the story and admitted the tale answered questions he'd had about those final days of Joseph's life in Nauvoo.

Conferring the Mantle – Notes

Joseph had feared he might be taken from the earth without sealing the keys of the Kingdom of God upon the heads of other men. But by the spring of 1844, he had successfully rolled off the future leadership of the kingdom onto the proven shoulders of Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. If he died, the Church would not die with him.

In censuring William Law, Joseph had created an implacable enemy, willing to kill. Law and his followers claimed their anger was based on polygamy. Ironically, many of the leading conspirators were the same men who had engaged in illicit intercourse under John C. Bennett's tutelage.

Hundreds of men now stood at the ready, to rise up and murder the man they had recently revered as a prophet of God.

24 – Carthage, 1844

Joseph was killed at Carthage, Illinois, on June 27, 1844.

I originally expected the discussion of Joseph's death at Carthage would be a relatively boring recitation of the facts we all know. Then I read the original accounts from John Taylor, ¹ William Daniels, ² and William R. Hamilton. ³

We have not had enough data before to realize what happened at Carthage, because we have not known the identities of the vast number of individuals involved in illicit intercourse under the influence of John C. Bennett. It appears these ostensibly believing members of the Church were primarily responsible for the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum. Inasmuch as we have presumed the main killers of the Smith brothers were regular citizens of Missouri and Illinois, we may have an apology to make.

The Conspiracy of Nauvoo

Dennison Harris told of the conspiracy headed by William Law and Austin Cowles. When I posted this in June 2014 as part of the Faithful Joseph series, Jonathan Stapley pointed me to a 2010 paper in *BYU Studies* by Alexander L. Baugh and Richard N. Hozapfel. ⁴ This more recent discussion of the Council of Fifty deprecated the sources available prior to 2010. The paper by Baugh and Hozapfel contain two items of particular interest.

First, in the meeting Joseph talked about his expectation that he might be killed. Second, Wilford Woodruff's journal suggested this meeting had occurred on March 26. This indicated the conspirators' Sunday night meetings likely occurred on March 17th, 24th, and 31st.⁵

With this insight into the dates of key events, it is possible to reconstruct the deadly dance between Joseph and the conspirators. The following table gives a refined timeline for Joseph's interactions with the conspirators in the months leading up to his death.

Date	The Conspirators	Joseph Smith
Jan-Mar 1844	Recruited Dissidents	–
Feb-Mar 1844	Recruited Dennison Harris and Robert Scott	Asked Dennison and Robert to be spies
11 March	–	Established the Council of Fifty
17 March	Organized at home of William Law	Received report of sedition
24 March	Decided Joseph and Hyrum must be killed	Received report of intended murder. Conveyed news of the danger and identities of key conspirators at the temple ⁶
26 March	–	Conferred keys on Apostles. Said they might be called upon to die, and if so they should die like men.
31 March	Held meeting where conspirators were required to swear an oath to kill Joseph	Advised Dennison and Robert that they may be killed, that if they were called to die, they should die as men. But Joseph thought their youth would protect them. The young men identified Law, Cowles, and the Higbee brothers among the leading conspirators.
18 April 1844	Ordered press?	Excommunicated William Law
26 April 1844	Augustine Spencer physically assaulted his brother over the estate of their deceased father. Co-conspirators Charles Foster and Chauncey Higbee came to the Mayor's office to defend Augustine, drew guns and cried "they would be G– D–d if they would not shoot the Mayor."	Joseph fined Augustine Spencer ⁷ for assault. He fined Charles and Robert Foster, and Chauncey Higbee for resisting authorities and for their threats.

Date	The Conspirators	Joseph Smith
1 May 1844	Francis Higbee sued Joseph Smith for the sum of Five Thousand dollars, intending to renew the accusation that Joseph attempted to seduce Nancy Rigdon.	–
15 May 1844	–	Published information about 1841 sexual sins of John C. Bennett and Francis Higbee (Francis had been Nancy Rigdon’s suitor).
May 1844	Augustine Spencer circulated a letter in the east accusing Joseph of drinking, swearing, carousing, dancing all night, &tc., and keeping six or seven young females as wives.	–
18 May 1844	–	Excommunicated Austin Cowles
29 May 1844	–	Published information about sexual sins of John C. Bennett and Chauncey Higbee circa 1842
7 June 1844	Published the <i>Nauvoo Expositor</i> , with affidavits by Law and Cowles, accusing Joseph of seducing hundreds of women in Nauvoo	–
10 June 1844	–	Ordered destruction of the <i>Nauvoo Expositor</i> press
12 June 1844	Swore out warrant for Joseph’s arrest. Thomas Sharp published his editorial stating “We have no time for comment, every man will make his own. LET IT BE MADE WITH POWDER AND BALL!!!”	–
18 June 1844	–	Imposed martial law in Nauvoo
22 June 1844	Governor Ford demanded Joseph and Hyrum go to Carthage to answer charges against them	Attempted to flee to the west with Hyrum. Was called back to Nauvoo by his friends.
24 June 1844	Augustine Spencer accused Joseph of treason, a capital crime that required Joseph be held in prison ⁸	–

Joseph’s human intelligence into the dealings of the conspirators may have ended when Dennison and Robert left the third meeting of the conspirators, barely escaping with their lives when they refused to swear the required oath.

Yet the conspirators had not actually explained how they intended to kill Joseph. It is doubtful they planned anything so crude as shooting Joseph in the streets of Nauvoo in cold blood. Intelligent opposition forces develop a multi-pronged strategy where there are multiple avenues for “success.”

Analysis of Failed Attempts to Kill Joseph

If the conspirators wished to kill Joseph, it seems they would have wanted to examine the “failures” of prior attempts to make Joseph a dead man.

- 1) The first time people seriously tried to kill Joseph was the night of 24 March 1832. A group of men attacked the Johnson farm where Joseph was staying. It was dark, letting the men think they were anonymous. Ultimately they were unable to castrate and kill Joseph, though they left him partially scalped.⁹ The identities of the would-be killers were not as hidden as they had believed. Each carried a tin lamp, hand-pierced with a unique pattern. Joseph would have known exactly who had attacked him. Joseph declined to turn against his attackers.
- 2) In fall 1838 Joseph Smith was betrayed into the hands of the Missouri military forces. George Hinkle, William W. Phelps and the others who betrayed Joseph were fully aware that General Lucas intended to have Joseph killed. Had General Doniphan not refused to obey an illegal order, Joseph would have died in November 1838.
- 3) In August 1840 a Missouri mob attacked Nauvoo, apparently intending to harm Joseph and his family. But the small band of men was confused by a torrential summer rain. Instead of attacking the Smiths, they attacked and killed Marietta Holmes. Though historians have been unaware of this attack, Bennett and presumably his circle of friends would have been very aware that this event happened.
- 4) On June 5, 1841, Joseph was arrested at Bear Creek, Illinois. He was able to obtain a writ of *habeas corpus* and escape custody.

- 5) In summer/fall 1842 Joseph went into hiding to avoid extradition to Missouri, charged with involvement in the attempted murder of Missouri Governor Boggs. It was known that if Joseph was taken to Missouri he would be killed.
- 6) In June 1843 Joseph was arrested at the home of his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Wasson. After a week of legal wrangling, Joseph was able to get back to Nauvoo. Once in Nauvoo, Joseph was able to win his freedom due to the strong City Charter Bennett had negotiated.

If the 1844 conspirators wished to kill Joseph and still retain power, they had to make it appear someone else had killed him. They had to make sure Joseph could not find legal protection. They had to account for confusion and weather. And they had to make it appear that Joseph was at fault.

The Strategy

The plot against Joseph Smith seems to have included multiple strategies. Between these various measures, the conspirators could have expected they would be able to achieve their goal:

- Revoke the city charter and/or weaken Joseph's access to *habeus corpus* writs that would allow him to be heard before the friendly Nauvoo courts. This was accomplished by charging Joseph with treason.
- Create an opposition press to foment public anger and force Joseph's hand. This was served by creating the *Nauvoo Expositor* and having Thomas Sharp resume his position as editor of the *Warsaw Signal*.
- Create an alternative Church to accept the disaffected. Suggestively, James Strang joined the LDS Church during the time when conspirators were being sought. Most of the known conspirators aligned themselves with Strang after Joseph's death.
- Create a smear campaign against Joseph to weaken loyalty. This was accomplished using letters and legal attacks.

- Ensure the 200 sworn conspirators were ready to exploit any opportunity to kill Joseph. This is hinted at in the armed threat at Joseph’s office on April 26, 1844.
- Ensure high profile members of the conspiracy had alibis for the “mob” attack.
- Inform key non-Mormon enemies that there was significant discontent among the Mormons.
- Provide a back-up so Joseph and Hyrum could be shot and killed if the mob somehow failed to kill the brothers.
- Allow a window of several days for the attack, to ensure bad weather could be avoided. This is seen in the June 19, 1844, letter to Dr. Bennett claiming “things will come to a crisis in about eight to ten days...”

Carthage, seen as the outcome of Conspiracy

After March 31, the leaders of the conspiracy revealed their plan to those who had sworn to support the killing of Joseph Smith and keep the identities of the murderers a secret.

The *Nauvoo Expositor* was no doubt a major part of their ploy. If suppressed, the conspirators could claim Joseph was suppressing their freedom of speech. If not suppressed, the conspirators would continue to print their version of history where Joseph was guilty of heinous sin. In addition to the *Nauvoo Expositor*, which would take time to stand up, a campaign of opposition and letters was started.

When Joseph, as mayor, eventually attempted to suppress the sedition, the conspirators could use this “oppression” to further their case that Joseph had to be killed.

As the controversy elevated, the officials in Illinois would insist that Joseph respond to the court in Carthage. The lawyers ¹⁰ had determined that a charge of treason, even if completely without basis, would ensure the Smiths would be held in jail without bond. With Joseph away from the safety of Nauvoo, they could implement their plan for an anonymous mob to

attack, a mob that could be blamed on discontented folks from Missouri or Illinois.

The conspirators wanted Joseph and Hyrum dead. But it appears they were not eager to incur collateral damage. The day the Smiths were killed, all the men who departed the jail were denied re-entry. Although John Taylor was seriously wounded in the heat of battle, there was no attempt to “finish him off” or go after Willard Richards once Hyrum and Joseph were dead. The supposed Missouri and Illinois malcontents would not have naturally operated with such surgical precision.¹¹

On the day of the killings, a detachment of the Warsaw militia supposedly marched north to Nauvoo. About six miles from Warsaw, near the railroad shanties, Colonel Levi Williams released three companies of men. He and Thomas Sharp then proceeded to “beat up” for volunteers to go to Carthage. According to some witnesses, the purpose for which the volunteers were allegedly to go to Carthage was left unstated, though Jacob Davis went home rather than participate, and reportedly commented, “[I’ll] be damned if [I] would go kill a man that was confined in prison.”¹² According to William Daniels, approximately 30 of the group that marched back towards Carthage were from the Warsaw militia.

Based on the testimony of William Hamilton, he first sighted a group of 125 men approaching Carthage from two miles away, a bit north of due west, the only direction from which they could have approached without being seen much earlier.

Some of the men had blackened their faces, to prevent recognition. Given the discrepancy between Daniel’s estimate that 30 men from the Warsaw militia returned to Carthage and Hamilton’s estimate that 125 men were in the final mob, as many as 100 members of the lethal mob may have been Nauvoo conspirators.

John Taylor mentioned that the shot that killed Hyrum came from outside, through the window. The mob was too close to the jail to achieve the near-horizontal angle of the killing bullet. John decided the killing shot must have come from the Carthage Greys. But John did not consider the possibility of a shooter not with the Carthage Greys who may have been specifically positioned to fire into the room. Francis Higbee, a leader of the conspiracy, was allegedly seen in Carthage that day, though he left shortly after the killings.¹³ Undercover U.S. Marshall John C. Elliott would later boast of killing the Smith brothers, having borrowed a specialized rifle capable of the deed.

John Taylor went to the window, where he was shot. Falling on the sill, he felt himself sliding out of the window. Somehow he was propelled back into the room. John presumed the damage to his watch was made by a bullet that pushed him back into the room. But that damage is inconsistent with the complete destruction an actual ball would have caused. Further, no single ball could have imparted enough force to reverse the slide of a stunned man collapsed in the window. It appears the watch's internal gears damaged the watch face and casing when John initially fell to the window sill. ¹⁴

The “force” that moved John from the window and a deadly fall was almost certainly Joseph Smith. Joseph, aware of the conspiracy as none of his colleagues were, would likely have seen Hyrum downed by a bullet from outside. Though likely knowing someone was shooting from outside, Joseph put himself in the line of fire to keep John from falling out of the window and in attempt to escape the upstairs room. It seems Joseph hoped the mob would spare the others if Joseph were no longer with them.

Once Joseph was at the window, he was shot by both the mob that had burst through the abandoned door on the west side of the room and by at least one person shooting from outside the jail, positioned to the east.

Raising his hands in the Masonic cry of distress, Joseph likely intended to cry out “Oh Lord, My God! Is there no help for the widow’s son?” But he only said, “Oh Lord, My God!” before he could no longer speak. Joseph hung in the window for a few seconds before gravity pulled him out of the window to the ground beneath. The coroner found Joseph had been killed by the ball that had entered Joseph’s right breast, shot from the east. ¹⁵

Joseph and possibly Hyrum were each killed by someone shooting from the east, firing from outside of the jail. Despite the confusion of the moment, it is entirely possible both fatal shots could have been made by John C. Elliott, as he would later claim.

A rifle would have taken roughly 30 seconds to load with a patched ball. Hyrum had been shot in the back just as a volley was being shot through the door. John Taylor had run to the window to escape, but was downed by the next volley shot by the mob, meaning that at least 20 seconds had transpired since Hyrum’s death. Giving Joseph a few seconds to run across the room to John’s side, 30-40 seconds had passed since Hyrum had been shot. Enough time had transpired for the same rifleman who shot Hyrum to reload and aim at Joseph Smith. ¹⁶

Contaminating the Testimony

The Nauvoo conspirators left one last trace of their involvement. One of the important witnesses of the events of June 27th was William Daniels. At the time of the killings, Daniels was not a Mormon. However after Joseph's death, Daniels decided to join the Mormon Church. A few weeks before the trial, a pamphlet was published containing William Daniels' testimony, but with fantastical modifications.

William Daniels had seen a young man approach Joseph's body.¹⁷ In the pamphlet the young man became a craven member of the mob intent on beheading Joseph. Similarly, Daniels only said he saw a bright light pass across Joseph's body. In the pamphlet Daniels had allegedly said a heavenly beam of light encompassed Joseph's body and stunned all who attempted to desecrate the wounded prophet.

Speaking of the difference between the pamphlet (regarding the bright light and the man with the bowie knife) and the version of the story he'd recounted under oath, Daniels said:

I did not write that neither did I authorize it to be written... I told Mr. Littlefield it was not correct.¹⁸

Mr. Littlefield, author of the pamphlet, had interviewed William Daniels multiple times to come up with the story he published. The pamphlet provided valuable information to the defense for the conspirators on trial and more than enough fantastical elements to destroy Daniel's credibility as a witness. Because of the distortions the pamphlet contained compared to Daniels' testimony under oath, the prosecution agreed to throw out William Daniels' testimony entirely.

Lyman O. Littlefield, author of the pamphlet, had been one of Bennett's Strikers. Catherine Laur [Fuller Warren] gave testimony that Lyman O. Littlefield had demanded she yield to him in the winter of 1841/1842. Lyman O. Littlefield is also one of those excommunicated in 1842. Given the large number of Strikers named as members of the Nauvoo conspiracy, it seems likely that Lyman O. Littlefield was also involved in the Nauvoo conspiracy to kill Joseph. If so, the pamphlet with its embellished tale could be seen as a finishing element of the conspiracy to kill Joseph and leave the conspirators blameless in the eyes of the world.

As a body, the apostles chose not to avenge Joseph's death. Instead of obsessing over who might have contributed to Joseph's death, they aggressively moved to continue his work. One of their first priorities was to transform plural marriage into what the revelation had said it was, rather than the celibate series of ceremonies Emma Smith argued it should be.

Carthage, 1844 – Notes

Joseph was killed June 27, 1844. Those who contributed to and possibly effected his death engaged in strategic attacks on Joseph and his teachings from roughly February 1844 until well after Joseph's death.

Many of the leading conspirators were known to have been involved in Bennett's campaign of illicit intercourse in 1841-1842. Despite the conspirators' overt outrage regarding Joseph Smith's alleged sexual excesses, some of them may have wished to return to the sexual freedoms they had enjoyed under Bennett's leadership.

The apostles had been granted the keys of the priesthood, the keys Joseph and they believed would bring to pass the salvation of all mankind. Proxy work on behalf of the dead and sealing families together, even when a man's prior wife had died, were clearly associated with those keys.

Joseph and Hyrum were imprisoned at Carthage based on a charge of treason. The treason charge was never substantiated. But the severity of the alleged offense prevented any legal escape. A mob attacked on the evening of June 27, 1844, shooting from the west into the room holding the prisoners. However the shots that killed Hyrum and Joseph came from the east. If the same gunman fired both lethal shots, he was positioned no closer than 100 yards from the jail. Making two lethal shots in such short succession indicates the shooter was using a rest, like a modern sniper might use. John C. Elliott boasted of being the one who had killed the Smith brothers. The owners of the rifle Elliott had used similarly boasted their gun had killed "Joe Smith."

25 – Collecting the Sorrowful

Before Joseph's death in the summer of 1844, roughly a hundred men and women had entered into plural marriages. However only six plural wives bore a child that seems unquestionably to have been engendered by their covenant husband prior to Joseph's death. ¹

For months after Joseph's death, the matter of plural marriage took a back seat to succession concerns. But by September 1844, Brigham Young and the apostles had been accepted as Joseph's rightful successors by a majority of Joseph's followers. The apostles continued work toward completing the Nauvoo temple and began to marry Joseph's secret widows and other women in need. To the chagrin of Emma Smith, the apostles gave the go ahead for men to engage in sexual relations with their plural wives.

Succession Crisis

In the immediate aftermath of the death of Joseph and Hyrum, there was lack of clarity regarding who would lead the Church. ²

Two obvious candidates were Joseph's surviving brothers, Samuel and William. However Samuel died later that summer. William believed Samuel had been poisoned, but others said it was merely a bilious stomach upset. ³

William was not supported as a serious successor for long by anyone outside his own family, particularly once he made it clear that he favored

spiritual wifery. William briefly aligned himself with Strang and subsequently attempted to lead other Mormon splinter groups. In 1878 William joined the RLDS Church headed by Joseph Smith III. This occurred just prior to Emma Hale's death in 1879. Emma's famous deathbed denial of polygamy may have been an effort to inoculate her sons against the corrupting influence of their uncle.

Brigham Young and the apostles claimed Joseph had conferred on them the keys to carry forth the work of salvation, but this event had been conducted in strict secrecy. Most of the apostles were not in Nauvoo when Joseph died, having been assigned to other states in support of Joseph Smith's campaign to become President of the United States.⁴ Under the theory that the apostles were Joseph's rightful successors, Willard Richards had begun signing himself as "Clerk and Acting President," as he was the only able apostle in Nauvoo after the martyrdom.⁵ John Taylor was still gravely ill from being shot at Carthage.

Sidney Rigdon believed he should replace Joseph Smith, as Sidney was the sole surviving member of the First Presidency. Rigdon returned from Pennsylvania,⁶ and proposed he be made the guardian of the Church.

Recent convert, James Strang, produced a letter that seemed to be a commission from Joseph Smith to lead the Church.⁷ Strang's baptism occurred during the time conspirators were being sought to plot against Joseph. The letter is now widely acknowledged to be a forgery.

Though Strang attracted many of those who had agitated against Joseph during the spring of 1844, the vast majority of Saints were inclined to support either Brigham Young or Sidney Rigdon as Joseph's successor. For those informed of the New and Everlasting Covenant and plural marriage, it was clear that Sidney Rigdon would not support Joseph's teachings on this matter. Meanwhile Brigham Young had been involved in Joseph's teachings and practices regarding plural marriage since January 1842.

When Sidney Rigdon returned from Pennsylvania, the four apostles in town invited him to meet with them on Sunday, August 4, 1844. Instead, Rigdon preached a sermon to several thousand people, indicating his intention to lead the Church and preserve the Church as Joseph "had begun it." That afternoon, Stake President William Marks announced that a special meeting would be held in four days to determine the matter of succession. Marks himself had a claim to succession. Emma had urged Marks to take up leadership of the Church in July 1844, but Marks was content to throw his support to Sidney Rigdon.⁸

On Thursdays the Saints commonly met in the grove for religious meetings. So Sidney Rigdon's decision to hold a vote on succession on Thursday, August 8, 1844, resonated with that practice. Sidney preached for two hours, and was leading up to a vote sustaining him as guardian of the Church.

Then Brigham Young took the stand. Brigham had planned to be with the other apostles in the office of Willard Richards, but the meeting in Richards' office had completely flown from his mind. Instead he found himself in the grove. Brigham announced to the assembled parties that a vote on the matter of succession would be held at 2 pm that afternoon. At the afternoon meeting Brigham taught a sermon that emphasized the right of the apostles to lead. Parley P. Pratt followed, also supporting the Twelve. Sidney Rigdon was exhausted from his morning sermon and asked William W. Phelps to plead his case. Instead, Phelps supported the Apostles.⁹

Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were sustained by the vast majority of those in attendance. It is reported that key individuals who did not sustain the apostles were eventually excommunicated.¹⁰

Collecting the Widows and Abandoned

Starting a month after the dramatic vote to sustain the apostles, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball began to meet with those who had entered into polygamous marriages, including Joseph's widows.¹¹ Roughly ten months after the vote sustaining Brigham Young and the apostles as the leaders of the Church, we begin to see children born to plural wives at a significant rate.

For Joseph's widows, there were four options:

- 1) Marry a Church leader (e.g., Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball)
- 2) Remain married to a prior husband
- 3) Remain widowed
- 4) Marry another husband who was not a Church leader

In the fall of 1844, it appears Brigham Young, Heber Kimball, and Amasa Lyman married several women who had been wives of Joseph Smith. Each of these women was unusually vulnerable, most lacking husbands or fathers to protect and provide for them. These women were:

BRIGHAM YOUNG	HEBER C. KIMBALL	AMASA LYMAN
Olive Grey Frost	Nancy Winchester	–
Eliza R. Snow	Martha McBride ¹²	–
Emily Dow Partridge	Sarah Whitney	Eliza Maria Partridge
Maria Lawrence	Sarah Lawrence	–
–	Lucy Walker	–

Women believed to have covenanted with Joseph Smith ¹³ but who were married to someone else prior to Joseph's death remained with the other husband. Those who were not members are highlighted.

WIFE * Mortal marriage to Smith in question	HUSBAND PRIOR TO JUNE 27, 1844
Fanny Alger	Solomon Custer
Zina Diantha Huntington	Henry Jacobs
Presendia Huntington	Norman Buell
Mary Heron*	John Snider
Sylvia Sessions	Windsor Lyon
Mary Elizabeth Rollins	Adam Lightner
Patty Bartlett	David Sessions
Marinda Nancy Johnson	Orson Hyde
Elizabeth Davis*	Jabez Durfee
Sarah Kingsley*	John Cleveland
Lucinda Pendleton	George Harris
Sarah Ann Whitney	Joseph C. Kingsbury
Ruth Vose	Edward Sayers
Flora Ann Woodworth	Carlos Gove
Elvira Annie Cowles	Jonathan H. Holmes

Other widows of Joseph Smith appear to have remained unattached in 1844. This includes Emma Smith, who was pregnant with Joseph's son. ¹⁴

In the months after being sustained as Joseph's successor, Brigham Young instructed men knowledgeable about plural marriage to covenant with women in need of protection. In the year following the dramatic vote sustaining Young, thirty men would covenant with eighty women, making them plural wives. This was in addition to the women who were Joseph's widows and those who had already become plural wives during Joseph's lifetime.

Emma Hale and others, such as Nauvoo Stake President William Marks, had clearly hoped Mormonism could revert to a traditionally monogamous Christian religion. Brigham's action to solemnize dozens of additional plural marriages would force a schism between the LDS Church, led by Brigham Young, and those later aligned with the Reorganized LDS Church (RLDS), led by Joseph Smith's sons. Two faiths with the same starting point thus diverged radically, polarizing one other as they attempted to win converts to their respective viewpoints.

Sexuality in Plural Marriage

Conclusive evidence of sexuality in plural marriages prior to Joseph's death is scant. Only two men, William Clayton and Joseph Bates Noble, are known to have produced a child with their plural wives prior to Joseph's death. Both children were apparently conceived during May 1843, when Emma openly accepted the New and Everlasting Covenant.¹⁵ There are four additional couples where plural wives appear to have conceived before Joseph's death: Heber C. Kimball with Sarah Peak Noon (son born no later than Sep 1844¹⁶), Lorenzo Dow Young with Harriet P. Wheeler [Decker] (son born Sep 5, 1844), William Felshaw with Charlotte Waters (daughter born Jan 25, 1845), and Theodore Turley with Mary Clift (son born Feb 11, 1845).¹⁷ Joseph may have consummated his marriages with Emily Partridge and Malissa Lott, as they testified to keep the Temple Lot out of RLDS hands in 1894. Conjugal relations between Joseph and others of his plural wives could have been possible, but are even less likely than the assertions Emily and Malissa made decades after Joseph's death. There are no provable children to confirm Joseph was sexually intimate with any plural wife.

Emma Smith had made it abundantly clear that she felt plural marriages should not produce children. In a conversation with Lucy Meserve (then a pregnant plural wife of Joseph's cousin, George A. Smith), Emma reportedly said that Mormonism was true, but "the Twelve had made bogus of it. She said they were living with their [plural] wives and raising children and Joseph never taught any such doctrine."¹⁸

Brigham Young and the rest of the twelve apostles had read the revelation and took it at face value. D&C 132: 68 was clear:

[A man's plural wives] are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth... that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified.
19

It was clear to them that plural marriages were to be consummated. Now that Brigham Young was in charge, he authorized men to consummate marriages with plural wives. In the summer of 1845, as the trial was being convened in Carthage to try the accused assassins of Joseph Smith, many plural wives in Nauvoo were pregnant or caring for newborn babies. It is no wonder that the leaders of Nauvoo wanted nothing to do with a trial that could prove dangerous to Joseph's surviving followers.

Turning the Hearts

Brigham insisted that the marriages of the Saints should appropriately include engendering children. He also was committed to completing the temple, so the Saints could receive the ordinances Joseph had taught could only be performed in a temple. This included sealing spouses together as well as sealing the Saints to one another as parents and children.²⁰

Most of the apostates of Nauvoo left to gather to Strang's Wisconsin refuge. Others unwilling to follow Young or Strang scattered under a variety of leaders, each claiming to be the true successor to Joseph Smith. Meanwhile the State and people of Illinois seemed determined to emulate every wrong enacted by Missouri.²¹

Joseph had cared deeply for the opinions of his wife, Emma Hale [Smith]. Brigham Young was not similarly constrained.

Brigham enacted his understanding of Joseph's teachings in a way that Joseph never had. It was clear to Brigham Young and most of the other apostles that appeasement and a façade of pure monogamy would do nothing to halt the coming storm.

Collecting the Sorrowful - Notes

Following Joseph's death, several possible successors were available. Joseph's brother would lose support when it became clear he still practiced and supported spiritual wifery. James Strang primarily attracted those sympathetic to the conspiracy to kill Joseph. Sidney Rigdon and Brigham Young each put themselves forward to the main body of Mormons as the legitimate successor. The majority supported Brigham Young and apostolic succession.

Once Brigham had been confirmed as leader of Joseph's people, he moved to provide for Joseph's widows. Women who already had a husband remained with those men. Brigham Young and Heber Kimball between them married most of the nine single women who entered into levirate plural marriages in the year after Joseph's death.

Dozens of leading men reached out to an additional eighty women in the year after Brigham was confirmed as Joseph Smith's successor.

Brigham Young encouraged men to engender children with their plural wives. This was very upsetting to Emma Hale [Smith], who claimed this was never Joseph's intent. Joseph was no longer alive to suppress the tension between his devotion to Emma and his devotion to God's command. The latent contradiction would rend Joseph's people asunder.

26 – For Eternity and Time

As the Nauvoo temple neared completion, the non-Mormons in Illinois took away all civil protection from the people in Nauvoo.

First to go was the Nauvoo city charter, which had authorized creation of the Nauvoo legion. Lacking a charter, Nauvoo could not even maintain a police force to protect against petty crime. ¹

The next peril was the beginning of the “wolf hunts” that had been initially threatened in 1844, a euphemism for attacks on outlying Mormon settlements and dwellings. In the months before the temple was completed, the wolf hunt mobs burned hundreds of homes. ² Given the violent history of Missouri, atrocities may have been committed in addition to the burning of homes. ³ In Missouri the wrongs were documented as there had been a hope of redress. There was no hope for redress in Illinois.

Illinois put out an arrest warrant for Brigham Young. In addition, word came that federal troops were advancing on Nauvoo, coming up the Mississippi River. ⁴ It was a time of severe tension, and Brigham knew he would be responsible for moving his people west.

Brigham was faced with the question of what to do with women whose husbands had died. The women wished to be sealed to their beloved, departed spouses. But what man could be counted on to marry or care for a woman who was eternally sealed to another man?

Brigham apparently made a policy decision.⁵ If an individual wished to be sealed to a deceased spouse for eternity, they could. However the person standing proxy would have to agree to marry the bereaved individual for time. In this manner every woman who was married eternally to a deceased man would have a living man with the responsibility to care for her. Similarly, every widower would be encouraged to reach out to care for an otherwise unattached woman in the community.

Accordingly, hundreds of women technically became plural wives in 1846. Dozens of these women were merely seeking eternal union with a deceased husband. Scores of women covenanted with a man who was sealed to a sister, mother, or daughter. Ironically, this policy trivialized the “for time” marriages. Several women shift husbands after fleeing Nauvoo, including women who married Brigham Young, John Taylor, and Lorenzo Snow.

Sealing Joseph to His Wives

The first endowments were performed in the Nauvoo Temple starting on December 10, 1845. Those previously endowed as part of the Anointed Quorum received the ordinances again in the temple. Brigham Young, Heber Kimball, and the other apostles worked nearly around the clock at the temple, working until 4 am that first day and sleeping for less than two hours before rising to continue the ordinances the next day.⁶

The temple records for the Nauvoo temple are unique because the time of day was noted as well as the date each ordinance was performed. So we get a detailed picture of the immense, time consuming effort it was for the Saints to receive their ordinances. These records are available to review in person⁷ at the Church Family History Library in Salt Lake City.⁸

Brigham and Heber had already married several of Joseph’s widows for time starting in September 1844. One of the many responsibilities they had during these hectic months was ensuring that all Joseph’s wives had the chance to be sealed to Joseph in the temple. Apparently they came to the conclusion that a Church leader should stand proxy for Joseph for these sealings.

Most of Joseph’s wives who choose to be sealed to Joseph in the temple allowed Brigham Young, Heber Kimball, or some other high Church leader to stand proxy.⁹ However the women who were married to other men when Joseph Smith was killed typically continued as the wives of those men, independent of who stood proxy in the Nauvoo temple.

WIFE OF JOSEPH SMITH Bolded women conceived during their covenant with Joseph Smith	HUSBAND AS OF JUNE 27, 1844 Bolded men were not members	1845-46 TEMPLE PROXY
Married to Brigham Young		
Louisa Beaman	None	Brigham Young
Eliza R. Snow	None	Brigham Young
Emily Dow Partridge	None	Brigham Young
Maria Lawrence	None	Brigham Young ¹⁰
Olive G. Frost	None	Brigham Young ¹¹
Rhoda Richards	None	Brigham Young
Zina Diantha Huntington	Henry Jacobs	Brigham Young
Mary Elizabeth Rollins	Adam Lightner	Brigham Young
Married to Heber C. Kimball ¹²		
Nancy Winchester	None	Heber C. Kimball
Sarah Lawrence	None	Heber C. Kimball
Lucy Walker	None	Heber C. Kimball
Martha McBride	None – widowed	Heber C. Kimball
Sarah Ann Whitney	Joseph C. Kingsbury	Heber C. Kimball
Presendia Huntington	Norman Buell	Heber C. Kimball
Sylvia Sessions	Windsor Lyon	Heber C. Kimball
Married to Other Leader		
Eliza Maria Partridge	None	Amasa Lyman
Desdemona Fullmer	None	Ezra Taft Benson
Melissa Lott	None	John Bernhisel
Agnes Coolbrith	None – widowed	George A. Smith
Delcena Johnson	None – widowed	Almon Babbitt
Elizabeth Davis *	Jabez Durfee	Cornelius Lott
Sarah Kingsley *	John Cleveland	John Smith
Lucinda Pendleton	George Harris	George Harris
Marinda Nancy Johnson	Orson Hyde	Orson Hyde ¹³

* Mortal marriage to Smith in question

We see that there are two women who chose to be sealed to Joseph in the temple where the proxy was not a high Church leader. In both these cases, the woman spent the rest of her life with the man who stood proxy for Joseph.

WIFE OF JOSEPH SMITH Bolded women conceived during their covenant with Joseph Smith	HUSBAND AS OF JUNE 27, 1844 Bolded men were not members	1845-46 TEMPLE PROXY
Married to Non-Leader		
Helen Mar Kimball	None	Horace Whitney
Elvira Annie Cowles	Jonathan H. Holmes	Jonathan H. Holmes
Not Sealed to Smith in Nauvoo Temple		
Hannah Ells	None	– 14
Almera Johnson	None – widowed	– 15
Emma Smith	None – widowed	– 16
Fanny Young	None – widowed	– 17
Patty Bartlett	David Sessions	– 18
Fanny Alger	Solomon Custer	– 19
Flora Ann Woodworth	Carlos Gove	– 20
Ruth Vose	Edward Sayers	– 21
Esther Dutcher	Albert Smith	– 22
Mary Heron *	John Snider	– 23

* Mortal marriage to Smith in question

Three women who covenanted with Joseph and subsequently became pregnant were married to men who were not members: Presendia [Buell], Mary Elizabeth [Lightner], and Sylvia [Lyons]. Possibly these husbands didn't know about their wife's covenant with Joseph. In any case, these husbands had no reason to refrain from marital relations with their legal wives.

Two women appear to have been associated with Bennett or his strikers: Esther [Smith]²⁴ and Eliza Snow.²⁵ Evidence that Esther [Smith] was actually Joseph's plural wife is tenuous, and may merely reflect her vows to assist Joseph in 1842. Eliza Snow is not bolded because pregnancy is disputed, as is Joseph's paternity of the reported child. Nancy Marinda Johnson is not bolded based on her assertion that she was sealed to Joseph in 1843. Lucinda Pendleton is not bolded as her sealing to Joseph likely occurred after 1840.

Unique Cases Among Joseph’s Widows

As mentioned, most of the women who had husbands already when Joseph died remained with those husbands, independent of which man stood proxy in the temple. This seems to indicate that the proxy who was “married” to these already-married widows of Joseph Smith was serving some other role. It may be more useful to think of these proxies as protectors rather than husbands.²⁶ In effect, they were to ensure the woman was properly cared for. As widows of Joseph Smith, the Church had both a particular responsibility to protect these women and a particular responsibility to husband them as a spiritual resource. Those women who did not have a husband when Joseph died were taken on as the plural wives of whoever stood proxy.

There are a few cases that bear examination.

Emma Hale [Smith]. It is doubtful Brigham Young or Heber Kimball approached Emma Smith about remarriage in 1844, while she was pregnant with Joseph’s last child, David.²⁷ By 1845 it had become clear that Brigham viewed Joseph’s estate as an asset of the Church, while Emma viewed Joseph’s estate as a resource to redeem Joseph’s debts and care for Joseph’s family. There was also the matter of Emma’s severe disapproval that men were consummating their plural marriages. Between the property concerns and the plural marriage concerns, Emma would refuse to follow Brigham Young west. Though not documented, it seems her rationale for refusing to be sealed to Joseph in the temple may have been a refusal to allow a Church leader to serve as Joseph’s proxy.

Elvira Cowles [Holmes]. Brigham or Heber may have approached Elvira about becoming a plural wife. However Joseph Smith had specifically asked Jonathan Holmes to care for Elvira.²⁸ Elvira lived out her days with Jonathan Holmes in relative obscurity. Jonathan was the only Nauvoo husband of one of Joseph’s widows to serve in the Mormon Battalion.²⁹ Elvira drove the family wagon and team west from Winter Quarters to Salt Lake City in 1847, and Elvira’s daughters all married a handcart pioneer. Elvira is therefore the only one of Joseph’s plural wives to link all the iconic Mormon trail experiences in a single family.

Helen Mar Kimball. Helen was 14 when she covenanted with Joseph. She had resented the way this “marriage” interfered with her ability to socialize. It appears possible that Heber felt he could watch over Helen as her father,

rather than requiring that she marry a high Church leader. Helen was allowed to marry Horace Whitney, young son of Bishop Newel K. Whitney. Alternately, it may have been felt that Horace needed a wife who was strong in the faith, given his former sympathy with those teaching spiritual wifery in 1842.

Sarah Ann Whitney. Sarah Ann had been married to Joseph Kingsbury, and Kingsbury had recorded in his journal that he had “agreed to Stand by Sarah Ann Whitney as Supposed to be her husband & had a pretended marriage...”³⁰ Kingsbury was Sarah Ann’s brother-in-law, and this pretended marriage may not have been consummated. Sarah apparently declined to remain with her widower brother-in-law.

Nancy Winchester. Nancy was only 15 when Joseph died and may have been as young as 13 when she covenanted with Joseph, if the covenant occurred at the time her brother was excommunicated. Heber C. Kimball married Nancy and cared for her, but never consummated the marriage.³¹

Zina Diantha Huntington [Jacobs Smith]. Zina continued as Henry Jacobs’ wife, despite Brigham having stood proxy for Joseph. Following Henry Jacobs’ excommunication for sealing William W. Phelps to a plural wife without authorization, Zina left Henry Jacobs and become Brigham’s wife in deed. Zina’s Church career flourished as one of Brigham’s wives. Zina would eventually succeed Eliza R. Snow as President of the Relief Society, the most powerful position a woman could hold in the Church. The position of Relief Society General President gave Zina the ability to collaborate with women’s rights advocates throughout the United States.

Other Polygamous Families in Nauvoo and Beyond

In order to act as levirate husbands to the dead Joseph’s many covenant wives, Brigham Young and other Church leaders took responsibility for dozens of women, forming the cores of their large polygamous families. In response to the violence with which the Saints were threatened, Brigham encouraged men to take responsibility for widows, unprotected women, and relatives of individuals for whom they cared deeply.

By the time Brigham Young closed the temple in February 1846, over 175 men had between them married approximately 500 plural wives.³² Initially these plural marriages were not openly acknowledged to “the world.” But as the years passed, it became impractical to either hide the fact of these plural marriages or adopt a policy of monogamy that would sunder hundreds of

families, many with young children. The LDS Church formally announced that it practiced plural marriage in 1852.

Public acknowledgement of Mormon “polygamy” caused extreme opposition from the United States government and her people. Forceful rejection of Mormonism as a valid faith tradition would continue for decades as military, legal, and cultural instruments were used to oppose Mormons. The fruit of this rejection continues even today.

Yet less than forty years after Mormons publicly embraced plural marriage, Wilford Woodruff would issue a document in 1890 known as the Manifesto, declaring no new plural marriages would be solemnized. In 1904 Joseph F. Smith would issue a second manifesto. The Second Manifesto reaffirmed that the Church had completely abandoned the practice of solemnizing new marriages between living women and living men who already had a living wife.

For Eternity and Time – Notes

With the completion of the Nauvoo temple, faithful Mormons thronged to the temple to solemnize their commitments to God. They also entered into Celestial marriages, uniting themselves as husbands and wives for all eternity. Actual and promised attacks were coming from surrounding mobs, the government of Illinois and even the Federal government. Even so, Brigham and the faithful spent inordinate amounts of effort to ensure all who wished could receive their ordinances.

Given the threat to vulnerable women, Brigham apparently decided no woman could be sealed to her deceased spouse unless the man standing proxy agreed to take responsibility for her as her mortal husband. In the case of Joseph’s many widows, high church leaders stood proxy for most of Joseph’s wives, even for those who already had a living husband. Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball ended up with vast families, each married to many of Joseph’s plural wives. The leaders stood ready to ensure proper protection for each woman if her mortal husband were to falter. This occurred in the case of Zina Huntington when Henry Jacobs was excommunicated.

Less than fifty years after the flight from Nauvoo, Wilford Woodruff would declare an end to the practice of solemnizing plural marriages. In 1904 Joseph F. Smith issued a Second Manifesto, making it clear that Church policy on the matter was not a mere political accommodation limited to the United States.

27 – Eradicating Spiritual Wifery

When I originally posted my Faithful Joseph series in 2013-2014, I proposed that Joseph Smith himself taught plural marriage, yet may have refrained from consummating his own plural marriages. There were those who welcomed such a viewpoint.

Others were concerned at the idea that Joseph would flout God's clear commandment to multiply and replenish the earth in conjunction with his plural wives, as recorded in D&C 132. Similarly, there were those who felt that it would be abusive to marry a woman and then refuse to engender children with her or otherwise comfort her with conjugal affection.

Whether Joseph's clear reticence to raise up progeny with his plural wives was abusive or not, it begged the question of how polygamy could subsequently become so entrenched in the LDS Church following Joseph's death.

If Joseph rarely or never engaged in sex with covenant wives, as the lack of offspring by plural wives suggests, how could Brigham Young's actions be explained?

Brigham, the Realist

Joseph Smith may have hoped to avoid hostilities by easing into the practice of plural marriage at some future time. With Joseph's death, Brigham had no hope that compromise on this issue would prevent hostilities.

Brigham Young was also at liberty to fulfill the revelation in D&C 132 without concern for the preferences of Emma Hale [Smith].

Brigham likely felt the Bible was unambiguous regarding the duty a levirate husband owed the widow of a deceased comrade. In the Bible, it is clear that every widow had a right to bear a child to be raised in honor of her fallen husband. The yearning women can feel to bear a child is seen in the biblical stories of Tamar and Hannah. Tamar posed as a prostitute in order to trick Judah into fulfilling his family's requirement to provide her a son. Hannah bargained with God, promising to yield up her child to God's service if only He would allow her to conceive. ¹ The great posterity levirate marriage could raise up is seen in Tamar and Ruth, ancestresses of King David and Jesus Christ.

In addition to widows, there were scores of extended family members and converts who were in need or had been damaged by the illicit intercourse scandal. It may never be possible to determine why men reached out to each of the hundreds of women they collectively married as plural wives prior to the flight from Nauvoo. But it seems some of these women had been victims of the Strikers and their seductions.

There is no biblical precedent for the numbers of plural marriages Brigham Young required of his people after the death of Joseph Smith. Yet the breadth of the sexual heresy promulgated by Dr. John C. Bennett and his Strikers had been extensive, if largely expunged from public histories.

Brigham Young was faced with a series of challenges:

1. Provide for the physical welfare of abandoned women as the Saints fled Nauvoo.
2. Eliminate attempts to usurp the centralized and orderly authority to administer saving ordinances. According to D&C 132:7, there was only one person at any given time to hold these keys. ² Brigham maintained he was that single authorized individual, following the death of Joseph Smith
3. Eradicate the heresy of spiritual wifery.

Brigham Young would wield his power to solemnize or sunder marriages liberally as he responded to each of these challenges. He would also use excommunication to clarify the boundaries of acceptable behavior.

William Smith, Volatile Brother

Joseph Smith had commanded Brigham Young to stand down from charging William Smith with adultery, likely in May 1842. ³ Though William had clearly been guilty of adultery and ecclesiastical abuse, he was ultimately not found to be the ringleader of those seducing women in 1841-1842.

After Joseph's death, William Smith remained in the Boston area. Samuel Smith died in the month after Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith were killed, leaving William as the sole remaining adult male of the Smith family. When William returned to Nauvoo in 1845, the people welcomed him with open arms. ⁴

William Smith appears to be the only Church leader who routinely charged money for his ecclesiastical services. Upon the death of Hyrum, William was made Church Patriarch. He voiced numerous patriarchal blessings, demanding a fee for each. ⁵

Despite Mormon desire to cherish Joseph's relatives, William Smith had been a rogue among the apostles. He had beaten Joseph, breaking ribs. ⁶ He had called for Joseph's death in 1838. ⁷ He had refused to leave America on the foreign missions other members of the Twelve Apostles served in 1839-41. ⁸ And it appears William alone, of the apostles, was a prominent participant in Bennett's heresy promoting illicit intercourse in 1841-1842.

While unsupervised in the Eastern United States, William took it upon himself to teach about eternal marriage, offering to seal people to one another outside of the temple. He also continued to teach variations of the Spiritual wifery heresy, that it was acceptable for men and women to engage in sexual intercourse even if there was no marriage involved. Hints of this heresy were brought to the attention of the rest of the apostles when Wilford Woodruff visited William's Massachusetts congregation. ⁹

Parley P. Pratt was sent to the east to investigate. There Parley discovered the full extent of the wrongful teachings and actions of William and his ecclesiastical subordinates. Parley would attempt to instruct the eastern Saints on the proper manner of being sealed to one's spouse, along with the fact that "sealing" was not license for licentiousness:

"How frequently a man and his wife, or a young couple about to be married, present themselves to me, with a request to be sealed to each other; that is, married for eternity. Do I ever grant their

request? No; for the best of all reasons. –I have no authority so to do under present circumstances; and, were I to do it, it would only be deceiving them; as such a sealing would not stand, or be recognized in the resurrection; unless performed according to the strict law of God, and of the keys of the sealing powers, and in connection with the ordinances of endowment which brings to God’s sanctuary [temple], and no where else.

“[The sealing power allows for] no confusion, unlawful connection, or unvirtuous liberties.”¹⁰

The extent of the misdeeds was of grave concern to the leadership of the Church. Unfortunately, Joseph Ball, one of the Black men William had ordained to the priesthood, was deeply implicated in the wrongful sexual activity.¹¹

Zina wrote in her diary about the situation following an address William Smith gave on August 17, 1845, in Nauvoo. At that time William openly advocated spiritual wifery and indicated that he practiced it. The discourse caused such distress that women put their handkerchiefs over their faces to show their disgust. Apostle John Taylor attempted to rebutt the sermon.

Zina wrote, “Wm Smith spoke to the people [and] Elder Talor made an appropriate reply, [because] it was needed.”¹²

Despite William’s offenses, there was a desire to keep William within the Church. However William was ultimately excommunicated for refusing to repent and accept the leadership of Brigham Young.

William could have reformed. We see this in the “marriage” between Willard Richards and Alice Langstroth in December 1845. Willard would write in his journal that they had “mutually acknowledge[d] each other husband and wife, in a covenant not to be broken in time or Eternity.” Apparently Willard administered to himself without authorization. The marriage would not be formalized in the temple and Alice Langstroth married another man.¹³ The reprimand Richards likely received for his unauthorized sealing action is lost to history.

The Talented Lamanite

William Smith was not the last to presume they had authority to wield the sealing power.

The sordid tale of William McCary eventually emerged. Originally welcomed as a charismatic “Lamanite” or Native Indian leader, William claimed he had the power of prophesy and transfiguration, in particular claiming he had the power to appear as various biblical and Book of Mormon figures.

McCary was eventually found to be a fraud. He was a mulatto rather than an Indian or “Lamanite.” Much worse were McCary’s unorthodox activities. McCary had been performing an “ordinance” where he would “seal” himself to women to guarantee their salvation. This ceremony was unlike any plural marriage sanctioned by the Church. Nelson Whipple reported McCary would seal a woman to himself by engaging in sexual intercourse with her while his wife watched.¹⁴

The obvious perversion involved in McCary’s usurpation of authority makes it a titillating story, but McCary’s threat to Brigham Young’s authority as sole holder of the sealing keys was resolved by excommunicating McCary.

Zion in Texas

Another challenge to Brigham’s central authority arose when it became clear that Apostle Lyman Wight had been officiating in sealing ceremonies without authorization. Lyman declined to follow Brigham’s lead and gather to Utah. Instead, Lyman led many of the Mormons who had served in the Wisconsin Pineries to an area near modern Austin, Texas. Lyman Wight was father of Orange Lysander Wight, who was apparently initiated into polygamy in 1841 after learning that John Higbee had two wives.

Brigham Young reacted by excommunicating Lyman Wight and his followers.¹⁵ It is commonly presumed that the excommunication was prompted merely by Lyman’s refusal to gather to Utah. After all, how could Brigham Young, of all people, object to polygamy? Yet Brigham could and did object to plural marriages if not officiated in a proper manner.

Appropriating Zina

Zina had been one of the first women to covenant to be a plural wife to Joseph Smith. Following the 1844 death of Joseph Smith, Zina would undergo a unique marital shift, leaving the ostensibly faithful and believing father of her children to become the conjugal wife of Brigham Young.

Henry Bailey Jacobs was the man Zina had married in 1841 prior to covenanting with Joseph Smith. Henry was fully supportive of Brigham and the other apostles, as well as supporting Joseph’s legacy. Henry was present when Zina was sealed to Joseph Smith in the temple. He was similarly a witness as Zina was sealed “for time” to Brigham Young, who had stood as proxy for Joseph in the sealing that had immediately preceded the “for time” ordinance.

In February, 1846, when Zina was technically married “for time” to Brigham Young, Zina was pregnant with a child engendered by Henry Bailey Jacobs. Following her marriage “for time” to Brigham, Zina would not conceive again while associated with Henry Jacobs.

However this is not terribly noteworthy. Zina was pregnant until March 22, 1846, when she gave birth to a son near the Chariton River in Iowa. Henry and Zina named their son Henry Chariton Jacobs. In May 1846 Zina’s husband, Henry Bailey Jacobs, was called to serve a mission in England.

When Henry left on his mission, Zina moved in with her ailing father, William, until his death in August 1846. After Zina’s father died, she took protection in the household of Brigham Young. Zina would have had every expectation of reuniting with Henry Jacobs upon the successful completion of his mission to England. But Henry would come home under a cloud of suspicion and disgrace.

While in England, William W. Phelps asked Henry Jacobs to perform a marriage ceremony, uniting William W. Phelps to a plural wife. Henry presumed that there was no wrong in his performing the marriage.

Henry Jacobs and Elder W. W. Phelps subsequently rejoined the Saints in Utah. Upon arrival, they learned that this sealing, performed by Henry without appropriate authority, was not viewed as acceptable. In fact, it was seen as so unorthodox that Elder W. W. Phelps was excommunicated in December 1848,¹⁶ despite the fact that other leaders were involved in conjugal polygamy.

If Elder Phelps was excommunicated for entering into marriages that were not appropriately administered, how much more severe would have been the punishment for the man who led Elder Phelps into error? Henry Jacobs was excommunicated as well, though this is not well known outside the descendants of Henry Jacobs.¹⁷

In later years Zina was in a position to prevent insight into what had happened in December 1848. Thus the punishment that Henry Jacobs received for inappropriately wielding the sealing power is closely guarded in the LDS Church Archives. Zina's own children were not told what had happened.

It seems the reason Zina was taken from Henry Jacobs and given to Brigham Young as wife was Henry Jacobs' presumption in sealing a couple as though for eternity without authorization, as well as knowingly sealing a married man to other women.

If Zina had not been Joseph's covenant wife, Henry's period of disgrace might have passed without impact to the family situation.

Perhaps if Zina had not agreed to let Brigham stand as Joseph's proxy when the sealing was re-solemnized in the temple in February 1846, Henry's period of disgrace might have passed with Zina still as his wife.

If Zina had been a whiny burden during the year she spent in the Young household during the latter portion of Henry's mission, Brigham might have been perfectly happy to insist that Zina return to Henry's side after the period of disgrace.

But Zina was a great and good lady who had been anointed with portentous value as Joseph covenant wife. She had agreed to allow Brigham to serve as Joseph's proxy in the temple.¹⁸

Thus when Henry Jacobs ran afoul of authority and doctrine, Henry was deemed unworthy to retain the hand of Zina, who was an unusually valued member of the religious community.

According to Oa Jacobs [Cannon], her mother, Emma Rigby [Jacobs], had been effectively adopted by Zina when she married Henry Chariton Jacobs. Their relationship was so close that apparently Zina told things to Emma Rigby [Jacobs] that she was not even willing to tell her own daughter, the daughter Brigham Young engendered with Zina in 1849. When Oa learned Henry Jacobs had been present when Brigham was married to Zina for time, Emma Rigby [Jacobs] begged her daughter to keep this information secret, apparently reflecting Zina's own feeling that such knowledge was best kept buried.

Yet Zina did not conceive a child during the 36 months after she had theoretically become Brigham's wife "for time." She would not conceive

Brigham's child until six months after Henry Jacobs would have been excommunicated along with William Wines Phelps.

Even in this six months there is a clue. Brigham's decision to wait six months before attempting to engender a child with Zina would ensure there was no question of the paternity of any children born by Zina after Henry's disgrace.

Examining an Adultery

In 1850 Joseph Ellis Johnson was brought to Salt Lake City to stand trial for adultery. Joseph Ellis Johnson had engendered a child with Hannah Goddard, the estranged plural wife of Apostle Lorenzo Snow. Escorting Joseph Ellis Johnson to Salt Lake City were Apostle Orson Hyde and Henry Miller, founder of Kanesville,¹⁹ the key Winter Quarters site. The party also included Joseph Kelly and family. No others traveled in the party.

Johnson came before the disciplinary council of leaders (including Brigham) in order to set the record safe. Despite Johnson's transgression, Johnson wished to beg for forgiveness that he might be sealed to the woman he had lain with and then be sealed to their children.

In the transcript, we see the members of the council asking whether or not Johnson taught that it was acceptable for a man and woman to have intercourse as long as it was not known. This is clearly their attempt to determine whether Joseph Ellis Johnson had been teaching spiritual wifery or illicit intercourse. Joseph Kelly gave testimony exonerating Johnson of a key reason Johnson was suspected of teaching spiritual wifery. It appears Johnson's mother-in-law had been a victim of spiritual wifery in Nauvoo.

Johnson denied he taught any such doctrine. He asserted he had merely slept with the young lady and things were as they were.

Joseph Ellis Johnson was restored to membership and sent back to Kanesville immediately following the trial. Upon his return, he met the tiny girl child who had been born to Hannah Goddard mere days after Johnson had been whisked off to stand trial.

Joseph Ellis Johnson would be officially sealed to Hannah in 1861, when Joseph and his families finally left Kanesville to gather to Salt Lake City.²⁰

Making Fun of the Freighter

As the western settlements took shape, Brigham insisted that couples who wished to marry come to Salt Lake City. As the Biography of Elizabeth Houston [DeLong] relates, “At this time [1867] no marriages were solemnized out of the Endowment House.”²¹ In other words, Church marriages were only performed in Salt Lake City, in the Endowment House.

For example, this explains why Joseph Ellis Johnson was not formally sealed to Hannah Goddard until he and Hannah had traveled to Salt Lake City in 1861.

In 1867, Albert DeLong was an bachelor and overland freighter. Albert fell in love with Elizabeth Houston, the twenty-year-old eldest daughter of Scottish widow Margaret Crawford [Houston]. It appears Margaret was not sufficiently impressed with Albert DeLong to part with a daughter on whom Margaret relied so wholly. This was a time when Brigham Young was actively discouraging commerce with those who were not Mormon, making people like DeLong social outcasts in the eyes of some of the faithful.

Margaret demanded an impossible condition. She would allow Elizabeth to travel from St. George to Salt Lake City in the company of Albert DeLong only if Elizabeth was married to Albert DeLong. However as the couple could only be married in Salt Lake City, it appeared the two could never be wed.

“To overcome this difficulty the young man went to Salt Lake City and explained his trouble to president Brigham Young, who gave him an order telling Erastus Snow to marry them in St. George.”²²

Erastus Snow performed the ceremony marrying Elizabeth Houston and Albert DeLong on January 3, 1867. As Widow Houston feared, Elizabeth and Albert left St. George as soon as they were married. Brigham Young would joke with Albert and Elizabeth regarding the unusual circumstances of their marriage whenever he saw the Delongs in his travels. This good-natured ribbing illustrates that Albert DeLong’s quest to circumvent the rules was not a typical happening in Brigham’s time.

This story seems merely a cute anecdote from one family among thousands. Yet it illustrates the unusual level of control Brigham Young personally exercised over seemingly minor matters related to marriage.

Artificial Shortage of Women

In our modern age, countries with large shortages of women are associated with terrible violence against women. However these Asian countries, India and China, have a shortage of women precisely because they despise women to begin with, willing to abort and otherwise discard girl children.

In western culture, social science indicates men behave differently when they believe there are more than enough women, or when they believe the women have no choice.

In Jon Birger's *Date-onomics*, he suggests that "When faced with an oversupply of women, guys are more likely to delay marriage and play the field."²³ In other words, they act like the Strikers of Nauvoo, expecting sex without commitment from as many women as they can convince to yield.

By encouraging and even forcing leading men to embrace plural marriage, Brigham Young created the ultimate shortage of women. Not only were there few women available to players, the women could have any man in the community, regardless of the man's prior marital commitments.

Brigham also put in place a liberal divorce policy. Husband or wife unhappy? Simply pay \$10 dollars and the marriage was over.²⁴ This meant that a young woman did not need to feel trapped if the marriage she had initially agreed to turned out to be a mistake.

We see this in the case of Jonathan Harriman Holmes' surviving daughter from his first marriage. Sarah Elizabeth Holmes married John Porter Barnard on February 14, 1853, when she was barely 15. John Porter Barnard, a respected butcher, was almost 50.²⁵ Given Sarah's youth, it is possible that this "marriage" was more a live-in engagement than a consummated marriage. The marriage soon ended. Sarah went on to become a plural wife to Miles Weaver. Miles died, and Sarah and her sister-widow became the second and third wives to Miles' brother, Franklin.

Brigham made it clear that the only accepted Mormon marriages were those officiated by Brigham Young or officiated by his express permission. It became impossible for anyone after the 1840s to fraudulently pretend their ordinance satisfied the requirement that was a pre-requisite to the Celestial Kingdom. Hence Brigham Young controlled access to the highest heaven in Mormon theology, where families are able to be together forever.

Brigham made plural marriage a mandatory expectation for Church leaders. With the best men in the community selected for service, the best men were now also under mandate to take on additional wives. These leaders were prohibited from courting the women they wished to marry. They were only permitted to ask and had to accept whatever answer the woman gave. Brigham put women firmly in the driver seat when it came to creating their family.

Orson Pratt and others would talk about the many social ills that were eliminated by polygamy. Foremost of these claims was that polygamy ended prostitution.²⁶ What modern ears usually fail to hear is the reference to the prostitution of women implicit in the illicit intercourse of Nauvoo.

Some modern researchers have presumed that polygamy reduced prostitution because the men, saddled with multiple wives, had insufficient interest or time or energy to also seek out prostitutes. However the artificial shortage of women created by polygamy meant that Mormon women did not need to sell their bodies for food. The connections between families created in Brigham's polygamous Mormon community provided a robust support system for all members of the Mormon community, beyond plural wives.

By 1870, less than a decade before Brigham's death, the rules of marriage were thoroughly established among the Mormons. There was no risk of spiritual wifery regaining a foothold as Joseph's doctrine. Women could pick from a pool of steady and righteous men without concern that a good man already had a wife. The combination of rigid rules yet allowance for divorce resulted in widespread adherence to the marital standards. Though only a small percentage of Mormon men were ever polygamists at any given time, analysis of Utah census records for 1860 indicates that roughly 50% of married women in some congregations were a spouse in a polygamous household.²⁷

The Lethal Cure

Brigham used polygamy to kill the heresy of spiritual wifery. He did this by tightly controlling marriage, openly promoting plural marriage, and making it so no woman was necessarily left in a vulnerable position that invited the possibility for spiritual wifery to regain a hold.

But the decades following Brigham's death demonstrated the challenge of using plural marriage to kill spiritual wifery. Like a doctor who cures a patient of cancer by a lethal dose of chemotherapy, Brigham had accomplished a

great good by implementing the damaging policy of quasi-mandatory mortal polygamy. Widespread polygamy is an unsustainable practice in the long-term, as seen by examining modern polygamist communities. Brigham's success in making plural marriage the defining aspect of the Mormon faith, possibly to quash spiritual wifery, would make ending the practice of plural marriage terribly difficult.

Eradicating Spiritual Wifery – Notes

As Brigham took leadership of the Mormon faithful, he faced a host of challenges to the central authority Joseph had taught was the prerogative of the presiding Prophet. These challenges would inform Brigham Young's use of plural marriage and excommunication to control his people.

Several attempted to take the sealing power into their own hands. William Smith failed to understand that spiritual wifery was not part of Celestial marriage. William McCary invented his own variant of "sealing," possibly composed of the worst lies Bennett and the Strikers had spread about Joseph Smith. Lyman Wight acted as though he had every right Brigham had to lead and perform eternal marriages. Henry Jacobs performed unauthorized plural marriages while in England. Each of these were excommunicated.

The 1850 trial of Joseph Ellis Johnson demonstrates the continued fear leaders had that spiritual wifery might reappear. Requiring that the Mormon faithful come to Salt Lake City and be married in the Endowment House ensured there was no confusion about which marriages were authorized and which were not.

By requiring leaders to marry plural wives, Brigham Young created an artificial shortage of women. A shortage of women is not a universal remedy for social ills. But in Western Society a shortage of women is recognized as being correlated with increased commitment and reduced promiscuity. But widespread polygamy is not sustainable. Brigham Young's success in promoting plural marriage would make it terribly difficult to end the practice.

28 – Fifty Years in the Wilderness

The Mormon exodus and pioneer period tend to be well understood by Mormons. However Mormons typically do not consider plural marriage as part of that history. It is therefore useful to trace the impact of plural marriage in the pioneer history between Brigham Young's departure from Nauvoo until we see the Mormon Church renounce new plural marriages in 1890 (and again in 1904). Modern place names are used for clarity.

For purposes of this discussion, the fifty years in the wilderness stretch from the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo, Illinois (starting February 4, 1846) to Utah's admission as a state of the United States (January 4, 1896).

1846 – Winter Quarters and the Battalion

Brigham Young had attempted to ensure everyone could be part of a family unit, even though this resulted in hundreds of “polygamous” families by February 1846. He also urged each family to gather a year's supply of food, expecting it would take the entire summer growing season to reach safety in the Rocky Mountains. ¹ But not everyone gathered the suggested supplies. By the winter of 1846/1847, the Mormon refugees had only crossed Iowa. They established Winter Quarters on the Nebraska bank of the Missouri River.

Concerned with the crushing poverty facing the people and the Church, emissaries to Washington D.C. arranged for a battalion of 500 to be raised

from among the Mormons to fight in the Mexican War. ² The funds from the service of these 500 significantly helped those left behind.

Additional plural marriages were solemnized at Winter Quarters, as single women attached themselves to the able men who had not left with the Mormon Battalion. ³ Several of the women who had become plural wives in Nauvoo were now giving birth. Among the 300 who died that winter were the babies of Joseph's widows Louisa Beaman, Emily Partridge, Lucy Walker, and Elvira Annie Cowles. ⁴

1847 – This is the Place

The pioneers did not reach the Salt Lake Valley until late July, 1847. The crops they planted the summer of 1847 did not produce a significant yield. The likelihood of a second winter of crushing illness and death loomed.

The Mormon Battalion veterans were ordered to remain in California to avoid increasing the stress on the meager supplies available in Utah. Again, the needs of pregnant wives caused great concern. Meanwhile, the presence of "Europeans" in the valley caused the local Indians to become ill.

The Indians came to John Taylor, asking him to heal the Chief's son, who lay near death. John Taylor blessed the boy, then came back to the Old Fort. There Taylor prayed that the Lord would bless the child to live. Shortly thereafter the Indians approached the fort again. They brought with them gifts of sego lily bulbs, thistle root, and a nutty mash. When the nutty mash was exhausted, the pregnant women began to suffer again. John Taylor traveled to visit the Indians. The Indians were happy to share more of the nutty mash, which they revealed was made from ground up roasted crickets (a local pest), drizzled with honey. ⁵

John returned to the fort with the mash. He refused from that point to partake of the stuff, but did not tell the others what they were eating. Had he told the truth, it's likely some of the pioneers would have refused the life-saving food. If your ancestor was born in Utah in 1848, it's possible their life was saved by the Indians and John Taylor's "lie."

1852 – Preaching Polygamy from the Pulpit

In August 1852 Orson Pratt was asked to deliver a sermon explaining the Mormon doctrine of plural marriage. ⁶ As Orson explained,

“...it is rather new ground to the inhabitants of the United States, and not only to them, but to a portion of the inhabitants of Europe; a portion of them have not been in the habit of preaching a doctrine of this description; consequently, we shall have to break up new ground.

“It is well known, however, to the congregation before me, that the Latter-day Saints have embraced the doctrine of a plurality of wives, as a part of their religious faith. It is not, as many have supposed, a doctrine embraced by them to gratify the carnal lusts and feelings of man; that is not the object of the doctrine.”⁷

Orson Pratt had notably been the apostle whose wife had been seduced by John C. Bennett. Orson’s original refusal to sustain Joseph Smith in the midst of Bennett’s attacks had caused great turmoil in the Quorum of the Twelve while Joseph was in hiding during 1842.

With open acknowledgement that Mormons practiced plural marriage, or polygamy, opposition to the Mormons and their beliefs intensified. It is widely believed that open preaching of plural marriage ended any chance for Utah statehood when the attempt was made in 1856. The number of individuals gathering to Utah declined in the wake of this announcement. In 1852 thirty-five companies had traveled to Utah. Two years later the number was less than half as many.⁸

1856 – Arrest and Handcarts

After the 1852 announcement that Mormons practiced plural marriage, a reporter for *Putnam’s Magazine* secured an interview with Joseph Leland Heywood, the U.S. Marshall for Utah. The reporter interviewed Heywood and two of Heywood’s three wives. According to the article that appeared in the magazine in the fall of 1855, this was “the only instance in which I have seen two wives of the same man together...” The reporter ended his piece predicting the imminent demise of Heywood’s original wife, Sarepta. The reporter wrote he had “detected in her countenance, while in repose, a look so gloomily sad, that her whole heart of agony lay bare before me. Poor, poor wife! Her days are destined to be few, and full of trouble.”⁹ A month after the article was published, 40-year-old Heywood married his 16-year-old ward, Mary Bell,¹⁰ and proceeded to Washington DC.

Once in DC, Heywood was notified he had been fired from his position as U.S. Marshall. Heywood was also arrested for stealing five dollars, a week's wages for a senior employee. The accusation was later determined to be false. Reeling from the twin blows of being fired and arrested, Heywood visited Senator Stephen A. Douglas, who Heywood had known when he was a successful merchant in Quincy, Illinois. When Senator Douglas received Heywood, he inquired after Heywood's wife, Sarepta, whom he had known in Illinois. Senator Douglas asked "if she was living." It appears Stephen Douglas had read the article in *Putnam's Magazine*, with the dire predictions regarding Sarepta Heywood. Joseph Leland Heywood assured Senator Douglas that Sarepta was fine.

Meanwhile, those who were willing to embrace Mormonism in the face of polygamy had only the most meager economic resources. The Church funds to support emigration had been exhausted. Those who had previously traveled to the Salt Lake Valley walked most the way. Brigham Young suggested that these impoverished converts might be able to walk, pushing their few belongings in hand-drawn carts. The handcart companies would be accompanied by wagon companies to carry the food and supplies needed by all to succeed in the journey. The three initial handcart companies made the journey successfully, leaving Iowa City in June, and departing Florence, Nebraska, roughly six weeks later, in July. These three companies arrived in Utah nine weeks after leaving Florence, in late September and early October.

Two more handcart companies arrived in Florence roughly a month after the initial three. Despite the risk of encountering winter weather, a majority of these pioneers decided to press on to Utah, hoping the warm weather would hold. But the snows arrived early that year, trapping the two handcart companies and their accompanying wagon companies at Devil's Gate, Wyoming. Over a hundred members of the companies died that snowy October. The proximate cause of their deaths was the decision the companies' leaders had made in Florence to urge the pioneers forward despite the late date. Brigham Young sent rescue parties as soon as learning of the late companies, over a week before the blizzard and weeks before the pioneer deaths. Hundreds were saved. However as the one who developed the handcart plan, Brigham Young was also condemned for the disaster.

It bears noting that the Church's stance on plural marriage had contributed to the poverty that had inspired the handcart plan. Similarly, the animosity of the individuals in Florence that made a late departure seem desirable was caused in large part by the Church's acceptance of plural marriage.¹¹

Unaware of the unusually harsh conditions on the trail to Utah, Heywood left Washington, DC, to travel to Utah with the mail party. Delayed by weather, the mail party reached Devil's Gate the day after Christmas, 1856. The mail party spent the rest of the winter snowed in at the horrible landmark, where the bodies of the recent dead had been left. Despite the meager food available, the members of Heywood's party refused to eat wolf meat, presumably because of what the wolves had fed upon. Heywood and the entire mail party were eventually able to escape Devil's Gate alive, arriving in Salt Lake Valley on March 23, 1857.¹²

As a consequence of accounting disputes, the U.S. government refused to reimburse Heywood for the tens of thousands of dollars he had committed as U.S. Marshall, a value roughly equivalent to 10 million dollars in 2015. The U.S. government was no doubt concerned they were being bilked to support polygamists or pay for their protection. After fighting for the payments for decades, Heywood was finally able to obtain the funds from the U.S. government and pay those who had provided services.

1858 – The Utah War

In 1857, the United States decided to act on its paranoia about the alleged seditious activities of the Utah Mormons. Secretary of War Floyd was anxious to prevent the U.S. government from using military force against a rebellious South. The specter of a rebellious polygamous Utah served as a pretext for sending armed forces thousands of miles to the west.

The so-called Utah War, prompted in large part by outsider concerns revolving around polygamy, was not a fighting war. Yet it created horrific economic conditions that further increased the need for leading men to reach out to protect Mormon women in the community.

The army began to form in May 1857. That same month well-loved Mormon apostle Parley P. Pratt was gunned down. The gunman was a drunkard,¹³ the estranged husband of Eleanor McComb [McLean]. Eleanor had fled her abusive marriage. Parley P. Pratt had come to Eleanor's assistance, helping her reach a more secure refuge in Utah. Eleanor and Parley had been sealed in Salt Lake City in 1855, despite the fact that Eleanor was prevented from obtaining a civil divorce from McLean.

Word of Parley's death arrived with the news that the U.S. army planned to march on Utah. The violence Mormons had experienced in Missouri and Illinois was fresh in the minds of many, revived by Parley's murder.

Brigham sent out orders that no one was to interact with the various wagon trains passing through Utah. But the order meant the wagon trains bound for California couldn't obtain necessary food and water. Tensions rose. On September 11, 1857, a group of Mormons in Iron County attacked the Baker-Fancher wagon train, which had camped at Mountain Meadows *en route* to California. Only children too young to report on the massacre were spared.¹⁴

The advancing U.S. Army detachment was the largest single troop concentration then in the United States, numbering over 3,500 men.¹⁵ Given the magnitude of the armed threat and Mormon culpability for the tragedy of Mountain Meadows, Brigham required the Saints to flee.

Over 30,000 Mormons gathered south of the Traverse Mountain Pass separating the northerly Salt Lake Valley from Utah Valley to the south. The topography of the Traverse Mountain Pass is similar to that of Saratoga, where the Americans defeated the British during the Revolutionary War. An aggressor attempting to attack through such a pass can be stopped by cannon fire from the flanking mountains.¹⁶

Once the U.S. Army approached Utah, negotiations ensued to avoid what was feared might become a bloody and damaging interaction. In late June 1858 terms were established. When the U.S. Army advanced into Salt Lake Valley, Mormon men stood at the ready to destroy all “improvements” on the land if the U.S. Army attempted to occupy Salt Lake City. The U.S. Army, under strict orders to comply with the terms of the June agreement, marched peacefully through the valley.

In July 1858 the Mormons began to return to their homes. They had lost yet another growing season. In many Mormon settlements, the carcasses of untended livestock littered the fields. Prior to the Utah War, Mormons had established 90 communities. Following the 1858 Utah war, outlying Mormon settlements in Idaho, Nevada, and California were abandoned entirely, never to be re-settled. Others would not be re-settled for decades.

US opposition to Utah and polygamy continued. In 1862 Congress passed the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act.¹⁷ However the U.S. was embroiled in Civil War by then. President Abraham Lincoln declined to use the act to interfere with the Mormons so long as they left the United States alone. The act would not be upheld by the Supreme Court until 1879.

1870 – Women and the Vote

By 1870 various conditions had combined to make polygamy a marital fact for many Mormon women. It is estimated that between 1860 and 1870 roughly 50% of mature Mormon women had been married to a man with more than one wife, though only a minority of men were ever polygamists.

Not obviously related to polygamy, Brigham Young did not want anything to do with outside economies. By demonizing trade outside of the Mormon community, Brigham Young alienated merchants. Of these merchants, William Godbe actively fought against Brigham Young. Godbe and his supporters began publishing the *Utah Magazine*, a periodical that would later become the *Salt Lake Tribune*. In time Godbe became convinced that getting the vote to women would contribute to Brigham Young's political downfall. Godbe believed enfranchised Mormon women would break the economic control Young held over the state of Utah. Godbe reportedly worked to get women the vote in Wyoming towards the end of eventually getting Mormon women the vote.

An amazing thing happened next. Both Mormon opponents and Mormon proponents decided it was in their best interest to secure the vote for women. Brigham's opponents thought "oppressed Mormon women" would reject their oppressors. Brigham's proponents saw that awarding women the vote would counter the image that Mormon women were oppressed.

While Wyoming's fledgling vote for women got tied up in the courts, Utah's decision to award the vote to women was celebrated by all. The size of the Mormon electorate swelled to roughly three times the previous male-only Mormon electorate. The first woman to cast a vote was Sarah Young, grand-niece of Brigham Young. Mormon women typically voted the way their men did.¹⁸ Mormon control over Utah was not harmed at all.

As the opponents of Brigham Young realized their error, taking the vote away from Mormons, male and female, became their aim.

1882 – The Edmunds Act: Taking Away Mormon Rights

By 1879 the Supreme Court had upheld the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act. Congress next moved to strip Mormons of the vote. The Edmunds Act¹⁹ increased the penalties for bigamy, expanding the coverage of the law to include any case where a couple was determined to have been living together

as man and wife. There would be no need to prove the marriage had been formally solemnized, proof Brigham Young had protected as sacred Church records. This act of living together was termed co-habitation.

Plural wives began going underground. Families throughout the Mormon settlements would open their homes to women without asking any questions. Even so, Mormon women and thousands of Mormon men were incarcerated. The imprisoned polygamists tried to make the best of their conditions, cut off as they were from family, employment, and any opportunity to share the gospel they loved. There were also deaths. For example, George Manwaring, author of the iconic Mormon hymn “Oh How Lovely Was the Morning,” died of pneumonia contracted while imprisoned under the Edmunds Act.²⁰

Ironically, a man keeping a mistress was not considered co-habitation. The non-Mormon politicians of the day could continue carrying on as they wished. This included legalized prostitution in Salt Lake City along second street, in Ogden, and near the army barracks.²¹ These legal brothels were populated with non-Mormon women brought in to satisfy the sexual desires of non-Mormon men in the region.

Orson Pratt and others had argued plural marriage eliminated social evils such as prostitution. It was not that plural marriage reduced demand by satisfying men so much as it eliminated supply. Mormon women had no need to sell themselves for food to support their families.

In an effort to destroy the Mormon influence in the region, the Edmunds Act denied the vote not only to “cohabits,” but to anyone who would not publicly recant the right of individuals to cohabit. In select instances, one had to recant Mormonism to be allowed to vote.²²

1886 – John Taylor Seeks Revelation

In 1886 the hunt to incarcerate Mormon leaders had intensified to the point that John Taylor, Mormon President and prophet, decided he had to go underground.

As pressure mounted on the Church, Taylor felt the will of his people requesting that he seek revelation on the matter. Apparently he inquired how far the New and Everlasting Covenant was binding on the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It seems John Taylor considered plural marriage synonymous with the New and Everlasting Covenant. Given

the way Taylor had learned of “the Principle” in Nauvoo, this was an understandable mistake. If Brigham Young or Heber Kimball had still been alive, they may not have misunderstood. But they were both dead.

The response Taylor got demanded that the New and Everlasting Covenant remain in place. By this, John understood that he was not at liberty to end the practice of plural marriage. Men present in the house when the revelation was received would advocate for plural marriage after John Taylor’s death. One was Taylor’s son, Apostle John W. Taylor. The others were the safe house owner, John W. Woolley, and his son, Lorin.

1887 – The Edmunds-Tucker Act: Taking Away Mormon Property

Four key events occurred in 1887.

First, Sophia Whitaker, wife of John Taylor, suffered a serious stroke. As she lay near death, federal agents surrounded the home and bed where she lingered, hoping to apprehend the Mormon Prophet. They would invade Sophia’s bedroom whenever it was suspected John Taylor might have returned to comfort his dying wife. Sophia’s son, John Whitaker Taylor, stood at her side, witnessing these indignities. Sophia would die without ever seeing her husband again. ²³

Second, David Patten Rich, a son of apostle and noted polygamist Charles C. Rich, was arrested for robbing a bank. David Rich was convicted of committing a felony and was excommunicated. ²⁴ David Rich’s example as a moral degenerate produced by Mormon polygamy became an important part in the lobbying to pass the Edmunds-Tucker Act. ²⁵

Third, the Edmunds-Tucker Act passed. The Act called for the seizure of Mormon Church properties valued at more than \$50,000. This would include the temples in which Mormons sealed families together and performed proxy baptisms. ²⁶

Finally, John Taylor learned that Sophia had died and that the Edmunds-Tucker Act had passed, possibly receiving word of these events on the same day. Taylor died roughly two months after receiving news of these twin disasters. ²⁷

Before John Taylor’s death, advisors had suggested the Mormons flee to Mexico. However John did not act on this advice. Instead he had moved to transfer as much Church property as possible into private hands.

1890 – Mormons Renounce Polygamy (Part 1)

With the death of John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff became the Mormon Prophet.²⁸ Around the time of Joseph's death, Woodruff had been presiding over Church efforts in Europe and the eastern United States, where he uncovered the wrongful actions of William Smith in Massachusetts.

Woodruff did not marry plural wives until the fall of 1846, at Winter Quarters.²⁹ When Woodruff's two plural wives would not give up staying out all night with other men, Woodruff ended the marriages and sent the young women back to their families. The two women went on to live respectable lives in the extended Mormon community. One married a Mormon Battalion veteran who had departed the summer shortly before her short-lived marriage to Wilford Woodruff. This suggests an innocent reason the teenagers chose to talk into the wee hours of the morning, heedless of the impropriety.

Given Wilford Woodruff's history with early polygamy, he was not as vested as his predecessors had been in continuing plural marriage as a necessary mortal component of Celestial Marriage. As federal scrutiny intensified in the late 1880s, Woodruff ceased living with all but one of his wives. When Woodruff learned a plural marriage had been performed in the Endowment House without his permission, he had the structure razed.

Faced with the fact that the Edmunds-Tucker Act would result in the loss of the temples if Mormons continued to practice plural marriage, Wilford Woodruff issued the 1890 Anti-Polygamy Manifesto. The Manifesto advised Mormons not to enter into any future plural marriages prohibited by the law of the land.³⁰ Woodruff explained it was more important to retain the temples and the ability to perform the saving ordinances than maintain the practice of plural marriage in mortality.

Four years later, Woodruff would further revise the Mormon understanding of temple ordinances. At the time of the 1846 temple ordinances in Nauvoo, it had been impossible for many saints to seal themselves along family lines. The practice had grown up of sealing or adopting people to Church leaders. In April 1894, Wilford Woodruff stated that sealings should link individuals to their actual parents.³¹ Shortly thereafter, the Utah Genealogical Society was formed.

1896 – Utah Becomes A State

With Mormon polygamy renounced, the United States cautiously considered making Utah a state.

One major question was whether women would be allowed to vote in the new state. Advocates of statehood initially desired to separate women's suffrage from the matter of Utah's status within the United States. They were concerned that opposition to giving the vote to women might derail recognition of Utah as a state. But the insistence of the women led to inclusion of their right to vote with the language making Utah a state. Though Utah had originally granted voting rights to women nearly a quarter century earlier, only Wyoming and Colorado were allowing women to vote at the time Utah finally became a state in 1896. Female suffrage would not be granted throughout the United States until 1920. A map of female voting rights immediately prior to passage of 19th Amendment shows that the entire west surrounding Utah had accepted female suffrage. The possible contribution of Utah's women to western suffrage should not be dismissed.

In the minds of many Mormons, it was unclear whether the Manifesto affected their ability to practice polygamy in other nations. Although polygamy was illegal in Canada and Mexico, those countries had not decided to take a hard stance against Mormon polygamy. The settlement of Cardston, Alberta, Canada, just north of the United States border, was settled by Mormons in 1887 at the behest of John Taylor for the express purpose of establishing a Mormon colony that was beyond the reach of the United States' anti-polygamy prosecutions. Mexican communities, such as Colonia Juarez, sprung up just south of the U.S. border, filled with plural wives and their children.

Though the majority of Mormons shrugged off plural marriage willingly, a select few clung to the practice. These few believed plural marriage in mortality was a critical component of the restored gospel.³² The days of defiance were about to begin.

Fifty Years in the Wilderness – Notes

The Mormon dedication to plural marriage arguably informed every aspect of pioneer history. Whether directly or indirectly, plural marriage caused the attempt to use handcarts, the Utah War, the Mountain Meadows massacre, female suffrage, and settlements in Canada and Mexico.

29 – Days of Defiance

The majority of Mormons welcomed the end of polygamy, announced by Wilford Woodruff in 1890. The suffering caused by government enforcement of anti-polygamy laws had been great.

Yet even when Wilford Woodruff announced that plural marriage should end, not everything was over.

For the vast majority of men involved in a plural marriage, Wilford Woodruff's pronouncement ending polygamy did not persuade them to renounce their plural wives. Many of these men were older, with older plural wives who were at or near the end of their childbearing years.

A few men involved in plural marriage had married young brides in the final years before the Manifesto was issued. These were often inspired by John Taylor's dying conviction that plural marriage was the New and Everlasting Covenant. These few men believed the requirement to enter into plural marriage could never righteously be taken from the earth.

Meanwhile, the United States had taken a hard position that polygamy was utterly wrong. On this point the people of the United States were of one mind as they have rarely been since.

Mind Your Own Business

Once the Morrill Act was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1879 and the Edmunds Act was signed into law in 1882, plural marriages were conducted in strict secrecy. Young wives retained their maiden names even when they moved away from home. A young man could never know if his lady love kept her distance due to disdain or because she had already secretly pledged herself to another. ¹ In the years leading up to Wilford Woodruff's announcement ending polygamy, Mormon culture had adopted means of hiding the actual practice of polygamy.

Annie Clark [Tanner] tells of the women who existed in the Mormon Underground. Pregnant women would be taken in without question. They would not be asked their name or where they came from. When she herself was pregnant and underground, she had a complete false history at the ready, should anyone ask her who she was.

In August 1889 Annie Tanner was with her young daughter at the home of her aunt, Mary Rich. Wilford Woodruff, then president of the Church, was visiting, along with Apostles George Q. Cannon and Francis Marion Lyman. ² Wilford Woodruff saw Annie playing with her daughter and asked if the child was Annie's. Annie acknowledged that the girl was her child. Then President Woodruff asked who the father might be. Annie hesitated, saying nothing. Elder Cannon came to her rescue, saying "That is hardly a fair question, is it, Brother Woodruff?" ³

Ironically, Annie's husband was present that week. But they were never together in public. Similar scenes played out throughout the rest of the Mormon settlements. No one wanted to know anything they might have to testify to in a court of law. ⁴

When President Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto in 1890, it was not clear whether the ban on plural marriages was supposed to end existing plural marriages. The wording of the Manifesto led some to think plural marriages might still be possible to contract in countries other than the United States, where governments didn't care enough to prosecute. Given a culture where participants in plural marriages were not willing to tell the prophet himself of their status, the Manifesto became something the Church could not effectively enforce.

Testing the Waters

Intense anti-polygamy persecution had been mounted against the Church. The Manifesto had declared that new plural marriages should no longer be solemnized in the United States, the country in which all Mormon temples existed at that time. To set an example, both Church President Wilford Woodruff and Presiding Apostle Lorenzo Snow severed earthly ties with their plural wives, each spending the rest of his life with only one of his eternal wives.

Others, however, continued to believe polygamy was a fundamental principle of exaltation.

One of these who resisted was B. H. Roberts, born 1857 in England. Roberts had started adulthood as a boozing, gambling miner who could not read. By the time Roberts was in his thirties, he had become a staunch defender of the faith, a prolific writer, a member of the First Quorum of Seventy, and husband to three women.

In 1898 B. H. Roberts ⁵ ran for Congress. He won election as a Democratic member of the House of Representatives. Because Utah was newly a state, this meant Roberts would be a voting member of Congress if allowed to take his elected seat. Constituents throughout the United States rebelled at the thought of admitting an acknowledged polygamist to Congress. Anti-polygamy activists distributed petitions demanding Roberts be barred from serving in Congress.

Individuals throughout the United States signed the petition to bar Roberts from being seated in Congress. The originals of these petitions are housed in the U.S. Archives, where they occupy multiple feet of shelf space. The number of signatures collected is in excess of 50% of the number of enfranchised voters at that time. ⁶ Roberts was never seated in Congress.

The Actions of the Sons

A majority of LDS Church officials continued to privately acknowledge their plural wives. The majority of these men married their plural wives before the beginning of intense government sanctions. They were now old men and their wives were largely beyond the age of childbearing.

A minority, however, had been willing to marry even in the face of the dire sanctions of the Edmunds-Tucker Act and the anticipated prohibition

against polygamy on the part of the LDS Church. Now that Utah was a state, this minority quietly began to marry additional women, presuming they could perform sealing ordinances in opposition to the direction of the prophet. ⁷

In 1901 the three youngest apostles married additional plural wives. John W. Taylor and Abraham Owen Woodruff were the sons of former prophets, admitted to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when they were in their mid-twenties. Matthias F. Cowley was the third apostle to break ranks and marry a plural wife in the new century. Joseph Marion Tanner, husband of Annie Clark [Tanner], was another prominent Church leader who followed the lead of the three youngest apostles.

John W. Taylor, born in 1858 during the Utah War, was the senior of these youngest apostles, both in age and apostolic rank. It is likely he was the ring-leader of those entering into post-manifesto polygamy. In 1886 he had been guarding the door in the home of John W. Woolley ⁸ when President John Taylor reportedly received a revelation. In response to John Taylor's question asking if the Church was still bound to continue the New and Everlasting Covenant, God had said yes. President Taylor clearly believed New and Everlasting Covenant was synonymous with plural marriage.

In January, 1901, someone performed a marriage binding the 27-year-old Owen Woodruff to a second wife. Woodruff's new bride was Eliza Avery Clark, an 18-year-old who had been born in Farmington, Utah. On August 29, 1901, someone performed marriage ceremonies binding John W. Taylor to two half-sisters as his fourth and fifth wives. Taylor's new brides were college-educated Eliza Roxie Welling and Phoebe Welling, ⁹ also from Farmington, Utah. In 1901 Matthias Cowley also took on an additional plural wife, Mary Lenora Taylor. ¹⁰

Given the secrecy surrounding plural marriages solemnized after the Manifesto, it is not always possible to determine when the marriages occurred or who had officiated. However it is certain the actions of these young apostles suggested plural marriages could continue despite President Woodruff's 1890 Manifesto. The three junior apostles were young, handsome men. Their new wives were young women with their entire reproductive lives ahead of them.

The Smoot Hearings or Mormons Renounce Polygamy (Part 2)

In 1902, Apostle Reed Smoot obtained permission from the Church to run for the U.S. Senate. He won the election and was seated in 1903. National

opposition to Reed Smoot was immediate. As a Mormon, Smoot was suspected of being a polygamist. As an LDS apostle, Smoot was suspected of being a mere puppet for the Mormon hierarchy.

The Smoot hearings would produce a huge record. According to Kathleen Flake:

“The four-year Senate proceeding created a 3,500-page record of testimony by 100 witnesses on every peculiarity of Mormonism, especially its polygamous family structure, ritual worship practices, “secret oaths,” open canon, economic communalism, and theocratic politics. The public participated actively in the proceedings. In the Capitol, spectators lined the halls, waiting for limited seats in the committee room, and filled the galleries to hear floor debates. For those who could not see for themselves, journalists and cartoonists depicted each day’s admission and outrage. At the height of the hearing, some senators were receiving a thousand letters a day from angry constituents. What remains of these public petitions fills 11 feet of shelf space, the largest such collection in the National Archives.”¹¹

The most famous sound bite from the trial was uttered by Senator Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania. Boies was unabashed in his appetites, which included food and women. But he was irritated at the pompous self-righteousness of others. Addressing the subject of polygamy, Penrose reportedly glared at Senate colleagues who had reputations for philandering and said:

“As for me, I would rather have seated beside me in this chamber a polygamist who doesn’t poly than a monogamist who doesn’t monog.”¹²

Despite four years of hearings, the Senate was ultimately unable to muster the 2/3 majority required to expel a member from the Senate.¹³ In 1904, however, the outcome of the Smoot hearings was far from certain. LDS Church President Joseph F. Smith was asked to testify before Congress in 1904. Joseph F. Smith was one of those who had refused to put away his plural wives. He acknowledged to the U.S. Congress that his own unwillingness to give up his plural wives had set a bad example. Three months later, on June 6, 1904, President Smith issued a reiteration of the Church’s position on plural marriage:

Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into, contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff of September 24, 1890, commonly called the manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff, and adopted by the Church at its general conference, October 6, 1890, which forbade any marriages violative of the law of the land, I, Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent, or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

And I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage, he will be deemed in transgression against the Church, and will be liable to be dealt with according to the rules and regulations thereof and excommunicated therefrom. ¹⁴

JOSEPH F. SMITH,
President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Significantly, B. H. Roberts seconded the new statement.

The next day Owen Woodruff's first wife, Helen, died of small pox in Mexico. ¹⁵ Owen Woodruff himself passed away of small pox later that month. ¹⁶ The boyish apostle's audacious practice of post-Manifesto polygamy would therefore be largely forgotten by history. ¹⁷

However John W. Taylor and Matthias Cowley continued to solemnize plural marriages, despite the 1904 reiteration of the Church's position. ¹⁸ When they were called as witnesses in the Smoot hearings, they fled the country and went into hiding. ¹⁹

In 1905, Taylor and Cowley were called before their colleagues in the Church hierarchy. They resigned from the Quorum of the Twelve at the request of Joseph F. Smith on October 28, 1905.

In 1909, after Reed Smoot was no longer at risk of being ousted from the U.S. Senate, John W. Taylor married his secretary, Ellen Sandburg. ²⁰ He was able to keep this sixth marriage quiet until 1911. When the Quorum of the Twelve learned of this post-1904 marriage, they questioned John W. Taylor. Taylor replied it was none of their business. John W. Taylor was excommunicated. Matthias Cowley was disfellowshipped, possibly because

he had almost certainly performed the ceremony joining John W. Taylor and Ellen Sandburg.

Legend has it that John W. Taylor accepted his excommunication, but it broke his heart.²¹ His financial dealings faltered now that he was no longer a member of the Church.²² He was diagnosed with stomach cancer after the excommunication. He died in 1916 with President Joseph F. Smith sitting vigil for his last days. Some take the prophet's vigil at the deathbed of his longtime colleague as a sign of their friendship. Others believe the prophet stood watch to ensure no one attempted to restore John's blessings before he died.²³

After Matthias Cowley was stripped of his priesthood, the former apostle curbed his involvement in advocating for plural marriage. In 1936, after twenty-five years, Matthias was again ordained to the priesthood. But Matthias Cowley was never readmitted to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Matthias' son, Matthew Cowley, would rise to prominence in the Church, becoming an apostle in 1945.²⁴

The erring apostles had been silenced by death and Church discipline. However others took up the cause of perpetuating polygamy.

The Church of the Landlord

There were those, like John Taylor, who were convinced that the New and Everlasting Covenant was synonymous with plural marriage. One of these was John W. Woolley. It was in Woolley's house that John Taylor reportedly received the 1886 revelation regarding the New and Everlasting Covenant.²⁵

As the man in whose house the John Taylor revelation had been received, John Woolley became convinced it was his duty to continue the practice of polygamy. Woolley preached that the Church leadership had fundamentally erred in ceasing the practice of plural marriage.

In 1914 John W. Woolley was excommunicated for performing plural marriages in his role as a temple sealer. Despite this public censure, John and his son, Lorin, appear to have believed the Church itself was secretly continuing the practice of plural marriage. In this vein, Lorin alleged that church president Heber J. Grant and apostle James E. Talmage had taken plural wives in the "recent past."²⁶ The Church vigorously denied Lorin's claims and excommunicated him in 1924.

John W. Woolley died in December 1928, claiming that he was the rightful successor to John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff, the last two Mormon prophets to allow plural marriages. It had been the now-dead apostle-sons of these two prophets who had each participated in post-Manifesto polygamy.²⁷

At John Woolley's death, Lorin C. Woolley assumed the mantle of leadership in his father's movement to continue polygamy.

In 1912 Lorin published the first account of the 1886 revelation.²⁸ The story became more elaborate as the years passed. In 1929 Lorin published what he claimed was the authoritative account of the revelation reportedly received in 1886. Lorin alleged that John Taylor had set apart a cadre of men to ensure that no year passed by without children being born in the New and Everlasting Covenant of marriage. Supposedly the end of the world would result.²⁹ By 1929 the mainstream LDS Church no longer understood the New and Everlasting Covenant to be synonymous with plural marriage. Therefore Lorin Woolley specifically claimed John Taylor's alleged actions meant that no year must pass without children being born into plural marriages.

Lorin Woolley assumed control of the Council of Friends, a priesthood council Woolley claimed was superior in authority to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As Woolley argued his Council of Friends was the more authoritative organization, Woolley argued the Mormon Church could not appropriately excommunicate the polygamists. Lorin claimed the Council of Friends dated back to Adam. But most accounts simply report that Lorin organized the Council of Friends.

The Woolleys had said they were perpetuating necessary and fundamental tenets of Mormonism, including polygamy and the United Order.³⁰ Those who adhere to the Woolley faith tradition are often referred to as fundamentalists, a term coined in the 1940s by LDS Apostle Mark E. Petersen.³¹

The vast majority of modern polygamists in the Mormon tradition belong to offshoots of Lorin Woolley's 1929 Council of Friends.³² Lorin would never live to see the many disparate fundamentalist traditions his controversial claims would spawn, with some leaders of fundamentalist sects found guilty of crimes from murder to rape and incest. Mormons discovered to be practicing polygamy are excommunicated from the LDS Church. Their children must renounce polygamy to be baptized.

Fundamentalist polygamist groups are primarily located in the Western United States, Western Canada, and northern Mexico. Somewhere between 8,000 and 30,000 fundamentalists actually live in polygamous households.

One prominent fundamentalist leader, Warren Jeffs, was on the FBI list of ten most wanted criminals before he was apprehended and sentenced to life in prison plus twenty years for rape and incestuous abuse. Dan and Ron Lafferty were brothers who murdered their sister-in-law, Brenda Lafferty. Brenda had persuaded Ron's wife to reject polygamy and leave Ron. The Laffertys also murdered their niece, Brenda's infant daughter Erica.³³ The Lafferty case was documented in Jon Krakauer's 2003 book about violent polygamist fundamentalism, *Under the Banner of Heaven*.

Despite the gross abuses of some, many fundamentalists are honorable individuals who merely feel they are holding true to a divine mandate to practice plural marriage, a mandate they feel the modern Mormon Church has abandoned. Meanwhile the LDS Church repudiates mortal polygamy.

What of the Taylors?

Some are confused by the history regarding the end of polygamy. Some are tempted to believe the modern Mormon Church was wrong to abandon polygamy in 1890. If this is true, the experience of one family may be of particular interest.

John Taylor went to his death bed believing that plural marriage was necessary. John Whitaker Taylor persisted in this belief as a high Church leader, until he was stripped of every privilege of Church membership.

What did the third and fourth generations from John Taylor and his son choose?

The Taylors chose to remain in the mainstream LDS Church, the Church that walked away from "the principle." As late as 1980 the matriarchs of the family were carefully teaching their descendants of the dangers of fundamentalist sects. These matriarchs were telling their children and grandchildren of their status as precious children of a storied heritage, children that fundamentalists would desire to seduce to their cause.

As of 1980, it was alleged that only one modern descendant of John Taylor had been involved in fundamentalist polygamy. This one young

woman had the marriage annulled as soon as she became aware that her husband was a polygamist. ³⁴ It is doubtful modern descendants of John Taylor have aligned themselves with fundamentalist polygamy. Yet if there were some secret polygamous way that led to “true” salvation, shouldn’t the modern descendants of the Taylors have sought that “true” salvation? ³⁵

Days of Defiance – Notes

In the years of intense federal opposition to plural marriage during the 1880s, Mormons developed ways to continue the practice. Women were not questioned about who might have fathered their children. Homes were opened to women with no questions asked. The women had false histories at the ready. Annie Clark [Tanner] would not even tell the prophet himself the identity of her daughter’s father.

The vast majority of Mormons rejoiced when the requirement to practice plural marriage was lifted. But some felt it was wrong to end a practice for which they and their forebears had suffered so intensely.

B. H. Roberts, husband to three wives, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1898. National outrage produced a petition that occupies multiple feet in the Library of Congress. Roberts was never seated as a Congressman.

The three junior apostles, Taylor, Cowley, and Woodruff, entered into plural marriages in roughly 1901. John W. Taylor and Owen Woodruff were sons of two LDS Presidents who had taught plural marriage. In addition to practicing plural marriage, the three began to encourage others to enter into plural marriage.

Apostle Reed Smoot was given authorization to run for the U.S. Senate in 1902. When Smoot was elected, Senate hearings continued for four years, looking into Smoot’s past and all aspects of Mormon religion. Though Smoot was never ousted from the Senate, media attention clarified that the LDS Church needed to regulate rogue members. A Second Manifesto was issued, and Taylor and Cowley were disfellowshipped. Woodruff had died.

With the junior apostles silenced, John and Lorin Woolley took it upon themselves to continue the practice of what they considered fundamental principles, including the United Order and plural marriage. There are currently between 8,000 and 30,000 fundamentalists. Meanwhile the mainstream LDS Church has a membership in excess of 15 million.³⁶

30 – God’s Strange Act: A Legacy

In the fall of 2012, Taylor volunteered to campaign for one of the two U.S. presidential candidates. He was primarily motivated by political ideology, but he also hoped that he might meet someone. He’d fought for his country in Iraq and served a mission to Thailand. For a couple of years since his mission, Taylor had been hoping to meet someone he could marry. He’d dated, of course, and he’d introduce whichever woman he was dating to his family. Time after time, however, he’d eventually have to tell well-wishers that, no, he was no longer dating the young woman he’d told them about.

In the pre-dawn mist, Taylor surveyed the group of fellow campaigners. They had gathered at the vans to travel to a swing district for the weekend of campaigning. Instead of the group of college students he’d expected, the other campaigners were mature individuals or children. Resigned, Taylor set about making friends of those around him.

After dawn, the vans of campaigners stopped for a break. Taylor noticed a woman amidst the older folks and helpful children. She was bundled in her coat against the fall chill, hair pulled back in a knot, glasses framing an attractive face of undetermined age. Taylor turned back to his new-found friends and continued the discussion. He didn’t want his new friends to feel he was willing to ditch them just for an attractive woman. Besides, the woman might turn out to be married or otherwise uninterested in a college student

like himself. However Taylor’s new friends urged him to meet the lady on the other side of the group.

Her name, Taylor learned, was Shazia. And, no, she was not married, nor would she be unwilling to date a college student. As the weekend progressed, Taylor and Shazia began to learn how much they shared in common: music, academics, a love of the outdoors, politics, having a parent from Asia, pioneer heritage, ancestors who were shot at Carthage jail. ¹

In time Taylor introduced Shazia to his family and updated his Facebook status. Eventually an e-mail from Taylor’s grandmother went out, days before Valentine’s Day. The subject read “Taylor’s technically not engaged yet, but the marriage is set...”

Thus began one of the myriad love stories of those who believe in the importance of marriage, of those who believe their unions can last for eternity.



Together, Forever

Our modern culture is filled with movies and cards talking about being together forever. And yet there is only one religion with a doctrine that actually allows for couples and families to be together in eternity.

This is the legacy of Joseph Smith. He taught that we could we enter into eternal covenants with one another. Further, he taught, we can solemnize eternal linkages between our family members reaching through all generations of mortal existence, all countries, all races.

We who love in this life know how much our spouse means to us, how much we care for our children, how much we care for our parents. As we consider the generations who preceded us and the generations yet to come, Mormons see mankind as a great eternal family. It is a grand global family that transcends all boundaries of time and space, a family that will transcend death and hell.

Isaiah prophesied that in the last day, the Lord God would rise up and save His people, as David saved Israel from the Philistines in the Valley of Gibeon. In that last day, Isaiah said, God would do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.²

God would give His people line upon line, precept upon precept, giving them consolation, confirming their hope.³ In that day Elijah would appear and restore the sealing power, that the fathers might be sealed to their children, and the children to their fathers.⁴ The hour would come when those in their graves would hear the word of God,⁵ that Word which is life and light, with power to make all who will believe the children of God.⁶

This, then, was the purpose of the restoration. It was to save all mankind by binding us together in families. The saving ordinance of baptism would be performed, by proxy if necessary, as a prerequisite to each individual’s entry into the great eternal union.

No other theology envisions this truly universal salvation of mankind. Of modern religions, only in the religion Joseph Smith restored will each child of God become free from the circumstances and limitations of their birth. In the theology believers claim Joseph Smith restored, all are provided the means for salvation and then permitted to choose whether to embrace the salvation of Christ or reject it.⁷

Why Polygamy?

If the family of mankind is to be bound together for eternity, it had to be possible to bind together those families where a man had been married to more than one woman during his lifetime.

A huge amount of controversy and suffering has been endured over plural marriage. Yet it seems Joseph's introduction of plural marriage as part of the New and Everlasting Covenant was merely a procedural footnote to the great work of sealing mankind together.

In great stories, the hero's quest is to right the wrong that looms over the people.

Christ died that all might be saved, that all might be resurrected. Paul told the Corinthians, "Else why are they baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all..." From this exasperated comment, we gain insight into a primitive Christian church that was performing ordinances on behalf of the departed. The primitive Christian Church was extending salvation to more than just those few who were privileged to hear it and embrace it in this life.

Yet this salvation is not just for the children of first wives. Insistence on monogamy as the only valid form of marriage had to be broken, else the great work of binding families together would fail. Women who married widowers would have been cut off. The plural wives of 70% of mankind's cultures would have forever been cut off. And with these women, vast numbers of children would also be cut off.

A culture willing to kill over polygamy would not have willingly birthed the understanding that a man could be eternally sealed to more than one woman. And so restoration of that one small aspect of the work required the sacrifice of "the best blood of the nineteenth century," as John Taylor would write of Joseph's death. ⁸

Why the Secrecy?

Of late there have been those disturbed that the LDS Church appeared to hide the past regarding polygamy. Something, surely, was rotten about this, if it had to be so thoroughly buried.

Three factors come into play. First is that plural marriage is not what you want dominating an initial conversation about salvation and the precious gift

of Christ’s atonement. Yet when would plural marriage be discussed, if not then? Plural marriage is discussed, when one is studying the history of the Church. But most people never get to a stage where they are seriously studying the history of the Church. Thus most people get stuck at a level where they are uncomfortable at the thought of a man being able to have more than one wife, yet do not have the background to understand why God might have restored this “principle.”

Second, there are those who learn of plural marriage and desire to practice it, believing (incorrectly) that if it was good enough for Joseph, it is good enough for them. Surely this fear should be receding over a hundred years after the excommunication of John W. Taylor. But today’s general authorities were born when this was a very real threat. Some have adult memories of Apostle Richard Lyman’s excommunication in 1943. Lyman had slipped from friendship with a woman to an imagined union with her in heaven to an adulterous “polygamous” liaison. Lyman betrayed his wife and thousands who had honored him. Leaders of the modern Church don’t want to risk losing anyone else they love to polygamy.

Third, the actual history of Nauvoo polygamy and plural marriage has been shrouded in secrecy. This was originally intended to protect the repentant souls who had been seduced by John C. Bennett and his Strikers. Yet how could the Church tell those things which had been stricken from the record, details that had only ever been known to a select few? Those few took the secrets to their graves over a century ago.

Today, with the internet, the mangled and secretive story has power to wound, where it could previously simply be hidden. And so today it is necessary to assemble the story, as best as we possibly can, so that the most accurate truth can be laid before all, believers and detractors alike.

Knowledge Brings Peace

The initial draft of this book was written as a series of blog posts. I thought there would be many who would challenge my views, bringing forward facts that would fundamentally alter my reconstruction. I looked forward to the challenge. Peer review is a proven method I have long used in my scientific career for arriving at a better final result.

What I could not be sure of was the number of those commenting and e-mailing me directly, telling me that this reconstruction made sense of a history they’d relegated to a back shelf. These were often those who had made a

decision to be a faithful Mormon based on the witness of the Spirit, even though Joseph's practice of plural marriage had remained a troublesome mystery.

Some have supposed me dogmatic in my views. But I have been open to change in response to data. Those who followed my blog posts in 2014 saw this. I originally did not know the extent of John Bennett's seduction of Joseph's people. I did not originally think the Strikers had been directly involved in Joseph's killing. I did not originally consider my ancestor, Austin Cowles, to be a major conspirator contributing to Joseph's death. I did not originally acknowledge how much responsibility my ancestor, John W. Taylor, bore for today's Mormon fundamentalists. I had not originally imagined how many of the women involved in early Nauvoo polygamy might have been seduced by the Strikers. I did not know that Eliza R. Snow may have been raped or that she had modified her 1842 poem about marriage or that she had written describing an intimate relationship⁹ with "that Foul hearted spirit, the traitor, The vile, faithless, rottenhearted wretch..." presumably John C. Bennett.

This reconstructed history tells of terrible evil. And yet it has brought peace to some. In 2014 an e-mail arrived from someone related to Mary Clift. Mary's son, Jason, has long been presumed to be one of the first children born into polygamy. The reconstructed history explains how Jason had actually been fathered by Gustavus Hills,¹⁰ that the High Council minutes had not been an elaborate ruse to "protect" the secret of Celestial marriage. The e-mail read:

"Meg,

"I wanted to thank you for sharing your thoughts on the Theodore Turley/Mary Clift marriage... In researching [Mary's] life to present a biography, I was more than a little confused by the August 1842 Gustavus Hills testimony she gave in relation to the family's insistence on the January 1842 marriage date. In asking [another family member] about it, he suggested (as a theory, since we do not know for sure) that it was a false testimony in an effort to hide the practice of plural marriage. I've recently discovered your theory that you published earlier this year to the contrary. This is much more satisfying to me in picturing both Mary and Theodore..."

As my correspondent concluded, we may never truly know what happened. But we must acknowledge that other theories regarding Nauvoo and polygamy are similarly uncertain.

Ultimately we should select those reconstructions that best fit the totality of the data. The totality of the data suggests Joseph rarely consummated his “marriages” to plural wives, possibly out of deference to his beloved Emma. Likewise, his love for even those who would ultimately kill him rendered him perhaps too willing to forgive.

Joseph’s Legacy

Joseph Smith’s teachings regarding the New and Everlasting Covenant, with its allowance for plural marriage in eternity, is consistent with the Bible and early Christianity, if utterly foreign to most modern Christian creeds. Today’s Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or Mormonism represents the result of embracing that Covenant. It is a religion that envisions all mankind as brothers and sisters, a theology with a mechanism to save all mankind through all time as well as all space. It is a religion fundamentally based on the primacy of the love between spouses and the love between parents and children.

It is a religion that has power to offer salvation to even those who have fallen away: to John Bennett and William Law, to Francis Higbee and Lorin C. Woolley. When the final judgment commences, the hope is that all the ordinances of salvation will have been performed for all mankind, that all individuals will then stand before the judgment bar with an ability to make an informed post-mortal decision regarding Christ and God. At that time, those who choose Christ will have the option of embracing either the duly authorized baptism they enacted in life or the one that was performed by proxy on their behalf.

In that envisioned future judgment, no man or woman will be left behind except by their own, individual choice. No child will have been declared an eternal bastard unworthy of Christ’s salvation. All will be provided the ordinances of salvation as part of the human family, in all its complexities.

This, then, is the legacy of Joseph Smith, Jr. This is the reason it was worth giving his life. It was to restore the knowledge that marriages in eternity could, at times, diverge from the monogamous ideal.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Bruce Nielson for inviting me to blog on this topic at Millennial Star (millennialstar.org). Without that opportunity, I would not have been forced to find the next level of documentation you see here. I am also grateful to Brian C. Hales, who graciously shared the Nauvoo High Council Minutes and the testimonies of the women who reported having been seduced by the Strikers. Brian's magnificent 1500 page work *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, with the accompanying website, contains a vast amount of information regarding Nauvoo events. It is a must-have resource for all students of Mormon polygamy.

I am also grateful for those researchers who have gone before me, and who have shared their writings. Of particular note are Todd H. Compton, Gary Bergera, Richard L. Bushman, Linda Newell, Val Avery, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, and Joseph Johnstun. Scholarship and probity are always of value, even when interpretations differ.

I must also recognize the sweet individuals who waded through my original manuscripts and provided feedback. Their comments significantly improved the book you are reading now.

Finally, I am grateful to my family, for their support and example. In particular, I am grateful to my husband, Bryan Stout. He has an unwavering love for me and all mankind. He was the one who pointed me to works such as Compton's *In Sacred Loneliness*, Annie Clark Tanner's *A Mormon Mother*, and Hales' *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*. He is the one who constantly questions me, while sharing his vast insights into Christianity across the millennia. He is the one who brings me food and water when I have been unwilling to move from my computer for hours on end. If I know that men can be good and great, it is because I know Bryan Stout.

God's Strange Act: A Legacy – Notes

Modern Mormon marriages are like the marriages of any other group, with the hope that the spouses can be together forever. While this hope is routinely voiced in cards and movies, there is no mechanism for this to be accomplished in any of the world's religions, other than in Mormonism.

Plural marriage is merely an accommodation for the reality that some families don't fit the monogamous ideal. There is no need for every man to be a polygamist in eternity, or for every woman to presume she will have to

share her husband. But as we attempt to bind the family of mankind together in all its complexity, a mechanism for dealing with the many realities of actual families was needed. The biblical family model, where each woman and her children are linked to one man, is sufficient to bind the human family together. Mormons trust God to make any required adjustments in heaven.

The secrecy of early plural marriage came about because of the illicit intercourse practiced and taught by Dr. John C. Bennett. At the time, names and details were kept quiet in hopes that the women and men affected would repent. The individuals of that past had no idea the way the information would get mangled in our day. They thought it no harm to take secrets to the grave, unrecorded.

We can continue to persist in the limited and prurient view of our past, or embrace the terrible and glorious truths that created Mormonism as it is – a religion that believes in families, even when they diverge from the ideal.

Appendix A – Conscientious History: A Guide

A reasonable person will want to observe a few short rules when reconstructing or evaluating history. Adapted from Wendie E. Schneider's distillation of the 2000 ruling in *Irving v. Penguin Books and Lipstadt*.

1. Know the Basics of Evidence

- a. **Primary Evidence** is created by a participant in the event under investigation
 - i. **Contemporary** evidence is created at the time of the event
 - ii. **Late** evidence (usually recollection) is created after the event
- b. **Secondary Evidence**, contemporary or late, is created by those not present at the event and is often speculation
- c. **Provenance**
 - i. If the story or artifact changed hands, was there opportunity for **unintentional error** to have crept in?
 - ii. Was any source likely to have **altered the story** or artifact?
- d. **Plausibility**
 - i. Is the story or artifact **anachronistic**?
 - ii. Is the story or artifact **contradicted by science**?

2. Evaluate the Evidence before Finalizing a Conclusion

- a. Treat all sources with **appropriate reservations**
- b. Don't dismiss counter-evidence without **scholarly consideration**
- c. **Be even-handed** in treatment of evidence
- d. **Identify speculation** when suggesting conclusions
- e. **Correctly transcribe or translate** documents. Omissions or elisions should be used to clarify evidence, not alter it
- f. **Weigh the authenticity** of all accounts
- g. **Consider the motives** of historical actors

3. Avoid Fraud, the deliberate misrepresentation or manipulation of historical evidence

- a. **Do not knowingly present forgery** as genuine
- b. **Do not suggest implausible reasons** for dismissing genuine evidence or reasonable conjecture
- c. **Do not attribute distorted conclusions** to sources
- d. **Do not manipulate statistics** to alter conclusions
- e. **Do not deliberately mis-translate** texts

Appendix B – Small Arms Ballistics

In 1860, the United States War Department conducted a series of ballistics tests, evaluating the accuracy of various guns at different ranges and wind conditions. Each test consisted of up to 50 balls shot at a 10' x 10' target, with marks every foot in the vertical direction and across the middle of the target horizontally. Often the tests had five different men shoot at the target. At other times five different men loaded the guns, but only one man shot the guns.

Contrary to popular wisdom, the shots from the rifles weren't much more accurate than the smoothbore musket test. The main difference in the much-discussed outcome of Civil War battles was likely the minié ball. The minié "ball" is conical with an indented base. This irregular projectile deforms on impact, creating much more internal damage than a smooth round ball. In addition, breach-loaded rifles could be loaded more quickly than the old muzzle-loading guns.

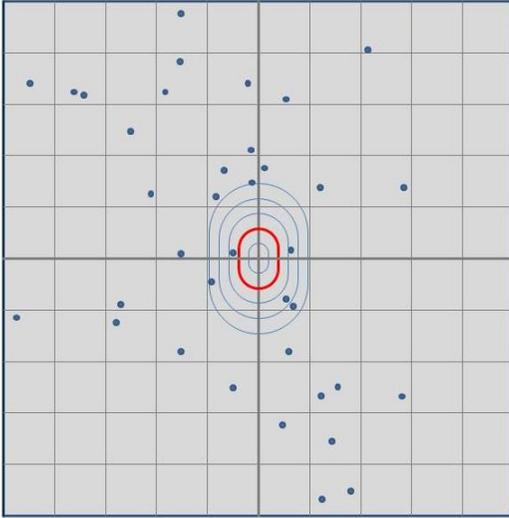
The main factor in achieving highly accurate placement of the shots was allowing one skilled shooter to use a rest.

The source material for the images in this appendix is the 1860 Trial of Small Arms conducted by the War Department. The figures in this appendix were created by digitizing the impact points from key targets from the 1860 trials and adding a B-18 torso target to the center of each 10' x 10' target originally used.

For a B-18 torso target, the innermost rounded rectangle is the 10 point ring. Competitions are scored by giving each shot the number of points associated with the rings, with the smallest ring having the highest points. Shots impacting on or inside ring 9 would be considered kill shots.

Source:

War Dept 112, Records of the firings and opinions of the Board assembled at the Washington Arsenal for the Trial of Small Arms according to Special Order No. 23, War Department, February 1st, 1860. Reproduced in *The Rifled Musket*, written by Claud E. Fuller, Bonanza Books, New York, 1958.



Target #37

Smooth Bore Musket
 Caliber .69
 100 yards
 No wind noted

10 men shooting by volley
 50 total shots fired

37 struck 10' x 10' target

6 hit NRA B-18 target

0 hit NRA B-18 ring 9+



Target #13

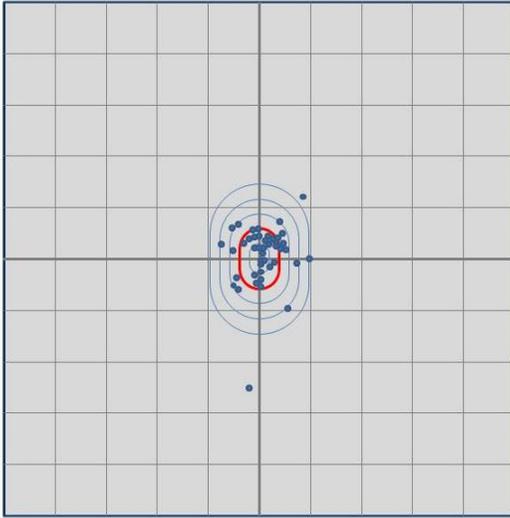
Harper's Ferry Rifle
 Caliber .58
 100 yards
 Moderate wind from right

10 men shooting by volley
 50 total shots fired

37 struck 10' x 10' target

5 hit NRA B-18 target

0 hit NRA B-18 ring 9+



Target #79

Harper's Ferry Rifle
Caliber .58
100 yards
Calm

5 men loading 5 arms
50 total shots fired by
one man from a rest

50 struck 10' x 10' target

48 hit NRA B-18 target

34 hit NRA B-18 ring 9+



Target #70

Iron Barreled Rifle with
leaf sights and fly trigger
100 yards
Calm

5 men loading 5 arms
50 total shots fired by
one man from a rest

50 struck 10' x 10' target

50 hit NRA B-18 target

22 hit NRA B-18 ring 9+

Appendix C – Alleged Children of Joseph Smith

Mother	Child	Discussion
Julia Clapp	Julia Murdock Smith (?31) ☉	Rumor circa 1842 spread by those who suspected Julia was not Emma's daughter. Father was John Murdock.
Fanny Alger	Orrison Smith (?34)	Tradition disproved by genetic testing (Ycs)
Hannah Dubois	Alleged son and/or daughter	Speculative tradition. First two children fathered by a John F. Smith, suggesting source of rumor
Clarissa Reed	Mosiah Lyman Hancock (?34)	Tradition based on letter referring to "our Mosiah", disproved by genetic testing (Ycs)
	John Reed Hancock (?41)	Disproved by genetic testing (Ycs) (Perego e-mail to Stout of 5/14/2016)
Marietta Carter	Sarah Elizabeth Holmes (?38)	Assertion made to Ugo Perego, possibly based on Sarah's closeness to the Smith family
Presendia Huntington	Oliver Norman Buell (?40)	Anti-Mormon exposé by Mary Etta Coray [Henderson Jones Smith]. Oliver disproved by genetic testing. John conceived 60 miles from Nauvoo, making it unlikely Joseph was involved.
	John Hiram Buell (?43) ☉	
Lucinda Pendleton	Don Alonzo Smith (?40)	Family tradition disproved by genetic testing (Perego e-mail to Hales of 12/6/2011)
Zina Huntington	Zebulon Williams Jacobs (?42)	Speculation by William Hall disproved by genetic testing
Mary Rollins Lightner	George Algernon Lightner (?42) ☉	Speculation. Mary Rollins suggested three children may have been fathered by Joseph, but never said her children were Joseph's
	Florentine Mattheas Lightner (?43) ☉	
Eliza Snow	miscarriage (?42) ☉	Nov '42 journal mentions death and vile wretch
Nancy Marinda Johnson	Orson Washington Hyde (?43) ☉	Speculation by Fawn Brodie, 43 week pregnancy needed for unlikely conception window to work.
	Frank Henry Hyde (?46)	Speculation by Fawn Brodie though birth date 18 months after Joseph died
Sylvia Sessions	Josephine Rosetta Lyon (?44)	Speculation based on mother's dying testimony. Disproved by autosomal DNA tests, presented 6/11/2016 to the Mormon History Association
Margaret Creighton	Josephine Henry (?44)	Assertion by Larry R. King, circa 2008. Per Hales, mother pregnant upon arrival at Nauvoo
Esther Dutcher	Joseph Albert Smith (?44)	Speculation. Legal husband was Albert Smith, no relation to Joseph Smith.
Mary Ann Frost	Moroni Llewellyn Pratt (?44)	Speculation by Fawn Brodie, disproved by genetic testing, Parley Pratt is father
Olive Grey Frost	Child (?45) ☉	Rumor based on statement by an "Aunt Lizzie" likely born 1847
Lucy Walker	Rachel Kimball (?46) ☉	Speculation based on Rachel's death record, giving either wrong birthday or wrong age
Lulu Vermillion	Carolyn Delight	Assertion made to Ugo Perego. May be Carolyn Delight Allen (?38), born to Lucy Morley [Allen]

Bolded mothers believed to have been Joseph's covenant wives

Bolded children denotes DNA analysis conducted by Ugo Perego

☉ - Died without producing children

Appendix D – Timeline

Date	Event
1805, Dec	Joseph Smith is born
1820, Mar	Joseph Smith experiences the First Vision
1823, Sep	Joseph Smith is visited by the Angel Moroni
1827, Jan	Joseph Smith marries Emma Hale
1827, Sep	Joseph Smith retrieves the Golden Plates
1828, Jun	Emma Hale [Smith] gives birth to Alvin Smith, who dies hours later. Joseph Smith receives word that Martin Harris lost 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon
1830, Mar	The Book of Mormon is published in Palmyra, NY
1830, Jun	Joseph Smith, Jr., organizes the Church of Christ, later known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or the LDS Church. Due to its association with the Book of Mormon, members of the LDS Church are referred to as Mormons and their religion called Mormonism.
1830, Sep	Emma Hale [Smith] chooses to remain with Joseph Smith when her father evicts Joseph from his farm.
1831, Feb	Joseph and Emma arrive in Kirtland, OH. Joseph resumes his Old Testament translation at Genesis 5:29.
1831, Mar 7	Joseph Smith leaves off translating the Old Testament at Genesis 24:31. Per report from Erastus Snow, it seems Joseph Smith had received the revelation regarding the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage (aka plural marriage/Celestial marriage) while translating Genesis 17.
1831, Apr	Emma gives birth to twins Thaddeus and Louisa. They die within hours of birth. She is given the newborn twins of John Murdock, whose wife had died in childbirth. The twins are Joseph Murdock Smith and Julia Murdock Smith.
1832, Feb	Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon receive a revelation prompted by John 5:29 which describes a three-tiered heaven. This appears to be a partial answer to Joseph's question the prior year.

Date	Event
1832, Mar	Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon are attacked by a mob. Joseph's adopted son, Joseph Murdock Smith, dies five days later.
1832, Nov	Emma gives birth to Joseph Smith III.
Abt 1833	Fanny Alger becomes a maid servant in the Smith home.
Abt 1834	Joseph is commanded to enter into plural marriage with Mary Elizabeth Rollins. He does not act. For years she has dreams that she is Joseph's wife.
1836, Mar	The Kirtland Temple is dedicated
1836, Apr	Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery have a vision in the Kirtland Temple, where the keys of gathering Israel, the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, and the keys to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers are bestowed on Joseph Smith.
Abt 1836	Joseph Smith enters into a Celestial marriage with Fanny Alger.
1836, Jun	Emma gives birth to Frederick Granger Williams Smith.
1836, Sep	Fanny Alger leaves Kirtland. Two months later she marries Solomon Custer. Regarding the end of Fanny's stay with the Smiths, Oliver Cowdery develops the conviction that Joseph Smith had been guilty of adultery. Joseph counters that the alleged behavior would be appropriate in the context of a marriage.
1838, Jun	Emma gives birth to Alexander Hale Smith
1838, Oct	A Missouri mob attacks the village of Haun's Mill. 17 men are killed, including the husbands of Catherine Laur [Fuller] and Philinda Eldredge [Merrick]
1838, Nov	Joseph Smith is taken prisoner. He is ordered shot, but the officer refuses to obey. Joseph will eventually be incarcerated in Liberty Jail.
1839, Apr	Joseph Smith is allowed to escape from Liberty Jail. He flees Missouri and rejoins Emma in Illinois
1840, Jun	Emma gives birth to Don Carlos Smith.
1840, Aug	A Missouri mob attacks Nauvoo. Marietta Rosetta Carter [Holmes], a neighbor of the Smiths who had been married in their home, is killed. Her baby, Mary Holmes, dies the following month.
1840, Sep	Dr. John C. Bennett protects the Smith homestead while Joseph Smith, Sr., gives his dying blessing to his children.
1840, Dec	Dr. Bennett wins passage of a City Charter for Nauvoo.

Date	Event
1841, Jan	Joseph pronounces D&C 124, blessing Dr. Bennett that “for his love he shall be great...” At this time Dr. Bennett was courting a young woman and had apparently requested a bill of divorcement from his estranged wife.
1841, Feb	Dr. Bennett is elected first Mayor of Nauvoo. Joseph becomes aware that Dr. Bennett may have a shady past. He sends George Miller to investigate.
1841, Mar	George Miller writes a letter confirming that Dr. Bennett has a sordid past, including reports from Bennett’s estranged wife alleging adultery and abuse.
1841, Apr	Sidney Rigdon becomes ill. Joseph Smith temporarily installs Dr. Bennett as Assistant President of the Church. Joseph Smith enters into a Celestial marriage with Louisa Beaman, member of a family that has known Joseph since translation of the Book of Mormon.
1841, NLT May	Dr. Bennett engages in an illicit affair with Sarah Marinda Bates [Pratt], wife of Apostle Orson Pratt
1841, NLT Jun	Dr. Bennett cultivates the widow Catherine Laur [Fuller] as a mistress. He claims any sin will fall upon him, and informs her he has medicine to prevent or terminate pregnancy
1841, Jul	Dr. Bennett confesses to adultery, possibly before a group of 60 men. Brigham Young and Heber Kimball return to Nauvoo from England Catherine Laur [Fuller] engages in illicit intercourse with George M. Thatcher Orson Pratt returns to Nauvoo and reunites with his wife. Dr. Bennett attempts suicide

Date	Event
1841, Aug	<p>William Clayton visits Nauvoo</p> <p>Joseph Smith's clerk, Robert Thompson, dies. An 1843 entry in William Clayton's journal suggests Robert Thompson had been guilty of illicit intercourse.</p> <p>Orange Wight reportedly learns John Higbee has two wives and recalls girls were calling each other "spirituals." Says by the following winter he was fully initiated.</p>
1841, Sep	<p>Joseph Smith's son and brother die, both named Don Carlos Smith.</p> <p>Don Carlos reportedly had said, "Any man who will teach and practice the doctrine of spiritual wifery will go to hell, I don't care if it is my brother Joseph."</p>
1841, Oct	<p>Catherine Laur [Fuller] gives an affidavit naming October as the month Dr. Bennett began to claim that Joseph Smith taught and practiced illicit intercourse</p> <p>Joseph Smith enters into Celestial marriage with Zina Diantha Huntington [Jacobs]</p>
1841, Nov	<p>William Smith settles in Nauvoo. He will eventually become a key member of Dr. Bennett's illicit intercourse operation, helping convince women to yield, testifying that Joseph Smith teaches that it is right</p>
1841, Dec	<p>Joseph Smith enters into Celestial marriage with Presendia Lathrop Huntington [Buell]</p> <p>Brigham Young asks Martha Brotherton to be his extra-monomamous lover. Joseph prays for the welfare of "B.Y."</p>
1842, Jan	<p>Joseph Smith enters into a levirate marriage with Agnes Moulton Coolbrith [Smith], widow of his recently-deceased brother. Brigham Young officiates.</p> <p>Joseph enters into Celestial marriage with Mary Elizabeth Rollins [Lightner]. Joseph tells her to remain with her husband</p> <p>The Nauvoo High Council urges the lesser priesthood to go to every home to teach the Saints their duty. This evolves into a city-wide census conducted in Feb 1842</p>

Date	Event
1842, Feb?	Joseph reaches out to Sylvia Sessions [Lyon], wife of dentist and apothecary, Windsor Lyon.
1842, Mar	<p>Joseph reportedly marries Patty Bartlett [Sessions]. Patty is a midwife</p> <p>The Nauvoo Women’s Relief Society is organized, with a founding purpose to warn the unwary. Emma Smith is president of the new organization.</p>
1842, Apr	<p>Marinda Nancy Johnson [Hyde] invites Nancy Rigdon to talk with Joseph Smith</p> <p>Possible timeframe when Joseph attempts to talk with Emily Dow Partridge. When Emily refuses to be alone with Joseph or even accept a letter, Elizabeth Durfee asks the Partridge girls to visit and inquires what they know about spiritual wifery</p>
1842, May	<p>Joseph begins administering the initiatory and endowment ceremonies, with vows that sex is only for spouses</p> <p>A Masonic Lodge is established in Nauvoo</p> <p>Horace Whitney is sent to visit relatives in CT and OH</p> <p>Several informants describe suspicious interactions between women and men. Five women come forward to testify regarding having engaged in illicit intercourse and witnessed others in the act of sex. The testimonies clearly indicate the illicit intercourse heresy was started by Dr. Bennett the prior year.</p>
1842, Jun	<p>Dr. Bennett is cut off from the Church</p> <p>Oliver Snow leaves Nauvoo</p> <p>Eliza Snow is taken into the home of Relief Society Counselor, Sarah Cleveland. Sarah Cleveland stands as witness as Joseph Smith reportedly enters into Celestial marriage with Eliza Snow</p>

Date	Event
1842, Jul	<p>Dr. Bennett begins to publish a series of exposés, alleging Joseph had taught illicit intercourse and planned to overthrow the United States. Bennett’s early tale claiming to have witnessed Joseph Smith in the act is never repeated in writing</p> <p>Dr. Bennett accuses Joseph of attempting to seduce Sarah Bates [Pratt]. Joseph counter-accuses Dr. Bennett of engaging in an illicit affair with Sarah [Pratt]</p> <p>Orson Pratt goes missing. He is found miles from Nauvoo near the river. It is believed Orson was contemplating suicide</p> <p>Joseph Smith enters into Celestial marriage with Sarah Ann Whitney, sister of Horace Whitney</p>
1842, Aug	<p>Joseph Smith goes into hiding</p> <p>When Orson would not agree to support Joseph (and implicitly identify his wife, Sarah, as a whore), the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles excommunicates Orson</p>
1842, Sep	<p>Eliza Snow writes a poem dedicated to Jonathan Holmes. The original manuscript hints this was the first indication that husbands and wives can be “sealed” after death.</p>
1842, Nov	<p>Eliza Snow writes a series of undated poems talking about death, seduction, solitude, and “conscious innocence.”</p>
1842, Dec	<p>Jonathan Holmes marries Elvira Annie Cowles. Elvira has allegedly already promised herself to Joseph Smith. Elvira does not conceive for another two years, months after Joseph Smith’s death</p> <p>Eliza Snow begins teaching school, teaching daily until March 17, 1843</p>
1843, Mar	<p>Joseph secretly marries Emily and Eliza Partridge. Emily’s account makes it clear the marriage was not consummated, at least not the first night</p>
1843, Apr	<p>Erastus Snow returns to Nauvoo after an extended absence. Joseph Smith teaches him the doctrine of Celestial marriage and asserts “That the time had come now when the principle should be practiced.”</p>

Date	Event
1843, May	<p>Emma Hale [Smith] agrees to enter into Celestial marriage, including giving Eliza and Emily Partridge to Joseph as a public symbol of her acceptance of the principle.</p> <p>Days after allowing Joseph to marry the Partridge sisters, Emma recants, taking action to curtail the Partridge girls’ access to Joseph. Even so, Emma does go through with the ceremony to be sealed to Joseph.</p>
1843, Jun	<p>Elvira Annie Cowles [Holmes] enters into covenant with Joseph Smith</p> <p>Emma makes a demand of Joseph. Joseph is commanded to grant Emma her desire. Emma and Joseph travel to Inlet Grove, IL. While there, Joseph is attacked and taken into custody</p> <p>Joseph’s friends are able to get Joseph back to Nauvoo and freed. Joseph throws a party and invites the men who beat and arrested him to be his guests of honor</p>
1843, Jul	<p>Joseph Smith writes down the revelation regarding the New and Everlasting Covenant (D&C 132). The promise Emma had been granted is rescinded and she is to cleave to Joseph.</p>
1843, Aug	<p>Hyrum shares the text of the revelation with the Nauvoo High Council. Some reject the revelation.</p>
1843, Oct	<p>Hyrum Smith shares the revelation with William Law.</p> <p>Dr. Bennett writes about the “Doctrine of Marrying for Eternity, for the first time reflecting a correct understanding of Joseph’s doctrine.</p>
1843, Dec	<p>Dr. Bennett visits Nauvoo. The only record of the visit are purchases Dr. Bennett makes at Joseph’s Red Brick Store</p> <p>William Law is dropped from the Anointed Quorum and dismissed as Assistant President of the Church</p>
1844, Feb	<p>Thomas Sharp resumes as editor of the Warsaw Signal</p> <p>James Strang joins the Mormon Church</p> <p>Men believed to be sympathetic to an anti-Joseph movement are contacted</p>

Date	Event
1844, Mar	<p>Dennison Harris and Robert Scott agree to spy on the conspirators</p> <p>Joseph Smith establishes the Council of Fifty</p> <p>Some two hundred attend an initial meeting in the home of William Law. During the second meeting it is decided that Joseph Smith must be killed.</p> <p>Joseph confers the keys of gathering, the gospel of Abraham, and the sealing power conveyed by Elijah on the heads of the Apostles</p> <p>Dennison Harris and Robert Scott narrowly escape a meeting of the conspirators having refused to swear the oath of secrecy and intent to murder Joseph Smith</p>
1844, Apr	William Law excommunicated
1844, May	<p>Austin Cowles excommunicated</p> <p>Affidavits of some women seduced by John Bennett and Chauncey Higbee published in the Nauvoo Neighbor</p>
1844 Jun	<p>First and only issue of the <i>Nauvoo Expositor</i> is published by Chauncey Higbee et al., with affidavits from William Law and Austin Cowles</p> <p><i>Nauvoo Expositor</i> press destroyed</p> <p>Joseph arrested, imprisoned, and killed by a mob</p> <p>Bodies of Joseph and Hyrum Smith returned to Nauvoo</p>
1844, Sep	<p>Brigham Young persuades the Mormons in Nauvoo that he is the rightful successor to Joseph Smith</p> <p>James Strang makes a claim that he has been designated Joseph's successor. Many of the known conspirators ally themselves with Strang</p> <p>Young and Kimball begin to solemnize plural marriages, including marrying numerous widows of Joseph Smith</p>
1845, Oct	William Smith excommunicated after openly preaching regarding spiritual wifery
1845, Dec	The Nauvoo temple is dedicated and ordinance work begins
1845, Feb	<p>The Mormons begin to leave Nauvoo, hoping to reach the Rockies in time to plant crops in summer 1845.</p> <p>They will not arrive until July 1847</p>

Date	Event
1845, Sep	The Battle of Nauvoo occurs as a mob of 1000 men attack the scant 100 remaining residents of Nauvoo.
1846, Jul	500 Mormon men sign up to serve in the U.S. Army to fight in the Mexican War. This Mormon Battalion never sees battle, but finds gold at Sutter’s Mill and paves the wagon road across the Sierra Madres that will be used by those bound to California during the gold rush.
1847, Jul	The first Mormons arrive in Salt Lake Valley. Brigham Young declares that “This is the right place...”
1848, Sep	The Holmes-Thompson party, Battalion members who paved the wagon trail over the Sierra Madres, return to their families in Salt Lake valley
1852, Aug	Orson Pratt gives a public sermon stating Mormons formally embrace the doctrine of plural marriage
1853, Jul	Former Nauvoo Stake President, William Marks, publishes account where Joseph Smith had reportedly condemned “this doctrine of polygamy, or Spiritual-wife System” weeks before his death in 1844.
1857, May	Apostle Parley P. Pratt is gunned down and stabbed by Hector McLean, whose wife and children had accepted Pratt’s protection in fleeing the abusive McLean. Pratt died hours later from loss of blood. The killing revives Mormon feelings of persecution anchored in the violent expulsion from Missouri and Illinois, as well as the killing of Joseph and Hyrum Smith
1857, Jul	Federal troops leave Fort Leavenworth, KS, bound to Utah Territory to subdue to Mormons, who are believed to be in open rebellion against the United States
1857, Sep	Under orders from Brigham Young to avoid interactions with non-Mormon wagon trains, Mormons refrain from giving customary assistance to those traveling through Utah to California. The Baker-Fancher Party attempt to reach California by taking a trail through southern Utah. The Baker-Fancher party is attacked after finding fresh water and grazing for livestock at Mountain Meadows. All in the party old enough to identify who the attackers had been are killed.
1858, Mar	Mormons throughout Utah Territory, eventually totaling an estimated 30,000, board up their homes. They move south of the Traverse Mountain Pass separating Salt Lake Valley (e.g., Salt Lake City) from Utah Valley (e.g., Provo).

Date	Event
1858, Jun	As agreed with Buchanan's peace commission, Johnston's army enters the Salt Lake valley. A few Mormon men are left behind to torch the improvements, if U.S. troops fail to honor the agreement.
1858, Jul	Once the U.S. Army is seen as respecting the peace terms, the Mormons leave Provo and returned to their farms. Several outlying communities are abandoned.
1861-1865	The American Civil War occurs. The Federal troops stationed in Utah depart in August 1861. A contingent returns in 1862.
1862, Jul	Abraham Lincoln signs the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act, focused on Mormon polygamy. The American Civil War and lack of funds prevent significant enforcement.
1869	Joseph Smith's sons and other missionaries from the Re-organized LDS Church (RLDS Church) proselyte throughout Utah and the Mormon settlements attempting to persuade the Utah Mormons that Joseph Smith never was a polygamist. In response, Joseph F. Smith and Andrew Jensen separately compile affidavits clarifying the dates and details of Joseph Smith's covenants in Nauvoo.
1870	Utah Territory passes women's suffrage Brigham Young's grand-niece, Sarah Young, is first woman to cast a vote in the United States
1877, Aug	Brigham Young dies John Taylor becomes leader of the LDS Church
1882, Mar	President Chester A. Arthur signs the Edmunds Act, building on the Morrill act by revoking the right of polygamists to vote and barring them from jury duty or political office. The Federal government begins incarcerating polygamists in the penitentiary.
1885	President John Taylor, who had succeeded Brigham Young, goes underground to escape Federal custody.
1886	John Taylor seeks permission from God to end the New and Everlasting Covenant. An uncanonized revelation prohibits Taylor from revoking the Everlasting Covenant. John Taylor presumes he must continue the practice of plural marriage.

Date	Event
1887	Congress passes the Edmunds-Tucker Act. The act disincorporated the LDS Church and directed confiscation of Church properties valued at more than \$50,000, which would include the Mormon temples. The act abrogates spousal privilege, requiring wives to testify against their husbands. The act also takes away voting rights from Utah women. John Taylor dies two months after learning of the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act. Wilford Woodruff assumes leadership of the LDS Church.
1890, Oct	Faced with potential loss of the temples, LDS Church President Wilford Woodruff issues the Anti-Polygamy Manifesto, prohibiting Mormons from entering into any marriage prohibited by the law of the land. Existing plural marriages continue to be seen as valid.
1887-1894	The RLDS Church sues for possession of the Missouri Temple Lot from the Hedrickites or Church of Christ (Temple Lot). The LDS Church sides with the Hedrickites to keep the important property out of RLDS hands. The initial ruling awarded the property to the RLDS Church. An appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eight Circuit produces lengthy testimony regarding polygamy, in aid of proving that the RLDS Church was not the rightful successor to Joseph Smith's original Church. The Court of Appeals chooses to vacate the original trial court decision.
1900-1901	Three junior LDS Apostles marry additional plural wives. They preach that plural marriage must continue.
1903	LDS Apostle Reed Smoot is elected to the U.S. Senate.
1904-1907	The U.S. Senate conducts hearings into Reed Smoot's suitability to serve in the U.S. Senate. The hearings created a 3,5000 page record of "every peculiarity of Mormonism."
1904	LDS President Joseph F. Smith issues a Second Manifesto, clarifying that any Church officer who performed a plural marriage, as well as the offending couple, would be excommunicated and extends the policy to the entire world, where the 1890 Manifesto had been understood as applying only within the United States. Apostle Abraham Owen Woodruff dies of small pox.

Date	Event
1905	Apostles John W. Taylor and Mattias F. Cowley resign from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.
1911	John W. Taylor is excommunicated for having married his secretary in 1909, making her his sixth plural wife.
1912	Lorin C. Woolley writes the first account of John Taylor's 1886 revelation, claiming that it was polygamy that God had declared could not be revoked.
1914	John W. Woolley is excommunicated for performing plural marriages
1916	John W. Taylor dies. LDS President Joseph F. Smith sits vigil at Taylors deathbed. The LDS Church refused to restore Taylor's blessings or acknowledge his post-Manifesto marriages for many decades after his death.
1924	Lorin C. Woolley excommunicated for "pernicious falsehood" related to his claims that Heber J. Grant and James E. Talmage had recently married plural wives.
1928	Lorin C. Wolley succeeds his father as senior member and prophet of the Council of Friends, a sect dedicated to continuing the practice of polygamy despite LDS Manifestos prohibiting the practice.
1943	Apostle Richard Lyman is excommunicated for engaging in a long-term adultery, an affair Lyman had considered to be merely an unauthorized polygamous union
2014, Nov	Media outlets around the world realize that the LDS Church had quietly published scholarly articles regarding early LDS polygamy. The CNN headline reads "Mormon Founder Joseph Smith wed 40 Wives."

Appendix E – The Peace of thy Children

My sisters asked me to provide them a safe version of this history for their children, one that would skip all the distressing anatomical details. While a reasonable person can evaluate the facts and not find the LDS faith to be “true,” my sisters wished to help their children understand this history in the context of the gospel they are learning at Church in Primary.

The Gospel teaches that families are meant to be together forever. After Jesus died, this truth was lost. Later, kings and queens changed marriage because they did not understand that families are supposed to be forever.

When Joseph Smith was born, churches taught marriage ended with death and did not last forever. They taught that it was wicked to have more than one spouse. When Joseph read the Old Testament, he asked God how Abraham could have two wives and still be a righteous prophet.

God told Joseph marriages and families last forever, and that it was important for children to have both their parents sealed to them in eternity. God wants all His children to be with their mothers and fathers in heaven. But if Abraham could only be married to one person, then one of his sons would not be able to be in his family forever.

Joseph knew some men who had married again after their first wife had died. He knew these men loved their new wives and children as much as the first. In the resurrection, both wives would be alive. If marriage did not end with death, then the man would have two wives.

God gave Joseph a commandment to marry another wife. Joseph did not want to have more than one wife. He had been taught it was wrong. He felt it would be mean to his wife Emma. He loved her so much. But God insisted. He wanted people to know a man could have more than one wife.

A young woman named Fanny worked for Joseph and Emma in their home. Emma was good friends with Fanny. Joseph married Fanny, like how Abraham married the woman who worked for his wife. But Joseph did not have a baby with Fanny. Fanny was not happy, so she left. Emma was very unhappy that Fanny left, and she complained to Joseph’s friend.

Joseph's friend thought Joseph had committed adultery. Fanny's friends said Fanny was married to Joseph. Fanny's family trusted Joseph, and believed him for the rest of their lives.

In those days, Joseph was running a bank for the Church. All over the country everyone's money lost value. Some members of the Church were angry at Joseph when their money lost value. They betrayed Joseph to Missouri soldiers. The soldiers locked Joseph in jail for many months. The people in Missouri burned the Mormons' homes. They bragged about killing Mormon men and boys and hurting women and girls.

Those who believed in Joseph fled Missouri and took refuge in a swamp. Many got sick because swamps are not healthy places to live. Joseph was allowed to escape from the jail. He blessed the sick and healed them. The people worked together to change the swamp into a beautiful city, named Nauvoo. It was a great time of learning and teaching about how God intends to save all those who repent, even those who died without baptism.

But the people in Missouri attacked Nauvoo and killed a woman and burned her home. A politician named Dr. Bennett promised to get the government to protect Nauvoo. When he did this, everyone was happy. They elected Dr. Bennett to be mayor and made him a general.

Dr. Bennett wanted to marry one of the Mormon women. But Joseph was told Dr. Bennett was a bad man who abandoned his wife and children. Joseph sent a missionary to learn more. The missionary discovered the story was true, Dr. Bennett was still married and had lied and had done other wicked things. Joseph made Dr. Bennett stop talking about getting married. Joseph hoped Dr. Bennett would repent.

Joseph was ignoring the commandment about marriage, like how Jonah ignored the commandment to preach to Nineveh. Finally Joseph obeyed, marrying a woman named Louisa. It was very secret, and Louisa never got pregnant. So maybe Joseph was planning on Louisa just being his wife in eternity without having a family with her on earth.

Dr. Bennett was frustrated. He wanted to be able to be with a woman. When a man and woman are married, they take care of each other. If they have children together, they take care of their children. When a man and a woman make a baby together, it feels good, like eating something yummy. But Dr. Bennett did not want to take care of a wife and children. He just wanted to feel good.

Dr. Bennett convinced a married woman to commit adultery with him so he could feel good. Then he convinced a widow to do the same. When friends discovered what Bennett was doing, he told them that this was a new teaching. Dr. Bennett said it was OK to have a good time with any woman, as long as it was kept hidden. Dr. Bennett gave the men medicine so the women would not get pregnant. Lots of men and women became involved in this secret sin.

Joseph did not know about the sins of Dr. Bennett and his friends. But God knew that Dr. Bennett's lies and secret adultery would destroy the Church. God sent an angel with a sword to Joseph. If Joseph did not obey the commandment to marry more women, the people would be destroyed. Joseph was confused about what to do. He talked with some women he felt inspired to marry years earlier. But they were married to other men now. They covenanted to be Joseph's wives in eternity, but remained with the husbands they already had for their time on Earth. Joseph hoped this would fulfill the commandment.

But God wanted His people to understand that marriage was for creating loving families. Loving families take care of each other and make relationships that can last forever. This was opposite from the idea Dr. Bennett taught. Dr. Bennett said a man and a woman could be together like they were married just for a little while to feel good, but that they did not need to take care of each other or have a relationship that lasts forever.

Then Joseph found out there were liars teaching that adultery was okay. One young man who had sinned was kicked out of the church. Then Joseph began to see that it was more than just one man. Joseph asked the priesthood holders to visit every home and teach the people their duty. But the men who were sinning were good at keeping secrets, like the Gadianton robbers in the Book of Mormon.

Sarah Kimball was a generous woman. She thought it would be a great idea to have the women sew shirts for the men building the temple. Joseph felt inspired that the women should do more than sew shirts. He made the women's organization an important part of the Church. The women named the organization Relief Society. In Relief Society they learned the gospel, did good works, and learned that adultery is evil.

Emma became president of the Relief Society. Emma and Joseph both preached that woman should be virtuous, no matter who told them it was OK to sin. The Relief Society investigated rumors, asking young women if they knew anything about that "spiritual wifery" which was adultery.

Two months after Relief Society was formed, a few brave women came forward. They told the good leaders of the Church what had happened. They confessed and were forgiven. Some of the men confessed as well. Even Dr. Bennett confessed. But when Joseph learned all the facts, he figured out Dr. Bennett was the one who invented the lies. Joseph kicked Dr. Bennett out of the Church. He fired him from being mayor and general.

In the months that followed, more women came forward and confessed. Some of the women confessed to the city council. But Joseph mostly protected the women and men from public shame if they repented. In those days it was a terrible thing to commit adultery. Some people would never forgive if they knew. But Joseph knew that repentance means God will forgive. If you repent, God stops being upset with you for doing the sin.

Joseph and Emma taught righteousness. Joseph also told the women about God's teachings that marriage can be eternal. To show that the women they were truly forgiven, Joseph let them be married for eternity. Some fathers who loved their daughters thought it would be best if their daughters married Joseph in eternity. Emma participated in some of the weddings where Joseph married other women.

Dr. Bennett was so angry about being publicly disgraced that he started telling lies about Joseph. He wrote in the newspaper, he wrote a book, and he spoke to crowds all over America. Most people thought Dr. Bennett's stories were too crazy to be true. Others thought that if Joseph Smith taught and did the things Dr. Bennett said, Joseph Smith should be killed.

In Nauvoo, Emma and Joseph thought everything was fixed. To fulfill God's commandment, Emma told Joseph to marry two orphan women, Emily and Eliza Partridge. But Emily and Eliza didn't know about the liars who taught adultery was okay. They thought marriage would be just like in the Old Testament, where all the wives had lots of children.

But Emma knew that Dr. Bennett's lies about Joseph would make people think that he only cared about feeling good, not doing good. Emma did not want Emily and Eliza to have children at that time. Emma thought people would try to kill Joseph if he had children with his other wives. So Emma made Emily and Eliza stay away from Joseph. Emma told Joseph that she would divorce him if he had children with his other wives. Joseph loved Emma and they had many children together, so he agreed with her.

Joseph and Emma went away from Nauvoo to talk about what to do. While they were alone, sheriffs from Missouri found Joseph. They beat Joseph, hitting him again and again with a gun. When they took Joseph away, Emma was really scared. She thought Joseph would be killed. The people of Nauvoo rescued Joseph. Joseph was so happy to be free that he threw a big party. He invited the sheriffs who beat him up to be his special guests, and fed them the best food. Joseph always wanted to forgive.

Emma was mad. She did not want Joseph to forgive. She did not want to be part of a great big family that included the men that beat up her husband. She was angry about how dangerous it was for Joseph to be a husband to other women. She thought people would say Joseph was just trying to commit adultery.

Joseph's brother, Hyrum, thought if Joseph wrote the revelation down, Emma would be happy. But in the revelation, God told Emma to repent. This made Emma even more upset. Emma made Joseph burn the revelation. But someone had made a copy. The revelation that made Emma mad is now in the Doctrine & Covenants as Section 132.

Hyrum was really happy about the revelation. Hyrum's first wife had died, and he had a new wife. Now he could be with both his wives in eternity. Hyrum taught lots of people how the New and Everlasting Covenant lets families to be together forever, even when a man has more than one wife. He also taught how people can repent and be sealed into the great family of mankind.

But some did not want to repent. Joseph would not let people be sealed together in families until they repented. William Law did not want to repent. He gathered hundreds of men and made them swear to kill Joseph and lie about it. Joseph found out they wanted to kill him. Joseph gathered the apostles and ordained them with the sealing power and all the keys of the restored gospel. This way the gospel would not be lost even if Joseph was killed.

William Law and his hundreds of men used a newspaper to accuse Joseph of horrible things. Joseph was attacked by men who wanted Joseph shot because of what they read in the newspaper. The Mormons were afraid of the new newspaper. They decided to destroy the printing press of William Law's newspaper. This was against the law. The government said it was a terrible thing that Joseph destroyed a printing press, even though others had destroyed Mormon printing presses and burned cabins and even killed Mormons without being punished.

Joseph and Hyrum went to the county jail at Carthage. Before the trial, a mob attacked the jail and killed Joseph and Hyrum. The people who loved Joseph were shocked and afraid. They did not know who would lead them now that Joseph was dead. There was a special meeting to decide who would be their leader. The people agreed Brigham Young spoke like Joseph had spoken. Some wrote it was like Joseph was with them again.

Once Brigham Young and the apostles were in charge of the Church, Brigham was responsible for the women who were Joseph's eternal wives. None of Joseph's wives had gotten pregnant except Emma and the women who already had husbands. Brigham knew that it was a very sad thing for a woman to not have children. So he told the women it was time for them to have children.

Joseph's widows married men like the apostles, who promised to be good and protect them. These women were good friends to each other and honored Emma. The women had lots of children. They taught the children the gospel and explained to them that Joseph Smith was a great prophet. They would have loved to have Emma follow Brigham Young to the west.

But Emma Smith decided to stay near Nauvoo, where Joseph's body was buried. She paid the money Joseph owed for buying the swamp that became Nauvoo. Emma raised Joseph's children to love their father and taught them he was a good man who never committed adultery. For many years Joseph's sons told Brigham Young and the Mountain Mormons they were wrong to teach that a man could marry more than one woman. They said their father, Joseph Smith, would never have taught adultery.

Hyrum's son believed families could be together forever. He wanted to prove his cousins were wrong. Hyrum's son and others asked the women to write about being sealed to Joseph. The cousins fought in court about what Joseph taught. Many people told the judge that Joseph taught about how families can be together forever, even when a man had more than one wife.

But they did not talk about Dr. Bennett and the many people who had sinned. They did not want to remember the sins of anyone who had repented. The people who knew about the secret sins got old and died. The righteous leaders, like Joseph Smith, did not write about the secret adultery. So the young people did not understand why men like Dr. Bennett and William Law would lie. They started to believe the lies about Joseph Smith.

People started publishing books that said that Joseph committed adultery like Dr. Bennett and other secret adulterers. Really Joseph taught repentance and tried to fix the problems caused by the adulterers. When people learn about the many women Joseph helped, they think it was adultery. They believe the writers who say Joseph was a secret adulterer.

But God loves all his children. He asks those who believe His prophets and pray for those children of God who do not believe. He asks those who believe to be baptized for those who die without baptism. He asks us to forgive, the way Christ forgave. And He asks us to be families and love one another. He asks us to care about our ancestors. He asks us to grow up to be good parents for our children.

Most of all, God wants His children to accept the salvation of Christ, so that we can return to God in Heaven. In heaven we can be with our mothers and our fathers and our sisters and our brothers. We can be together with the person we marry in the temple and our children. This way all the people of the earth can become one great big family, where everyone is loved and everyone belongs.

Glossary

A collection of terms to assist the reader.
Neither guaranteed to be comprehensive
nor to be restricted to terms found in this book.

1 st Ward	Civic designation, comprised of Nauvoo, Illinois, properties north of Knight Street and west of Wells Street; location of Orson Pratt home
2 nd Ward	Civic designation, comprised of Nauvoo properties north of Knight Street and east of Wells Street; location of Catherine [Fuller] home
3 rd Ward	Civic designation, comprised of Nauvoo properties south of Knight Street and east of Wells Street
4 th Ward	Civic designation, comprised of Nauvoo properties south of Knight Street and west of Wells Street; location of Joseph Smith's home
abortion	Medically-induced termination of pregnancy
apostle	One of a group of twelve men in the Mormon Church with a commission to proclaim the gospel to all the world.
Articles of Faith	Concise summary of LDS beliefs, penned by Joseph Smith, published March 1, 1842 in the Times and Seasons, subsequently canonized and published in the Pearl of Great Prices
Baptism	Ordinance by which an individual covenants to take upon themselves the name of Jesus Christ, confessing Him as Lord and Savior, regarded as a requirement for attaining heaven and salvation
baptism for the dead	Proxy ordinance in which a living person is baptized on behalf of a deceased individual
Book of Mormon	LDS Scripture, said to be translated from metal plates inscribed by Israelites who had traveled to the Americas circa 600 BC
Carthage, Illinois	County seat of Hancock County, Illinois, location of the County jail
Celestial marriage	LDS form of high marriage, believed to unite spouses and descendants in eternity
COC	Community of Christ, formerly the Re-organized Church of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) Church

contagion	The spread of disease via contact. In the 1840s, prominent medical personnel did not believe contagion caused disease
Council in Heaven	Pre-mortal council where God presented a plan for exaltation. Christ offered to support God's plan, Lucifer rebelled, proposing a "better" way. c.f. Christian tradition about the Fall of Lucifer
D&C	Doctrine and Covenants, LDS Scripture, a collection of revelations received by Joseph Smith and other LDS prophets
eschatology	Study of the end, usually of all mankind
endowment	LDS sacred ordinance, requiring vows such as being completely faithful to one's spouse(s)
Extermination Order	Order issued by Governor Boggs of Missouri in October 1838, requiring the Mormons leave the state of Missouri
Fundamentalist	Term coined by LDS apostle Mark E. Peterson in the 1940s to describe those teaching plural marriage despite the Manifestos of 1890 & 1904
Haun's Mill Massacre	Attack by a militia of ~250 on a hamlet near Jacob Haun's mill off Shoal Creek, killing at least 17 Mormon men and boys. Women were reported to have been raped as well.
High Council	Council of twelve men administering to a Stake under the leadership of the President of the Stake and his Counselors. Charged with judgement when members commit serious sins
illicit intercourse	Sexual relations with no legal or ceremonial commitment
infection	The spread of disease via the air. In the 1840s, the viral and bacteriological mechanisms for infection were not known
LDS Church	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, formed 1830
Manifesto, 1890	Official declaration by the LDS Church ending the practice of polygamy
Manifesto, 1904	Clarification that plural marriages would not be permitted in any part of the world
Masonic Lodge	Basic organizational unit of Masonry. The Nauvoo Lodge was installed on March 15, 1842

miscarriage	Natural termination of pregnancy, also spontaneous abortion
Mormon	Term for members of the LDS Church. Also adjective for anything associated with faith traditions that have arisen from Joseph Smith's teachings
Nauvoo	City in Hancock County, Illinois, settled by Mormons in 1839, meaning "City Beautiful"
Nauvoo Census of 1842	Census of Nauvoo, Illinois, civic wards in Feb 1842, presented to the City in March 1842
Nauvoo Expositor	Opposition newspaper in Nauvoo. The press was destroyed after the issue printed June 7, 1844.
Nauvoo Legion	Militia for Nauvoo, Illinois, chartered by the Nauvoo City Charter of 1840
Nauvoo Neighbor	Newspaper published in Nauvoo from 1843-1845, successor to <i>The Wasp</i>
New and Everlasting Covenant	A Covenant between God and mankind, allowing all who choose to reunite with God in eternity, even those who died without mortal baptism or knowledge of Christ
Onanism	Sexual act involving penetration without ejaculation
patriarch	LDS Individual with patriarchal right to receive revelation on behalf of individuals
patriarchal blessing	Blessing voiced by a Patriarch on behalf of an individual desiring such a blessing
Pearl of Great Price	LDS Scripture, including a 'translation' of the Genesis creation account, a 'translation' of Egyptian funeral papyri, and Joseph Smith's history as written in 1839
plural marriage	Marriage in which one man has more than one wife, specifically with respect to eternal marriage
polyamory	Form of marriage where multiple men and women are together, often an open marriage
polyandry	Form of marriage where a woman has more than one husband
polygamy	Generic term for marriage where an individual has more than one spouse
polygyny	Form of marriage where a man has more than one wife

protology	Study of the beginning, see eschatology
Pre-mortal Existence	LDS term for existence of the spirit before conception.
Priesthood Ban	LDS ban from 1852 to 1978 prohibiting Black individuals from receiving the priesthood or any ordinances associated with the New and Everlasting Covenant.
proxy	In LDS ceremony, a mortal individual who stands in the place of a deceased individual
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles	The group of twelve men commissioned to proclaim the gospel to all the world. From March 1844, group commissioned to bear the responsibility for Church Leadership in the event of the death of Joseph Smith
Relief Society	LDS Women's organization from March 1842
RLDS	Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, formed 1860, now COC
sealing	Ordinance in which individuals are joined together for eternity. Can refer to union between spouses or joining of children to parents
spiritual wifery	Synonym for illicit or unlawful intercourse
Stake	Collection of multiple congregations or wards, usually comprising a few thousand individuals
temple	LDS term for sacred structure where ordinances related to the New and Everlasting Covenant are solemnized, including proxy ordinances on behalf of the deceased
Temple Lot Trial	Appeal to the 1894 ruling that the RLDS Church owned the Missouri Temple Lot. The LDS Church presented extensive testimony attempting to prove Joseph Smith taught and practiced plural marriage.
The Wasp	Newspaper published in Nauvoo from 1840-1843, generally supportive of the LDS Church
Times and Seasons	Newspaper published in Nauvoo, usually supportive of the LDS Church
Ward	Congregation of roughly 500-1000 individuals, alternately a civic division for purposes of voting
Warsaw Signal	Newspaper in Warsaw, Illinois, edited by Thomas Sharp. Critical of Smith after May 1841

End Notes

Foreword

¹ Perego, Ugo, “Joseph Smith and DNA,” *The Persistence of Polygamy, Vol. 1*, pp. 233-256. Also see Appendix C.

² Massachusetts doctor, Charles Knowlton, wrote a book in 1832 titled *The Fruits of Philosophy, or the Private Companion of Young Married People*, which explained methods of birth control. He was sentenced to three months hard labor. As late as 1877 people were being prosecuted for attempting to publish Knowlton’s book.

³ It was believed there was a “safe” period, but a proper understanding of the gynecological basis for this safe period was developed in the 1920s independently by Kyusaku Ogino in Japan and Hermann Knaus in Austria. The Rhythm Method was popularized in 1932 by a Roman Catholic doctor in America, Leo J. Latz, who considered the rhythm method consistent with Catholic doctrine. See Latz, *The Rhythm of Sterility and Fertility in Women*, 1932.

⁴ Objective evidence here refers to physical evidence, such as children or disease. As early as 1825, Jeremy Bentham’s *A Treatise on Judicial Evidence* (1825) argued that testimony needed to be backed up by material proof.

⁵ Brian Hales’ book and website, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, contains all public journals and records regarding this matter. Three primary sources are the Joseph F. Smith collection of affidavits, gathered circa 1869, Andrew Jensen’s affidavits also gathered circa 1869, and the 1894 appeal to the Temple Lot ruling. The express purpose of the gathered testimonies was to confirm that Joseph Smith had covenanted with women other than Emma Hale.

⁶ Hales, Emma. *Last Testimony of Sister Emma*, February 1879. When asked if Joseph had other wives, she replied, “He had no other wife but me; nor did he to my knowledge ever have.”

⁷ Bennett, John Cook, *History of the Saints*, 1842.

⁸ Law, William, affidavit published in the only issue of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, May, 1844.

⁹ Joseph Smith – History 1:10

1 – Prelude to a Killing

¹ March 31, 1844, The three meetings Dennison Harris attended were on Sundays. The Council of Fifty was formed on 26 March, where Joseph indicated he might be killed. Baugh, Alexander L. and Richard N. Holzapfel, “I Roll the Burden and Responsibility of Leading This Church Off from My Shoulders on to Yours: The 1844/1845 Declaration of the Quorum of the Twelve Regarding Apostolic Succession,” *BYU Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 3, 2010, pp. 5-19. Joseph’s acknowledgement that he might be killed is on p. 18. Footnote 20 on p. 13 provides the support for the date falling on March 26, 1844.

² William Law owned a stately brick home at the edge of the river, just south of Parley Street.

³ Joseph Smith announced his candidacy for the Presidency of the United States on January 29, 1844, shortly after stripping William Law of his leadership positions. Law was excommunicated in April 19, 1844, more than two weeks after the third seditious meeting held in his home on the river. See Joseph Smith: Campaign for President of the United States By Arnold K. Garr <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2009/02/joseph-smith-campaign-for-president-of-the-united-states?lang=eng>

⁴ Cummings, Horace, “Conspiracy of Nauvoo,” *The Contributor*, 1884, p. 253. Online 21 Jun 2014 at <http://tinyurl.com/1884-Contributor>.

⁵ John Scott was Robert Scott’s brother and a bodyguard to Joseph Smith.

⁶ This mention of a dip in the river suggests that the weather had turned warm.

⁷ The two leaders of the conspiracy were William Law, formerly Joseph’s counselor in the Presidency of the Church, and Austin Cowles, a member of the Nauvoo High Council.

⁸ Cummings, Conspiracy of Nauvoo, *The Contributor*, 1884, p. 253.

⁹ *The Contributor, Volume V*, p. 260, 1884. It appears Joseph may have hoped he could flee and remain hidden for twenty years. However he was ultimately not able to escape as hoped.

¹⁰ Dennison Harris related the tale to Brigham Young sometime before Young's death in 1877. The printed version of the tale was published in 1884, forty years after Joseph's death.

¹¹ Plural marriage, where a living man was married to multiple living women, was put aside. Modern Mormon doctrine allows a man to be eternally united (or sealed) to all the women who had been his wives. Modern Mormon practice also allows sealing ordinances to be performed on behalf of deceased women uniting them to all of their husbands, though most expect that only one of these ordinances would be binding in eternity.

2 – Why Would God Command Polygamy?

¹ Luke 2: 10-11

² 1 Timothy 2: 3-6

³ John Lefgren's analysis of local weather patterns and the science of maple syrup place the date of this vision on March 26, 1820, which was Palm Sunday.

⁴ Joseph Smith – History 1: 19

⁵ Joseph Smith – History 1: 34-35

⁶ Joseph Smith – History 1: 36-38

⁷ Joseph Smith – History 1: 39 , c.f. Malachi 4:6

⁸ Malachi 4:6, cf. Luke 1:17

⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 137:5

¹⁰ "Baptism for the Dead," *Church History In The Fulness Of Times Student Manual*, 2003, p. 251.

¹¹ Hales, Brian, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy, Volume 3: Theology*, 2013, chapter 7.

¹² See Calisse, Carlo, *A History of Italian Law, Volume II*, p. 545 for the 1054 laws declaring affinity by betrothal sufficient to create an impediment to marriage. The Catholic Encyclopedia article on Affinity (in Canon Law) discusses the eleventh Council of Rome in 1059 which established the impediment of affinity (and consanguinity) to the seventh degree.

¹³ Queen Margaret of Scotland tried to persuade the Witanagemot to revise the marriage code to align with the papal position in the 1070s , but was only able to wrest an agreement that a widow ought not be forced to marry her step-son, a change to marriage law that was one of the five reasons cited for her canonization. See Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret Queen of Scotland*, William Forbes-Leith translation, Edinburgh, 1884, pp. 51-52. Online 9 Dec 2015 at <https://archive.org/details/lifeofstmargaret00turguoft>. By the time of King Henry VIII, Henry had to petition Rome for special permission to marry his brother's widow, even though levirate marriage is very clearly a duty imposed on a dead man's brothers (Genesis 38:8, Deuteronomy 25:5,6, 9-10, Ruth).

¹⁴ Though Church law made polygamy difficult, Martin Luther wrote in the early 1500s: "I confess that I cannot forbid a person to marry several wives, for it does not contradict the Scripture. If a man wishes to marry more than one wife he should be asked whether he is satisfied in his conscience that he may do so in accordance with the word of God. In such a case the civil authority has nothing to do in the matter." (De Wette II, p. 459)

¹⁵ William W. Phelps to his wife, Sally, dated 16 September 1835, see Van Orden, "Writing to Zion: The William W. Phelps Kirtland Letters (1835–1836)," *BYU Studies* 33, no. 3, p. 16, 1993.

¹⁶ Joseph Smith – History 1: 39, c.f., Malachi 4:6.

3 – Guns, Germs, and Sex

¹ It takes about 20 seconds to muzzle-load a smooth-bore musket. The ease of loading and shooting is in comparison to the time required to load and shoot early rifles, prior to the creation of the minié ball after 1848.

² As bow wood became more dear, it appears gun makers attempted to make muskets more accurate by imparting spin to the balls, as spinning arrows were known to fly more true.

³ Johnstun, Joseph, "Weapons Related to the Murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Fall/Winter 2015, p. 18.

⁴ I have verified the 100 yard estimate using the dimensions of the upper story room and the minor amount of drop a rifled ball would experience.

⁵ See Appendix B.

⁶ Johnstun, Joseph, "Weapons Related to the Murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Fall/Winter 2015.

⁷ Wicks, R. S., & Foister, F. R. (2005). *Junius and Joseph: Presidential politics and the assassination of the first Mormon prophet*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, pp. 258-260. Elliott is reported to have arrived at Warsaw, Illinois in 1843 as an undercover U.S. Marshall from Ohio, posing as a school teacher.

⁸ William Elliott indictment, October 1844, LDS Archives. Jonas Hobart 1845 trial testimony (Sharp, Trial, 2). Cited in Junius and Joseph, p. 258.

⁹ Douglas O. Linder, *The Carthage Conspiracy Trial: An Account*, 2010. Online 23 Mar 2016 at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/carthageaccount.html>.

¹⁰ "John C. Elliott," *Hamilton (OH) Daily Republican*, August 29, 1892. Cited by Joseph Johnstun, "Weapons Related to the Murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, Fall/Winter 2015, Vol. 35, No. 2, p. 29.

¹¹ Poonam Mahendra and Shradha Bisht. *Ferula asafoetida: Traditional uses and pharmacological activity*. Online 23 Mar 2016 at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3459456/>.

¹² Wilhelm Wyl was the pen name of Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal. Wyl, Wilhelm, *Mormon Portraits*, pp. 61-62.

¹³ Harning, Lisa N., *Comparing and Contrasting Social, Political, and Medical Reactions to 19th Century Cholera Epidemics in London and New York City* (2015). University of New Hampshire Honors Theses. Paper 229, p. 3. Online 23 Mar 2016 at <http://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1232&context=honors>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁵ Peregó, Ugo, "Joseph Smith and DNA," *The Persistence of Polygamy, Volume I*, pp. 233-256. Also see Appendix C.

¹⁶ A special adults-only session of Stake Conference was held in the DC suburbs where I lived in the 1970s. The sermon focused on encouraging couples to express their love physically to one another also for the purpose of strengthening the relationship, not only to produce children. In the 1980s, the periodical *Exponent II* (By Mormon Women, For Mormon Women, About Mormon Women) discussed that sexuality between married individuals could extend beyond mere procreation. See Bonnie Shaw, "Mormon Sexuality: An Interview with Mary Beth Raynes," *Exponent II* Vol. 9, Issue 1 (Fall 1982): 3-4.

¹⁷ Emma Hale's reproductive history is well documented. For my analysis, see Stout, Meg, "Joseph's Wives: Emma Hale," *millennialstar.org*, April 22, 2015, online 25 Nov 2015 at <http://www.millennialstar.org/josephs-wives-emma-hale/>.

¹⁸ From visit to Watervliet Shaker Historic District in Colonie, New York, a National Park Service site, see also www.nps.gov/nr/travel/shaker/wat.htm.

¹⁹ D&C 49: 15-16 specifically refutes the idea that it is acceptable to forbid to marry, indicating that marriage is lawful "that the earth might answer the end of its creation."

²⁰ Ephraim Stinchfield wrote his observations of the Cochrane Delusion in 1819. Cochrane would spend four years in prison for what the state deemed gross lewdness.

²¹ The main exception to this pattern is Emily Partridge. In later writings, Emily equates spiritual wifery and plural marriage, suggesting she didn't know there was a difference.

²² In *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*, p. 297, citing Beecher, *All Things Move in Order in the City*, p. 318.

²³ This oft-quoted Noyes assertion is pulled from the same source as statements that "mankind was now living in a new age," "he did not sin," and his choices "came from a

perfect heart.” See www.gutenberg.us/articles/john_humphrey_noyes. It appears these would have come from a Noyes writing circa 1834, when he embraced Perfectionism.

²⁴ Bergera, Gary James, “Transgressions in the Latter-day Saint Community: The Cases of Albert Carrington, Richard R. Lyman, and Joseph F. Smith – Part 1: Albert Carrington,” *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 37, Issue 3, Summer 2011, pp. 119-161.

²⁵ Gilman, Sander L., *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, University of California Press, 1993, p. 118.

²⁶ Maines, Rachel P, *The Technology of Orgasm: “Hysteria”, the Vibrator, and Women’s Sexual Satisfaction*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

²⁷ Micale, Mark S., *On the “Disappearance” of Hysteria: A Study in the Clinical Deconstruction of a Diagnosis*, Department of History, Yale University, pp. 496-526. See chart showing number of French psychiatric theses on hysteria, which reached a high of 111 in the 1890s, when Freud was writing about hypnosis to cure hysteria, dropping to under 20 in the 1910s and less than 10 in the 1920s.

4 – The 1831 Revelation Regarding Plural Marriage

¹ Erastus Snow wrote that Joseph explained in 1843 “that when He was translating the Scriptures that part of it were one of the Old Prophets was dividing His property to His offspring ^Then it was that the Lord revealed unto him^” Erastus Snow returned to Nauvoo in April 1843 but the discussion could only have occurred at a time when Joseph would have said “That the time had come now when the principle should be practiced.” See Bergera, Gary James, “Identifying the Earliest Polygamists, 1841-44,” *Dialogue* Vol. 38, No. 3 p. 37.

² Jackson, Kent P. and Robert J. Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: The Original Manuscripts*, 2004. Multiple early historians suggest the revelation on plural marriage was received in February or March of 1831, including B. H. Roberts (History of the Church V:XXIX), Joseph F. Smith (1882 funeral address), and Hubert Howe Bancroft (1889, History of Utah).

³ This was Joseph writing or making edits based on revelation, rather than “translation.”

⁴ From D&C 132:1-4. Even though D&C 132 was formally received in 1843, Joseph indicated the revelation was well known to him and that he could write it again if destroyed.

⁵ D&C 45: 9, 16

⁶ D&C 45: 60-62

⁷ The idea that death could be a result of sin is seen in Joseph Smith’s June 23, 1843, confidence to William Clayton, where he told Clayton of [Robert] Thompson’s death as a result of sin. See *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, George D. Smith editor, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, UT, 1995, p. 108.

⁸ From H. Michael Marquardt’s book, *The Joseph Smith Revelations Text and Commentary*, p. 374-376, excerpt retrieved online 5 Jan 2014. The men were Joseph Smith Jun. Oliver Cowdery, W.W. Phelps, Martin Harris, Joseph Coe, Ziba Peterson and Joshua Lewis, all married.

⁹ Wording from the Joseph Smith Translation, also D&C 76: 16-17. c.f. John 5: 28-29

¹⁰ The original interpretation of the term sealed was different from the sealing between family members performed in temples today

¹¹ Sermon delivered at the funeral of Seymour Brunson on August 10, 1840, also D&C 127 and D&C 128. See also a poetic adaptation of D&C 76 in 1843 possibly written by William W. Phelps. The 1843 version doesn’t insist an individual be judge only by their earthly works.

¹² See D&C 131 and D&C 132.

¹³ April 1894 revelation received by Wilford Woodruff, see Wilford Woodruff journal for 5-6 April 1894 and Deseret Evening News, *General Conference Proceedings*, of 14 April 1894.

¹⁴ This eternal pre-existence of souls is distinct from re-incarnation, where an eternal being is recycled through life in various bodies, human or other.

¹⁵ Jeremiah 1:5, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee”

¹⁶ Isaiah 14:12, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!”

¹⁷ Revelations 12:3-9, speaking of the conflict between Michael and the great serpent over the “stars” of heaven.

¹⁸ This vision of a literal Heavenly Father of spirits is explored in Eliza R. Snow’s hymn, O, My Father, written in 1845.

¹⁹ The quoted description comes from the Church court that tried Joseph Ellis Johnson in 1850. See Hales, Brian, *Mary Heron*. Online 16 Mar 2014 at <http://www.josephsmithpolygamy.com/NonWivesSexualRelations/24Accusations/MaryHeronSniderACC.html>. Similar descriptions can be found in the confessions of the women who had been seduced in 1842, Joseph Smith’s description of Bennett’s activities, and Bennett’s description of the “seraglio” over which he claimed Emma Hale [Smith] presided.

5 – Mormon Polygamy Prior to 1841

¹ D&C 76

² Compton, Todd, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, UT, 1997, p. 231.

³ I first became aware of this in conversation with one of Hannah’s descendants. Hales also recounts one such story from an earlier generation, though Hales thought the liaison was supposed to have produced one of Hannah’s 1840s children.

⁴ Compton lists Hannah as one of the supposed wives where he did not believe the data supported the earlier claims.

⁵ Examination of the death records for Nauvoo shows no one who matches the particulars for the supposed John F. Smith

⁶ Hales, Volume 1, Chapter 3, pp. 77-83.

⁷ Hales, Brian C., *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, Volume 1, Chapter 11, p. 291.

⁸ Brian Hales devotes Chapter 3 of his *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy* to this lack of contemporary sexual rumors. Neither Todd Compton, George Smith, nor Richard Bushman lend credence to the idea that Joseph was sexually opportunistic during this early time frame.

⁹ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 39.

¹⁰ The suggestion that Rosetta Marietta Carter was Joseph’s wife may have arisen because her daughter, Sarah Holmes, lived in the Smith household after Marietta was killed.

¹¹ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 32.

¹² Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, Vols 1 & 2, Chapters 4-6 and Appendix D.

¹³ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 26, suggests Fanny became Joseph’s wife in 1833.

¹⁴ Bradley, Don, *Weighing the Case of Fanny Alger*, Persistence of Polygamy, Vol. I, p. 56.

¹⁵ Chauncey Webb’s belief that Fanny was pregnant could have been caused by amenorrhea, or cessation of menstruation. This can occur in times of heightened stress, such as the stress Fanny might have experienced as a result of the intense controversy regarding her time in the Smith home. However amenorrhea is insufficient to explain the lack of children in the Nauvoo timeframe, due to the sheer number of women involved.

¹⁶ Bradley, Don, “Weighing the Case of Fanny Alger,” *Persistence of Polygamy*, Vol. I, p. 44.

¹⁷ For example, Missourians claimed Mormons had killed ten of their number during the fighting at Crooked River. However subsequent evaluations indicated only one Missourian was killed while three Mormons were killed.

¹⁸ D&C 121:1

¹⁹ D&C 121:7, 10

²⁰ D&C 121:26, 27

6 – Six Funerals and a Blessing

¹ Many of the young women Joseph would covenant with had lost parents during 1840 and were living in the Smith household. Though Joseph promise the women they could be linked to the rest of their family members, it is unclear Joseph realized this when their parents died.

² Smith, Lucy, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations*, Liverpool, 1853, p. 88

³ D&C 137:5

⁴ *The Rachel Neyman Story*, online at <https://familysearch.org/photos/stories/514482>

⁵ Familysearch.org, Cyrus Livingston Neyman (L7GB-KDL). The Rachel Neyman Story claims Cyrus left Butler, Pennsylvania with his family in 1830, he and Frederick are the only children who could have died before the family left Butler.

⁶ *Times and Seasons* Vol. 1. Whole No. 6., Commerce, Illinois, April, 1840, recounting events during the “General Conference held April 6, 1840.”

⁷ John 3:3

⁸ John 3:5

⁹ In August 1840 Joseph would reveal the doctrine that proxy baptisms could be performed on behalf of the dead, after noting Jane Neyman, “a particular widow in the crowd whose son had died without baptism.” He then quoted the verse from John 3 where Jesus told Nicodemus baptism was required—the same verses Joseph had quoted during his April 1840 Conference address.

¹⁰ See Seymour Brunson Wikipedia article, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seymour_Brunson retrieved 16 February 2014.

¹¹ Account of Heber C. Kimball, in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 49.

¹² Jane Neyman’s presence is inferred from Joseph’s comments regarding the widow whose son had died.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 15:19–26

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:29

¹⁵ Jane’s husband, William, was still alive. But he would die less than three weeks later.

¹⁶ Susan Easton Black, “A Voice of Gladness for the Living and the Dead’ (D&C 128:19),” in *Religious Educator* 3, no. 2 (2002): 137–149.

¹⁷ *History of the Church*, 4:569; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Mar. 27, 1842, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Wilford Woodruff.

¹⁸ D&C 128:22, from an epistle from Joseph Smith the Prophet to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, containing further directions on baptism for the dead, dated at Nauvoo, Illinois, September 6, 1842.

¹⁹ Vienna Jacques is sometimes listed as one of Joseph Smith’s plural wives, though the purported evidence did not lead to her inclusion in Todd Compton’s *Sacred Loneliness*.

²⁰ Black, “A Voice of Gladness for the Living and the Dead’ (D&C 128:19).”

²¹ Church History In The Fulness Of Times Student Manual, (2003), 251–262, online 16 Feb 2014 at <http://www.lds.org/manual/print/church-history-in-the-fulness-of-times-student-manual/chapter-twenty-doctrinal-developments-in-nauvoo?lang=eng>, retrieved.

²² The double ceremony was performed by Frederick G. Williams on 13 April 1837. The Prophet Joseph had intended to perform the marriages, but threat of violence related to the failure of the Kirtland Safety Society required Joseph to be absent from his home. See *Activities of Esquire Williams*, 2012, online 16 Feb 2014 at <http://byustudies.byu.edu/images/webpage/fgw/activitiesesquirewilliams.pdf>.

²³ *Compton, Sacred Loneliness*, p. 39. See discussion of Jared Carter in the prior chapter.

²⁴ The Community of Christ map shows the Holmes property at the northwest corner of block 146, just north of Water Street and block 157. The Smith homestead is located on the northeast corner block 155, just south of Water Street.

²⁵ The stories Sarah told her children are contained in the records for Jonathan Harriman Holmes available at the Lands and Records Office in Historic Nauvoo. The family stories lump Marietta’s death with the Missouri persecutions (e.g., Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 546) but Marietta died in August 1840 in Nauvoo (see Cook, Lyndon, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839-1845*).

²⁶ Cook, Lyndon, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839-1845*.

²⁷ Records for Jonathan Harriman Holmes record, Nauvoo Land and Records Office.

²⁸ The first ceremony known to bind a widower to his deceased spouse was performed for Joseph C. Kingsbury in April 1843. Eliza's poem was written in September 1842.

²⁹ *Eliza R. Snow journal, 1842-1882* / Snow, Eliza Roxcy 1804-1887 / MS 1439 / Microfilm. Online 3 Jun 2014 at <https://eadview.lds.org/dcbrowser/MS%201439/>. The poem is on images MS1439_f0001_00009.jpg and MS1439_f0001_00010.jpg

³⁰ Although it is possible some other mother could have nursed Mary Holmes, Jonathan and Sarah lived in the Smith home after Marietta's death, making Emma the most likely wet nurse for the child.

³¹ Cook, Lyndon, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839-1845*.

³² I experienced this firsthand at the death (and abrupt weaning) of my own son.

³³ Those disenchanted with the LDS Church point out that Father Smith sometimes drank. He had also "allowed" events that impoverished the family, which forced his sons to seek every opportunity to make work to pay the debt. The failed mortgage was the reason Joseph hired himself out as a "dowser," which would lead to the claims Joseph was a money digger.

³⁴ From *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, edited by Scot and Maurine Proctor.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ *ibid.*

7 – A Doctor and His Beloved

¹ The August date is given by Joseph Smith in the July 1, 1842 issue of the *Times and Seasons*.

² This does not include the time Dr. Bennett spent in LDS sects after Joseph's death.

³ Smith, Andrew, *Saintly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett*, University of Illinois Press, 1997 pp. 2-3.

⁴ Smith, *Saintly Scoundrel*. Chapters 2 and 3 are titled "The Diploma Peddler" and "The 'Getter Up' of Colleges", pp. 13-33.

⁵ Smith, *Saintly Scoundrel*, p. 79.

⁶ "To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to All Honorable Part of Community," *Times & Seasons*, 1 July, 1842, online 22 Feb 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>.

⁷ Goddard, Stephen H. and Zeruah N., sworn before George W. Harris, Alderman of the City of Nauvoo on July 23rd, 1842. Published in *Affidavits and Certificates* on August 31, 1842.

⁸ Lyman Omer Littlefield, *Reminiscences of Latter-day Saints: Giving an Account of Much Individual Suffering Endured for Religious Conscience*, The Utah Journal Co., Printers, Logan Utah, 1888, p. 158. Cited by Brian Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, Greg Kofford Books, 2013, Volume 1, Chapter 19, p. 519.

⁹ Joseph Smith, letter to Vilate Kimball, March 2, 1841, in *Helen Vilate Bourne Fleming Papers*, MS 9670, Box 1, Folder 25, CHL.

¹⁰ *Nauvoo Female Relief Society, Petition to Thomas Carlin, circa July 22, 1842*; CHL (MS 15535).

¹¹ "Justin [sic] Brooks to Joseph Smith," 7 Nov. 1842 in *Journal History of the Church*; see *Times and Seasons* 4 (Jan 2, 1843):63.

¹² From use of "LaVina" for Elvira, it seems the person writing the letter tended to switch around sounds or words. The elided portion of the transcription reads "I came to Utah in '69, and rented LaVina Holmes farm." As John Fish Wright emigrated to Utah in 1852 as a ten-year-old boy, the sentence makes sense if it was supposed to read "I came to Utah and in '69 rented LaVina Holmes farm." John Fish Write came to Paradise, Cache County, Utah in 1869, after living elsewhere in Cache County, Utah. Jonathan Holmes had a daughter who lived in Millville, Cache County, Utah, just 10 miles north of Paradise, suggesting the "LaVina Holmes farm" was a place Elvira [Holmes] stayed, rather than owned.

- ¹³ D. Michael Quinn papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, WA MSS S-2692. *William Wright, Letter to unidentified addressee but stamped as received in the First Presidency Office on June 2, 1931*. Cited by Brian Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy, Volume 1*, p. 329.
- ¹⁴ Phebe's belief that her mother lived with Joseph as a wife was likely formed in 1868, when Phebe was refusing to marry Job Welling, who had previously married her older sister. Elvira's may have been assuring Phebe plural marriage was an appropriate form of marriage, rather than confirming that Elvira had engaged in conjugal relations with Joseph Smith.
- ¹⁵ Welling, Phebe Louisa Holmes, Feb 9, 1938, *The Ancestors and Descendants of Job Welling: Utah Pioneer from England, 9 Jan 1833 – 7 Mar 1886*, pp. 25
- ¹⁶ Welling, Milton H., Jan 25, 1938, *The Job Welling Family Organization, The Ancestors and Descendants of Job Welling: Utah Pioneer from England, 9 Jan 1833 – 7 Mar 1886*, p. 19.
- ¹⁷ Taylor, Roxie Welling, undated, *The Job Welling Family Organization, The Ancestors and Descendants of Job Welling: Utah Pioneer from England, 9 Jan 1833 – 7 Mar 1886*, pp. 20.
- ¹⁸ "To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to All Honorable Part of Community," *Times & Seasons*, 1 July, 1842, online 22 Feb 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>.
- ¹⁹ D&C 121: 41-43.
- ²⁰ "To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to All Honorable Part of Community," *Times & Seasons*, 1 July, 1842, online 22 Feb 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>.

8 – The Angel of the Lord

- ¹ Boyack, Hazel Noble, *A Nobleman in Israel: A Biographical Sketch of Joseph Bates Noble, Pioneer to Utah in 1847*. The Pioneer Printing Company, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1962.
- ² Noble, *A Nobleman in Israel*, pp. 11-21.
- ³ Bergera, Gary James, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, p. 37.
- ⁴ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 71-113.
- ⁵ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 79-80.
- ⁶ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 59.
- ⁷ Noble clearly thought Joseph was confirming he'd consummated the marriage. However Joseph may have merely confirmed he'd blown out the candle.
- ⁸ Joseph B. Noble, Deposition, Temple Lot Case, part 3, pp. 426-27, questions 700-704.
- ⁹ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 55-70.
- ¹⁰ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 71-113.
- ¹¹ Dr. Bennett's role in the marriage indicates Zina Huntington could not have been the young woman Bennett hoped to marry.
- ¹² Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 79-80.
- ¹³ Perego, Ugo, "Joseph Smith and DNA," *The Persistence of Polygamy*, Volume I, pp. 233-256.
- ¹⁴ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 123.
- ¹⁵ Zina was president of the Relief Society until her death in 1901. Zina was the third president of Relief Society and the third and last of Joseph's wives to head that organization.
- ¹⁶ *The Coffin Canes*, online 10 Mar 2014 at <http://www.josephsmithjr.org/index.php/history/joseph-smith-jr/201-the-coffin-canes>.

9 – Fall of the Doctor

- ¹ Dr. Bennett was elected Mayor of Nauvoo on February 1, 1841.
- ² Backenstoës, Jacob B., "Affidavit of J. B. Backenstoës," *Affidavits and Certificates, Disproving the Statements and Affidavits Contained in John C. Bennett's Letters*, Nauvoo, Illinois, Aug 31, 1842. Online 27 Mar 2014 at <http://www.josephsmithpolygamy.com/JSImproperProposals/16ImproperProposalsAccusations/SarahPratt2.html>.
- ³ *Times & Seasons*, May 15, 1844, "Municipal Court," p. 539. The Masonic Lodge was not established until May 1842. Hyrum may have been talking about a gathering where the

Masonic Lodge later met and men who would later be Masons. The context of the 1844 testimony suggests Hyrum was not describing Dr. Bennett May 1842 confession.

⁴ Personal conversation with Joseph Johnstun. Frank Higbee tried to claim he may have had pox, but not that sort of pox. The newspaper did not include the word for Frank's disease.

⁵ The civil wards and the ecclesiastical wards had different boundaries. Catherine Laur [Fuller] and her children were enumerated in the second ward, in the northeast quadrant of the city. According to Lyman De Platt, "The streets separating the wards were Wells, which ran north and south, and Knight, which ran east and west. Ward 1 was in the northwest, Ward 2 the northeast, Ward 3 the southeast and Ward 4 the southwest quadrants of the city." De Platt, Lyman, *Nauvoo: Early Mormon Records Series*, Vol. 1, Highland, UT, 1980.

⁶ See *History of the Church*, Vol. 3, pp. 149-160, also p. 428. On October 2, 1838, a mob of 30-50 men began to fire at the Mormon village of DeWitt in Carroll County. The Mormons attempted to defend themselves, while knowing that if there were a single death amongst the mob members, thousands of the residents of Missouri would raise arms against the Mormons. By October 6 the Mormons' provisions were nearly exhausted and the mob had grown to two or three hundred men. By October 9 homes were being set on fire, forcing the residents of DeWitt to live in the center of town in their wagon boxes. Any who tried to venture out for food were shot. The Mormons had petitioned Governor Boggs for assistance. Boggs ignored the plea, then said they "might fight it out." When the state militia arrived, they sided with the mob. A woman who had recently given birth died of exposure and starvation. In another incident, a man's brains were knocked out. Multiple gang rapes involving a dozen or more men upon each woman were boasted of openly, which the Mormon leaders were horrified to learn had actually occurred.

⁷ *History of the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 422. "Affidavits of Hyrum Smith et al. On Affairs in Missouri, 1831-1839; Officially Subscribed to Before the Municipal Court of Nauvoo The First Day of July, 1843."

⁸ Catherine Fuller statement before the Nauvoo High Council, LDS Archives MS/d/2375/Box 8/fd. Nauvoo, copied and included in the Valen T. Avery Papers USU_COLL MSS 316, Box 24, Fd 14, Special Collections and Archives, Utah State University Merrill-Cazier Library, Logan, Utah. Queen Anne's Lace may have been the medicine Dr. Bennett gave Catherine Fuller.

⁹ A philter was a potion or charm with power to arouse sexual passion.

¹⁰ *The Wasp*, Vol. 1, Number 15, Nauvoo, Hancock Co., Sat., July 23, 1842, an issue devoted to Bennetiana. One description of Bennett's 1841 suicide attempt reads "This reminds us of the time when the Doctor undertook to poison himself to death, but some good Samaritan-like Mormons saved his life; though a wag or two fixed a pile of sand, [as a] monument and fingered on it the following epitaph; 'In memory of Major General *John C. Bennett*; who died at the siege of *Philter*, in the defence of the cause of Venus, July 17, 1841.'" Online 23 Mar 2016 at <http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/LDS/wasp1.htm>. The description of Bennett's suicide attempt is also mentioned in Smith, *Saintly Scoundrel*, but the date of the suicide attempt is given as July 27, 1841 (see p. 80).

¹¹ *Times and Seasons*, Volume 3, No. 17 of 1 July 1842, online 20 Mar 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>.

¹² Backenstos, Jacob B., sworn to the 28th of July, 1842, before Ebenezer Robinson, J. P., contained in *Affidavits and Certificates Disproving the Statements and Affidavits Contained in John C. Bennett's Letters*, August 31, 1842.

¹³ Backenstos, Jacob B., sworn to the 28th of July, 1842, before Ebenezer Robinson, J. P., contained in *Affidavits and Certificates Disproving the Statements and Affidavits Contained in John C. Bennett's Letters*, August 31, 1842.

¹⁴ *Autobiography of Orange Wight*. Online 3 Apr 2016 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/OWight.html>.

¹⁵ Smith, *Saintly Scoundrel*, pp. 80-83. Bennett is listed in the 1842 census as living in Ward 1, his name near the names of Orson Pratt and Sarah Bates [Pratt].

¹⁶ There was no church building for general meetings during the Nauvoo era. Worship meetings were held in the open or under a bowery. There had been plans to construct a large tent to protect worshippers, but the tent was not completed before Nauvoo was abandoned.

¹⁷ Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*. Hales does not specify which date this sermon occurred, but includes fall 1841 as one possibility.

¹⁸ Robinson, Ebenezer, *The Return*, Volume 2, Number 7 (July 1890): 302, see also Volume 2, Number 6 (June 1890): 287. Ebenezer Robinson alleges Don Carlos Smith said “Any man who will teach and practice the doctrine of spiritual wifery will go to hell, I don’t care if it is my brother Joseph.” Don Carlos died in September 1841.

¹⁹ Nauvoo testimonies before the High Council, May 1842.

²⁰ Walker, Kyle R., *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*. Greg Kofford Books, Draper, UT, 2015, pp. 114-115.

²¹ Walker, *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*, pp. 141-142. Walker suggests William’s verbal abuse of Joseph’s memory may have been motivated by persuading potential enemies that he was not a Mormon sympathizer, a somewhat generous view of the situation.

²² Catherine Fuller statement before the Nauvoo High Council, LDS Archives MS/d/2375/Box 8/fd. Nauvoo, copied and included in the Valeen T. Avery Papers USU_COLL MSS 316, Box 24, Fd 14, Special Collections and Archives, Utah State University Merrill-Cazier Library, Logan, Utah.

²³ D. Michael Quinn papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, WA MSS S-2692. “William Wright, Letter to unidentified addressee but stamped as received in the First Presidency Office on June 2, 1931.”

²⁴ Smith, George, *An Intimate Chronicle*, p. 108. This entry is from the second of three notebooks from Some question why William Clayton kept a separate notebook for his polygamy journal, information regarding the time between

²⁵ Mary Judd [Page] wrote the words to the hymn, “Ye Who are Called to Labor,” which is included in the 1985 LDS hymnal as hymn #321.

²⁶ Bergera, “Earliest Mormon Polygamists,” *Dialogue*.

²⁷ Clayton, William, see Smith, George D., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, Signature Books, 1995, p. 108.

²⁸ My thanks to Bryan Stout for reviewing all the Hancock County records for the 1840 census as well as the 1842 Nauvoo census, which lists all members of Nauvoo households by name. It is remotely possible B. Y. might refer to someone not covered by the 1842 Nauvoo City census, who was not the head of household listed in the 1840 census, or whose nickname started with a “B.” However, the Martha Brotherton story suggests the B. Y. of Clayton’s journal was Brigham Young.

²⁹ *Times & Seasons*, April 1842, online 22 Feb 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>.

³⁰ Reference to Martha Brotherton letter of summer 1842.

³¹ Kimball, Stanley B., *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981, p. 95. Online 29 Nov 2015 at http://mormonpolygamydocuments.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/JSP_Book_61.pdf.

³² Bergera, “Earliest Mormon Polygamists,” *Dialogue*.

³³ *Wight, Orange, 1903*. Online 3 Apr 2016 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/OWight.html>.

³⁴ Helen’s article states this occurred in 1843, but the year 1842 is clear from the context. See Whitney, Helen Mar Kimball, “Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo,” *Woman’s Exponent*, 11 (1882-1883), online 29 Nov 2015 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/HWhitney.html>.

³⁵ Whitney, Helen Mar Kimball, “Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo,” *Woman’s Exponent*, 11 (1882-1883), online 29 Nov 2015 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/HWhitney.html>.

10 – The Pending Storm

¹ Clayton, William. In George D. Smith, ed. *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, p. 108.

² Josephine would grow up to be the first female poet laureate of any American state. Of interest, the name she used as an adult expressly rejects Joseph Smith, removing those elements from her birth name and adopting her mother’s maiden name. Josephine Anna Smith remade herself into Ina Donna Coolbrith.

³ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 154.

⁴ Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony, part 3, pp 521-522, questions 679, 687.

⁵ Robinson, Ebenezer, *The Return*, Volume 2, Number 7 (July 1890): 302, see also Volume 2, Number 6 (June 1890): 287.

⁶ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 166-167.

⁷ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 208-209.

⁸ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 209.

⁹ *Autobiography of Mary E. Lightner* (1818 – 1913), The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine 17 (July 1926):193-205, online 10 Mar 2014 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/MLightner.html>.

¹⁰ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 210.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 211.

¹³ *1905 BYU Testimony of Mary Elizabeth Lightner*, online 10 Mar 2014 at <http://user.xmission.com/~plporter/lds/merlbyu.htm>.

¹⁴ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 226.

¹⁵ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 213.

11 – Hunt in the City Beautiful

¹ Nancy Winchester was born in August 1828, a couple of weeks before Helen Mar Kimball, who would marry Joseph Smith when she was only 14 years old.

² “Notice.” *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 17 of 1 July 1842, online 20 Mar 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>.

³ I have been unable to find information about Clarissa Marvel outside of the minutes of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo during March and April of 1842, see the *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, online 13 Mar 2014 at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperDetails/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book>.

⁴ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 236.

⁵ Thomsonian medicine focused on herbal remedies in contrast to the bleedings, purgatives, and surgeries used by mainstream physicians of the day.

⁶ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 607.

⁷ An elevated frequency of sexual abuse is a suspected causal factor for psychogenic non-epileptic seizures (PNES). Modern diagnostic techniques involve monitoring seizures with video and an electroencephalograph. It is impossible to know whether a report of “fits” in 1845 meets the diagnostic criteria for PNES. Even if Nancy’s fits were PNES, Nancy’s possible trauma could have occurred in the 1838-1839 timeframe. But the excommunication of Nancy’s brother and the change of management for the *Times and Seasons*, with which her brother had been associated, suggest something happened in early 1842.

⁸ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, particularly p. 608.

⁹ Queen Anne’s Lace (QAL) seeds may have been used to prevent pregnancy in Nauvoo. The side effects of QAL are minimal, compared to other contemporary contraceptives.

¹⁰ Sylvia’s earlier records were lost, but from 1867 until her death in 1892 at age 97, Patty delivered nearly 4000 children.

¹¹ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 179. Date of journal entry in Compton, p. 682.

¹² Joseph F. Smith prepared two affidavits for Sylvia's signature. One was dated February 8, 1842. The other was dated February 8, 1843. Joseph F. Smith apparently derived the date from the birthday of Sylvia's daughter, Josephine, born February 8, 1844. Sylvia never signed an affidavit attesting she had been sealed to Joseph during his lifetime. Sylvia was sealed to Joseph Smith after his death, on January 26, 1846. A late assertion by Sylvia that her daughter Josephine was Joseph's child could be because Josephine was the only one of Sylvia's children to marry outside of the temple, where the sacred information that an individual was sealed to Joseph was usually revealed.

¹³ Hales, Brian, "Biography of Sylvia Sessions" on website *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, online 2 May 2016 at <http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/plural-wives-overview/sylvia-sessions/>.

¹⁴ Perego, Ugo, *Was Joseph Smith the Biological Father of Josephine Lyon? The Genetic Evidence*, presented June 11, 2016 at the 51st Mormon History Association Conference. Scientific data online 14 Jun 2016 at <http://www.josephsmithdna.com/josephine-lyon.html>. For earlier results, see "Joseph Smith and DNA," *The Persistence of Polygamy*, Volume I, pp. 233-256.

¹⁵ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 236.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Belief that Joseph married Marinda in April 1842 is based on cryptic notes in Joseph's journal history. Marinda herself would indicate she was not sealed to Joseph Smith until Mary 1843 in the presence of Eliza and Emily Partridge.

¹⁸ Bennett, John, *History of the Saints*, 1842, pp. 243-244. The letter Joseph wrote to Nancy Rigdon is also found in Brian Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, Chapter 17.

¹⁹ The 1840 census only showed the name of the head of household and numbers of family members in gender and age bins. To see a blank copy of the 1840 federal census form is Online 13 Mar 2014 at http://www.mymcpl.org/_uploaded_resources/MGC-1840censusblank.pdf.

²⁰ For a history of Home Teaching, see Rex Anderson, *A documentary history of the Lord's way of watching over the church by the priesthood through the ages*, online 14 Mar 2014 at

<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/MTAF/id/2337>. On page 24 Anderson relates the story of William F. Cahoon, who was assigned to be a teacher to Joseph Smith and his family when Cahoon was only seventeen. As Cahoon was born in 1813, this must have been around 1830.

²¹ Maurine Carr Ward, *1842 Census of Nauvoo: Identification of Members: Civil Ward One*, online 13 Mar 2014 at http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NJ5-1_Ward2.pdf. The early February timing was reconstructed by Dr. Lyman De Platt based on extensive analysis, see *Early Mormon Records Series*, Vol. 1, Highland, Utah, 1980.

²² Women offered funds to assist the Continental Army, but General Washington refused monies, as this gave the impression the new nation had to rely on women for finances. Shirts, however, were deemed acceptable. See Cokie Roberts' *Founding Mothers*, as noted in the Kirkus review of the children's version of Roberts' book, online 13 Mar 2014 at <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/cokie-roberts/founding-mothers/>.

²³ Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, Chapter 10. Sarah Kimball was sealed to Joseph on March 2, 1877 in the St. George temple.

²⁴ Smith, Joseph, in *Relief Society Minute Book*, Nauvoo, Illinois, June 9, 1842, Church History Library, 63. Women "were to be empowered through the calling of the priesthood to be grouped into suitable organizations for the purpose of ministering to the sick, assisting the needy, comforting the aged, warning the unwary and succoring the orphans."

²⁵ Phebe Wheeler was also nominated to be secretary the day Relief Society was founded. Phebe Wheeler and Hanna(h) Ells recorded minutes of the Relief Society at times, but Eliza Snow recorded all of the sermons Joseph Smith delivered to the Relief Society. Phebe Wheeler, a servant in Hyrum Smith's home, married Oliver Olney, brother-in-law to Marinda Nancy Johnson [Hyde]. Olney was excommunicated the day Relief Society was founded, and would go on to print anti-Mormon pamphlets. Phebe Wheeler [Olney] drops out of the stream of well-documented Mormon history. Hannah Ells, on the other hand,

apparently became one of Joseph's plural wives in 1843. Hannah Ells passed away in the home of Sarah Granger [Kimball] in 1845 when she was about 32. Eliza Snow was at Hannah's bedside and documented her passing.

²⁶ This and subsequent Relief Society quotes are from the *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, online 13 Mar 2014 at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book?locale=eng&p=63>.

²⁷ Minutes of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo during March and April of 1842, see the *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 406.

12 – Arraigning the Band of Brothers

¹ Minutes of the High Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Nauvoo, Illinois, 1840-45, entry for January the 18th 1842. *The Nauvoo City Council and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger editor, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 2011, pp. 399-402.

² *ibid.*

³ *Times and Seasons*, Volume 3, No. 16 of 15 June 1842, online 20 Mar 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>.

⁴ Gary Bergera has written about the trial in his article, “‘Illicit Intercourse,’ Plural Marriage, and the Nauvoo Stake High Council, 1840-1844,” *John Whitmer Historical Journal*.

⁵ Women's testimony as published in the May 29, 1844 issue of the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, online 18 Mar 2014 at <http://boap.org/LDS/Nauvoo-Neighbor/1844/5-29-1844.pdf>.

⁶ Records for James J. Miller, LZG8-Z5X, online 19 Mar 2014 at familysearch.org.

⁷ These two ladies were Mary Clift and Esther Smith. Esther Smith was likely Esther Dutcher [Smith]. Gustavus Hills, one of the Nauvoo Aldermen, had asked them for sex.

⁸ In the family story recorded by Rachel Neyman's descendants, the children in the family when the Neymans left Pennsylvania in 1830 are listed as Margaret Jane [b. 1813], Cyrus Livingston [b. 1815], Annis [b. 1818], Hiram [b. 1819], Matilda, Mary Ann [b. 1822] and Jonathan [b. 1825]. This implies Matilda was born around 1820.

⁹ Women's Women's testimonies published in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* issue of May 29, 1844.

¹⁰ On May 17, 1842, Chauncey Higbee signed an affidavit affirming that Joseph Smith had never taught him about illicit intercourse, see *The Nauvoo City Council and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger editor, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 2011, p. 415

¹¹ From the testimonies as published in 1844, it seems this “one” might have been either John C. Bennett or William Smith. Dinger in his edition of the Nauvoo High Council minutes asserts this referred to William Smith. See footnote 40, *The Nauvoo City Council and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger editor, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 2011, pp. 415-416.

¹² Women's Women's testimonies published in the Nauvoo Neighbor issue of May 29, 1844.

¹³ Smith, Andrew, *Saintly Scoundrel*.

¹⁴ *Nauvoo Neighbor*, May 29, 1844.

¹⁵ Catherine Fuller statement before the Nauvoo High Council, LDS Archives MS/d/2375/Box 8/fd. Nauvoo, copied and included in the Valeen T. Avery Papers USU_COLL MSS 316, Box 24, Fd 14, Special Collections and Archives, Utah State University Merrill-Cazier Library, Logan, Utah.

¹⁶ Information about William Smith has been crossed out in the hand-written testimony, but is still legible. A late account (Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 9 April 1890) says Brigham Young was to charge William Smith with adultery and other sins. After the trial began, Joseph entered the room and cried, “Bro. Brigham, I will not listen to this abuse of my family a minute longer...” Cannon writes “A rupture between the two greatest men on earth seemed imminent.” Brigham instantly said, “Bro. Joseph, I withdraw the charge.” Joseph

may have believed William or Bennett had originated the illicit sex scheme. Once Joseph determined Bennett was the culprit, he tried to protect all others, including his brother.

¹⁷ De Platt, Lyman, *Early Mormon Records Series*, Vol. 1, Highland, Utah, 1980, p. 298.

¹⁸ Later reinstated.

¹⁹ Later reinstated. His excommunication has been his audacity in suing William Marks.

However blaming the discipline on a law suit may have been intended to deflect suspicion, given that Lyon was willing to repent.

²⁰ It is not clear if Margaret meant Higbee was having sex with Margaret's sister during the same period of several weeks, or if Higbee was simultaneously engaging in sex with both of them in a *ménage à trois*. Margaret's mother, Jane Neyman, is mentioned, but it is unclear whether she was implicated as one who had been seduced.

²¹ Rachel would marry Lucien Woodworth in January, 1846, embracing Joseph's teachings.

²² Elenor Kingsley was endowed in the Nauvoo temple in February 1846, indicating that she had eventually decided to join the Church and embrace Joseph Smith's teachings.

²³ Seraglio is the term for the living quarters of a harem in the Ottoman Empire.

²⁴ Some researchers suppose additional details might have leaked to Bennett via Nancy Rigdon, who Joseph interviewed. Nancy's beau was Francis Higbee, Chauncey's brother.

Those not vested in the idea that Joseph was innocent of Bennett's activities presume that Bennett learned about Joseph's plural marriage activities from Joseph himself. However the gross difference between the seducer's rationale and Joseph's teachings makes this unlikely.

²⁵ *Nauvoo Neighbor*, May 29, 1844.

²⁶ *Times and Seasons*, Volume 4, No. 3 of December 15, 1842, online 3 Apr 2016 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/8618>.

13 – Wives of Sorrow

¹ Bergera, Gary, "Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44," *Dialogue*, online 22 Mar 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf.

² Most who can be tested have been evaluated. See Appendix C.

³ Ann Laemmlen Lewis, *Frances Amelia Kimberley and Theodore Turley: My Third Great Grandparents*, online 26 Mar 2014 at <http://www.geocities.com/~wallyg/L2frances.htm>.

⁴ *The Nauvoo City Council and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger editor, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 2011.

⁵ Clayton, William. In George D. Smith, ed. *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, p. 108.

⁶ Mention of fruit and vegetables implies the conversation occurred in the fall.

⁷ Account says "enter Plural Marriage." As this is a late account written by someone from within the Mormon faith tradition. I question whether Vinson used that term.

⁸ Quoted in Bergera, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, from Delia Belnap, *Martha McBride Knight*, typescript, not paginated, LDS Church Archives; courtesy Todd Compton.

⁹ Lisa Wood, *Biography For: Martha McBride Knight Smith Kimball*, online 26 Mar 2014 at <http://www.mypioneertrk.com/Biographies.aspx?PioneerName=Martha%20McBride%20Knight%20Smith%20Kimball>.

¹⁰ *Our Pioneer Heritage*, Vol. 10, p. 388.

¹¹ The *Nauvoo Expositor*, put together by Chauncey Higbee and men involved in the High Council proceedings in May 1842, devotes quite a bit of space to the manner in which these new female converts were seduced, "It is a notorious fact, that many females in foreign climes, and in countries to us unknown, even in the most distant regions of the Eastern hemisphere, have been induced, by the sound of the gospel, to forsake friends, and embark upon a voyage across waters that lie stretched over the greater portion of the globe, as they supposed, to glorify God, that they might thereby stand acquitted in the great day of God

Almighty. But what is taught them on their arrival at this place?— They are visited by some of the Strikers, for we know not what else to call them...” Online 26 Mar 2014 at http://en.fairmormon.org/Primary_sources/Nauvoo_Expositor_Full_Text.

¹² Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer*, p. 95.

¹³ Familysearch.org merely lists “1838, Ohio River” as the date and place of death.

¹⁴ Mary L. S. Putnam and Lila Cahoon, eds. and comps., *Reynolds Caboon: His Roots and Branches* (Bountiful, Utah: Family History Publishers, 1993).

¹⁵ familysearch.org.

¹⁶ Bergera doesn't count Jason Turley since it is clearly documented Jason was fathered by Gustavus Hills as part of the Bennett illicit intercourse scheme.

¹⁷ Nauvoo Temple carpenter David Moore relates that Lucina Johnson was living with Charles A. Chase, who was first cousin of Darwin Chase. Catherine Fuller named Darwin Chase as one of those who asked her to have illicit intercourse. Darwin Chase was also named by Sarah Miller related to her experience with illicit intercourse. So Lucina was living in a circumstance that would have brought her into the circle of one of the ring of seducers. David Moore, *Compiled Writings of David Moore*, pp. 19-20, cited in Brian Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, Volume 1, Chapter 22.

¹⁸ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 166-167.

¹⁹ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 226.

²⁰ *The Nauvoo City Council and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger editor, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 2011, p. 431.

²¹ Sylvia did tell her daughter, Josephine, that Josephine was Joseph's daughter. However Josephine was the only one of Sylvia's children who had married outside of the temple, the location where adoptive or posthumous sealing relationships to Joseph would have been revealed. Sylvia had been sealed to Joseph posthumously in the Nauvoo temple.

²² Perego, Ugo, *Was Joseph Smith the Biological Father of Josephine Lyon? The Genetic Evidence*, presented June 11, 2016 at the 51st Mormon History Association Conference. Scientific data online 14 Jun 2016 at <http://www.josephsmithdna.com/josephine-lyon.html>. For earlier results, see *Joseph Smith and DNA*, The Persistence of Polygamy, Volume I, pp. 233-256.

²³ Jill Mulvay Deer and Karen Lynn Davidson, ed.s *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*, pp. 210-211.

²⁴ Helen's article gives the date as May 1843, but then says that he left a year before she herself was introduced to the principle of plural marriage. This indicates Horace left in May 1842, right before Dr. Bennett was exposed for fomenting illicit intercourse. See Helen Mar Kimball [Whitney], “Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo,” *Woman's Exponent* 11 (1882-83), online 24 Nov 2015 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/HWhitney.html>.

²⁵ Helen Mar Kimball [Whitney], “Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo,” *Woman's Exponent* 11 (1882-83), online 24 Nov 2015 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/HWhitney.html>.

14 – Sangamo and Pratt

¹ Six of the apostles turned against Joseph around 1837, some openly calling for his death. Five were excommunicated. The sixth, Joseph's younger brother, William Smith, remained a member of the Quorum despite his vocal attacks on Joseph.

² Rick J. Fish, *Orson Pratt in Nauvoo, 1839-1845*, May 1993, online 27 Mar 2014 at http://jared.pratt-family.org/orson_histories/orson_pratt_in_nauvoo2.html.

³ “Affidavit of J. B. Backenstos,” *Affidavits and Certificates, Disproving the Statements and Affidavits Contained in John C. Bennett's Letters*. Nauvoo, Illinois, Aug. 31, 1842, “Personally appeared before me Ebenezer Robinson acting Justice of the Peace, in and for said county, J. B. Backenstos, who being duly sworn according to law, deposeth and saith, that some time during last winter, he [Backenstos] accused Doctor John C. Bennett, with having an illicit intercourse with Mrs. Orson Pratt, and some others, when said Bennett replied that she made a first rate go, and from personal observations I should have taken said Doctor

Bennett and Mrs. Pratt as man and wife, had I not known to the contrary, and further this deponent saith not.” Online 27 Mar 2014 at <http://www.josephsmithspolygamy.com/JSImproperProposals/16ImproperProposalsAccusations/SarahPratt2.html>.

⁴ The Goddards would indicate that the home itself was built by Foster, though it is possible the home was built by Foster at the behest of Dr. Bennett.

⁵ *The Return*, Vol. 2. No. 11., Davis City, Iowa, November, 1890, p. 362, online 27 Mar 2014 at <http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/RigWrit/M&A/Return1.htm>.

⁶ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 17, July 1, 1842, online 27 Mar 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/8375>.

⁷ Lorenzo D. Wasson, son of Emma Smith’s sister, in a letter to Joseph and Emma dated July 30, 1842, printed in the August 15 edition of the *Times and Seasons*, quoted in Andrew F. Smith, *The Sainly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett*, p. 79. Online 27 Mar 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>.

⁸ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, No 8, of May 15, 1844, “Municipal Court” Online 27 Mar 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/8375>.

⁹ Francis Higbee, or Frank, appears to have refuted the implication that he had a sexually acquired disease, countering that he didn’t have that sort of “pox.” Per discussion with Joseph Johnstun in February 2015.

¹⁰ The individuals may have later become Nauvoo Masons. The confession likely occurred on the third floor of the Nauvoo Cultural Hall, later site of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge.

¹¹ *Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 4, 400.

¹² Chapter 3 of Andrew Smith’s biography of Bennett, *Sainly Scoundrel*, is titled “The ‘Getter Up’ of Colleges”, p. 26.

¹³ DHC, vol. 4, 414.

¹⁴ In addition to William Smith and Vinson Knight signing the notice of excommunication, Chauncey Higbee and Francis Higbee would sign affidavits in 1842 exonerating Joseph.

¹⁵ *Sangamo Journal*, 15 July 1842, quoted in Smith, *Sainly Scoundrel*, p. 101.

¹⁶ Martha’s sister, Elizabeth Brotherton, would become a plural wife of Parly P. Pratt in June 1843. Martha’s sister, Mary Brotherton [McKilrick], bore her first child in May 1842. After the death of John McKilrick/McKilrick, Mary would also become a plural wife of Parley P. Pratt. After Martha passed away, Brigham Young had her sealed to him by proxy.

¹⁷ Pratt, Elizabeth Brotherton, *Women’s Exponent*, December 1, 1890, V. 19, #12, pp. 94-95.

¹⁸ Joseph Fielding, Diary (1843-1846), Church Archives in “ ‘They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet’ –The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding,” transcribed and edited by Andrew F. Ehat, *BYU Studies* 19 (Winter 1979). Online 24 Nov 2015 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/JFielding.html>.

¹⁹ Willard Richards would reach out to the Longstroths, teaching them of plural marriage and covenanting with two of the Longstroth girls in 1843 and possibly a third in 1845.

²⁰ John McKilrick married Mary Brotherton in England. Their first child was conceived before the Brothertons left England on September 21, 1841.

²¹ *Journals of Orson Pratt*, 561-2. Online 7 Apr 2014 at http://jared.pratt-family.org/orson_histories/orson_pratt_in_nauvoo2.html#_cdn52.

²² DHC, vol. 5, 60-61.

²³ DHC, vol. 5, 60-61.

²⁴ *Times and Seasons*, vol. 2, 363. Also David J. Whittaker, *Early Mormon Pamphleteering*, A Dissertation Presented to the Department of History, Brigham Young University, 1982, p. 101.

²⁵ DHC, vol. 5, 60-61.

²⁶ One of Bennett’s early assertions in the Sangamo Journal was the charge that Joseph had instigated the the nearly-fatal May 1842 shooting of Governor Boggs.

²⁷ Whittaker, *Early Mormon Pamphleteering*, p. 101. Online 7 Apr 2014 at http://jared.pratt-family.org/orson_histories/orson_pratt_in_nauvoo2.html#_cdn56.

²⁸ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 23. of 1 October 1842, pp. 939-940. Online 28 Mar 2014 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>.

²⁹ Of interest, the name of Elvira Annie Cowles, Relief Society Treasurer, was allegedly not included on the certificate signed by other members of the Relief Society presidency.

15 – The Apostles and Their Wives

¹ DNA analyses are only possible for those children who lived long enough to have children themselves. But those saying Joseph was a sexual partner to the women have no physical data to support their hypothesis.

² There are other women who would have themselves sealed to Joseph in the Nauvoo temple, at least one of whom alleged they had covenanted with Joseph during his lifetime. However these other women's history is insufficiently documented to be certain Joseph covenanted with them, or what the nature of the covenant might have been.

³ According to story in the May 1844 newspapers, Bennett confessed before roughly sixty men in the location that would later be used by the Masonic Lodge. "Municipal Court," *Times & Seasons*, May 15, 1844, p. 539

⁴ The accusation that caused Joseph to go into hiding was the claim Joseph had plotted to have Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs murdered. Governor Boggs was shot in May 1842, but survived. The "hitman" Joseph supposedly sent was offended at the suggestion he'd been involved. Orrin Porter Rockwell testified "I never shot at anybody, if I shoot they get shot! ... He's still alive, ain't he?" Rockwell was acquitted by a Grand Jury.

⁵ Apostle Jedediah M. Grant, second counselor to Brigham Young and father of President Heber J. Grant, sermon delivered on 19 February 1854 (*JD* 2: 13-14).

⁶ See *Grampa Bill's G.A. Pages*, online 5 Apr 2014 at <http://www.gapages.com/q12.htm>.

⁷ Nancy Johnson divorced Orson Hyde in 1870, possibly due to the visit of Joseph's sons in 1869, the questioning regarding the covenant Nancy had made with Joseph, and the autonomy Nancy might have felt required to agitate for female suffrage and anti-polygamy legislation. See Keith Perkins, "A House Divided, The John Johnson Family," *Ensign*, Feb. 1979. "After coming to Utah in 1852, [Nancy Marinda Johnson Hyde] and her husband settled in the Seventeenth Ward. In 1868 she became the ward's Relief Society president, serving in that position until her death. She also was a member of the board of directors of the Deseret Hospital in Salt Lake. She sought the rights of Mormon women at a time when much of the nation was attempting to destroy the rights of all Latter-day Saints and was selected as a member of a committee which drafted a resolution against some of the vicious antipolygamy legislation being considered in Congress. (See *Millennial Star*, vol. 32, p. 113.) She also was one of fourteen women who drafted a resolution thanking the acting governor of Utah, S. A. Mann, for signing the act that gave the women in Utah the right to vote, the second such act in the United States."

⁸ Brian Hales points out Orson Washington (deceased as a child) would have had to gestate for 43 week to allow for him to be Joseph's biological child. Frank Henry Hyde, he was born in 1846, making it impossible for Joseph to have been the biological father.

⁹ Hyrum performed other impromptu Celestial marriages without correction, as in the case of Howard Coray. Therefore it seems the sealing between Parley Pratt and Mary Ann Frost [Stearns Pratt] was in error, rather than Hyrum acting without prior authorization.

¹⁰ Agnes died in September 1843.

¹¹ Taylor, Samuel W., *Last Pioneer: John Taylor, a Mormon Prophet*, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 1999.

¹² John M. Whitaker typed and edited journals, 1: 242 (1 November 1890), Special Collections, Marriott Library. Whitaker provided this transcription from his original journals that he wrote in his own version of Pittman shorthand. Quoted in Michael Quinn, *Evidence for the Sexual Side of Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, 2012, p. 26, online 11 Apr 2014 at

[http://ldsbooks.pbworks.com/f/Michael+Quinn+-+Evidence+for+Joseph's+Sexual+Polygamy+\(2012\).pdf](http://ldsbooks.pbworks.com/f/Michael+Quinn+-+Evidence+for+Joseph's+Sexual+Polygamy+(2012).pdf).

¹³ Whitney, Orson F., *Life of Heber C. Kimball, An Apostle*, Kimball Family, Salt Lake City, 1888. Chapter XLVI, pp. 333-335.

¹⁴ Rick J. Fish, *Orson Pratt in Nauvoo: 1839-1846*, 1993, citing Whittaker, *Early Mormon Pamphleteering*, p. 101. Online 8 Apr 2014 at http://jared.pratt-family.org/orson_histories/orson_pratt_in_nauvoo2.html.

¹⁵ Daniel H. Wells, *Letter to Joseph F. Smith*, June 25, 1888.

¹⁶ In the late 1930s Phoebe Holmes [Welling] would write Elvira said she'd been Joseph's wife in very deed. Phoebe as a teenager refused to consider Job Wellings' proposal because he was English and a widower and a polygamist. Elvira, faced with a child who was being a bigot, may have said true things that implied more than had actually happened. Phoebe ended up marrying Job, who was already married to Phoebe's older sister, Marietta. The two sisters combined to persuade their youngest sister, Emma Lucinda, to join them as wives of Job. When Job was sent on a mission, he would write the most delightful crossed letters to his "Dear MPE" or Marietta, Phoebe, and Emma Lucinda.

16 – Eliza Roxcy Snow [Smith]

¹ Derr, Jill Mulvancy, and Karen Lynn Davidson, *Eliza: The Life and Faith of Eliza R. Snow*.

² *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*, edited by Jill Mulvany Derr and Karen Lynn Davidson, 2009.

³ Recounted by Jan Shipps in private conversation on May 23, 2010 in the home of Gregory Prince, documented in my post "*Mormon Enigma (ex ante)*", online 15 Apr 2014 at <http://www.megstout.com/blog/2010/05/24/mormon-enigma-ex-ante/>.

⁴ Wikipedia article on Valeen Tippetts Avery, online 15 Apr 2014 at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valeen_Tippetts_Avery.

⁵ Wikipedia article on Mark Hofmann, online 15 Apr 2014 at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Hofmann.

⁶ Stack, Peggy Fletcher, "Shocking historical finding: Mormon icon Eliza R. Snow was gang-raped by Missouri ruffians," *Salt Lake Tribune*, Mar 3, 2016. Online 3 Mar 2016 at <http://www.sltrib.com/home/3613791-155/shocking-historical-finding-mormon-icon-eliza>. Also "BYU-Idaho historian sheds more light on the 1838 attack on Mormon poet Eliza Snow," *Salt Lake Tribune*, Mar 3, 2016. Online 8 Mar 2016 at <http://www.sltrib.com/home/3635705-155/byu-idaho-historian-sheds-more-light-on>.

⁷ Radke-Moss, Andrea, "Eliza R. Snow as a Victim of Sexual Violence in the 1838 Missouri War— the Author's Reflections on a Source," *The Juvenile Instructor Blog*, March 7, 2016. Online 7 Mar 2016 at <http://juvenileinstructor.org/eliza-r-snow-as-a-victim-of-sexual-violence-in-the-1838-missouri-war-the-authors-reflections-on-a-source/>

⁸ The jailers had apparently hoped they could get some good anti-Mormon propaganda out of the tale of "flesh-eating Mormons." Lyman Wight was the only prisoner to partake of the proffered meat before it was discovered what the jailers had meant by "Mormon meat." The jailers eventually realized the prisoners would rather starve than eat human flesh and tried to hide what they'd done. See *History of the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 428.

⁹ *History of the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 422. Affidavits of Hyrum Smith et al. "On Affairs in Missouri, 1831-1839; Officially Subscribed to Before the Municipal Court of Nauvoo The First Day of July, 1843."

¹⁰ *History of the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 428. "Affidavits of Hyrum Smith et al. On Affairs in Missouri, 1831-1839; Officially Subscribed to Before the Municipal Court of Nauvoo The First Day of July, 1843."

¹¹ *Autobiography of Mosiah Hancock (1834-1865)*. Compiled by Amy E. Baird, Victoria H. Jackson, and Laura L. Wassell (daughters of Mosiah Hancock). Online 19 May 2016 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/MHancock.html>.

¹² Leroi Snow, *Notes*, based on letter from W. Aird Macdonald, based on story told him by his mission president, Ben E. Rich, in 1906-1908. Ben is presumed to have heard the story recounted by his father, the Charles C. Rich present in the story. See Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 314-315, reference on p. 715.

¹³ It is proposed that Charles C. Rich couldn't have seen Eliza being pregnant in 1842 because he didn't learn about Celestial marriage and plurality being an approved doctrine until 1844. However everyone knew why women got pregnant, and in 1842 there was a perfectly understandable reason for even a single woman to show up pregnant. Shameful, but understandable. By the time Rich was conveying the story to his son, he believed the pregnant Eliza he'd seen had been carrying the Prophet's son. So what he probably initially saw as a simple fall that ended an embarrassing out of wedlock pregnancy became transformed in his mind to an honored Celestial wife being abused by Joseph's wife, causing the death of Joseph's child. This mental paradigm shift does not invalidate the possibility that Rich really did see a fall where a woman he'd thought was single starts having a miscarriage before his eyes.

¹⁴ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 314, allegedly cited in Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, p. 58, but I do not find the story on that page in my edition.

¹⁵ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 314, from Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, p. 447.

¹⁶ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 315, from *John Boice Blessing Book*, CA, MS 8129, p. 40. Also Beecher, Newell, and Avery, *BYU Studies*, Vol 22, No 1 (1982), p. 93. I personally feel this particular story is more likely to have involved Eliza Partridge, not Eliza R. Snow.

¹⁷ Beecher, Maureen Ursenbach et al., *Emma and Eliza and the Stairs*, *BYU Studies* 22/1 (Fall 1982): 86-96.

¹⁸ For example, there is a tale of Emma finding two letters in Joseph's jacket and becoming enraged, after which Eliza leaves Nauvoo for several months. However even this tale has an alternate explanation based on a fuller understanding of the total history.

¹⁹ Alice Merrill [Horne] was almost certainly the source of this oral tradition.

²⁰ Bennett, "The Mormon Seraglio," *History of the Saints*, pp. 217-225.

²¹ Bennett, "The Cyprian Saints," *History of the Saints*, pp. 220-221.

²² Bennett, "The Chambered Sisters of Charity," *History of the Saints*, pp. 221-222.

²³ Bennett, "The Consecratees of the Cloister, or Cloistered Saints," *History of the Saints*, pp. 223-224.

²⁴ Martha H. Brotherton, Affidavit dated July 13, 1842, *Native American Bulletin*, 1 (July 16, 1842), St. Louis. It was also republished in the *Sangamo Journal* 10 (July 22, 1842), Springfield, Illinois; the *Warsaw Signal*, July 23, 1842; *New York Herald*, 8 (July 25, 27, 1842); *Louisville Daily Journal* 12 (July 25, 1842): 183 (extracts); *Alton Telegraph and Democratic Review* 7 (July 30, 1842), Alton, Illinois; *Quincy Whig* 5 (August 6, 1842): [2], Quincy, Illinois; and John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints: Or an Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), 236-40.

²⁵ This poem is sufficiently different in tone from Eliza's other poems, that it seems remotely possible that it was written by someone else and merely attributed to Eliza. However the poem is included without suspicion in at least two modern compilations of Eliza Snow's poetry.

²⁶ Eliza R. Snow, "The Bride's Avowal," contained in *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*, pp. 210-211.

²⁷ *Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, *BYU Studies* Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 394. Online 16 Apr 2014 at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>.

²⁸ *Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, *BYU Studies* Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 394-5. Online 16 Apr 2014 at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>.

²⁹ William had beaten Joseph in 1835 so severely he appears to have broken Joseph's ribs. At the time of the 1838 troubles, William expressed the hope Joseph would never get out of the hands of his enemies alive. See Walker, Kyle R., *William Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*, pp. 114-115, 141-142.

³⁰ It seems Bennett or one of the Strikers could have given the poem to William to publish in the *Wasp* to discredit Joseph.

³¹ *Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, *BYU Studies* Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 396. Online 16 Apr 2014 at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>.

³² Cited in *Mormon Enigma*, p. 122.

³³ Though Sarah appears not to have been seduced, it was feared her brother was sympathetic to the Higbee boys. Joseph may also have planned to make Sarah his plural wife in deed.

³⁴ Kingsbury, Joseph C., *The History of Joseph C. Kingsbury Written by this own Hand*, pp. 12-13. Original manuscript available at Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, 295 S 1500 E, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112-0860. Online 1 Apr 2016 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/Diaries/id/7660>.

³⁵ Kingsbury, Joseph C., *The History of Joseph C. Kingsbury Written by this own Hand*, pp. 15-16. Original manuscript available at Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, 295 S 1500 E, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112-0860. Online 1 Apr 2016 at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/Diaries/id/7660>.

³⁶ The poem as currently found in the manuscript of Eliza's Nauvoo journal includes a dedication to Jonathan and Elvira. However as the ink used to write in the journal does not change until December 1842, it is not entirely clear if the dedication was original or added at some later time.

³⁷ Snow, Eliza Roxcy, *Eliza R. Snow journal, 1842-1882*, Church History Library MS 1439, online 3 Jun 2014 at <https://eadview.lds.org/dcbrowser/MS%201439/>, files 9 & 10. Also Stout, Meg, *Examining the manuscript of Eliza's journal*, online 3 Jun 2014 at <http://www.millennialstar.org/manuscript-of-elizas-journal/>. The poem has obviously been tampered with, scraping the original word off the paper and replacing it with "rays." The original word appears to begin with a and ends in s, and is roughly the same length as another instance of "angels" that appears later in Eliza's journal.

³⁸ For the poem as it existed by December 1842, see *Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, *BYU Studies* Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 399. Online 16 Apr 2014 at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>.

³⁹ It is impossible to see the head of the stairs from the bottom of the stairs in the Homestead.

⁴⁰ John Donne, *Death, be not Proud*, online 16 Apr 2014 at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173363>.

⁴¹ *Times and Seasons*, 15 December 1842.

⁴² Cook, Lyndon, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839-1845*.

⁴³ Snow, Eliza Roxcy, *Eliza R. Snow journal, 1842-1882*, Church History Library MS 1439, online 3 Jun 2014 at <https://eadview.lds.org/dcbrowser/MS%201439/>, files 16 & 17.

⁴⁴ This imagery evokes sexual intimacy between the vile wretch and whatever women is being personified as innocence.

⁴⁵ Snow, Eliza Roxcy, *Eliza R. Snow journal, 1842-1882*, Church History Library MS 1439, online 3 Jun 2014 at <https://eadview.lds.org/dcbrowser/MS%201439/>, files 16 & 18.

⁴⁶ This is the last line on the page before the content squeezed into the margin.

⁴⁷ Snow, Eliza Roxcy, *Eliza R. Snow journal, 1842-1882*, Church History Library MS 1439, online 3 Jun 2014 at <https://eadview.lds.org/dcbrowser/MS%201439/>, file 15.

⁴⁸ Letter written in Quincy by Emma Smith to Joseph Smith, imprisoned in Liberty Jail, written March 7, 1839.

⁴⁹ *Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, *BYU Studies* Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 402. Online 16 Apr 2014 at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>.

⁵⁰ Faulring, *American Prophet's Record*, p. 303.

⁵¹ On July 20, 1843, Eliza writes of an unnamed Sister who came to her, with forbidding and angry looks, her "appearance very plainly manifested the perturbation of her mind." The next day Eliza would leave Nauvoo to live with the Leavitt's in the Morley Settlement. While

at the Morley Settlement, Eliza would also associate with Sylvia P. Lyon, writing a poem for Sylvia upon the death of Sylvia's daughter. On April 5, 1844, Eliza returned to Nauvoo to attend Conference. She writes she was counseled to remain in Nauvoo, and by 14 May had been invited to lodge with the Markham family. Eliza was living with the Markhams when Joseph was killed, would travel with the Markhams when the Saints were forced to leave Nauvoo, and would live with them once the exodus arrived at Winter Quarters.

17 – Healing Wounded Hearts

¹ *The Book of Mormon* includes discussion of plural marriage. As seen in the marriages of the Queen of the Lamanites, Book of Mormon peoples used levirate marriage that conveyed property, as in the story of Ruth.

² 2 Timothy 3:6.

³ Gideon, born 1831, was first cousin to Marietta Carter [Holmes], who had been killed by a mob in August 1840. This story regarding Hyrum Smith was related to B. H. Roberts in 1894.

⁴ Gary Bergera, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, p. 41, online 2 May 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf.

⁵ Gary Bergera, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, pp. 28-29, online 2 May 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf. It appears that around this time Hyrum had a dream of being united to his deceased wife, Jerusha. Mercy Thompson, Hyrum's sister-in-law, had a corresponding dream of being united to her deceased husband, Robert Thomson. Three days after Hyrum accepted the doctrine of the New and Everlasting Covenant, Hyrum and Mercy stood proxy as each was sealed to their deceased spouses, fulfilling the promise conveyed in their respective dreams.

⁶ Emily Dow Partridge Young, *Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl*, undated manuscript, CHL, Ms 5220, pp 186, 186b.

⁷ Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 407.

⁸ Temple Lot Transcript.

⁹ Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 407-408.

¹⁰ Gary Bergera, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, p. 23-25, online 3 May 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf.

¹¹ Gary Bergera, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, p. 8, online 3 May 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf.

¹² Ruth Vose and her non-Mormon husband, Edward Sayers, had taken Joseph in during August 1842, when he was hiding to avoid being extradited to Missouri on charges related to the shooting of Governor Boggs. As recorded by Andrew Jensen, Ruth and Edward Sayers arrived in Nauvoo in 1841. "While there the strongest affection sprang up between the Prophet Joseph and Mr. Sayers. The latter not attaching much importance to the theory of a future life insisted that his wife Ruth should be sealed to the Prophet for eternity, as he himself should only claim her in this life. She was accordingly sealed to the Prophet in Emma Smith's presence and thus became numbered among the Prophets plural wives though she continued to live with Mr. Sayers until his death." from Andrew Jensen, "Ruth Vose Sayers Draft biographical sketch," cited in Brian Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, Chapter 12, see note 42. Ruth Sayers would attest in May 1869 that she was sealed to Joseph Smith in February 1843 with Hyrum performing the sealing. However Hyrum hadn't reconciled with Joseph over plural marriage until May 26, 1843. Nor is it likely Emma would have openly participated in a sealing between Joseph and another woman as early as February 1843. If Ruth was right about the year, her sealing to Joseph likely took place after May 26, 1843. If Ruth was right about the month, her sealing to Joseph likely took place in February 1844. A

third possibility presents itself if Joseph agreed to the marriage in February 1843, but the actual ceremony didn't occur until after May 26, 1843. Gary Bergera gives his analysis in "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, p. 32-33, online 3 May 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf.

¹³ Mary Ann Price traveled to Utah in 1852, one of four women to drive teams in the Henry W. Miller Company. During that crossing, Mary Ann was still being referred to as Miss Mary Ann Price.

¹⁴ Gary Bergera, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, p. 8-10, online 3 May 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf.

¹⁵ Orange Wight had set his cap for Flora Ann after hearing about plural marriage from Joseph Smith. Orange Wight's reaction to the awkward revelation by Flora Ann's mother was to be pleased Joseph had liked a woman he liked, and to try to find some other worthy woman who hadn't already been snapped up, cited in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 389-391.

¹⁶ See Gary Bergera, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, p. 30-31, online 3 May 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf.

¹⁷ John C. Bennett wrote "Joe Smith was privately married to his spiritual wives—in the case of Mrs. A**** S****, by Apostle Brigham Young; and in that of Miss L***** B***** [Louisa Beaman], by Elder Joseph Bates Noble. John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints; or, An Expose of Joe Smith and Mormonism* [Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842], p. 256.

¹⁸ Vilate Kimball letter, cited in Gary Bergera, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, p. 18, online 3 May 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf. The confidence between Sarah Peak [Noon Kimball] and Sarah B. Alley [Noble] is consistent with the possibility that they were both pregnant at the same time.

¹⁹ Erastus Snow's recollection says 1841, but since he wasn't in Nauvoo until April 1843, this was an error on Snow's part. We can infer that the 1843 conversation likely occurred no earlier than summer 1843, as Erastus mentions that Emma had administered to Joseph but had since turned against him.

²⁰ Gary Bergera, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, p. 6-7, online 3 May 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf.

²¹ "Lucy Walker, Brief Biographical Sketch," pp. 5-6, cited in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 463.

²² "Lucy Walker, Brief Biographical Sketch," cited in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 464.

²³ "Lucy Walker, Brief Biographical Sketch," cited in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 465.

²⁴ Temple Lot transcript, cited in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 465.

18 – Emma's Ultimatum

¹ Accounts regarding a fall 1841 sermon mentioning polygamy are recorded by Joseph Lee Robinson, George A. Smith, Horace Cummings, and Helen Mar Kimball [Smith Whitney]. Helen also documents Joseph's sermon and retraction. Robinson and Kimball mention Emma's reaction, see Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, Volume I, Chapter 9.

² If Joseph practice plural marriage, it seems reasonable that he did so during the windows where we see bona fide plural wives conceive children. Emily Partridge would testify that she had roomed with Joseph several times and participated in carnal intercourse during May 1843, however she did not conceive. It is sufficient for Emily's testimony to remain true if actual carnal intercourse occurred only once. An RLDS apostate, after having embezzled funds from the RLDS Church, would claim Malissa Lott told him Joseph Smith had wanted

to have her bear his child. Malissa then described the one intimate encounter that followed. It seems this must have occurred in May 1844, as Malissa's failure to quicken from the single attempt would likely have occasioned another attempt. If accepted as accurate, Malissa's description of the solitary attempt to conceive Joseph's child portrays a "polygamist" who truly was reluctant.

³ *History of the Church* 3:28-30.

⁴ The *Nauvoo Expositor*, June 7, 1844, Page 1, Col. F. Online 15 May 2014 at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Expositor.

⁵ *Relief Society Minute Book*, p. 53, Minutes for Thursday, May 26th, online 6 May 2014 at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book?p=50#/>. This is the meeting after Catherine Fuller, Margaret and Matilda Nyman, Sarah Miller, and others testified before the High Council regarding the seductions carried out by Bennett, Chauncey Higbee, and others.

⁶ *Relief Society Minute Book*, p. 61, Minutes for Thursday, June 9th, online 6 May 2014 at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book?p=58#/>.

⁷ Partridge, Emily Dow, autobiographical sketch, *Written Especially for My Children, January 7, 1877*, Marriott Library, manuscript owned by Emily Young Knopp.

⁸ Partridge, Emily Dow, "Emily Young Autobiography," p. 4; see *Women's Exponent*, v. 14, August 1, 1885, p. 38.

⁹ Only two previously-married couples had been sealed at this point. Newell K. Whitney and his wife, Elizabeth, were sealed in conjunction with the sealing of their daughter, Sarah, to Joseph. Then Heber C. Kimball was sealed to his wife, Vilate, as a result of Kimball's faith in offering Vilate to Joseph, an offered sacrifice I think was prompted by the apostle's action in excommunicating Orson Pratt for refusing to publicly confirm that his wife was an adulteress.

¹⁰ Emily's testimony was given as part of the Temple Lot trial, where the Utah Church was helping the Temple Lot Church defend the Missouri property where a Temple was to have been erected. The Church tried to prove that Joseph had practiced and taught polygamy during his lifetime, "proving" that the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, headed by Joseph's sons, was not true to the legacy of Joseph Smith. Emily thus had a motive to be expansive with her claims regarding sexuality with Joseph.

¹¹ *Orange Wight, Autobiography*, "At first the doctrine was taught in private... The next I noticed when in company with the young folks the girls were calling one another spirituals." Orange dates this to 1841-1842, making it possible that the Partridge girls had heard the term and even used it themselves by 1843. Online 12 May 2014 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/OWight.html>. Orange claims he was initiated into polygamy in the winter of 1841/42, which was almost certainly in the context of John C. Bennett's spiritual wifery. It is uncertain how Orange Wight learned that the Partridge girls, specifically, were wives of Joseph Smith.

¹² This is the tale related by Sister Mary Ann Barzee Boice, cited in multiple sources, including Beecher, Newell, and Avery, "Emma Eliza and the Stairs," *BYU Studies* 22:1, p. 93, online 12 May 2014 at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/PDFViewer.aspx?title=5510&linkURL=22.1BeecherNewellEmma-062070ee-a927-48b5-a09a-db83edd57b24.pdf>.

¹³ See Devery S. Anderson, Gary James Bergera, Editors. *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, 1842-1846: A Documentary History*; See also Ehat, *Introduction of Temple Ordinances*, 74-75. For a summary, see the FairMormon article titled *Joseph Smith/Polygamy/Emma Smith/Sealing*, online 12 May 2014 at http://pt.fairmormon.org/Joseph_Smith/Polygamy/Emma_Smith/Sealing.

¹⁴ Gary Bergera, "The Earliest Mormon Polygamists," *Dialogue*, pp. 28-29, online 2 May 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf.

¹⁵ An anti-Mormon source, Catherine Lewis, reports Helen telling her mother "I would never have been sealed (married) to Joseph had I known it was anything more than a

ceremony.” This was in the context of Brigham Young attempting to collect the young widow, as he believed was his levirate duty. However objection may refer to the reality that the “ceremony” interfered with Helen’s flirtations and attendance at dances. Brigham, however, was unabashedly intending to impregnate Joseph’s widows who came into his care. The idea of being added to what could be perceived as Brigham’s harem might not have been appealing.

¹⁶ See the retraction of the commandment, D&C 132: 51-56, online 12 May 2014 at <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/132.51-56?lang=eng#50>.

¹⁷ D&C 132:54.

¹⁸ Jackson, Joseph H., Biography, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, online 15 Jun 2016 at <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/joseph-h-jackson>.

¹⁹ Jonathan, less than three months younger than Joseph Smith, is the only man whose wife was sealed to Joseph during mid-1843. As late as 1845, Jonathan’s marriage to Elvira may still have been a pretend marriage.

²⁰ The August 16, 1843 entry in William Clayton’s journal indicates Joseph feared Emma would divorce him if he took the Partridge sisters as plural wives. As Joseph was already married to the Partridge sisters, this suggests Joseph either hadn’t consummated the unions or had ended conjugal relations and didn’t want to resume relations for fear Emma would invoke her ultimatum from June 1843. See George D. Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, p. 117.

²¹ The location of the Wasson’s home is sometimes given as Inlet Grove. However local historians assert that at the time of the arrest the Wasson home was located in Palestine Grove. An 1843 account of the arrest indicates that the arrest occurred in Palestine Grove.

²² B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Period I, Volume V*, pp. 440-442. Online 12 May 2014 at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/hc/5/24.html>.

²³ Todd Compton writes of this visit on June 29th, concluding “Once again [Elizabeth Durfee] may have been preparing a young woman, Melissa Lott, for a proposal from Joseph Smith.” See Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 262-263.

²⁴ B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Period I, Volume V*, p. 456. Online 12 May 2014 at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/hc/5/24.html>.

²⁵ B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Period I, Volume V*, pp. 458-459. Online 12 May 2014 at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/hc/5/24.html>.

19 – Revealing the Revelation

¹ Critics of D&C 132 claim James Whitehead, Joseph’s secretary, should have written it down, rather than a simple tithing clerk. However these critics tend to ignore James Whitehead’s 1864 assertion that he had witnessed several sealings where Emma gave Joseph plural wives.

² D&C 132.

³ Joseph F. Smith, Jr., *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, p. 77.

⁴ Andrew Jensen, *The Historical Record* 6 [May 1887]: pp. 224, 225–226

⁵ *History of the Church* 5:507.

⁶ *History of the Church* 5:509.

⁷ RLDS *History of the Church* 3:351–352; *The Messenger of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* 1 [April 1875], p. 23. From the date, it appears Briggs’ testimony was published as a direct attack on Clayton’s 1874 account.

⁸ When I separated from my first husband, my mother did not want to have to lie to my husband. So she would drop me off around the corner from whatever home I had arranged to shelter in that night, so she could honestly tell my abusive husband that she didn’t know where I was.

⁹ Allegedly Joseph F. Smith or Joseph Fielding Smith later opined that the revelation in its entirety ought not to have been canonized, containing as it did these time-specific and embarrassing details regarding Emma Smith.

¹⁰ One of these early sealings would show Hyrum's lack of understanding. Even though Joseph had sealed Hyrum to the widowed Mercy Fielding [Thompson] for time, Hyrum had not understood that widows should be given the chance to be sealed to their beloved first husbands. So Hyrum sealed Parley P. Pratt to his wife, Mary Ann Frost [Sterns Pratt], a sealing Joseph would feel he had to cancel.

¹¹ *Howard Coray, Autobiography*, online 15 May 2014 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/HCoray.html>.

¹² *Nauvoo Expositor*, June 7, 1844, Page 2, Col. D. Online 15 May 2014 at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Expositor.

¹³ *Nauvoo Expositor*, June 7, 1844, Page 1, Col. F. Online 15 May 2014 at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Expositor.

¹⁴ Modern historians make a point of the fact that Austin's daughter, Elvira Annie Cowles [Holmes] had become one of Joseph's plural wives earlier that summer. However I don't know why Austin would have had any idea about Elvira's sealing to Joseph.

¹⁵ *Nauvoo Expositor*, June 7, 1844, Page 1, Col. E. Online 15 May 2014 at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Expositor.

¹⁶ *Brigham Young, Sermon, October 8, 1866*, LDS Church Archives, cited in Gary Bergera, "Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44," *Dialogue*, online 22 Mar 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf.

¹⁷ Danel Bachman, *A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith*, p. 176.

¹⁸ Jonathan H. Hale was bishop of the Nauvoo 9th Ward after August 20, 1842, see *The Nauvoo City Council and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger editor, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 2011, pp. 422-423.

¹⁹ Jonathan Harriman Holmes, Jonathan Harriman Hale, and Henry Harriman were three cousins from Massachusetts who joined the Church together and traveled to Kirtland in 1835. Holmes was one of Joseph's bodyguards, husband of the ill-fated Marietta Carter, and "assigned" husband to Elvira Annie Cowles, who had been sealed to Joseph by the time this gathering took place. Clarissa Boynton Harriman, the woman who is described as being barren, was sister to Olive Boynton [Hale], wife of Bishop Jonathan Harriman Hale. Thus Clarissa's inability to "raise up children" to the name of Harriman was a concern to many of those in attendance at this meeting.

²⁰ Eliza Elizabeth Jones was born in January 1830, making her at most 14 if Joseph performed a sealing ceremony between Eliza and Henry before Joseph's death. Henry and Eliza were sealed in the Nauvoo temple in January 1846 and Eliza conceived her first child in the summer when she was 16 years old.

²¹ *Aroet Lucious Hale, Journal*, online 15 May 2014 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/AHale.html>.

²² This was likely John Somers Higbee, uncle to Chauncey Higbee and Francis Higbee. As John Higbee is not identified as an early polygamist by either Gary Bergera or George D. Smith, it seems possible or even likely that John Higbee was involved in Bennett's spiritual wifery, not Joseph's plural marriage. John Higbee is mentioned in heroic terms by Orange Wight's 1904 letter for his protection and aid to the Wight family during the Missouri troubles of 1833 that prompted Joseph Smith to raise Zion's Camp to come to the rescue.

²³ *Orange Wight, May 4, 1903, letter to Joseph I. Earl*, online 15 May 2014 at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/OWight.html>.

²⁴ It is not clear if this means Orange became informed, or if it means he became an active member of the group involved in illicit intercourse. After Orange was "initiated" at age 18, he was sent away from Nauvoo on a mission under the supervision of two older missionaries.

²⁵ It seems here that it would have been Brigham explaining that he, Brigham, had more than one wife, as he was a widower. Thus it would be natural for Brigham to explain that he

expected to be united in heaven to both the woman who was his current wife, as well as the wonderful woman who had been his wife before her death.

²⁶ Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, July 9, 1843, pp. 134-136.

20 – Those Virtuous and Pure

¹ D&C 132:52

² From D&C 132:60-62

³ If these nine were among the “ten” Joseph was told he was permitted, it seems Emma Hale [Smith] may have been the tenth.

⁴ According to Todd Compton, Martha McBride married Heber C. Kimball on October 12, 1844, when Martha was 39. However other biographies of Martha McBride claim she did not marry Heber C. Kimball until two months before leaving Nauvoo, which would suggest the date was October 12, 1845. As Martha was a widow and mother of four daughters and a son when she covenanted with Joseph, I think the 1845 date is more likely, suggesting she was taken under protection in the context of the danger posed by the wolf hunts and the pending flight from Nauvoo rather than as one of the “virtuous and pure.”

⁵ Some claim Fanny gave birth to a son named Orson or Orrison. Ugo Perego has evaluated this case and found that the descendants of Orrison could not have Joseph Smith as an ancestor. Chauncey Webb indicated Fanny was pregnant when she lived in his home in the late summer of 1836, however by the Don Bradley reconstruction of the relationship, Fanny may have been only a couple of months pregnant at the time if she conceived after April 1836. The symptoms Chauncey may have observed could have been produced by amenorrhea, cessation of menstruation caused by stress. See Bradley, Don, *Weighing the Case of Fanny Alger*, *The Persistence of Polygamy*, Volume I, pp. 14-58. Also see Perego, Ugo, *Joseph Smith and DNA*, *The Persistence of Polygamy*, Volume I, pp. 244-246.

⁶ Vinson Knight’s daughter fled from the attempted discussion. As Joseph and others may have feared, the young Miss Knight left Mormonism, confident in her interpretation that Joseph Smith was involved in prurient sexuality.

⁷ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 316. Compton does not explicitly mention Eliza’s departure from Nauvoo.

⁸ *Joseph Smith Papers*, journal facsimile for October 5, 1843.

⁹ The third possibility is Heber Kimball, who may have engendered a child with Sarah Peak Noon by this point. On the other hand, it is not clear who engendered the son Sarah Peak [Noon] gave birth to in 1842.

¹⁰ Clayton, William, Journal entry for October 19, 1843, see Smith, George D., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, UT, 1995, p 122.

¹¹ Initially faith healing was seen as a “proof” that the Church was true. In the late 1800s other churches began to perform faith healings. Allocation of priesthood to men was a pet theory of Joseph F. Smith, a theory his followers ensconced as doctrine in the 1900s.

¹² Exodus 40:12-13.

¹³ It is not clear what washing and anointing an expectant mother consisted of, exactly. The implication is that it was sufficiently intimate that it was not a form of blessing a man could appropriately perform.

¹⁴ Belle Spafford was called to serve in her local Relief Society Presidency as a young mother, a calling she initially despised. Speaking of those days, she said, “To me the society needed lifting up and pushing forward. We needed to enroll more young women, and have programs a little more meaningful. We needed to do something on the homemaking day besides quilting. . . . So I worked toward these goals along with my president and the other counselor.” See Janet Peterson and Connie Lewis, “Making a Difference for Women: Belle S. Spafford,” *Ensign*, March 2006.

¹⁵ Smith, Lucy Meserve, *Original Historical Narrative of Lucy Meserve Smith* (1888-1890), LDS Church Archives, cited by Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Journey to Zion: Voices From the Mormon Trail*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997, p. 157.

¹⁶ Meserve Smith, Lucy, "Statement," *Wilford Wood Collection of Church Historical Materials*, Microfilm at LDS Church History Library, MS 8617, Reel 8, internal reference within collection – 4-N-b-2.

¹⁷ The only woman married to a faithful Mormon who reportedly conceived before July 1844 and after covenanting with Joseph Smith was Esther Dutcher [Smith]. See Appendix C.

¹⁸ Stress can cause amenorrhea, a cessation of menstruation. However stress did not appear to cause significant rates of amenorrhea at later times for Joseph's wives. For Malissa Lott, the most descriptive account of a possible consummation of the marriage to Joseph is documented in the 1900s by R.C. Evans in attempting to prove the RLDS Church was wrong. See Evans, R. C., *Forty Years in the Mormon Church: Why I Left It*, Toronto, R. C. Evans, 1920. According to Evans, Malissa said Joseph wished her to bear his child. They were allegedly intimate just once, in the nursery next to the bedroom where Joseph and Emma slept. This would agree with Malissa's 1894 testimony that she had been Joseph's wife "in very deed." The tale resembles the famous Road Hill murder case, where the nursery was atypically adjoined to the master bedroom to facilitate intrigue between the master of the house and the governess. However Joseph Smith III confirms Emma loved to have the children near, so had insisted that the children's room be adjacent to the bedroom where Emma and Joseph slept. If Malissa and Joseph did consummate their marriage with the intent to have Malissa bear a child, this likely occurred in May 1844. If the attempt had occurred earlier, a second attempt would have reasonably been made when it had become clear Malissa hadn't quickened. Malissa was a strategic choice, as her father was Joseph's bodyguard and the Lotts had a farm outside town. A potentially pregnant Malissa and her eventual child would have been sheltered from danger. It could have happened. But that doesn't mean it did happen. Malissa refused to confirm she'd been intimate with Joseph when her own family pressed her for details. Amongst Joseph's plural wives, Malissa's treatment by Church authorities in the wake of Joseph's death is notably offhand.

¹⁹ Brigham Young, discourse given Aug. 31, 1873, JD 16:166-67, quoted by Todd Compton in *Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*, Signature Books, 1997, p. 616.

²⁰ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 621. Compton writes of Fanny Young's death, "The last married of Joseph Smith's wives had passed over to the other country."

²¹ Ruth Vose Sayers claimed Hyrum Smith performed a ceremony sealing her to Joseph Smith in February 1843. But Hyrum Smith didn't accept the doctrine of plural marriage until May 26, 1843. It appears Ruth misremembered the year, and was sealed to Joseph in 1844.

²² Bergera, Gary James, "The Earliest Polygamists," *Dialogue*, Vol 38, No 3, p. 30. Bergera writes "I am persuaded that the evidence allows for an additional four (if not more) plural wives [in addition to the women identified as Joseph's plural wives by Todd Compton in *Sacred Loneliness*]—Mary Houston, Sarah Scott Mulholland, Mary Ann Frost Stearns Pratt, and Phebe Watrous Woodworth..." Bergera also mentions Lyndon W. Cook's suggestion (*Nauvoo Mariages Proxy Sealings 1843-1846*, 2004, pp. 12-13) that Lydia Kenyon [Carter], Sarah (Bapson) Rapson [Poulterer], and Hannah Dubois [Smith Dibble] were Joseph's plural wives. I discuss Mary Ann Frost [Stearns Pratt], Phebe Watrous [Woodworth], and Hannah Dubois [Smith Dibble] in the main text of this book. Mary Houston and Sarah Scott were married to Heber C. Kimball in 1846 in the Nauvoo Temple. Heber's grandson, Orson Whitney, wrote these two women were acknowledged to have been Joseph's wives. Sarah Scott (b. 1816) was a widow in 1839 and her brother was one William Law would invite to participate in the conspiracy to kill Joseph. This suggests Sarah may have been caught up in the illicit intercourse scandal. Mary Houston's age (b. 1818) and lack of progeny are also consistent with involvement in the illicit intercourse scandal. Lydia Kenyon [Carter] (b. 1799) was sister-in-law to Jared Carter and aunt to Carter girls who married Jonathan Harriman Holmes and Orange Wight. Lydia's long-time legal husband would travel with her to Utah.

Lydia may have been a mentor to younger women at risk of being led astray. Sarah Rapson [Poulterer] (b. 1793) was an English widow whose children had all died. Sarah “Bapson” may have been one of the semi-anonymous women mentioned in Bennett’s *History of the Saints*, suggesting she was working to expose the strikers during 1842. Other women sealed by proxy to Joseph Smith in 1846 and later are alleged to have covenanted with Joseph during his lifetime.

²³ In the heaven I imagine, Mr. Sayers will have accepted the saving ordinances and will be united to Rose, who he loved so much he was willing to let her have the desire of her heart.

21 – Daughter of Promise

¹ Jane’s diary mentions Joseph Fitch, his wife and daughter. Additional details on the Fitch family in Wilton were located in the book *Descendants of Reinold and Matthew Marvin of Hartford, Ct.*, by George Franklin Marvin and William Theophilus Rogers Marvin, online 1 Jun 2014 at <http://books.google.com/books?id=Gc81AAAAAAAJ&pg=PA430#v=onepage&q&f=false> and familysearch.org.

² In Jane’s autobiography, she says she, herself, was fourteen. However Jane had a nine-year-old son in 1843. It is likely Jane was using the age of the girl for whom she served as companion. Manning James, Jane, *Autobiography*, online 1 Jun 2014 at <http://www.blacklds.org/manning>.

³ Jane’s baptism was likely in the fall of 1842. It is therefore possible that the presence of the Elder in Wilton was occasioned by the missionary efforts conducted to dispel the lurid stories John C. Bennett was telling during his anti-Mormon campaign associated with publication of his *History of the Saints*.

⁴ Manning James, Jane, *Autobiography*, online 1 Jun 2014 at <http://www.blacklds.org/manning>.

⁵ Date is given in *Black and Mormon*, edited by Newell G. Bringhurst and Darron T. Smith, online 2 Jun 2014 at <http://books.google.com/books?id=5OBGf1dixKYC&pg=PA51#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁶ Jane’s mother had remarried a man named Cato Treadwill, who may have been part of the party, but is not mentioned in Jane’s account. This would have increased the number of men in the party to four.

⁷ Jane’s son, Sylvester (KNVC-9HP), was eight years old when the Manning party arrived in Nauvoo.

⁸ Elder Wandell was apparently the Elder who had baptized Jane, see Henry J. Wolfinger, “A Test of Faith: Jane Elizabeth James and the Origins of the Utah Black Community,” *Social Accommodations in Utah* (American West Center occasional papers, University of Utah, 1975), pp. 126–29. This is cited in Linda King Newell and Valery Tippetts Avery, “Jane Manning James: Black Saint, 1847 Pioneer,” *Ensign*, online 2 Jun 2014 at <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/08/jane-manning-james-black-saint-1847-pioneer?lang=eng>.

⁹ It is worth noting that “the washing” had previously been the job of Emily Partridge, who had departed the Smith household a few weeks before Jane joined the Smith household.

¹⁰ Manning James, Jane, *Autobiography*, online 1 Jun 2014 at <http://www.blacklds.org/manning>.

¹¹ *Life History of Sarah Elizabeth Holmes [Weaver]*, available at the Nauvoo Land and Records Office.

¹² Cited in Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, Chapter 24. Apparently from page 19 of the autobiography of Sarah Elizabeth Manning [James], but not included in the online version previously cited.

¹³ Manning James, Jane, *Autobiography*, online 1 Jun 2014 at <http://www.blacklds.org/manning>.

¹⁴ Personal correspondence with Margaret Blair Young, co-author with Darius Aidan Gray of the *Standing on the Promises* series of historical novels discussing the history of Blacks in early LDS history. At the time of our correspondence, Margaret didn't recall the rapist's name, but conveyed the impression he was a local Connecticut clergyman.

¹⁵ Though Jane does not specify which Burlington she fled to, Burlington, Iowa, is more likely than Burlington, Illinois.

¹⁶ Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, "Jane Manning James: Black Saint, 1847 Pioneer," *Ensign*, online 1 Jun 2014 at <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/08/jane-manning-james-black-saint-1847-pioneer?lang=eng>.

¹⁷ Whipple, Nelson Wheeler, quoted by Connell O'Donovan in "Brigham Young, African Americans, and Plural Marriage: Schism and the Beginnings of Black Priesthood and Temple Denial," *The Persistence of Polygamy, Vol 2, From Joseph Smith's Martyrdom to the First Manifesto, 1844-1890*, John Whitmer Books, 2013, p. 73.

¹⁸ Ham, Shem, and Japeth were sons of Noah, the Bible prophet at the time of the great flood. Shem was believed to be the father of the Semites, or Israelites. Japeth was believed to have been the father of the Whites who were not Israelites. Ham was believed to be the father of the Blacks. Ironically, there is a Black people who have extremely strong Cohenim DNA, indicating that these Black individuals are a literal branch of Israel. Residual racism was still taught when I was a college student in the 1980s. I think a loving God might have kept his Black children from us, until we yearned to have the stain of the ban taken from us. The ban meant we don't have a rich history of White members being actually terrible to their Black brothers. It resembles how a parent might separate two children when one might do irreparable damage to the other. The ban may have been because White members couldn't be trusted to avoid terrible hatefulness until a later date. I say this as a mixed race child born when it was "void and prohibited" for my parents to marry in the state of my birth.

¹⁹ O'Donovan, Connell, "Black Priesthood and Priesthood Denial," *The Persistence of Polygamy*, pp. 60.

²⁰ "Slavery in Utah" at *Utah History to Go*, online 2 Jun 2014 at

http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/pioneers_and_cowboys/slaveryinutah.html.

²¹ The 1850 and 1860 Utah censuses reported 26 and 29 Black slaves, respectively.

Enslavement of native Americans was a larger issue. Brigham's attempt to transmute slavery into indentured servitude as a step towards complete emancipation backfired. Utes started raiding Paiute villages for women and children, who they threaten to kill unless the Mormons "bought" the kidnapped victims. This is how Omer Badigee became the adopted son of Joseph Leland Heywood. A Mormon bought Badigee, saving his life, but didn't take care of Badigee. Heywood, finding this situation, relieved the un-named Mormon of responsibility for the boy, brought him to his household, where Omer was bathed, de-loused, and given decent clothes (the rags Omer had been wearing were burned).

²² See Brigham Young addresses, Ms d 1234, Box 48, folder 3, dated Feb. 5, 1852. Also included in Fred C. Collier, *The Teachings of Brigham Young*.

²³ *ibid*.

²⁴ This is an account I tumbled across in the early days of the internet, which I have been unable to relocate. However it is entirely consistent with the vigil of Mary Fielding [Smith] upon discovering the relocation of her husband's body. Assuming the account was accurate, it seems likely the Smith brother who may have been buried with Joseph and Hyrum was Samuel.

²⁵ This controversy continued into the next generation, when Emma's family resorted to "dousing" in 1928 to locate the lost remains of the brothers. Joseph Fielding Smith, Hyrum's grandson, was livid that Emma's family would presume to resort to such means to "locate" the graves, then move the bodies yet again without consulting Hyrum's descendants. Further, there was suspicion that the bodies had been misidentified, a suspicion which has since been allayed by forensic analysis. See Curtis G. Weber, *Skulls and Crossed Bones? A Forensic Study of the Remains of Hyrum and Joseph Smith*, online 2 Jun 2014 at

<http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Skulls-and-Crossed-Bones-A-Forensic-Study-of-the-Remains-of-Hyrum-and-Joseph-Smith.pdf>. Unbeknownst to Joseph Fielding Smith, the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum had been moved out of Nauvoo from under the beehive burial location just prior to the conflict of September 1846, and subsequently reburied on the grounds of Emma's home, near a spring house which subsequently was torn down, accounting for the lack of accuracy regarding the final resting place of the remains.

²⁶ Deseret News article reporting the death and funeral of Jane Manning James on April 16, 1908, cited in Jane Manning James page on *Black LDS*, online 2 Jun 2014 at <http://www.blacklds.org/manning>.

22 – The Prodigal Returns

¹ Based on Rabbi Scheinerman's article on *lashon hara* (the Hebrew term for "evil speech"). Online 10 Jun 2014 at <http://scheinerman.net/judaism/Sermons/lashon-hara.html>.

² In July 1842, Bennett requested Stephen Douglas assist him in obtaining a divorce from his wife, Mary. The actual divorce was finalized on October 15, 1842. From Andrew Smith's *Saintly Scoundrel* on p. 105: "While in Quincy [in July 1842], Bennett might have met with Stephen Douglas because two matters were resolved about this time. The first was Bennett's resignation as master in chancery for Hancock County. The second was Douglas's [sic] agreement to handle Bennett's divorce from his estranged wife, Mary Bennett, who had remained in Ohio. This divorce was not finalized until October 15 because she had to be informed of the proceedings. She evidently did not contest the divorce. [Reference to Decree of Divorce, signed by Stephen A. Douglas, Hancock County Archives, Carthage, Ill.]"

³ J. M. Dixon and J. W. Doughty, *Centennial History of Polk County, Iowa*, p. 327, cited in Andrew F. Smith, *The Saintly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett*, p. 138.

⁴ Michael De Groote, "Speaker says militia leader betrayed Joseph Smith", *Deseret News*, online 15 Jun 2014 at <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700009433/Speaker-says-militia-leader-betrayed-Joseph-Smith.html?pg=all>.

⁵ John C. Bennett, October 28, 1843, letter to the editor, published in the *Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot*, cited in Andrew Smith, *The Saintly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett*, p. 138.

⁶ A possible informant might be William Law, who learned about the New and Everlasting Covenant around this time.

⁷ Though Bennett had secured a divorce from Mary Barker, he married again in early 1843. Therefore he could not have hoped to have the woman he had courted in Nauvoo (possibly Elvira Cowles) unless she were to have become his plural wife.

⁸ *Joseph Smith's Daybook from His General Store in Nauvoo*, December 8, 1843, Iowa Masonic Library, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Cited in Andrew Smith, *The Saintly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett*, pp. 138-139. Then end note giving details of the payment is note 34 on page 223.

⁹ Joseph Jackson claimed in January 1844 that Joseph had been attempting to convince Jane Law of the correctness of the doctrine for "some two months." Numerous 1844 documents discuss the accusation that William Law was an adulterer, including: Alexander Neibaur's journal entry of May 24, 1844; William Clayton's journal entry of June 12, 1844; Hyrum Smith's accusations in the Nauvoo City Council on June 8, 1844; and Hyrum's writings in the June 17, 1844, *Nauvoo Neighbor*.

¹⁰ It is possible some in the Boston crowd were Mormons who had been sent away from Nauvoo following the scandal. We know William Smith was in the Boston area. Mormon Elders had been following Bennett's lecture circuit, to mitigate the damage his tales caused. The attack on Bennett could have been to stop him from identifying the other guilty men.

¹¹ Smith, *Saintly Scoundrel*, p. 140.

¹² Cited in *Saintly Scoundrel*. Jonathan Dunham, Major General of the Nauvoo Legion, could be the author of the reported letter. However Joseph last instructions to Dunham told Dunham to “instruct the people to stay at home and attend to their own business.” Allen J. Stout alleged Dunham had disobeyed Joseph Smith’s order to rally to Carthage, but it does not appear Joseph issued such an order. If traitorous, Dunham would have been happy to keep the Mormons away from Carthage, as Joseph Smith had commanded him to do.

¹³ D&C 124:16-17.

23 – Conferring the Mantle

¹ D&C 132:50, 60, online 17 Jun 2014 at <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/132?lang=eng>.

² Hyrum had served a mission to the East with Law in 1841, so was particularly close to him. But Law, though a member of the Quorum of the Anointed, was not exposed to the doctrine of plural marriage before fall 1843, though other members of the Quorum of the Anointed had been taught and experienced the sealing ordinance starting in May 1843. It is not known why Joseph may delayed exposing Law to the doctrine. Hyrum likely approached Law without Joseph’s permission. Law was a leader in the conspiracy to kill Joseph prior to giving this account, suggesting Law’s portrayal of the conversation might be suspect.

³ *William Law, Affidavit, 1885*, cited in *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, by Richard Van Wagoner, 1989, p. 65.

⁴ Alexander Neibaur journal entry of May 24, 1844. Also corroborated by William Clayton journal entry of June 12, 1844, and Hyrum Smith in the June 17, 1844 *Nauvoo Neighbor*. Though these three accounts are recorded in 1844, the wording in each is consistent with the possibility that the inquiry occurred in fall 1843. Joseph Jackson claimed in January 1844 that Joseph had been attempting to convince Jane Law of the correctness of the doctrine for “some two months.” Hyrum Smith had also related to the Nauvoo City Council on June 8, 1844, that William Law had confessed to adultery. See *The Nauvoo City Council and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger editor, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 2011, p. 241-242.

⁵ See *Joseph Smith Papers*, “Officers of the Nauvoo Legion,” online Jun 22, 2014 at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/bc-jsp/content/jsp/images/content/library/pdf/chart12.pdf>.

⁶ Neibaur journal entry of May 24, 1844. Cited in *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, by Richard Van Wagoner, 1989, p. 71.

⁷ William Law journal entry of May 13, 1844. Cited in Lyndon W. Cook, “William Law, Nauvoo Dissenter,” *BYU Studies*, Vol 22 No. 1 (1982), p. 65 in footnote 82, online Jun 22, 2014 at <https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/view/5255>.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 66, footnote 87.

⁹ Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, “The Prophet’s Final Charge to the Twelve,” in *Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Kent P. Jackson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 495–524, online 22 Jun 2014 at http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/joseph-smith-prophet-and-seer/prophets-final-charge-twelve-1844#_ednref57.

¹⁰ Wilford Woodruff, *The Latter-Day Saints Millennial Star*, Volume 49, p. 722. See also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff*, Chapter 2, Joseph Smith: Prophet, Seer, and Revelator.

¹¹ John Allen Hicks was a few years older than Joseph Smith and had been The President of the Elders’ Quorum in Nauvoo. His familysearch record is online 22 Jun 2014 at <https://familysearch.org/tree/#view=ancestor&person=KNWK-S19>. It is not clear which brother was with him, though Robert Francis Hicks seems possible. Hicks was of Irish extraction, like Law, and had joined the Church in Canada. William Law, Robert Francis Hicks, and Robert Scott would all end up moving to Wisconsin after leaving Nauvoo.

¹² Most of these men had served together as prominent officers in the Nauvoo Legion, when Bennett was in charge.

¹³ Dennison would convey the tale decades later, a delay requested by Joseph Smith. *The Contributor*, 1884, online 21 Jun 2014 at <http://tinyurl.com/1884-Contributor>. Also see Dallin Oaks, “Following the Pioneers,” *Ensign*, online 22 Jun 2014 at <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/print/1997/10/following-the-pioneers?lang=eng>.

¹⁴ John and Robert Scott were brothers to Sarah Scott [Mulholland Mullinder], who would marry Heber Kimball after Joseph’s death and was reportedly one of Joseph Smith plural wives during his lifetime.

¹⁵ Joseph Smith, as conveyed via Dennison L. Harris to Horace Cummings, commented on by John Taylor. Horace Cummings’ version was published in *The Contributor* in 1884, and was included in Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smiths Polygamy, Volume 3*, Chapter 15.

¹⁶ *The Contributor*, 1884.

24 – Carthage, 1844

¹ John Taylor, affidavit of 22 September 1844, online 27 Jun 2014 at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/tayloraccount.html>.

² William Daniels, original 1845 trial record. Online 27 Jun 2014 at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/daniels2testimony.html>.

³ William R. Hamilton, 24 December 1902, online 27 Jun 2014 at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/hamiltonaccount.html>.

⁴ Baugh, Alexander L. and Richard N. Holzapfel, “I Roll the Burden and Responsibility of Leading This Church Off from My Shoulders on to Yours: The 1844/1845 Declaration of the Quorum of the Twelve Regarding Apostolic Succession,” *BYU Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 3, 2010, pp. 5-19. Joseph’s acknowledgement that he might be killed is on p. 18. Footnote 20 on p. 13 provides the support for the date falling on March 26, 1844.

⁵ It seems more than coincidental that the first meeting likely occurred on the anniversary of the founding of Relief Society. Relief Society had proven the downfall of the Strikers.

⁶ *Wilford Woodruff Journals*, 24 March 1844.

⁷ Sadler and Sadler, “Augustine Spencer: Nauvoo Gentile, Joseph Smith Antagonist,” *Mormon Historical Studies*, Fall 2011, Vol. 12 Issue 2, pp. 27-46. Online 28 Jun 2014 at <http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Augustine-Spencer-Nauvoo-Gentile-Joseph-Smith-Antagonist.pdf>.

⁸ Sadler and Sadler, “Augustine Spencer: Nauvoo Gentile, Joseph Smith Antagonist,” *Mormon Historical Studies*, Fall 2011, Vol. 12 Issue 2, pp. 37-38. Online 28 Jun 2014 at <http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Augustine-Spencer-Nauvoo-Gentile-Joseph-Smith-Antagonist.pdf>. See also *Warrant for the Arrest of Joseph Smith on the Charge of Treason*, online 8 Jun 2014 at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/treasonwrit.html>.

⁹ The reported scalping is given as a reason Joseph would comb the hair forward at his temples. A profile portrait of Joseph painted by Mary Elizabeth Lightner appears to show a significant lack of hair on Joseph’s right temple, see Winder, Lorie, “In Search of the Real Joseph Smith,” *Sunstone*, issue 24, Nov/Dec 1980, p. 31.

¹⁰ The father of Chauncey and Francis Higbee had been a judge in Nauvoo before his death. Thus they may have been the legal advisors for the conspirators.

¹¹ John Taylor account of the martyrdom, online 27 Jun 2014 at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/tayloraccount.html> retrieved.

¹² George Walker testimony regarding Jacob Davis, online 27 Jun 2014 at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/carthageaccount.html>.

¹³ From John Taylor’s affidavit of 22 September 1844, “I learned of Francis Higbee as being in the neighborhood. On hearing his name mentioned, I immediately arose and said, ‘Captain Smith, you are a justice of the peace; I have heard his name mentioned; I want to

swear my life against him.’ I was informed that word was immediately sent to him to leave the place, which he did.”

¹⁴ Lyon, Joseph L. and David W. Lyon, “Physical Evidence at Carthage Jail and What It Reveals about the Assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith,” *BYU Studies* 47:4. See also Rappleye, Christine, “Separating Facts from Fiction about the Prophet’s Death,” *Deseret News*, online 28 Jun 2014 at <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705385933/Education-Week-Separating-facts-from-fiction-about-the-Prophets-death.html?pg=all>.

¹⁵ William Elliott indictment, October 1844, LDS Archives. Jonas Hobart 1845 trial testimony (Sharp, Trial, 2). Cited in *Junius and Joseph*, p. 258.

¹⁶ It takes roughly 20 seconds to load a smooth bore musket. Loading a rifle with a patched ball takes a few seconds longer than the time required for smooth bore muskets.

¹⁷ Based on William R. Hamilton’s description of his actions that day, he could have been the young man William Daniels saw.

¹⁸ William Daniel’s testimony at Carthage in 1845, online 28 Jun 2014 at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/daniels2testimony.html>.

25 – Collecting the Sorrowful

¹ DNA analysis fails to confirm any child born to a wife of Joseph Smith can be proven to have been engendered by Smith. The six couples where a plural wife almost certainly conceived within a covenant marriage prior to Joseph’s death are: Joseph B. Noble & Sarah B. Alley (George born February 2, 1844); William Clayton & Margaret Moon (Daniel born Feb 18, 1844); Lorenzo Dow Young & Harriet P. Wheeler Decker (John born September 5, 1844); William Fleshaw & Charlotte Walters (Katherine born January 25, 1845); Theodore Turley & Mary Clift (Ephraim born February 11, 1845); and Heber C. Kimball & Sarah Peak Noon (Henry born ca. 1844, his younger sister Sarah born July 1, 1845). From Bergera, “Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44,” *Dialogue*, online 7 Jul 2014 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf. The earlier children conceived by Mary Clift and Sara Peak Noon, often believed to have been engendered by Theodore Turley and Heber C. Kimball respectively, were engendered during Dr. Bennett’s campaign of illicit intercourse. Presuming full-term deliveries, the children of Joseph B. Noble and William Clayton by their plural wives were likely conceived in late May 1843. The son of Heber C. Kimball with Sarah Peak [Noon] may also have been conceived in May 1843. The child of Lorenzo Dow Young was conceived no earlier than December 1843. The children of William Fleshaw and Theodore Turley with plural wives were conceived in about May 1844. This pattern of conceptions suggests that Joseph Smith may also have consummated a plural marriage in May 1843, presumably the marriage to Emily Partridge. He also may have consummated a plural marriage in about May 1844, consistent with the 1894 testimony of Malissa Lott. There is no reason to be certain either consummation occurred without the knowledge and agreement of Emma Smith.

² See *Succession Crisis (Latter Day Saints)*, online 3 Apr 2016 at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Succession_crisis_\(Latter_Day_Saints\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Succession_crisis_(Latter_Day_Saints)).

³ William based his accusation on the fact that Samuel was being treated by Willard Richards, a doctor specializing in Thompsonian and homeopathic methods. Homeopathic remedies can produce a brief exacerbation of symptoms before healing occurs. The tendency of the Smiths to credit each other with poisoning may have been influenced by the death of Alvin Smith as a result of “heroic” medicine, which included use of calomel, a highly toxic mercury compound. See Divett, “Medicine and the Mormons,” *Dialogue*, online 7 Jul 2014 at https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V12N03_20.pdf.

⁴ Joseph was inspired to announce his candidacy when no current candidate was willing to endorse federal support for the liberties of the Mormons. Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, p. 12. Also Smith, *History of the Church*, VI, pp. 64-65 and *Student*

Manual for Church History in the Fulness of Times, Chapter 21, online 7 July 2014 at <https://www.lds.org/manual/church-history-in-the-fulness-of-times-student-manual/chapter-twenty-one-growing-conflict-in-illinois?lang=eng>.

⁵ Walker, “Six Days in August: Brigham Young and the Succession Crisis of 1844,” in *A Firm Foundation*, online 7 July 2014 at <http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/firm-foundation/8-six-days-august-brigham-young-and-succession-crisis-1844>.

⁶ Sidney Rigdon was Joseph’s pick for Vice President, and candidates for President and Vice President on a ticket could not hail from the same state. Selection of Sidney Rigdon as running mate might have been a way to respectfully get Sidney out of Nauvoo at a time when conspiracy was rife.

⁷ Some believe the letter was merely appointing Strang to lead the congregation (stake) in Wisconsin. Others believe the letter was a forgery that used a legitimate outer covering from a letter posted by Joseph from Nauvoo shortly before his death. See *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Strangite)*, online 3 Apr 2016 at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter_Day_Saints_\(Strangite\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter_Day_Saints_(Strangite)). It is suggestive that Strang became Mormon just when the Law conspiracy was gaining steam. Many of those who aligned themselves with Strang had links to the conspiracy, including William Law and Austin Cowles.

⁸ Walker, “Six Days in August,” *A Firm Foundation*.

⁹ Walker, “Six Days in August,” *A Firm Foundation*.

¹⁰ McKiernan, *The voice of one crying in the wilderness : Sidney Rigdon, religious reformer, 1793-1876*, p. 56.

¹¹ Others reached out to women whose husbands had either died or departed, as in the case of Emmeline B. Harris, a deserted teenage bride who became a plural wife of Newel K. Whitney. Newel K. Whitney’s death in 1850 left Emmeline a single mother again at age 22. She approached Daniel H. Wells and asked him to accept her as a plural wife. She went on to become the General President of the Relief Society, showing how plural marriage was a pathway to power for women in the early Church, with prominent men able to promote the abilities of those of several wives who were similarly capable.

¹² Martha’s marriage to Heber C. Kimball occurred on October 12th. Some authors give the year as 1844, but as it was about two months before leaving Nauvoo, it was likely in 1845.

¹³ This list of Joseph’s wives is based on Compton and Hales, though I don’t believe some of these women (Mary Heron, Elizabeth Durfee, Sarah Kingsley) had actually married Joseph during his lifetime.

¹⁴ Brian C. Hales has a list of those women he believes were married to Joseph Smith, with an indication of who they married after Joseph’s death. But Brian’s list includes many years of subsequent history, not just the events of 1844, online 7 Jul 2014 at <http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/stories-of-faith-joseph-smiths-plural-wives/>.

¹⁵ It seems likely the children born in 1842 to plural wives were potentially or probably fathered by someone other than the “polygamist” who sheltered the women in that year.

¹⁶ Henry Kimball (b. 1844) had a sister, Sarah Helen Kimball, born on July 1, 1845. Henry was would have been born at least ten months before his sister.

¹⁷ See Chapters *Wives of Sorrow* and *Healing Wounded Hearts* for more information on the plural marriages of other men producing children prior to Joseph’s death.

¹⁸ George D. Smith, “Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841-1846: A Preliminary Demographic Report,” *Dialogue*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 25-26.

¹⁹ D&C 132:68.

²⁰ Early Saints would bind themselves together in family units by adoption. After 1894 “adoption” sealings were entirely supplanted by sealings along genealogical lines.

²¹ Assuming one finds it wrong to revoke all legal protections for a despised people as well as burning their homes and murdering individuals. It is clear that the inhabitants of Illinois, particularly the inhabitants of Hancock County, in 1845 felt such acts were legitimate.

26 – For Eternity and Time

¹ Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, p. 65.

² Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, pp. 36, 70. Jonathan Hughes writes that 175 homes were burned in Lima, Illinois, alone. See Hughes, *The Vital Few*, Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 79.

³ My ancestors, the Delongs, died during the timeframe of the wolf hunts. The children who survived suggested poisoned berries may have been the cause of the deaths.

⁴ Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*. Also documented at the Library of Congress, from research performed by Stephen Stathis circa 1978.

⁵ This policy could well have been modeled on the ceremony making Mercy Thompson a plural wife to Hyrum Smith, who had earlier stood proxy for Mercy's dead husband on 29 May 1843. See Woodward, Jed, "Mercy Thompson and the Revelation on Marriage," Jan 2, 2015, online 11 Jan 2015 at <https://history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-eternal-marriage?lang=eng>.

⁶ *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, Edited by Devery Anderson and Gary Bergera, excerpt Online 13 Jul 2014 at <http://signaturebooks.com/2010/10/excerpt-nauvoo-endowment-companies/>.

⁷ Any individual may view these records, provided they are able to obtain a written recommendation from the LDS bishop who presides over the location where they live. For LDS individuals, a temple recommend serves this purpose.

⁸ When I viewed these records, they were restricted and could only be reviewed by those who either hold a temple recommend or those without a temple recommend who have obtained a recommendation from the bishop over the locality where they lived. Lyndon W. Cook has published these records in *Nauvoo Marriages and Proxy Sealings*, Grandin Books, 2004. George W. Smith includes an extensive table of Nauvoo polygamists and their wives in *Nauvoo Polygamy*, Signature Books, 2012, pp. 573-656.

⁹ See Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*, pp. 4-9, and Brian C. Hales extensive research into the wives of Joseph Smith, online 7 Jul 2014 at <http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/stories-of-faith-joseph-smiths-plural-wives/>.

¹⁰ Though Brigham Young had stood as proxy, high Church leader Almon Babbitt apparently stepped forward to be the mortal husband for Maria, who died during the years Almon Babbitt remained in Nauvoo as one of the three Nauvoo trustees.

¹¹ Olive died in October 1845 before she could be sealed in the temple, but had married Brigham Young for time in the fall of 1844. A late report of questionable provenance indicates Olive bore Joseph Smith a child, but that she and the child both died [see <http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/plural-wives-overview/olive-g-frost/>]. If Brigham was the father of Olive's child, the child would be attributed to Joseph under levirate custom. While it is possible Olive's reported child was engendered by Joseph, the report is also consistent with Brigham Young being the biological father of "Joseph's" child.

¹² Orson Whitney (b. 1855) indicates two other women Heber married in 1846 were known to have been Joseph Smith's plural wives, Mary Houston (b. 1816) and Sarah Scott [Mullholland Mullinder] (b. 1818). The profile for both these women suggests they could have been put under covenant in response to the illicit intercourse scandal.

¹³ Initially sealed to Orson Hyde, later sealed to Joseph Smith and separated from Hyde.

¹⁴ Died 1845 with Eliza Snow at her side. Her death almost certainly occurred before December 10, 1845, when the first ordinances were performed in the Nauvoo temple.

¹⁵ Almera married Reuben Barton after Joseph's death. It does not appear Almera was sealed to Joseph Smith in the Nauvoo temple.

¹⁶ Declined to be sealed to any high-Church leader due to disputes over property and the doctrine of plural marriage as practiced by Brigham and the apostles.

¹⁷ As Fanny was Brigham’s sister and an older woman, it is possible Brigham and Heber determined there was no need to provide her another “husband” to care for her and husband her as a Church resource.

¹⁸ Patty apparently didn’t participate in any sealings in the Nauvoo temple. Patty was in her fifties and a trusted mid-wife. She remained a mentor and confidant of the rest of Joseph’s wives, and was viewed as one who cared for others, not so much as one who needed to be “taken care of.”

¹⁹ Married non-Mormon, left Mormon community in fall 1836.

²⁰ Married non-Mormon in 1843.

²¹ Had been sealed to Joseph with husband’s consent in February 1843 or 1844 in what was clearly an eternity-only sealing.

²² Esther’s covenant with Joseph Smith during his lifetime likely occurred in 1842, either following Gustavus Hill’s attempt to seduce her or her subsequent testimony months later before the Nauvoo High Council. Esther was sealed (again) to Joseph with her husband standing proxy in 1851.

²³ I don’t agree that Mary Heron should be listed as a wife of Joseph Smith, but include her here because others have listed her as a likely wife (Quinn, Hales) or possible wife (Compton). I think Joseph Kelly was the “Joseph” described as frigging Mary in Nauvoo.

²⁴ Esther Smith testified Gustavus Hills taught it was acceptable to engage in illicit intercourse. There are only two possible Esther Smiths in the vicinity of Nauvoo in 1842, Esther Dutcher [Smith] and Esther Smith [Fuller]. Esther [Fuller] lived in Iowa, making it unlikely she participated in the Nauvoo Choir, as was true of the Esther Smith who testified before the High Council. It is unlikely Esther [Fuller] was called by her maiden name, as she had been married for a decade.

²⁵ The rationale for including Eliza Snow in this category is covered in Chapter 19.

²⁶ This idea of a proxy “husband” having little to do with the woman once they left the temple the day of the sealing is seen in the story of Mary Leamon, see *Making It Up versus The Scientific Method*, online 24 Apr 2014 at <http://www.millennialstar.org/making-it-up-versus-the-scientific-method/> retrieved.

²⁷ It may be significant that Emma’s only son to be named after a biblical polygamist was born after the 1843 ceremony where she entered into the New and Everlasting Covenant.

²⁸ Recounted in Wright letter provided to the Church in the early 1900s as well as Holmes family history. See Chapter 7, page 49.

²⁹ Melissa Lott would later marry a veteran of the Mormon Battalion, Jonathan’s colleague Ira Willis, but she was not married to Ira when he left to serve in the Battalion.

³⁰ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 351.

³¹ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, P. 608.

³² George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy: “...but we called it celestial marriage”*, pp. 573-656. Smith reports higher numbers as he includes women who were not technically plural wives as well as men who it appears were not technically polygamists, such as Porter Rockwell.

27 – Eradicating Spiritual Wifery

¹ Hannah’s authority to bargain away her husband’s son indicates that she was likely not a first wife.

² See also D&C 28: 2, 7, 13.

³ A late account (*Abraham H. Cannon Journal*, 9 April 1890) indicates Brigham Young was asked to accuse William Smith of adultery and other sins. After the trial began, Joseph stood and cried, “Bro. Brigham, I will not listen to this abuse of my family a minute longer...” Cannon writes “A rupture between the two greatest men on earth seemed imminent.”

⁴ Walker, *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*, pp. 220-221.

⁵ See Walker, *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*, p. 269-273

⁶ Walker, *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*, pp. 114-115.

⁷ Walker, *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*, pp. 141-142

⁸ Walker, *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*, p. 147.

⁹ O'Donovan, Connell, "Black Priesthood and Priesthood Denial," *The Persistence of Polygamy*, Vol. 2, pp. 52-53. Also Walker, *William B. Smith.*, pp. 198-203, though Walker characterizes William's activities as merely unauthorized plural marriage rather than spiritual wifery.

Joseph may have learned of William's incorrect understanding of the doctrine in spring of 1844, possibly prompting Joseph's comments to William Marks regarding the need to end this spiritual wife doctrine or polygamy.

¹⁰ Pratt, Parley P., "This Number Closes the First Volume of the 'Prophet'," *Prophet* 1, no. 52 (May 24, 1845): 2. Cited by Kyle Walker in *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet*, p. 245.

¹¹ O'Donovan, Connell, "Black Priesthood and Priesthood Denial," *The Persistence of Polygamy*, Vol. 2, pp. 51-57.

¹² Huntington Jacobs Smith Young, Zina Diantha, Diary entry of August 17, 1845, repeated in Beecher, "*All Things Move in Order in the City: The Nauvoo Diary of Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs*," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (Spring 1979): 318.

¹³ Smith, George D, *Nauvoo Polygamy*, Signature Books, 2012, p. 649, note 315.

¹⁴ Whipple, cited by O'Donovan, *Persistence of Polygamy*, Vol 2, p. 60.

¹⁵ The Council of Fifty Record for Feb 4, 1845, shows Lyman Wight was dropped from that Council prior to Lyman's emigration to Texas. Lyman's excommunication was documented in the General Church Minutes for Dec 3, 1848 and in Lyndon W. Cook's *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985.

¹⁶ O'Donovan, Connell, "Black Priesthood and Priesthood Denial," *The Persistence of Polygamy*, Vol. 2, pp. 79-80.

¹⁷ I had inferred Henry Jacobs must have been excommunicated. While in Nauvoo in February 2016, I encountered a descendant of Zina and Henry and confidante of Oa Jacobs Cannon who confirmed that Henry had, in fact, been excommunicated upon his return from England.

¹⁸ Extreme measures were taken to ensure Zina and her children were not corrupted by their association with an excommunicated man, but this level of interference was rare. Agnes Coolbrith [Smith Smith Smith Pickett] was not rescued when her legal husband abandoned her. The relative neglect may have arisen because she was in California and had been sealed to Don Carlos rather than Joseph Smith in eternity.

¹⁹ Kanessville was originally called Millers Hollow, after Henry W. Miller. Miller would be the first member of the Iowa State Legislature from the area.

²⁰ Joseph Ellis Johnson traveled to Salt Lake City in a company led by his nephew, Sixtus Ellis Johnson, departing Florence, Nebraska on 14-15 July 1861 and arriving in Salt Lake City on September 27, 1861. Familysearch.org shows Joseph Ellis Johnson was sealed to Hannah Goddard on November 17, 1861, in the Endowment House.

²¹ Judd, Bessie, *Biography of Elizabeth Houston DeLong*, written January 15, 1922. Contained in *The DeLong Family Saga*, compiled by Gladys W. Banks, with Douglas W. Banks, p. 86.

²² *ibid.*

²³ Tucker, Reed, "Sorry, ladies, there really is a man shortage," *New York Post*, August 25, 2015, online 29 Nov 2015 at <http://nypost.com/2015/08/25/hey-ladies-here-are-8-reasons-youre-single/>.

²⁴ *Journal of Discourses*, 8:202 (B. Young/1860); Wilford Woodruff record of divorces (1889-98), cited by Michael Quinn in *Extensions of Power*, Chapter Six, note 78, Signature Books. Michael Quinn mentioned this divorce fee during a lecture at the Sunstone Symposium held in Washington, DC, in spring 1995.

²⁵ Ages at date of marriage from familysearch.org. The records for these individuals no longer show the relationship in familysearch. Online information at other sites still show the 1852 marriage date.

²⁶ Orson Pratt mentioned this benefit of polygamy in his August 1852 discourse announcing plural marriage as a formal belief of the LDS Church. Another source is Franklin D. Richards article “Polygamy,” *Millennial Star* 17, no. 14 (April 7, 1855): 213.

²⁷ Marie Cornwall, Camela Courtright, and Laga Van Beek, “How Common the Principle? Women as Plural Wives in 1860,” *Dialogue* 26 (Summer 1993): 149. Online 9 Dec 2015 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V26N02_153.pdf. See also Troy A. Wynn’s analysis of Utah households based on 1880 census data, online 9 Dec 2015 at <http://www.somemormonstuff.com/polygamy-in-utah-1880/>.

28 – Fifty Years in the Wilderness

¹ Modern long-term supply standards estimate a need for 300 lbs of grain per person for a year. This would be 1500 lbs of flour for a family of five. Pratt, Parley P., Parley indicated a family of five would need “1 good wagon, 3 yoke cattle, 2 cows, 2 beef cattle, 3 sheep, 1,000 lbs flour, 20 lbs sugar, 1 rifle and ammunition, a tent and tent poles, from 10 to 20 lbs seed to a family, from 25 to 100 lbs tools for farming, and a few other items...” cited by Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah*, Salt Lake, 1890, reprinted by Bookcraft, 1964, p. 214, footnote.

² Rich, Russell R., *Ensign to the Nations: A History of the LDS Church from 1846 to 1972*, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Publications, Chapter 4 – Mormon Battalion, pp. 51-82.

³ An instance of this is seen in the first plural wives Wilford Woodruff marries. The young women appear to have been added to the Woodruff household primarily for economic reasons. When Wilford Woodruff requested that they refrain from staying out all night with young men, they refused. Willford Woodruff sent the young ladies packing and asked that the young men be whipped. Despite modern outrage that these young women were allegedly treated so harshly, these girls went on to be first wives who allowed their husbands to marry young teenage brides, as they had been when they joined the Woodruff household.

⁴ Emily Partridge’s diary mentions the death of her baby, and also discusses comforting Elvira when her baby died. The two babies are buried in the same “column” of the graveyard, a few rows apart because of the time elapsed between their deaths. If one stands to look at the angel plaque at the Pioneer gravesite at Winter Quarters, one is standing on the grave of Elvira’s baby daughter. The death of Lucy’s daughter Rachel was discussed on the final page of Chapter 17—Healing Wounded Hearts.

⁵ Taylor, Samuel W., *Last Pioneer: John Taylor, a Mormon Prophet*, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 1999.

⁶ Orson Pratt, *Celestial Marriage*, delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, August 29, 1852.

⁷ Reported by G. D. Watt. Online 20 Jul 2014 at <http://jod.mrm.org/1/53>.

⁸ See Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel – Chronological Company List, online 20 Jul 2014 at <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companydatelist>.

⁹ *Putnam’s Magazine*, Vol. VI, September 1855, No. XXXIII p. 265-266, reprinted in Ipson, *Ever Faithful: The Life of Joseph Leland Heywood*, pp. 220-221.

¹⁰ It appears the marriage was unconsummated, but intended to secure Mary as Heywood’s wife upon his intended return a year later. Heywood reportedly married his ward at the request of his other three wives, as “they all loved her she did much to lighten the work load.” Mary was also “mother” to Omer Badigee, the Paiute Indian boy Heywood adopted.

¹¹ Various sources, including *Mormon Handcart Pioneers*, online 20 Jul 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_handcart_pioneers.

¹² Ipson, *Ever Faithful*, pp. 198-202.

¹³ Online 20 Jul 2014 at http://jared.pratt-family.org/parley_histories/parley-death-stephen-pratt.html.

¹⁴ Walker, Ronald W., Richard E. Turley, Glen M. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

¹⁵ Camp Floyd in its heyday held more than 3,500 men. In addition, the advancing force was supplemented by an additional 3,000 troops as they approached Salt Lake Valley.

¹⁶ The Traverse Mountain Pass is now the site where I-15 passes from Salt Lake Valley to Utah Valley, referred to as Point of the Mountain. I am not sure Brigham Young positioned cannons on the Traverse Mountains, but he had at least one cannon, which the Holmes-Thompson company brought back to Salt Lake Valley after mustering out of the U.S. Army. The Traverse Mountains have been eroded to supply concrete for construction projects.

¹⁷ See the *Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act*, online 21 Jul 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morrill_Anti-Bigamy_Act.

¹⁸ An outstanding example of when this wasn't true is seen in the case of Martha Hughes [Cannon], who became the first female State Senator ever elected in the United States. Martha or "Mattie" ran as a Democrat. Her husband, Angus Cannon, had also been a candidate for State Senate, running as a Republican. He was not elected.

¹⁹ See *Edmunds Act*, online 21 Jul 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmunds_Act.

²⁰ *The Deseret Weekly*, Volume 42; Volume 52, p. 834, online 10 Apr 2014 at <http://books.google.com/books?id=D2LUAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA834&lpg=PA834&dq=george+Manwaring+released&source=bl&ots=hSxRpxEIgT&sig=eNFhDiPrcc-Q35GLZ5ajd8kkorY&hl=en&sa=X&ei=ZyxHU535EsvhsASSooJg&ved=0CF0Q6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=george%20Manwaring%20released&f=false>.

²¹ Hal Schindler, *The Oldest Profession's Sordid Past in Utah*, online 21 Jul 2014 at http://historytogo.utah.gov/salt_lake_tribune/in_another_time/theoldestprofessionssordidpastnutah.html.

²² Under the Edmunds Act (1882), polygamists' right to vote was revoked. This revocation was enforced even if the individual merely stated belief in the Mormon doctrine of plural marriage. All elected offices were vacated, and an election board issued certificates to those who both denied belief in polygamy and did not practice it. Then new elections were held.

²³ Taylor, Samuel W., *Last Pioneer: John Taylor, a Mormon Prophet*, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 1999.

²⁴ Wife Alice Ann Kimball, divorced him and married Mormon apostle, Joseph F. Smith.

²⁵ Account conveyed to Meg Stout by a descendant of Rich and Alice Ann Kimball. See also Joseph F. Smith Marriages and Family, online 21 Jul 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_F._Smith#Marriages_and_family. Mormon prophet, Spencer Woolley Kimball, allegedly later opined that his cousins, the children of Alice Ann by David Patten Rich, should not have been sealed to Joseph F. Smith. Personal conversation with descendant of Rich and Alice Ann Kimball.

²⁶ *Edmunds-Tucker Act*, online 21 Jul 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmunds%E2%80%93Tucker_Act.

²⁷ Taylor, Samuel W., *Last Pioneer: John Taylor, a Mormon Prophet*, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 1999.

²⁸ *Wilford Woodruff*, online 21 Jul 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilford_Woodruff.

²⁹ Wilford Woodruff had been heading up the Eastern States Mission when Joseph Smith died.

³⁰ See 1890 Manifesto, online 21 Jul 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1890_Manifesto. Also canonized in LDS scripture as Official Declaration 1 and currently included in the LDS scripture volume *The Doctrine and Covenants*.

³¹ Wilford Woodruff sermon of Apr 1894, online 21 Jul 2014 at http://scottwoodward.org/Talks/html/Woodruff,%20Wilford/WoodruffW_LawOfAdoption.html.

³² The LDS Church has never insisted that families must be monogamous in eternity, despite its increasingly harsh penalties against those who practice plural marriage in life.

29 – Days of Defiance

¹ Annie Clark Tanner, *A Mormon Mother*, pp. 74, 81.

² Annie only mentions Elder Cannon and Lyman, without including first names, but as Abraham Cannon would not become an apostle until two months after the reported visit, I think it's unlikely Annie was referring to anyone other than George Q. Cannon.

³ Annie Clark Tanner, *A Mormon Mother*, pp. 110-111.

⁴ Annie Tanner would settle in Farmington, Utah, where she would become a Spiritual Living teacher, team teaching with Nellie Todd Taylor, the second wife of John W. Taylor.

⁵ In 1895 the Church issued a manifesto supporting political neutrality, and prohibiting high Church leaders such as the Apostles and members of the Seventy from running for political office without the express permission of the Church. The policy was likely a concession related to hopes for Utah statehood, but B. H. Roberts argued the policy infringed on his rights as a U.S. citizen. See *1895 Political Manifesto*, online 3 Aug 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_Political_Manifesto.

⁶ See Roberts, Brigham H., *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965, p. 363. The petitions from U.S. citizens demanding that Roberts be denied a seat in congress take up several feet of space in the Library of Congress. The number of signatures on the petitions represent more than 50% of the enfranchised voters in the United States at the time. Unpublished research performed by Steven Stathis, also verifiable by accessing the originals held at the U.S. Archives and comparing numbers to the number of enfranchised voters in 1896. Roughly 14 million individuals cast a vote in the presidential election held that year, online 3 Aug 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_1896.

⁷ It is clear these post-Manifesto marriages were not solemnized in accordance with Church policy. D&C 28 had made it clear that the prophet was to lead, though counsel could be given by others. D&C 132:7 clarified that only one person at any given time held the power to seal, though that power could be delegated, as Joseph had done with Hyrum and as Brigham did with Erastus Snow. By 1901 there were many to whom the power to officiate at sealings had been delegated. But any sealings they performed that were not in accordance with the will of the prophet were not considered valid, as seen by Wilford Woodruff's action in razing the Endowment House due to the report of an unauthorized sealing.

⁸ A few years later, John W. Taylor would marry John Woolley's niece, Janet Maria Woolley.

⁹ The sisters were grand-daughters of Jonathan Harriman Holmes and Elvira Annie Cowles.

¹⁰ Mary Lenora doesn't appear to be closely related to John W. Taylor. Family search lists the marriage as being solemnized in 1905, but Mary Lenora gave birth to Matthias' child on May 30, 1902, implying their marriage was solemnized no later than September 1901. Mary Lenora gave birth in Logan, Cache County, Utah, which is where Owen Woodruff's plural wife, Avery, was going to school, suggesting a social link to the other apostles' plural wives.

¹¹ Flake, Kathleen, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle*, The University of North Carolina Press (2004).

¹² Beers, Paul B., *Pennsylvania Politics Today and Yesterday: The Tolerable Accommodation*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA, 1980, p. 51.

¹³ Reed Smoot would go on to serve in the U.S. Senate until 1933.

¹⁴ The so-called Second Manifesto was presented at the April 6, 1904 General Conference of the LDS Church. President Joseph F. Smith read the manifesto, which was then accepted unanimously by those in attendance. "Resolved that we, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in General Conference assembled, hereby approve and endorse the statement and declaration of President Joseph F. Smith just made to this Conference concerning plural marriages, and will support the courts of the Church in the enforcement thereof." *Conference Report*, April 1904, p. 76.

¹⁵ The Woodruff family had most recently been staying in Colonia Juarez, one of the polygamous communities in Mexico close to the United States border. As a point of interest,

Mitt Romney's ancestors were part of the Colonia Juarez community, to which ancestor Miles P. Romney had fled to protect himself and his four wives from federal prosecution.

¹⁶ Owen died in El Paso, Texas.

¹⁷ Snyder, Lu Ann Faylor and Phillip A. Snyder, *Post-Manifesto Polygamy: The 1899-1904 Correspondence of Helen, Owen, and Avery Woodruff*, 2009, online 3 Aug 2014 at http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/usupress_pubs/40/.

¹⁸ Presumably Taylor and Cowley felt that marriages performed outside of the United States were still permitted under the 1904 Manifesto.

¹⁹ In March 1904 subpoenas were sent to Joseph F. Smith, M. W. Merrill, John W. Taylor, George Teasdale, Matthias F. Cowley, John Henry Smith, and Dr. Joseph M. Tanner, see Snyder and Snyder, *Post Manifesto Polygamy: The 1899-1904 Correspondence of Helen, Owen, and Avery Woodruff*, p. 33. Merrill and Teasdale were ailing, Taylor, Cowley, and Tanner went into hiding. Joseph F. Smith refused to do more than ask the rebellious men to testify, saying the hearings were a political matter, not a matter where he could exert spiritual command. Dr. Joseph M. Tanner was the husband of Annie Clark [Tanner], see notes 1-4 in this chapter. ²⁰ John's honeymoon with Ellen involved a large family camping trip with his plural wives and their children. Only Nettie, of John's plural wives, refused to participate in the "honeymoon" trip. Ironically, Nettie's letter to Ellen, written lest Nettie's unwillingness to participate in the camping trip be misinterpreted as rejection of Ellen herself, is now the only extant contemporary record of the honeymoon trip.

²¹ John W. Taylor's life is documented in Sam Taylor's book *Family Kingdom*, a book the rest of the family would refer to as Nettie's book, as Sam overwhelmingly featured his own mother's interactions with John W. Taylor. The other wives did produce life sketches before their deaths, rounding out the picture of this particular post-Manifesto polygamous family.

²² John W. Taylor's last big deal never came together. He died still owing over \$30,000 to his second wife, Nellie Todd. After his death, she was not permitted to inherit any of his estate, as she was a plural wife.

²³ According to Wikipedia, John W. Taylor's blessing were secretly restored in 1965 by Joseph Fielding Smith, a few months after John's first wife, May Leona Rich, turned 100. However John's plural wives and their children were not aware of this restoration during their lifetimes.

²⁴ Matthew Cowley joined the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shortly after the excommunication of Richard Lyman for adultery, an adultery Richard Lyman had pretended was merely a plural marriage. Matthew's presence in the quorum was no doubt a reminder of the price a man had to pay for believing in the mortal continuation of plural marriage.

²⁵ A picture of the alleged revelation is extant, which appears to be written in John Taylor's handwriting. But the original document is not publicly available. See *1886 Revelation*, online 4 Aug 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1886_Revelation.

²⁶ Brian C. Hales, *'I Love to Hear Him Talk and Rehearse': The Life and Teachings of Lorin C. Woolley*, Mormon History Association, 2003. Online 3 Aug 2014 at <http://www.mormonfundamentalism.com/NEWFILES/LorinCWoolleyBio.htm>.

²⁷ Others claim John W. Woolley was the rightful successor of Joseph F. Smith.

²⁸ In Sam Taylor's *Family Kingdom*, he describes his father, John W. Taylor, being approached after his excommunication by two groups. One group consisted of protestant preachers, who hoped to win the now-underutilized Taylor to their cause. He refused. The second group consisted of those wishing to reinstate polygamy, arguing that John W. Taylor could attract a large portion of the Church to his banner, were he to publicly declare a return to the teachings of his father, John Taylor. Again, John refused. Lorin Woolley's publication of the account of the 1886 revelation likely followed John W. Taylor's refusal.

²⁹ A belief that the end of the world might result if reproductive marriages were no longer solemnized within the New and Everlasting Covenant is loosely correlated with the allegory of the Olive grove, found in the *Book of Mormon*, Jacob 5 and is consistent with the language of Malachi 4:6.

³⁰ The United Order is a form of Christian communalism attempted in the early days of the Church in which property is shared. This sort of communalism is described in the *New Testament*, in Acts 4:32-37.

³¹ Mark E. Petersen was the apostle who was called to replace excommunicated apostle Richard Lyman, whose adultery was inspired by a belief that plural marriage was still acceptable.

³² See *Mormon Fundamentalists* article on Wikipedia, online 3 Aug 2014 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_fundamentalists.

³³ The Laffertys' anger was reportedly associated with Brenda's counsel to Ron's wife that led Ron's wife to refuse him a second wife and then leave Ron herself.

³⁴ I was told this story in 1980, before I cared about family history, so I never recorded the young woman's name. The generation that maintained this level of vigilance has now passed from this life. Michael Quinn indicates Ellen Sandburg [Taylor] hosted polygamous gatherings in support of her sisters, who had also entered into post-Manifesto marriages.

³⁵ I am unaware that any Cowleys entered into fundamentalist polygamy. Owen Woodruff's eldest son, Wilford Owen Woodruff, only five when his father died, married a plural wife in 1942 and was excommunicated. His first wife left him and he was eventually re-baptized.

³⁶ "2015 Statistical Report for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," presented by Brook P. Hales during the Saturday afternoon session of General Conference, April 2, 2016.

30 – God's Strange Act: A Legacy

¹ John Taylor and Hyrum Smith.

² c.f. Isaiah 28:21.

³ c.f. D&C 128:21.

⁴ c.f., Malachi 4:5-6.

⁵ c.f., John 5: 28

⁶ c.f., D&C 138, John 1: 1-14.

⁷ This ability for the individual to choose, combined with God's justice and Christ's mercy, is expected to result in individuals spending eternity in any of various desirable states, from a state where God is not to a state where all effort goes towards forwarding God's plan of "bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of Man." Thus no one is forced to heaven against their will, nor is anyone consigned to hell due to an accident of birth.

⁸ D&C 135: 6

⁹ Some propose that Eliza was describing someone else or even society in general as the innocence seduced by the "rotten-hearted wretch."

¹⁰ This assertion is based on Mary's own affidavit before the Nauvoo High Council in 1842. See *The Nauvoo City Council and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger editor, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 2011, pp. 424-426.

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