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Reluctant Polygamist

A Closer Look at
Joseph Smith

Meg Stout

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DEDICATION

To

5

My family, which gives me insight into what it means to yearn for those
without whom heaven would not be heaven.

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

10 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
15 illuminate the existence of documents unavailable to geographically-disadvantaged researchers.

20 I am indebted to recent biographers of key Nauvoo figures, including Andrew Smith for his *The Saintry 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 research papers including raw material that didn’t make it to the final book.

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30 many individuals who have made their findings available via Family Search and other ancestor-oriented websites.

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

FORWARD

5 This is an Advanced Review Copy or ARC of Reluctant Polygamist,
made available between 30 November 2015 and 29 February 2016.

10 You are encouraged to provide feedback at reluctantpolygamist.com.
Please provide the page and line along with your comment (e.g., p 175:35 –
Very important comment about contradictory source or need for footnote
or bad spelling or awkward grammar...) This will increase the chances that
your comment can be properly reflected in the final text. If reading a kindle
version of the ARC, please provide the location in the kindle book.

15 The flow of the book is roughly chronological. As the rough draft of
this book was first published as a series of blog posts, the individual
chapters contain a complete explanation, even if that means there is
repetition of some material or foreshadowing of later events.

20 The number and quality of footnotes in this ARC varies from chapter
to chapter, reflecting the amount of time and access to resources I had
when I composed the original posts from which this material arose. Any
time you feel my endnotes are insufficient, feel free to say so.

25 I have opted use endnotes to allow readers to ignore the notes if they
wish. In some of the chapters that have been heavily reworked since my
initial blog posts in 2013-2014, the notes will not have received the same
scrutiny as the body of the text, with some currently included in the body of
the text. Please pardon this digital dust.

30 When I have found information in a secondary source that cited an
original document, I try to identify both the original source and the
secondary source where I found the information. Where available I include
a website where you can find a source.

35 I am making the ARC available on Cyber Monday 2015, however the
index is was not complete by that deadline. An index to the ARC will be
available at the website by Christmas 2015.

40 Thank you in advance for reading and providing excellent comments!

Timeline

Date	Event
1805, Dec	Joseph Smith 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 has lost the 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 or 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.
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.

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Date	Event
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 covenant 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 anything he did was 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.
1841, Jan	Joseph pronounces D&C 124, which includes a blessing for Dr. Bennett, saying 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.

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Date	Event
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 covenant 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 and procedures to prevent or terminate pregnancy
1841, Jul	Dr. Bennett confesses to adultery 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
1841, Aug	William Clayton visits Nauvoo, possible date of Martha Brotherton's described ordeal Joseph Smith's clerk, Robert Thompson, dies. An 1843 entry in William Clayton's journal suggests Robert Thompson had been guilty of illicit intercourse. Orange Wight reports learning John Higbee had two wives and girls are calling each other "spirituals." Says by this time he was fully initiated.

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Date	Event
1841, Sep	Joseph Smith's son and brother die. Both are named Don Carlos Smith. Ebenezer Robinson quotes Don Carlos as saying, "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." This hints someone had tried to convince Don Carlos of spiritual wifery, invoking Joseph's name.
1841, Oct	Catherine Laur [Fuller] gives an affidavit naming October as the month Dr. Bennett begins to claim that Joseph Smith engages in illicit intercourse Joseph Smith enters into covenant marriage with Zina Diantha Huntington [Jacobs]
1841, Nov	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
1841, Dec	Joseph Smith enters into covenant marriage with Presendia Lathrop Huntington [Buell]
1842, Jan	Joseph Smith enters into a levirate marriage with Agnes Moulton Coolbrith [Smith], widow of his recently-deceased brother Don Carlos Smith Joseph enters into covenant marriage with Mary Elizabeth Rollins [Lightner]. Joseph tells her to remain with her husband. 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
1842, Feb?	Joseph allegedly marries Sylvia Sessions [Lyon], wife of dentist and apothecary, Windsor Lyon.
1842, Mar	Joseph reportedly marries Patty Bartlett [Sessions]. Patty is a midwife. The Nauvoo Women's Relief Society is organized, with a founding purpose to warn the unwary. Emma Smith is president of the new organization.
1842, Apr	Marinda Nancy Johnson [Hyde] invites Nancy Rigdon to talk with Joseph Smith. Possible timeframe when Joseph attempts to talk with Emily Dow Partridge. When Emily refuses to be alone

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Date	Event
1842, Apr (continued)	with Joseph or even accept a letter, Elizabeth Durfee asks the Partridge girls to visit and inquires what they know about spiritual wifery
1842, May	Joseph begins administering the initiatory and endowment ceremonies, with the strict admonition that sex is only allowed in marriages. A Masonic Lodge is established in Nauvoo Horace Whitney is sent to visit relatives in CT and OH 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.
1842, Jun	Dr. Bennett is cut off from the Church Oliver Snow leaves Nauvoo Eliza Snow is taken into the home of Relief Society Counselor, Sarah Cleveland. Sarah Cleveland stands as witness as Joseph Smith enters into covenant marriage with Eliza Snow
1842, Jul	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 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]. Orson Pratt goes missing. He is found miles from Nauvoo near the river. It is believed Orson was contemplating suicide. Joseph Smith enters into covenant marriage with Sarah Ann Whitney, sister of Horace Whitney
1842, Aug	Joseph Smith goes into hiding.

Date	Event
1842, Aug (continued)	When Orson won't agree to support Joseph (and implicitly identify his wife, Sarah, as a whore), the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles excommunicated Orson
1842, Sep	Eliza Snow writes a poem dedicated to Jonathan Holmes. The original writing seems to indicate this was a poem about Jonathan being reunited with his dead wife, Marietta. If so, this is the first written indication of the doctrine allowing husbands and wives to be "sealed" after the death of one party.
1842, Nov	Eliza Snow writes a series of undated poems talking about death, seduction, loneliness, and "conscious innocence."
1842, Dec	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. Eliza Snow begins teaching school, teaching daily until March 17, 1843
1843, Mar	Joseph secretly marries Emily and Eliza Partridge. Emily's account makes it clear the marriage was not consummated, at least not the first night
1843, Apr	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."
1843, May	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. Days after the ceremony, Emma appears to recant her willingness, taking action to curtail the Partridge girls' access to Joseph. Even so, Emma does go through with the ceremony to be sealed to Joseph.
1843, Jun	Elvira Annie Cowles [Holmes] enters into covenant with Joseph Smith 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.

Date	Event
1843, Jun (continued)	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
1843, Jul	Joseph Smith writes down the revelation regarding the New and Everlasting Covenant (D&C 132). The demand Emma had been given is rescinded and she is to cleave to Joseph.
1843, Aug	Hyrum shares the text of the revelation with the Nauvoo High Council. Several members of the High Council reject the revelation.
1843, Oct	Hyrum Smith shares the revelation with William Law William Law and wife Jane request to be sealed. Joseph refuses, allegedly because he believes William Law to be guilty of adultery Dr. Bennett writes about the "Doctrine of Marrying for Eternity, for the first time reflecting a correct understanding of Joseph's doctrine. His tone is still condemnatory.
1843, Dec	Dr. Bennett visits Nauvoo. The only record of the visit are purchases Dr. Bennett makes at Joseph's Red Brick Store. William Law is dropped from the Anointed Quorum and dismissed as Assistant President of the Church
1844, Feb	Thomas Sharp resumes his post as editor of the Warsaw Signal James Strang joins the Mormon Church Editors of the Expositor order a printing press? Men believed to be sympathetic to an anti-Joseph movement are contacted
1844, Mar	Dennison Harris and Robert Stock agree to spy on the conspirators Joseph Smith establishes the Council of Fifty 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.

Date	Event
1844, Mar (continued)	Joseph confers the keys of gathering, the gospel of Abraham, and the sealing power conveyed by Elijah on the heads of the Apostles Dennison Harris and Robert Stock narrowly escape a meeting of the conspirators having refused to swear the oath of secrecy and intent to murder Joseph Smith
1844, Apr	William Law excommunicated
1844, May	Austin Cowles excommunicated Affidavits of women seduced by John Bennett and Chauncy Higbee published in the Nauvoo Neighbor
1844 Jun	First and only issue of the Expositor is published by Chauncy Higbee et al., with affidavits from William Law and Austin Cowles. Expositor press destroyed Joseph arrested, imprisoned, and killed by a mob
1844, Sep	Brigham Young convinces the Mormons in Nauvoo that he is the rightful successor to Joseph Smith James Strang makes a claim that he has been designated Joseph's successor. Many of the known conspirators ally themselves with Strang Brigham Young and Heber Kimball begin to marry the widows of Joseph Smith.
1845, Oct	William Smith excommunicated after openly preaching regarding spiritual wifery
1845, Dec	The Nauvoo temple is dedicated and ordinance work begins
1845, Feb	The Mormons begin to leave Nauvoo, hoping to reach the sanctuary of the Rockies in time to plant crops in summer 1845. They will not arrive in the Salt Lake valley until July 1847 after a crushing winter of starvation and scurvy at Winter Quarters
1845, Sep	The Battle of Nauvoo occurs as a mob of 1000 men attack the scant 100 remaining residents of Nauvoo.
1846, Jul	500 men sign up to serve in the US Army to fight in the Mexican War. This Mormon Battalion never sees battle,

Date	Event
1846, Jul (continued)	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 preaches a public sermon announcing Mormons formally embrace the doctrine of plural marriage
1853, Jul	Former Nauvoo Stake President, William Marks, publishes account where Joseph Smith had 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 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 was 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 were killed.
1858, Mar	Mormons throughout Utah Territory, eventually totaling an estimated 30,000, board up their homes and gather to Provo, UT. A few able-bodied men are left behind to torch the improvements, if troops attempt to take property by force.
1858, Jun	As agreed with Buchanan's peace commission, Johnston's army entered the Utah valley unhindered

Date	Event
1858, Jul	Once the US Army is seen as respecting the peace terms, the Mormons leave Provo and returned to their blighted farms. By some estimates, the Northern settlements will take ten years to recover from the loss of crops and animals from the summer spent in Provo
1861-1865	The War Between the States occurs. The Federal troops stationed in Utah depart to fight for their respective side of the conflict.
1862, Jul	Abraham Lincoln signs the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act, intended to end Mormon polygamy and limit church and non-profit ownership of property to \$50,000 in territories of the United States
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 daughter casts the first vote.
1877, Aug	Brigham Young dies, months after reorganizing the Quorum of the Twelve apostles according to the date of their admission or re-admission to the Quorum. This makes Orson Pratt less senior than John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff due to his brief excommunication in 1842/3.
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	John Taylor, who had succeeded Brigham Young as Church President, goes underground to escape Federal custody.
1886	John Taylor seeks permission from God to end the New and Everlasting Covenant. A revelation on the matter that was never canonized prohibits Taylor from revoking the Everlasting Covenant, while never explicitly equating the Covenant with plural marriage.
1887	Congress passes the Edmunds-Tucker Act. The act dis-incorporated the LDS Church and directed confiscation of

Date	Event
1887 (continued)	Church properties valued at more than \$50,000, which would include the Mormon temples. The act abrogated spousal privilege, requiring wives to testify against their husbands. The act also took the right to vote away from Utah women. John Taylor dies two months after learning of the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act.
1890	LDS Church President Wilford Woodruff issues the Anti-Polygamy Manifesto, prohibiting Mormons from entering into any marriage prohibited by the law of the land. This did not terminate existing plural marriages, which continued to be seen as valid by the Church while the parties lived.
1887-1893	The RLDS sues to wrest 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 US Court of Appeals for the Eight Circuit produced 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 chose to vacate the original trial court decision.
1900-1901	Three junior LDS Apostles marry additional plural wives. They begin to be more bold in preaching that plural marriage should continue.
1903	LDS Apostle Reed Smoot is elected to the US Senate.
1904-1907	The US Senate conducts hearings into Reed Smoot's suitability to serve in the US Senate. The hearings created a 3,5000 page record of "ever peculiarity of Mormonis."
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 extending the policy to the entire world, where the 1890 Manifesto had been understood as applying only within the United States.
1905	Apostles John W. Taylor and Mattias F. Cowley resign from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Fellow renegade, Abraham Owen Woodruff, had died in 1904.
1911	John W. Taylor is excommunicated for having married his secretary in 1909, bringing the number of his plural wives to six.

Date	Event
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 Taylor's bedside. 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," likely related to his claims that Heber J. Grant and James E. Talmage had taken plural wives in the "recent past."
1928	Lorin C. Wolley succeeds his father as senior member and prophet of the Council of Friends, a Mormon sect committed to continuing the practice of polygamy despite the Manifestos of the LDS Church prohibiting the practice.
2014, Nov	Media outlets around the world realize that the LDS Church had quietly published scholarly articles regarding early LDS polygamy. The CNN headline read "Mormon Founder Joseph Smith wed 40 Wives."

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A FAITHFUL JOSEPH?

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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 other wives. Correlated lesson materials tend to minimize discussion of important historical points relating to plural marriage in order to avoid offending those who do not have a firm grounding in the gospel.

15

Unfortunately, this has led to polarized versions of early Church 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.

20

Joseph covenanted with dozens of women, based on the affidavits these women signed in the late 1860s and 1870s. Those familiar with the affidavits describing these relationships have presumed that 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.

25

30

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.

35

Nightfall at Nauvoo

5 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.

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

15 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, repeated in Sam’s book. My teenaged testimony was crushed. Though God seemed to opine that I should remain an active Mormon, I white-knuckled for two decades harboring serious doubts about Joseph and the Church.

20 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 have experienced in my life, but I still had no comfortable explanation for Joseph and polygamy.

25

Annie Cowles

30 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 heard her mention the treasurer Emma selected for the first Relief Society, Elvira Annie Cowles. Annie was my ancestor, so I picked her.

35 By 4 am that Sunday I had pieced together the fact that Annie (one of Joseph Smith’s plural wives) was mother of the three women who married Job Welling and grandmother of two women who married 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.

40 In 2006, still convinced I had to tell the story of these women, I decided to approach the story in novel form. Though I was then certain

5 Joseph and Elvira had been intimate, I felt I couldn’t portray that in my novel. 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 standpoint to retain male readers. Another man (a non-Mormon) said the sexual tension between my heroine and Joseph Smith was uncomfortably intense. As I warped the story in response to these comments, I had to dig deeper into extant facts, delving beneath the facile understanding I’d had of events and motivations. Causalities emerged that I’d previously been blind to.

10

No Sex?

15 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 Annie’s reproductive history.

20

25 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. Annie continued to bear children regularly whenever Jonathan was around, her second daughter showing up nine and a half months following Jonathan’s return with his Mormon Battalion unit.

25

30 Annie and Jonathan were fertile. Joseph had children with Emma regularly. And yet Annie didn’t produce a child for years after the ceremonies I presumed would legitimize intimacies between Annie and either Joseph or Jonathan.

30

35 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 conceived children prior to Joseph’s death.

35

40 Perhaps Joseph wanted to avoid engendering children with his plural wives while enjoying sex. If this were the case, there were few methods of birth control available to Joseph, and these were considered criminal.² The rhythm method wouldn’t even 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 extant data.

40

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

5

There are three prominent views of Joseph Smith.

10

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 1893.⁵

15

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}

20

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?"⁸

25

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?

5

2

10

COULD A LOVING GOD DEMAND POLYGAMY?

15

In December 2013, a friend stopped by to celebrate Christ's birth. During his brief visit, he told us the Christmas story from memory. Two verses stood out in particular:

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

20

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

25

Joy to All People

Christians believe men must be baptized to be saved:

*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,
he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ²*

30

*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
but have everlasting life. ³*

35

Throughout scripture, the Lord speaks 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 1820,⁴ all Joseph knew was that God lived and there was something about the religions of the day that was not right in God's eyes.

Why might God have mourned? Mormons believe God mourned the loss of doctrines that could save all mankind, doctrines that may have been 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. In response to Joseph's prayers, the Angel Moroni appeared several times to Joseph. While each repeat visit that night 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 gold plates containing the fullness of the Gospel.^{4a}

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.^{4b}

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.^{4c}

As people don't have branches and roots, I suspect the angel meant: "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.⁵ Therefore Joseph would not comprehend for many years how God could keep the promises made to the fathers, or even how we could be saved with our fathers and our children (with our branch and root).

The Two Joseph Loved and the Book in the Hill

There were two people in Joseph's life who were set apart to be symbols of God's salvation. These were the two individuals Joseph was told to bring with him if he was to successfully retrieve the ancient writings from the hill.

The first person Joseph was told to bring with him to the hill was Joseph's brother, Alvin. The designation of Alvin as the one required to bring forth the book⁶ endowed Alvin with intense importance for Joseph.

Then Alvin died.

Joseph would have mourned Alvin's death in any case. Having Alvin die under these circumstances was soul-wrenching. Joseph pondered the fate of his dead brother intensely for years.

Since Alvin died while the ancient writings remained hidden in the hill, Joseph was commanded to bring another. The angel reassured Joseph he would know who that right person was. This second person, so important to the emergence of the restored gospel, was Emma Hale.

When Joseph realized she was the one that was to accompany him,⁷ he did not merely ask that she stand at his side in retrieving the book from the hill. Joseph asked Emma to stand at his side in life, as his partner and helper, the Eve to his Adam.

Weaving the Family of Mankind Together

Joseph would eventually teach that baptisms could be performed on behalf of those who had died without baptism. The message contained in the book from the hill, the Book of Mormon, is the salvation of all mankind via baptism.

Comprehension that baptism could be performed on behalf of the dead was informed by Joseph's 1835 vision of Alvin in heaven.⁸ It was brought to a head by the grief of Jane Neyman, a mother who believed her teenage son was condemned to hell when he died without baptism.⁹ Performing these posthumous proxy baptisms was to be done individually, by name, not by mass proxy baptisms of unknown dead.

In LDS theology, the promise made to the fathers in Malachi was

clearly the binding together of the human family. This is the great promise Jacob [Israel] wrested from God.¹⁰ This was the promise Abraham received of his seed like the stars in heaven or the dust of the earth.¹¹ This was the covenant Isaac obeyed when he married an unknown relative from a distant land for only such woman would honor the authority of Melchizedek.¹²

The work of Joseph's life was to put in place the mechanism to eternally join parents to their children throughout all the generations of mankind. To us who believe Joseph Smith, 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 wouldn't allow the ordinances to be performed outside a temple of God.¹³ Thus these ceremonies would not be performed until after Joseph's death. But merely binding parents and children across generations would not be sufficient any more than simply stringing the warp threads on a loom is sufficient to create cloth.

Binding together husbands and wives would be required to weave the family of mankind together, like the weft thread on the shuttle in the weaver's hand. How could Joseph imagine being bound to his children without also being bound to Emma, their mother, 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 the sealing ordinances without any complications. A thousand years earlier, the occasional polygamous marriage was accepted. All wives would have been able to be sealed to their respective husbands, with 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 that should prohibit marriages between the couple's unrelated kin.¹⁴ In following years, the Catholic faithful would adjust their laws to align with the realities of the impediments of consanguinity and affinity,¹⁵ leading to almost total cessation of polygamous marriages.¹⁶

Thus monogamy became the only allowable form of marriage by the

time of Joseph Smith. Yet if monogamy were allowed to remain as the only valid form of marriage, huge tracts of the human family would remain stranded, forever cut off. It's not clear Joseph understood this at first, since 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."¹⁷

Romantic though Phelps' statement seems, this idea of eternal marriage would prohibit him from remarrying were Sally to die.

Even if Mormons themselves could have lived strict eternal monogamy from that point forth, 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 wasn't the first wife, she would not be able to be sealed to her husband for eternity. The children of women who couldn't be sealed would be 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 His covenant that Christ would be our Savior if we came to earth. This Mormon God could not allow any of us to become eternal orphans, unless it was by our own choice.

This work of united all mankind into one great family required God's people embrace the possibility of plural marriage, so none would be excluded from the fulfillment of the promises made to us before the world began. Thus the reason the God Mormons believe in instituted polygamy was to permit universal salvation through baptism and sealing for all who love God.

GUNS, GERMS, AND SEX

Joseph was shot to death, arguably because of polygamy. But Joseph lived in a time before bacterial infection was understood.

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 had evolved in a particular manner, medicine was primitive, and and though several variations of sexual innovations had emerged in the name of religion, there were many beliefs that worked to persuade men and women to be circumspect even within the bounds of marriage. Hypotheses about what happened in Nauvoo during the 1840s must take these realities into consideration.

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 factors, and how important it is to consider these factors when interpreting history and constructing hypotheses.

Guns

The details of how Joseph Smith died are hard to appreciate without an understanding of how and where guns had evolved, and how the shooters were armed that fatal day in 1844.

The bow and arrow were used for millennia to deliver death at a distance. The oldest known bow-shot arrows date to 10,000 years ago and were found in Ahrensburg, Germany. ¹

Roughly a thousand years ago the Chinese began to use bamboo tubes filled with gunpowder to eject projectiles. The Italians called these "big reeds" or *canone*. In time the derivative term *gonne* was synonymous with war. When the gunpowder tubes were fitted with handles, they became known as hand cannons, or *handgonnes*. ²

Five hundred years ago metallurgy had improved sufficiently to support mass production of guns for individual infantrymen. The guns, called muskets after the crossbow arrows they replaced, could be sufficiently lethal in the hands of a relatively unskilled person. ³

By the time the Pilgrims first arrived in the Plymouth in 1620, muskets had replaced bows and arrows as the primary projectile weapon in Europe. ⁴ Life on the frontier being settled by Europeans required a good weapon for hunting and self-defense. A musket was deemed a necessary piece of kit for any household. The barrel of a musket had a smooth bore. This made the guns easy to load and shoot. ⁵

Germans invented a way to make muskets more accurate in the late 1400s. ⁶ By creating gently twisting grooves inside the barrel of the musket, the ball would spin. The rifle had increased range and accuracy for a variety of reasons:

1. The rifling caused the ball to spin, creating gyroscopic stability and increasing accuracy.
 - a. Within the barrel, the spinning ball was stable, exiting the barrel in a consistent manner rather than bouncing randomly off the edges of the barrel, as does a ball shot from a smooth-bore weapon.
 - b. Once outside the barrel, the spinning ball would present a consistent front to the air through which it passed, decreasing turbulent drag.
 - c. The spinning ball would not spin about any axis perpendicular to the direction of flight, eliminating the Magnus effect, which can cause a ball to veer off course.
2. In order to ensure the ball developed the spin from the rifling, a patch of some natural material, such as animal skin, was formed around the ball as it was pushed into the barrel. The patch created

a gas-tight seal, ensuring that all the power from the gunpowder was transferred to the ball.

5 But accuracy and ability to kill at range came at a price. Rifled muskets took more time to load due to the tight fit required for a patched ball, and the grooves could be easily fouled with unexploded gunpowder. Despite these drawbacks, German immigrants to Pennsylvania began to produce rifled muskets in quantity in the early 1700s. These rifled muskets were called Pennsylvania rifles or long rifles, among other names. A hunter could
10 kill a deer at 50 yards with a smooth-bore musket. A long rifle could kill a deer at twice that range.⁷

15 During the Revolutionary War, rifles were used by light infantry and snipers. But the soldiers using rifles had to be protected by infantry using the faster-loading smooth bore weapons. George Washington, the Revolutionary general who was made first President of the United States, argued that rifles were militarily inferior to smooth bore muskets. But Congress disagreed. In 1803 Secretary of War Henry Dearborn
20 commissioned the Harper's Ferry Armory to produce a short-barreled rifle for the light infantry of the US Army. The short barrel made the rifle easier to load and less likely to foul, at the expense of a minor reduction in accuracy relative to a long rifle.

25 At this same time, Thomas Jefferson desired to acquire the Mississippi port of New Orleans, authorizing his agents to spend up to \$10 million dollars for the city and its surroundings. To their surprise, Napoleon offered to sell the Americans the entire Louisiana territory in which New Orleans was situated for the modestly greater price of \$15 million dollars. Acquisition of the Louisiana territory doubled the land controlled by the
30 United States at a cost of only \$0.03 per acre.⁸

35 Americans without strong ties to the settled communities in the east moved westward. Among those who traveled west of the Mississippi were two brothers of German descent, who had learned to make rifles from their recently deceased father, Christian Hawken. In the early 1820s brothers Samuel and Jacob Hawken settled in Saint Louis, capital of the new slave state of Missouri and gateway to the western wilderness.⁹ The brothers developed an improved rifle design, light enough to carry regularly,
40 powerful enough to kill large game, and accurate enough to hit a target at an extended range compared to standard military rifles. The Hawken had two triggers, the first to cock the gun and a second to trigger the firing action with minimal pressure, a so-called hair trigger. An 1861 sporting magazine explained:

5 The term "hair trigger" implies that the lock is fitted with additional machinery, by which the trigger may be set to so delicate an action that the slightest touch of the finger upon the trigger will put the whole lock in motion... a very slight jar will cause the piece to go off, particularly when it is set to a ticklish nicety...

10 Hair triggers are therefore never fitted to military rifles, and, at the present day, seldom to sporting ones. But, for the sportsman who in solitude pursues his sport among the wild-deer in Scotland, the hair-trigger is sometimes highly valued, as it enables him to shoot with greater accuracy...

15 Let the [hair-trigger] be set moderately easy, and then the very instant you are confident in your aim, the least touch of the hair-trigger will send the bullet with unerring certainty to the mark...

20 A heavy or hard-pulling trigger is very objectionable in a rifle; indeed, it is almost impossible to shoot accurately with such a weapon, unless a rest is used; and then the force required to put the trigger in motion is so great, that it generally moves the piece from the true aim, and causes a miss.¹⁰

25 Individual Hawken rifles were manufactured with barrels of varying calibers, including guns large enough to shoot a .68 caliber ball. A ball shot from one of these large caliber Hawken's, it was said, was so powerful it could stop a buffalo with a single shot.^{10a}

30 The original settlers of the new state of Missouri had been in place for roughly ten years when Joseph Smith proclaimed in 1831 that Independence, Missouri would be a land "appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints."¹¹

35 The "old settlers" of the slave state of Missouri resented the new Yankee arrivals with their talk of abolition and claims of divine revelation. Mob violence and the Governor's order forced the Mormons to abandon their properties in Missouri by 1838.

40 Joseph Smith and his followers settled in Illinois, along a bend in the Mississippi River, a single day's journey from St. Louis.¹² Joseph renamed the area Nauvoo. In December 1840, Illinois granted Nauvoo a city charter which granted authority to create a "body of independent militarymen."¹³ The Nauvoo Legion was formed shortly thereafter.

The Nauvoo Legion, like other state-approved militias, was permitted to draw on Federal stands of arms. The most common weapon issued to

the Nauvoo Legion and other area militias was the Model 1816 musket, a 58 inch smooth-bore musket that shot a .69 caliber ball. A smaller number of individuals were issued the Harper's Ferry Model 1803 Rifle, a 33 inch rifled musket that shot a .54 caliber ball. Some members of the Legion

5 purchased their own weapon. Though it is not possible to determine every man who owned a Hawken, it is certain that Hawkens were owned by individuals in and around Nauvoo. For example, Joseph Smith's famous bodyguard and noted sharpshooter, Orrin Porter Rockwell, allegedly owned a Hawken rifle.¹⁴

10 The evening Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were killed, they were with visitors John Taylor, and Willard Richards in an ununlockable room on the second story of Carthage Jail. An armed mob, many with blackened faces, charged up the staircase on the western side of the jail.¹⁵ The four

15 men inside the room rushed to hold the door closed against the onslaught. After the first volley, Joseph shot a handgun into the hallway, attempting to delay the next volley. When shots rang out again, Hyrum was hit in the face and the back. The ball entering Hyrum's back traveled through Hyrum's entire body. Upon exiting, the ball had enough energy to smash Hyrum's

20 watch.¹⁶ Taylor estimated that the shooter who shot Hyrum's back must have been located at least 100 yards to the east of the jail, as a ball shot from any lesser distance through the east-facing second-story window would have hit the ceiling rather than a man pressed up against the door at the far wall, a distance of 12 feet.¹⁷

25 What individual would shoot directly at a group of his co-conspirators? It seems such an individual must have had supreme confidence in his ability to hit his target, confidence that a rifled musket with a hair trigger might justify.

Germ

30 Prior to Lister's identification of the anti-bacterial properties of *penicillium glaucum* in 1871, there was not an understanding that germs caused disease, nor was there widespread belief that disease could be contagious.

35 Medical Pioneer Florence Nightingale, whose nursing care during the Crimean War (1854-1856) made her a hero, rejected germ theory and contagion. She vested her whole confidence on the power of sanitation to reduce death from such things as childbed fever, also referred to as

40 puerperal fever. In public hospitals of crowded cities of the day, puerperal fever could kill 50% or more of the women admitted to hospitals that also

practiced surgical medicine. Nightingale was able to make significant improvements to early mortality simply by advocating hygiene, sanitation, fresh air, good diet, and warmth.¹⁸

5 The situations we are discussing in Nauvoo occurred more than a decade before even the mere sanitation advances of Florence Nightingale. So individuals involved in any sort of sexual activity would not have known they could be contagious. When it came to pregnancies, any widespread attempt to use surgical means to "take it away" would likely have resulted in

10 death for the women involved.

15 During the late 1860s, Joseph Smith's sons questioned how their father could have been such a prolific polygamist if there were no children. Children were hinted at by individuals other than the mothers of the children.¹⁹ The women the Smith brothers questioned claimed they had failed to conceive through "lack of proper conditions."²⁰

20 Sarah Pratt, implicated in spiritual wifery and illicit intercourse in Nauvoo, put forward an explanations for why there were no children. In the 1880s, long after Sarah had given up any pretense of believing in Mormonism, she gave an interview to Wilhelm Wyl²¹ for his 1886 expose of Mormonism, *Mormon Portraits*. Sarah claimed to have seen Bennett with a long metal implement used to perform abortions, saying he had just performed such an operation on one of Joseph's wives.

25 The problem with this idea, however, is that any such large scale use of surgical means to terminate pregnancy in that era would have resulted in deaths. Lister's ideas regarding antibiotics and infection were not accepted by the medical community until after the 1881 death of US President James

30 A. Garfield.²² Sarah Pratt and Wilhelm Wyl appear not to have realized how inconsistent the abortion tale was in light of this new science. Specifically there is no reason to believe that there were any women associated with Joseph Smith who either became sick or died as a result of surgery during pregnancy.

35 Despite the likelihood that Dr. Bennett had a surgical implement that could terminate pregnancy, it does not appear that surgical means were the preferred method for avoiding inconvenient pregnancy. As Catherine Fuller would testify, Bennett had pressured her to yield and grant him sex. She had

40 objected, saying it would bring disgrace on the Church if she should become pregnant. Bennett replied that if she did become pregnant, he would attend to it. She said "I understood that he would give medication to prevent it..."²³ Discussion of medicine used as an after sex abortifacient is

also documented in the case of Mary Clift, who conceived a child engendered by Gustavus Hills in early 1842. ²⁴

5 Was there such a medicine, a relatively reliable after sex method of preventing pregnancy? There are a variety of possible options. The one that seems most plausible, in light of what is known of the time, local plants, and lack of serious side effects, is derived from the seeds of Queen Anne's Lace. Queen Anne's Lace, believed to be related to the extinct contraceptive *silphium* used in ancient times, ^{24a} develops a large white multi-bloom flower that resembles a circle of white lace with a single drop of red in the center. 10 Queen Anne's lace is ubiquitous in North America, where it begins to bloom in early spring and continues to bloom through the fall. Throughout this period of time, the flowers continually go to seed as neighboring plants are only beginning to put out flowers. Gathering the seeds would be tedious, but entirely possible. Modern naturopaths have self-medicated 15 using Queen Anne's Lace and report that it appears to work well. ²⁵

The other germs in play in Nauvoo would be those associated with venereal disease. There were two diseases in particular which were 20 sufficiently common to have slang terms associated with them. The first venereal disease was referred to as the pox. This referred to syphilis. Syphilis manifested in sores on the genitalia, But eventually the sores would heal. Because the sores on women were not visible, it was not known commonly known that women were being infected by their partners. As 25 mentioned, doctors did not believe in contagious disease in the 1840s. However children of women infected with syphilis would fail to thrive at birth. ²⁶

The second common venereal disease was referred to as the clap. This 30 referred to gonorrhea. Gonorrhea manifested as a white rash on the genitals of the man. The only way to treat gonorrhea in the 1840s was to use mercury.

Ironically, sexual misbehavior was blamed for other diseases that 35 modern medicine attributes to wholly non-sexual causes. This is particularly true of cholera. The 1832 cholera epidemic in New York City spread the idea that the thousands of deaths had been caused by moral depravity among the poor, who were disproportionately represented among the dead. Periodicals of the day claimed cholera was caused by such excesses as 40 married men engaging in sex more frequently than strictly necessary for the production of desired children. Temperance men, therefore, would tend to restrict even marital sex.

On the one side we have folkways dictating that even sex between married partners should be a controlled act. On the other hand we have diseases which would have rendered men and their female partners unable to give 5 birth to strong offspring. Thirdly we have the fact that surgical means of avoiding inconvenient pregnancy would have resulted in widespread death. Any theory to explain the lack of children born in the polygamy in Nauvoo must therefore account for these beliefs and real bacteriological truths.

Sex

10 The founders of the United States chose not to have a state religion, leaving it to each individual to find the particular religion that suited their beliefs. For the most part, individuals filed off into the standard Christian religions. But America also produced a variety of new religions. Of these, 15 there were some religious innovators who wished to change not only the nature of belief but the fundamental nature of family relationships.

Shakers and Celibacy. Perhaps the most well-known and honored of these early Christian sects was founded by Ann Lee. Born in England in 20 1736, Ann Lee taught her followers that it is possible to attain perfect holiness by giving up sexual relations. She was forced to marry, but her four children all died in infancy, confirming her radical rejection of sexuality and marriage. In 1774, Ann Lee and some followers emigrated from England to Albany County, New York. Ann's denomination was called United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing. They were also referred to as the 25 Shaking Quakers or Shakers because in their worship services involved dance and charismatic shaking. The community grew from converts and from taking in children who would be abandoned by others. However the unwillingness of Shakers to engender children has led to near extinction of practicing Shakers. ²⁷ 30

In 1831 Leman Copley, a Shaker from 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 35 Second Coming, that it was wrong to eat meat, and that it was wrong to have sex or 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. ²⁸

40 Since 1831, Mormon doctrine has clearly been built around the idea that families are ordained of God, that sexuality within marriage is righteous.

Spiritual Wives. Jacob Cochran, like Ann Lee, valued 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 the Shakers, Cochran's people were taught that marriage was not valid. Cochran taught that believers should hold everything in common. However instead of avoiding sexual intercourse, Cochran allegedly taught that intercourse could occur between "spiritual" husbands and wives, pseudo-marriage arrangements that were temporary.

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

"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."²⁹

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 came from the areas near the Cochran settlements. Austin Cowles was one who had lived near the Cochranites who would aggressively reject Joseph's teachings regarding plural marriage.

The term "spiritual wifery" was used in Nauvoo to describe sexual intercourse that was not part of a marriage. 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. An example of this is Zina Diantha Huntington's strong negative reaction when William Smith preached in 1845 regarding spiritual wifery.³⁰

Complex Marriage and Social Intercourse. Another relatively well known group 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."³¹

In 1834, Noyes declared himself perfect and free from sin. He began his community in Vermont in 1836, declaring that sexual intercourse could be separated into two components: the social and the procreative. It seems Noyes might have been inspired in this view by the 1832 publication of

Charles Knowlton's *The Fruits of Philosophy, or the Private Companion of Young Married People*, a text describing birth control techniques that would earn Knowlton three months of hard labor in prison.

Noyes viewed it a positive social act for everyone to participate in intercourse starting at puberty, which Noyes considered began at age 14. Young men were to have such 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 learned to have intercourse without ejaculation, were permitted to have intercourse with nubile teens and women who were not married. Married people were allowed to have "social" intercourse with those to whom they were not married, a practice that was referred to as complex marriage or "free love," a term invented by Noyes.

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 isn't clear that his sexual experiments would necessarily have informed Mormon polygamy. However the key technique Noyes used to achieve social intercourse without risking pregnancy was onanism, the practice of having intercourse without allowing the man to ejaculate during penetration. Onan and sufficient detail regarding what he did are described 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.

We know onanism was explicitly rejected by Mormon leaders due to the 1885 excommunication of Mormon Apostle Albert Carrington, who believed sex wasn't adultery unless the man ejaculated during penetration. This was a time when the LDS Church still practiced polygamy. Yet Carrington's onanism was considered adultery, fornication, and "lewd and lascivious conduct."^{31a}

Treatment of Hysteria. John Noyes' desire to prevent "sexual starvation" among his people was not as far-fetched as we might imagine. For over two thousand years medical literature had promulgated the idea that women were prone to a variety of disorders caused by the uterus,

hystera in Greek, which would wander about the body like a living creature, causing disease, blocked passages, and obstructed breathing.

Illness related to the *hystera* is first described in the Hippocratic corpus, describing movement of the uterus around the woman's body as it became dry and light due to lack of bodily fluids. Pregnancy was recommended as a cure, as intercourse would "moisten" the womb. Cappadocia physician Aretaeus, writing in the 1st century BCE, claimed 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. Intriguingly, the idea of the wandering womb was still in vogue when Sigmund Freud described the wandering mind.³²

By the 1800s, the prescribed remedy for female hysteria was to massage the genitalia to produce a uterine paroxysm. Such a "paroxysm" would cause the wandering uterus to become lubricated and reseal itself in the proper position. The medical literature did not refer to this as orgasm, as it was believed only men could experience true pleasure during sex.

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 high stress situations could still call for treatment, even in a married woman. This treatment was administered by practitioners of either sex by hand and was considered an honorable task.³³

In the latter half of the 1800s, a new device was developed to assist healers with this onerous if honorable duty. It was called a vibrator and 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 revert to a doctor. Vibrators were widely advertised in respectable periodicals of the day for medical use.

It was not until the advent of film that 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 can be seen in the precipitous drop in the number of medical papers describing hysteria and treatment of hysteria after 1900.³⁴ Not only was the treatment for hysteria now *verboten*, 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 testimony regarding alleged interactions between Doctor Bennett and women prior to April 1841. It is possible that in Dr. Bennett's early days in the community he was acting as a medical doctor, dispensing a "proven" treatment to women who were stressed by the extreme circumstances associated with being separated from spouse or simply dealing with the disruptions embracing Mormonism had brought to the lives of so many individuals.

Philanderers, Debauchers, and Strikers. Aside from these mentioned deviations from today's sexual norm, there were also those who simply wished to have sex without the commitment of marriage. The Mississippi River had a significant migratory element of society associated with the river boats and movement of cargo up and down the natural water highway. These migrating men and their associates who worked the river trade wished to be able to enjoy sex without the traditional commitments.

It was alleged there was a brothel in the town of Warsaw, just south of Nauvoo along the Mississippi river. Those in Nauvoo who wished to sow their wild oats could travel down the river. Testimony was printed in the newspaper asserting that Mormon Francis Higbee had contracted "the ____", likely referring to syphilis, from a French woman in Warsaw in the 1841 timeframe.³⁵

Shortly after Nauvoo was granted a city charter, it appears that the mayor and others supported creation in Nauvoo of an establishment near the planned temple site that eventually became known to be a house of ill repute. In 1842 the City ordered the destruction of the building.³⁶

In 1841 it appears men began to pressure women to have sex without marriage. In 1844, The Nauvoo Expositor described the ruination of women recently arrived in Nauvoo: "They are visited by some of the Strikers, for we know not what else to call them."³⁷ Striker was a synonym for debaucher, so more focused and evil than a mere philanderer. Though claiming that Joseph Smith was the source of this debauchery, the Nauvoo Expositor was describing behavior of which Expositor editor Chauncy Higbee had been guilty, according to the confessions of multiple women in 1842.

When men were dallying with women other than their wives, retrospective descriptions of Nauvoo often cast these dalliances as "polygamy," even when there is scant reason to believe Joseph had allowed

the relationship. We see this in Orange Wight's assertion that John Higbee, uncle to Francis and Chauncy Higbee, had two wives in 1841.³⁸

5 It is impossible to confidently determine the nature of all of the sexual activity in Nauvoo Illinois during the mid-1840s. However it is useful to understand that there were multiple sources of inspirations for the activity that was reported. Specifically, there was no need that people had actually been taught about polygamy by Joseph Smith if they happen to be living a lifestyle that technically was considered polygamous.

10 Legitimate Rape. In 2012 one of Missouri's Congressmen claimed there was no need to permit abortion in the case of rape victims, because victims of "legitimate rape" rarely become pregnant. In an August 2012 interview on Fox channel KTVI, Todd Akin said, "If it's legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down."³⁹

15 Watching the media storm that erupted over this comment, I was curious if there was any basis for such a statement. To the contrary, recent studies show that even under attack, the female body will react in a manner to permit conception, all other factors permitting.⁴⁰

20 This is germane to Joseph Smith and polygamy because some claim that children were not conceived due to stress, the uncertainty of the times, or conditions not being right.

25 If the terror of rape is not sufficient to "shut that whole thing down," then sex within a consensual but secret relationship would not fail to produce children merely because of stress.

30 Infertility. Some presume that Joseph didn't produce children with his plural wives because it is relatively common for individuals in our day to have great difficulty conceiving a child. My own daughter, for example, was unable to conceive for several years after her marriage.

35 However it is not reasonable to hypothesize that Joseph Smith and his plural wives were not respectively virile and fecund. Joseph Smith continually engendered children with Emma Hale throughout their marriage. It appears that Emma first conceived within a year of the date Joseph and Emma married.⁴¹ She was pregnant with their final child when Joseph was killed.

40 Similarly many of the women with whom Joseph Smith covenanted during his lifetime went on to bear children, usually conceiving within

5 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. But after Louisa married Brigham Young in 1846, she gave birth to five children in the period of five years before her death of cancer in 1850.

10 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 not one or two instances to study, but dozens and even hundreds of such instances. Therefore theories as to what could have been happening must take into account this very large data set.

15 Summary

20 It is impossible to prove Joseph Smith wasn't a coercive opportunist who delighted to have sex with anyone who moved. However it is possible to determine that all known facts about his time, including many facts of which Joseph and his contemporaries were unaware, militate against such a conclusion.

25 Experimentation with the nature of marriage in the name of religion was part of the fabric of the American frontier. However Joseph Smith's "celestial marriage" does not appear to be derivative of other marriage experiments. We have explicit indications that the innovations of Lee, Cochran, and Noyes were rejected, as was general debauchery.

30 Similarly, there is reason to believe that Joseph Smith's murder was not the result of impulsive anti-Mormon mob action, but a pre-meditated killing by an inside group with a highly-skilled marksman using state of the art weaponry.

THE 1831 REVELATION REGARDING PLURAL MARRIAGE

Many contributing to New Mormon History take the view that Joseph was contorting doctrine to justify his libido-driven actions, without trying to find a revelation that might have caused those actions.

The only canonized document discussing plural marriage is found in D&C 132, which was not published during Joseph's lifetime. In fact, the RLDS Church fundamentally questioned the legitimacy of this revelation, considering it an invention of Brigham Young. Weeks before her death, Joseph Smith's widow, Emma Hale, would claim she had never seen the revelation.

However Erastus Snow affirmed that Joseph had received the revelation while translating an "one of the Old Prophets was deviding His property to His offspring," likely Genesis 17, ¹ and we know Joseph abruptly ceased translating the Old Testament at Genesis 24: 31 prior to 7 March 1831. ² When we consider this revelation occurred at that time, the historical and revelatory record comes to life.

The Context for the 1831 Revelation

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

Reluctant Polygamist

- Joseph marries Emma Hale over her father's objection (January 1827).
- Joseph obtains the gold plates and begins to translate them (September 1827).
- Emma's first child, Alvin Smith, is born and dies when Martin Harris loses the first 116 manuscript pages (June 1828).
- Believing himself under condemnation for having allowed the pages to be lost, Joseph starts attending the Methodist church, but Emma's uncle kicks him out (summer 1828).
- Translation resumes and The Book of Mormon is published (May 1829–March 1830).
- The Hale family decides to let Joseph farm a parcel near their home (summer 1830).
- Joseph forms the Church of Jesus Christ [of Latter-day Saints] (April 1830).
- Joseph is commanded to tend to the Lord's work. He neglects the farm (summer 1830).
- Joseph comes home to find Emma talking with her father and uncle. Hale kicks Joseph off the farm, demanding that Emma leave Joseph (September 1830). Emma stays with Joseph.
- Emma becomes pregnant with twins (likely September 1830, presuming typical twin gestation of 36 weeks).
- Joseph begins his translation ³ of the King James Bible (NLT Dec 1830).
- Joseph and Emma travel to Kirtland, Ohio (February 1831).
- Joseph resumes his work on the King James Bible, translating from Gen 5:29 through Gen 24:31 prior to March 7, 1831.

Emma was at least seven months pregnant with the twins by early March 1831. She 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, who they viewed as a heretic unfit to support a wife. Tales of religious innovators, such as Jacob Cochran, may have entered into these family conversations.

Emma seems the most likely person to have discussed Old Testament polygamy with Joseph in March of 1831, the one who would have reason to question the institution of polygamy in the Old Testament, the one who would have potentially even argued with Joseph that polygamy could not be the will of God. Any other person close enough to Joseph to discuss these things in 1831 would likely have left a record of the interaction. Yet there is

no such record.

Based on the Genesis account up to the death of Abraham's wife, Sarah, Joseph went to God and apparently asked how it was that Abraham and other honored Bible figures were justified in having many wives and concubines. 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 refused to write down the revelation related to plural marriage at that time, we do see the continued argument Joseph and God engage in after this point. D&C 45, received March 7, 1831, is the first revelation that hints of the turmoil Joseph would have been experiencing at receiving word of 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 the terrible events that will 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 twins, Thaddeus and Louisa, who died hours later.

While I don't believe God takes children from parents as punishment, 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.^{6a}

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, where seven missionaries being sent to preach to the American Indians are told to “take unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites.”⁷

Apparently Saints then were as willing to selectively obey as at any time—Phelps didn't 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 even considered courting or marrying an Indian woman, or any other plural wife for that matter.

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 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. That day Joseph and Sidney were translating John chapter 5 and came to verse 29:

5 *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. ⁸

10 Prompted by this mention of the dead who would hear the gospel, “the voice of the Son of Man,” Joseph and Sidney proceeded to record one of the most important visions in the formation of Mormon eschatology, or beliefs regarding the ultimate destiny of mankind. The vision describes a
15 heaven of many degrees based on earthly faith and works. The highest, or celestial, level of heaven would be reserved for those who were baptized and sealed ⁹ by the Holy Spirit of promise.

20 The 1832 revelation recorded as D&C 76 answered some of Joseph’s questions about the New and Everlasting Covenant he’d been asked to restore the year earlier. Clearly this, more than any other revelation associated with the translation of the New Testament, was the answer Joseph had been promised in D&C 45, about the fate of mankind when the end would come, an initial answer to Joseph’s turmoil about the revelation
25 regarding plural marriage.

Thus by 1831 and 1832 plural marriage had become convolved with Joseph Smith’s beliefs regarding the salvation of mankind and the terrible happenings predicted for the end of times.

30 Mormon eschatology would evolve further after 1832, to include proxy ordinance work on behalf of the dead, ¹⁰ multiple degrees of glory within the Celestial Kingdom, ¹¹ and the sealing of all mankind together via biological and adoptive family lines. ¹²

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE: WIVES AND HANDMAIDS

Joseph Smith primarily taught his followers doctrines of faith, repentance, and baptism that are familiar throughout the Christian world.

Of those Mormon doctrines other Christians find controversial, the vast majority are teachings Mormons cherish: mankind’s relationship to God, the responsibility of individuals to their children, and our duty to our ancestors. Mormons cherish the powerful marriage bond enthroned in Mormon theology.

The crucible that gave birth to modern Mormon marriage practices, however, is the mis-understood, never-talked about *thing* that causes so many Mormons to question the simple faith they had as children, converts, or young missionaries. But Joseph’s struggle has a pattern to it that most of us have failed to see.

Old Testament Marriage Patterns

To explore Biblical marriage patterns, it is sufficient to consider the patriarchs about whom Joseph had asked God, listed in D&C 132:1.

Abraham. Abraham was married to Sarah. Yet when Sarah proved unable to have children, she 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.

Hagar was evicted from the household of Abraham and Sarah at Sarah's request, based on her alleged preening and her son's insults to Sarah's son, Isaac.

5 After Sarah's death, Abraham also marries Keturah and has five sons with her. Thus we see an Old Testament patriarch re-marrying after the death of his wife.

10 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.

15 However what we do see in the story of Isaac is how important it is to marry a woman who is a believer. The story of Rebekah giving water to Abraham's servant at the well is miraculous in Rebekah's generosity. Though Genesis 24 does not explain how much water camels drink, her unprovoked offer to draw water for the camels was no mere sharing of a glass of water, but willingly entering into an arduous task on behalf of a stranger. Her willingness to follow Abraham's servant without delay to marry the unknown relative, Isaac, is another signal of her willingness to follow God.

25 Jacob. Jacob returns to the household of Rebekah's brother, Laban. Here he labors for seven years for Laban's daughter Rachel, the woman he loves. But Laban switches Rachel for her older, unmarried sister, Leah, on the wedding night.

30 Jacob proceeds to commit himself to another seven years of labor to obtain the hand of Rachel. Thus we see the third of the key Old Testament patriarchs married to sisters.

35 Even though Rachel is the favored wife of the two, she seems unable to bear a child. Rachel follows Sarah's lead and offers Jacob her servant, Bilhah, that Rachel might be considered to have born children. Not to be outdone, Leah offers Jacob her servant, Zilpah, as we seen in Genesis 30.

40 Moses. The Bible record only mentions Zipporah, the Israelite, as Moses' wife, mentioned in Exodus 2, 4 and 18. Again we appear to have an Old Testament prophet married to only one wife. However it might be possible that Moses had been married to a princess of the Egyptians prior to his flight into Egypt.

5 David. King David married several women, though the number is not clear. Those who are mentioned in the Bible are 1) Saul's daughter, Michal, 2) Ahinoam, who bore David's first son, Amnon, 3) Abigail, who had been wife of Nabal the Carmelite, 4) Maacah, daughter of the King of Geshur and mother of Absalom and Tamar, 5) Haggith, mother of Adonijah, 6) Abital, mother of Shefatya, 7) Eglah, mother of Yitre-am, and 8) Bathsheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite and mother of Solomon.

10 In the story of David we see wives bring 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.

15 In the case of Bathsheba, we see David seduce her without benefit of marriage while Uriah is away at war. To hide the seduction, David tries to get Uriah to lay with Bathsheba after his return, but Uriah refuses to enjoy the comforts of home if his men cannot. Unable to cover the illicit nature of Bathsheba's pregnancy, David sends Uriah out at the head of his forces, where Uriah predictably is slain.

20 In D&C 132:39, David is characterized as fallen for his sin in the case of Uriah. Regarding marriage in eternity, it is stated that David "shall not inherit [his wives] out of the world, for [the Lord] gave them to another.

25 Here we see the important belief that a man's wife could be taken from him for sin.

30 Solomon. Though David had sinned in engendering a child with Bathsheba, he was not barred from elevating Bathsheba's subsequent son to the throne.

35 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. Among these were foreign princesses from Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Sidon, and the Hittites.

40 In the wives of Solomon, we see a pattern of creating alliances through ceremonial "marriage" and concubinage. There is insufficient information to determine what role sexuality played in these many hundreds of relationships.

Understanding the women Joseph Smith married after 1831

Though Joseph likely came to believe plural marriage was possible, even

required, in the 1831-1832 timeframe, Joseph would avoid plural marriage for years after the initial revelation.

5 It is well-understood that Mormon scripture permits plural marriage in rare circumstances, and that Mormons claimed a divine dispensation to engage in polygamy from the 1830s to 1890.

10 Less understood is the devastation caused by John Bennett as he 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.” This secret, illicit sex was sometimes referred to as spiritual wifery.

15 As I research the women Joseph either married, sought to marry, or is accused of having married, they fall into one or more of the following categories:

20 Wives of Commandment. These are women Joseph married based on a reported commandment, most notably being threatened by an angel with a drawn sword. Emma Hale, Joseph’s legal wife, falls into this category. This is similar to the divine involvement in Isaac’s marriage to Rebekah.

25 Levirate wives. These women were widows whose first husband had died. Joseph would have married them to provide for them and protect them, whether temporally or merely spiritually, as David had married Abigail. This sort of marriage is outlined in Leviticus and illustrated by the stories of Tamar and Ruth, ancestresses of King David and Jesus Christ.

30 Dynastic wives. These women were daughters of faithful church leaders who wished to create a familial link between themselves and Joseph Smith. In each case, the daughter’s marriage to Joseph Smith was associated with the leaders’ extraordinary devotion and celestial marriage to his own legal wife. The celestial solemnization of the civil marriages two of these sets of parents are the only ones to occur prior to the celestial solemnization of Joseph’s own marriage to Emma. This evokes the Biblical marriages that
35 created alliances in the times of David and Solomon.

40 Handmaids. These are women Joseph married who were relatively young and unmarried. In these cases, Emma was likely aware of the relationship between these women and Joseph. In some cases Emma is undeniably documented to have given Joseph permission to marry these women. This evokes the Bible accounts of Hagar, Bilhah, and Zilpah, who were servants of Sarah, Rachel, and Leah.

5 Hagars. These women were evicted from the Smith household or circle by Emma. Though it is inferred that the rejection of these few means Emma Smith was unable to condone her husband’s plural marriages, there are many more wives Emma continued to associate with closely, despite knowing they were at least ceremonially linked to Joseph Smith. Hagar is the obvious Biblical account that resembles the eviction of these women.

10 Eternity-only wives. These are women who wished to be with Joseph after this mortal life, even though they were married to someone else and continued to remain with their legal husband during Joseph’s lifetime. It seems that some of the many hundreds of wives and concubines of Solomon might have similarly been wives in name only.

15 In addition to these wives inspired by Biblical precedent, I believe we have two additional categories of “wife:”

20 Victims. These women appear to have been seduced or raped by John Bennett and/or his acolytes. No children born to possible victims during this time frame are known to have survived to adulthood. Joseph or other church leaders appear to have spoken with or “married” these women to provide for them and to protect them. In the case of one of these likely victims, Emma actively participated in helping protect the woman.

25 Detectives. Joseph taught these women about “Celestial Marriage” and asked them to enter into covenant with him in connection with the search for the men teaching “Spiritual Wifery.” As Emma was also one of these detectives in her role as Relief Society President, it is possible or even likely that she knew about these “wives.”
30

If the 1840s gave us an astonishing number of marriages to study and document, the 1830s are outstanding because of their near silence on the topic of plural marriage.

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 tiered heaven¹. 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. Thus the February 1832 revelation would mark the beginning of when we might expect 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. Though Marinda Johnson isn't on record as suggesting Joseph hoped to marry her in 1832, however she was the most "convenient" marriageable single woman on hand following the February 1832 revelation.

At the time Marinda Johnson was 16. In March 1832, weeks after the revelation, Joseph Smith was pulled from his bed in the Johnson home. 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.

Mormons are familiar with the outcome of this mobbing. 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 be slightly addled from then on. Joseph escaped castration, but 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.

If Joseph and Emma thought this attack was a direct result of an early attempt to practice plural marriage, it would be no wonder that they both would approach plural marriage as though it could lead to Joseph's death.

Mr. Smith

According to the public record, 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 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, focusing on the children born in the 1840s during Hannah's marriage to Philo Dibble.⁴

It is the descendants of the mysterious John F. Smith who have told me they are descended from Joseph Smith. They cite the inability to find a John F. Smith⁵ 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 Joseph's brother, William, pronounced on the head of one of these early children, a blessing allegedly close held at Church Headquarters.

Unfortunately, it appears 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 didn't share ancestors with the sons of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack. However this demonstrates a

problem related to unraveling 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.

5 Time and again, then, situations and statements that have a non-sexual interpretation have been imbued with sexual significance.

Exchange of Women

10

By 1836 it appears Joseph Smith entered into a covenant relationship with Fanny Alger. By September 1836, Fanny had left the Mormon community in Kirtland, Ohio, in the midst of 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.

15

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. Allegedly Joseph offered to help Levi Hancock win the hand of Clarissa Reed if Levi would “get Fanny Alger” for Joseph as a wife. ⁷ In 1836 when Fanny fled the Smith household, the family with whom she stayed (Chancy Webb’s family) characterized Fanny’s relationship with Joseph as a marriage. ⁸

20

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

25

Don Bradley, like Compton, finds that the relationship between Fanny Alger and Joseph Smith was most likely a marriage, as a marriage would explain all the accounts, while an illicit affair would not be able to explain the accounts asserting the relationship was honorable. ⁹

30

Both Compton and Bradley give credence to Oliver Cowdery’s outrage at the alleged adultery occurring between Fanny and Joseph. Bradley in particular cites Chancy Webb’s 1872 assertion that Fanny was pregnant when she stayed with the Webbs just prior to leaving Kirtland.

35

However Oliver Cowdery was not an eye-witness to the scene that caused Emma such distress. Chauncy Webb was an embittered opponent of Mormonism when he claimed Fanny had been pregnant. His understanding of the matter could have been caused by any of a number of circumstances

40

other than actual pregnancy. Given his opposition at the time of giving his testimony, the story lacks nuances that might permit us to determine if there is an alternate explanation.

5 No one has considered an alternate reason for Emma’s rage and Fanny’s stress. There was at least one man living in the Smith home during this period of time, Jonathan Harriman Holmes. He was the same age as Joseph Smith, and Jonathan was unmarried. A seemingly compliant Fanny who had covenanted with Joseph, yet asked if she could terminate the covenant to marry another, would cause an informed Emma to rage.

10

In September, 1836, the Algers left Kirtland and spent a year in Indiana en route to Missouri. While in Indiana, Fanny married Solomon Custer and 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. Neither Joseph Smith nor Emma would ever document the nature of the situation with Fanny.

15

Zion’s Camp, Cholera, and Wishful Thinking

20

Meanwhile 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.

25

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 and possibly the exchange of women idea. 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. Supposing he believed providing a wife in exchange was required, he was blessed with an abundant selection of teenaged female charges.

30

Jared was so confident that he could procure a second wife that he built a second home in preparation. But his hope was ill-founded. In September 1835 Jared was chastised. ¹¹ Interestingly, Jared’s ward Rosetta Marietta Carter is sometimes listed as one of Joseph Smith’s wives, possibly because her surviving daughter would become a member of the Smith household. ¹²

35

40

Apostasy and Prison

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

5 But Oliver was predisposed to suspect immoral behavior from a religious leader, based on the experience his brother, Warren, had as a neighbor of Jacob Cochran. Oliver, without having seen anything, inferred a sexual and inappropriate relationship between Joseph and Fanny.

10 Oliver's belief in an affair eventually caused Oliver to break with Joseph and the Mormons. Oliver moved to Missouri.

15 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. The hostility between members of the Church and residents of Zion, including apostates like Oliver Cowdery, would lead to the extermination order, the Haun's Mill massacre, the siege of numerous homesteads and Mormon towns, and the Battle at Crooked River.

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

25 As Joseph languished in Liberty, he cried out,

*Oh God, where art thou?*¹⁵

In answer, Jesus responded,

30

*Peace be unto your soul... you are not yet as Job.*¹⁶

35 *God shall give unto you knowledge... that has not be 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.*¹⁷

40 I think of this imprisoned Joseph was a man who had been commanded to restore plural marriage, yet had clearly not succeeded in any significant way that would be useful to God's purposes.

And yet between March 1839 in Liberty Jail and April 1841 in Nauvoo, something would convince Joseph to attempt obedience again. I think

Joseph Smith was not convinced by sexual desire or even the relative safety of Nauvoo. Rather a series of deaths highlighted the key importance of our eternal relationships to one another and to God.

SIX FUNERALS AND A BLESSING

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

In focusing on sexual desire, scholars have ignored the deaths that ripped Joseph's soul and informed his vision of family and eternity. The deaths of which I speak are in the historical record, though largely unknown. There may be more than the six I enumerate here: brother, son, friend, wife & mother, daughter, and father. But I believe these six informed Joseph's mind and heart regarding the meaning of God's promise to the fathers and children stated 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 were to retrieve the ancient record from the Hill Cumorah. ¹ Alvin's death devastated Joseph on many levels.

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

he saw Alvin in a vision of the Celestial Kingdom. ² The vision showed Joseph there was a way for those who died without baptism to be accepted into heaven, but the revelation does nothing to explain how it is done.

Beloved Son: Cyrus Livingston Neyman

Jane Harper (Neyman) and William Neyman appear to have joined the church in the early 1830s. Before they accepted the gospel, however, two of their sons had died. ³ Their son Frederick had died in infancy. Son Cyrus Livingston was a teenager when he died. ⁴ As was common for early Latter-day Saints, Jane would have presumed Cyrus was damned, as someone of age who had never accepted the gospel in this life.

In April 1840 Joseph Smith spoke to the Saints in a grove of trees for 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."

For Jane Neyman, however, the sermon rekindled her grief about her son's damnation. For as Jesus told Nicodemus:

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁶ And "*except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* ⁷

History doesn't capture how Joseph became aware of Jane's torment. But later events indicate it likely weighed on his mind for months. ⁸

Alvin would be saved. Why not Cyrus Neyman? 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'd served several missions, endured the hardships of Missouri, and was the individual who brought the charges against Oliver Cowdery that resulted in Cowdery's excommunication. 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.⁹

5 Seymour's funeral was held Saturday, on August 15, 1840. The line of mourners stretched for a mile.¹⁰ No doubt the mourners comforted Seymour's family, honoring his life of sacrifice and reassuring them Seymour would certainly be saved.

10 Jane Neyman was there as well,¹¹ and likely comforted those in need of comfort. But the words of honor and reassurance likely pierced her soul. Seymour would be saved in God's Kingdom. Her son, Cyrus, she believed, would forever be damned.

15 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.¹²

25 It was a typical Christian funeral. But Joseph saw Jane Neyman 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?¹³

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

35 He spoke of Jane, "This widow¹⁴ [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."¹⁵

40 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."¹⁶

5

"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."¹⁷

10

15 Those who heard these teachings were filled with joy, but none more so than Jane Neyman. Less than a month later, Jane Neyman 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 Jacques,¹⁸ intent on witnessing this important event, rode her horse down into the river so she could hear the ordinance.¹⁹

20

25 Afterwards Joseph Smith asked what words were used in performing the ordinance. I find it interesting that we don't know whether it was Jane Neyman, Brother Olmstead, or Vienna Jacques who relayed the words. When Joseph heard what had been done, he approved what had taken place.²⁰

25

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.

30

Beloved Wife & Mother: Rosetta Marietta Carter Holmes

35 In 1837 Joseph Smith arranged to marry Jonathan Harriman Holmes to Marietta Carter in a double ceremony with Wilford Woodruff and Phoebe Carter.²¹

35

Marietta was the ward of Jared Carter, he of the two Kirtland homes and schemes to procure a second wife.²²

40 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 just off Water Street, about a block east of the homestead.²³ Emma herself had just had a new baby, a little boy named

40

Don Carlos.

5 A strong summer storm hit Nauvoo in the days after the Brunson funeral. What happened next would remain a guarded secret, the only record surviving in the stories Marietta's toddler was told to explain where her mother had gone, stories shrouded in the trappings of the Missouri persecution narratives. ²⁴ But Sarah's stories describe events that happened in August 1840, a time frame of supposed peace in Mormon history.

10 That fateful day, August 18-19, 1840, a group of men from Missouri approached Water Street. Their target was likely the distinctive two-story homestead where Joseph and Emma lived. But in the storm they became confused and attacked another home on the street—the Holmes cabin. There they found Marietta with her daughters Sarah and baby Mary.
15 Eventually the men fled, leaving the cabin in flames and the mother terribly wounded.

In Sarah's stories her mother took shelter with neighbors who fetched her father. Marietta died August 20, 1840. ²⁵ She had been only twenty
20 years old.

Sarah's Nauvoo stories talk about living in the Smith home, playing alongside the Smith children, keeping watch for those approaching the Smith homestead, kneeling in prayer alongside Joseph Smith and Joseph's
25 son, Joseph III, and stealing cookies from the black cook (Jane Manning).

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
30 his own marriage, much less the marriage of any other couple. As they buried Marietta, Joseph could have realized the ordinance of marriage could also be performed for those now dead, just as baptism could be performed by proxy.

35 Though there is nothing written at the time, there is a hint that Jonathan Holmes was the first widower offered the possibility of being reunited with his deceased spouse in eternity. ^{25a} Eliza Snow would write a poem in September 1842 dedicated to Jonathan, inspired by a sermon on the resurrection. Eliza modified the poem shortly thereafter, but the original
40 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,

5 May your mutual vows be plighted—
May your hearts, no longer twain
And your spirits be united
In an everlasting chain. ^{25b}

10 **Beloved Daughter: Mary Holmes**

We do not know what the mob did to Mary Holmes. Therefore I do not know whether Joseph and Emma expected baby Mary to survive her mother. But in the weeks that would transpire between Marietta's death and
15 the death of baby Mary, Emma likely nursed the doomed infant alongside her own son. ²⁶

Mary passed away on 10 September, ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ So even though Mary was
20 not Emma's child, the loss would have been profound. Beyond the Smiths' grief was the mourning of their silent friend, the gentle Jonathan, the father who now sat in the corner holding his one remaining family member, the toddler Sarah.

25 I believe that in this crucible, Joseph finally saw 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.
30

Beloved Father: Joseph Smith Sr.

35 Joseph Smith's father was a weak and flawed man. ²⁹ 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 possible Joseph could have talked with his father about the New and Everlasting Covenant and his reluctance to obey.
40

On September 12, 1840, Father Smith began vomiting blood. Until that day the family had hoped Father Smith would recover. ³⁰ The Smith household was still reeling from the deaths of Marietta and Mary Holmes.

Joseph's mother Lucy documented the scene. The recent attack on the Holmes cabin appears to have been a concern to the Smiths, as 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 Missouriians."³¹

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."³²

It appears 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 seemed to slip 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.³³

Joseph's renewed attempt to obey the 1831 commandment regarding plural marriage and the New and Everlasting Covenant started in earnest after September 14, 1840, at the death of his father.

5

8

A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE

10

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

Dr. Bennett would be a Mormon less than two years. Yet his time with the Mormons and his public attacks after his excommunication deformed Mormon history more than the actions of any other single individual.

20

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 built ships, but blockades associated with the War of 1812 destroyed the family's fortunes. John's grandfather narrowly escaped debtor's prison.¹

John's 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.² It seems John was expert at self-promotion and

placing himself in high positions.

5 Medicine in the early 1800s involved practices that today would be considered sexual abuse. One example was the common practice of using genital massage to treat hysteria. ³ As the years passed, Mary Bennett began to suspect her husband of infidelity, seeing marriage after marriage 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
10 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..." ⁴

15 John decided to come to the aid of the Mormons in the wake of this personal disgrace. Bennett wrote to Joseph Smith in July 1840, offering his services. ⁵ By early September Bennett was working to protect Nauvoo from the mobocracy that had driven the Saints from Missouri, the mobocracy that had taken the life of Marietta Holmes mere weeks earlier in the heart of Nauvoo.

20 Bennett drafted up a powerful city charter and traveled to Springfield, Illinois, to lobby for passage of the document, impressing the likes of Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. Bennett won passage of the charter and returned to Nauvoo a hero. When elections under the charter were held, Bennett was installed as Mayor of Nauvoo and made General of the Nauvoo Legion—a rank subordinate only to Joseph Smith. Bennett portrayed himself as a bachelor to his Mormon friends. Soon Bennett began to keep company with a young woman. ⁶

30 It is possible Joseph saw in Bennett a man who might be able to live plural marriage. On January 19, 1841, Joseph pronounced a blessing on John C. Bennett:

35 *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.*

40 *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.* ⁷

Though Joseph wanted to trust Bennett, Joseph received a

communication soon after it was known Bennett had joined the church, possibly after the January blessing. ⁸ The informant identified himself as being from a vicinity where Bennett had lived, claiming Bennett was a mean man who had left a wife and children left behind in Morgan County, Ohio.
5 Though Joseph's own experience had taught him that evil tales can be told of honorable men, Joseph commissioned Elder George Miller to seek out the truth behind the stories alleged about Bennett.

10 I don't believe Joseph would have trusted Bennett with the doctrine regarding plural marriage less than three months after Bennett's baptism. Once the allegations had arrived, it seems unlikely Joseph Smith would have confided in Bennett unless Elder Miller returned a report exonerating Bennett. ⁹

15 Miller wrote his report on March 2, 1841. It is unclear when it reached Joseph. Miller's informants claimed Bennett was "able to push himself into places and situations entirely beyond his abilities... his wife left him under satisfactory evidence of his adulterous connections... he used her bad otherwise... it has been Dr. Bennett's wish that his wife should get a bill of
20 divorcement, but as yet she has not... in fine, he is an imposter and unworthy of the confidence of all good men."

Wanted: A Wife

25 Prior to Bennett's exposure as a married man, he had been courting a young woman, telling her he wished to marry her. As soon as Joseph learned Bennett was still married, he ended the relationship between Bennett and his desired bride.

30 History has remained unusually quiet on the subject of which woman Dr. Bennett's desired to marry. This was someone Dr. Bennett appears to have met soon after arriving in Nauvoo, if one presumes that his desire to marry this young woman of Nauvoo caused "Dr. Bennett's wish that his
35 wife should get a bill of divorcement..."

Elvira Annie Cowles emerges as a likely candidate as the face that launched Bennett's thousand lies.

40 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, unlike the various orphaned young ladies who passed through the Smith household in those months. When Bennett arrived in Nauvoo and was welcomed into the Smith household, Elvira and Bennett became housemates.

In 1869 Andrew Jensen wrote the daughters of Elvira Annie Cowles, inquiring about her relationship with Joseph Smith. ¹¹ Elvira's oldest living daughter replied, telling Jensen that Elvira had not been Joseph's first plural wife. ¹² The date Elvira Annie Cowles would give Joseph F. Smith for her sealing to Joseph was June 1, 1843.

Yet Jonathan Holmes, Elvira's public husband from December 1, 1842, would tell family and friends that he only became Elvira's husband after the death of Joseph Smith, that she had first been Joseph's wife. ^{12a} This implies that Elvira's decision to covenant with Joseph Smith pre-dated the December 1842 ceremony publicly marrying her to Jonathan Holmes.

Elvira is my ancestor, and therefore I wished to understand the important milestones of her life. I searched for years to understand why Elvira didn't marry Joseph until June 1843. The date didn't fit. However the ladies who witnessed the sealing could only have been party to a sealing in 1843, so the date wasn't a typo. I couldn't figure it out until I read Bergera's article on the earliest sealings between married couples. ¹³ Elvira's sealing to Joseph Smith occurred three days after Emma Smith was finally sealed to Joseph.

Here was a possible answer, then. Elvira Annie Cowles, of all the plural wives Joseph would covenant with, appears to have promised Emma that she would not enter into a Covenant with Joseph until after Emma herself had accepted the Covenant.

Even though Elvira Annie wasn't the first plural wife, she may have been the first woman Joseph talked with about covenant marriage after his father's death. She was an intimate of the Smith family. Emma loved Elvira and trusted her. ¹⁴

Alternately, Joseph could have spoken with Elvira in the context of explaining why she could not continue to hope for marriage with Dr. Bennett.

Whether Joseph spoke to Elvira to request her as a plural wife in her own right or in the process of ending her possible relationship with Dr.

Bennett, there is no good reason to suppose Joseph didn't tell Emma about what was going on. Particularly if the conversation involved breaking off matters with Dr. Bennett, Emma needed to know, as Dr. Bennett was living under her roof.

Sheltered in the Home of Vilate Kimball?

In early 1841, around the time Joseph would have been suspicious of Dr. Bennett's past, some event occurred in the Church that apparently was deemed "painful to every lover of Truth and Holiness." Joseph Smith wrote a letter to Vilate Kimball, in whose home an unidentified young woman was staying.

Joseph wrote:

"I can in some measure enter into your feelings respecting the occurrence which has lately taken place in the church which is indeed painful to every lover of Truth and Holiness, and probably to none more so than myself. I am indeed sorry that any thing should have caused such a stir in the Church, and bro't disgrace upon persons who are otherwise respectable. The course I have taken in the matter was such as I felt warranted to take from the testimony that was adduced. 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 tent to her future welfare and happiness. I have no doubt but you will act in wisdom in this matter I remain yours in the Gospel." ^{14a}

Heber Kimball was on a mission to the British Isles at the time and would return in July 1841.

It is possible that the young woman was the unmarried young woman Dr. Bennett had been courting.

However, another possibility for the young woman was a married woman, Sarah Marinda Bates [Pratt], who it was later alleged had been a continual recipient of visits from Dr. Bennett. Sarah Pratt was the wife of Orson Pratt, Mormon Apostle who was at that time in the British Isles,

having preached the gospel in Scotland.

5 In 1842 the Goddards, with whom Sarah had been staying in October 1840, claimed that Dr. Bennett came to the house frequently. Speaking of the conduct between Dr. Bennett and Sarah Pratt, Zeruiiah Goddard would assert, “I would further state that from my own observation, I am satisfied that their conduct was anything but virtuous...”^{14b}

10 If the young woman was Mrs. Pratt, then only twenty-four years old, it appears she did not stay long with Vilate Kimball. The Goddards in their affidavits claimed that Sarah moved into a house furnished by Dr. Foster, in which she lived until sometime about the first of June, after which she was turned out of that house and came again to live with the Goddards.

15 As for Dr. Bennett, it is presumed that he lived in the Smith household for 39 weeks after his arrival, placing him in the Smith home from roughly September 1840 through June 1841, leaving the Smith household around the same time Sarah Pratt was turned out of her situation in the house provided by Dr. Foster and sent back to the Goddards.

20 The most innocent explanation of these assertions, if presumed true, is that Dr. Bennett had originally started attending to Sarah Pratt in a medical capacity, a *quid pro quo* for her service in performing sewing and laundry for him. Testimony regarding matters after March 1841, however, make it clear
25 Dr. Bennett likely engaged in conduct that was “anything but virtuous.”

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

5
10 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 supported Joseph Smith and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints despite
15 terrible personal losses.

The three families Joseph reached out to were the Alvah Beaman family, which had supported his work while he was translating the Book of Mormon, the William Huntington family, which had earnestly sought out
20 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 Joseph Smith to move forward in
25 establishing Celestial marriage.

Fall 1840: The Noble House of Beaman

30 In 1869 Joseph Bates Noble wrote out an affidavit claiming Joseph Smith had approached him in the fall of 1840 and taught him “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
35 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, where he had been taught the gospel by Brigham Young

and Heber C. Kimball. He had been an missionary for the Church before ever meeting Joseph Smith, and was one of those who marched to Missouri with Zion's Camp, a pseudo-military effort to relieve the suffering of Mormons in Missouri circa 1834.

5

Joseph Bates Noble's importance, however, was more due to the family he had married into. He eventually married Maray Adaline 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 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, pp. 11-21.

10

15

Joseph Smith would also confide in another Beaman in-law, Erastus Snow, telling him in April 1843 details regarding when he had first received the revelation regarding "the principle of the Celestial Order of Marriage..." as well as affirming that "the time had come now when the principle should be practiced." ³ Bergera, Gary James, The Earliest Mormon Polygamists, p. 37.

20

On September 29, 1840, Louisa Beaman's mother had died. Louisa was twenty-five. She moved in with her sister Mary Adeline and Mary's husband, Joseph Bates Noble. ²⁰

25

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." ²²

30

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.

35

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 traveled across the river to the Noble home. ²³

40

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."

5

The cross-examination is humorous, the fast interchange between a learned lawyer and the honest farmer, destroying the certainty Joseph Bates Noble had conveyed that Joseph Smith and Louisa Beaman necessarily consummated their Celestial marriage:

10

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.

15

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?

20

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

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

25

A. Well, I am confident that he did.

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

30

A. No sir, for I was not there. ^{note} Joseph B. Noble, Deposition, Temple Lot Case, part 3, pp. 426-27, questions 700-704.

Louisa would not become pregnant during Joseph's lifetime. By contrast, Louisa would bear five children in five years to Brigham Young (including two sets of twins) between their marriage in 1846 and Louisa's death of breast cancer on May 15, 1850. ²⁵

35

Zina Diantha Huntington ¹⁶

40

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

allied themselves formally with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in April, 1835.

5 Zina was nineteen the summer of 1840 when her mother passed away of a “congestive chill,” likely malaria. Zina herself was so sick she couldn’t 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, moving out and into their new home on August 20, 1840, the same day Marietta Holmes died. ¹⁷

While convalescing at the homestead, Zina met Henry Jacobs, and they began courting.

15 At some point that fall, possible around the same time that Joseph spoke with Joseph Bates Noble, , Joseph taught Zina’s brother, Dimick Huntington, the principle of plural marriage and asked to marry Zina. However it isn’t clear that Dimick found an opportunity to share this doctrine with Zina in 1840 or early 1841.

20 Likely uninformed that she had the option of entering into Celestial marriage with Joseph Smith, Zina married Henry Jacobs on March 7, 1841.

25 But terrible things would happen after March 1841. After Zina’s marriage to Jacobs, Joseph Smith would claim 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.

30 This time Dimick did talk to Zina, though she was now married and pregnant.

35 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...” ¹⁸

Zina decided to become Joseph Smith’s plural wife.

40 Nine and a half months after marrying Henry Jacobs, Zina gave birth to Henry Jacobs’ son. ^{note} DNA analysis proves that Zebulon Jacobs was the biological child of Henry Jacobs. Zina would not conceive again until after the death of Joseph Smith. She would name her son Zebulon, after the son of Jacob and his first wife, Leah.

5

10

FALL OF THE DOCTOR

10

Dr. John Cook Bennett apparently came to Nauvoo by September 1840. By October 1840 he had been baptized. Less than six months after arriving in Nauvoo, he had been elected Mayor of the city. ^{Note} Dr. Bennett was elected Mayor of Nauvoo on February 1, 1841.

By the summer of 1842, Bennett and Joseph Smith were each alleging the other had participated in gross misconduct.

20 There are two prominent views of John Cook Bennett.

Those who revere Joseph Smith tend to believe Bennett was a devilish scoundrel who told vicious lies about Joseph Smith.

25 Those who don’t much care about Joseph Smith tend to believe Bennett was a colorful individual who possibly told the truth about Joseph Smith.

30 The great quandary for those who paint Bennett as an irredeemable scoundrel is the question of how Joseph Smith could have allowed Bennett to ascend to such heights.

35 Real people are not all good or all evil. Bennett begun as someone who secured freedom for his adopted people, a man who could have been one of the greatest leaders of the Mormon movement. Yet line by line, Bennett fell from trusted friend to foul traitor.

Savior of the Mormons

On July 20, 1840, John C. Bennett was officially confirmed as the Quartermaster General of Illinois, an unpaid position responsible for arms and munitions throughout the state. ¹ This was before the outcry over the assassination of President Garfield would lead to establishment of a civil service. ² During this earlier period of time, political appointments were granted to friendly individuals of promise, who then used their positions to gain money and power. The same day Bennett was appointed Quartermaster, he wrote a letter endorsing Western Tonic Mixtures. ³ One presumes the company thanked Bennett for this testimonial in a manner that improved his financial or political position.

Less than a week later, Bennett wrote to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon offering his assistance and advice. ⁴ He professed that happiness, not pursuit of wealth, inspired his interest. He expressed the hope that “your people will become my people, your God my God.” ⁵ The Mormons voted as a cohesive block. ⁶ Illinois had been a state for little more than twenty years. It was both raw enough for a newcomer to make himself a name and civilized enough that a prominent man from Illinois might vie for the highest office in the land. ⁷ Bennett’s initial, unsolicited, advice urged Smith to gather his converts into a concentrated group. The Mormon population was swelling rapidly, creating a previously untapped political force Bennett likely believed he could exploit for his own gain. ⁸

By August, the Mormon concern about attacks from Missouri had been realized. ⁹ Smith urgently needed someone who could win protection for the Mormons in their new home in Illinois. Given that Missouri still considered Joseph Smith a fugitive, Nauvoo also needed a city charter that could allow Joseph to escape the expected extradition attempts.

Bennett’s arrival in Nauvoo could not have come at a better time.

The Salvation of Bennett

Bennett’s 1842 exposé *History of the Saints* claimed he had never believed. But Bennett in 1842 was a wounded man full of rage, driven to hurt Joseph Smith in any way possible.

It is possible that the Bennett of 1840 was honestly impressed with the goodness of the people he had decided to save. Bennett’s past was littered with events of which a man might reasonably wish to repent. His decision

to be baptized in October 1840 may have been sincere, despite his obvious political motivations.

For Bennett the slate was wiped clean. He had an unprecedented level of access to the powerful in the Mormon community. And the way Mormons had been treated in Missouri had been horrific. Illinois could show that they were better than the brutes in Missouri, that they did adhere to the best ideals of the still-new United States.

If Bennett was truly converted, however, he made two mistakes. First, he did not tell Joseph about the estranged wife who would not grant him a divorce. ¹⁰ Second, he did not admit that he had played fast and loose with people’s hopes and dreams in the past. ¹¹ However Bennett was worlds away from the Ohio valley where his wife, Mary Barker Bennett, now lived. He’d always been able to outrun his past before. Perhaps a penitent Bennett thought his relinquished past could remain a secret.

It could be that Bennett was aware of how much Joseph was willing to forgive. William Wines Phelps had been estranged from the Church since betraying Joseph to authorities in Missouri—an evolution that nearly caused Joseph’s death. In July 1840 W. W. Phelps begged to be allowed to return. The drama of Brother Phelp’s return would have been playing out as Bennett entered Mormon society. If Joseph could forgive the deadly treachery of William W. Phelps, why need Bennett confess of inconvenient facts from the past?

The Pinnacle of Bennett’s Power

Bennett’s mission to the Illinois legislature proved successful. He was able to win passage of a powerful city charter, which included a strong *habeus corpus* provision. Joseph and other would make use of the *habeus corpus* powers granted by the Nauvoo city charter to escape extradition for several years. Bennett also won passage of a charter to create a legion in Nauvoo as well as a university.

Upon Bennett’s return to Nauvoo, he was elected Mayor of Nauvoo. When the Nauvoo Legion was formed, Bennett was made General of the Legion. ¹² In light of the failing health of Sidney Rigdon, the absence of most of the apostles, and the apostasy of Oliver Cowdery, there was a power vacuum in the church. Joseph called Bennett to serve as Assistant President of the Church. ¹³

The Fall Begins

5 At some point “shortly after Bennett’s baptism,” Joseph Smith began to suspect a sordid past for Bennett. ¹⁴ Joseph’s likely gently probed the past before Joseph took the step of commissioning an investigation. This would be the first point after baptism when Bennett could have come clean and retained Joseph’s trust. However Joseph remained concerned enough that he sent George Miller to look into the accusations.

10 George Miller wrote Joseph Smith on March 2, 1841. Bennett reportedly was “able to push himself into places and situations entirely beyond his abilities... his wife left him under satisfactory evidence of his adulterous connections... he used her bad otherwise... it has been Dr. Bennett’s wish that his wife should get a bill of divorcement, but as yet she has not... in fine, he is an imposter and unworthy of the confidence of all good men.” ¹⁵

20 Joseph would have talked with Bennett again after receipt of George Miller’s March 2nd letter. The text of the letter is damning, so Bennett must have done something to retain Joseph’s good will. It’s even possible Bennett didn’t overtly lie. ¹⁶

25 Bennett could have offered to repent of his past errors. In response, Joseph, who forgave easily, may have merely counseled Dr. Bennett to cease his fraudulent courtship and end questionable behaviors.

30 Despite Joseph’s likely misgivings, Joseph defended Bennett when Thomas C. Sharp attacked Bennett’s character in May 1841. ¹⁸ Joseph wrote Sharp a pointed letter to the editor asking for a cancellation of his subscription. This was the beginning of Sharp’s antipathy towards the Mormons, a hatred that would lead to Joseph’s death. ¹⁹

35 As mentioned previously, Bennett appears to have resumed his interactions with Sarah Pratt, wife of apostle Orson Pratt. Sarah was a young woman and mother, and was likely emotional about her husband being gone on a foreign mission. Later reports alleging Bennett and Sarah were intimate in 1840 and early 1841 could have arisen from professional treatment of her “hysteria.” ²⁰

40 At some point, however, Bennett and Sarah Pratt became fully intimate. Bennett was later reported to have claimed “Sarah Pratt made a first rate go.” ²¹

Even now, it would have been possible for Bennett to confess all to Joseph. But he didn’t.

The Widow Fuller

5 Sarah Pratt knew her husband would be returning to Nauvoo, likely in July 1841.

10 Dr. Bennett would no longer be able to keep company with Sarah Pratt. From 1842 testimony presented to the Nauvoo High Council, Dr. Bennett pressured the widow Catherine Fuller to provide him sex prior to Orson Pratt’s return to Nauvoo in mid-July.

15 Catherine Laur [Fuller] had been married to Josiah Fuller, who was killed at Haun’s Mill. As Catherine would affirm in May 1842:

20 “Nearly a year ago I became acquainted with John C. Bennett, after visiting twice and on the third time he proposed unlawful intercourse, being about one week after first acquaintance.

25 “He said he wished his desires granted. I told him it was contrary to my feelings. He answered there was others in higher standing than I was who would conduct in that way, and there was no harm in it. He said there should be no sin upon me if there was any sin it would come upon himself.

30 “I told him I was not guilty of such conduct and thought it would bring a disgrace on the church if I should become pregnant. He said he would attend to that. I understood that he would give me medicine to prevent it.” ^{note} Valeen Avery papers.

35 Perhaps Dr. Bennett originally planned to keep Catherine Fuller as his personal mistress. However something occurred which caused him to begin sharing Catherine Fuller with his colleagues.

40 By mid-July 1841 Catherine reported was pressed to have intercourse with George W. Thatcher. The dates when she slept with the other men she names are not clear. But 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, provided an affidavit affirming that he found John C. Bennett:

“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.”^{note} 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.

It would be fascinating if Jacob Backenstos could have been prevailed upon to say more. Catherine Fuller would list Jacob Backenstos as one of the several men with whom she had lain. This suggests a scenario where Bennett, discovered *in media res* by some colleague from the Nauvoo Legion, lied to prevent disgrace, 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 said “Widow Fuller is guilty of the same [engaging in illicit intercourse]. Dr. Bennett was with her... Saw Bennet in the act with Sis Fuller.”

Unlike the amusing testimony where Joseph Bates Noble was forced to admit he hadn’t actually seen what he presumed must have happened, it appears there were many who in fact had seen sexual acts being performed by their fellows in.

Such a delicious “secret” didn’t stay a secret for long. By the end of the summer, girls in Nauvoo were referring to one another as “spirituals.” Orange Wight, teenage son of Apostle Lyman Wight, learned that John Higbee, uncle to two members of the Nauvoo Legion, was keeping two wives. In his 1903 letter for 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...”

Suicide and Secret Disgrace

In June Joseph received a letter from his brother, Hyrum Smith, confirming what George Miller had learned three months earlier.

Ebenezer Robinson would later write that Joseph reprimanded Bennett

based on the letter from Hyrum. However analysis of Lorenzo Wasson’s 1842 letter regarding Joseph’s words with Bennett, it seems clear that Joseph had learned about Bennett’s affair with Sarah Pratt.²³ Bennett begged Joseph to not openly shame him. Sarah was evicted from the house she had been granted and sent back to board with the Goddards. Bennett moved out of the Smith homestead.

Bennett apparently took a lethal dose of medicine in late July 1841. The exact cause of Bennett’s attempt on his own life is unknown, though there are multiple candidate possibilities. I believe Bennett’s suicide attempt was sincere. But Bennett was discovered and his life saved.

As angry as Joseph would have been at Bennett, he had compassion on the fallen man. As soon as practicable, Bennett was again involved in the duties of his offices. No mention was made publicly at this time of his abandoned wife and children, his shady past, or the adultery with Sarah Pratt.

It appears Joseph had not learned about the teachings promoting illicit intercourse which were spreading through his people.

Joseph’s Teachings

In July Orson Pratt returned to Nauvoo after a successful mission to the Holy Land. 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 the excitement that was Nauvoo. 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.²⁴

Bennett was forced to be friends with a man he’d cuckolded, forced to endure while that man enjoyed all the benefits of being back home. Bennett had to go through the performance of his duties knowing that Smith would not permit him any more opportunities for advancement. The woman he 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.

All the while he was surrounded by the righteous who were forever attending Church meetings in the groves of Nauvoo.²⁵

Bennett was likely at one of these church meetings one morning during the fall of 1841. Joseph was preaching, and mentioned that when the gospel was taught in Turkey or India it might be necessary for the Saints to embrace the possibility of a man having multiple wives.²⁶ After lunch the meeting reconvened, and Joseph recanted his words. But the sermon seems to have planted the seed of an idea in Bennett's mind.

Another possibility would be 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. It seems likely that Bennett's informant in this may have been Joseph Bates Noble himself. If so, Noble may not have realized that a seemingly innocent remark to Bennett could have such devastating consequences.

No matter the source of Bennett's inspiration for claiming Joseph taught there was no harm in unlawful intercourse, Bennett and his Strikers 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 [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."

From the affidavits sworn out during 1842, it seems at least a dozen

men who had either seduced women or attempted to pressure women to yield to them, teaching 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.

Fourth, students of this history could sift among the affidavits, choosing to decide that those regarding later enemies of Joseph Smith must have been correct, and the affidavits naming those who would remain faithful to Mormonism must have been incorrect or covering up legitimate polygamy.

For the most part, all stories regarding any form of non-monogamous sexuality 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 stories from 1841-2 as though they are covering up Joseph's teachings of Celestial marriage under the guise of common adultery, let us look at tales regarding polygamy.

Let us sift the stories into those stories clearly related to Celestial marriage and those stories that fail in some manner to meet a Celestial standard.

Here are some proposed tells:

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.

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. When William felt he was being disrespected, he could become violent, once beating Joseph publicly so severely that Joseph appears to have suffered broken ribs. When other early apostles turned against Joseph, William called for Joseph's death.

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.

Joseph attempted to reform his young brother, but after Joseph's death it became clear that William continued to teach and practice unlawful sexual intercourse. In September 1845 he 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. Late in life he would re-join the RLDS Church, but 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." 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]..."

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.

5. It appears both John Snider and Joseph Kelly 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 appeared to 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." Specifically, Coolidge and his family (or families) did not join the main body of Saints who moved to Utah after 1846.

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, "could not save him." ^{note} Smith, George, *An Intimate Chrinicle*, p. 108.

Neither Vinson Knight's wife nor the widow he cared for, Mrs. Levi Merrick, were sealed to Vinson in the Nauvoo temple.

John E. Page. In 1904 Joseph Fielding Smith visited Mary Judd Page, 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?

40 A. Yes.

Q. How did he get them?

A. I gave them to him.

Q. How come you did that?

5 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.

10 It is possible that John E. Page's "plural wives" were granted to him within the context of Joseph Smith's teachings. However nothing about the Joseph Fielding Smith interview distinguishes John E. Page's acquisition of "wives" from Bennett's heresy. I find it suspicious that Mary Judd Page didn't name or even number the wives she "gave" to John E. Page.

20 Robert Thompson. In the William Clayton journal entry discussing delicate matters, R. Thompson is also mentioned, and it is specifically mentioned that R. Thompson had died. The likely identity for R. Thompson is Robert Thompson, husband of Mercy Fielding and scribe for Joseph Smith prior to his death in 1841.

25 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.

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

35 At some point shortly after arriving in Illinois, English-born Martha Brotherton was invited to visit Nauvoo. She knew Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, who had been missionaries when she and her family joined the Mormon Church. Upon arriving in Nauvoo, she apparently saw William Clayton, a fellow-convert from England.

40 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 and settled in St. Louis for a few months before leaving the United States and returning to England.

5 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. ^{note} Give issue of the T&S. Second is a letter reportedly written by Martha herself to a disgraced Dr. Bennett, published as part of the body of calumny Dr. Bennett flung at Joseph Smith and his followers after May 1842. The original letter is not available for analysis, making it unclear which of the assertions originated with Martha herself.

10 Two items fix the time of the alleged interaction between Brigham and Martha before November 1841. First, Martha's sister Mary? Had married John McIlwrick and bore a child in May 1842. It appears the marriage between Mary Brotherton and John McIlwrick occurred after the Brothertons arrived in the United States. Second, Joseph Fielding would write of former acquaintances he encountered 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." ^{note} 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). Available online at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/JFielding.html>, retrieved October 22, 2015.

30 The combination of the Clayton journal with the Brotherton story suggests that Brigham Young could have temporarily been misled regarding spiritual wifery. However the Brotherton interview, while fundamentally alienating Martha and her parents from the gospel, had not involved actual sexual transgression.

35 By January 1842, Brigham Young has gone from either uninformed disciple or misinformed predator to the first non-relative to officiate at a ceremony uniting Joseph to a plural wife.

40 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, or when he became a husband to the deserted English convert, Sarah Peak Noon.

5 However the family stories relate that prior to his plural marriage to Sarah Peak Noon, 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.

10 Heber presented his plan to Joseph Smith, who promptly proceeded to forbid such a course. According to Stanley Kimball, though without reference and possibly in an incorrect context, “Joseph had to warn him [Heber Kimball] that he could lose his apostleship and to command him three times to obey.”^{note} Kimball, Stanely B., *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981, p. 95. Available online at http://mormonpolygamydocuments.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/JSP_Book_61.pdf, retrieved November 29, 2015.

20 Stanley B. Kimball clearly believed the command to obey related to entering into the practice of plural marriage. However, given the secrecy Heber Kimball maintained regarding his introduction to polygamy, the extreme nature of the threat makes more sense if Heber was on the verge of committing an error, rather than merely not embracing Celestial marriage.

25 Horace Whitney. There is no reason to believe Horace actually embraced illicit intercourse. However on May 12, 1842,^{note} 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), available online at http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early_Saints/HWhitney.html, retrieved November 29, 2015. Horace was sent away from Nauvoo, 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 a year. Horace would not return to Nauvoo until after the death of Joseph Smith.

40 Sarah Ann Whitney covenanted to be a plural wife of Joseph Smith on July 27, 1842. Helen, writing in 1881, thought the covenant between Sarah Whitney and Joseph Smith had occurred in the spring of 1842, prior to Horace’s departure from Nauvoo. Helen writes Sarah covenanted with Joseph Smith:

5 “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.

10 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.”^{Note} Ibid.

20 Writing four decades after the events of 1842, Helen is gentle 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.

25

Summary

30 Dr. John C. Bennett had, in the course of a mere year, gone from accidental adulterer to leader of a sexual underground of vast proportions, definitely ensnaring Joseph’s brother, Apostle William Smith. Teenaged boys, respectable women, and leading men in the Mormon community had been affected.

35 Yet for the first several months of the sexual heresy, it appears Joseph Smith himself was unaware of these matter, or how his name was being used to justify illicit intercourse. It is only under these circumstances that we begin to see Joseph claim that the angel came again, commanding him to obey. If he would not restore Celestial marriage, with its allowance for plural marriage, he and his people would be cut off.

40

THE ANGEL AND THE SWORD

Prior to the fall of 1841, an angel reportedly appeared to Joseph twice, commanding him to establish the principle of celestial marriage. But in the fall of 1841, the angel would return with sword in hand. Joseph had to establish the principle, or his position and very life were forfeit.

Something had changed. God could no longer permit Joseph to take his own sweet time establishing celestial marriage among members of the Church. In the final days of 1841 Joseph enlisted the aid of Dimick Huntington.

The four women Joseph would marry in response to the angel's threat were women who were married to other men.²

Zina Huntington [Jacobs]

Joseph Smith had considered proposing to Zina Huntington in the fall of 1840, when she was still single. However Zina Huntington appears not to have known of Joseph Smith's intended proposal and wed Henry Jacobs in March 1841. Dr. John C. Bennett performed the ceremony.

Some months later, Joseph sent word to Zina via her brother, Dimick.³ Joseph's message was simple:

"Tell Zina, I put it off and put it off till an angel with a drawn sword stood by me and told me if I did not establish that principle upon the earth I would lose my position and my life.

Zina anguished over what she should do. Zina was pregnant with Jacob's child. The idea was abhorrent to her. She expected that were she to become Joseph's celestial wife she would never again be looked upon as an honorable woman by those she dearly loved. However Zina received her own witness that the principle of celestial marriage was correct. The sealing took place on October 27, 1841.⁴ Despite this testimony, she no doubt feared how this sealing would affect her relationship with her husband, Henry Jacobs, and those of her siblings who knew about celestial marriage: Prescendia, Dimick, William, and Oliver.⁵

After giving birth to a son in December 1841, Zina would not conceive again until after Joseph's death. Perhaps Zina resolved the marital ambiguity of being married publicly to Henry Jacobs while secretly covenant wife of Joseph Smith by simply avoiding conjugal behavior.

Presendia Huntington [Buell]

Dimick, having secured Zina for Joseph, asked Joseph to covenant with his other living sister, Presendia Huntington [Buell] (b. 1810). Presendia had married Norman Buell in the 1820s, bearing him their first child in 1828. By the fall of 1841, 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.

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."⁶

Prescendia and Zina would travel to Utah and become leaders amongst the Mormon woman.⁷ 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 during the succession crisis. Oliver, the youngest, would inherit and cherish a cane containing Joseph's death locks.⁸

Thus the Huntingtons, like the Beamans and Joseph Bates Noble, remained loyal to Joseph Smith throughout the turbulent years that would come.

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,⁹ was born only a few months before Don Carlos' untimely death.

5

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. But it does seem that the marriage between Agnes and Joseph was purely based on a desire to fulfill the commandment from the angel rather than as a reaction to the activities of Bennett and his followers. On January 6th, the day of the sealing ceremony between Joseph and Agnes, Joseph wrote:

10

"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."¹⁰

15

Notably, this was the first celestial marriage performed by someone in the Mormon ecclesiastical hierarchy. Brigham's participation in the ceremony between Joseph and Agnes signaled the first known involvement of one of Joseph's ecclesiastical officers in a Celestial marriage ceremony.

20

25 **Mary Elizabeth Rollins [Lightner]**

Joseph had been impressed with Mary Rollins from the time she was a pre-teen, in 1831. While in Zion 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 she be reprimanded. Instead, Joseph backed her up.¹³

30

A few years later Mary was on hand when the mobs did attack. Their target was the 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.¹⁴ Mary surrendered the pages to Sister Phelps, who had the surviving pages bound into books. One of these was presented to Mary, who prized it very highly.¹⁵

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That would have been 1833-1834. This was the year Joseph would say

he was strongly prompted to ask Mary to be his plural wife, the first year he indicates the angel appeared and commanded him to act. But Joseph would fail to act at that time.¹⁶

5

The following year Mary became the bride of Adam Lightner in August 1835.¹⁷ Despite her marriage to Lightner, for several years Mary would have dreams in which she was the wife of Joseph Smith.¹⁸

In the fall of 1841, when Joseph finally set about collecting those women he'd felt prompted to marry in years past, 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.

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

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"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 reported that] 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."¹⁹

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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..."²⁰

35

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..."²¹

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

HUNT IN THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

In the spring of 1842 Joseph is alleged 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 me have been certain these were signs of Joseph's sexual cupidity and Emma's hostility. And yet to my eye the man and his wife seem knit together in the same purpose, a hunt to uncover the seducers and save the women and men of Nauvoo.

As Emma and Joseph became aware of the activities of Bennett's sex ring, it seems Joseph went from sealing women to himself for the purpose of obeying the 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 performed the marriages 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 confidants. The Smith governess, Elvira Annie Cowles, may also have been one of Emma's confidants.

I propose that some of the women Joseph Smith would allegedly covenant with had 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 who most resembles the life-long trauma one would expect in a victim of abuse.

Nancy Mariah Winchester

No one now alive knows the date when Joseph covenanted with Nancy, but she was still only 15 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 him to fellowship in the Church also warned him to leave Nauvoo immediately.

It seems that the unknown events related to Benjamin's excommunication may have prompted Joseph and Emma to reach out to protect Nancy. In the winter of 1841/42, Nancy was barely 13 years old. The careful protection I believe Nancy Winchester received from Joseph and Emma would continue after Joseph's death. Heber Kimball took over responsibility for Nancy Winchester after Joseph's murder.

On December 8, 1845 Heber rushes to Steven Winchester's homes to bless Nancy, who was having fits.³ While it is possible the fits were merely associated with some commonplace illness, it also suggests that either Nancy was prone to fits, or had developed a susceptibility to fits from some trauma.

Heber Kimball never consummated the marriage. 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.²

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.

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.⁴

Whether young Nancy or some others came to Emma and Joseph's attention, it appears they 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.⁵ Willard was a Thomsonian⁶ 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.

Sylvia Lyon and Patty Sessions

Joseph and Emma likely believed the seducers were using some kind of drug to secure the compliance of women. It would have been shocking indeed to believe that such women had yielded to their seducers without such coercion. Laudanum was a common medicine used at the time. Based on opium, laudanum could "initiate, sustain, or lengthen sleep."

Sylvia Sessions Lyon was wife of the town store clerk and druggist, Windsor Lyon.⁷ Around this time Windsor Lyon was excommunicated from the Church, though in his case it appears the primary cause was his audacity in attempting to sue another member of the Church, William Marks, over a financial agreement. Brian Hales proposes that Windsor Lyon and Sylvia Session [Lyon] became separated during this period of time, preventing the sexual interaction he believes occurred between Sylvia and Joseph Smith from technically qualifying as polyandry.

Alternately, Joseph could have asked Sylvia to covenant with him as a sign of fealty, without any conjugal intent. Unlike Zina Huntington, Sylvia

would continue to conceive children prior to Joseph's death. DNA analysis of Sylvia's surviving child from this timeframe is inconclusive, in large part because the descendants of Sylvia's daughter, Josephine, have known common ancestry with Lucy Mack [Smith] and Joseph Smith, Sr., Joseph Smith's parents.

Sylvia would tell her daughter, Josephine, that Joseph Smith was her father, as Sylvia had been sealed to Joseph Smith at the time Windsor was cut off from the Church. Though this deathbed confession has usually been interpreted literally, Sylvia may have merely been telling Josephine of a covenant relationship she had with Joseph Smith, a covenant relationship Josephine should have learned about in the temple. Except Josephine had not been initially married in the temple.

Returning to events of early 1842, it does not appear laudanum was needed or used to ensure compliance. Even if it was being used by Bennett and his Strikers, it would have proved difficult to determine who bought for legitimate purposes, and who bought to aid attack.⁹ Laudanum was a popular remedy as it could alleviate pain, coughs, and diarrhea, in addition to calming nerves and "enhancing" sleep.⁸

The next medical individual Joseph pulled into the investigation was Sylvia's mother, Patty Sessions. Patty was in her late forties at this time, and was an experienced mid-wife, having delivered children regularly since she'd been a teenage newlywed, in 1812.¹⁰ In approximately 1867 Patty would write in her journal that she was sealed to Joseph on March 9, 1842, with Willard Richards officiating and her daughter, Sylvia, witnessing the covenant.¹¹

Involving Sylvia Lyon in the investigation indicates Joseph and Emma feared a drug was being used to molest women. Involving Patty Sessions indicates Joseph and Emma now feared the molestations may have resulted in pregnancies.

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 a covenant with Joseph.

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 Johnson Hyde, 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. His family lived on the ground floor of that establishment.¹²

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, as their host, Hiram Kimball, proceeded to give “each of the 12, a Lot of Land & supper of Turkeys.”¹³

On January 13th Willard Richards moved from the home of Brigham Young to live with Joseph. Willard was a Thompsonian doctor who had saved Joseph’s life in Kirtland and in whom Joseph had complete faith. It seems Joseph had become aware of abuses that would require the attention of a doctor in the January 1842 timeframe, likely 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 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 interpreted through the eyes of those who thought Willard and Marinda were having an affair. However if the Times and Seasons had become a location frequented by Bennett’s ring, the shooting could have an alternate interpretation, one of Willard 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.¹⁴ 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 correspondence between Joseph and Nancy, read with the idea that Joseph was hunting out guilty men, shows a Joseph concerned for Nancy, desperately trying to win her soul back from the corrupted path it appeared she was beginning to take.¹⁵

The widow Delcena Johnson Sherman was a widow who may have been caught in the web of the either the seducers or the investigators. Delcena

Johnson Sherman was sister of Joseph Ellis Johnson and had been a widow since Lyman Sherman’s death in 1839. 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 also possible Joseph had learned of the seduction of Mary Heron [Snider],¹⁶ mother-in-law of Delcena’s brother. Thus it is possible the Strikers had approached the widow Delcena about yielding herself to illicit intercourse. 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.

The Census of Nauvoo

A crucial step in the investigation was to determine 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, in the unlikely event the census was available to Joseph Smith and Emma. The federal census had merely identified the head of household and the number of individuals associated with the household.¹⁷

A city census would serve two purposes. It would document, in detail, which persons lived in each property. It would also provide a pretext for gaining access to each home. The census was conducted by regular male members of the Church, and was done with almost military precision during the first two weeks in February.¹⁸

Even though priesthood members had visited members in their homes since the earliest days of the church, the census provided a complete snapshot in time.¹⁹ The census itself contains no information about who might have been abused, but sending the priesthood into the homes would be an opportunity for unusual circumstances to be noted.

The census was formally presented to the City of Nauvoo on March 1, 1842.

The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo

On March 4, 1842, days after the census was complete, Sarah Kimball, wife of the non-Mormon businessman who had gifted land and turkeys to the Twelve, got together with Eliza Snow and others to discuss a benevolent female society and develop a constitution for the organization.

The men working on the temple were sometimes ill-clothed, and Sarah Kimball wished to help. Sarah Kimball may have been inspired by the way women during the Revolutionary War had assisted the Continental Army by sewing shirts.²⁰

When Sarah Kimball and Eliza Snow approached Joseph Smith with their draft constitution for a female benevolent society, Joseph counter-proposed a woman's organization that was a formal arm or auxiliary of the Church. 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."

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 could instruct them directly, and the members of the Relief Society would in turn minister to the women of Nauvoo.

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.²¹

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 as her counselors her two particular confidants, Elizabeth Whitney and Sarah Cleveland. She nominated Elvira Cowles to be treasurer. Eliza Snow was nominated to be secretary²² a nod to the group of women who had originally proposed the organization. Phoebe Wheeler was also nominated to be a secretary of the Relief Society. However her marriage to Oliver Onley and his opposition to the LDS Church appear to have swiftly ended Phoebe's active involvement in Relief Society.

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 is settled.

By April 28th, women seeking admittance are being individually voted upon – and some are being denied entry. However by mid-May, large groupings of sisters are being admitted without any objection.

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

"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."²³

Lucy Ann Munjar was then "suspended for a time."

On May 26th, Joseph and Emma both attended the Relief Society. Joseph was clearly aware of gross iniquities. In the context, it is clear that when Joseph mentions "fellows," he is referring to women. Joseph said:

"they are our fellows²⁴ — 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!"²⁵

Emma took a different tack. If Joseph and Emma were playing good cop, bad cop that day, Emma clearly had the role of the 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.²⁶

The very next day over a hundred women sought membership in Relief Society. Membership in Relief Society was perhaps becoming seen as tantamount to a declaration of virtue. Lucy Ann Munjar was re-admitted to the membership.

By the beginning of June the bar had been raised. New members would now 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, again more than a hundred women qualified to become members of the Relief Society that day.

In May, as Joseph and Emma were alternately urging the ladies to expose sin yet inviting sinners to repent and reform, various women and men were coming forward and confessing before the Church’s High Council. The women admitted to having extramarital sexual liaisons with multiple partners. On 20 May, the victims of Chauncy Higbee, for example, would testify he’d taught them “it was right to have free intercourse with women if it was kept secret &c...”²⁷ One of Chauncy’s victims, Catherine Laur [Fuller Warren], testified she had engaged in sex not only with Chauncy, but also with John C. Bennett and been propositioned by William Smith, Joseph’s youngest brother.²⁸

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.

First, Joseph asked for the right to establish a Masonic Lodge in Nauvoo. This was somewhat irregular, as there were few, if any, regular 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.

Second, Joseph instituted the endowment, an ordinance during which the “endowed” individual is instructed in sacred history and asked to pledge to obey. In the context of the reality of widespread illicit intercourse in the community, the most striking pledge is one related to remaining sexually faithful to one’s spouse. Unlike membership in the Masonic Lodge, the endowment ceremony was restricted to high profile Mormons, such as George Miller and 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, and invited Eliza and Emily Partridge to her home. Mrs. Durfee then struck up a conversation with the girls about what they 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 Bennett’s web raised additional suspicions in the girls’ minds, suspicions aroused by rumors they’d heard about spiritual wifery. There is no indication the Partridge girls ever suspected the questioning was in service of apprehending evil-doers.

Nancy Rigdon was interviewed by Joseph Smith as has been previously mentioned.³⁰ Nancy believed she was being propositioned. Her reactions indicated she did not perceive herself to have been abused by members of the sex ring. To the converse, Nancy looked on Francis Higbee, brother of Striker reingleader, Chauncy Higbee, as a suitor.

It appears there was a third category of interviewees: those who had

5 been seduced but who were now penitent. The extant record does not allow
us to determine conclusively who these were, or how many women had
been taken. But the record is nevertheless suggestive. With the exception of
Sarah Whitney, I suspect all the women who became plural wives in 1842
either served as detectives in the hunt for the abusers or were among the
10 population of women who had been abused.

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

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13

ARRAIGNING THE BAND OF BROTHERS

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If Joseph uncovered Bennett's evil doing by January 13, 1842, we
would expect to see evidence to that effect. A study of the Nauvoo High
Council Minutes demonstrates that the Nauvoo census did, in fact,
15 originate from a concern for the religious welfare of the Saints.

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

A member of the High Council wondered what response should be
given if the bishops were to refuse this request. Apparently Saints in
Nauvoo were as overwhelmed as any of us in modern times.

25

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
30 every house and see that every family done their duty..."²

Apparently Joseph had nearly immediately set Hyrum Smith and William
Marks on a path that might help find the wrong-doers. But Joseph had to
walk a fine line. Neither Hyrum Smith nor William Marks had been read in
35 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.

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, but Joseph would withhold all the evidence

presented to the High Council for two years, allegedly in hopes of reclaiming 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, Chauncy Higbee.

Joseph hoped the revelations of Chauncy's complicity in the 1842 seductions would erode support for Chauncy's plan to murder Joseph. But the disclosure was too little, 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, Chauncy 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 Miller. 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...

[Chauncy] 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

Sarah Miller was likely Sarah Searcy, born in 1815. Her husband had died one year earlier in Nauvoo.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 to have sexual intercourse with women if they would keep it to themselves.⁷

The Widow's Daughters

The widow Jane Neyman 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 Neyman'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 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 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 villainously and lyingly stating that he had been so instructed by Joseph Smith,^{note} On May 17, 1842, Chauncey Higbee signed an affidavit affirming that Joseph Smith had never taught him about illicit intercourse, see Nauvoo City Council and High Council Minutes, Dingle edition, p. 415 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,¹⁰ 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.¹¹

The affidavits themselves 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, attesting 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, were not so much because the women were being coached on how to accuse, but because they were being coached on how to tell a sufficiently damning story without revealing too much.

The Widow Fuller

The testimony of Margaret Neyman clearly indicated the home of Widow Fuller was the place where Chauncey Higbee had been able to interview Margaret and Matilda at length and perform his conquests.

The Widow Fuller was Catherine Laur, born 1807, who had married Josiah Fuller. Catherine and Josiah were living in the village of Haun's Mill

in October 1838 when a 240-man militia from nearby Missouri counties attacked. Josiah Fuller was one of the seventeen killed, apparently having attempted to shelter in the blacksmith shop, Mercifully Josiah likely died before the militia entered the smithy and shot the remaining three boys and hacked a 78-year-old man to death with a dull blade. It is reported the militia proceeded to chase down and rape many of the Mormon women who had just seen their men murdered.

In the 1840 federal census, Catherine (or Katherine) Fuller is shown as the head of her household between the ages of 30 and 40, with a boy and girl under age 5, two boys between ages 5 and 10, and a boy between the ages of 10 and 15.¹²

In May 1842 Catherine would provide extensive testimony about how Bennett and his acolytes 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.¹³

The testimonies of these these women against Chauncey Higbee were published in in the Nauvoo Neighbor in May 1844, less than two weeks before Chauncey Higbee helped published The Nauvoo Expositor, the anti-Mormon paper whose destruction lead directly to Joseph's death.¹⁴

A More Complete Story

Based on the testimonies 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

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 'yealded' 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 in the testimony of the women who testified. It seems clear from the full record that Dr. John C. Bennett was the ring-leader. The ten men 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 women who confessed to having engaged in illicit intercourse with these men were:

Catherine 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 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, Matilda¹⁷)

Matilda Nyman (engaged in relations with Higbee multiple times)

Mary Clift (became pregnant with Gustavus Hills' child)

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 (seen with Higbee and Littlefield)

Elenor Kingsley (seen with Higbee and Littlefield)

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

Other Victims?

10 Brian Hales said he is unaware of any evidence that Joseph’s plural wives were among those seduced by Bennett and his cronies. However as I analyze the evidence, I am not persuaded that the testimony before the High Council was complete:

15 • 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.

20 • 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.

25 • Mary Heron isn’t mentioned in these findings, despite the indication that she was the first woman “frigged.”

30 • Sarah Pratt isn’t mentioned in these findings, despite Bennett confiding in Jacob Backenstos that “Sarah made a first rate go.”

35 • Catherine Fuller Warren testified that multiple men (Darwin Chase, William Smith, Lyman O. Littlefield, and Justus Morse) to who she didn’t yield tried to get her to have sex with them. Are we to believe that these men never tried that line on anyone else?

40 • There was no attempt to get the men to yield up a complete list of the women they had corrupted.

• 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”¹⁸ presided over by Emma.

5 • Orange Wight wrote that John Higbee, uncle to Chauncy and Francis Higbee, had two wives in 1841. Yet John Higbee is not mentioned in the High Council Minutes.

10 • 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.

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

20 In my ice cube, Bennett seduced Sarah Pratt before coming up with a scheme for justifying illicit intercourse. By summer 1841, Bennett had pressured Catherine Fuller to yield, claiming better presons that she were involved—theoretically a true statement as Sarah Pratt, wife of an apostle, had been willing to engage in illicit intercourse.

25 Rather than keep Catherine Fuller his own, persona, 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. It is possibly during this time frame that Brigham Young and Heber Kimball came to believe that they had an obligation to reach out to Martha Brotherton and the Pitkin sisters, respectively.

35 There is a theme in the testimonies of the seduced women that the seducers provided food and money to the women who yielded to their demands. Those without support, widows and orphans like Catherine Fuller, Sarah Miller, Clarissa Marvel, Margaret and Matilda Neyman, would be more vulnerable to men promising food, particularly when it was claimed that Joseph Smith taught such doctrines and when William Smith himself attested that it was a correct doctrine.

40 Around October 1841, Dr. Bennett began to assert that Joseph Smith practiced illicit intercourse. 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. Certainly Louisa Beaman

and Joseph Bates Noble would be featured in Bennett's later exposé of Joseph Smith.

5 If Dr. Bennett didn't get his information directly from Joseph Bates Noble, 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 didn't have sex with every man who came at her with the story about illicit sex being fine. But those
10 who had been taught about the New and Everlasting Covenant would reject Bennett's heresy by stating they knew that wasn't what Joseph taught.¹⁹

15 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.

20 **The Face that Launched a Thousand Lies**

25 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.

30 I think Bennett was trying to gain access to a particular woman, one who knew he was still married, a woman ensconced in the bosom of the Smith family and well-versed in the teachings Joseph had been sharing with the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo.

It is unclear if Bennett was ever able to sleep with the woman he'd been targeting.

35 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.

5

14

10 **WIVES OF SORROW**

10

15 The most comprehensive treatment of plural marriages during Joseph Smith's lifetime, to my knowledge, 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 debunked the rumors that Joseph fathered children² by his plural wives – a belief that prevented Bergera and prior scholars from considering the possibility that early plural marriages could have been primarily ceremonial with little or no sexual element.
20 Specifically, no one has seriously examined the possibility that some of these marriages could have been inspired by a need to care for the victims of Bennett's sex ring.

25 Let's start by looking at the first plural marriage that didn't include Joseph Smith: the marriage of Theodore Turley and Mary Clift in early 1842.

30 **Theodore Turley and Mary Clift**

35 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, where Turley had a gun shop and filled the post of Armorer General for the Nauvoo Legion.³

35

In October 1842 a baby boy, Jason, was born to Mary Clift, herself an

English convert from Gloucester. 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, but only her last daughter would survive to adulthood. Mary, having buried all her previous children, died within a week of giving birth to this last child. Because of Jason's birth, it is presumed that Theodore Turley took Mary Clift to be his plural wife in January 1842.

Unfortunately, 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 didn't involve Joseph Smith is known to be a reaction to the seductions of Bennett's ilk.

Vinson Knight and Philinda C. Eldredge [Myrick]

Sometime before August 1842, Bishop Vinson Knight married Philinda C. Eldredge [Myrick] (b. 1809). Philinda had wed Levi N. Myrick on November 18, 1827. In 1838 Philinda and Levi were at Haun's Mill when the 240-man militia 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, though it is not clear if this happened before or after one militia member put his musket against one boy's skull and blew off the top of his head. The militia shot Charles down. 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 that when Philinda arrived in Nauvoo, she would have remained close to Catherine Fuller, another woman widowed at Haun's Mill. Therefore it seems possible that Philinda became involved in the illicit intercourse practiced by Bennett's men, given that Catherine Fuller's home was a particular gathering place for these men, and site of many sexual conquests.

As one of the three bishops in Nauvoo at the time, it appears Vinson Knight became aware of the activities of Bennett's men and the women hovering on the edge of subsistence that the men had victimized. It is

possible Joseph Smith may have 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.

Whether Vinson was providing Philinda food as a plural wife or as a spiritual wife, as Bennett and his men termed their female sexual partners, Vinson's wife, Martha McBride, allegedly "knew some thing was worr[y]ing her husband and he couldn't 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, 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 enter Plural Marriage.⁶ 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.'⁷

Vinson wouldn't 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. I have not seen a full account of the funeral comments, but Joseph apparently said Vinson Knight was the "best friend he ever had on earth."⁸

Martha McBride Knight would become one of Joseph's plural wives the month after Vinson's death. Philinda Eldredge would remarry in 1843. Neither Martha nor Philinda would have themselves sealed to Vinson in the Nauvoo temple, possibly corroborating Clayton's record regarding Vinson's loose conduct.

Heber C. Kimball and Sarah Peak [Noon]

Sarah Peake was born in 1811 in England. Sarah married William Noon in 1829, and William accompanied Sarah and her children to Nauvoo when Sarah converted to Mormonism. After arriving with his family in Nauvoo, however, William abandoned Sarah and his children, returning to England. It seems extreme for William to make the trip from England only to turn around and go back. Something powerful must have happened to alienate

him.

The converts arriving in Nauvoo from England and elsewhere were not rich. We know the Bennett's seducers were targeting widows, but they had
5 also shown a taste for new or prospective converts fresh off the boat, as 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.⁹ If Sarah had been induced to participate in illicit
10 intercourse, perhaps to ensure enough food for her family, the discovery of this betrayal could certainly have prompted William Noon to leave.

Heber C. Kimball told Joseph Smith of his plan to approach spinsters Laura Pitkin (52) and Abigail Pitkin (45) to be his wives.¹⁰ When Heber
15 told Joseph his plan, Joseph commanded Heber to marry Sarah Peake Noon, who was 31. Sarah gave birth to a son, Adelmon, in October or November if 1842. This puts the date of conception when Bennett and his men were at the peak of actively attempting to seduce women.

It has been commonly presumed that Joseph's command to marry Sarah Peak Noon in lieu of the Pitkin spinsters was an indication that plural
20 marriages were for the purpose of producing children. However if Joseph ordered Heber to marry Sarah Peak Noon because she had become pregnant as a result of illicit intercourse taught by Bennett or his men, this particular marriage should not be used to support the belief that
25 polygamists should marry young, fertile women rather than older women in need.

Unfortunately we can never positively determine who fathered
30 Adelmon, as he passed away in April 1843. Intriguingly, Sarah Peake Noon would not have another child until July 1845, raising the possibility that Heber and Sarah refrained from sexual relations until after the death of Joseph Smith.

35 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
40 reached Nauvoo, her husband had died¹¹ 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 1842.¹² The birth of Lucina's daughter, Lucina Johnson Cahoon, is given as "abt 1843."¹³ However Gary Bergera lists Lucina Cahoon as one of the children born to plural wives prior to Joseph Smith's death.¹⁴

5 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.¹⁵

10 Brigham Young and Lucy Ann Decker [Seeley]

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

With Lucy we have an echo of Sarah Peak Noon – a young mother abandoned by a husband who had accompanied her to Nauvoo. Whatever
20 the cause of William Seeley's desertion, Brigham Young too responsibility for Lucy Ann in 1842.

Brigham and Lucy would not produce children for at least two years after their alleged marriage in the summer of 1842. As in the case of Heber
25 C. Kimball and Sarah Peake Noon, this hints at the possibility that Brigham and Lucy did not engage in sexual relations until after Joseph's death.

30 Joseph's 1842 Wives

In last week's post I 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.

35 The review above of women who became plural wives to men other than Joseph Smith shows a strong pattern suggesting these women could have also been victims of Bennett and his men.

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

Agnes Coolbrith [Smith] (m. Jan 6, 1842): Agnes' was a levirate marriage and the journal entry recorded 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 hint on January 6th that Joseph’s marriage to Agnes was a reaction to Bennett. However Agnes fit the profile of the kind of woman Bennett and his men sought out. Clarissa Marvel would be questioned for spreading rumors about Agnes’ character. And Agnes would later write Joseph F. Smith hinting that she could tell him things he knew nothing about.¹⁶

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 didn’t know.¹⁷

Sylvia Sessions [Lyon]: Sylvia was the wife of Windsor Lyon, a dentist and apothecary. ^{note} Dingle, 431. Sylvia would never clarify when she was married to Joseph, apparently refusing to sign either of the affidavits Joseph F. Smith prepared in 1869. However Sylvia did tell her daughter, Josephine, that she was sealed to Joseph Smith during the timeframe when Windsor was cut off from the Church.¹⁸ Sylvia was allegedly 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 (e.g., laudanum) or drugs and herbs to inhibit pregnancy.

DNA evidence falls to confirm that Josephine was necessarily Joseph Smith’s biological child, with conclusive findings currently impossible due to the nature of autosomal DNA research and common ancestry between the descendents of Josephine Lyons and the ancestors of Joseph Smith.

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 and help them if they had become pregnant as a result of the seduction.

Nancy Winchester: The date when Nancy married Joseph is unknown. However the fact that she never consummated her marriage with Heber C. Kimball and 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, hints that something traumatic happened to her.

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 wasn’t sealed to Joseph Smith until May 1843. This paints Marinda Nancy Johnson as a trusted agent in 1842, but not a plural wife in this tumultuous year.

Elizabeth Davis [Goldsmith Brackenbury Durfee]: Outsiders came to believe Elizabeth had been one of Joseph’s wives and Elizabeth would have herself sealed to Joseph in the Nauvoo temple after his death. However Elizabeth’s main role appeared to be questioning young ladies regarding what they thought about spiritual wifery, and helping Emma to determine 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 her good friend, 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 Sarah’s role appears to be that of an investigator rather than a wife or lover.

Delcena Diadamia Johnson [Sherman]: Delcena was a widow with six children to feed. Delcena was sister of Mary Heron’s son-in-law, putting her within the circle of a woman seduced by Bennett’s Strikers. This increases the likelihood that Delcena had been pressured to yield to a Striker in exchange for food, widow that she was. One of Delcena’s brothers returned to Nauvoo in July 1842 and described the marriage between Delcena and Joseph to be “tacitly admitted,” with Delcena living in the home of Joseph’s plural wife, Louisa Beaman. Joseph Smith may have been acting to protect Delcena and remove any reason for her to submit to those seeking illicit intercourse.

Eliza Roxy Snow (m. 29 June 1842): We do not know when Eliza learned about “plurality,” other than that it occurred in Nauvoo. Sometime in 1842 Eliza penned a 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.”¹⁹ This poem would be published in August 1842, a time when the only possible interpretation was that Snow was proclaiming herself Joseph’s plural wife. This publication coincided with Eliza being asked to leave the home of Sarah Cleveland, where she had been staying.

Such a poem could only have been inserted into the paper by someone wishing to harm Joseph, implying that Eliza had presented to poem to someone previously involved in Bennett's group engaging in illicit intercourse. Eliza would attest that she became Joseph's wife on June 29, shortly after Bennett's departure from Nauvoo, with Sarah Cleveland as witness and Brigham Young officiating. Wilhelm Wyl would suggest in 1886 that Snow was intimate with Bennett and would also state that "everyone knows" Eliza Snow had become pregnant with Joseph Smith's child.

Sarah Ann Whitney (m. 27 July 1842): This is the only one of the marriages Joseph Smith enters into in 1842 that seems untouched by the Bennett scandal. Sarah was daughter of Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Emma's Relief Society Counselor, and Newel K. Whitney was the 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 first couple that was already married to have their vows solemnized for eternity. Much is made of the letter Joseph writes the Whitneys from hiding, telling them that if Emma isn't there they can come to him in perfect safety. It is always presumed Emma is the danger, as if she isn't 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 in hopes of locating Joseph.

Though Sarah herself seems untouched by the Bennett scandal, it was feared her brother, Horace, would turn against Joseph Smith. On May 12, 1842,²⁰ Horace was sent away to live with relations in Connecticut and Ohio. His wife, Helen Mar Kimball, would write:

"But Joseph feared to disclose [his marriage to Sarah Whitney to her brother, Horace], believing that 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.

"[Horace] 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."²¹

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. Thus Joseph's marriage to Martha would have been similar to the marriage of Theodore Turley to Mary Clift – a goodly man protecting a woman who had been connected with a scoundrel.

To me it appears that almost all the plural marriage activity in 1842 was associated with cleaning up the secret mess Bennett and his strikers had caused by rampantly persuading men and women to engage in illicit intercourse. Unfortunately it 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.

SANGAMO AND PRATT

Orson Pratt has figured only lightly in the account until now. But the events following John C. Bennett's departure 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 Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois, the State Capital. 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 expose against the Mormons would help the Whigs defeat the Democrats in the upcoming election.

The initial letter was a kitchen sink of accusations, containing allegations of treason, political tyranny, attempted murder, sexual misconduct, and about every other un-American deed Bennett could think of. But the stories Bennett knew best 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 sent on missions abroad.

Orson had been in Europe as a missionary during the first months of John C. Bennett's presence in Nauvoo. While John C. Bennett was putting in place the Nauvoo City Charter, Orson was in England, preaching and publishing in Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Manchester. While Orson Pratt was preaching without purse or scrip, Bennett was having Sarah Pratt wash his clothing, sew his shirts, and make his outer clothing.^{1a}

It is likely during this period of time (May-July 1841) that Bennett formed the opinion that Sarah Pratt "made a first rate go."²

Orson returned from England in the summer of 1841, stopping in New York to publish a second edition of his Edinburgh tract History of the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon on July 1, 1841. 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, likely never suspecting she'd 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, 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. ³

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.

10 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." ⁴ This
15 "iniquity under... pretense of authority from the heads of the church" seems strikingly similar to the teachings about illicit intercourse Bennett would later weave for others.

20 Joseph Smith and Brigham Young would later testify ⁵ that Bennett and Francis Higbee had been found guilty of adultery around July 4, 1841, past history that had bearing on a matter before the municipal court in 1844. Dr. Bennett had been called in to treat Francis Higbee, [brother of Chauncy Higbee and boyfriend of Nancy Rigdon] and found him suffering from the ——. This was most likely a reference to "the pox," or syphilis. ^{5a} This
25 could also have been a reference to "the clap," slang for gonorrhea. ⁶ Somehow Bennett had become engaged in illicit activities as well. Both Bennett and Higbee eventually confessed before a group of 60-70 individuals the third floor of the Nauvoo Cultural Hall. ⁷ Joseph maintained that he had said nothing against Francis since that time.

30 Joseph became aware of the interactions that had taken place between Bennett and Sarah Pratt because Sheriff Backenstos brought it to Joseph's attention, accusing Bennett of "an illicit intercourse with Mrs. Orson Pratt..." There is no record of exactly what Joseph said to Sarah regarding
35 her participation in the illicit intercourse.

Sometime that summer, Bennett allegedly attempted suicide.

40 We know from Catherine Fuller's testimony that Bennett first seduces her no later than the beginning of July 1841. Catherine's written testimony from May 1842 reads, in part:

Nearly a year ago I became acquainted with John C. Bennett after

visiting twice and on the third time he proposed unlawful intercourse being about one week after first acquaintance. He said he wished his desires granted. I told him it was contrary to my feelings he answered there was others in higher standing than I was who would conduct in that way and there was no harm in it. He said there should be no sin upon me if there was any sin it should come upon himself. I told him I was not guilty of such conduct and thought it would bring a disgrace on the church if I should become pregnant. He said he would attend to that. I understood that he would give medicine to prevent it. Sometime last winter I became alarmed at my conduct and told him I did not wish his company any longer...

About the middle of July Thatcher was at my house – came twice – has not been since... He had unlawful intercourse with me twice...

15 John C. Bennett was the first man that seduced me – no man ever made the attempt before him. ⁸

20 So Bennett had approached Catherine Fuller no later than the beginning of July, perhaps just after Joseph received the damning letter from Hyrum, and possibly after his life had been saved against his will. ⁹

Orson, the Dutiful

25 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. It also seems possible he was aware she had been accused of committing adultery with John C. Bennett ¹⁰ However the timing of events leaves a possibility that he was not informed of his wife's infidelity. Sarah could have implied that she'd merely had a falling out with Joseph, to explain the situation without betraying her guilt.

35 There is no indication Orson was told about Bennett's romp with Sarah in 1841. Orson's later actions convey complete shock, as though he was completely blindsided by the accusations Bennett, Sarah, and Joseph would make in July 1842.

40 Public documents allow us a window into the 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 and formation of the University of the City of Nauvoo show signs of his involvement, often promising more than was actual. For example, it was a full 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, likely working closely with Dr. Bennett. 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 been 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, who had been his 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.

35 **Bennett Hones His Attack**

Dr. Bennett’s initial letters, exposing Joseph Smith, spewed numerous accusations at Joseph and his people. But one item hit home. It was the allegation that Joseph had seduced not only hundreds of single and married females, more than the great Solomon.¹⁴ Bennett specifically named Pamela Michael, Nancy Rigdon, Martha Brotherton, and Sarah Pratt, among others.

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. Aside from Bennett’s accusation, Pamelia’s rebuttal, and her Nauvoo obituary, I can find nothing else about Pamela Mitchell Michael.

Nancy Rigdon, daughter of Joseph’s long-time colleague, Sidney Rigdon, was being courted by Francis Higbee around this time. A letter Joseph wrote to Nancy at this time, published by Bennett, makes it clear to me that Joseph was attempting to win Nancy’s soul back from a dark place. Sidney Rigdon hesitated to share correspondence from Bennett later that summer, causing Joseph to fear Sidney was implicated in the illicit sex ring. It doesn’t appear that Nancy Rigdon wanted the letter published. Her lack of support for Bennett’s disclosures reduced the utility of her tale for Bennett’s purposes.

Martha Brotherton was an English convert who arrived in the Nauvoo area as early as July 1841, settling near Warsaw with the rest of her family. Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and Parley P. Pratt were the missionaries that brought the gospel to Martha’s family.¹⁵ Brigham Young would later indicate that they’d heard an evil report regarding Martha. According to Martha’s tales, Brigham approached Martha and asked if she would be his wife. Martha and her parents left Warsaw and settled in St. Louis. The Brothertons may have been among the disaffected Mormons Joseph Fielding described encountering upon his 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.”^{15a}

Martha’s tale of being coerced to be a secret wife was sufficiently noised about by April 1842 that the matter was explicitly refuted in April 1842 General Conference, with the rebuttal 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. Several months later, Martha allegedly wrote a letter describing her ordeal in more detail, to support Bennett’s campaign against Joseph. In the published letter, the time she claimed to have been locked up down to ten minutes. Intriguingly, Martha’s original statement has not been

found. It's possible Bennett edited her statement for heightened effect. Whether Martha Brotherton's testimony as published in the Sangamo Journal was literally the truth or not, the piece was powerful, a tale of coercion told from the woman's point of view. Even though Martha's sisters and brother-in-law would testify she had lied, the damage was done.

Bennett's most explosive claim, however, was his charge that Joseph Smith had attempted to seduce Sarah Pratt, wife of his own, trusted apostle. Clearly Joseph would have talked with Sarah in conjunction with the adultery allegations of July 1841. Bennett would fail to mention his own dalliances with Sarah and allege that Smith had demanded Sarah become his lover during his pastoral visits. Supposedly when Sarah refused, Smith cut off Church support. It appears Bennett sent an advance copy of the text scheduled to run in the Sangamo Journal in mid-July. Based on the timing of subsequent events, it appears Orson shared the text with Joseph, possibly demanding to know how Joseph could explain such behavior. 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 believing the religion he had dedicated himself to had been created by 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."

¹⁶

Joseph called a meeting in the grove on 14 July, the day before the Sangamo Journal article was scheduled to run. He didn't name Sarah at the time, but laid out the story of Bennett's seduction of an honorable woman.

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 in fact Sarah Pratt.¹⁷

The day the article appeared, Orson went missing, though it's unclear if he was discovered missing before or after Joseph's address describing Sarah Pratt as an adultress. Joseph "caused the Temple hands and the principal men of the city to make search for him."¹⁸ Orson was found five miles south of Nauvoo, next to the Mississippi River. It seems reasonable that Orson could have been contemplating suicide as he walked alone down the riverbank.¹⁹

Orson remained in Nauvoo. A week later he voted against Joseph, presumably in a venue where the 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.²⁰ From that time Orson did not oppose Joseph. But neither did he openly support Joseph. To do so was to proclaim that Orson believed his wife, Sarah, was an adulteress.

By August Joseph Smith had gone into hiding. There was grave concern that deputies from Missouri would attempt to extradite Joseph.²¹ 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."²²

With Joseph still in hiding in September, the leading men and women of the city drew up certificates, attesting that "Bennett's 'secret wife system' is a disclosure of his own make."²³ Orson Pratt's name is conspicuously missing.²⁴

Joseph, who had tried so hard to protect those who were guilty, watched from hiding as an innocent man was excommunicated for the crime of standing by his wife. Joseph was determined to save Orson, but he needed those who had excommunicated Orson to sustain their wounded brother with their whole hearts. It seems Joseph resorted to extreme measures to reunite the apostles once again.

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.

For the moment we will deal with events that appear to have occurred prior to January 1843. In the prior chapter, *The Angel and the Sword*, I discussed Joseph covenanting 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 shows none of the children these women birthed¹ is 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. Mary Elizabeth Rollins’ “marriage” to Joseph 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 is believed to have married four additional women who are already married:

- Sylvia Sessions [Lyon],
- Patty Bartlett [Sessions],
- Elizabeth Davis [Goldsmith Brackenbury Durfee], and
- Sarah Maryetta Kingsley [Howe Cleveland].

As discussed in *Wives of Sorrow*, it appears these women acted as detectives during the hunt for the men seducing women in Nauvoo. These “marriages” then were 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.

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 all the most effective lies, there was a kernel of truth. Joseph had been talking with women about the New and Everlasting Covenant. However Joseph’s aim does not appear to have been the easy sex Bennett and his ring of strikers had elicited from the hapless women of Nauvoo. This easy sex was the kind of sexual misconduct Bennett was accusing Joseph of seeking. Bennett supported his assertion by telling a story alleging Joseph had made improper advances to Sarah Pratt, wife of his apostle, Orson Pratt.

Judges in Israel

Joseph’s response to the accusation regarding Sarah Pratt was outrage. Sarah was an acknowledged adultress in the eyes of the dozens of members of the community who heard John C. Bennett’s confession in 1841.^{1a} Joseph initially counter-accused Bennett of committing adultery, only specifying to the general public that the woman was Sarah when Bennett persisted in printing his allegations.

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.

However the other eleven apostles felt that Orson’s silence was tantamount to an attack on Joseph Smith. Joseph’s very life was at stake, they believed. Certainly Joseph had been forced into hiding as a result of Bennett’s accusations.² The apostles didn’t 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. So the apostles excommunicated Orson on August 20, 1842.

Trying the Judges

There is reason to think that Joseph was very distressed by the apostles' decision to excommunicate Orson. Not only had Orson been harmed, the eleven 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, but to create a quorum that was truly united, and one by choice rather than by edict.

It is reputed that Joseph asked all the apostles to give him their wives. The timing of this request is not known exactly, and as far as I am aware no one has ever previously documented a hypothesis 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."³, Jedediah was second counselor to Brigham Young and had been sealed to Young as an adopted son.

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 all the men who had been made apostles in the short history of the Church leading up to 1842⁴ shows how many had fallen by the wayside (with the surviving faithful members of the original quorum highlighted):

1. ~~Thomas B. Marsh~~, (1835-1838) apostasy
2. ~~David W. Patten~~, (1835-1838) killed in Missouri
3. **Brigham Young**, (1835-1847)
4. **Heber C. Kimball**, (1835-1868)
5. **Orson Hyde**, (1835-1839, 1839-1878)
6. ~~William E. McLellan~~, (1835-1838) apostasy
7. **Parley P. Pratt**, (1835-1857)
8. ~~Luke S. Johnson~~, (1835-1838) apostasy
9. **William B. Smith**, (1835-1845)
10. **Orson Pratt**, (1835-1842, 1843-1881)
11. ~~John F. Boynton~~, 1835-1837) apostasy
12. ~~Lyman E. Johnson~~, (1835-1838) apostasy
13. John E. Page, (1838-1846)
14. John Taylor, (1838-1880)
15. Wilford Woodruff, (1839-1889)
16. George A. Smith, (1839-1868)

17. Willard Richards, (1840-1847)

18. Lyman Wight, (1841-1848)

Despite the assertion that many of the 1842 apostles, if not all, 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, clearly 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 married 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, I suspect that Brigham may have agreed all too quickly, not internalizing the pain Orson would have been feeling as a result of his ordeal. 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 ultimately sour 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, rather than the original date for ordination as an apostle. Orson Pratt had been the senior apostle based on the former accounting, and would have become President of the Church upon Brigham's death. However with a re-definition of seniority, Orson's rank in the Quorum fell below that of John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff.

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 apparently reached out to Nancy Marinda Johnson for help. Nancy Marinda was the one who reached out to Nancy Rigdon during the investigation.

5

Shortly after Orson Hyde returned home 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.

10

In May 1843, Nancy Marinda Johnson [Hyde] was sealed to Joseph Smith. She continued to live with Orson Hyde and proceeded to have the rest of her ten children with him. ⁵ It appears Marinda, like Zina Huntington and Mary Elizabeth Rollins, came to believe that she was one who had been fore-ordained for Joseph. However Nancy lived the rest of her reproductive existence with the man she had chosen to marry when Joseph hesitated. ⁶

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Parley P. Pratt

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The configuration of Parley's family was uniquely complicated in 1842. Parley's first wife, Thankful Halsey, died due to complications of childbirth in March 1837. Parley then proceeded to marry Mary Ann Frost [Stearns], a young widow who had been unusually devoted to her first husband.

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We don't have a record suggesting Joseph demanded Parley's wife in 1842. However when Parley learned of plural marriage, he was overjoyed with the possibility of binding his loved ones to him for eternity.

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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.

35

When Joseph learned that Mary Ann had been sealed to Parley rather than to the deceased Stearns, he cancelled the sealing his brother had performed, which had been done without specific authorization. It appears Joseph then proceeded to seal Mary Ann to himself. Mary Ann did not understand, and Joseph didn't record his reasoning. Joseph may have sealed himself to Mary Ann to make sure Parley and Mary Ann didn't again attempt to usurp the eventual place of the deceased Stearns at Mary Ann's side in eternity.

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John Taylor

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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.

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John Taylor adored his wife, Leonora. She was a full twelve years his senior. So John had married Leonora despite the traditional folkways that would have had him seek a girl closer to his own age.

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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.

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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 ⁷ because of the events of that day. We don't know enough of the dating of events and the details of Agnes' death to understand why Leonora felt that way.

25

Wilford Woodruff related that "the Prophet went to the home of President Taylor, and said to him, 'Brother John, I want Leonora[?] ... it is said [that] 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 [sic] 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.[?]' ⁸

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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.

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Heber C. Kimball

In the case of Heber C. Kimball, the tale as we have it comes from his son-in-law, Apostle Orson F. Whitney. So the story isn't the romping human tale Sam Taylor told about John and Leonora. It is a faithful tale from a devoted son.

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 a true 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. Thus Heber and Vilate would 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 the widow, 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 son-in-law, 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, and it seemed to Whitney that this challenge must have been the first of his father-in-law's sacrifices on behalf of restoring the principle of plural marriage. However Whitney's reconstruction of events does not fit the larger context, as it would place Joseph's demand for Vilate's hand sometime in early 1842 rather than after Orson Pratt's excommunication in August 1842. Thus, Whitney's account of Heber Kimball's experience with plural marriage has interfered with a holistic understanding of Nauvoo events.

15

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, 1843.⁹ 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, I believe 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

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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 two 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 woman who believed when her husband was both aware of the eternal arrangement and happy to allow his wife to participate in a ceremony Mr. Sayers felt was so much stuff and nonsense.

5 **Elvira Annie Cowles [Holmes]** would be sealed to Joseph Smith on June 1, 1843. Joseph Smith himself had performed the December 1, 1842, civil ceremony linking Elvira to Jonathan Harriman Holmes, widower of the martyred Marietta Carter [Holmes]. 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. Thus, 10 though Elvira appears to be participating in polyandry based on the available marriage documents and affidavits, there is every reason to believe that Elvira's intention to be sealed to Joseph pre-dated her public marriage to Jonathan Holmes. As already mentioned, there is no indication Elvira 15 had sex with either Joseph or with Jonathan during Joseph's lifetime, though it does appear Elvira implied things to her daughters to encourage them to accept the New and Everlasting Covenant.¹⁰

20 Intriguingly, in February 1843 Elvira and Jonathan would welcome Eliza Snow into their home. Eliza had served as secretary in the Relief Society while Elvira served as treasurer. Eliza had become one of Joseph Smith's plural wives in June 1842—Elvira would become one of Joseph's plural 25 wives in June 1843. I propose that the lives of these three (Jonathan Harriman Holmes, Elvira Annie Cowles, and Eliza Roxcy Snow) were far more entwined than prior scholars have perceived.

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ELIZA AND THE STAIRS

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Eliza Snow is arguably the most prominent woman in early Mormon history. Though Emma was Joseph's wife and help-meet, Eliza Snow would go west with the Saints. Eliza was an adviser to Brigham Young, frontier 15 president of the Relief Society, and influential in the formation of both the children's ministry (Primary) and the youth ministry (now called Young Men and Young Women). Eliza was prominent in the campaign that won female suffrage in Utah in 1870 – fully fifty years before all women in the rest of the United States would receive the right to vote.¹

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Besides all these accomplishments, Eliza Snow was regarded as a prophetess, and her hundreds of poems were treasured, whether they comforted those who had recently lost an infant. conveyed doctrine (e.g., 25 the concept of a Mother in Heaven conveyed by the hymn *Oh My Father*)²

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Eliza as Deceitful Seducer

30 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 undiscovered 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 35 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 so much distress that she could only write about Joseph and these women for a few minutes before she would literally feel the gorge rise within her. Val would vomit, then go lay 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 was 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. Though Newell and Avery were not excommunicated, 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 Sheets⁵ 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, a man who had been discovering numerous historical documents. Steven Christensen had been one of Hofmann's clients. As the investigation proceeded, Mark Hofmann was found to be the bomber, and his documents were found to be forgeries.⁶

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, portraying a good woman betrayed by a craven husband and deceitful female friends, remained. No doubt the authors would object to this characterization. Few scholars admit the extent to which underlying paradigms shape the soft science of interpreting the hard data. However it is telling the number of women who have read *Mormon Enigma* and consider Eliza Snow to be a traitor, the archetype of Emma's female friends and associates who are presumed to have lain with Emma's

husband.

Eliza and the Stairs

One of the most evocative stories regarding Emma's alleged distress regarding polygamy involves Eliza. A late, fourth-hand account describes Eliza as pregnant and losing the child. The possible factual information in the story is bolded:

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."⁷

Anti-Mormon, Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal, under the pseudonym Wilhelm Wyl, recounted in 1886 a version of the same tale, where Emma feels "outraged as a wife and betrayed as a friend" and so takes a broom to Eliza in revenge.⁸ Eliza's nephew, LeRoi Snow, said Emma knocked Eliza down the stairs, causing a miscarriage.⁹ Mary Barzee Boyce recounts a rumor from her son-in-law's mother, Aidah Clement, saying Emma pulled Eliza R. Snow downstairs by the hair of her head.¹⁰

In a Utah where Eliza was respected and Emma had refused to follow leaders of the Utah Church, these stories painted Emma Smith as crazed and violent. But once Eliza was herself gone from living memory, a humanized Emma is seen as the victim, reacting in an understandable manner to finding her friend's unborn child is the get of Emma's husband, Joseph.

While *Mormon Enigma* and an earlier article on this subject in *BYU Studies* (Vol 22, No 1, p. 93 (1982)) cast doubt on the reliability of these staircase reports, nowhere do the authors provide an alternative to the

fundamental betrayal Emma would have experienced if Eliza were sleeping with Joseph within a plural marriage of which Emma was uninformed and not consulted.

5

Eliza as Victim

As discussed in *Wives of Sorrow*, there is a strong pattern suggesting many of the women who became plural wives in 1842 had been victims of false teachings regarding spiritual wifery, the anything-goes-if-no-one-finds-out illicit intercourse Bennett and his Strikers were urging women of Nauvoo to participate in.

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 fall-out related to John C. Bennett’s departure from Nauvoo. Regard for Eliza and her righteousness prevents most from easily accepting the possibility that Eliza could have fallen prey to Bennett. Ironically, no one seriously challenges the thought that this same honorable and righteous Eliza could have been secretly having sex with Joseph behind Emma’s back, even if she didn’t get pregnant and lose the child in a fall down the stairs.

We know Bennett had been courting a young woman, someone he had promised to marry.¹¹ But after March 1841 it would have been impossible for Bennett to marry the woman he loved, since now Joseph Smith was informed of Bennett’s wife Mary, who still lived and was still married to Bennett. I propose the “young” woman Bennett loved was Elvira Annie Cowles, nearly a decade younger than Bennett, and an intimate of the Smith household where Bennett had initially lived in Nauvoo. Elvira rises to prominence as a candidate because by the end of 1842 she will be provided a widower as pretend husband, at a time when other pregnant women, such as Mary Clift, are merely taken under the protection of married men.

By the time Bennett was ready to approach his beloved with a tale of spiritual wifery which might have won her to his bed, the Relief Society had been formed. From the evolution of Bennett’s likely system of spiritual wifery, he seems to have been trying to develop a scheme that might work even in light of the aggressive virtue being taught by Relief Society. If Elvira was his desired object, she was ensconced in the heart of the new organization teaching women to hold to virtue no matter who the messenger.

Could the intelligent and honorable Eliza Snow have been seduced? If

so, why would Bennett have committed or allowed such a risky seduction?

If Bennett desired Elvira, he needed to determine if his line was plausible. Eliza served with Elvira and was also single. Eliza would have served as a dress rehearsal, allowing Bennett or one of his Strikers to refine the tale one last time before Bennett approached his beloved. I suggest Bennett took the raw line that had succeeded with Catherine Fuller and clothed it in portentous language suggesting an eternal purpose. We see evidence of such elaboration in Bennett’s description of a Mormon Seraglio with three levels of females.¹²

The initial “order” Bennett described were allegedly Cyprian Saints, women who had lost their virtue and been discovered 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.

The second “order” in Bennett’s female sexual hierarchy were 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 bears an astonishing resemblance to the many women, like Catherine Fuller, that Bennett and his Strikers had seduced.

The highest “order” in Bennett’s female hierarchy were 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...”

How might Eliza react, to being told Bennett or one of his Strikers wished her as a secret wife, and that this man had won the permission of Joseph Smith himself to partake of Eliza’s affections, if only she, too, was willing to accept this gift of human companionship.

40

Eliza's Poems and Journal

Eliza would write a poem titled *The Bride's Avowal*:

5 *"Dearest, the hour approaches,
Our destinies to twine
In one eternal wreath of fate,
As holy beings join..."*

10 *I would not sell thy confidence,
For all the pearls that strew
The ocean's bed or all the gems
That sparkle in Peru."*¹³

15 This poem appears to accept the proposal that someone, perhaps Eliza, become a secret bride. In the poem the bride has not yet been bedded.

 It is not certain when Eliza wrote this poem, or when the woman in the poem agreed to be bedded.

20

 By mid-June, 1842, Joseph Smith made a decision to publicly cut Bennett off from the Church, reversing his earlier inclination to show Bennett mercy. Eliza describes her father's decision to leave Nauvoo as well the next day, though it would take Oliver Snow a week to arrange all his affairs in support of the departure.¹⁴

25

 Eliza decided to remain in Nauvoo and moved into the home of Sarah Cleveland, one of Emma's Relief Society counselors. If she had been seduced, fulfilling the willingness her poem implies, she could have been carrying the seducer's child.

30

 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. She writes:

35 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...

40 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.¹⁵

Eliza would later state that this was the day she became sealed to Joseph Smith, with Sarah Cleveland standing as witness. To me Eliza's journal not only hides the fact of her sealing to Joseph Smith, it reads like the musings of a misled woman who was taken in sin, and is reflecting on her confession of those sins.

5

 On August 12th Elvira Cowles visited Eliza, a social call that might not have been noted had it not immediately preceded disturbing events.

10 On August 13th Eliza's poem, *The Bride's Avowal*, was published in *The Wasp*, the newspaper William Smith edited. William had been accused of having been complicit in Bennett's seductions, and was almost certainly sympathetic to the exiled Dr. Bennett.¹⁶ Eliza's first-person language and talk of secret marriage could be read as confirming all that Bennett was alleging about Joseph Smith. The day the poem was published, Sarah Cleveland made it clear that her future plans would not be consistent with Eliza remaining 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..."¹⁷

20

 Learning that Eliza had been evicted and might leave Nauvoo, Emma sent for Eliza Snow, her Secretary, author of the damning poem in William's paper.

25

Plausible Deniability

 If Eliza was pregnant by this point, a combination of the corsets and the high-waisted, full skirts of the day would continue to hide the fact for several months. Eliza could comfortably mingle in society for up to five months after the date of conception before there was risk of being identified as pregnant.

30

 We know of at least one 1842 plural marriage that was arranged to care for a woman, Mary Clift, impregnated by one of Bennett's men, Gustavus Hills. If Eliza was pregnant, we should expect to see someone who steps forward to offer Eliza public marriage.

35

 A poem in Eliza's diary the month after she begins living in the Smith household may provide such evidence. On September 17, 1842, following a stirring sermon on the resurrection, Eliza composed the following:

40

Conjugal^{17a}

5 *Like two streams, whose gentle forces
Mingling, in one current blend—
Like two waves, whose outward courses
To the ocean's bosom tend—*

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

15 *May your mutual vows be plighted—
May your hearts, no longer twain
And your spirits be united
In an everlasting chain.*¹⁸

20 Jonathan had been a fixture in the Smith household ever since his wife, Marietta Carter [Holmes], had been killed in August 1840. He had never remarried. Eliza's presence in the Smith home for the past month provided the surface possibility that the widower could have fallen in love with the formidable spinster.

25 Eliza's poetry suggested resurrection could lead to the reunion of spouses parted by death, echoing the promise Joseph C. Kingsbury claimed to have been given for agreeing to be a pretend husband for Sarah Whitney.

30 Given the secrecy shrouding the New and Everlasting Covenant at the time, it seems the only reason Eliza would have known about Jonathan's promised eternal reunion with his deceased wife would be if she was party to the sacrifice he was about to make, of committing to be a pretend husband.

35 **Apostrophe to Death: Extracting Eliza's history from her Poetry**

40 The many stories about Eliza and the staircase were written by people who no longer lived in Nauvoo. They appear to have forgotten that their stories 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 like the one in the story. The staircase in the Homestead is a small, enclosed stair.²⁰

5 However the scene works for the Red Brick Store, which had a staircase running from the back of the store up to Joseph's office. This would be a natural location for Charles C. Rich to have been present to witness a fall. Though the original configuration of the staircase in the Red Brick Store is unknown, it was used to haul freight from the river up to the store-room on the second story, so would have been wide, unenclosed, and likely lacked a landing.

10 Following November 15 we find a series of four poems in Eliza Snow's journal. This portion of Eliza's journal contains no dates, so we only know these poems are written sometime between 16 November and 30 November 1842.

15 The first poem, which lacks regular meter and rhyme, is an address to Death. The poem is shot through with imagery from the Book of Mormon and evokes John Donne's poem, *Death, be not proud*.²¹

20 *What art thou, Death?—I've seen thy visage and
Have heard thy sound—the deep, low, murm'ring sound
That rises on thy tread!*

25 *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!*

30 *...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
40 The Grave, life's portal to the worlds on high.*²²

The second work is similarly free verse, without regular rhyme or rhythm, and gives Eliza's testimony. Scholars of Eliza's life will know this

work, as it is one of the two Eliza used to conclude her autobiography in 1885, titled “*Sketch of My Life*.” Viewed through the lens of Historicism,²³ Eliza describes a woman in a personal relationship with the man she refers to as a vile wretch. Eliza uses the term innocence to describe the woman, and speaks of how the vile wretch fed himself, face to face, on the peace and blood of [her] innocence:

*It is no trifling thing to be a saint...
To stand unmov'd beneath the with'ring rock
Of vile apostasy...—*

*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 a 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,²⁴
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 face²⁵ 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.—*

*...to be a saint, requires
A noble sacrifice...the grand consummation,²⁶ will
Repay the price however costly...*

*...Then let me be a saint, and be prepar'd
For the approaching day, which like a snare
Will soon surprise the hypocrite [and] expose
The rottenness of human schemes...*

In another of Eliza's poems written in her November seclusion, Eliza embraces the forgiveness of Christ, the ability to return to “conscious innocence.”

*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;
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.*

In the final poem composed during these three weeks, Eliza contemplates solitude:

*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.*

*This is truly a moment peculiarly fraught
With unbound meditation and freedom of thought!
Such rich hallowed seasons are wont to inspire
With the breath of Parnassus²⁷ the languishing lyre*

*For sweet silence is dancing in Solitude's eye
When there's nobody here but Eliza and I.*

*O thou fav'rite retirement! Palladium²⁸ of joys
Remov'd from the bustle of nonsense and noise
Where mind strengthens its empire—enlarges its sphere
While it soars like the eagle or roams like the deer
O these still, sober moments, how swiftly they fly
While there's nobody here but Eliza and I.*

Denouement

Sometime prior to December 1842, Eliza modified the poem she had written about angels kissing each other in the presence of the sun. Elvira Annie Cowles, Eliza's friend and the woman who had cared for Jonathan's daughter since the death of Marietta Carter [Holmes], would stand by Jonathan's side when Joseph performed the ceremony on December 1, 1842.

Eliza's poem, as it now appears in Eliza's journal, was dedicated to Jonathan and Elvira, and the word "angels" was replaced by "rays." The edited poem was published in the paper to celebrate the public wedding of Jonathan and Elvira. But as the marriage between Jonathan and Elvira would not seem to be consummated for several more years, the reason for the public wedding is not known.

One clue as to why Elvira might have been provided a pretend husband could be a November 7, 1842, letter from Lester (Justin) Brooks to Joseph Smith, where Brooks closes his letter "Give my respects to Sister Elvira Cowles and all enquiring friends...".²⁹ If Elvira had been Bennett's beloved, the marriage might have been intended to end Bennett's hopes of ever possessing Elvira.³⁰

By 12 December Joseph and Emma had persuaded Eliza to break her solitude. A school had been organized that would be held in the Masonic Hall, and the Smiths asked Eliza to be an instructor in the school. Eliza was initially skeptical, describing it as an "arduous business with my delicate constitution, at this inclement season of the year..." Eliza would teach the school every day until classes were released on March 17, 1843. This would begin a notable tradition of Eliza's concern for the youth in the gospel.³¹

On 11 February 1843 Eliza "Took board and had my lodgings removed

to the residence of br. J. Holmes."³² This date, so often presumed to coincide as the timing of the incident with the stairs, appears to have been caused by Joseph's activity of "changing furniture in the house to receive Mother Smith in the family..."³³ Jonathan, Eliza, and Elvira, friends who had supported one another the previous summer, were re-united again for a period.³⁴

By March the last of the men and women directly impacted by Bennett and the Strikers had been gathered in and counseled in secret. But thousands had been wounded by Bennett's accusations. Of particular concern were those women who had been questioned during the desperate investigation, the ones who didn't know the difference between spiritual wifery and the New and Everlasting Covenant. These young ones suspected they knew what was going on, and it appeared to them Joseph was everything Bennett had hinted.

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 (and hinted at in the Book of Mormon) 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..."¹ 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, 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 Hyrum was made Assistant President of the Church and ordained to the office of apostle in the Quorum of the 12 Apostles.

Yet though Joseph had taught plural marriage to the other apostles, he was unable to get Hyrum to accept plural marriage until May 26, 1843.

Young Gideon Carter² wrote "Hyrum did not at first receive [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."³

Joseph asked Hyrum to ask the Lord about it. After much anguish, Hyrum confronted Brigham Young near the Masonic Hall. The two proceeded to sit on a pile of fence rails that lay nearby. In 1866 Young would give a sermon and relate Hyrum's words:

"[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...”⁴

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 raised particular questions in the minds of young ladies who had been questioned during the desperate investigations that led to Bennett’s expulsion.

Edward Partridge 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.

20

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.”

25

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.”

30

Joseph was obviously still concerned that the seducers might have gotten to the Partridge girls. He 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.”

35

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.”⁵

40

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.

5

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.

10

On March 4, 1843, Mrs. Durfee told Emily 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 didn’t 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, but they 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.

15

20

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.” 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?”⁶

25

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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.

35

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 feared.

40

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

5

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.

10

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 history, the marriages were not consummated until after the Longstroths were sealed to Willard Richards in the Nauvoo temple, three years later.⁷

15

20

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 don’t have enough data to know how Bennett’s identification of William’s sister as a plural wife 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 could have remained unconsummated while Joseph lived.⁸

25

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Ruth Vose [Sayers] alleged she was sealed to Joseph for eternity only in February 1843, with Hyrum Smith performing the ceremony, however it seems likely she mis-remembered the year than that she mis-remembered the officiant.⁹ Thus it is more likely that Joseph was sealed to Ruth Vose [Sayers] in February 1844.

35

40

Orson Hyde first plural wife was English-born Martha Rebecca Browett, who 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 had died and left 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 Price¹⁰ 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 unlikely that they had remained unaffected by the stories of English-born Martha Brotherton and the stories in the Expositor 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.¹¹

5

Flora Ann Woodworth was daughter of Lucien Woodworth, the construction foreman working on the Nauvoo House, a project very important to Joseph. 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, which may refer to Joseph’s concern about Lucien or a possible ceremony between Joseph and Flora Ann. Sometime during the summer of 1843, Flora’s mother, Phebe, told Orange Wight that Flora was one of Joseph’s wives.¹² While there is no documentation to suggest Lucien Woodworth or Flora Ann had been “wounded” by the events of 1842, Phebe’s satisfaction with the marriage between Flora Ann and Joseph hints that the marriage certainly served to increase the bond between Joseph and the Woodworth family.¹³

10

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As mentioned previously, Emily and Eliza Partridge married Joseph Smith on 4 March and 8 March respectively, a year after Emily refused to allow Joseph to talk with her or give her a letter.

25

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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.¹⁴ While it is possible Bennett learned about Joseph Bates Noble’s role from Joseph Smith, it seems more likely that Noble, himself, shared the story. On April 5, 1843, Joseph Smith sealed Joseph Bates Noble to Sarah B. Alley, a convert from Massachusetts who was in her early twenties. By the end of the month it appears Sarah had conceived her son, George. 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...”¹⁵

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. Within the month Margaret had conceived, giving

birth to a son on February 18, 1844.¹⁶

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
5 commanded of God to take another wife, and you are the woman.”¹⁷ 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, that it would prove an everlasting blessing to Lucy’s father’s house and form a chain that could never be broken. Lucy’s
10 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
15 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.
20
18

Joseph promised Lucy she would have a manifestation of the will of God concerning her, a testimony she could never deny. That night Lucy
25 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.”¹⁹
30

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
35 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” A footnote states grave 147 is the 1st in row thirteen. However this record contradicts itself. Either Rachel was born
40 January 28, 1845, making Joseph Smith a possible 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 that the age is correct and the date was a mistake, validating Lucy’s point that “It was not a love

matter... [but] to establish that grand and glorious principle that God had revealed to the world.”²⁰

5 Summary

During the early portion of 1843, Joseph Smith reached out to a handful of men and women to invite them to enter into plural marriage. The men who took on plural wives during this period were very close to Joseph and
10 appear to have been reaching out to relatives or converts who reasonably could have been spooked by Bennett’s accusations. As for the women who became plural wives in early 1843, the documents that exist indicate the woman had serious reservations based on either knowledge of or suspicion regarding Joseph Smith’s involvement in plural marriage. Yet time and again these women did gain a testimony that either plural marriage was not the
15 evil they had feared or that the man involved was upright and noble. The number of English converts involved in marriages during this first portion of 1843 is unusual, and may be associated with the disproportionate damage Bennett’s activities and accusations had done to English converts.
20

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 some cases. But the April plural marriages entered into by William Clayton and Joseph Bates Noble show that sexual relations
25 between men and their plural wives did occur prior to Joseph’s death in certain cases.

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
30 only time but for all eternity. The next four months would prove more difficult than Emma had imagined

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, including attempts to physically harm Joseph. Joseph had repeatedly been attacked, beaten, imprisoned, held at gunpoint, betrayed into enemy hands, and returned to her variously bleeding, bruised, tarred, and emaciated.

Eventually she would receive Joseph's lifeless body, riddled with bullets.

Along with Hyrum, Emma likely believed that Joseph's teachings and actions related to plural marriage would cause his death, as seen from 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. After all, she doesn't publicly acknowledge these marriages at any time. We only know through third parties that Emma participates in select marriages starting in May 1843.

Why did Emma remain silent if she know about Joseph's ceremonial marriages to other women?

Initially, the practice was so secretive that there are no contemporary documents at all.

Emma would have learned in Kirtland how devastating it could be when she allowed even a trusted intimate (Oliver Cowdery) to know about plural marriage. In Kirtland Emma was angered by finding Joseph alone with Fanny Alger. Oliver inferred Joseph was engaging in an illicit affair, and the subsequent alienation between Oliver Cowdery and the Church significantly contributed to the failure of the settlement at Kirtland and the Missouri troubles.

I can imagine Joseph kept Emma informed of his plans to restore Old Testament marriage practices in Nauvoo, as early as September 1840, prompted by the provocative blessing Father Smith pronounced on Joseph's head the day Father Smith died. So long as the marriages remained unconsummated and completely secret, there was no need for Emma to document or openly discuss, or comment on these plural marriages.

Starting in January 1842, Emma and Joseph both became aware there were sexual predators in Nauvoo. The two of them sprang into action to combat the scourge. As Relief Society President starting two months later, Emma presided over the female efforts to flush out Bennett and his Strikers during 1842. She was fully apprised of the fact that high profile men at that time were using their influence to persuade vulnerable 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.² Joseph supported Emma in this, announcing on June 9, 1842 that no one would be admitted to Relief Society unless two or three members in good standing of the Relief Society presented a petition that the prospective member was of good report.³

To me, it does not seem credible that Emma could have remained unaware of those women who were plural wives and the few good men who were sheltering and marrying plural wives. Emma's counselors in the Relief Society, the ones investigating the disturbing tales of seduction, were apprised of pertinent facts. We see Elizabeth Whitney, Sarah Cleveland, and Elizabeth Durfee participating in activities related to plural marriage during 1842, long before their President, Emma Smith, allows herself any public involvement.

I contend Emma near-total silence prior to May 1843 was inspired by her refusal to condone by deed or appearance the spiritual wifery and illicit intercourse carried out by Bennett and his men.

However by May 1843 it had been a year since the damning confessions

against Bennett and others had been presented to the High Council. If Emma had always been informed, as I contend, May 1843 appears to have been the earliest time Emma might have 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. So 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. But those secret sealings would not have served to show Emma's public embrace of plural marriage. Emily presumed that Emma had been ignorant of the March sealings, and that this was the reason they were repeated. But Emily Partridge herself was clearly ignorant of much that had happened in 1842 regarding illicit intercourse or "spiritual wifery" and John C. Bennett.

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.⁴

Emma was perhaps comforted by the knowledge that Joseph had already covenanted with Emily and Eliza Partridge, and the girls seemed content to remain secret wives. And so she went through with the re-sealing ceremony, placing these girls' hands in the hand of Joseph.

But Joseph and Emily at the least had misunderstood Emma's intent. Joseph spent that night with Emily, and according to Emily they were sufficiently intimate that she would decades later agree that she had engaged in "carnal intercourse" with Joseph.⁵

Emily likely committed another error. Emily and her circle of friends had been uninformed about the true details of Bennett's spiritual wifery in 1842. Emily presumed it was all part of the same thing. We know young girls had been referring to themselves as "spirituals."⁶ Emma would have been infuriated 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 once dragged Eliza down the stairs by her hair.⁷ This one tale regarding Eliza and the stairs seems to refer to Eliza Partridge. At the least, Emma Smith might react in this manner if a previously demure Eliza Partridge proceeded to openly demand intimacy with Joseph, heedless of the danger a resulting pregnancy would pose to Joseph.

Emma was faced with two girls who were neither discrete nor willing to keep their hands off their new husband. They risked exposing Joseph either 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 girls from having any intimate access to Joseph. But by this time Emily at least would claim under oath in the 1890s that she'd "roomed" with Joseph several times.

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 why Joseph and Emily and Eliza might have presumed intimacies would be appropriate.

Roughly four months after the possible intimacies in May 1843, Emma had Joseph send the Partridge girls away. Neither girl was 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. Besides, the time of skulking about in strict secrecy was now ending.

On May 28th, Joseph and Emma became the first couple sealed together in quasi-public, at a meeting of the Quorum of the Anointed.⁸ 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 the 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?"

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 more and more concerned.

5

Emma's Demands

In the days following the Partridge girls' sealing to Joseph, other young women became sealed to Joseph. The Lawrence sisters, Sarah and Maria, 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, possibly having waited for more than a year until Emma herself had embraced the New and Everlasting Covenant, but her reproductive history suggests she was not intimate with Joseph.

Heber 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 circumscribed Helen's social activities, to her surprise and irritation.⁹ Joseph also arranged for Sarah Whitney to marry her widower brother-in-law, who explicitly understood the arrangement as a pretend marriage. This would clear the way, potentially, for Joseph to become intimate with Sarah. Alternately, the pretend marriage could have been intended to prevent a suitor from pursuing Sarah.

In response to these additional situations where Joseph might be intimate with his wives, Emma finally reached a breaking point. She made a demand of Joseph, and Joseph was commanded to offer her the desire of her heart.¹⁰ 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."¹¹

35 What might Emma have demanded?

One possibility is that Emma demanded the right to have multiple husbands herself. Allegedly she demanded the right to be sealed to the handsome William Law.¹²

40

Another possibility is that Emma demanded a divorce.¹³

A third possibility is that Emma threatened to divorce Joseph if he

would not agree to abandon his plural wives, come away with her, and turn the work of the Church in Nauvoo over to others. An August 1843 entry in William Clayton's journal hints that Emma had demanded Joseph give up his wives. Joseph's actions during June 1843 also support this last reading.

5

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 Palestine Grove,¹⁴ Amboy Township, Lee County, Illinois, ten miles from Dixon, Illinois. It is not clear how long Joseph intended to stay with the Wassons, but a week later he would tell William Clayton and Stephen Markham "I have no fear. I shall not leave here." Emma would have been able to remain 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 Wassons, shifting administration of the Church to the Assistant President of the Church, his brother Hyrum, and the Quorum of the Twelve, headed by Brigham Young.

10

15

20 "I am weary of life... kill me, if you please"

On June 18th word reached Nauvoo that the Governor of Illinois, Thomas Ford, had issued a writ against Joseph, honoring 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.

25

On Friday, June 23rd, Joseph sent William Clayton to Dixon, to find out what was going on there. While in Dixon, Clayton met two men who represented themselves as missionaries of the Church. The men were actually Joseph H. Reynolds, a sheriff of Jackson County, Missouri, and Constable Harmon T. Wilson, from Carthage, Illinois. It appears Clayton told the men where they could find Joseph, not realizing these were the very men he had warned Joseph about.

35

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 the following account of the arrest:

40

I was in the yard going to the barn when Wilson stepped to the end of the house and saw me. He 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.

5 Reynolds cried out, “G—d—you, if you stir I’ll shoot; G—d—if you, stir one inch, I shoot you, be still, or I’ll shoot you, by G—.” I enquired “What is the meaning of all this?” “I’ll show you the meaning, by G—; and if you stir one inch, I’ll shoot you, G—d—you.”

10 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. I am a strong man, however, and with my own natural weapons could soon level both of you; but if you have any legal process to serve, I am at all times subject to law, and shall not offer resistance.”

15 Reynolds replied, “G—d—you, if you say another word I will shoot you, by G—.”

20 I answered, “Shoot away; I am not afraid of your pistols.”

25 [Stephen Markham approached.] 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...

30 I then said, “Gentlemen, if you have any legal process, I wish to obtain a writ of habeas corpus,” and was answered,—“G—d—you, you shan’t have one.” They still continued their punching me on both sides with their pistols.

35 [Markham said,] “There is no law on earth that requires a sheriff to take a prisoner without his clothes...”

40 I told Markham to go, and he immediately proceeded to Dixon on horseback, where the sheriff also proceeded with me at full speed, without even allowing me to speak to my family or bid them good bye. The officers held their pistols with the muzzles jamming into my side for more than eight miles, and they only desisted on being reproached by Markham for their cowardice in so brutally ill-treating an unarmed, defenseless prisoner...

I again stated to Reynolds, “I wish to get counsel,” when he answered. G—d—you, you shan’t have counsel: one word more, G—d—you, and I’ll shoot you.”

5 “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.”¹⁵

10 The following week was a tense contest of legal wranglings. During this week we see four women knowledgeable about Nauvoo polygamy (Elvira Annie Cowles, Eliza R. Snow, Elizabeth Whitney, and Elizabeth Durfee) visit the head of Joseph’s body guard, Cornelius Lott. It seems unlikely, under the circumstances, that they were visiting to procure Lott’s nubile daughter, Malissa, as a future wife for Joseph, as so many polygamy researchers have previously assumed.¹⁶ Perhaps instead they were attempting to set Lott’s mind at ease regarding rumors he had heard, persuading Lott to rouse himself in defense of Joseph, whose life was at stake.

20 As the path of Joseph, Reynolds, and Constable Wilson neared Nauvoo, they stopped at Honey Creek, at the home of Michael Crane. Joseph wrote:

25 A flock of turkeys and chickens were killed, and a substantial supper was provided for all; and the company feasted, sang, and had a happy time that night. 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.¹⁷

30 The next day “the Nauvoo Brass Band and Martial Band started with Emma and my brother Hyrum to meet me; also a train of carriages, containing a number of the principal inhabitants.” Joseph continues:

35 I directed Colonel Rockwood to place my Life Guards in their appropriate position in the procession. I was in a buggy with Mr. Montgomery. Sheriff Reynolds and Wilson, with my three lawyers, Cyrus Walker, Shepherd G. Patrick, and Edward Southwick, were in the stage coach with Lucien P. Sanger, the stage proprietor. Mr. Campbell, the sheriff of Lee county, and a company of about 140 were with me on horseback.

I was a prisoner in the hands of Reynolds, the agent of Missouri, and Wilson, his assistant. They were prisoners in the hands of Sheriff Campbell, who had delivered the whole of us into the hands of Colonel Markham, guarded by my friends, so that none of us could escape.

When the company from the city came up, I said I thought I would now ride a little easier; got out of the buggy; and, after embracing Emma and my brother Hyrum, who wept tears of joy at my return, as did also most of the great company who surrounded us, (it was a solemn, silent meeting,) I mounted my favorite horse, "Old Charley," when the band struck up "Hail Columbia," and proceeded to march slowly towards the city, Emma riding by my side into town.

I was greeted with the cheers of the people and firing of guns and cannon. We were obliged to appoint a number of men to keep the streets open for the procession to pass, and arrived at my house about one o'clock, where my aged mother was at the door to embrace me, with tears of joy rolling down her cheeks, and my children clung around me with feelings of enthusiastic and enraptured pleasure. Little Fred, exclaimed, "Pa, the Missourians won't take you away again, will they?"

The multitude seemed unwilling to disperse until after I had arisen on the fence and told them, "I am out of the hands of the Missourians again, thank God. I thank you all for your kindness and love to me. I bless you all in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. I shall address you at the Grove, near the Temple, at four o'clock this afternoon."

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.¹⁸

Despite a seeming attempt to retire from Nauvoo and live alone with Emma, 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. And though Reynolds had repeated threatened to kill Joseph, now that Joseph was back in Nauvoo, with Emma at his side, he

placed the pistol-whipping sheriff in a place of honor.

Joseph could not leave Nauvoo again without risking his life. Emma could hardly make good on her threat in light of how Joseph had returned.

After a week, however, Emma's relief regarding Joseph's safe return was giving 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.

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 and traveled some 200 miles northwest to the home of Emma's sister, Elizabeth Hale Wasson. The pressures of Church leadership and the women Joseph had covenanted with 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, came to arrest Joseph, pistol-whipping him and tearing him away from Emma in a scene reminiscent of the horror at Far West, when Joseph was dragged to prison and his family was thrust from him by the sword.

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 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. She undoubtedly 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, after Emma's sons had visited Utah, intent on convincing the Utah Saints to abandon the polygamy the young Smith brothers believed their father had never taught.

The Revelation is Written

William Clayton, Joseph's scribe and a practicing polygamist in July 1843, wrote a letter in 1871 documenting that Joseph dictated a revelation on plural marriage to him on Wednesday, July 12, 1843. The revelation in question is now Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants.¹ From the wording of the 1871 letter, it appears William Clayton was being asked to counter the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, headed by Joseph's sons. Joseph's sons and RLDS missionaries would have been challenging that any such revelation could ever have been written during Joseph Smith's life:

"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."²

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.”³

Joseph and Hyrum were long dead. Emma Smith would die in April 1879, and William Clayton passed away in seven months later. Clayton’s statements in the 1870s imply Emma’s concern centered on the doctrine of plural marriage. However the contemporary record indicates her concern may have been financial.

The records for July 12th 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.”⁴

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.”⁵

Emma had the original manuscript of the revelation burned. Apparently she didn’t know a copy had been made by Bishop Whitney while he had possession of the revelation.

In 1867 Emma 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.⁶ This could possibly be true and still be 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 behest.⁷ Unfortunately for Jason Briggs’ version of the tale, where the revelation was merely an 1852 artifact of Brigham Young’s creation, there are many other accounts attesting to the existence of the revelation in Nauvoo during the summer of 1843.

It might have been best had all copies of this version of the revelation been burned. After all, 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 1843.⁸

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, he began to officiate in marrying others.⁹

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.

5 “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.

10 “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
15 the 22nd of July, 1843.

20 “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
25 sealed, he performed the ceremony, then and there.”¹⁰

Hyrum and the High Council

30 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, purity or heavenly origin,” excused himself to obtain the copy of the revelation.

35 Returning to the High Council, Hyrum proceeded to read the revelation.

40 James Allred, David Fullmer, Thomas Grover, Aaron Johnson, Austin Cowles and Leonard Soby, documented the meeting in letters and affidavits.

Hyrum was on a roll. 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.

5 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.

10 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 Chauncy 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.

15 Now here was Joseph’s respected brother, Hyrum, blithely claiming that Joseph indeed had received a revelation stating a man could have multiple wives.

20 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 that would leave the Church as a result of Hyrum’s reading of the revelation. The following year, Austin wrote:

25 “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.

35 “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;

40 “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.

5 “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.”¹¹

10 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”¹² appears to have featured significantly in his rejection of the revelation.¹³ Austin was perhaps more troubled that “sealed” persons could commit any manner of sin save murder and be assured of eternal life. And yet Austin believed deeply in the fundamental doctrines Joseph had taught, contained in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Covenants.

William and Jane Law were similarly horrified, though their opposition focused almost solely on the doctrine of plural marriage.

20 Austin and the Laws would eventually contribute to an opposition newspaper, named the Expositor. Even having determined that Joseph’s alleged teachings on plural marriage had to be stopped, those behind the Expositor affirmed their belief in the doctrines Joseph had originally taught:

25 “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...”¹⁴

40 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.”¹⁵ 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

5 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.”¹⁶

Aroet Hale tells of one gathering, and how Joseph explained the revelation to a group of “regular” saints:

10 “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.^{16a} With the Prophet’s consent, father invited in his counselors and a few of the good old staunch brethren.

15 “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.¹⁷ This was the first time that our parents had ever heard the Prophet speak on the subject of celestial marriage.

25 “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.

30 “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.¹⁸ He brought her to the valleys. They have raised a family of children. They have done a good work in the St. George temple.”¹⁹

40 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 Higbee²⁰ had two wives.²¹ When Orange was almost 5 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.²²

"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 Texas rather than joining with the "Brighamites." So his 1903 letter to Joseph I. Earl describing these events were not informed by decades of living in the shadow of the apostles who had been close to Joseph during his life. It is more likely that much of what Orange thought was plural marriage was actually John C. Bennett's spiritual wifery.

That said, the conversation Orange had with Sister Woodworth informed Joseph that others now knew about Eliza, the Partridges and Flora. Within days all these four would leave the Joseph's inner circle.

Brigham Young Explains the Doctrine

For those of us attempting to understand the revelation many decades into the future, it is easy to get caught up in the belief that polygamy was about established men gathering up their pick of the available teenage girls. But if we look at the early explanations from Joseph and Hyrum and Brigham, we see that it was explained as part of a complete marriage system that allowed all members of a family to be joined together, and to establish links not only between spouses, but to their future, as in the case of Henry Harriman.

On July 9, 1843, before Joseph had written down the revelation, Brigham Young documents a discussion he had with a professor from a Southern university, who asked if Joseph Smith had more wives than one (as Dr. Bennett had widely claimed). Brigham admitted that he had. 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.

5 “‘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?”

10 “‘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?’

15 “[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.’”²³

20 This early record of Brigham’s explanation of plural marriage helps us see that he had, originally, seen plural marriage to be part of an over-arching marriage construct, fully consistent with modern Mormon ideas about sealing spouses and children and ancestors together. 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.

Summary

30 From the time Emma was sealed to Joseph, the first semi-public sealing between two individuals who were already married, the doctrine of eternal sealing, and the concomitant doctrine of plural marriage, began to spread among the saints. Where Joseph and others had previously confined their teachings to secretive meetings with individuals, this new era involved larger meetings, where the underlying reasons for doctrine were explained, rather than simply stating that God had commanded it, and obedience would yield eternal blessings to the family of the individual participating.

40 Emma, always concerned about the threat plural marriage posed to Joseph’s life, and secondarily concerned about the temporal security of herself and her children, would have happily terminated all open discussion of plural marriage. She clearly believed plural wives had no business producing children.

5 But the teachings of Joseph and Brigham make it clear that plural wives should be permitted to have children. I have included the best examples, but many more exist, of which I believe most are contained in Chapter 29 of Brian C. Hales’ book, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*.

10 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. Therefore it is not unreasonable to cite Hyrum as the inspiration for the Expositor.

15 Dr. Bennett had created an environment where many in the United States were at least informed of the possibility of 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 Expositor would be the fuse to the powder keg of suspicion Bennett had created. When Joseph and others made the decision to destroy the Expositor press in the summer of 1844, the fuse was lit.

20 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.

THOSE VIRTUOUS AND PURE

In D&C 132, The Lord tells 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 goes 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? The Partridges, the

Reluctant Polygamist

Lawrences, Lucy Walker, Olive Grey Frost, Sarah Whitney, Eliza Snow, Martha McBride [Knight], and Nancy Winchester would all marry one of the apostles within a year after Joseph's death. These, then, may have been the ten virtuous and pure, though Martha McBride, at the least, was not a virgin when she covenanted with Joseph, being the widow of Vinson Knight and mother of four daughters and a son in 1842.

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 sealed to Joseph as plural wives who might be considered "virtuous and pure" from the standpoint of being single without any reason to suspect they had been seduced:

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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This post could be a detailed history of each of these women, however the challenge we have is that so many of these women are either under-
documented or had died before the major efforts attempting to document
the nature of Nauvoo plural marriage (Joseph F. Smith's collection of
affidavits circa 1869, Andrew Jensen's parallel effort stretching out to the
1880s, and the Temple Lot trial and associated testimonies of the 1890s).

It is interesting that the revelation mentions "those who [might not be] pure, and have said they were pure," saying these would be destroyed. Illicit sex had permeated Nauvoo society the previous year. At least one of the men involved is 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. Thus ensuring the purity of the women Emma was commanded to accept as Joseph's wives was potentially a matter of life and death, even though Emma and Joseph were likely only concerned about spiritual corruption.

Beyond the lack of document is the lack of details that would help us understand which of these women might have not been pure, presumably by virtue of being seduced by Bennett or his Strikers.

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 around 1836. What we do know of Fanny is that many of her friends and family considered her relationship with Joseph a marriage. Joseph himself tried to thread the discord caused by Oliver Cowdery's belief that the matter was a mere dalliance by saying that whatever Joseph did in the context of a marriage should be permitted.

Fanny ended up leaving the Smith household after Emma 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. As we've discussed regarding 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. So Fanny and Joseph and Emma may have determined that Fanny need not remain in the Smith household for the marriage to serve God.

Obviously 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 three 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. However Eliza and Emily entered the complex marriage relationship between Joseph and Emma believing Joseph was lying to Emma, perhaps thinking this meant Emma could be safely disregarded. We have evidence of the Partridge girls forwarding the plural marriage agenda, serving at witness for plural sealings and trying to get the daughter of Vinson Knight to accept an interview with Joseph.

Emily certainly documents that shortly after the ceremony where Emma gave the Partridge women to Joseph, Emma became jealous and wouldn't permit Joseph to be alone with the Partridge women. This is ironic, since Emily, by her record, spent the better part of the prior year avoiding being alone with Joseph.

In August 1843, Emma demanded that Joseph send the Partridges away from Nauvoo. Joseph didn't 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 had given Flora a gold watch. When Emma learned of the valuable gift, she demanded Flora return the watch. This conflict had more to do with the distribution of wealth associated with Joseph having plural wives, rather than the possible sexual activity between Joseph and Flora. Flora almost immediately leaves and marries Carlos Gove, a member of the Nauvoo Legion but not affiliated with the Mormon Church, a story strikingly similar to the departure of Fanny Alger from the Smith household.

One potential key to the departure of the Partridges, Flora, and Eliza Snow from the Smith household might be the recollections of Orange Wight. It appears the teenaged Wight was “fully initiated” into the illicit sexual activities taught by Bennett and the Higbees at some point during the winter of 1841/42, after learning John Higbee had two “wives.”

By 1843 Orange was back in town, rather 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 hadn’t known about Flora.

It is curious that we see Eliza Snow, Flora Woodworth, Emily Partridge, and Eliza Partridge, the four women Orange Wight knew of as Joseph’s wives, leave in the summer of 1843.

Were Flora, Emily, and Eliza cast off due to Emma’s unwillingness to share her husband? Or was their presence proximate to Joseph too great a risk, given the late discovery of Orange Wight as a member of the Striker community and his privileged knowledge that these women were Joseph’s wives? If this second was the cause of Emma’s concern, she was not jealous, but worried about the threat to Joseph’s life.

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 don’t know the history of Mormon women in the 1800s, so they do not realize the power these women would come to wield.

Most obvious is the ascension of plural wives Eliza Snow [Smith Young] and Zina Diantha Huntington [Jacobs Smith Young] to preside over Relief Society through 1901. In those days Relief Society was a separate entity that reported to the Prophet but was not overseen by the priesthood as it is today. The youth ministry (Primary) and young women’s ministry (then the Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association) were administered by the Relief Society, and the leaders of Relief Society collaborated with leaders of the national fight for female rights, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.

In 1842 Joseph confirmed that it was right for women to perform

blessings of healing, a practice Brigham Young also upheld, though most in the Church today are unaware of this history. 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, the pure and virtuous, there was no longer a living testimony of the power Joseph himself had granted to women in the early Church. What remained was a vast congregation of women who remembered such gifts. But this coincided with a time when the Church no longer solemnized new plural marriages, and huge cultural changes were taking place as a result. Adherence to the Word of Wisdom and focus on priesthood authority rose to fill the need of a performance that was unique in service of God and a rationale for why the Church was the one sole authorized organization to effect the salvation of all mankind.³

One particular form of blessing performed by the women was to wash and anoint expectant mothers, a form of ceremonial blessing in some ways similar to ordinances now only performed in Mormon temples. Of all the blessings Joseph’s wives had performed, this one form of blessing could not simply be turned over to men who held the Melchizedek priesthood.

The practice of washing and anointing expectant mothers continued amongst those women aware of the practice until 1946, when Joseph F. Smith wrote Belle Spafford, newly called as the General Relief Society. While Smith agreed that the practice of washing and anointing expectant mothers was permitted, he reaffirmed the preference that the sick request blessings from priesthood brethren. Belle Spafford was one who as a mature teenager during World War I had never wanted to be a part of Relief Society, seeing it as old and outdated, a collection of fuddy duddy quilting circles.^{3a} Ending the practice of females performing the washing and anointing blessing was part of many modernizations Belle implemented in her decades as General Relief Society president.

So the last vestige of female blessings, promulgated to the Church by the powerful examples of Joseph’s dozens of plural wives, was terminated in a new era where women in the Church were integrated into the larger body of the Saints, contributing to the overall mission of the Church rather than focusing preferentially on initiatives of the Relief Society. It was also an era where confidence in modern medicine had largely undercut the belief that a blessing of this nature could materially change the fate of mother and child.

Sexuality in Joseph's Marriages?

5 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, and established the patterns of service and female community that resonate even today.

10 There don't appear to have been any actual children produced by Joseph in these dozens of marriages to plural wives based on modern DNA research. In fact, Emma tried very hard to convince people that plural wives weren't supposed to have children. Emma told an obviously-pregnant Lucy Messerve (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 didn't 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, as she conceived her first child in November or December 1845.

20 Profoundly upset by the discussion with Emma, Lucy confided in her husband, George A. Smith. George comforted Lucy, telling of a time he happened upon Joseph washing his hands. 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."

30 Emma may have known the child she was delivering had not been engendered by Joseph, as could have occurred had Eliza Snow been seduced by Bennett before realizing the true nature of plural marriage or if Emma had served as midwife for one of Joseph's ceremonial wives who was married to another man.

35 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.

40 We have a lack of the fruit we would expect had sex been the activity, a lack noted even in the 1800s when Joseph's sons were trying to convert the Saints away from polygamy. Though largely forgotten, we have a rich history of amazing spiritual works that were the fruit particularly of those

5 women who had been Joseph's plural wives, and who appear to have taught the rest of the female community of Saints. Given the lack of children, confirmed by DNA analysis, a reasonable explanation is that Joseph was teaching these women rather than having sex with them during the times we know of him spending time alone with the women.

The Last Straw

10 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, and culminated in a last flurry of marriages associated with the introduction of plural marriage to an inner circle of faithful.

20 By the end of 1843, the need for entering into additional plural marriages appeared to be largely over. The requirement for Emma to grant Joseph ten virgins had been more than filled, even discounting the ladies Emma evicted from her home.

25 Then came a day when Joseph and Brigham were having a conversation with Brigham's sister, Fanny. Fanny was a widow who was much older than Joseph or Brigham. In response to the discussion about the need for marriage, Fanny said:

30 "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."

35 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.^{3b}

40 Shortly thereafter, possibly that very evening, Joseph became violently ill after eating dinner. Unaware of another explanation for such a violent onset to illness, and possibly influenced by a dream Desdemona Fullmer had of Emma poisoning her, Joseph accused Emma of poisoning his food.

It is not hard to imagine how that would have gone over with Emma. Emma vehemently denied she'd done any such thing.

Why would Joseph even think Emma could have cause for poisoning him, if not the recent marriage to Fanny, which was clearly conducted without so much as secretly consulting Emma?

5 This may have ended Joseph's career of marrying plural wives. ⁴

10 And yet though Joseph was married at least ceremonially to dozens of women, there was one more woman I wish he had married. There was one more person who, had she been added to the elite and powerful quorum of Joseph's wives, could have fundamentally changed the history of Mormonism.

15 What's more heartbreaking is 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.

5

DAUGHTER OF PROMISE

10

15 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:

20

...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.

25

30

The following Sunday I was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ³

35

After Jane's baptism, she shared the gospel with her family. Her mother, Eliza, her two brothers, Isaac Lewis, and Peter, and two sisters, Sarah [Stebbins] and Angeline, were also baptized, as were the spouses of her brother Peter and her sister Sarah. In the fall of 1843 the 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 reluctance of folks in Nauvoo to take Jane in might have been related to the fact that she was an unwed mother. ⁷ Jane's plight was worse because all her luggage had been lost during the trip. She continues:

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, 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.”⁹

Jane’s duties eventually expanded to include cooking. In 1897 at the Jubilee, Sarah Holmes [Weaver] reunited with Jane. Sarah 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.

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!”¹⁰

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 the summer 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.”¹¹

Jane also writes in her autobiography about taking clothes down in the basement to wash and finding Joseph’s 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 don’t have any record from the women who did marry Joseph after July 1843 indicating that she played this role, of approaching the woman. However there is mere silence about this, rather than an active denial of her role.

But in the account of Jane, we see a shadow of what Emma’s actions might have been for Joseph’s wives such as Melissa Lott. However Emma, for some reason, did not ask Jane to be one of Joseph’s wives. Jane writes:

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.¹²

I think Jane would have been willing to become Joseph’s plural wife, based on her 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.

As far as I am aware, Emma’s offer to adopt Jane is the first time a sealing between a parent figure and a child is offered. This was an ordinance that Joseph had felt was too sacred to perform outside a temple. But for Emma, sealing Jane to Joseph and herself as a daughter was clearly 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 were he known to be married to a black woman? And as Jane's child, Sylvester, had been conceived as a result of rape,¹³ it might have been unclear whether Jane should be considered pure.

Aside from Jane herself, Emma had clearly been angered when Joseph sealed Fanny Young to himself in November 1843. The sealing to Fanny was like Joseph's former behavior, marrying women without so much as consulting Emma. It is possible the debacle over the sealing to Fanny Young, which occurred days before Jane's arrival in Nauvoo, led Emma to vow she would not permit Joseph any additional wives.¹⁴

15 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 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 first moved in with her mother, but as the threat of occupation by hostile forces increased, Jane suggested that she and her single sister, Angeline, leave town for 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 the story of

Jane bringing Eliza Partridge [Smith Lyman] two pounds of flour to sustain her after Eliza's husband left on a mission.

5 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. William 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.

However 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.¹⁷ He had also been "sealing" himself to women, an unauthorized ceremony unlike any plural marriage sanctioned by the Church. According to Springville, Iowa branch president, Nelson Whipple, McCary would seal a woman to himself by engaging in sexual intercourse with her three times in a day with his wife, Lucy, watching.^{17a}

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 first 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 that the blood of Ham was a cursed lineage gathered steam.

Despite Brigham's association with Jane, he was apparently 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."¹⁸ Whenever slaves were donated to the Church,

Brigham then proceeded to free them, however he did not force slave owners to emancipate their slaves. ¹⁹ Further, 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. ²⁰

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. It may be only then that Jane would come to understand the nature of Emma's offer in Nauvoo.

We'll never 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 President of the Church, John Taylor, requesting the sealing be performed. But 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 (likely Samuel rather than Don Carlos). Joseph F. Smith's mother, who had found the four men reburied Joseph and Hyrum per Emma's instructions, had similarly felt Emma's actions were high handed and uncalled for. ²¹

It is doubtful Joseph F. Smith would have agreed to seal anyone to Emma. He certainly wouldn't allow the faithful Jane Manning to be eternally linked to a woman he despised. Besides, there was the matter of the priesthood ban complicating things.

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 could have been one of the kids partaking of the fresh-baked cookies Sarah 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.

To our modern sensibilities, sealing Jane as an eternal servant is so incredibly offensive we can't imagine what Joseph F. Smith could have been thinking. But Joseph F. Smith didn't live in our days. 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." ¹⁹

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 had 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, with some important Church leader standing proxy.

When William McCary claimed charismatic gifts that threatened the order of the Church, as well as marrying white women, there would have already been the example of Joseph having married a black woman, a woman I can imagine subsequently married to Brigham Young. While William McCary's actions would still have been considered worthy of excommunication, it wouldn't have come down to a matter of mixing races as the objection.

Later, in Deseret, a Brigham Young who was married to Jane would have been hard-pressed to put in place the policies he did regarding blacks.

Even had he needed to put certain policies in place in response to the Compromise of 1850 which failed to outlaw slavery in Utah territory, he couldn't have then allowed those policies to be mistaken for doctrine, if he'd had Jane at his side as a plural wife.

5

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."

10

In the convoluted history of blacks and the Mormon Church, I see the interaction between Emma and Jane as 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.

15

To this alternate possible history where Jane was a plural wife, I could wish for one other alteration to history. I could wish for a John C. Bennett who had never fallen from grace. Or even having fallen from grace, I could wish for a John C. Bennett who returned, fully penitent, openly denying all his false charges, a Bennett who could have had a place with the Saints in the west, able to powerfully deny all the lies he had previously spread.

20

If Joseph had lived longer, I believe Bennett might have been able to return. As with Jane, the record contains tantalizing hints of an inclusive, redemptive past Mormonism might have had.

25

5

THE PRODIGAL RETURNS

10

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.

15

Few realize that Bennett returned and met with Joseph. Even though neither man recorded the details of their meeting, the record suggests Bennett was willing to repent.

20

The Hasidic Parable

25

To set the stage, let me recount an ancient Hasidic parable.

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.

30

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.

35

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. Aware of the value such a pillow would fetch at market, the man cried out as the feathers scattered in the wind.

5 As though awoken from a trance, the rabbi turned to the man. “My friend, please bring me the feathers, and we will repair the pillow.” The rabbi hugged the man. As the rabbi released the man, the man saw the tears glistening on the rabbi’s cheeks. The rabbi gathered the limp ticking in hand and walked back to his cottage.

10 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.

15 Wordlessly, the man offered the feathers to the rabbi. Carefully, the rabbi placed the gathered feathers into the ticking. The rabbi stitched the rip in the ticking, and the man saw that the repaired pillow was a flat parody of its original form.

20 The rabbi presented the lumpy, ill-stitched pillow to the man. “Now, my friend, go and attempt to gather back all the words you have spread.”¹

25 **The History of the Saints**

For nearly a year after Bennett left Nauvoo, he traveled America, regaling crowds with tales of the supposed evils of Joseph Smith and his band of Mormons. Within weeks Bennett had produced a book, titled
30 *History of the Saints*. The book largely consisted of affidavits Bennett had collected during his career, attesting to his virtues, combined with a variety of fantastic tales of evil allegedly perpetrated by “the Saints.” Perhaps to eliminate the threat of inconvenient truths disrupting his campaign against Smith, Bennett finally obtained a divorce from his estranged first wife, Mary Barker [Bennett].²

35 After a year Bennett’s ability to attract crowds was waning. Not only were Bennett’s tales about the Mormons old news, it 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
40 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

5 By the fall of 1843, Bennett decided to visit the Hinklites. George M. Hinkle had been a staunch member of the Mormon Church. But in 1838 Missouri Hinkle had turned against Joseph. Knowing that the Missouri militia intended to kill Joseph, Hinkle betrayed Joseph into their hands.⁴ Only five years had passed since Hinkle had plotted Joseph’s killing and proceeded to confiscate the property of the man he believed would have
10 been dead.

Perhaps Bennett saw in Hinkle some kind of kindred spirit. Hinkle might have been able to reveal history that might revivify Bennett’s own claims of injustice.

15 We don’t know exactly what transpired during Bennett’s visit to Hinkle. But it is while Bennett was in Moscow, Iowa, with the Hinklites 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
20 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.” The doctrine of plural marriage was also described in this letter, “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
25 determined by revelation through His Holiness, the Prophet!”^{5 6}

While it is possible Hinkle was the sole source of Bennett’s new information about the ‘Doctrine of Marrying for Eternity’ based on rumors
30 from the fuss about Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger, it seems more likely that someone from Nauvoo was in contact with Bennett.⁷

Return to Nauvoo

35 For whatever reason, Bennett left Hinkle and traveled back to Nauvoo, arriving in early December. Bennett would never speak of the visit, nor did anyone else described what happened. The only historical trace is an entry in Joseph Smith’s Daybook from his General Store in Nauvoo. For some
40 reason, Bennett handed Joseph \$117. At \$0.10 to \$0.25 per head at Bennett’s lectures, this represented the net profit from hundreds of lecture tickets. In the Daybook, Joseph quietly attributed it as back-payment of rent for 39 weeks’ lodging at the homestead.⁸

Everything Bennett did following this December 1843 visit can be read as the actions of a penitent.

5

Trying to Gather the 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.

10

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. For those of us who have studied the many other Mormons caught up in the spiritual wifery scandal, Bennett was not lying here. The other Mormons who may have been similarly guilty included Francis and Chauncy Higbee, Justin Morse, Orange Wight, John Higbee, Bishop Knight, and William Smith, to name only a few.

15

20

Before Bennett could say more, however, the crowd turned on him. They pelted him with rotten eggs. When 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.⁹

25

The Boston attack ended Bennett's attempts to set the record straight among the general public.

30

Return to the Saints

Days before Joseph's death, an unidentified "Major-General in the Illinois militia" wrote to Bennett on June 19, 1844, saying "we need you very much in your military capacity throughout the campaign... things will come to a crisis in about eight to ten days..."

35

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 intended repentance was gone.

40

Joseph had once upon a time blessed Bennett, promising blessings and

great glory had he accepted counsel and stood by Joseph:

5

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.

10

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.¹⁰

But the moment was lost. Bennett had absented himself. And during that absence, the mantle was conferred on another.

CONFERRING THE MANTLE

In July 1843, Joseph Smith received a revelation regarding plural marriage. Critics would focus on the 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 was this escape Joseph was offered? And what was the sacrifice God required at Joseph's hands?

Beginning of Troubles

In the fall of 1843, Hyrum Smith gave William and Jane Law the revelation to read. 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. 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

Initially, it appears William and Jane wished to be sealed. But when Joseph inquired of the Lord about the matter, he was apparently informed William was not worthy, that he had been guilty of adultery.⁴ William had been an Aide de Camp in the Nauvoo Legion. Chauncy Higbee and Jacob Backenstos, known to have engaged in illicit intercourse, had also served as Aides de Camp in the Legion.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 saying "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 case of Ruth Vose Sayers, however, Jane Law's husband would not have willingly allowed his wife to become Joseph's eternal bride.

In William Law's diary months later, he characterized the encounter between Joseph and Jane as attempted adultery, claiming that 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, the group of men and who had received the ordinance of the endowment. A week later, he became the first endowed individual to be dropped from the anointed quorum.⁸ The next day, January 8, 1844, Joseph informed William 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. As Law had requested, Law's case was tried a second time in April 1844. This time he was excommunicated on grounds of apostasy.

I now roll off the care of the Kingdom of God

5 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. Through their different experiences, each had come to accept 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 – particularly so if their respective 1842 plural wives had been victims of Bennett's group of Strikers.

10 During the winter of 1843/1844, Joseph turned to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. As Wilford Woodruff related:

15 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:

20 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."

5 On the day William Law was excommunicated, April 18, 1844, Joseph organized the Council of the Kingdom. 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

15 The Conspiracy of Nauvoo

20 Following his excommunication in April 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. Hicks ¹¹ and his brother, and two merchants by the name of 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.

30 The conspiracy was documented decades later, in 1884, based on the testimony of Dennison Harris. ¹³ Austin Cowles approached 19-year-old Dennison Lott Harris, nephew of Martin Harris. Martin Harris had been excommunicated in 1837 even though he'd been one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon. Cowles asked Dennison to invite his father, Emer Harris, to the initial meeting as well. 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, often staying in the home of William Law.

40 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, with some talk denouncing Joseph as a fallen prophet and proceeded to consider how Joseph could be overthrown.

5 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.

10 If they failed to show up, it was likely the men would murder them for what they had already heard. If they did attend, they would be pressed to be part of the planned murder and possibly killed if they refused to agree. Joseph hoped the conspirators would spare the two 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.”

15 As anticipated, all who attended the third and final meeting were required to swear a solemn oath to destroy Joseph Smith. Robert and Dennison 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.

20 “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!”

25 Roughly two hundred men had signed the oath. Apparently at least one of them wasn’t ready to shed innocent blood, or at least they weren’t sure they could get away with having shed innocent blood. Eventually the crowd decided it was less of a risk to let the young men go than deal with the consequences of killing them. Not only would there be bodies to dispose of, Dennison or Robert’s families might know enough to make accusations. The death of these two innocents would threaten the resolve of the group. Joseph was a filthy polygamist in their eyes, but actual murder would likely shatter the conspiracy and send remorseful individuals straight to Joseph to confess. Besides, Robert was like a son to William Law, which had been the reason Law had been so certain Robert would be willing to support the conspiracy.

30

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40 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.

Robert and Dennison left their guards, suggesting they could take a dip

in the river to explain the delay getting home. ¹⁴ As they drew near the bank, they found Joseph with Robert’s brother, John, in a skiff hidden by the bank. Joseph had apparently been afraid the young men would be murdered, and the bodies dumped in the river.

5 Robert and Dennison reported everything, including the names of leaders of the group and the fact that at least 200 men had signed the oath. As they spoke there at the river, Joseph said:

10 “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.

15 “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.

20 “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.

25 “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.

30 “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. ¹⁵

35 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. 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.

Summary

5 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.

10 However, 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, possibly including William Law himself.

15 Hundreds of men now stood at the ready, to rise up and murder the man they had recently revered as a prophet of God.

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CARTHAGE, 1844

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Joseph was killed at Carthage, Illinois on June 27, 1844, over 170 years ago.

15 Until June 2014, I presumed the dissidents hadn't been involved in Joseph's actual death beyond publishing the Expositor. I supposed the mob had been composed of non-Mormons from Missouri and Illinois, whipped into a frenzy by the editor of the Warsaw Signal, Thomas Sharp. The Carthage Greys had been complicit, I supposed. And the escape of John Taylor, Willard Richards, and the handful of men who had been at Carthage Jail prior to the actual martyrdom had been a sort of miracle. I liked to say that it had been a miracle that Joseph and Hyrum hadn't been killed by the Saints, though there had been hundreds allegedly willing to kill Joseph based on what had been written in the Expositor.

25 I originally thought a chapter describing 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 and William R. Hamilton. ²

30 We haven't 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 killers of the Smith brothers were primarily 'regular' citizens of Missouri and Illinois, I believe we have an apology to make.

35

The Conspiracy of Nauvoo

5 In the prior chapter, I summarized the account Dennison Harris left of the conspiracy headed by William Law and Austin Cowles. When I posted this in June 2014, J. Stapley pointed me to recent information BYU Studies had published about the Council of Fifty, which deprecated the sources I had consulted. With the updated insight into the dates of key events, I was able to see 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	Recruit Dissidents	–
Feb-Mar 1844	Recruit Dennison Harris and Robert Stock	Asks Dennison and Robert to be spies
11 March	–	Establishes the Council of Fifty
17 March	Organize at home of William Law	Receives report of sedition
24 March	Decide Joseph and Hyrum must be killed	Receives report of intended murder. Conveys news of the danger and identities of key conspirators at the temple ³
26 March	–	Confers keys on Apostles. Says they may be called upon to die, and if so they should die like men.
31 March	Hold meeting where conspirators are required to swear an oath to kill Joseph	Advises Dennison and Robert that they may be killed, that if they are called to die, they should die as men. But Joseph thinks their youth will protect them. The young men identify Law, Cowles, and the Higbee brothers among the leaders of the conspiracy.
18 April 1844	Orders press?	Excommunicates William Law
26 April 1844	Augustine Spencer physically assaults his brother over the estate of their deceased father. Co-conspirators Charles Foster and Chauncey Higbee come to the Mayor’s office to defend Augustine, draw guns and threaten “they would be G–D–d if they	Joseph fines Augustine Spencer ⁴ for assault. He fines Charles and Robert Foster, and Chauncey Higbee for resisting authorities and for their threats.

Date	The Conspirators	Joseph Smith
1 May 1844	Francis Higbee sues Joseph Smith for the sum of Five Thousand dollars, intending to renew the accusation that Joseph attempted to seduce Nancy Rigdon.	–
15 May 1844	–	Publishes information about 1841 sexual sins of John C. Bennett and Francis Higbee (Francis had been Nancy Rigdon’s suitor).
May 1844	Augustine Spencer letter circulates in the east accusing Joseph of drinking, swearing, carousing, dancing all night, &etc., and keeping six or seven young females as wives.	–
18 May 1844	–	Excommunicates Austin Cowles
29 May 1844	–	Publishes information about 1842 sexual sins of John C. Bennett and Chauncey Higbee
7 June 1844	Publish the Expositor, with affidavits by Law and Cowles, accusing Joseph of seducing hundreds of women in Nauvoo	–
10 June 1844	–	Orders destruction of the Expositor press
12 June 1844	Swear out warrant for Joseph’s arrest. Thomas Sharp publishes 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	–	Impose martial law in Nauvoo
22 June 1844	Governor Ford demands Joseph and Hyrum go to Carthage to answer charges against them	Attempts to flee to the west with Hyrum. Is called back to Nauvoo by his friends.
24 June 1844	Augustine Spencer accuses Joseph of treason, a capital crime that requires Joseph be held in prison ⁵	–

Joseph’s human intelligence into the dealings of the conspirators ended when Dennison and Robert left the third meeting of the conspirators, barely escaping with their lives when they refuse to swear the required oath.

5

Yet the conspirators had not actually explained how they intended to kill Joseph. I doubt 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 Past Failed Attempts to Kill Joseph

5

If the conspirators wished to kill Joseph, it seems they would have wanted to examine the “failures” in the previous attempts to make Joseph a dead man.

10 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. The identities of the would-be killers were not as hidden as they
15 had believed. Each carried a tin lamp, hand-pierced with a unique pattern. Joseph knew exactly who had attacked him. Joseph declined to turn against his attackers.

20 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. But for the bravery of General Doniphan refusing to obey an illegal order, Joseph would have died in November 1838.

25 3) In August 1840 a Missouri mob attacked Nauvoo, apparently intending to harm Joseph and his family. But the small, disorganized band were confused by a torrential summer rain. Instead of attacking the Smiths, they attacked and killed Marietta Holmes. Though we have remained unaware of this attack, Bennett and presumably his circle of friends would have been
30 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 habeus corpus and escape custody.

35 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.

40 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, where he was able to win his freedom due to the unusually 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 couldn't find legal protection. And they had to make it appear that
5 Joseph was at fault.

The Strategy

10 The plot against Joseph Smith seems to have included multiple strategies. Between these various measures, the conspirators surely expected they would be able to effect their desires:

- 15 • 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.
- 20 • Create an opposition press to forment public anger and force Joseph's hand. This was served by creating the Expositor and having Thomas Sharp resume his position as editor of the Warsaw Signal.
- 25 • 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.
- 30 • Create a smear campaign against Joseph to weaken loyalty.
- Ensure the 200 sworn conspirators were ready to exploit any opportunity to kill Joseph.
- 35 • 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.
- 40 • Provide a back-up so Joseph and Hyrum could be shot and killed if the mob failed to kill the brothers.

Carthage, seen as the outcome of Conspiracy

5 After March 31, the leaders of the conspiracy revealed their plan to those who had sworn the prior week to support the killing of Joseph Smith and keep the identities of the murderers a secret.

10 The 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 Expositor, which would take time to stand up, a campaign of opposition and letters was started.

15 When Joseph, as mayor, attempted to suppress the sedition, the conspirators could use this “oppression” to further their case that Joseph had to be killed.

20 As the controversy elevated, the officials in Illinois would insist that Joseph respond to the court in Carthage. The lawyers ⁶ 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.

30 The conspirators wanted Joseph and Hyrum dead, but weren’t eager to incur collateral damage. On the day of the killing, 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 alleged Missouri and Illinois malcontents would not have naturally operated with such surgical precision. ⁷

35 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 one
40 man who went home rather than participate commented, “[I’ll] be damned if [I] would go kill a man that was confined in prison.” ⁸ According to William Daniels, approximately 30 of the group that marched back towards

Carthage were from the Warsaw militia.

5 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.

10 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.

15 John Taylor mentioned that the shot that killed Hyrum came from outside through the window. Based on this data and the angle of the shot, which was nearly horizontal, John decided the killing shot must have come from the Carthage Greys, since the mob was too close to the jail to achieve the near-horizontal angle of the killing bullet. But what John didn’t consider was the possibility of a sharpshooter positioned to fire into the room.
20 Francis Higbee, a leader of the conspiracy, was seen in Carthage that day, though he left shortly after the killings. ⁹

25 John went to the window, where he was shot. Falling on the sill, he felt himself sliding out of the window. But somehow he was pushed or pulled back into the room. John always presumed the bullet-like damage to his watch must have made the difference. But that damage is inconsistent with the damage an actual ball would have made, and no single ball could have imparted enough force to change John’s direction. It is more likely some pointy object, possibly even the watch’s own internal gears, damaged the
30 watch as John fell to the window sill. ¹⁰

35 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 have seen Hyrum downed by a bullet from outside and may have realized there was a sharp shooter outside. But to save John Taylor, Joseph put himself in the line of fire. He was shot immediately 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.

40 Raising his hands in the Masonic cry of distress, Joseph started to cry out “Oh Lord, My God! Is there no help for the widow’s son?” But he only had a chance to say “Oh Lord, My God!” before he could no longer speak.

He hung in the window for a few second before gravity pulled him out of the window to the ground beneath.

5 It is possible to determine what sort of gun killed Hyrum and possibly Joseph, each of whom were killed by the single shot from the east, outside of the jail. Most guns of the era had smooth bores, and the balls would quickly lose momentum. Bullets from such guns would rarely penetrate deep into a body, often being deflected even by sinew, much less bone. Guns with rifling in the barrel could shoot bullets traveled further and retained their momentum. Only a ball from a rifled weapon could have passed through Hyrum's entire body on the far side of the room from a second-story window with enough energy to smash his pocket watch upon exiting.

15 Though there isn't as much data to be certain Joseph was killed by a rifle, the bullet some believe did kill Joseph was shot from outside the jail by someone who was positioned to the east, as had been the individual who shot Hyrum. Hyrum had been killed when a volley was being shot through the door, as he was also wounded in the face. After Hyrum was downed, Joseph and John Taylor shot through a gap in the door, primarily trying to delay the next volley, rather than attempting to actually inflict deadly violence. In the delay won by shooting at the mob, 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, this means a rifleman to the east likely had 30-40 seconds to reload and aim after shooting Hyrum, plenty of time to be ready to exploit a possible shot at Joseph Smith.

30 **Contaminating the Testimony**

If the Nauvoo conspirators were as involved in Joseph's death as I suspect, they left one last trace of their involvement. One of the important witnesses to the events of June 27th was William Daniels. At the time of the killings, Daniels was not a Mormon. However after Joseph was dead, Daniels decided to join the Mormon Church. A few weeks before the trial, a pamphlet was published, containing the William Daniels testimony, but with fantastical modifications.

40 William Daniels had seen a young man approach Joseph's body. ¹² In the pamphlet the young man became a craven member of the mob intent on beheading Joseph.

5 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 his version of the story, Daniels said:

10 I did not write that neither did I authorize it to be written... I told Mr. Littlefield it was not correct. ¹³

15 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.

25 Lyman O. Littlefield, author of the pamphlet, had been one of Bennett's Strikers, having approached Catherine Warren for sex in 1842. Given the large number of Strikers named as members of the Nauvoo conspiracy, it seems highly 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.

30 **Conclusion**

35 Joseph was dead. Those who contributed to and possibly effected his death were well-placed to take control of Joseph's city. Many of the conspirators had been involved in Bennett's campaign of illicit intercourse in 1841-1842. It seems possible that, despite their overt outrage regarding Joseph Smith's alleged sexual excesses, some of them wished to return to the sexual freedoms they had enjoyed under Bennett's leadership.

40 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 the possibility of sealing families together, along with plural marriages when a man had been married to more

than one spouse, were clearly associated with those keys.

5 As a body, the apostles chose not to avenge Joseph's death. Instead 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.

5

26

COLLECTING THE SORROWFUL

10

Before Joseph's death in the summer of 1844, over 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

20 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 established with the majority of Joseph's followers that they were Joseph's rightful successors. They continued work toward completing the Nauvoo temple and began to marry the plural widows Joseph had left behind. To the chagrin of Emma Smith, the apostles gave the go ahead for men with plural wives to engage in sexual relations with these wives.

25

Succession Crisis

30 In the immediate aftermath of the death of Joseph and Hyrum, there was lack of clarity regarding who would lead the Church. ²

35 Two obvious candidates were Joseph's surviving brothers, Samuel and William. However Samuel would die that summer, reputedly from a bilious stomach upset, though William claimed Samuel had been poisoned. ³ William was not supported as a serious successor for long by anyone outside his own family and briefly aligned himself with Strang.

Brigham Young and the apostles believed Joseph had conferred on them the keys to carry forth the work of salvation, but this event had been conducted in strict secrecy. Their claim was complicated by the fact that the majority of the apostles were not in Nauvoo when Joseph died, as they were in other states involved in 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

Sidney Rigdon believed he was the clear successor to Joseph Smith as the sole surviving member of the First Presidency, proposing he would become the guardian of the Church. Rigdon had been volatile ever since being beaten by a mob in 1832 and since 1842 had been suspected of working against Joseph. Rigdon was in Pennsylvania when Joseph died. ⁶

Recent convert, James Strang, produced a letter that seemed to be a commission from Joseph Smith to lead the Church. ⁷ As discussed earlier, Strang's baptism occurred during the time conspirators were being sought to plot against Joseph.

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. Brigham Young, on the other hand, had been deeply involved in Joseph's teachings and practices regarding plural marriage.

When Sidney Rigdon returned from Pennsylvania, the four apostles in town invited him to meet with them on 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, and Emma had urged him to take the reigns 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 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 when Brigham Young took the stand. Brigham was supposed to have been 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, and announced to the assembled parties that a vote on the matter of succession would be held that afternoon at 2 pm. At the 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 claim of the apostles. ⁹

Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were sustained by the vast majority of those in attendance. Those 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 Nine 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.

As 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 the following women who had been wives of Joseph Smith:

BRIGHAM YOUNG	HEBER C. KIMBALL	AMASA LYMAN
Olive G. Frost	Nancy Winchester	–
Eliza R. Snow	Martha McBride	–
Emily Dow Partridge	–	Eliza Maria Partridge
Maria Lawrence	Sarah Lawrence	–
–	Lucy Walker	–

5 Women scholars believe had covenanted with Joseph Smith ¹² but were married to someone else prior to Joseph’s death remained with the other husband. These include:

WIFE	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

10 Other widows of Joseph Smith appear to have remained unattached in 1844. This would include Emma Smith, who was pregnant with Joseph’s son. ¹³

Sexuality in Plural Marriage

5 Conclusive evidence of sexuality in plural marriages prior to Joseph’s death is scant. There are only two cases where the men are known to have produced a child with their plural wives prior to Joseph’s death: William Clayton and Joseph Bates Noble. There are four additional couples where children appear to have been conceived before Joseph’s death: Heber C. Kimball with Sarah Peak Noon, Theodore Turley with Mary Clift, Lorenzo Dow Young with Harriet P. Wheeler Decker, and William Felshaw with Charlotte Waters. ¹⁴ There is no conclusive evidence that Joseph was sexually intimate with any of his plural wives, if by conclusive evidence we mean DNA confirmation.

15 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 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.” ¹⁵ Distraught, Lucy reported this to her secret husband, George. George reassured Lucy by recounting a time when he came upon Joseph washing his hands, reporting that he’d been assisting Emma in the delivery of a child for one of his plural wives. The child Emma and Joseph helped deliver needn’t have been engendered by Joseph, but clearly George A. Smith and Lucy Meserve took comfort that they were not acting out of harmony with Joseph’s teachings, despite Emma’s opposition.

20 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:

30 *[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.* ¹⁶

35 It was clear to them that plural marriages were to be consummated. Now that Brigham Young was in charge, he authorized sexual relations in plural marriages. Nine months after September 1844, just as the trial was being convened in Carthage to try the accused assassins of Joseph Smith, many plural wives in Nauvoo were pregnant plural wives 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

5 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 into a sort of family.¹⁷

10 The apostates of Nauvoo left to gather to Strang's Wisconsin refuge. Meanwhile the State and people of Illinois seemed determine to emulate every wrong enacted by Missouri.¹⁸

15 Undeterred, Brigham enacted his understanding of Joseph's teachings in a way that Joseph never had. Unlike Joseph, Brigham felt no need to avoid offending Emma Hale.

5

27

FOR ETERNITY AND TIME

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As the Nauvoo temple neared completion, the non-Mormons in Illinois tore down all pretense of civil protection for the people in Nauvoo.

15 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

20 The next threat was the beginning of the "wolf hunts" that had been 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 over 100 homes.²

25 There was an arrest warrant out for Brigham Young. In addition, word came that federal troops were advancing on Nauvoo, coming up the Mississippi River.³ It was a time of severe tension, and Brigham knew he would be responsible for moving his people west.

30 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 and care for a woman who was eternally sealed to another man?

35 Brigham apparently made a policy decision.⁴ If a woman wished to be sealed to a deceased spouse for eternity, she could—so long as the man standing proxy agreed to marry the woman for time. In this manner, every

woman who was sealed, or married eternally, to a deceased man would have a living man with the responsibility to care for her.

5 **Sealing Joseph to His Wives**

The first endowments were performed in the Nauvoo Temple starting on December 10, 1845, as 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.⁵

The temple records for the Nauvoo temple are unique because not only was the date an ordinance was performed recorded, but the time of day was noted as well. 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 person at the Church Family History Library in Salt Lake City.⁶

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.

Thus we see Brigham Young, Heber Kimball, or some other apostle or high Church leader stand proxy for almost all of Joseph's wives who choose to be sealed to Joseph in the temple.⁷ For the most part the women who were married to other men when Joseph Smith was killed continued as the wives of those men, independent of who stood proxy in the Nauvoo temple. We will examine the exceptions in the next section.

WIFE OF JOSEPH SMITH	HUSBAND AS OF JUNE 27, 1844	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 ⁸
Olive G. Frost	None	Brigham Young ⁹
Rhoda Richards	None	Brigham Young
Zina Diantha Huntington *	Henry Jacobs	Brigham Young
Mary Elizabeth Rollins	Adam Lightner	Brigham Young
Married to Heber C. Kimball		
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 ¹⁰

We see that there are only 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	HUSBAND AS OF JUNE 27, 1844	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	– 11
Almera Johnson	None – widowed	– 12
Emma Smith *	None – widowed	– 13
Fanny Young	None – widowed	– 14
Patty Bartlett	David Sessions	– 15
Fanny Alger	Solomon Custer	– 16
Flora Ann Woodworth	Carlos Gove	– 17
Ruth Vose	Edward Sayers	– 18
Esther Dutcher	Albert Smith	– 19
Mary Heron	John Snider	– 20

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. I propose we think of these proxies as more of a protector than husband. ²¹ 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, however, that bear examination.

Emma Smith – I doubt Brigham Young or Heber Kimball approached Emma Smith about marriage in 1844, while she was pregnant with Joseph’s last child, David. 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 the apostles were consummating their plural marriages. Between the property concerns and the plural marriage concerns, Emma would refuse to follow Brigham Young west and would refuse to be sealed to Joseph if that meant she had to allow a Church leaders to serve as Joseph’s proxy, with what that implied.

Elvira Cowles Holmes – It seems likely Brigham or Heber approached Elvira about becoming a plural wife. However Joseph Smith had specifically asked Jonathan Holmes to care for Elvira. ²² Thus it appears that Elvira declined to be sealed to a high Church leader. She lived out her days with Jonathan Holmes in relative obscurity, though this leads to Jonathan being the only husband of one of Joseph’s widows to serve in the Mormon Battalion. ²³ Elvira drove the family wagon and team west from Winter Quarters to Salt Lake City in 1847, and Elvira and Jonathan’s daughters married a handcart pioneer. Thus Elvira’s is the only one of the plural wives to link all the iconic Mormon trail experiences in a single family.

Helen Mar Kimball – Helen was 14 when she married Joseph, and 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 someone her own age, Horace Whitney, son of high Church leader Newel K. Whitney.

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...” ²⁴ Kingsbury was Sarah Ann’s uncle, and it seems possible this pretended marriage was never consummated. Sarah could have remained the wife of Kingsbury had she so chosen, making the argument that her father as a high Church leader could ensure her future “Church career,” but apparently she determined it would be better to actually be married to a high Church leader in the person of Heber C. Kimball.

Nancy Winchester – Nancy was only 15 when Joseph died and may have been as young as 13 when she became Joseph’s plural wife. Heber C. Kimball married her, and cared for her, but never consummated the marriage.²⁵

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Zina Diantha Huntington [Jacobs Smith] – Zina continued as Henry Jacobs wife, despite Brigham having stood proxy for Joseph. Following the scandal where Henry Jacobs presumed to seal 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, and she would eventually succeed Eliza R. Snow as President of the Relief Society, the most powerful position a woman could hold in the Church. As president of the Relief Society Zina had had more scope, in some ways, than male Mormon leaders, as this position gave Zina the ability to collaborate with women’s rights advocates throughout the United States.

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Other Polygamous Families in Nauvoo and Beyond

By the time the Mormons were forced to abandon Nauvoo, some 196 men had between them married 717 wives. As the Mormons traveled westward, these men would take on an additional 417 plural wives.²⁶ These plural marriages were not openly acknowledged to “the world.” The Mormons would not come out as advocating polygamy until 1852. Less than forty years later, Wilford Woodruff would issue a document known as the Manifesto, declaring polygamy was over. In 1904, a bit more than fifty years after the 1852 announcement, Joseph F. Smith would issue a second manifesto, reaffirming the Church had abandoned the practice of solemnizing new marriages between living women and living men who already had a living wife.

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However the twin excesses of Joseph’s many marriages and the vast “harems” of Brigham Young and other Church leaders resulting from the Nauvoo temple proxy sealing policy combined to warp the practice of polygamy during the 1800s and warp the understanding of the New and Everlasting Covenant. Aside from the impact these polygamy excesses had on the Saints themselves, Mormon polygamy caused extreme opposition from the United States government and her people. The Mormons’ days in the “wilderness” of the American west were beginning.

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ERADICATING SPIRITUAL WIFERY

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When I originally posted my Faithful Joseph series in 2013-2014, proposing that Joseph Smith himself might have refrained from consummating plural marriages, there were those who welcomed such a viewpoint.

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Others were concerned at the idea that Joseph would flout God’s clear commandment, as recorded in D&C 132. Similarly, there were those who felt that it is abusive to marry a woman and then refuse to engender children or otherwise comfort a true wife with conjugal affection.

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Whether Joseph’s clear reticence to raise up progeny with his plural wives was abusive or not, it begged the question of how pervasive polygamy subsequently became.

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If Joseph rarely or never engages in sex with covenant wives, how could Brigham Young’s actions be explained?

Brigham, the Realist

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Brigham Young was at liberty to fulfill the revelation in D&C 132 without worrying himself too much about the preferences of Emma Hales [Smith]. He may have felt that the Bible record was unambiguous regarding the duty of a levirate husband to the widow of a deceased comrade, that every widow had a right to bear a child to be raised in honor of the fallen man. This precedent is clear in the tale of Tamar, daughter-in-law to Judah. The duty of a levirate husband to a widow is described in Leviticus and re-

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iterated in the story of Ruth. The story of Samuel's mother, Hannah, shows the regard God pays to a woman's desire to raise up a child, even when it appears clear that the woman's husband already has heirs.

5 However the Biblical precedent does not mandate that everyone practice polygamy. A woman need only be provided a single son to raise up the name of her dead spouse.

10 There is no Biblical precedent for the level of polygamous activity Brigham Young required of his people after the death of Joseph Smith. However neither is an obvious Biblical precedent for the sexual heresy promulgated by Dr. John C. Bennett and his Strikers.

Brigham Young was faced with a series of challenges:

- 15 1. Provide for the physical welfare of abandoned women as the Saints fled Nauvoo.
- 20 2. Eliminate attempts to usurp the centralized and orderly authority to administer saving ordinances. According to D&C 28, there would only one person at any given time to hold these keys. Brigham clearly felt he was that single authorized individual, following the death of Joseph Smith
- 25 3. Eradicate the heresy of spiritual wifery.

Brigham Young's implementation of Celestial Marriage can be seen to have been useful in responding to each of these challenges.

30 **William Smith, Volatile Brother**

Joseph Smith had commanded Brigham Young to stand down from charging William Smith with adultery, likely in May 1842. Though William had clearly been guilty of incorrect behavior, he was ultimately not the ringleader of those seducing women in 1841-1842.

40 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 adult male remaining of the Smith family. There were those who felt that William ought to lead in the place of his dead brother.

5 However William Smith had always been a rogue among the apostles. He had beaten Joseph, breaking ribs. He had called for Joseph's death in 1838. He had refused to leave America on the foreign missions the other members of the Twelve Apostles served in 1839-40. And it appears William alone, of the apostles, was an active participant in Bennett's heresy promoting illicit intercourse in 1841-1842.

10 Intriguingly, William Smith appears to be the only Church leader who routinely charged money for his ecclesiastical services. Upon the death of his father and brother, Hyrum, William was made Church Patriarch. He voiced numerous patriarchal blessings, demanding a fee for each blessing delivered.

15 Out east, unsupervised, 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 first brought to the attention of the rest of the Apostles when Wilford Woodruff visited the east.¹⁸

25 Parley P. Pratt was sent to the east, where he 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" wasn't license for licentiousness:

30 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, where 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 powes, and in connection with the ordinances of endowment which brings to God's sanctuary [temple], and no where else.

40 [The sealing power allows for] no confusion, unlawful connection, or unvirtuous liberties.¹⁹

The full extent of confusion is beyond the scope of this post, but the overall matter was of grave concern to the leadership of the Church.

Zina wrote in her diary about the situation following an address William Smith made 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 and disgust that women put their handkerchiefs over their faces to show how much they disagreed. Apostle John Taylor attempted to rebutt the sermon, if gently.²⁰

Zina wrote, “Wm Smith spoke to the people [and] Elder Ta[y]lor made an appropriate reply, [because] it was needed.”²¹

Ultimately William was excommunicated for refusing to accept the leadership of Brigham Young.

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, it was eventually found that McCary was a fraud. He was no Indian, but a mulatto. Worse were McCary’s 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.

The worst offence was McCary’s presumption that he could perform sealings. 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 in the presence of his wife, Lucy.

The obvious perversion involved in McCary’s usurpation of authority makes it a titillating story, but it was ultimately not a threat to Brigham Young’s authority as sole holder of the sealing keys.

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 among the Mormons who had followed Lyman to 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. 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 polygamy 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 uniquely unusual marital shift, leaving the ostensibly faithful/believing father of her children to become the conjugal wife of Brigham Young.

Henry Bailey Jacobs, the man Zina had married in 1841 prior to covenanting with Joseph Smith, appeared to have been fully supportive of Brigham and the other apostles, as well as Joseph’s legacy. He 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.

Thus in February, 1846, Zina was technically married “for time” to Brigham Young. Again she is pregnant at the time with a child engendered by Henry Bailey Jacobs. Following her marriage “for time” to Brigham, Zina does not conceive again while associated with Henry Jacobs.

This, however, 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. Then, alone, 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.

When Henry Jacobs found himself in England and William W. Phelps desired to be married to additional women, Henry presumed that there was no wrong in his performing the marriages.

5 When Henry and Elder W. W. Phelps rejoined the Saints in Utah, however, 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, despite the fact that other leaders were involved in conugal polygamy.

10 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? 22

15 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 privy to what happened.

20 It seems the reason Zina was taken from Henry Jacobs and given to Brigham Young as wife was Henry Jacobs' presumption not only of sealing a couples up as though for eternity, but knowingly sealing a married man to other women

25 If Zina hadn't been Joseph's covenant wife, Henry's period of disgrace might have passed without impact to the family situation.

30 Perhaps if Zina hadn't 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.

35 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.

40 But Zina was a great and good lady who had been anointed with portentous value by virtue of the revelation were Joseph was commanded to covenant with her. She had agreed to allow Brigham to serve as Joseph's proxy in the temple. 23

Thus when Henry Jacobs ran afoul of authority and doctrine, it was not

at all clear that such an unworthy individual should be allowed to retain the hand of Zina, an unusually valued member of the religious community.

5 According to Oa Cannon, her mother had been effectively adopted by Zina when Oa's mother married Henry Chariton Jacobs. Their relationship was so close that apparently Zina confided things to her daughter-in-law that she wasn't 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, Oa's mother begged her to keep this information secret, apparently reflecting Zina's own feeling that such knowledge was best kept buried.

15 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.

20 Even in this six months there is a clue. One imagines that Henry might well have exercised the privilege of a husband as soon as he returned from England, before it was known that he had pretended to exercise the sealing power in error. Six months would be a reasonable amount of time to wait, to ensure that there was no question of the paternity of any children born by Zina after Henry's disgrace.

25 **Examining an Adultery**

30 In the 1850 Joseph Ellis Johnson was brought to Salt Lake City to stand trial for adultery. He had lain with Hannah Goddard, the estranged plural wife of Apostle Lorenzo Snow. Escorting Joseph Ellis Johnson to Salt Lake City were Apostle Orson Hyde, Joseph Kelly, and Henry Miller, founder of Kaneshville, the key Winter Quarters site.

35 Joseph Ellis Johnson had engendered a child with Hannah. Johnson came before the disciplinary council of leaders (including Brigham) in order to set the record safe. Despite Johnson's transgression, he wished to beg for forgiveness that he might be sealed to the woman he had lain with and then sealed to their children.

40 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 (the long-winded description of

spiritual wifery or illicit intercourse). Johnson denied he taught any such doctrine. He had merely slept with the young lady and things were as they were.

5 Joseph Ellis Johnson was restored to membership and sent back to Kanesville immediately following the trial. Upon his return, he met the tiny baby girl that had been born days after Johnson had been whisked off to stand trial.

10 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.

15 Ribbing 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.”^{Note} Judd, Bessie, Biography of Elizabeth Houston DeLong, written January 15, 1922. *The DeLong Family Saga*, compiled by Gladys W. Banks, assisted by Douglas W. Banks, p. 86.

25 For examples, 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. He fell in love with Elizabeth Houston, the twenty-year-old oldest 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.

35 Margaret proposed a catch 22. 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.

40 “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.”

Erastus Snow performed the ceremony wedding Elizabeth Houston to Albert DeLong on January 3, 1867. As Widow Houston had feared,

Elizabeth and Albert left St. George as soon as they were married.

Artificial Shortage of Women

5 In our modern age, countries with large shortages of women are associated with terrible violence against women. However these countries (e.g., India, China) have a shortage of women precisely because they despise women to begin with.

10 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.

15 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.”^{note} Tucker, Reed, Sorry, ladies, there really is a man shortage, *New York Post*, August 25, 2015, available online at <http://nypost.com/2015/08/25/hey-ladies-here-are-8-reasons-youre-single/>,
20 [single/](http://nypost.com/2015/08/25/hey-ladies-here-are-8-reasons-youre-single/), retrieved November 29, 2015. In other words, they act like the Strikers of Nauvoo.

25 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 prior marital commitments.

30 Brigham also put in place a liberal divorce policy. Husband or wife unhappy? Simply pay \$5 dollars and the marriage was over. This meant that a young woman didn’t need to feel trapped if the marriage she had initially agreed to turned out to be a mistake.

35 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 was almost 50. According to one history I’ve read, Barnard was a butcher. Given Sarah’s youth, it is possible that this “marriage” was more like a live-in engagement rather than a consummated marriage.

40 Things didn’t work out. The marriage was ended, and Sarah went on to marry Miles Weaver.

By making it clear that the only accepted Mormon marriages were

those officiated by Brigham Young or officiated by his express permission, Brigham made it impossible for anyone after roughly 1850 to pretend their ordinance satisfied the requirement that was a pre-requisite to the Celestial Kingdom, the highest heaven where families are able to be together forever.

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By making polygamy practically mandatory, certainly mandatory for any Church leader, Brigham made it so any woman could aspire to have the best man in her community. Brigham put women firmly in the driver seat when it came to creating their family.

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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. What modern ears usually fail to hear is the reference to the prostitution of women implicit in the illicit intercourse of Nauvoo.

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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. They presume the men were getting enough at home, so to speak.

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However the artificial shortage of women created by polygamy meant that Mormon women did not need to sell their bodies for food. Even if the women themselves were not plural wives, the interconnected family fabric plural marriages created in Brigham's polygamous Mormon community provided a robust support system for all members of the community.

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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 who wished to be married and have children had ample opportunity to do so, and could pick from a pool of steady and righteous men without concern that a good man already had a wife. 25 The combination of rigid rules yet allowance for divorce resulted in widespread adherence to the marital standards. Beyond embracing marriage with strict rules of fidelity, the pervasiveness of the unique Mormon form of marriage can be seen in the large number of women who had been a spouse in a polygamous household. By 1870 that number reached 50% of all adult women in the community.

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Killed By The 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 left in a vulnerable position that invited the possibility for spiritual wifery to regain a hold.

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But the decade following Brigham's death demonstrated the challenge of using plural marriage to kill spiritual wifery. Like a patient who is cured of cancer but dies of chemotherapy, Brigham had accomplished a great good by implementing quasi-mandatory mortal polygamy, a unsustainable programme in the long-term.

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FIFTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS

The Mormon exodus and pioneer period tends to be well understood by Mormons. However as we typically don't focus on the history of polygamy as part of that history, I feel it is useful to trace the impact of polygamy in the pioneer history between Brigham Young's departure from Nauvoo until we see the Mormon Church denounce new plural marriages in 1890 (and again in 1904).

For purposes of this discussion, the Fifty Years I presume we agree that Mormons were in the wilderness stretch from their exodus from Nauvoo and the state of Illinois (starting 4 February 1846) to Utah's admission as a state of the United States (January 4, 1896).

1846 – Winter Quarters

Brigham Young had 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. But not everyone prepared the requested supplies, and by the winter of 1846/1847 the Mormon refugees had only gotten to Nebraska, where they established Winter Quarters.

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. The funds from the service of these 500 significantly helped those left behind.

Reluctant Polygamist

Numerous plural marriages were solemnized at Winter Quarters, as single women without supplies attached themselves to the able men who had not left with the Mormon Battalion. Babies born to women who had contracted plural marriages in Nauvoo make up a portion of the 300 who died that terrible winter, including the babies of Joseph's widows Emily Partridge, Lucy Walker, and Elvira Annie Cowles.

1847 – This is the Place

The pioneers did not reach the Salt Lake valley until late July, 1847. The crops they got planted did not yield significant food. The likelihood of a second winter of crushing illness and death loomed.

The Mormon Battalion was ordered to remain in California to avoid increasing the stress on the meager supplies available. Again, the pressure of pregnant wives caused great concern and 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 boy, who lay near death. John Taylor blessed the boy, then came back to the Old Fort, praying that the Lord would bless the child to live. Shortly thereafter the Indians approached the fort again, this time bringing gifts of sego lily bulbs, thistle root, and a nutty mash. Weeks later, when the nutty mash was exhausted and the pregnant women were again suffering, John Taylor traveled to visit the Indians again. 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.

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 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 polygamy. ¹ 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.

5 “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.”

10 Orson Pratt had notably been the apostle whose wife had been seduced by John C. Bennett, and Orson’s original refusal to sustain Joseph Smith as innocent of the seduction Bennett had accused Joseph of attempting had caused great turmoil in the Quorum of the Twelve while Joseph was in hiding during 1842.

15 In the wake of the open acknowledgement that Mormons practiced polygamy, opposition to the Mormons and their beliefs intensified. It is widely presumed that the open preaching of polygamy 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. 20 In 1852 thirty-five companies traveled to Utah. Two years later the number was less than half as many. ²

25 1856 – Arrest and Handcarts

A couple of years after the 1852 announcement, a reporter for Putnam’s Magazine secured an interview with the US Marshall, Mormon Joseph Leland Heywood, and two of his three wives. According to the article that appeared in the magazine 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, for 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.” ³ A month after the article was published, the 40-year-old Heywood married his 16-year-old ward, Mary Bell, ⁴ and proceeded to Washington DC.

40 Once in DC, Heywood was notified he had been fired from his position as US Marshall. Further, Heywood was put on house arrest under suspicion of stealing five dollars (a charge that was later found to be false). Reeling from the twin blows of being fired and arrested, Heywood visited Senator Stephen A. Douglas, who he had known when Heywood was a successful

merchant in Quincy, Illinois. When Senator Douglas received Heywood, he inquired after Heywood’s wife, who he had known, asking “if she was living.”

5 Meanwhile those who were willing to embrace Mormonism in the face of polygamy had only the most meager economic resources. As those who had traveled to the Salt Lake valley walked most the way, Brigham Young decided that these impoverished converts might be able to walk, pushing their few belongings in hand-drawn carts. Each handcart company would be accompanied by a wagon company 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 arrived in Utah nine weeks after leaving Florence, in late September or early 15 October.

20 Two more handcart companies arrived in Florence roughly a month after the initial three. After deliberation, a majority of these pioneers decided to press on to Utah, hoping the warm weather would hold through October. 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 of the handcart pioneers died that snowy October. The immediate cause of their deaths was the decision of the local Church authorities in Florence (headed by Franklin Richards) to urge the pioneers forward despite the late date. Brigham Young, as the one who developed the handcart plan, was also condemned for the disaster. But it bears noting that the poverty that had inspired the handcart plan and the animosity of the individuals in Florence that made a late departure seem desirable were caused in large part by the Church’s stance regarding polygamy. ⁵

30 Unaware of the terrible weather ahead, Heywood left Washington DC in October to travel to Utah with the mail party. Delayed by weather, the mail party reached Devil’s Gate the day after Christmas, 1856. They spent the rest of the winter snowed in at the horrible landmark, where the bodies of the recent dead had been left. Despite the starvation conditions, 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 40 March 23. ⁶

As a consequence of accounting disputes, and desiring to avoid being bilked to support polygamists or pay for their protection, the US

government for decades 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. After fighting for the payments for decades, Heywood was finally able to obtain the funds and pay those who had provided services.

1858 – The Utah War

In 1857, the United States decided to act on its paranoia about the potentially seditious activities of the Utah Mormons. Secretary of War Floyd was a Southern sympathizer and was anxious to prevent the US government from using military force against a rebellious South. The possibility that polygamous Utah was in rebellion served as a convenient pretext for sending an army thousands of miles to the west.

The army began to form in May 1857. That same month well-loved Mormon apostle Parley P. Pratt had been gunned down by the husband of Eleanor McLean, an alleged drunkard and violent man. ⁷ After years of abuse, Eleanor had escaped her former marriage and sought to free her children from the man she'd so feared, aided by Parley P. Pratt, who she now regarded as her husband.

Word of Parley's death arrived with word that an army was forming to march on Utah. Brigham sent out word that no one was to interact with the various wagon trains passing through Utah. But failure to interact meant inability for these wagon trains to obtain necessary food and water. Tensions rose, resulting in the Mountain Meadows Massacre on September 11, 1857, where a group of Mormons in Iron County attacked the Baker-Fancher wagon train headed for California. Only children too young to report on the massacre were spared. ⁸

In light of the advancing army and the terrible tragedy of Mountain Meadows, Brigham required the Saints to gather in Provo, a settlement south of natural topography very similar to Saratoga, where the embattled Americans had finally been able to turn the tide against the British during the Revolutionary War. A few men were left behind in the settlements, ready to destroy all "improvements" on the land to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Army.

Once the Army approached Utah, negotiations ensued to avoid what was anticipated to become a bloody and damaging interaction. It wasn't until late June that terms were established, and the Army marched

peacefully through the valley. By early July, when the Mormons began to return home, they had lost yet another growing season. Worst, the bodies of unfed livestock littered fields throughout the Mormon settlements. By some accounts, the Mormon economy would not recover for ten years.

The Utah War, prompted in large part by outsider concerns revolving around polygamy, created horrific economic conditions that further increased the need for leading men to reach out to protect Mormon women in the community.

Meanwhile Congress passed the 1862 Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act. ⁹ However given the US involvement in Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln decline 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 – at some point leading up to 1870, roughly 50% of the women had been married to a man with more than one wife.

Not obviously related, Brigham Young didn't want anything to do with outside economies. By demonizing trade outside of the Mormon community, Brigham Young alienated merchants, particularly William Godbe. Godbe and his supporters began publishing in 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, breaking the economic control Young held over the state of Utah. Godbe 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. Opponents thought the "oppressed Mormon women" would reject the political involvement of their men, and 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 three times the previous male-only

Mormon electorate. And the women voted the way their men did.

As the opponents of Brigham Young realized their error, taking the vote away from the Mormons became the highest priority.

5

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 Act ¹⁰ 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, even if no marriage certificate could be found. This act of living together was termed co-habitation. During the weeks preceding passage of the act, the non-voting representative to Congress was denied his elected seat in Congress because he was a polygamist. ¹¹

Plural wives began going underground, and families throughout the Mormon settlements would open their homes to women without asking any questions. Even so, 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. But there were deaths. For example, George Manwaring, author of the hymn “Oh How Lovely Was the Morning,” died of pneumonia contracted while in prison under the Edmunds Act.^{11a}

Ironically, a man keeping a mistress was not considered co-habitation. Thus the non-Mormon politicians of the day could continue carrying on as they wished. This included legalized prostitution near the army barracks, in Salt Lake City around second street, and in Ogden. ¹² These legal brothels were populated with non-Mormon women brought in to satisfy the sexual needs of non-Mormon men in the region.

From the time polygamy had been formally announced as a doctrine in 1852, Mormon apologists had argued that polygamy reduced the need for prostitution. Men commonly think this reduction was due to men being able to “get enough” at home. Women usually realize that the reduction came from women having no need to resort to the oldest profession to support their children. Even the many women who didn’t choose to marry into polygamy had vast extended families by virtue of the polygamy of others.

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.

5 1886 – John Taylor Seeks Revelation

In 1885 the hunt for the Mormon leadership had intensified to the point that John Taylor, Mormon President and prophet, decided he had to go underground.

10

As pressure mounted on the Church, John 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. In John’s mind, it seems, polygamy was synonymous with the New and Everlasting Covenant. Given the way he had learned of “the Principle” in Nauvoo, this was an understandable mistake, a mistake Brigham Young and Heber Kimball might not have made, had they still been alive.

15

The response John 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.

20

Two men in the safe house where the revelation was received would play a large part in advocating polygamy after the death of John Taylor. One was John’s son, Apostle John W. Taylor. The other was the owner of the safe house, Lorin C. Woolley.

25

30 1887 – The Edmunds-Tucker Act: Taking Away Mormon Property

Four 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, expecting to thus entrap the Mormon Prophet. They would invade her bedroom whenever it was possible John Taylor had returned to comfort his dying wife. Sophia’s son, at the time still a monogamist, stood at her side, witnessing these indignities. Sophia would die without ever seeing her husband again. ¹³

40

Second, David Patten Rich, son of noted polygamist Charles Coulson Rich, was arrested for robbing a bank. His example as a moral degenerate

produced by Mormon polygamy became an important part in the lobbying to pass the Edmunds-Tucker Act. One of the conditions of the Act would confiscate the property of the Mormon Church, leaving it with no more than \$50,000 in assets. ¹⁴ David Rich was convicted of felony by the law and excommunicated by the Church. His wife, Alice Ann Kimball, divorced him and married Mormon apostle, Joseph F. Smith. ¹⁵

Third, the Edmunds-Tucker Act passed. The assets of the Mormon Church became subject to seizure. ¹⁶

Finally, heartbroken by the death of Sophia and passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act, John Taylor died roughly two months after receiving news of these twin disasters in the same day. ¹⁷

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. ¹⁸ Woodruff had not been in Nauvoo during the final period of Joseph Smith's life, as he was heading up the Eastern States Mission at the time. Woodruff had not become a polygamist until the fall of 1846, as famine threatened the Mormons at Winter Quarters. The two young women Woodruff married would not submit to his request to avoid staying out all night with other men, so they were sent back to their families. It is not clear if these plural marriages had been consummated, nor is it certain that the women had engaged in sexual activity with the men with whom they had spent their nights.

As federal scrutiny intensified and the leaders of the Church went underground, Woodruff had ceased living with all but one of his plural wives.

In 1890 Woodruff faced the realization that the Edmunds-Tucker Act would result in the loss of the temples, the location where Mormons performed saving ordinances on behalf of their dead. He felt inspired that it was more important to retain these properties and the ability to perform the saving ordinances than maintain the practice of polygamy in mortality.

In September 1890, President Woodruff issued the Anti-Polygamy

Manifesto, advising that Mormons should not enter into any future plural marriages prohibited by the law of the land. ¹⁹

Four years later, Woodruff's revision of the Mormon understanding of temple ordinances took another dramatic turn. From the time of the 1846 temple ordinances in Nauvoo, it had not been possible for many saints to seal themselves along family lines. And so the practice had grown up of sealing people to Church leaders. In April, 1894, Wilford Woodruff stated that sealings should be performed linking individuals to their actual parents.

²⁰ 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. Initially advocates of statehood desired to separate women's suffrage from the matter of Utah's status within the United States, concerned that opposition to giving the vote to women might derail recognition of Utah as a state. But support of the women led to inclusion of their right to vote with the language making Utah a state. Despite the long history of female suffrage in Utah and denial of the vote to Mormons, only Wyoming and Colorado had granted the vote to women by the time Utah became a state. Female suffrage would not be granted throughout the United States until 1920.

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. Various communities, such as Colonia Juarez, Mexico, sprung up just outside the US border, filled with plural wives and their children.

Though the majority of Mormons shrugged off polygamy willingly, a select few clung to the doctrine, believing it was a critical component of the restored gospel. The days of defiance were about to begin.

DAYS OF DEFIANCE

5
10 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.

15 Yet even when Wilford Woodruff announced that plural marriage should end, not everything was over.

20 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.

25 A few men involved in plural marriage had married young brides in the days before the Manifesto. These were often inspired by John Taylor's dying conviction that plural marriage was the New and Everlasting Covenant, and that this covenant could never righteously be taken from the earth.

30 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

5 Once the Morrill Act was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1879 and 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 the reality of having already pledged herself secretly to another. ¹ Thus for over a decade prior to Wilford Woodruff's announcement ending polygamy, Mormon culture had adopted means of hiding the actual practice of polygamy.

10 Annie Clark Tanner tells of the women who existed in the Mormon Underground—pregnant women who would be taken in without question, who 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.

15 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

25 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

30 When President Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto in 1890, it wasn't clear whether the ban on plural marriages was supposed to include ending existing plural marriages, or whether plural marriages might still be possible to contract in countries other than the United States, countries where either polygamy wasn't illegal or where the government was willing to turn a blind eye, as Abraham Lincoln had done in the US during the 1860s. Given a culture where participants in plural marriages weren't even willing to tell the prophet himself of their status, the Manifesto became something the Church couldn't effectively police.

Testing the Waters

As intense anti-polygamy persecution mounted against the Church and then in light of the Manifesto, Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow had
5 both made a decision to sever the earthly ties with their plural wives, spending the rest of their lives with only one of their wives.

Others, however, continued to believe polygamy was a fundamental principle of exaltation. So though most Saints were willing to follow the
10 lead of Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow in forsaking polygamy, a few resisted.

One of these was B. H. Roberts, born 1857 in England, who started adulthood as a boozing, gambling miner who couldn't read. By the time
15 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 1896 B. H. Roberts defied Church advice,⁵ and ran for Congress. He won election as a Democratic member of the House of Representatives.
20 Because Utah was newly a state, this meant Roberts, a practicing polygamist, would be a voting member of Congress if allowed to take his elected seat.

Outraged, anti-polygamy individuals throughout the United States signed the petition to bar Roberts from being seated in Congress. The
25 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

The Actions of the Sons

A majority of high Church officials continued to privately acknowledge
35 their plural wives. However those men who had taken on plural wives before the beginning of intense government sanctions were now in their sixties, and their wives were older women, most of whom were past the age of childbearing.

A minority had been willing to marry even in the face of the dire
40 sanctions of the Edmunds-Tucker Act and growing opposition to polygamy in the Church. With Utah now a state, this minority decided that it was necessary to continue to marry additional women.

In 1901 the three youngest apostles married additional plural wives. John W. Taylor and Abraham O. (Owen) Woodruff were the sons of
5 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.

John W. Taylor, in his mid-forties, was the eldest of these youngest apostles, both in age and in seniority in the quorum. It is almost certain that
10 he was the ring-leader of this trio of apostles entering into post-manifesto polygamy. He had been guarding the door in 1886 in the home of John W. Woolley⁷ when his father, John Taylor, had allegedly 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.
15 President Taylor clearly believed New and Everlasting Covenant was synonymous with plural marriage.

In January, 1901, someone performed a marriage binding the married
20 27-year-old Owen Woodruff to a second wife, Eliza Avery Clark, an 18-year-old who had been born in Farmington, Utah. The following year on August 29, 1901, someone performed marriage ceremonies binding John W. Taylor to two half-sisters as his fourth and fifth wives, college-educated Eliza Roxie and Phoebe Welling, also from Farmington, Utah. In 1901 Matthias Cowley also took on an additional plural wife, Mary Lenora
25 Taylor.⁸

Given the absolute secrecy of the plural marriages solemnized after the manifesto, it isn't always possible to determine who was officiating at post-manifesto plural marriages or where they occurred. However it is certain the
30 1900/1901 actions of this trio of apostles lent legitimacy to the idea that plural marriages could be entered into despite President Woodruff's 1890 Manifesto. These three were young, handsome men, not old men with old wives well past the age of engendering children.

The Smoot Hearings

In 1902 Apostle Reed Smoot obtained permission from the Church to
40 run for the U.S. Senate, and he was seated in 1903. But opposition to Reed Smoot was immediate. As a Mormon, he was suspected of being a polygamist, and as an apostle, he was suspected of being a mere puppet for the Mormon hierarchy.

Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow had both passed away, leaving Joseph F. Smith as the president of the Church. Joseph F. Smith was one of those who had refused to put away his plural wives.

5 The Smoot hearings would produce a huge record. According to Kathleen Flake:

10 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.

20 Eventually, despite four years of hearings, the Senate was unable to muster the 2/3 majority required to expel a member from the Senate.⁹ The most famous soundbite from the trial was uttered by Senator Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania. Addressing the subject of polygamy, Penrose reportedly glared at one or more of his Senate colleagues who had a reputation for philandering and said:

30 “As for me, I would rather have seated beside me in this chamber a polygamist who doesn’t polyg than a monogamist who doesn’t monag.”

35 However in 1904 the outcome of the Smoot hearings was far from certain. Earlier that year, Church President Joseph F. Smith was asked to testify before Congress. He acknowledged 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:

40 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

5 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.

10 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.

15 JOSEPH F. SMITH,
President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Significantly, B. H. Roberts seconded the new statement.

20 The next day Owen Woodruff’s first wife, Helen, died of small pox in Mexico.¹⁰ Owen Woodruff himself passed away of small pox later that month.¹¹ The boyish apostle’s audacious practice of post-Manifesto polygamy would therefore be largely forgotten by history.¹²

25 However John W. Taylor and Matthias Cowley continued to solemnize plural marriages, despite the 1904 reiteration of the Church’s position.¹³ When they were called as witnesses in the Smoot hearings, they went into hiding, fleeing the country.¹⁴

30 In 1905, Taylor and Cowley were called before their colleagues in the Church hierarchy. They both resigned from the Quorum of the Twelve at the request of Joseph F. Smith on October 28, 1905.

35 In 1909, after Reed Smoot was no longer at risk of being ousted from the US Senate, John W. Taylor married Ellen Sandburg, his secretary.¹⁵ 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, who 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.

40 Legend has it that John W. Taylor accepted his excommunication, but it broke his heart.¹⁶ His financial dealings faltered now that he was no longer a member of the Church.¹⁷ He was diagnosed with stomach cancer after

the excommunication, and died in 1916 with President Joseph F. Smith sitting vigil for the last days of John's life. Some take the prophet's vigil at the deathbed of his longtime friend as a sign of their friendship. Others presume the prophet stood watch to ensure no one attempted to restore John's blessings before he died.¹⁸

Matthias Cowley curbed his involvement in performing and advocating plural marriage after he was stripped of his priesthood. In 1936, after twenty-five years, Matthias was again ordained to the priesthood, but he was never readmitted to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. However Matthias' son, Matthew Cowley, would rise to prominence in the Church, becoming an apostle in 1945.¹⁹

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, the man in whose house John Taylor allegedly received the 1886 revelation regarding the New and Everlasting Covenant.²⁰

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, that the Church leadership had fundamentally erred in ceasing the practice. Years later, John Woolley's son, Lorin, would allege 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. However as the years had severed the linkage between the Covenant and plural marriage, Lorin Woolley specifically claimed it was necessary that no year pass without children being born into the principle of plural marriage.

In 1912 Lorin Woolley published the first account of the 1886 revelation.²¹ The story became more elaborate as the years passed.

In 1914 John W. Woolley was excommunicated for performing plural marriages in his role as a temple sealer. Despite this public censure, John and 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."²² 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, whose dead apostle-sons had each participated in post-Manifesto polygamy.²³ Lorin C. Woolley assumed the mantle of leadership in his father's movement, and in 1929 published the authoritative account of what he claimed occurred in 1886. The Woolleys said they were perpetuating necessary and fundamental tenets of Mormonism, including polygamy and the United Order.²⁴ Thus those who adhere to the Woolley faith tradition are often referred to as fundamentalists.

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 that had excommunicated the polygamists. While Lorin claims the Council of Friends dated back to Adam, many accounts simply report that Lorin organized the Council of Friends. The vast majority of modern polygamists in the Mormon tradition are offshoots of Lorin Woolley's 1929 Council of Friends, with a small minority of polygamists claiming they broke off from the mainstream Mormon Church without looking to Lorin Woolley for their authority.²⁵ Lorin, whose claim to authority was so controversial, would never live to see the multiple independent fundamentalist traditions his claims would spawn, with some leaders of the disparate fundamentalist sects found guilty of crimes from murder to rape and incest.

Mormon fundamentalist 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. In 2003 Jon Krakauer wrote *Under the Banner of Heaven*, a book describing the violent fundamentalism of Dan and Ron Lafferty, brothers who murdered their sister-in-law, Brenda Lafferty, and her infant daughter Erica.²⁶

40 What of the Taylors?

Given the history of those who attempted and even now still attempt to continue polygamy after the Church presidents called for its cessation, one

family is of particular interest.

5 What have the descendants of John Taylor and John Whitaker Taylor chosen? The former went to his death bed believing that polygamy was necessary. The later persisted in this belief as a high Church leader, until he was stripped of every privilege of Church membership.

10 What did the third and fourth generations from John Taylor and his son choose?

15 They chose to remain in the mainstream 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, telling them of their status as precious children of a storied heritage, children that fundamentalists would desire to seduce to their cause.

20 As of 1980, it was alleged that only one descendant of John Taylor had been involved in fundamentalist polygamy, and she had the marriage annulled as soon as she became aware that her husband was a polygamist.²⁷ Thus I am unaware of any descendant of John Taylor who has knowingly entered into fundamentalist polygamy, and none have remained.

25 If there was a secret polygamous way that led to “true” salvation, is it not curious that no descendant of the Taylors has sought that “true” salvation?²⁸

30 Though the vast majority of self-identified Mormons reject contemporary fundamentalist polygamy, the history of polygamy has had a critical impact on Mormon theology and eschatology, an impact most fail to recognize.

5

GOD’S STRANGE ACT: A LEGACY

10

15 In the fall of 2012, Taylor volunteered to campaign for one of the two US 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, only to eventually have to tell well-wishers that, no, he was no longer dating this woman or that woman.

20

25 In the pre-dawn mist, Taylor surveyed the group of fellow campaigners that had gathered at the vans that would take them 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.

30 After dawn, the vans of campaigners stopped for a break. Taylor noticed that amidst the older folks and helpful children, there was a woman. 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 their discussion, not wanting to make his new friends feel he was willing to ditch them just for an attractive woman. Particularly if the woman turned out to be much older or married or otherwise uninterested in a person like himself. However Taylor’s new friends urged him to meet the lady on the other side of the group.

35

Her name, Taylor learned, was Shazia. And, no, she wasn't in her thirties, nor was she married. As the weekend progressed, in the midst of their village of fellow campaigners, 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, with the subject "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 could solemnize eternal linkages between our family members reaching through all generations of mortal existence, all countries, all eras.

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, one 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 had 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 us consolation, confirming our 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, to save all mankind by binding us together in families, with the saving ordinance of baptism performed by proxy as a prerequisite to eternal union.

No other theology, specifically not the theologies of breakaway Mormon groups, envisions this 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 was 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.

Despite the huge amount of controversy and suffering endured over polygamy, I submit that Joseph's introduction of polygamy as part of the

New and Everlasting Covenant was merely a procedural footnote to the great work of sealing mankind together.

5 In great stories, the hero's quest is to right the great wrong that looms over the people. Christ died that all might be saved, that all might be resurrected. "Else why are they baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all," Paul told the Corinthians. From this exasperated comment, we get a picture of a primitive Christian church that was performing ordinances on behalf of the departed, extending salvation to more than just those few who are privileged to hear it and embrace it in this life.

10 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, with the pre-requisite of baptism, 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.

15 A culture willing to kill over polygamy would almost certainly not have willingly birthed an 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.

25 **Why the Secrecy?**

Of late there have been those disturbed that the Church appeared to hide the past regarding polygamy. Something, surely, was rotten about this, if it had to be so thoroughly buried.

30 Three factors come into play. First is that polygamy isn't what you want dominating an initial conversation about salvation and the precious gift of Christ's atonement. And if not discussed then, when? Currently polygamy is discussed, but typically not until one is studying the history of the Church, and 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 polygamy yet don't have the background to understand why God might have restored this "principle."

40 Second, there are those who learn of polygamy 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, and some have adult memories of Apostle Richard Lyman's excommunication in 1943, for having intimate relations with a woman Richard had originally merely planned to have sealed to him as a plural wife after his death.

5 Third, the actual history of Nauvoo polygamy has been clouded by obfuscation, originally intended to protect the repentant souls who had been seduced by John C. Bennett and his Strikers. How could the Church tell those things that had been stricken from the record, details that had only ever been known to a select few who took the secrets to their graves over a century ago?

10 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.

20 **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 the reconstruction I had made. I actually welcomed that, because I do want to base my reconstruction on the best data available.

30 What I hoped for but wasn't sure of were the numbers 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 polygamy had remained a troublesome mystery.

35 Some have supposed me dogmatic in my views. Yet had I encountered solid data during this journey that altered my original premise, I would have changed.

40 In fact, you have seen this. I originally didn't know the extent of John Bennett's seduction of Joseph's people. I didn't originally think the Strikers had been directly involved in Joseph's killing. I didn't originally consider my ancestor, Austin Cowles, to be a major conspirator contributing to Joseph's death. I didn't originally acknowledge how fundamentally responsible my

ancestor, John W. Taylor, had been 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 didn't know that Eliza R. Snow had modified her 1842 poem about marriage or that she had written describing an intimate relationship⁸ with "that Foul hearted spirit, the traitor, The vile, faithless, rottenhearted wretch..." presumably John C. Bennett.

The history I have reconstructed tells of horrific evil. And yet it brings peace. Recently I received a letter from someone related to Mary Clift, whose child has long been presumed to be one of the first children born into polygamy, a child I have asserted was fathered by a Striker, one Gustavus Hills.⁹

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 don't 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 first 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. I believe the totality of the data shows Joseph to have been likely faithful to Emma and perhaps too willing to forgive those who would ultimately kill him.

Joseph's Legacy

If Joseph Smith was inspired by God, then today's Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or Mormonism represents the result. Mormonism 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. Wooley. 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 embrace that baptism that has been performed on their behalf and choose Christ and God.

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, it all its complexities.

This, then, is the legacy of Joseph, and the reason it was worth giving his life 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. Without that opportunity, I would not have been forced to find the next level of documentation you seen 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, which 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, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher. While I may not always agree with their interpretations, I am grateful for their scholarship and probity.

Finally, I am grateful to my family, for their support and example. In particular, I am grateful to my husband, Bryan Stout, for his unwavering love for me and all mankind, and for his suggestions throughout the years,

Meg Stout

pointing me to works such as Compton's *In Sacred Loneliness* and Hales' *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*. If I know that men can be good and great, it is because I know Bryan Stout.

5

10

APPENDIX A:
THE PEACE OF THY CHILDREN

15

Two of my sisters asked me to provide them a simpler version of the history, one that could be shared with children, one that would skip all the distressing anatomical details. I wrote a draft, which they tweaked and used to explain this history to their children, all younger than ten years old.

This is the result: Mom tested and kid approved.

20

The Gospel teaches that families are meant to be together forever, but after Jesus died, this was one of the truths to be lost. Some kings and queens changed the official understanding of marriage to fit their ideas because they didn't understand that families are supposed to be forever.

25

When Joseph Smith was born, many churches taught that marriage ended with death and didn't last forever. They also taught that it was wicked to have more than one spouse. When Joseph read about Abraham in the Old Testament, he asked God how Abraham could have two wives and still be a righteous prophet.

30

God told Joseph that 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 linked to their mothers and fathers. But if Abraham could only be married to one person, then one of his sons would

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not be able to be in his family forever.

5 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, and if marriage didn't end with death, then the man would have two wives.

10 Then God gave Joseph a commandment to marry another wife. Joseph didn't want to have more than one wife because he had always been taught it was wrong and he felt it would be mean to his wife Emma. He loved her so much and she loved him. But God wanted to restore the knowledge that a man could have more than one wife in the eyes of God.

15 A young woman named Fanny worked for Joseph and Emma in their home. Emma was good friends with Fanny. Joseph and Fanny were married, like how Abraham married the woman who worked for his wife. Unlike Abraham, Joseph did not have a baby with Fanny, and Fanny wasn't happy with the way things worked out, so she left. Emma was very unhappy that Fanny left, and she complained to Joseph's friend.

20 Rumors arose saying Joseph had committed adultery. But Joseph and Emma and Fanny never told what had happened. Fanny's family trusted Joseph though, and believed in him for the rest of their lives.

25 At this time, Joseph was working on running a bank for Zion. All over the country everyone's money lost value, and some people in the church blamed Joseph that their money lost value. Some got so angry that they betrayed Joseph to Missouri soldiers. They locked Joseph in jail for many months. The people in Missouri burned the Mormon homes and bragged about killing Mormon men and boys.

30 Those who stayed true to Joseph left Missouri and went to a swamp that became Nauvoo. Many got very sick because swamps are not healthy places to live. Joseph was allowed to escape from the jail. He came to Nauvoo and blessed the sick and healed them, and the people worked together to change the swamp into a beautiful city, their own Zion. 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.

40 But violence continued against the Mormons and the attackers went unpunished. After a terrible attack where a woman was murdered in her home, a politician named Dr. Bennett told Joseph he would get protection and recognition from the government for Nauvoo. When he did this,

everyone was so happy with him that they elected him to be the mayor of Nauvoo and a leader in the city's army.

5 Dr. Bennett planned to marry one of the Mormon women. But Joseph was told Dr. Bennett was already married, and that he was a bad man. Joseph wasn't sure he should just believe a story, so he sent a missionary to investigate. The missionary found that the story was right, Dr. Bennett was already married and had lied about it and had done other wicked things. Joseph told Dr. Bennett to stop talking to the young woman about marriage. But Joseph didn't like to shame people, so he didn't tell others about Dr. Bennett's past.

10 Joseph had been ignoring the commandment about marriage, like how Jonah ignored the commandment to preach to Nineva. 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.

20 But 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, and 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 just wanted to feel good. He didn't want to take care of a wife and children.

25 Dr. Bennett liked feeling good more than being good. He convinced a married woman to commit adultery with him so he could feel good. Then he convinced a widow in the same way. When his friends discovered what Bennett was doing, he told them that this was a new teaching, that 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 wouldn't get pregnant. Lots of men and women became involved in this secret sin.

30 At this time, Joseph didn't 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. So God sent an angel with a sword. The angel told Joseph that if he didn't obey the commandment to marry more women, he would be destroyed and his people would be destroyed. But Joseph was confused about what to do. He talked with some women he had felt inspired to marry years earlier. 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.

5 But God wanted His people to understand that marriage was for creating loving families that took care of each other and making relationships that would last forever. This was opposite from the idea of Dr. Bennett who taught that a man and a woman could be together like they were married just for a little while to feel good, and that they didn't need to take care of each other or have a relationship that lasted forever.

10 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.

15 Sarah Kimball was a generous woman. She thought it would be a great idea to form a society that could sew shirts for the men building the temple. Joseph felt inspired that this society should do more than sew shirts. It should be an organization for the women of the Church to learn the gospel, where they could do good works, and where they could learn to be wary of the evil men trying to teach them adultery was okay.

20 Emma became president of the woman's group, named 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 the so-called "spiritual wifery" that taught women that adultery was okay.

25 Two months after Relief Society was formed, five brave women came forward. They told the righteous 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 that Dr. Bennett had been the one who invented the lies. And so Joseph kicked Dr. Bennett out of the Church and made it so Bennett wasn't mayor or part of the city's army.

30 In the months that followed, more women came forward, confessing to being misled. Some of these women gave sworn testimony before the city council. But whenever Joseph could, he protected the women and men from public shame if they repented. In those days it was a terrible thing to sin in that manner. Joseph knew that some people would never forgive if they knew. And he knew that repentance means the sin is remembered no more by God.

5 As Joseph and Emma taught righteousness, Joseph would also teach the women about God's teachings that marriage could endure into eternity. To show that the women who had been deceived into committing adultery were truly forgiven, Joseph would have them married to him for eternity. Some righteous fathers who wanted their daughters to have a good husband thought it would be best if their daughters married Joseph in eternity.

10 Dr. Bennett was so angry about being publicly disgraced that he started telling lies about Joseph. He wrote articles for 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 told them about, Joseph Smith deserved to be killed.

15 In Nauvoo, Emma and Joseph thought everything was fixed. To fulfill the commandment from the angel and from God, Emma told Joseph to marry two orphaned women, Emily and Eliza Partridge. But Emily and Eliza had never known about the liars who taught adultery was okay. They thought this marriage would be just like the marriages in the Old Testament, where all the wives had lots of children.

20 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 didn't want Emily and Eliza to have children at that time because she thought people would try to kill Joseph if he had children with his other wives. So Emma made sure Emily and Eliza stayed away from Joseph. Emma even told Joseph that she would divorce him if he tried to have children with his other wives. Joseph loved Emma and they had many children together, so he agreed with her.

25 Joseph and Emma went away from Nauvoo to spend some time talking about what to do. While they were alone, sheriffs from Missouri captured Joseph. They beat Joseph, hitting him again and again with a pistol. Then they pushed him into a carriage and drove away with him. Emma saw all of this and it really scared her. She was afraid Joseph would be killed. The people of Nauvoo came to Joseph's rescue. Joseph was so happy to be free that he threw a big party. And he invited the Missouri sheriffs who had injured him to be his special guests, feeding them the best food. Joseph always wanted to forgive.

30 Emma was mad, though. She didn't want Joseph to forgive. She didn't want to be part of a great big family that included the men that pistol-

whipped her husband. And she was also angry about how dangerous it was for Joseph to be a husband to other women because many thought Joseph was just trying to do what Dr. Bennett and his friends had done when they commit adultery. Joseph's brother, Hyrum, thought if Joseph wrote the revelation down, Emma would be happy. But in the revelation, God was stern with Emma, telling her to repent. This made Emma even more upset and she made Joseph burn the revelation. But someone had made a copy. The revelation that made Emma so 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 remarried. So Hyrum taught how the New and Everlasting Covenant allowed families to be together forever even when a man had been married to more than one woman. He also taught how even those who had sinned could be cleansed and sealed into the great family of mankind.

But some didn't want to repent. Joseph wouldn't let people be sealed together in families until they repented. William Law was a man that did not want to repent. He gathered hundreds of men and made them swear an oath to kill Joseph and lie to protect one another. Joseph found out there was a plot to kill him so he 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 screamed they would see Joseph shot because of what they read in the newspaper. The Mormons had suffered terrible violence and were afraid of the new newspaper. They decided to destroy the printing press of the newspaper William Law created. This was against the law. The government decided 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 was taken to the county jail at Carthage. But before a trial could be held, a mob attacked the jail and killed Joseph and Hyrum. All the people who loved Joseph were shocked and afraid. They didn't 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 back with them again.

Once Brigham Young and the apostles were in charge of the Church, Brigham had to figure out how to care for the many women who had covenanted as wives of Joseph. None of the women had gotten pregnant during Joseph's lifetime except Emma. 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 and they taught the children the gospel and 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 honor their father as a good man who had never committed adultery. For many years Joseph's sons told Brigham Young and the Mountain Mormons that they were wrong to teach that one man could marry more than one woman. They said their father, Joseph Smith, would never have taught such a thing because they thought it was adultery.

Hyrum's son believed what his uncle Joseph Smith taught about families being 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 who was right 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 didn't talk about Dr. Bennett and the many people who had sinned. They didn't want to remember the sins of anyone who had repented. They wanted to protect them from the shame. In time those who knew about the secret sins died. Because many righteous leaders, including Joseph Smith, didn't write much about the secret adultery, many people didn't understand why men like Dr. Bennett and William Law would lie about Joseph, so they began to believe the lies about Joseph Smith.

People started publishing books that said that Joseph did and taught the same things as Dr. Bennett and other secret adulterers. Really he taught repentance and tried to fix the problems caused by the adulterers. Many people who learn about the many women Joseph was sealed to believe the writers who say Joseph cared more about feeling good than being good, like the secret adulterers.

5 But God loves all his children. He asks those who believe His prophets to 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 and turn our hearts to our fathers and when we are mothers and fathers, to turn our hearts to our children.

10 Above 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, our sisters and our brothers, and we can be together with the person we marry in the temple and the children who were born to us. And in this way, all the people of the earth can be joined together in one great family, where everyone is loved and everyone belongs.

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End Notes

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1 – A Faithful Joseph?

¹ Perego, Ugo, *Joseph Smith and DNA*, The Persistence of Polygamy, Vol. 1, pp. 233-256.

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, such as withdrawal, sponges, and condoms. He was sentenced to three months hard labor. As late as 1877 people were being prosecuted for attempting to publish Knowlton's book.

³ Though it was earlier believed there was a "safe" period, a proper understanding of the gynecological basis this safe period was not developed until 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. Hales finds that 12 of Joseph's wives "certainly" engaged in marital relations with Joseph based on these documents. Three primary sources are the Joseph F. Smith collection of affidavits, gathered circa 1869, Andrew Jensen's affidavits also gathered circa 1869, and the 1893 Temple Lot trial. In the case of all three, the express purpose of the gathered testimonies was to confirm that Joseph Smith had covenanted with women other than Emma Hale, or "married plural wives."

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." Emma's sons proselyted the Utah Mormons extensively starting in the 1860s, attempting to persuade them Joseph had not been a polygamist.

⁷ Bennett, John Cook, *History of the Saints*, 1842.

⁸ Law, William, affidavit published in the only issue of *The Expositor*, May, 1844.

⁹ Joseph Smith – History 1:10

2 – Could a Loving God Demand Polygamy?

¹ Luke 2: 10-11² John 3:3³ John 3:16

5 ⁴ 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.

^{4a} Joseph Smith – History 1: 34-35^{4b} Joseph Smith – History 1: 36-38^{4c} Joseph Smith – History 1: 39 , c.f. Malachi 4:6

10 ⁵ Malachi 4:6, cf. Luke 1:17

⁶ Smith, Lucy, “Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations,” Liverpool, 1853, p. 88⁷ Joseph Knight holograph, see Jessee, Dean, Joseph Knight’s Recollection of Early Mormon History, BYU Studies, 1976.

15 ⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 137:5

⁹ Church History In The Fulness Of Times Student Manual, (2003), p. 251, Baptism for the Dead¹⁰ Genesis 28, Genesis 32:24-30, Genesis 48:16¹¹ Genesis 13:16, Genesis 15:5

20 ¹² Genesis 24:1-7, 58-67

¹³ See Joseph Smith’s Polygamy, Volume 3: Theology, chapter 7¹⁴ 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.

25 ¹⁵ Queen Margaret of Scotland tried to persuade the Witanagemot to revise the marriage code to wholly 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. By the time of King Henry VIII,

30 traditional biblical forms of marriage were so suppressed that 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)

35 ¹⁶ Even though Church laws made polygamy increasingly difficult for hundreds of years prior to the reformation, 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)

40 ¹⁷ 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.

45 3 – Guns, Germs, and Sex

¹ McEwen E, Bergman R, Miller C. Early bow design and construction. Scientific American 1991 vol. 264 pp76-82.

50 ² Chase, Kenneth Warren (2003), *Firearms, a global history to 1700*. Cambridge University Press.

³ Though early guns were not as accurate as longbows or cross bows, they could pierce heavy plate armor and terrorized troops and horses.⁴ Lowbows were more accurate, but required special training and continuous practice from childhood. Even so, firearms did not supplant longbows in England until the wood used for longbows (yew) was almost all exhausted throughout Europe by about 1568.

5 ⁵ It takes about 20 seconds to muzzle-load a smooth-bore musket. The ease of loading and shooting is noted in comparison to the time required to load and shoot early rifles, prior to the creation of the *minnie* ball after 1848.

⁶ 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.

10 ⁷ 50 yards is given as the maximum reliable range for an average shooter by various sources. The long rifle was better, and in the hands of a skilled person could be much better. An incident with Daniel Boone demonstrates that he killed an opponent at the siege of Boonesborough in 1778 by delivering a shot to the head at a range of 250 yards.

⁸ Thomas Jefferson Foundation, *Louisiana Purchase*, available online at www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/louisiana-purchase, retrieved 24 Nov 2015.

15 ⁹ Baird, John D., *Hawken Rifles: The Mountain Man’s Choice*, (1968) The Buckskin Press. Pp. xv1-xv11, 1, 4.

¹⁰ The Sporting magazine; or Monthly calendar of the transactions of the turf, the chace, and every other diversion interesting to the man of pleasure and enterprize,” 1861, Chapter XVII, Hair Triggers, p. 463-464.

20 ^{10a} Gibson, Harry W., Frontier Arms of the Mormons, Utah Historical Quarterly, p. 14.

¹¹ D&C 57: 1, revelation given through Joseph Smith on July 20, 1831.

25 ¹² Estimate based on account of Henry Peter DeLong, who was in St. Louis when he learned Joseph and Hyrum Smith had been shot the previous day, June 27, 1844. Henry arrived in Nauvoo June 29, 1844, the day of the viewing and burial of Joseph and 20 Hyrum Smith. Thus news of the death had traveled down river in a single day, and Henry traveled back to Nauvoo the following day.

¹³ Nauvoo Charter bill, passed by the Illinois general assembly on Dec 17, 1840, which took effect February 1, 1841.

30 ¹⁴ It is frequently alleged that Porter Rockwell had a Hawken or plains rifle. Those who quote a source cite Walker, J. P., The Legendary Mountain Men of North America.

¹⁵ Carthage jail still stands and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The location of the stairwell on the western side of the jail can be verified by anyone who has visited Carthage Jail, aided by satellite imagery from map programs such as Google Maps.

35 ¹⁶ Taylor, John, affidavit of September 22, 1844, available online at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/frtrial/carthage/tayloraccount.html>, retrieved 27 June 2014.

¹⁷ *ibidem*.¹⁸ Nightingale, Florence, Notes on Nursing: What it is, and What it is not, 1859.

40 ¹⁹ Mary Elizabeth Rollins suggested that there were children, but that they were known by other names. Patti Sessions suggested that her grand-daughter, born prior to Joseph’s death, might be an example of a child born to Joseph. However DNA analysis fails to confirm that Josephine Lyon [Fisher] is descended from Joseph Smith.

45 ²⁰ Melissa Lott is one who claimed she didn’t conceive due to “lack of proper conditions on my part probably. Richard Charles Evans, an RLDS leader who left the RLDS Church, claimed Melissa Lott said after marrying Joseph, Joseph indicated he did desire to have a child with her, but according to Evans, “Joseph never had sexual intercourse with her but once.” Evans eventually left the RLDS Church because he came to believe that Joseph Smith had indeed be involved in plural marriage, a claim the RLDS Church rejected in the 1920s at the time Evans left the RLDS Church.

50 ²¹ Wilhelm Wyl was the pen name of Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal. Wyl, Wilhelm, Mormon Portraits, pp. 61-62.

²² Garfield was shot on July 2 and passed away on September 19. Autopsy proved that cause of death was infection from his medical treatment under the hands of Dr. Bliss, prompting

the saying “Ignorance is Bliss.” Though Lincoln gets the credit for healing a divided nation, historians consider the extended agony of the respected Garfield to be the event that actually healed the nation. As to the topic at hand, Garfield upheld the position of Rutherford B. Hayes that practicing polygamists should lose citizen rights, though the Edmunds Act was not passed until after Garfield’s death.

²³ 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.

²⁴ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Dinger edition.

^{24a} Silphium was used as a seasoning and medicine, so important that it was represented by specific glyphs in Egypt and Knossos. Romans consider it worth its weight in silver. Pliny claimed it could be used “to promote the menstrual discharge.” Silver coins from Cyrene depicting silphium seed pod circa 500 BCE are more similar to the traditional “heart” shape than any organ that actually pumps blood. Ancient writings appear to show silphium or its derivative, *laserpicum*, being used in conjunction with non-procreative sexuality.

²⁵ Robin Rose Bennett began working with Queen Anne’s Lace (QAL) in 1985. Her findings were published in the Northeast Herbal Association Journal. Following this publication, she allegedly began to receive anecdotal information. The majority of these anecdotes reported incredibly positive experiences using QAL. See Herbalist post of November 24, 2009, available online at herbalist.blogspot.com/2009/11/queen-annes-lace-conscious-choice-for.html, retrieved 25 November 2015.

²⁶ Information on syphilis is readily available from a wide variety of sources. An examination of the devastation syphilis could wreak in the 1800s is presented in Kate Summerscale’s 2010 book *The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher: A Shocking Murder and the Undoing of a Great Victorian Detective*. At the end of the true tale of the famous murder of Saville Kent, Summerscale lays out the evidence that Saville’s father had likely infected both his wives with syphilis, based on the physical evidence exhibited by his children who did survive (Hutchinson’s teeth) and the confusion and early deaths of his wives, symptoms associated with untreated syphilitic infection.

²⁷ From visit to Watervliet Shaker Historic District in Colonie, New York, which is a National Park Service site, see also www.nps.gov/nr/travel/shaker/wat.htm.

²⁸ 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.”

²⁹ Ephraim Stinchfield wrote his observations of the Cochranite Delusion in 1819. Cochran would spend four years in prison for what the state deemed gross lewdness.

³⁰ In William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet, p.

³¹ I have been unable to find the exact source of this oft-quoted Noyes assertion, however it 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.

^{31a} 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.

³² Gilman, Sander L., *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, University of California Press, 1993, p. 118.

³³ Maines, Rachel P, *The Technology of Orgasm: “Hysteria”, the Vibrator, and Women’s Sexual Satisfaction*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ Times and Seasons, May 15, 1844. See also Smith, Andrew, *The Sainly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett*, 1997.

³⁶ Nauvoo City Council and High Council Minutes, Dingle edition, pp.

³⁷ The Nauvoo Expositor, preamble. Available online at http://en.fairmormon.org/Primary_sources/Nauvoo_Expositor_Full_Text, retrieved 27 November 2015.

³⁸ Orange Wight, Autobiography, available at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/OWight.html>, retrieved 12 May 2014.

³⁹ Jacob, Charles, *Jacob Report: Full Interview with Todd Akin*, Fox 2 Now, KTVI, August 19, 2012. Available online at <http://fox2now.com/2012/08/19/the-jaco-report-august-19-2012/>, retrieved 25 November 2015.

⁴⁰ Two such studies I found in 2012 are “A sexual difference in the specific of sexual arousal,” by Chivers et al., and “Category-specificity and sexual concordance: The stability of sex differences in sexual arousal patterns,” by Suschinsky and Lalumière.

⁴¹ Analysis of the births and inferred conception of Emma’s children, it appears that six of the children she conceived were conceived in September, the anniversary of retrieving the metal plates from the Hill Cumorah. Two of the children she conceived appear to have been conceived on the anniversary of her January marriage to Joseph Smith, and one, Don Carlos, was conceived as soon as Joseph rejoined Emma after escaping from Liberty Jail. Thus there is a strong pattern suggesting that even with Emma, Joseph was less sexual than most moderns presume. See Stout, Meg, *Joseph’s Wives: Emma Hale*, millennialstar.org, April 22, 2015, available online at <http://www.millennialstar.org/josephs-wives-emma-hale/>, retrieved 25 November 2015.

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 deviding His property to His offspring ~Then it was that the Lord revealed unto him~” Erastus Snow returned from his mission in April 1843, and apparently this was when Joseph said “That the time had come now when the principle should be practiced.” See Bergera, Gary James, *Identifying the Earliest Polygamists, 1841-44*, Dialogue Volume 38, Number 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 not translation in the modern sense of the word, but rather Joseph making edits to what he felt the text ought to have said, based on revelation.

⁴ From D&C 132:1-4. Even though D&C 132 was formally received in 1843, Joseph indicated the initial part of 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

^{6a} The idea that death could be a result of sin is seen in Joseph Smith’s 1843 confidence in William Clayton, where he told Clayton of R. Thompson’s death as a result of sin.

⁷ From H. Michael Marquardt’s book, *The Joseph Smith Revelations Text and Commentary*, p. 374-376, see excerpt retrieved online 5 Jan 2014.

⁸ Wording as recorded in the Joseph Smith Translation, also D&C 76: 16-17. c.f. John 5: 28-29

⁹ The original interpretation of the term sealed was different from the sealing between family

members performed in temples today

¹⁰ Sermon delivered at the funeral of Seymour Brunson on August 10, 1840, also D&C 127 and D&C 128. See also a poetic version of D&C 76 in 1843 attributed to Joseph Smith but possibly written by William W. Phelps which softens the original 1832 D&C 76 implication that an individual can only merit the afterlife earned by their works prior to death.

¹¹ See D&C 131 and D&C 132.

¹² April 1894 revelation received by Wilford Woodruff, see Wilford Woodruff journal for 5-6 April 1894 and Deseret Evening News report of General Conference Proceedings of 14 April 1894

5 – Biblical Marriage: Wives and Handmaids

No footnotes currently included

6 – Mormon Polygamy Prior to 1841

¹ D&C 76

² Compton, Sacred Loneliness, 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 he 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 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.

⁷ Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, p. 32.

⁸ Hales, Joseph Smith's Polygamy, Vols 1 & 2, Chapters 4-6 and Appendix D.

⁹ D&C 93: 46-47

¹⁰ D&C 98:16

¹¹ Compton, Sacred Loneliness, p. 39.

¹² The identification of Rosetta Marietta Carter as Joseph's wife may have arisen from the fact that her husband, Jonathan Harriman Holmes, would later marry one of Joseph's wives, Elvira Annie Cowles. Certainly Rosetta Marietta isn't included as a wife of Joseph Smith in any of the recent scholarly books.

¹³ D&C 110

¹⁴ Compton devotes the first chapter of Sacred Loneliness to Fanny (pp. 25-42). As mentioned earlier, Hales devotes three chapters and an appendix to Fanny Alger.

¹⁵ D&C 121:1

¹⁶ D&C 121:7, 10

¹⁷ D&C 121:26, 27

7 – Six Funerals and a Blessing

¹ Smith, Lucy, "Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations," Liverpool, 1853, p. 88

² D&C 137:5

³ The Rachel Neyman Story, available at <https://familysearch.org/photos/stories/514482>

⁴ See familysearch.org record for Cyrus Livingston Neyman (L7GB-KDL). Although 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. Cyrus must have died before August 1840, based on Joseph's comments regarding Jane Neyman at Samuel Brunson's funeral.

⁵ Times and Seasons Vol. 1. Whole No. 6., Commerce, Illinois, April, 1840, recounting events during the General Conference held April 6, 1840.

⁶ John 3:3

⁷ John 3:5

⁸ 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.

⁹ See Seymour Brunson Wikipedia article, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seymour_Brunson retrieved 16 February 2014.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Her presence is inferred from Joseph's comments regarding the widow whose son had died.

¹² 1 Corinthians 15:19-26

¹³ 1 Corinthians 15:29

¹⁴ Jane's husband, William, was actually still alive. But he would die less than three weeks later

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ History of the Church, 4:569; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Mar. 27, 1842, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Wilford Woodruff.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Black, "A Voice of Gladness for the Living and the Dead" (D&C 128:19)."

²⁰ Church History In The Fulness Of Times Student Manual, (2003), 251–262, available online 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 16 February 2014.

²¹ 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, available online at <http://byustudies.byu.edu/images/webpage/fgw/activitiesesquirewilliams.pdf>, retrieved 16 February 2014.

²² Compton, Sacred Loneliness, p. 39. See also my previous post in this series, available online at <http://www.millennialstar.org/the-decade-of-delay/>.

²³ See documentation for Jonathan Harriman Holmes in the Land and Records Office in Historic Nauvoo.

²⁴ 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's 1840 Nauvoo death is recorded in Lyndon Cook's compilation Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839-1845.

²⁵ Lyndon Cook's compilation Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839-1845.

^{25a} No ceremonies actually binding a widow or widower to their deceased spouse was performed until the dedication of the Nauvoo temple.

^{25b} Eliza R. Snow journal, 1842-1882 / Snow, Eliza Roxcy 1804-1887 / MS 1439 / Microfilm. Available online at <https://eadview.lds.org/dcbrowser/MS%201439/>, retrieved June 3, 2014. The poem is contained on images MS1439_f0001_00009.jpg and MS1439_f0001_00010.jpg

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Lyndon Cook's compilation Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839-1845.

²⁸ I experienced this firsthand at the death of my own son. I assume the phenomenon the doctors described to me would have been operative for Emma less than two hundred years earlier.

²⁹ Those disenchanting with the 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 money to redeem their debts. The family's failed mortgage was the reason Joseph hired himself out as a "dowser," which would lead to the claims Joseph was a money digger.

³⁰ From The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, edited by Scot and Maurine Proctor.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

8 – A Doctor in the House

¹ Smith, Andrew, The Sainly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett, pp. 2-3. As Bennett's 1841 suicide attempt and sexual excesses under the guise of Spiritual Wifery could have arisen from childhood sexual abuse, it appears this timeframe, when Bennett's grandfather mysteriously avoids debtors prison, is a candidate for such abuse.

² Smith, Sainly Scoundrel. Chapters 2 and 3 are titled "The Diploma Peddler" and "The 'Getter Up' of Colleges", pp. 13-33.

³ The first vibrator was invented in 1869, seen as a great boon for doctors to prevent repetitive stress injuries associated with the professional treatment of hysteria.

⁴ Smith, Sainly Scoundrel, p. 79.

⁵ *ibid.* p. 54.

⁶ "To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to All Honorable Part of Community" Times & Seasons, 1 July, 1842, available online at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>, retrieved Feb 22, 2014. Wilhelm Wyl suggested in 1885 that the woman in question was Eliza Snow, who Wyl claimed had become pregnant by Bennett. I suggest a more likely candidate was Elvira Annie Cowles, the Smith governess and therefore fellow resident of the Smith household during the winter of 1840/41.

⁷ D&C 124: 16-17

⁸ Bennett's baptism is reported in the Western World (later the Warsaw Signal), 21 October, 1840. The letter is discussed in "To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to All Honorable Part of Community" Times & Seasons, 1 July, 1842, available online at

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⁹ When Bennett and his acolytes began to seduce women in late 1841 and 1842, their "doctrine" did not resemble Joseph's doctrine at all, suggesting they were not privy to Joseph's teachings. Bennett in particular was surprised when he learned of Joseph's doctrine once the revelation on Celestial marriage was written down in 1843.

¹⁰ By 2014 I realized that Lorenzo Wasson's report that Joseph gave Bennett a "tremendous flagellation" was likely not connected with the June letter from Hyrum Smith and William Law, as has previously been supposed by various historians, but rather the July report from Sheriff Jacob Backenstos that Bennett had been found having sex with his landlady, Sarah Pratt. Therefore it is likely that Joseph acted to end Bennett's relationship with the young woman he was courting as soon as he got the Miller report.

¹¹ Andrew Jensen was attempting to piece together the history of Joseph Smith's plural marriages. Separately Joseph F. Smith was canvassing Joseph's wives seeking affidavits regarding the sealing dates for his wives. This activity was prompted by Joseph Smith III's visit to Utah in 1869, as Joseph Smith III claimed his father had never married plural wives.

¹² Copy of the letter from Marietta Holmes Welling to Andrew Jensen is in my files, obtained from the Mormon Battalion Visitor's Center prior to the renovation that removed the records to Salt Lake City.

^{12a} Family account of Jonathan's statement is contained in the The Ancestors and Descendants of Job Welling, The Blue Book, 1982. William Wright, member of a family that knew Elvira and Jonathan Holmes in Utah, would deliver a version of the story to LDS Church headquarters in 1931, near the end of John Fish Wright's life, the Wright who had likely rented a farm where Elvira had lived and somehow became aware of the story regarding Elvira, Jonathan, and Joseph Smith. The Wright letter is included in Brian Hales' book and website regarding Joseph Smith's Polygamy. Brian corresponded with me in September 2013, as he didn't know at the time who William Wright might have been. I was able to find the Wright connection by tracing a Wright who had been engaged to my grandmother, Albert Herschel Wright (KWZT-PFB).

¹³ Bergera, Gary James. "The Earliest Eternal Sealings for Civilly Married Couples Living and Dead." Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought (Fall 2002): 41-66.

¹⁴ Emma would ask Elvira to be treasurer of the Relief Society in March 1842. Sarah's stories make it clear that Elvira was an intimate of the Smith household even after her public marriage to Jonathan Holmes in December 1842 and her sealing to Joseph in June 1843.

^{14a} Joseph Smith, letter to Vilate Kimball, March 2, 1841, in Helen Vilate Bourne Fleming Papers, MS 9670, Box 1, Folder 25, CHL.

^{14b} Goddard, Stephen H. and Zeruiah 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.

¹⁵ Bennett supposedly stayed with the Smiths for 39 weeks, based on a payment noted in Joseph Smith's Daybook from His General Store in Nauvoo, December 8, 1843, Iowa Masonic Library, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, an entry that has been confirmed recently by Laura Hales (apparently Bennett also purchased a bag of flour).. If correct, this would place Bennett's departure from the Smith home around May 1841. The question of correctness arises because the spectacle of Bennett visiting Joseph Smith in 1843 must have been fraught with other concerns. I suspect the rent was a way to account for monies Bennett forced Joseph to take.

9 – The Angel of the Lord

¹ Smith, Andrew, The Sainly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett, pp.

2-3. As Bennett's 1841 suicide attempt and sexual excesses under the guise of Spiritual Wifery could have arisen from childhood sexual abuse, it appears this timeframe, when Bennett's grandfather mysteriously avoids debtors prison, is a candidate for such abuse.

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¹⁶ Image shown at beginning of post adapted from image #01 of Zina Huntington in Bradley & Woodward "4 Zinas," image available online at

<http://signaturebookslibrary.org/?p=23550>, retrieved February 23, 2014. I date the picture to 1855 because commercial photography was only invented in 1838 making an 1840 portrait of a single teenager in the American West unlikely in the extreme, given that we don't have photographs of Joseph Smith or John C. Bennett. Besides, even though this is arguably the youngest picture of Zina, she doesn't look like a teenager in this picture.

¹⁷ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 71-113.

¹⁸ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, pp 79-80.

¹⁹ When I wrote this, I thought Joseph had actually talked with Zina in the fall of 1840. However it appears Joseph only talked with Zina's brother in 1840. Zina probably only learned of the doctrine and Joseph's desire to have her be sealed to him in eternity circa October 1841, after her marriage to Henry Jacobs, when she was already pregnant with Henry Jacobs' child.

²⁰ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, pp 55-70.

²¹ Quoted in multiple sources, including Gary James Bergera, *Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-1844*, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved Feb 22, 2014.

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.* Also in Compton, p. 59.

²⁴ Testimony during the Temple Lot case in 1892, quoted in Bergera, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved Feb. 22, 2014.

²⁵ Compton, *Sacred Loneliness*, pp 55-70.

²⁶ This assertion, that Lousia remained faithful to Joseph, has confused some people. Let me clarify that I think the fact that she embraced a 'levirate' marriage to Brigham Young and remained with the Saints as they traveled west of the Rocky mountains constitutes "remaining faithful to the covenant she'd made." Other women, notably Emma Smith, would not accept levirate marriage or a re-sealing in the Nauvoo temple, or remain with the Saints as they traveled west to Deseret. Emma had her reasons, which are valid. However Emma's refusal to remain with the body of the Saints has been traditionally viewed as her rejection of plural marriage rather than a desire to honor her husband's debts and preserve his reputation.

10 – Fall of the Doctor

¹ Smith, Andrew, *The Saintly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett*, pp. 2-3. As Bennett's 1841 suicide attempt and sexual excesses under the guise of Spiritual

Wifery could have arisen from childhood sexual abuse, it appears this timeframe, when Bennett's grandfather mysteriously avoids debtors prison, is a candidate for such abuse.

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¹¹ Andrew Jensen was attempting to piece together the history of Joseph Smith's plural marriages. Separately Joseph F. Smith was canvassing Joseph's wives seeking affidavits regarding the sealing dates for his wives. This activity was prompted by Joseph Smith III's visit to Utah in 1869, as Joseph Smith III claimed his father had never married plural wives.

¹² Copy of the letter from Marietta Holmes Welling to Andrew Jensen is in my files, obtained from the Mormon Battalion Visitor's Center prior to the renovation that removed the records to Salt Lake City.

^{12a} Family account of Jonathan's statement is contained in the The Ancestors and Descendants of Job Welling, The Blue Book, 1982. William Wright, member of a family that knew Elvira and Jonathan Holmes in Utah, would deliver a version of the story to LDS Church headquarters in 1931, near the end of John Fish Wright's life, the Wright who had likely rented a farm where Elvira had lived and somehow became aware of the story regarding Elvira, Jonathan, and Joseph Smith. The Wright letter is included in Brian Hales' book and website regarding Joseph Smith's Polygamy. Brian corresponded with me in September 2013, as he didn't know at the time who William Wright might have been. I was able to find the Wright connection by tracing a Wright who had been engaged to my grandmother, Albert Herschel Wright (KWZT-PFB).

¹³ Bergera, Gary James. "The Earliest Eternal Sealings for Civilly Married Couples Living and Dead." Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought (Fall 2002): 41-66.

¹⁴ Emma would ask Elvira to be treasurer of the Relief Society in March 1842. Sarah's stories make it clear that Elvira was an intimate of the Smith household even after her public marriage to Jonathan Holmes in December 1842 and her sealing to Joseph in June 1843.

^{14a} Joseph Smith, letter to Vilate Kimball, March 2, 1841, in Helen Vilate Bourne Fleming Papers, MS 9670, Box 1, Folder 25, CHL.

^{14b} 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.

¹⁵ Bennett supposedly stayed with the Smiths for 39 weeks, based on a payment noted in Joseph Smith's Daybook from His General Store in Nauvoo, December 8, 1843, Iowa Masonic Library, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, an entry that has been confirmed recently by Laura Hales (apparently Bennett also purchased a bag of flour).. If correct, this would place Bennett's departure from the Smith home around May 1841. The question of correctness arises because the spectacle of Bennett visiting Joseph Smith in 1843 must have been fraught with other concerns. I suspect the rent was a way to account for monies Bennett forced Joseph to take.

¹⁶ Image shown at beginning of post adapted from image #01 of Zina Huntington in Bradley & Woodward "4 Zinas," image available online at

¹⁷ <http://signaturebookslibrary.org/?p=23550>, retrieved February 23, 2014. I date the picture to 1855 because commercial photography was only invented in 1838 making an 1840 portrait of a single teenager in the American West unlikely in the extreme, given that we don't have photographs of Joseph Smith or John C. Bennett. Besides, even though this is arguably the youngest picture of Zina, she doesn't look like a teenager in this picture.

¹⁷ Compton, Sacred Loneliness, pp. 71-113.

¹⁸ Compton, Sacred Loneliness, pp 79-80.

¹⁹ When I wrote this, I thought Joseph had actually talked with Zina in the fall of 1840. However it appears Joseph only talked with Zina's brother in 1840. Zina probably only learned of the doctrine and Joseph's desire to have her be sealed to him in eternity circa October 1841, after her marriage to Henry Jacobs, when she was already pregnant with Henry Jacobs' child.

²⁰ Compton, Sacred Loneliness, pp 55-70.

²¹ Quoted in multiple sources, including Gary James Bergera, Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-1844, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved Feb 22, 2014.

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.* Also in Compton, p. 59.

²⁴ Testimony during the Temple Lot case in 1892, quoted in Bergera, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved Feb. 22, 2014.

²⁵ Compton, Sacred Loneliness, pp 55-70.

²⁶ This assertion, that Lousia remained faithful to Joseph, has confused some people. Let me clarify that I think the fact that she embraced a 'levirate' marriage to Brigham Young and remained with the Saints as they traveled west of the Rocky mountains constitutes "remaining faithful to the covenant she'd made." Other women, notably Emma Smith, would not accept levirate marriage or a re-sealing in the Nauvoo temple, or remain with the Saints as they traveled west to Deseret. Emma had her reasons, which are valid. However Emma's refusal to remain with the body of the Saints has been traditionally viewed as her rejection of plural marriage rather than a desire to honor her husband's debts and preserve his reputation.

11 – The Angel and the Sword

¹ Dimick and his brother, William, were among the four men Emma would entrust with the secret reburial of Joseph's remains in February, 1845. The other two trusted men were Jonathan Harriman Holmes and Gilbert Goldsmith, son of Elizabeth Durfee.

² In one case, Agnes Coolbrith Smith, the husband had died.

³ In some accounts the identity of the brother who relayed the message is unclear, but at least one account indicates the brother who reported to Zina was Dimick (b. 1808) rather than William (b. 1818), or Oliver (b. 1823).

⁴ Dimick would perform the sealing between Joseph and Zina.

⁵ Dimick and William would remain close to Joseph and Emma, and would be two of the four men Emma trusted to relocate Joseph's body in February 1845.

⁶ Todd Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 123.

⁷ Zina would become president of the Relief Society until her death in 1901. Zina was the third president of the Relief Society. She was also the third and last of Joseph's wives to head that organization.

⁸ *The Coffin Canes*, available online at <http://www.josephsmithjr.org/index.php/history/joseph-smith-jr/201-the-coffin-canes>, retrieved 10 March 2014.

⁹ Josephine would grow up to be known as Ina Coolbrith, the first poet laureate of any American state.

¹⁰ Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 154.

¹¹ It does not appear that Joseph taught Orson Pratt the principle of plural marriage until around the time that Bennett was exposed.

¹² Brigham famously reported seeing a funeral procession shortly after learning of plural marriage, and wishing that he could take the place of the dead man.

¹³ Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 208-209.

¹⁴ Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 209.

¹⁵ *Autobiography of Mary E. Lightner (1818 – 1913)*, *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 17 (July 1926):193-205, available online at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/MLightner.html>.

¹⁶ Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 210.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 211.

¹⁹ 1905 BYU Testimony of Mary Elizabeth Lightner, available online at <http://user.xmission.com/~plporter/lds/merlbyu.htm>, retrieved 10 March 2014.

²⁰ Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 226.

²¹ Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 213

²² Brian Hales, *Alleged Sexual Impropriety between Joseph Smith and Mary Heron*, available online at <http://www.josephsmithspolygamy.com/NonWivesSexualRelations/24Accusations/MaryHeronSniderACC.html>, retrieved 10 March 2014.

²³ In October 1840 Joseph Ellis had married Harriet Ellen Snider in a ceremony in Nauvoo, officiated by Joseph Smith. A few months later John Snider was named a member of the Nauvoo House committee on January 19, 1841, see D&C 124:22.

²⁴ It does not appear Lorenzo consummated the marriage with Miss Goddard before leaving on his mission. Before she began sleeping with Joseph Ellis, Miss Goddard apparently decided she didn't want to be Lorenzo's wife. It is unclear if she attempted to have her sealing to Lorenzo annulled before she took up with Joseph Ellis.

²⁵ *Misc Minutes*, Brigham Young Collection, d 1234, CHL, Sept. 2, 1850, restricted; excerpts transcribed by D. Michael Quinn, bx 3 fd 2, Quinn Collection, Yale Library. This document is available on Richard E. Turley, Jr. *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Provo, Utah: BYU Press, vol. 1, DVD #18, but that entry is blacked out, restricted because it deals with Church disciplinary proceedings.

²⁶ *ibid.*

12 – 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 Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, particularly p. 608.

³ Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 607

⁴ 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, available online at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperDetails/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book>, retrieved 13 March 2014.

⁵ Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 236.

⁶ Thomsonian medicine focused on herbal remedies in contrast to the bleedings, purgatives, and surgeries used by mainstream physicians of the day.

⁷ Joseph F. Smith prepared two affidavits for Sylvia's signature. One was dated February 8, 1842. The other was dated February 8, 1843. It appears Joseph F. Smith derived the date from the birthday of Sylvia's daughter, Josephine, born February 8, 1844. However Sylvia never signed an affidavit attesting she had been sealed to Joseph during his lifetime. Sylvia would choose to be 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 attributed to the nature of the covenant into which Sylvia entered in the temple after Joseph's death.

⁸ Josephine was the only one of Sylvia's children to marry outside of the temple, where the information that an individual was sealed to Joseph was usually revealed, as knowledge regarding such a relationship would be considered sacred.

⁹ Laudanum included opium and from 1820 included morphine. As laudanum was highly addictive, individuals would sometimes continue to use it after their symptoms had abated.

¹⁰ Chloroform was invented in 1831 in an attempt to develop a cheap pesticide. In 1841/42 chloroform was not yet sold for use on humans. The first attested use of chloroform as an effective anesthetic was on 4 November 1847 by Scottish obstetrician James Young Simpson. Dr. John C. Bennett published his findings regarding chloroform in 1848.

¹¹ Sylvia's earlier records were lost, but from 1867 until her death in 1892 at age 97, Patty delivered nearly 4000 children.

¹² Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 179. Date of journal entry in Compton, p. 682.

¹³ Compton, In *Sacred Loneliness*, p. 236.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ The letter Joseph writes to Nancy Rigdon is in Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, Chapter 17. Martha Brotherton would have a similar experience with Brigham Young, believing him to be entrapping her. Again, I contend these conversations were held in hopes of identifying the men who were abusing the women of Nauvoo.

¹⁷ The seduction of Mary Heron Snider was covered in my previous post regarding A Faithful Joseph. To read more, see Hales' article on Mary Heron, available online at <http://www.josephsmithspolygamy.com/NonWivesSexualRelations/24Accusations/MaryHeronSniderACC.html>, retrieved 16 March 2014. Note that Hales only considers the possibilities where Heron was a sexual partner of Joseph Smith, where I read the incomplete minutes as clearly indicating Joseph as the man who told Joseph Ellis Johnson about the friggling to which his mother-in-law was subjected.

¹⁸ A blank copy of the 1840 federal census form is available online at http://www.mymcpl.org/_uploaded_resources/MGC-1840censusblank.pdf, retrieved on 13 March 2014.

¹⁹ Maurine Carr Ward, 1842 Census of Nauvoo: Identification of Members: Civil Ward One, available online at <http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NJ5->

1_Ward2.pdf, retrieved 13 March 2014.reference. The timing of the census is not specified in the census itself, but the early February timing was reconstructed by Dr. Lyman Pratt based on extensive analysis.

¹⁹ 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, available online at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/MTAF/id/2337>, retrieved 14 March 2014. 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.

²⁰ The women had 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. The story of the shirt women sewed during the revolutionary war is contained in Cokie Roberts' *Founding Mothers*, as noted in the Kirkus review of the children's version of Roberts' book, available online at <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/cokie-roberts/founding-mothers/>, retrieved 13 March 2014.

²¹ Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, Chapter 10. Sarah Kimball would be one of the many who requested to be sealed to Joseph after his death, being sealed to him on March 2, 1877 in the St. George temple.

²² Phebe Wheeler was also nominated to be secretary the day Relief Society was founded. Phebe Wheeler and Hanna(h) Ells would record minutes of the Relief Society at times, but Eliza Snow recorded all of the sermons Joseph Smith delivered to the Relief Society during his life. Phebe Wheeler was a domestic in Hyrum Smith's home, then 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. Hence Phebe Wheeler drops out of the stream of well-documented Mormon history. Hannah Ells, on the other hand, would apparently become one of Joseph's plural wives in 1843, before her untimely death in the home of Sarah Kimball in 1845, with Eliza Snow at her bedside.

²³ This and subsequent Relief Society quotes are from the Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, available online at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book?locale=eng&p=63>, retrieved 13 March 2014.

²⁴ In the context of the minutes, it is clear that when Joseph says "fellows," he is referring to fellow sisters in the Relief Society.

²⁵ Minutes of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo during March and April of 1842, see the Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, available online at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperDetails/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book>, retrieved 13 March 2014.

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, p. 24.

²⁸ *ibid.* Van Wagoner wrote William had bedded Catherine, but Catherine only said he tried.

²⁹ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 406.

³⁰ Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, Chapter 17.

³¹ John Bowes' *Mormonism Exposed* indicates Joseph Smith sent Brigham Young to interview Martha because they had heard "an evil report of her." See Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, Chapter 17.

13 – 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 originals are currently in LDS church archives. Copies are available at various Utah and Western libraries.

² *ibid.*

³ *Times and Seasons*, Volume 3, No. 16 of 15 June 1842, available online at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>, retrieved 20 March 2014.

⁴ Gary Bergera has written about the trial in his article, "Illicit Intercourse, Plural Marriage, and the Nauvoo Stake High Council, 1840-1844," published in the *John Whitmer Historical Journal*. Unfortunately, I have not had a chance to read this article. [I was able to read the Bergera article on April 26, 2014.]

⁵ Women's testimony available from many sources, including the May 29, 1844 issue of the Nauvoo Neighbor, and Richard and Pamela Price's Restoration Bookstore website describing how they believe Joseph fought polygamy, available online at <https://restorationbookstore.org/articles/nopoligamy/jsfp-vol1/chp12.htm>, retrieved 19 March 2014.

⁶ Records for James J. Miller, LZG8-Z5X, available online at familysearch.org, retrieved 19 March 2014.

⁷ These two ladies were Mary Clift and Esther Smith. The man in their case was Gustavus Hills, one of the Nauvoo Aldermen.

⁸ I do not have an age for Matilda. 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 would imply Matilda was born around 1820.

⁹ Women's Women's testimonies published in the Nauvoo Neighbor issue of May 29, 1844, available online at <http://boap.org/LDS/Nauvoo-Neighbor/1844/5-29-1844.pdf>, retrieved 18 March 2014

¹⁰ It seems this "one" might have been either John C. Bennett or William Smith. However the deponent did not specify in her testimony, nor is there any record that she was asked who this one was, who had tipped the balance in Matilda's mind regarding the likelihood that Joseph had taught illicit sex to be correct. We only know that "one" was male.

¹¹ Women's Women's testimonies published in the Nauvoo Neighbor issue of May 29, 1844, available online at <http://boap.org/LDS/Nauvoo-Neighbor/1844/5-29-1844.pdf>, retrieved 18 March 2014

¹² 1840 census image, available online at <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-267-12895-144349-35?cc=1786457>, retrieved 19 March 2014.

¹³ May 29, 1844 issue of the Nauvoo Neighbor, and Richard and Pamela Price's Restoration Bookstore website describing how they believe Joseph fought polygamy, available online at <https://restorationbookstore.org/articles/nopoligamy/jsfp-vol1/chp12.htm>, retrieved 19 March 2014.

¹⁴ Others contributing to the Expositor were men like Austin Cowles and William Law, who had sat on the 1842 High Council that cut of Chauncy Higbee and John C. Bennett, men who had been exposed to the entirety of the sordid testimony associated with the activities of Bennett, Chauncy Higbee, and the other seducers.

¹⁵ Brian Hales was kind enough to send me a transcription of the Nauvoo High Council Minutes covering 1841-1845, as well as a scan of some 15 pages of the listed pages of handwritten testimonies before the High Council.

¹⁶ Information about William Smith has been crossed out in the hand-written testimony, but is still adequately legible. A late account (Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 9 April 1890) indicates Brigham Young had been assigned to prefer charges against William Smith for adultery and other sins. After the trial had begun, Joseph entered the room. As the testimony concerning William proceeded, 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." But Brigham instantly said, "Bro. Joseph, I withdraw the charge." I think until this last stage of the investigation and trial, it had not

been clear to Joseph whether William or Bennett had been the originator of the illicit sex scheme. Once Joseph determined Bennett was the culprit, he determined to protect all others, particularly including his brother.

¹⁷ 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 menage a trois. The name of Margaret's mother, Jane Neyman, also appears, but I was not able to decipher the words sufficiently to be certain whether she was implicated as one who had been seduced.

¹⁸ Seraglio is the term for the living quarters of a harem in the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁹ Some researchers suppose additional details might have leaked to Bennett via Nancy Rigdon, who Joseph interviewed. Nancy's beau was Francis Higbee, Chauncy'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, in my opinion.

14 – Wives of Sorrow

¹ Bergera, Gary, Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 22 March 2014.

² All children believed to be Joseph's children who survived to have children themselves have been evaluated.

³ Ann Laemmlen Lewis, Frances Amelia Kimberley and Theodore Turley: My Third Great Grandparents, available online at <http://www.geocities.com/~wallyg/L2frances.htm>, retrieved 26 March 2014.

⁴ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, 1841-1845.

⁵ George D. Smith, ed. An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton, p. 108.

⁶ As this is a late account written by someone from within the Mormon faith tradition, I question whether the original term used was "enter Plural Marriage."

⁷ Quoted in Bergera: The Earliest Mormon Polygamists, from Delia Belnap, "Martha McBride Knight," typescript, not paginated, LDS Church Archives; courtesy Todd Compton.

⁸ Lisa Wood, Biography For: Martha McBride Knight Smith Kimball, available online at <http://www.mypioneertrek.com/Biographies.aspx?PioneerName=Martha%20McBride%20Knight%20Smith%20Kimball>, retrieved 26 March 2014.

⁹ The Expositor, put together by Chauncy Higbee and several of the men who had sat on 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..." available online at http://en.fairmormon.org/Primary_sources/Nauvoo_Expositor_Full_Text, retrieved 26 March 2014.

¹⁰ Stanley B. Kimball, Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer, p. 95.

¹¹ Familysearch.org merely lists "1838, Ohio River" as the date and place of death.

¹² Mary L. S. Putnam and Lila Cahoon, eds. and comps., Reynolds Cahoon: His Roots and Branches (Bountiful, Utah: Family History Publishers, 1993).

¹³ familysearch.org.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, pp. 166-167.

¹⁷ Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, pp. 226.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Jill Mulvay Deer and Karen Lynn Davidson, eds. Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry, pp. 210-211.

²¹ 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), available online at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/HWhitney.html>, retrieved November 24, 2015.

²¹ Helen Mar Kimball [Whitney], "Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo," *Woman's Exponent* 11 (1882-83), available online at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/HWhitney.html>, retrieved November 24, 2015.

15 – 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.

^{1a} Rick J. Fish, Orson Pratt in Nauvoo, 1839-1845, May 1993, available online at http://jared.pratt-family.org/orson_histories/orson_pratt_in_nauvoo2.html, retrieved 27 March 2014.

² "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, depose 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." Available online at <http://www.josephsmithspolygamy.com/JSImproperProposals/16ImproperProposalsAccusations/SarahPratt2.html>, retrieved 27 March 2014.

³ The Return, Vol. 2. No. 11., Davis City, Iowa, November, 1890, p. 362, available online at <http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/RigWrit/M&A/Return1.htm>, retrieved 27 March 2014.

⁴ 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. Available online at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>, retrieved 27 March 2014.

⁵ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, No 8, of May 15, 1844, “Municipal Court” available online at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/8375>, retrieved 27 March 2014.

^{5a} 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.”

⁶ Clap, as a term referring to venereal disease, originated in 1580-1590 and seems to come from the Provençal term for a pile of stones. Perhaps this indicated that someone found to be infected with clap was promiscuous and deserved the biblical punishment of stoning.

⁷ These individuals were may have been precursors to the Nauvoo Masons, as the confession occurred on the third floor of the Nauvoo Cultural Hall, which was the location of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge.

⁸ Testimony of Catherine Fuller Warren before the High Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the City of Nauvoo May 25th 1842 against John C. Bennett & others, copy of holograph in Valeen Tippitts Avery Collection USU, MSS 316, bx 24, fd 14.

⁹ A contemporary account of Bennett’s possible suicide was contained in the *Wasp* on 27 July 1842, dating the suicide attempt as occurring exactly one year earlier. Given the heightened rhetoric of the time, I suspect the date in the *Wasp* was not as exact as portrayed.

¹⁰ Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, *A Book of Mormons*, Signature Books, 1982, p. 211, cited by Richard and Pamela Price, *Vision Article 34, The Sarah Pratt Case*, available online at <https://restorationbookstore.org/articles/nopoligamy/jsfp-visionarticles/sarahprattcase.htm>, retrieved on 27 March 2014.

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 *Sangamo Journal*, 15 July 1842, quoted in Smith, *Sainly Scoundrel*, p. 101.

¹⁵ 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. My research suggests that Mary’s husband was born in America, which would date the Brothertons arrival in Illinois as coinciding with the first wave of English converts (July 1841). After the death of John McIlwrick/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.

^{15a} 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). Available online at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/JFielding.html>, retrieved November 24, 2015.

¹⁶ *Journals of Orson Pratt*, 561-2. Available online at http://jared.pratt-family.org/orson_histories/orson_pratt_in_nauvoo2.html#_edn52, retrieved 7 April 2014.

¹⁷ *DHC*, vol. 5, 60-61.

¹⁸ *DHC*, vol. 5, 60-61.

¹⁹ *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.

²⁰ *DHC*, vol. 5, 60-61.

²¹ 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.

²² Whittaker, “Early Mormon Pamphleteering,” 101. Available online at http://jared.pratt-family.org/orson_histories/orson_pratt_in_nauvoo2.html#_edn56, retrieved 7 April 2014.

²³ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 23. of 1 October 1842, pp. 939-940. Available online at

<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9200>, retrieved on 28 March 2014.

²⁴ Of interest, the name of Elvira Annie Cowles, Relief Society Treasurer, is not included on the certificate signed by other members of the Relief Society presidency.

16 – The Apostles and Their Wives

¹ Obviously DNA analyses are only possible for those children who lived long enough to have children themselves. However those wishing to imagine Joseph as a sexual partner to these women are left with no physical data to support their hypothesis.

^{1a} 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.

² The accusation that caused Joseph to go into hiding was not related to polygamy, but rather was the accusation that Joseph had plotted to have Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs murdered. Governor Boggs had been shot in May 1842, but survived. The “hitman” Joseph would have sent, had he ordered the hit, was offended at the suggestion he’d been involved. Orrin Porter Rockwell was in fact acquitted by a Grand Jury in part because it was believed that he wouldn’t have missed, had he been the shooter. Rockwell testified “I never shot at anybody, if I shoot they get shot! ... He’s still alive, ain’t he?”

³ 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).

⁴ This list is courtesy of Grampa Bill’s G.A. Pages, available online at <http://www.gapages.com/q12.htm>, retrieved on 5 April 5, 2014.

⁵ Ugo Perego’s DNA investigations have confirmed that Orson Hyde was the father of Marinda’s children born during Joseph Smith’s lifetime.

⁶ Nancy divorced Orson in 1870. It is not clear to me what prompted this divorce, though it could have been associated with the visit of Joseph’s sons in 1869, the questioning regarding the covenant Nancy had made with Joseph, the autonomy Nancy might have felt required to agitate for female suffrage and anti-polygamy legislation. An article in the *Ensign* (Feb. 1979, Keith Perkins, *A House Divided, The John Johnson Family*) says of Nancy Marinda “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.”

⁷ Agnes died in September 1843.

⁸ 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, available online 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), retrieved April 11, 2014.

⁹ Rick J. Fish, *Orson Pratt in Nauvoo: 1839-1846, 1993*, citing Whittaker, “Early Mormon Pamphleteering,” 101. Available online at http://jared.pratt-family.org/orson_histories/orson_pratt_in_nauvoo2.html, retrieved April 8, 2014.

¹⁰ In the late 1930s Phoebe Holmes [Welling] would write about what she recalled her

mother saying about her relationship with Joseph Smith, that Elvira had been Joseph's wife in very deed or some such. However Phoebe had been the teenager who refused to consider Job Wellings' proposal because he was English and a widower and a polygamist. I think Elvira, faced with a child who was being a bigot, said true things that implied more than had actually happened. Phoebe ended up agreeing to marry Job, who was already married to Phoebe's older sister, Marietta. Then 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.

17 – Eliza and the Stairs

¹ Wikipedia article on Eliza Rocxy Snow, available online at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eliza_Snow, retrieved April 15, 2014.

² Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry, edited by Jill Mulvany Derr and Karen Lynn Davidson, 2009.

³ Recounted by Jan Shipp in private conversation on May 23, 2010 in the home of Gregory Prince, documented in my post "Mormon Enigma (ex ante), available online at <http://www.megstout.com/blog/2010/05/24/mormon-enigma-ex-ante/>, retrieved April 15, 2014.

⁴ Wikipedia article on Valeen Tippetts Avery, available online at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valeen_Tippetts_Avery, retrieved April 15, 2014.

⁵ The Sheets family lived in the Provo neighborhood where my husband lived.

⁶ Wikipedia article on Mark Hofmann, available online at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Hofmann, retrieved April 15, 2014.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Compton, p. 314, allegedly cited in Van Wagoner, Mormon Polygamy, p. 58, but I do not find the story on that page in my edition.

⁹ Compton, p. 314, from Brodie, No Man Knows My History, p. 447.

¹⁰ Compton, 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.

¹¹ Times and Seasons, 1 Jul 1842.

¹² from Bennett, History of the Saints, The Mormon Seraglio, pp. 217-225.

¹³ Eliza R. Snow, The Bride's Avowal, contained in Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry, pp. 210-211.

¹⁴ Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, BYU Studies Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 394. Available online at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>, retrieved 16 April 2014.

¹⁵ Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, BYU Studies Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 394-5. Available online at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>, retrieved 16 April 2014.

¹⁶ I propose that Bennett got the poem to William and asked his friend to publish the poem in the Wasp to discredit Joseph.

¹⁷ Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, BYU Studies Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 396. Available online at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>, retrieved 16 April 2014.

^{17a} 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.

¹⁸ Examining the manuscript of Eliza's journal, available online at this poem had obviously been tampered with, the original word scraped off the paper and replaced 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. For the poem as it existed in December 1842, see Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, BYU Studies Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 399. Available online at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>, retrieved 16 April 2014.

²⁰ It is impossible to see the head of the stairs from the bottom of the stairs in the Homestead.

²¹ John Donne, Death, be not Proud, available online at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173363>, retrieved April 16, 2014.

²² pp. 222-223, published in Times and Seasons, 15 December 1842.

²³ In analyzing texts, the Historicist considers the culture and social forces that influence and are revealed in the text. See The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms, second edition, p. 202. A psychoanalytical criticism of these texts may also be used to reveal Eliza's mental processes and mood.

²⁴ Eliza's reference to herself as innocence.

²⁵ This imagery clearly evokes sexual intimacy.

²⁶ This is a reference to Christ's atonement.

²⁷ A mountain in Greece that was believed to be sacred to Apollo and home of the Muses – a reference to how this solitude is reviving in Eliza the desire to once again return to her gift for poetry.

²⁸ Palladium was the wooden statue of Pallas that Athena had given to the founder of Troy that was believed to protect Troy as long as it remained in the city. According to Virgil's Aeneid, Odysseus stole the Palladium and Aeneas took the Palladium to Rome, where it protected that great city. In Christianity since 1600 the term came to represent any relic that protected a city, people, or nation from military attack. Though this term falls awkwardly on our ears, Eliza may well have seen herself as the erstwhile virgin who provided protection to the enemy (Bennett) during a time of "nonsense and noise" and has now been removed from that enemy to the new spiritual empire of Joseph's New and Everlasting Covenant, while Bennett wages his attack on the people of God. Pallas, who Athena looked on as a sister, was the one killed when Athena was protected. If my supposition is correct, that Bennett was targeting Elvira and seduced Eliza as part of his campaign to have Elvira, then Elvira, like Athena, was protected while Eliza, like Pallas of the Palladium, was wounded.

²⁹ The letter in question is clearly from Lester Brooks, counselor to Almon Babbitt in the Kirtland Stake Presidency. As Lester later becomes one of the apostles to James Strang, the Mormon sect that included so many who conspired against Joseph Smith, it is not unreasonable to suspect Lester was somehow associated with Bennett and others who would later conspire against Joseph. At any rate, his closing salutation to Elvira Cowles is provocative in a letter otherwise devoted to reporting on the success of the Kirtland reformation, see the 2 January 1843 issue of the Times and Seasons Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 62-63, available online at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/8618>, retrieved 10 Jan 2015. A suspected connection between Lester and Bennett's heresy of illicit intercourse might have prompted Joseph's 1843 marriage to Almera Johnson, his first wife living in Kirtland, and sister-in-law to the Kirtland Stake President, Almon Babbitt. This supposition assumes that Almera was an informant rather than a lover.

³⁰ Elvira's name is notably missing from the affidavit from the women of Nauvoo in summer 1842 attesting to the innocence of Joseph Smith. As Bennett had attempted to kill Joseph in May 1842 during a mock battle of the Nauvoo Legion, Elvira may have been trying to keep a low profile, to avoid provoking Bennett, particularly as Bennett still had

allies in Nauvoo itself who could hurt Joseph. A marriage to Jonathan would end Bennett's hopes of possessing Elvira without inciting Bennett's hatred of Joseph.

³¹ Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, *BYU Studies* Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 402. Available online at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>, retrieved 16 April 2014.

³² Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal, edited by Maureen Ursenbach, *BYU Studies* Vol 15:4 (1975), p. 402. Available online at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=5186>, retrieved 16 April 2014.

³³ Faulring, *American Prophet's Record*, 303.

³⁴ 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.

18 – Healing Wounded Hearts

¹ 2 Timothy 3:6.

² 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.

³ Gary Bergera, *The Earliest Mormon Polygamists*, p. 41, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 2 May 2014.

⁴ Gary Bergera, *The Earliest Mormon Polygamists*, pp. 28-29, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 2 May 2014. 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.

⁵ Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 407.

⁶ Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 407-408.

⁷ Gary Bergera, *Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44*, p.23-25, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 3 May 2014.

⁸ Gary Bergera, *Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44*, p.8, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 3 May 2014.

⁹ 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 *Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44*, p.32-33, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 3 May 2014.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Gary Bergera, *Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44*, p.8-10, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 3 May 2014.

¹² 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.

¹³ Gary Bergera reports that Pheve Woodworth, Flora's mother, may also have been sealed to Joseph Smith. See Gary Bergera, *Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44*, p.30-31, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 3 May 2014.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Vilate Kimball letter, cited in Gary Bergera, *Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44*, p.18, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 3 May 2014.

¹⁶ Gary Bergera, *Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44*, p.6-7, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 3 May 2014.

¹⁷ Lucy Walker, *Brief Biographical Sketch*, pp. 5-6, cited in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 463.

¹⁸ Lucy Walker, *Brief Biographical Sketch*, cited in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 464.

¹⁹ Lucy Walker, *Brief Biographical Sketch*, cited in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 465.

²⁰ Temple Lot transcript, cited in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 465.

19 – 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 Relief Society Minute Book, p. 53, Minutes for Thursday, May 26th, available online at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book?p=50#!/>, retrieved 6 May 2014. 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, Chauncy Higbee, and others.

³ Relief Society Minute Book, p. 61, Minutes for Thursday, June 9th, available online at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book?p=58#!/>, retrieved 6 May 2014.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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 from being claimed by Joseph's sons. The point was to prove that Joseph had practiced and taught polygamy during his lifetime, "proving" that the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints, headed by Joseph's sons, was not true to the legacy of Joseph Smith. I content Emily had a motive to be expansive with her claims regarding sexuality in her relationship with Joseph, both to save the Temple Lot and to get revenge, of a sort, against Emma's memory.

⁶ 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. Available at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/OWight.html>, retrieved 12 May 2014. 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.

⁷ 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, available online at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/PDFViewer.aspx?title=5510&linkURL=22.1BeecherNewellEmma-062070ee-a927-48b5-a09a-db83edd57b24.pdf>, retrieved 5/12/2014.

⁸ 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*, available online at http://pt.fairmormon.org/Joseph_Smith/Polygamy/Emma_Smith/Sealing, retrieved 12 May 2014.

⁹ 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 to care for, as he believed was his levirate duty. However this need not be interpreted as referring to intimacy between Joseph and herself, though the "ceremony" did interfere 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.

¹⁰ See the retraction of the commandment, D&C 132: 51-56, available online at <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/132.51-56?lang=eng#50>, retrieved 12 May 2014.

¹¹ D&C 132:54.

¹² This possibility is mentioned in Alex Beam's *American Crucifixion*.

¹³ An August 1843 entry in William Clayton's journal indicates that Joseph feared Emma would divorce him if he took her up on her offer to take the Partridge sisters as plural wives. This appears to be a fear based on Emma's actual ultimatum from June 1843, combined with her reluctance in August to embrace "p," which is often considered to refer to polygamy.

¹⁴ The location of the Wasson's home is sometimes presumed to have been 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.

¹⁵ B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Period I, Volume V*, pp. 440-442. Available online at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/hc/5/24.html>, retrieved 12 May 2014.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Period I, Volume V*, p. 456. Available online at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/hc/5/24.html>, retrieved 12 May 2014.

¹⁸ B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Period I, Volume V*, pp. 458-459. Available online at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/hc/5/24.html>, retrieved 12 May 2014.

20 – Revealing the Revelation

¹ D&C 132.

² Joseph F. Smith, Jr., *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, p. 77.

³ Andrew Jensen, *The Historical Record* 6 [May 1887]: pp. 224, 225-226

⁴ *History of the Church* 5:507.

⁵ *History of the Church* 5:509.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Joseph F. Smith or Joseph Fielding Smith later opined that the revelation in its entirety ought not to have been canonized, as I recall, containing as it did these time-specific and embarrassing details regarding Emma Smith. If anyone knows off-hand where that opinion is recorded, I would be grateful to include the reference.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Howard Coray, Autobiography, available online at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/HCoray.html>, retrieved May 15, 2014.

¹¹ *The Expositor*, June 7, 1844, Page 2, Col. D. Available online at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Expositor, retrieved 15 May, 2014.

¹² *The Expositor*, June 7, 1844, Page 1, Col. F. Available online at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Expositor, retrieved 15 May, 2014.

¹³ 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 any idea about Elvira's sealing to Joseph.

¹⁴ The Expositor, June 7, 1844, Page 1, Col. E. Available online at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Expositor, retrieved 15 May, 2014.

¹⁵ Brigham Young, Sermon, October 8, 1966, LDS Church Archives, cited in Gary Bergera, Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44, available online at

http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 22 March 2014.

¹⁶ Danel Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith," p.176.

^{16a} Jonathan H. Hale was bishop of the Nauvoo 9th Ward at the time.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Aroet Lucious Hale, Journal, available online at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/AHale.html>, retrieved May 15, 2014.

²⁰ This was likely John Somers Higbee, uncle to Chauncy 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.

²¹ Orange Wight, May 4, 1903, letter to Joseph I. Earl, available online at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/OWight.html>, retrieved 15 May 2014.

²² 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.

²³ Watson, Manuscript History of Brigham Young, July 9, 1843, pp. 134-136.

21 – Those Virtuous and Pure

¹ D&C 132:52

² From D&C 132:60-62

³ In the early days of the Church, faith healing was seen as a "proof" that the Church was true. But around the end of the 1800s various charismatic movements arose that also performed faith healings.

^{3a} 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.

^{3b} 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.

⁴ Ruth Vose Sayers claimed Hyrum Smith performed a ceremony sealing her to Joseph Smith in February 1843. However as Hyrum Smith didn't accept the doctrine of the new and Everlasting Covenant of marriage until May 26, 1843, it appears Ruth misremembered the year, and was instead sealed to Joseph Smith in 1844.

22 – 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, available online at <http://books.google.com/books?id=Gc81AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA430#v=onepage&q&f=false>, retrieved 1 June 2014, and familysearch.org.

² In Jane's autobiography, she says she, herself, was fourteen. However since Jane was born in 1822, the chronology doesn't work, making it likely Jane was using the age of the girl for whom she served as companion. Jane's autobiography is available online at <http://www.blacklds.org/manning>, retrieved 1 June 2014.

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 Jane's autobiography, available online at <http://www.blacklds.org/manning>, retrieved 1 June 2014.

⁵ Date is given in *Black and Mormon*, edited by Newell G. Bringhurst and Darron T. Smith, available online at <http://books.google.com/books?id=5OBGf1dixKYC&pg=PA51#v=onepage&q&f=false>, retrieved 2 June 2014.

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*, available online at <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/08/jane-manning-james-black-saint-1847-pioneer?lang=eng>, retrieved 2 June 2014.

⁹ Jane's autobiography, available online at <http://www.blacklds.org/manning>, retrieved 1 June 2014.

¹⁰ *Life History of Sarah Elizabeth Holmes [Weaver]*, retrieved from the Nauvoo Land and Records Office.

¹¹ 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.

¹² Jane's autobiography, available online at <http://www.blacklds.org/manning>, retrieved 1 June 2014.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ While Fanny Young is often considered the last woman to become a plural wife to Joseph Smith, it appears that Ruth Vose Sayers was sealed to Joseph in 1844 rather than 1843, based on her assertion that Hyrum Smith performed the sealing.

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*, available online at <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/08/jane-manning-james-black-saint-1847-pioneer?lang=eng>, retrieved 1 June 2014.

¹⁷ See Wikipedia article on William McCary, available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_McCary, retrieved 2 June 2014. In addition to William's claims of prophesy and transfiguration, there were allegedly irregularities in how William's plural wives were introduced to marital sexuality.

^{17a} 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 (Volume 2): From Joseph Smith's Martyrdom to the First Manifesto, 1844-1890*, John Whitmer Books, 2013, p. 73.

¹⁸ See the article on Slavery in Utah at Utah History to Go, available online at http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/pioneers_and_cowboys/slaveryinutah.html, retrieved 2 June 2014.

¹⁹ 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. The Utes started raiding Paiute villages for women and children, which they would present to Mormon settlements and threaten to kill unless the Mormons "bought" the kidnapped victims. This is how Omer Badigee became the adopted son of Joseph Leland Heywood. Some hapless Mormon had bought Badigee, saving his life, but then proceeded to allow Badigee to merely exist. 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 (Heywood's ward and later wife, Mary Bell, burned the rags Omer had been wearing).

²⁰ 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*.

²¹ 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*, available online 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>, retrieved 2 June 2014. 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.

²² 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, available online at <http://www.blacklds.org/manning>, retrieved 2 June 2014.

23 – The Prodigal Returns

¹ Paraphrased from Rabbi Scheinerman's article on lashon hara (the Hebrew term for "evil speech." Available online at <http://scheinerman.net/judaism/Sermons/lashon-hara.html>, retrieved 10 June 2014.

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.

³ J. M. Dixon and J. W. Doughty, *Centennial History of Polk County, Iowa*, p. 327, cited in Andrew F. Smith, *The Sainly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett*, p. 138.

⁴ Michael De Groote, *Speaker says militia leader betrayed Joseph Smith*, available online at <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700009433/Speaker-says-militia-leader-betrayed-Joseph-Smith.html?pg=all>, retrieved June 15, 2014.

⁵ John C. Bennett, October 28, 1843, letter to the editor, published in the *Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot*, cited in Andrew Smith, *The Sainly 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. It appears Joseph determined Law had been guilty of adultery. Law had been an Aide de Camp in the Nauvoo Legion, as had others of Bennett's Strikers.

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 Sainly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett*, pp. 138-139. Then end note giving the details of the payment is note 34 on page 223.

⁹ *Sainly Scoundrel*, p. 140.

¹⁰ D&C 124:16-17.

24 – Conferring the Mantle

¹ D&C 132:50, 60, available online at <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/132?lang=eng>, retrieved 17 June 2014.

² Hyrum had served a mission to the East with Law in 1841, so was particularly close to him. However it is significant that Law, though a member of the Quorum of the Anointed, had not already been exposed to the doctrine of plural marriage before fall 1843, as members of the Quorum of the Anointed had been taught and experienced the sealing ordinance starting in May 1843. It is possible Joseph had an inkling of Law's lack of worthiness, which would explain the delay in exposing him to the doctrine. It is unclear whether Hyrum approached Law with Joseph's permission or not. Law's description of meeting with Joseph is late and antagonistic, supporting the possibility that the event might not have occurred as Law portrays.

³ William Law, Affidavit, 1885, cited in *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, by Richard Van Wagoner, 1989, p. 65.

⁴ Alexander Neibaur, May 24, 1844, journal entry. Also corroborated by William Clayton, June 12, 1844, journal entry and Hyrum Smith, 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."

⁵ See Joseph Smith Papers, *Officers of the Nauvoo Legion*, available online at

<http://josephsmithpapers.org/bc-jsp/content/jsp/images/content/library/pdf/chart12.pdf>, retrieved June 22, 2014.

⁶ Neibaur, May 24, 1844, journal entry. Cited in *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, by Richard Van Wagoner, 1989, p. 71.

⁷ William Law, May 13, 1844, journal entry. Cited in Lyndon W. Cook, *William Law, Nauvoo Dissenter*, *BYU Studies*, Vol 22 No. 1 (1982), p. 65 in footnote 82, available at <https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/view/5255>, retrieved June 22, 2014.

⁸ Cook, 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, available online at http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/joseph-smith-prophet-and-seer/prophets-final-charge-twelve-1844#_ednref57, retrieved June 22, 2014.

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 available online at <https://familysearch.org/tree/#view=ancestor&person=KNWK-S19>, retrieved June 22, 2014. 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 The Contributor, 1884, available online at <http://tinyurl.com/1884-Contributor>, retrieved June 21, 2014. Also see Dallin Oaks, *Following the Pioneers*, available online at <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/print/1997/10/following-the-pioneers?lang=eng>, retrieved June 22, 2014.

¹⁴ This mention of a dip in the river suggests that the weather had turned warm, placing the date of the meetings in mid-May.

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.

25 – Carthage, 1844

¹ John Taylor, affidavit of 22 September 1844, available online at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/tayloraccount.html>, retrieved 27 June 2014.

² William R. Hamilton, 24 December 1902, available online at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/hamiltonaccount.html>, retrieved 27 June 2014.

³ Wilford Woodruff Journals, 24 March 1844.

⁴ Sadler and Sadler, Augustine Spencer: Nauvoo Gentile, Joseph Smith Antagonist, *Mormon Historical Studies*, Fall 2011, Vol. 12 Issue 2, pp. 27-46. Available online at <http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Augustine-Spencer-Nauvoo-Gentile-Joseph-Smith-Antagonist.pdf>, retrieved 28 June 2014.

⁵ Sadler and Sadler, Augustine Spencer: Nauvoo Gentile, Joseph Smith Antagonist, *Mormon Historical Studies*, Fall 2011, Vol. 12 Issue 2, pp. 37-38. Available online at

<http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Augustine-Spencer-Nauvoo-Gentile-Joseph-Smith-Antagonist.pdf>, retrieved 28 June 2014. See also Warrant for the Arrest of Joseph Smith on the Charge of Treason, available online at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/treasonwrit.html>, retrieved 28 June 2014.

⁶ The father of Chauncey and Francis Higbee had been a judge in Nauvoo before his death. It appears they were likely the legal advisors for the conspirators.

⁷ John Taylor account of the martyrdom, available online at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/tayloraccount.html> retrieved 27 June 2014.

⁸ George Walker testimony regarding Jacob Davis, available online at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/carthageaccount.html>, retrieved 27 June 2014.

⁹ 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."

¹⁰ Joseph Lynn Lyon research, reported by Christine Rappleye, *Separating Facts from Fiction about the Prophet's Death*, available online at <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705385933/Education-Week-Separating-facts-from-fiction-about-the-Prophets-death.html?pg=all>, retrieved 28 June 2014.

¹¹ At the time the Smith brothers were killed, there were only two types of rifles: Tennessee rifles and Prairie rifles. The Tennessee rifles were developed in the 1700s and had long barrels, ironically reducing the accuracy of the guns. Prairie rifles, of which the Hawkens were considered the best, had relatively short barrels and hair triggers. Prairie rifles were designed to accurately and quickly kill large game, such as buffalo.

¹² Based on William R. Hamilton's description of his actions that day, he could have been the young man William Daniels saw.

¹³ William Daniel's testimony at Carthage in 1845, available online at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/daniels2testimony.html>, retrieved 28 June 2014.

26 – Collecting the Sorrowful

¹ As already discussed multiple times, no child born to a wife of Joseph Smith can be proven to have been engendered by Smith, based on DNA analysis. 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*, available online at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N03_13.pdf, retrieved 7 Jul 2014. The earlier children conceived by Mary Clift and Sara Peak Noon, often believed to have been engendered respectively by Theodore Turley and Heber C. Kimball, may have been engendered during Dr. Bennett's campaign of illicit intercourse.

² See *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 and the powders were administered by Hosea Stout. Homeopathic remedies are preparations primarily consisting

of sugar that 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*, available at https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V12N03_20.pdf, retrieved 7 Jul 2014.

⁴ Joseph was inspired to announce his candidacy when no current candidate was willing to endorse federal support for the liberties of the Mormons. 19Dallin 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, available online at <https://www.lds.org/manual/church-history-in-the-fulness-of-times-student-manual/chapter-twenty-one-growing-conflict-in-illinois?lang=eng>, retrieved 7 July 2014.

⁵ Walker, *Six Days in August: Brigham Young and the Succession Crisis of 1844*, in *A Firm Foundation*, available online at <http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/firm-foundation/8-six-days-august-brigham-young-and-succession-crisis-1844>, retrieved 7 July 2014.

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. Since Joseph did not expect to win the election, 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)*. 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*.

⁹ Walker, *Six Days in August*.

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.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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, available at <http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/stories-of-faith-joseph-smiths-plural-wives/>, retrieved 7 July 2014.

¹⁴ See *Wives of Sorrow and Healing Wounded Hearts* for more information on the plural marriages of other men producing children prior to Joseph’s death.

¹⁵ George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841-1846: A Preliminary Demographic Report*, *Dialogue*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 25-26.

¹⁶ D&C 132:68.

¹⁷ In the early days of the Church, it was unclear that sealings between children and parents should be performed along genealogical lines. Even so, the early Saints did bind themselves together in family units by adoption. These “adoption” sealings were later supplanted with sealings along genealogical lines, starting with the dedication of the St. George temple.

¹⁸ 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.

27 – 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.

³ Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*. Also documented at the Library of Congress, from research performed by Stephen Stathis circa 1978.

⁴ 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, available online at <https://history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-eternal-marriage?lang=eng>, retrieved 11 January 2015.

⁵ *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, Edited by Devery Anderson and Gary Bergera, excerpt available online at <http://signaturebooks.com/2010/10/excerpt-nauvoo-endowment-companies/>, retrieved 13 July 2014.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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, available at <http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/stories-of-faith-joseph-smiths-plural-wives/>, retrieved 7 July 2014.

⁸ 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 period when Almon Babbitt remained in Nauvoo as one of the three Nauvoo trustees

⁹ 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 Hale’s *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy* website for the details]. A possibility that could explain this report and the known date of Olive’s death would be if Brigham was the father of Olive’s child, a child that would be attributed to Joseph under levirate custom. Olive and the child could then have both died at the same time, consistent with a difficult delivery or merely the unusually high rate of neonatal infant mortality seen in Nauvoo during that time period.

¹⁰ Initially sealed to Orson Hyde, later sealed to Joseph Smith and separated from Hyde

¹¹ 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.

¹² Almera married Reuben Barton after Joseph’s death – I am not aware of whether she was sealed to Joseph Smith in the Nauvoo temple.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ I am not aware of what sealings, if any, Patti participated in while in Nauvoo. Patti 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.”

¹⁶ Married non-Mormon, left Mormon community circa 1837.

¹⁷ Married non-Mormon in 1843.

¹⁸ Had been sealed to Joseph with husband's consent in 1843 in what was clearly an eternity-only sealing.

¹⁹ Esther's sealing to Joseph Smith during his lifetime appears similar to Ruth Vose's sealing, however it seems her husband was not aware it had occurred. Esther was sealed to Joseph with her husband standing proxy in 1851.

²⁰ 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).

²¹ 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, recounted in my post Making It Up versus The Scientific Method, included in this book as Appendix B1.

²² Recounted in Wright letter provided to the Church in the early 1900s as well as Holmes family history.

²³ 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.

²⁴ Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, p. 351.

²⁵ Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, P. 608.

²⁶ George D. Smith, Nauvoo Polygamy: "...but we called it celestial marriage", p. 573. It is not clear if these additional 417 plural wives included plural wives of men who had not been among the 196 who had supposedly become polygamists in Nauvoo. For example, Wilford Woodruff did not take on plural wives until the fall of 1846.

28 – Eradicating Spiritual Wifery

Notes to be available in final copy

29 – Fifty Years in the Wilderness

¹ Orson Pratt, Celestial Marriage, delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, August 29, 1852.

² Reported by G. D. Watt. Available online at <http://jod.mrm.org/1/53>, retrieved 20 July 2014.

³ See Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel – Chronological Company List, available online at <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companydatelist>, retrieved 20 July 2014.

⁴ 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.

⁵ It appears the marriage was more of an engagement intended to secure Mary as his wife upon his intended return a year later. Apparently Heywood married his ward at the request of his other three wives, as "they all loved her she did much to lighten the work load." Besides this, Mary was the effective "mother" to the Paiute Indian boy Heywood had adopted.

⁶ Various sources, including Mormon Handcart Pioneers, available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_handcart_pioneers, retrieved 20 July 2014.

⁷ Ipson, Ever Faithful, pp. 198-202.

⁸ http://jared.pratt-family.org/parley_histories/parley-death-stephen-pratt.html, retrieved 20 July 2014.

⁹ See Mountain Meadows Massacre, available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre, retrieved 20 July 2014.

¹⁰ See the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act, available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morrill_Anti-Bigamy_Act, retrieved 21 July 2014.

¹¹ See Edmunds Act, available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmunds_Act, retrieved 21 July 2014.

^{11a} The Deseret Weekly, Volume 42; Volume 52, p. 834, available online at <http://books.google.com/books?id=D2LUAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA834&dq=george+Manwaring+released&source=bl&ots=hSxRpxEIgT&sig=eNFhDiPrcq-Q35GLZ5ajd8kkorY&hl=en&sa=X&ei=ZyxHU535EsvhsASSooJg&ved=0CF0Q6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=george%20Manwaring%20released&f=false>, retrieved 10 April 2014.

¹² This elected representative was George Q. Cannon, a high-ranking member of the Mormon hierarchy.

¹³ Hal Schindler, The Oldest Profession's Sordid Past in Utah, available at http://historytogo.utah.gov/salt_lake_tribune/in_another_time/theoldestprofessionsordidpastinutah.html, retrieved 21 July 2014.

¹⁴ Samuel Taylor, John Taylor: The Last Pioneer.

¹⁵ Personal account conveyed to Meg Stout.

¹⁶ Joseph F. Smith Marriages and Family, available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_F._Smith#Marriages_and_family, retrieved 21 July 2014. Mormon prophet, Spencer Woolley Kimball, later opined that his cousins, the children of Alice Ann by David Patten Rich, should not have been sealed to Joseph F. Smith.

¹⁷ See Edmunds-Tucker Act, available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmunds%E2%80%93Tucker_Act, retrieved 21 July 2014.

¹⁸ Samuel Taylor, John Taylor: The Last Pioneer. If the news of Sophia's death and passage of the Act wasn't received exactly the same day, the twin disasters were relayed close together.

¹⁹ See Wilford Woodruff, available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilford_Woodruff, retrieved 21 July 2014.

²⁰ See 1890 Manifesto, available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1890_Manifesto, retrieved 21 July 2014.

²¹ Wilford Woodruff Sermon, available at http://scottwoodward.org/Talks/html/Woodruff,%20Wilford/WoodruffW_LawOfAdoption.html, retrieved 21 July 2014.

30 – 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 she was referring to someone 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. While this policy was likely an important concession required for Utah to become a state, B. H. Roberts felt that this policy infringed on his rights as a U.S. citizen. For information see the Wikipedia article on the 1895 Political Manifesto, available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_Political_Manifesto, retrieved 3 August 2014.

⁶ Unpublished research performed by Steven Stathis, also verifiable by accessing the originals held at the US Archives and comparing numbers to the number of enfranchised voters in 1896. By way of comparison, roughly 14 million individuals cast a vote in the presidential election held that year, c.f., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1896, retrieved 3 August 2014.

⁷ A few years later, John W. Taylor would marry John Woolley's niece, Janet Maria Woolley.

⁸ 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. Though

Mary Lenora is not from Farmington, she gave birth in Logan, Cache County, Utah, which is where Owen Woodruff's plural wife, Avery, was going to school.

⁹ Reed Smoot would go on to serve in the US Senate until 1933.

¹⁰ The Woodruff family had most recently been staying in Colonia Juarez, one of the polygamist 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.

¹¹ Owen died in El Paso, Texas.

¹² A 2009 book about Helen, Owen, and Avery Woodruff is available for download at http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/usupress_pubs/40/, retrieved 3 August, 2014.

¹³ Presumably Taylor and Cowley felt that marriages performed outside of the United States were still permitted under the 1904 Manifesto.

¹⁴ 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, mentioned earlier in this post.

¹⁵ John's honeymoon with Ellen involved a large family camping trip with his plural wives and their children. Only Nettie, of his plural wives, refused to participate in this "honeymoon" trip. Ironically, her letter to Ellen, welcoming her into the family lest her failure to participate in the camping trip be misinterpreted as rejection of Ellen herself, is now the only extant contemporary record of the honeymoon trip.

¹⁶ 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 features 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.

¹⁷ John 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.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Another of Matthias' sons, Samuel P. Cowley, became famous as an FBI agent, head of J. Edgar Hoovers Flying Squad, which apprehended John Dillinger. Samuel P. Cowley was killed in 1934, shot down by Baby Face Nelson, surviving just long enough to convey information on how he and his partner were killed.

²⁰ 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, available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1886_Revelation, retrieved 4 August, 2014.

²¹ 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 W. Taylor refused. It appears Lorin

Woolley's publication of the account of the 1886 revelation followed John W. Taylor's refusal to be the standard bearer of post-Manifesto polygamy.

²² Brian C. Hales, "I Love to Hear Him Talk and Rehearse!: The Life and Teachings of Lorin C. Woolley", Mormon History Association, 2003. Available online at <http://www.mormonfundamentalism.com/NEWFILES/LorinCWoolleyBio.htm>, retrieved 3 August 2014.

²³ Others claim John W. Woolley was the rightful successor of Joseph F. Smith.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ See Mormon Fundamentalists article on Wikipedia, available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_fundamentalists, retrieved 3 August 2014.

²⁶ Allegedly the Laffertys' anger was 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.

²⁷ Alas, I was told this story back in the days 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.

²⁸ I am unaware that any Cowleys entered into fundamentalist polygamy, but cannot state that with authority. Owen Woodruff's eldest son, Wilford Owen Woodruff, only five when his father died, married a plural wife in 1942 and was excommunicated, but his first wife left him and he was eventually re-baptized into the Church.

31 – 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 desired 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 Some propose that Eliza was describing someone else or even society in general as the innocence seduced by the "rotten-hearted wretch."

⁹ This assertion is based on Mary's own affidavit before the Nauvoo High Council in 1842.

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According to the website Relative Finder, she is related to most the
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10 Meg Stout has been blogging at the Mormon website Millennial Star
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