The Saints' Herald

April 28, 1936

May 5, 1936

Marriage...-

Chapter 4

They met and were married there. Otho was a widower, and was full of inquiries for their new bride, and put many questions to her. I asked: "Melissa, did you ever marry another man?" "No, sir." "Did you ever have two children?" "No, sir." "Where did it occur?" "At the house on the farm." "And my mother knew nothing about it, before or after?" "No, sir." "Did you ever live with your father as his wife, in the Mansion House in Nauvoo, as has been claimed?" "No, sir." "Did you ever live with him as his wife anywhere?" "I never did." Then I said: "Well, Melissa, I have repeatedly been told that you have stated that you were married to my father and lived with him as his wife, and that my mother knew about it. How about it?" "I answered rather tremulously, 'If there was anything of that kind going on you may be sure that my mother knew about it.' I then asked her what was her opinion of my mother's character for truth and veracity. She replied that she considered my mother one of the noblest women in the world, and that she had known her well and knew her to be as good and truthful a woman as ever lived. 'Then you think I would be justified in believing what my mother told me?': 'Yes, indeed, for she would not lie to you.' "Melissa, my mother told me that my father had never had any wife other than herself, and was never married to any woman other than herself, or in any manner whatsoever. Do you consider I am justified in believing her?' 

Without hesitation she answered, 'It is your mother told you any such thing as that you may depend upon what she said and feel sure she was telling the truth, and that she knew nothing about any such state of affairs. Yes, you would be entirely justified in believing her.' 

Our conversation continued for some time. Finally I asked, plainly, 'Melissa, will you tell me just what was your relation to my father, if any?'

She arose, went to a shelf, and returned with a Bible which she opened at the family record pages and showed me a line written there in a scrawling handwriting:

'Married my daughter Melissa to Prophet Joseph Smith.' giving the date, which I seem to remember as late as 1843. I looked closely at the handwriting, examined the book and the other entries carefully. Then I asked:

'Who were present when this marriage took place—if marriage it may be called?'

'No one but your father and myself.'

'Was my mother there?'

'No, sir.'

'Was there no one else?'

'No, sir.'

'Where did it occur?'

'At the house on the farm.'

'And my mother knew nothing about it, before or after?'

'No, sir.'

'Did you ever live with your father as his wife, in the Mansion House in Nauvoo, as has been claimed?'

'No, sir.'

'Did you ever live with him as his wife anywhere?'

'I never did.'

At this point she began to cry, and said, 'No, I never did; but you have no business asking me such questions. I had a great regard and respect for both your father and your mother. I do not like to talk about these things.'

'Then I said: 'Well, Melissa, I have repeatedly been told that you have stated that you were married to my father and lived with him as his wife, and that my mother knew of it. Now you tell me you never did live with him as his wife, although claiming to have been married to him. You tell me there was no one present at that purported marriage except the three of you and that my mother knew nothing about such an alliance. Frankly, I am at a loss to know just what you would have me believe about it.'

'I was about to make still closer inquiries in order to find out if she ever had any relations of any sort with my father other than the ordinary relations that may properly exist between such persons under the usual conditions of social procedure, when just then there came a rap on the door, and in walked her sisters, Mary and Alzina.

Alzina lived rather near Melissa, but Mary, the older, was living some twenty-five or thirty miles away. Hearing I was in Lehi she had hitched up her team and come to see me, stopping at Alzina's on the way and bringing along her along.'

(To be continued)