CHAPTER VI

THE SPREAD OF PLURAL MARRIAGE IN NAUVOO

In the security of Nauvoo, and with the imperative of a divine command, Joseph Smith attempted to introduce the new doctrine of plural marriage among his associates and followers. He did so primarily through private and personal interviews, although he also delivered one or two public sermons on the subject. As of 1842 there were approximately 7,000 residents in Nauvoo, while the summer census for 1845 showed a population of 11,152. Yet, according to George A. Smith's estimate, which appears to be fairly accurate, no more than one or two hundred people knew of the revelation when it was written in 1843. This means that only a small fraction of the Prophet's adherents were aware of his attitudes on plural marriage at that point. But the number involved turned out to be significant both in a positive and negative sense.

In this chapter we will focus on Smith's advocacy of plural marriage, the secrecy which shrouded the introduction of the principle,

2 George A. Smith, discourse of August 13, 1871, JD 14:213.
The Church's public denials of the practice, and the accompanying reactions of local Mormons. Three groups of Saints played important roles in the outcome of events. There were those who had early knowledge of plural marriage and endorsed it; those who learned of the doctrine and opposed it; and the mass of people who were uninformed about the matter but got caught in a cross fire of rumor and debate.

The inception of plural marriage did not come as a surprise to all Nauvooans. Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young claimed that they had premonitions that such a doctrinal position would be enunciated. More often than not, though, the first indications were not given to church officials like Kimball and Young, but to relative unknowns in the history of Mormonism. Joseph B. Noble claimed that it was in the fall of 1840 that he was first instructed on the subject. He swore that the following spring he sealed his sister-in-law, Louisa Beman, to Smith. Noble and Miss Beman were probably the first

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3 In April of 1839, H. C. Kimball was in Far West, Missouri aiding those Mormons in the process of leaving that state. In a letter to Vilate who was with some exiles in Quincy, Illinois, Kimball dictated "a word from the Spirit of the Lord" in which he predicted that his posterity should "be as numerous as the sands upon the sea shore." Vilate rather doubted the prophecy due to her advancing age. "The thought had never entered our minds," Kimball related, "that the Lord would establish in this Church the doctrine of plurality of wives in my day, still I believed it would be restored to the earth in some future time." (Orson F. Whitney, op. cit., pp. 241, 245 and also H. C. Kimball, "President Heber C. Kimball's Journal," MS 45:115-116. Compare the remarks of his daughter in the *Woman's Exponent*, X [October 1, 1881], 66.) Young's experience is partially mentioned on p.180 below. See his discourse of June 23, 1874, *JD* 18:241, for full details. Moreover, Mary Lightner said she had been dreaming for a number of years before Smith approached her that she was his wife. (Mary Lightner, "Remarks.")

Nauvooans to whom Smith confided the principle. The Bemans were among the earliest supporters of Smith's religious endeavors. As early as 1827, Louisa's father, Alva Beman, helped Smith conceal the plates of the Book of Mormon from a mob. Still, the full reasoning behind Smith's choice of this particular family for the unveiling of his precept of plural associations is not known.

In 1840 the William Huntington family also learned of the doctrine. In October and December Joseph was married to Prescinda and Zina Huntington by their brother Dimick in the presence of Fanny M. Huntington. William and his family were converted to Mormonism in 1832. Although they were never prominent in Church affairs, William remained faithful through the trying days of Kirtland and Far West, aiding the Smiths and supporting the Church generally. In 1840 he married the relict of Bishop Edward Partridge and served on the High Council in Nauvoo. Again, however, the basis for the Prophet's selection are obscure.

Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, 1:368-370. There is perhaps one possibility which may partially explain the connection with this family. We have already noted that Smith may have had a vision of the women who were to enter into plural marriages with him. His
In 1841 Smith apparently began to instruct authorities of the Church regarding plural marriage. That summer many of the Twelve Apostles returned from missionary tours in Great Britain. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor arrived in Nauvoo on July 1, 1841. Kimball's daughter, Helen, related the events that ensued.

Joseph Smith was waiting at the landing with a company of horsemen. As soon as the missionaries disembarked from the boat, he rushed them to dinner at his home, not even giving them time to visit with their own families. Helen Kimball thought that this discourtesy continued after dinner when Smith brought the entire party to the Kimball home. The Prophet, wrote Helen Kimball, "seemed unwilling to part with my father and from that time kept the Twelve in Council early and late." Helen said her mother "never dreamed that he was during those times revealing to them the principles of Celestial Marriage" or that her trials were about to begin. George A. Smith confirms Miss Kimball's contemporaries also said he had a vision or visions relating to his ancestry and how he was related by blood to many of the prominent families of the early church. (See Heber C. Kimball, discourse of September 6, 1856, JD 5:215-216; and Orson Pratt to Parley P. Pratt, October 11, 1853 as quoted in Archibald F. Bennett, Saviors on Mount Zion [Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union Board, 1955], p. 86. The author also has a photo copy of this letter in his possession.) Genealogical research by Archibald F. Bennett and others has demonstrated this to be a fact and that most of Smith's relations descend from Reverend John Lathrop, who came to America from England in the 1630's. (Archibald Bennett, op. cit., chapt. xxi, entitled "A Race of Religious Leaders," pp. 85-90.) Edward Tullidge quotes Zina D. Huntington as saying that Lathrop was one of her progenitors also. (Tullidge, op. cit., p. 203.) It appears very likely that these three facts are not unrelated to the emerging, but not fully developed concept of dynasticism in the Church hierarchy.

8 HC 4:381.

9 Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes in Nauvoo," Women's Exponent, X (August 15, 1881), 42. If this sequence is true Juanita Brooks...
reminisences. He noted that it was "at one of the first interviews" after his return from England on July 13, 1841, that Smith astonished him with the new doctrine of "Patriarchal Marriage."

However, the testimony of Brigham Young seems to indicate that Smith did not teach these men all he knew about plural marriage at this time. While still in England, Young recollected he had visions in which the Lord manifested "things that [he] did not understand" concerning marriage. He kept these matters to himself, planning to speak to Smith about them upon his return to Nauvoo. In conversing with Smith, Young felt that the Prophet was probing for something. So Young explained what he felt was in store for the future. At this point, Smith

turned round and looked me in the eyes, and says he--
'Brother Brigham, are you speaking what you understand,---are you in earnest?' Says I--'I Speak just as the Spirit manifest to me.' Says he--'God bless you, the Lord has opened your mind,' and he turned and went off.

At least one member of the Quorum of the Twelve, Parley P. Pratt, was not instructed until 1843. The private introduction of Pratt and his wife by Smith was somehow interrupted, and Smith did not finish his tutoring. The Pratts then went to Vilate Kimball for additional

conclusion that Smith introduced them to plural marriage on May 4-5, 1842 cannot be correct. This was the meeting when the Prophet began to instruct church leaders more fully in the temple doctrines. Mrs. Brooks has apparently assumed that this was the time when he introduced plural marriage. She gives no documentation for her assertion. (See Juanita Brooks, John D. Lee, Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Soapgroat [Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1972], pp. 56-57.)

10 George A. Smith to Joseph Smith III, October 9, 1869 as quoted in Bailey, op. cit., pp. 82-83. See also iiC 4:382.

information. Vilate explained that she thought they had better "go to those that had authority to teach," warning them that "they were sacred things, and he [Pratt] had better not make a move until he got more instruction." 12

The story of Heber C. Kimball, also told by Helen Kimball, is perhaps the most interesting and instructive of all those extant on Smith's method of private introduction concerning plural marriage. It seems that Smith astounded Kimball with perhaps the most unusual request ever made of one of his followers. It was nothing less than the demand that Kimball should give his wife Vilate to the Prophet to be his wife. Kimball reeled at the thought. Suspicion and doubt seized him, but he knew his leader too well to take the request lightly. He fasted and prayed for three days to bring himself into submission. Finally, with "soul self-mastered" he took Vilate to the Prophet's home. Reportedly, Smith wept at this demonstration of devotion. In the emotion-filled moment, he embraced Kimball and told him the Lord was only testing him as he had tested Abraham. Vilate

12 Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, June 27, 1843. Original in the LDS Church Archives. On the 29th she was still writing the letter and on that date told her husband that since beginning the letter she had received the visit referred to in the text. Thus when Smith was teaching Pratt about "the eternal union of the sexes" in Philadelphia in 1840 he must not have been teaching the polygynous doctrine as Mrs. Brodie asserts. (P. P. Pratt, Autobiography, pp. 297-298 and Brodie, op. cit., p. 297.)

Later church leaders recounted a similar test of John Taylor. Given the fact that the story was related by Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon, it is doubtful that they were confusing Kimball and Taylor. (See John M. Whitaker, Daily Journal, November 1, 1890, p. 242. Original in the Marriott Library, University of Utah.) Jedediah Grant said, "Did the Prophet Joseph want every man's wife he asked for? He did not, but in that thing was the grand thread of the Priesthood developed. The grand object in view was to try the people of God, to see what was in them." (Discourse of February 19, 1854, JO 2:14.)
was to remain his own. In fact, now that he had passed the test, nothing would be withheld from him. So then and there Smith joined the Kimball's hands together and sealed them as husband and wife for eternity.  

Next, the Prophet required Kimball to take a plural wife without the knowledge of Vilate, fearing that she would not accept the principle. Kimball delayed until he received a third command to action. He had been told to marry Sarah Peak Noon, an immigrant and mother of two daughters who left a drunken and dissolute husband in England. Heber was told that, if he did not comply with this directive, he would lose his Apostleship and suffer damnation. Under this pressure he acquiesced.

For days after the wedding, the knowledge that he was deceiving his wife seared Kimball's conscience. He ate little and slept less. Finally, he went to Smith and confessed he was too weak to deceive his wife any longer. But Joseph Smith informed him that the Lord had promised that his life would be taken to protect him from apostasy.

Kimball's "anxious and haggard looks betrayed him daily and hourly, and finally his misery became so unbearable that it was impossible to control his feelings." Helen said, "he became sick in body, but

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13 This story comes from two separate sources; the first in Helen M. Whitney and the second is from James Lawson, a son-in-law. Mrs. Whitney's story is told originally in the Women's Exponent, XI (July 15, 1882); 26, Orson F. Whitney, "Heber C. Kimball," Contributor, VIII (June, 1887), 311. Lawson's was first printed in Orson F. Whitney, The Life of Heber C. Kimball, in 1888. (See the present edition, pp. 439-440.)

14 H. Whitney, Woman's Exponent, X (October 15, 1881).
his mental wretchedness was too great to allow his retiring, and he would walk the floor till nearly morning. . . . " When he refused to explain to Vilate the cause of his anguish, she turned to prayer.

According to Helen, a vision was opened to her mother's mind and

Before her was illustrated the order of Celestial Marriage, in all its beauty and glory, together with the great exaltation and honor it would confer upon her in that immortal and celestial sphere, if she would accept it and stand in her place by her husband's side. She also saw the woman he had taken to wife, and contemplated with joy the vast and boundless love and union which this order would bring about, as well as the increase of her husband's kingdoms, and the power and glory extending throughout the eternities, worlds without end.15

Comforted, Vilate went to her husband and explained what had happened and told him she could covenant to stand by him. But the story does not end on this mystical, "happy ever after" note. In the fall of 1842, Kimball was called to missionary service in central and southern Illinois. Surviving correspondence between Heber and Vilate during this time shows that even the reported vision had not eradicated all the feelings of a devoted wife's heart. The intrusion of plural marriage into the Kimball home proved to be a persistent problem. On October 16, 1842 Vilate wrote to her husband, expressing her feelings as follows:

Our good Friend S. (Sarah, father's other wife) is as ever, and we are one. You said I must tell you all my feelings; but if I were to tell you that I sometimes felt tempted and tried and feel as though my burden was greater than I could bear, it would only be a source of sorrow to you, and the Lord knows that I do not wish to add one sorrow to your heart, for be assured, my dear Heber, that I do not love you any less for what has transpired, neither do I believe that you do me; therefore, I will keep my bad feelings to myself, as much as

15Ibid. p. 327.
possible and tell you the good. I can say with propriety that the most of my time I feel comfortable in my mind, and feel that I have much to be thankful for. I realize that the scenes we are called to pass through are calculated to wean us from the world, and prepare us for a better one. My desire is to live while I can be a comfort to you and to bring up our children. For I don't know of a person on earth that I should be willing to leave them with. 16

Heber likewise let his feelings be known in two letters, the first of which is dated October 23, 1842. At the time he had not received the foregoing communication from his wife. Among other things, he prayed that God would take him before he had a chance to sin or "betray my dear brethren who have been true to me and to God the Eternal Father." He exhorted his wife to stand by him even to death. Life was quickly losing its "charms" for him, he said, and his head was often "a fountain of tears." 17

By October 25 he had received Vilate's letter. His reply at that date illustrates the agony of the trial he was experiencing. He was deeply moved by her attempt to conceal her feelings. Although her letter was a "sweet Morsel" to him he had been able to read between the lines and sympathetically responded:

I could weep like a child if I could get by myself to think for one moment that I have been the means of causing you any sorrow [. ] I know you must have many

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16 Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, October 16, 1842 as quoted in the Women's Exponent, XI (June 1, 1882), 1-2. The author was unable to locate the original of this in the LDS Church Archives. Apparently Kimball's biographer has not either, since he quotes the same source used here in his recent article. (See, Stanley Kimball, "Heber C. Kimball and Family, the Nauvoo Years," BYU Studies, XV [Summer, 1975], 459-465.) The author suspects that Mrs. Whitney edited the letter somewhat because other letters she printed have been found, showing significant editing.

bad feelings but I feel to pray for you most of the time for I think you have not been out of my mind one score of minutes at a time since I left you. There has been but a few nits but what I have dreamt about you but most allways I find you distant. My feelings are of that kind that it makes me sick at heart so that I have no apetite to eat, my temptations are so severe, it seems as though I should heaf to lay down and die for it seems as though I should sink beneat it & I go to the woods Evry chance I have and pore out my soul before God that he would deliver me and bless you my dear love for I love you most dear I assure you for my heart ake so it seems as though it would burst [.]

I have been trouble[d] about my self some of the time [and the] first I would know I would bee in tears weeping like a child, about you and the situation that I am in but what can I do but go ahead [?] my dear Vilate do not let it cast you down for I know how to pity you, my dear. I can say I never suffered more in all the day of my life than since these things come to pass.18

At the conclusion Kimball again felt the need to reassure Vilate that his love for her remained strong and that taking a plural wife had not changed the nature of his love. He told her he would be the "most miserable" of all men if her love for him had changed. His own love for her "eclips[ed] all other[s] on Earth." "I esteem you most pressious of all things below the sun for you and my children are my Earthly object and it is all that holds me to it." Although these expressions were "the verry cream" of his soul, he again assured her: "no one in the world can make me as happy as you can."19

This episode, filled with pathos as it is, suggests several things relative to the discussion at hand. First, we learn of the

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18 Heber C. Kimball to Vilate Kimball, October 25, 1842. Original in the LDS Church Archives. This was published by Helen M. Whitney in *Ibid.* Comparison of the two show some editing. The original has been followed here.

tremendous need Smith felt for reassurance that he had the loyalty of his followers before he taught them the mysteries of plural marriage. Secondly, it suggests that the matrimonial doctrine was not an easy principle for an original wife to accept, even after she felt her prayers on the subject were answered. Thirdly, polygyny could sorely test the faith of devout Mormon husbands who accepted and followed Smith's teachings. And, from a consideration of other cases, the Kimballs were apparently not the only ones who had difficulties in this respect.

Benjamin F. Johnson reacted in anger and indignation when the Prophet first broached the subject of plural marriage with him. In April of 1843, Smith was holding meetings in Macedonia, Illinois, and on a Sunday morning he invited "Bennie" for a walk into the woods. As they sat on a log, the Prophet explained that the Lord had commanded him to take additional wives. He wanted Johnson's sister, Almera, and asked Johnson to act as intermediary. The latter's reaction was one of shock and amazement. "Brother Joseph, this is all new to me;" he said, "it may all be true—you know, but I do not [know]. To my education it is all wrong." Nevertheless, Johnson yielded, warning Smith that if he had intentions of degrading his sister he would kill him. Smith professed the purity of his motives and promised Johnson that he would receive his own witness that the doctrine was correct. Moreover, Johnson was told that he would have no trouble explaining things to Almera. "I stood before her trembling," Johnson remembered, "my knees shaking, but I opened my mouth and my heart opened to the light of the Lord, my tongue was
loosed and I was filled with the Holy Ghost." He preached such a sermon that both he and his sister were converted to the principle.

Later in Nauvoo, at the home of his sister, Delcena Sherman, Johnson was to hear Hyrum Smith's explanation that the Prophet would not have taught the doctrine if it was not from the Lord and, in fact, would not have accepted it if an angel had not threatened him.\textsuperscript{20}

Apparently, Hyrum Smith himself had a difficult spiritual struggle with the new doctrine. Indeed, he warned his brother that it would cause the breakup of the Church and cost him his life. As was his pattern, Joseph promised his older brother, that if he prayed about it, he would discover the correctness of the principle. Reportedly, Hyrum Smith "well-nigh sweat blood over it, so repugnant was it to his feelings," but upon inquiring of God he received the promised revelation.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20}Benjamin F. Johnson, \textit{My Life's Review}, pp. 94-95.

\textsuperscript{21}Gideon Carter, affidavit, February 27, 1874. Original in the Vault Folder in the LDS Church Archives. It has been published in B. H. Roberts, \textit{Succession in the Presidency of the Church} (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Publishing Co., 1900), pp. 122-125. James Allred, a member of the High Council to which Hyrum Smith later read the revelation said Smith told the council "he did not believe it at first, it was so contrary to his feelings, but he said he knew Joseph was a profit [sic.] of God so he made a covenant that he would not eat, drink or sleep until [sic.] he knew for himself, that he had got a testimony that it was true, that he had even herd [sic.] the voice of God concerning it." (James Allred, statement of October 15, 1854. Original in the LDS Church Archives.) Compare also the statements of Ebenezer and Angeline Robinson. (Affidavits of December 29, 1873 and October 24, 1885, as found in D. H. Bays, \textit{The Doctrines and Dogmas of Mormonism Examined and Refuted} [St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1897], pp. 368-371.)

Hyrum's first plural wife, Mercy R. Thompson tells the story that Hyrum was induced to marry her after the Prophet told him to. Her dead husband (Robert B. Thompson) repeatedly appeared to Smith telling him to have Hyrum marry her because he did not want her to live "such a lonely life." (Mercy R. Thompson to Joseph Smith III,
John Taylor's feelings were similar to those of Kimball, Johnson, and Hyrum Smith. Taylor remembered that, when the Prophet taught the doctrine to the Twelve, he told them that their refusal to practice it would inhibit the progress of the kingdom of God. But Taylor thought it was an "appalling thing to do," and, in fact, delayed so long in establishing a plural household that he aggravated Smith. Eventually Taylor encountered the Prophet on horseback in front of the Nauvoo temple. Smith was adamant in his instructions.

'Look here,' said he, 'those things that have been spoke of must be fulfilled, and if they are not entered into right away the keys will be turned.' Well, what did I do? Did I feel to stand in the way of this great, eternal principle, and treat lightly the things of God? No.22

Brigham Young said the only time he desired the grave was when he learned of his duty in the matter.23 Lorenzo Snow's reaction was typical. He, like Benjamin Johnson, was taken for a walk and told of plural marriage while sitting on a log near a river bank. In her biography of her brother, Eliza R. Snow quoted these comments from Lorenzo's journal:

I felt very humble, and in my simplicity besought him earnestly to correct me and set me right if, at any time, he should see me indulging any principle or practice that might tend to lead astray, into forbidden paths; to which he replied, 'Brother Lorenzo, the

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22 John Taylor, selections from discourses delivered in various settlements, JD 24:230. See also MS 45:454.

23 Brigham Young, discourse of July 14, 1855, JD 3:266.
principles of honesty and integrity are found within you, and you will never be guilty of any serious error or wrong, to lead you from the path of duty. The Lord will open your way to receive and obey the law of Celestial Marriage.  

The following are known or thought to have established plural households prior to the martyrdom: Ezra T. Benson, Gladden Bishop, William Clayton, Howard Egan, Thomas Grover, Orson Hyde, Benjamin F. Johnson, Heber C. Kimball, Joseph Bates Noble, Parley P. Pratt, Willard Richards, Hyrum Smith, John Smith, William Smith, Eratus Snow, James J. Strang, John Taylor, Lyman Wight, and Brigham Young.

Secrecy and Church Denials

The aura of secrecy which enclosed the new institution has been repeatedly noticed in this study. Not only were new initiates privately taught, but there were times when Smith even concealed his actions

24 Eliza R. Snow, Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow One of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1884), p. 70.

from Emma and went to unusual lengths to keep the matter from the public. As previously noted, on July 27, 1842 Smith married Sarah, the 17 year-old daughter of Bishop Newel Whitney. She "was the first woman given in plural marriage with the consent of both parents." Shortly after the marriage, Smith sent the mother and father a written invitation to meet him at a hiding place in order to receive additional blessings. This remarkable letter, penned August 18, 1842, specifically cautioned the addressees about secrecy. "Let Brother Whitney come a little ahead, and knock at the south east corner of the house at the window; it is next to the cornfield," he wrote. We have also noted Smith's concern that Whitney not come when Emma was present. He then said,

... be careful to escape observation, as much as possible. I know it is a heroick [sic.] undertaking, but so much the greater friendship, and the more joy when I see you. ... Burn this letter as soon as you read it, keep all locked up in your hearts my life depends on it. ... 28

Nine months later Joseph Smith "married" Sarah Ann Whitney to Joseph C. Kingsbury, brother-in-law to her father. In a striking diary entry, recently brought to light, Joseph Kingsbury explained his reason for marrying the girl. He said:

on the 29th of April 1843 I according to President Joseph Smith[s] Council [sic.] & other agread [sic.] to Stand by Sarah Ann Whitney as to be her husband & had a pretended marriage for the purpose of Bringing

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26 See n. 40, chapt. iv.

27 Tullidge, op. cit., p. 369.

28 Joseph Smith to Beloved Brother and Sister Whitney, op. cit.
about the purposes of God in these last days Spoken by
the mouths of the prophets. ... 29
This is the only known instance a "front" husband marrying one of
Smith's wives in order to conceal his activities.
Secrecy was also practiced by others. Erastus Snow recorded
in code in his diary his first plural marriage, which occurred on
February 15, 1844. This was apparently to conceal knowledge of the
proceedings from anyone who might gain access to the personal account
(see Figure 5). Likewise, shortly after her marriage to Joseph Smith,
Helen Mar Kimball received instructions from her father. He cautioned
her to keep her feelings to herself and tell them to no one because
"if you do you will be betrayed [sic.]; and Exposed, to your hurt."

29 Joseph C. Kingsbury, "The History of Joseph C. Kingsbury,"
Kingsbury's first wife died October 10, 1842. This wedding occurred
on April 29, 1843. (Civil Marriages Performed in Nauvoo, Hancock
County, Illinois. Original in the Nauvoo Collection, in the LDS
Church Archives.) The above account was first published by Michael
Marquardt. Compare Figure 7 p. 210 above.

30 Erastus Snow, Journal, June 1841 to February 1847, opposite
p. 50. Original in the LDS Church Archives. First a copy of these
pages were found in the Vault Folder with an attached explanation of
the code. Subsequently the journal itself was secured. The author
is grateful to the executive committee at the Historical Department of
the LDS Church for granting permission to reproduce this.
The coded message is in brown ink similar to that of the
rest of the journal. The deciphered message is in a different hand-
writing (unknown) and ink color (blue). Several blank pages follow
the message. The observant reader will notice that the dates on page
50 do not correspond with the date of Snow's marriage. Apparently
he skipped back a few pages in his journal, recorded the message
then continued keeping his journal account until he reached the
coded entry. Then he skipped back a few more pages and proceeded.
The one (1) at the top left of the coded message and the pages left
blank after it suggest that Snow may have contemplated adding
additional coded messages.
you must not show this letter to any but our family [.]. be wise and you shall prosper ... keep the company of those that are wise and keep close mouths, Solomon says a wise head keeps a close mouth. so don't tell all you feel. if you should [,] tell it to your mother, she feels for your interest.31

As Michael Quinn has pointed out, Joseph Smith "institutionalized both exclusiveness and secrecy as permanent characteristics of Mormonism. ..."32 Early Mormonism was steeped in secrecy. The

31 Heber C. Kimball to Helen Mar Kimball, June 9, 1844.

32 Michael Quinn, "Socio-Religious Radicalism of the Mormon Church: A Parallel to the Anabaptists" (paper presented to the Mormon History Association in conjunction with the Chicago meeting of the
Presiding councils of the Church from the First Presidency down to the Stake High Council meetings were all held behind closed doors. The sacred temple ordinances and rituals were only available to worthy and prepared church members. Perhaps, in some instances, even worship services were confined to selected believers. The apex of secrecy surrounded the formation and organizational councils of the Council of Fifty. In April of 1844, Sidney Rigdon revealed the nature of secrecy in the Church and some of the criticism it must have been receiving when he said: "Would you not be astonished if even now we should tell the glories and privileges of the Saints of God to you and to the World? We should be ridiculed; and no wonder we shut it up in secret. . . . Do not be astonished, then, if we even yet have secret meetings, asking God for things for your benefit." He assured the people, "There was no evil concocted when we first held secret meetings, and it is the same even now."35

Several factors explain this policy of secrecy about polygyny. Smith had encountered opposition from the time at an early age, when he began to have spiritual experiences with Christ. Disagreement with


35 HC 6:290-291.
his views only seemed to intensify as Mormonism grew and progressed. Most assessments of the persecutions that the Prophet ultimately experienced have pointed to cultural and social differences between his followers and their gentile neighbors. Strange Mormon doctrines and practices supposedly compounded tensions related to economic, political, and other issues. As a consequence, Smith was imprisoned, arrested numerous times, tarred and feathered, and faced one or two early threats on his life. By the time when the Saints gathered in Nauvoo--the third or fourth home for many of the exiles--the Prophet must have realized that an indiscriminate advocacy of plural marriage would only intensify criticism and stiffen anti-Mormon opposition.

For that matter, Smith did not have to speculate on what might happen if critics heard that he believed in plural marriage. He had already been tried in court for illicit relationships with women. And there is some evidence that he may have already been attacked by an irate crowd because of a supposed intimacy with a fellow Mormon's sister. In addition, Smith had seen one of his closest advisors, Oliver Cowdery, leave the Church over this issue. So he had no illusions as to what moral conduct either outsiders or believers expected of one who claimed to be a Prophet of God.

From Smith's own point of view, one of his greatest difficulties in life was to break down the "traditions of men" which stood in the way of his teachings on marriage. He thought that the norm of

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36 See ns. 23-25 in chapt. ii.
monogamy chained men's minds, making them totally un receptive to alternative lifestyles. On several occasions, Smith complained about the difficulty he had in teaching his own flock. Reverently and with obvious awe, Apostle Wilford Woodruff recalled that "the Lord taught him [Smith] many things by vision and revelation that were never taught publicly in his days; for the people could not bear the flood of intelligence which God poured into his mind." In an April, 1842 sermon to the Relief Society Smith chided those "Great Big Elders" whom he privately taught the "things of the Kingdom" that they were then proclaiming as their own revelations. Again, in a June, 1843 discourse, he angrily lashed out at those who professed loyalty, but "the moment you teach them some of the mysteries of the kingdom of God . . . they will be the first to stone you and put you to death." Six months before his murder, the Prophet depicted his dilemma in humorous words. To get things into the heads of the people, he said," has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a bettle." More serious tones reveal the frustrations of long years of inhibited teachings.

I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions; they cannot stand the fire at all.

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37 Wilford Woodruff, discourse of April 9, 1857, JD 5:83-84.
38 HC 4:604.
39 HC 5:424.
40 HC 6:184.
41 Ibid., 185. Klaus Hansen applied some of these statements to the kingdom of God concept rather than plural marriage. (See, Hansen, "The Making of King Strang," p. 207.)
What is more, his critics could not accept the institution of plural marriage as having any moral or religious basis whatever. To many gentiles, Smith and his doctrine were the worst threats to the underpinnings of society. As David Brion Davis has said, this very aura of secrecy contributed to the solidification of anti-Mormon sentiment. The unconditional loyalty and obedience demanded and received by Mormonism merely magnified these concerns.

Efforts to maintain silence, to restrict knowledge of the nuptial doctrine to trusted and worthy associates, and to avoid outside pressure only seemed to enliven charges of moral corruption against the Church. The bitterly anti-Mormon Nauvoo Expositor, edited by repudiated ex-Mormons, was quick to point to "many items of doctrine" which it said were "taught secretly, and denied openly." Likewise, after the death of Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon turned against Mormonism. In his religious newspaper, Rigdon charged that New Testament scriptures predicted the apostasy of the latter day Church because it would privately introduce wicked practices and seek to maintain them by secrecy and lying if necessary.

Under such circumstances, church leaders did deny the accusations of those who said that they countenanced immorality and

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43 Nauvoo Expositor, June 7, 1844.

44 Sidney Rigdon to James Gregg, in The Latter Day Saint’s Messenger and Advocate [Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania], October 15, 1844.
corruption with respect to marriage. Most of these denials stressed semantical and theological technicalities. That is, the language of the defense was carefully chosen to disavow practices that did not accurately represent Church doctrines. Some Mormons insisted that the Church was not advocating plural marriage as an official practice for its general membership. Still others bordered on outright prevarication in order to protect the Church.

As early as the 1830’s, at Kirtland and Far West, references were made to the marital provisions in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants and in the articles in the Elder’s Journal that involved some protective circumlocution. The earliest denials of marriage abuses in Nauvoo grew out of a scandal related to the activities of John C. Bennett, an individual who had been prominent in the Church’s hierarchy and in Nauvoo society. Bennett was excommunicated in the spring of 1842 for committing adultery with various women. Immediately, in the public press he charged that the Mormon leadership was teaching spiritual wifery and seduction. He stated that Joseph Smith and others had tried to use him as a go-between in alluring

45 In his letter of October 9, 1869 to Joseph Smith III, George A. Smith said, “Anyone who will read carefully the denials, as they are termed, . . . in connection with the circumstances will see clearly that they denounce adultery, fornication, brutal lust and the teaching of plurality of wives by those who were not commanded to do so; showing clearly that it was understood that such commandment would be given to others.” (Bailey, op. cit., p. 86.)


47 This story will be detailed in chapt. vii.
women into their seraglios. Joseph Smith contradicted these statements and, in fact, said that Bennett was using his name without authorization in making sexual conquests. Bennett finally signed an affidavit absolving Smith of any culpability for his behavior, but later claimed that this document was obtained under duress. 48

The October, 1842 issue of the *Times and Seasons*, a local Mormon publication, reaffirmed the Church's monogamous marital stance by reprinting the 1835 statement to this effect. This was done "to show that Dr. J. C. Bennett's 'secret wife system' is a matter of his own manufacture." 49 Subsequently, two additional disclaimers were signed by thirty-one prominent Nauvoosans. 50 The first was approved by twelve men who stated that they knew of no other marriage system than the one outlined in the 1835 statement. The second was endorsed by nineteen women of the Relief Society, all of whom were married. It echoed the statement made by the men, following the argument presented in the October editorial. The interesting thing in these statements is the fact that several of the signatories did in fact know of polygyny. Among the men, Newel K. Whitney and perhaps John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff were privy to the new teaching. Eliza R. Snow and Elizabeth Ann Whitney were enlightened among the ladies.

The Prophet's own comments on the subject were evasive. By February of 1842 he was boiling over and was particularly incensed

48 *T&C* 3:870-871.
about the rumors among the women. To the temple workmen he exploded,

There is a great noise in the city, and many are saying there cannot be so much smoke without some fire. Well, be it so. If the stories about Joseph Smith are true, then the stories of John C. Bennett are true about the ladies of Nauvoo; and he says that the Ladies' Relief Society are all organized of those who are to be the wives of Joe Smith, Ladies, you know whether this is true or not. 51

Years later, Eliza Snow explained the apparent discrepancies between these refutations and the behavior of the people. She said that they pertained only to Bennett's doctrines, not the true doctrines of the Church. 52 While this may have been the intention of some of the knowledgeable Mormons, there were also those who thought that they were actually representing the Church's true position. The latter were simply ignorant of the principles of plural marriage that were being secretly taught and practiced. Ebenezer and Angeline Robinson were among those who signed these documents, believing they were interdicting all non-monogamous doctrines. It was not until December of 1843 that Hyrum Smith taught them the truth about the plural marriage precept. Speaking of his previous knowledge, Robinson said, "we knew it was talked of in secret, and had been for more than a year." 53 In fact, Don Carlos Smith, the Prophet's younger brother, was ignorant of this teaching at the time. In June of 1841, he told

51 HC 5:286.

52 Eliza R. Snow to Joseph F. Smith, undated. Original is in the Joseph F. Smith Collection in the LDS Church Archives.

53 Ebenezer Robinson, "Items of Personal History," The Return (February, 1891), pp. 29-30.
Robinson that "Any man who will teach and practice 'spiritual wifery' will go to hell, no matter if it is my brother Joseph." 54

Some denials were straightforward, although they were probably based on zealous ignorance. This was apparently the case with a Mormon who wrote to the Boston Bee, categorically denying charges that his leaders were "advocating a plurality of wives." 55 But other public comments are quite obtuse and subject to different interpretations. For instance, on February 1, 1844, the Times and Seasons printed a "notice" from Joseph and Hyrum Smith to Hiram Brown in Lapeer County, Michigan. Brown was excommunicated for "preaching polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines." 56 It is likely that the Smiths were aware of the technical difference between polygamy and polygyny and could therefore classify the former as a false doctrine.

Again, in March of the same year, Hyrum Smith wrote a letter of chastisement to the China Creek Branch of the Church in Hancock County, Illinois. Some of the elders had been teaching the people that "a man having a certain priesthood, may have as many wives as he pleases." "That man teaches false doctrines," Smith declared.

54 Ebenezer Robinson, Items of Personal History of the Editor. Including Some Items of Church History not Generally Known, Taken from "The Return," Volumes 1-3, 1886-1890, pp. 126-127. Typescript in the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. The author used this source in lieu of the above source because the copy in the LDS Church Archives was incomplete and the interlibrary loan service at Purdue was unable to procure it.

55 TSS 4:143.

56 Ibid., 423.
"for there is no such doctrine taught here; neither is there any such thing practiced here." Therefore, those guilty of teaching such doctrine stood in jeopardy of losing their church membership.

The unauthorized practices of Bennett, Brown, and others at China Creek put Hyrum Smith in a bellicose mood. In an April, 1844 sermon, he responded to "the 10,000 reports" daily coming in about the existence of the spiritual wife doctrine. "Almost every foolish man runs to me to inquire if such things are true, & how many spiritual wives a man may have," he said. "I know nothing about it; what he might call a spiritual wife, I should not know anything about. In about half an hour after he has gone another begins to say: the Elders tell such & such things all over the country. I am authorized

57Ibid., 474. (Italics in the Original.) The origin of the idea is uncertain, however, Section 132 taught that the Prophet Nathan held the "keys of this power" and gave David his wives. From this idea Orson Pratt taught that the "keys" which then resided in Joseph Smith allowed the two necessary conditions for a man to have a plural wife. The possessor of the keys was the only one who could get the authorizing revelation from God, and he was also the only one with power to seal the couple together. (Orson Pratt, discourse of August 29, 1852, JD 1:63-64, and compare the statement by the First Presidency in 1933, op. cit.) An interesting note appears in Smith's History under the date of October 5, 1843 relative to these two issues. It says, "... walked up and down the street with my scribe. Gave instructions to try those persons who were preaching, teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives; for, according to the law I hold the keys of this power in the last days; for there is never but one on earth at a time on whom the power and its keys are conferred; and I have constantly said no man shall save but one wife at a time, unless the Lord directs otherwise." (HC 6:46.) But Smith's journal for the same date had a variant reading which is less specific but may convey the same notion although it appears to be more final than the published version. The diary reads, "... walked up and down st. [street] with scrib', and gave instructions to try those who were preaching, teaching on... the doctrine of plurality of wives on this law. Joseph forbids it, and the practice thereof. No man shall have but one wife." (Joseph Smith, Diary, Thursday, October 5, 1843. Original in the LDS Church Archives. Dean Jesse says the diary is in the handwriting of Willard Richards, one of Smith's secretaries.)
to tell you from henceforth," he asserted, "that any man who comes in and tells you such damn fool doctrine to tell him to give up his license. None but a fool teaches such stuff; the devil himself is not such a fool, and every Elder who teaches such stuff ought to have his nose wrung." The doctrine of eternal marriage had suffered a fate similar to other Mormon dogmas: "it was made to have an evil effect through the foolishness of some." 58

In a unique admission, Hyrum Smith then explained the Church doctrine which was apparently being confused with "spiritual wifery." It may be noteworthy, though, that the following comment says nothing of multiple living wives:

I married me a wife, and I am the only man who has any right to her. We had five children, the covenant was made for [sic.] our lives. She fell into the grave before God shewed us his order. God has shewn me that the covenant is dead, and had no more force, neither could I have her in the resurrection, but we should be as the angels--it troubled me. Prd. Joseph said you can have her sealed to you upon the same principles as you can be baptized for the dead. I enquired what can I do for any second wife? You can also make a covenant with her for eternity and have her sealed to you by the authority of the priesthood. I named the subject to my present wife, and she said I will act as proxy for your wife that is dead, and I will be sealed to you for eternity myself for I never had any other husband. 59

But Smith said even this doctrine should not be preached to the world. It should be taught only in Nauvoo where it could be kept under

58 Hyrum Smith, op. cit. See n. 46 in chap. iv.

59 Ibid. These doctrines had been taught as early as January of 1844. See the letter of Jacob Scott to Mary Warnock, January 5, 1844. Photocopy in the LDS Archives. Original in the Archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Missouri.
control and be reserved for the Saints who have obeyed the Gospel and gathered.

If one takes the position that these denials and teachings were couched in careful language to deny all false and unauthorized doctrines while concealing true ones, it must nevertheless be said that they also conveyed the impression to the public that the leaders were condemning all non-monogamous marital systems. It was Sidney Rigdon who said:

How often have these men and their accomplices stood up before the congregation, and called God and all the holy Angels to witness, that there was no such doctrine taught in the church; and it has now come to light... [that] they were living in the practice of these enormities and there were multitudes of their followers in the congregation at the time who knew it.

Attempts At a Public Announcement

Apparently Smith also made several attempts to broach the subject publicly in Nauvoo, but, with circumstances as they were it is not surprising that here, too, he encountered resistance. Helen Kimball said that the Prophet stated in 1841 that the ancient order concerning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be among the things restored with the fulness of the Gospel. However, in a speech made on the afternoon of the same day, he withdrew the statement, saying "possibly the Spirit had made things seem nearer than it really was."

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60 Sidney Rigdon to James Gregg, op. cit., p. 14.

61 Helen M. Whitney, *Plural Marriages*, pp. 1-12, and *Women's Exponent*, X, 93. Bathsheba W. Smith placed this or a similar experience in the year 1840. (Affidavit, November 19, 1903. Original in the Vault Folder, LDS Church Archives. A shorter affidavit written the previous day does not mention this event.) Still another
On another occasion it is reported that Smith challenged his fellow Mormons with a rhetorical question, proposing a situation wherein the Elders baptized a Turkish polygamist. He asked if the man could bring his wives to Zion and live in peace. "Yes," he said, answering his own query, "the laws in Zion are such that you can bring your wives and enjoy them here as well as there." Again, he apparently struck a sensitive nerve. A delegation of women interrupted his dinner, demanding a retraction. He reportedly granted it, saying that he "was aware it was a very large pill for them or the people to swallow." 62

The Recording and Public Reading of Section 132

However, these were not official public declarations of the new doctrine. The closest thing to that was the recording and semi-public reading of the revelation on marriage now known as Section 132 of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants. Because it was not published in experience took place about the time the revelation was written.

(James W. Phippen, "Joseph Smith, the Prophet," Young Women's Journal. XVII [December, 1906], 540.)

62 Joseph L. Robinson, Journal, pp. 12-13. Typed copy located in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. (Compare George A. Smith, discourse of March 18, 1855, J. 2:217.) Other testimony in support of the notion that Smith introduced the topic publicly in Nauvoo comes from Utah Mormons at the turn of the century. It came as a part of the continuing debate with the RLDS. N. T. Silcock started the debate and the deluge by claiming he heard Smith preach a sermon in July of 1843. "This was the only systematical polygamous sermon I have ever heard," he said. (See the statements of N. T. Silcock, Thomas Chastleworth, B. H. Watts, Harry Dalton, S. T. Kenner, B. F. Johnson, Mrs. Alice E. Stephens and James Leithhead in the Deseret Evening News, March 15, April 2, 8, 12, 1904, and the Journal History, November 27, 1910.)
the Prophet's lifetime and because of the circumstances of its writing and later publication, some have questioned the authenticity of this document. However, evidence available today verifies the essential elements in the story of the origin of the document and its use in Nauvoo.

In 1871 William Clayton publicly claimed that he wrote the revelation as received by Joseph Smith on the morning of July 12, 1843. We have already noted that 1843 was a year of intense crisis in the marriage of Joseph and Emma Smith. Clayton said that Hyrum Smith was present when the section was drafted and that it was at his insistence that it was recorded. The brothers came into the office in the upper story of Smith's brick store on Water Street, near the bank of the Mississippi River. They were conversing about plural marriage, and Hyrum was importuning his brother to write the revelation so he could take it to Emma and try to convince her of its truth, thereby bringing "peace" to the Prophet's household. Smith was not sure that Emma would be so easily convinced. But Hyrum insisted that the doctrine was so plain that he could "convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth, purity or heavenly origin."

For some unexplained reason, perhaps to give it more authority,

63 The first publication came in 1852. Orson Pratt was called upon by Brigham Young to make the first public announcement of the doctrine on August 29, 1852. It was published in a Deseret News "Extra" on September 14, 1852, however, the revelation was not canonized until it was included in the 1876 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. These circumstances left the Utah church open to the criticism that the traditional story of its recording was a myth and that Young was the real author of the dogma.

64 William Clayton to Madison Scott, op. cit.
Clayton said Hyrum wanted the Prophet to use the same spectacles with which he had translated the Book of Mormon to write the revelation. Smith said "he knew the revelation perfectly from beginning to end," and thus dictated it from memory. Scribe Clayton read the revelation back to Smith, who then pronounced it correct, adding that there was "much more that he could write, [sic.] on the subject, but what was written was sufficient for the present."66

Hyrum then took the revelation to Emma Smith. Shortly thereafter he returned, saying that she was "very bitter and full of resentment and anger." The Prophet had expected as much. Later during the day, the revelation was reportedly read to several unnamed Church authorities. That evening Bishop Newel K. Whitney requested permission to copy the revelation. Smith consented, and on the following day Joseph Kingsbury—the ostensible husband of Whitney's daughter—copied the revelation. Several days later Smith told Clayton and others that "Emma had so teased and urgently entreated him for the privilege of destroying it" that it wearied him and he gave it to her. He knew full well he could rewrite it anytime and that a second copy had been made. Clayton said the Kingsbury copy was "carefully preserved by Bishop Whitney" and few knew of its existence until the

65 This was the Urim and Thummim, an instrument through which he received Section 3, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, and 16 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

66 William Clayton, affidavit, February 16, 1874. See also HR 6:225.
Saints arrived at Winter Quarters on the Missouri River in 1846. Both Clayton's and Smith's journals of the time verify the date of the recording of the revelation. In a diary kept for Smith by Willard Richards, we find under the date of July 12, 1843 the following entry: "Received a Revelation in the office in presence of Hyrum & Wm Clayton." Clayton stated in his own journal on that date that he had written a revelation consisting of "ten pages on the order of the Priesthood, showing the design of Moses, Abraham, David and Solomon having many wives, etc." Several people, including Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, and others, testified that Emma destroyed the original Clayton draft. Smith's own journal is suggestive of difficulties with Emma. For his entry on July 13, 1843, says that he "was in conversation with Emma most of the day." He was also at home most of the fourteenth.

However, the most important element of the story—the Kingsbury manuscript—finds substantial support from Kingsbury himself. In 1870 he swore to the accuracy of a deposition stating that he "wrote the Revelation on Celestial or plural marriage from the mouth of Bishop Newel K. Whitney as he read from the original, which was in his possession just before its reported destruction by Emma Smith.

67 Ibid.
68 Joseph Smith, Diary, July 12, 1842.
69 Bailey, op. cit., p. 84.
70 HC 5:509-510.
But the most striking and conclusive evidence of the Kingsbury story is found in the document itself. Two manuscript copies of Section 132 are housed in the LDS Church archives in Salt Lake City. One is in the handwriting of Willard Richards and the second has the chirography of Joseph Kingsbury. An examination of Kingsbury's 1846-1850 journal, located in the University of Utah Library and of two letters signed by Kingsbury have facilitated identification of his writing. Excerpts from the manuscript revelation, the journal, and the letters are reproduced in Figures 6, 7, and 8 below.\textsuperscript{72} The fact that the lettering in the revelation is somewhat stronger and

Vault Folder in the LDS Church Archives.) Further evidence of his authorship can be found in his testimony before the Circuit Court of the United States at Kansas City in the early 1890's (In The Circuit Court of the United States, Western District of Missouri, Western Division, At Kansas City. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Complaintant vs. The Church of Christ at Independence, Missouri; . . . Complaintant's Abstract of Pleading and Evidence. [Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House and Bindery, 1893], p. 342, [hereafter cited as The Temple Lot Case].)

\textsuperscript{72}Joseph Smith, Revelation, July 12, 1843, original manuscript in the LDS Church Archives; Kingsbury, \textit{op. cit.;} and Joseph C. Kingsbury to Joseph Merservey, March 26, 1878, original in the LDS Church Archives. The author expresses grateful appreciation to the Executive Committee of the LDS Historical Department and its Managing Director Elder Joseph Anderson for permission to reproduce these portions of the manuscript of the revelation and the letter, and to Dr. Joseph L. Cooley in charge of the Special Collections in Western Americana in the Marriott Library, University of Utah for permission to reproduce the Kingsbury journal.

One interesting approach to verify the 1843 authorship of the revelation was developed by William LaRue. He compared the revelation with several statements made about it at the time. LaRue concluded: "These statements indicate clearly to all, except those who 'prefer' to believe otherwise that this revelation . . . was known to all these persons in the days of Joseph Smith. . . . There is no disagreement between it and the common understanding which was had concerning it by those who knew about it." (William Earl LaRue, \textit{The Foundations of Mormonism: A Study of the Fundamental Facts in the History and Doctrines of the Mormons from Original Sources} [New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.], pp. 209-212.)
Inverness, July 12th, 1843.

Verily thou shalt live, until ye see my servant Joseph, that instrued as ye have enriched of my hand to know and understand wherein & the Lord justified my brethren, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; as also, Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as teaching the principle and doctrine of the things having many flicks and trenching mischief, and he, I am the Lord, the God, and will answer thee as touching this matter; therefore I have thy heart to receive and obey, the instructions which I am about to give unto you, for all these, who have the law revealed unto them, must obey the same; for the law I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant, and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye iniquitous people, but can reject this covenant, and be permitted to continue.

Figure 6. The Kingsbury Manuscript of Doctrine and Covenants Section 132.
The Kingsbury 1846-1850 Journal.
bolder than that of the 1878 correspondence, and is more deliberate and
careful than that what appears in the journal extract. strengthens the
notion that the revelation is the earliest of the three documents.
According to handwriting specialist Dean Jessee, there is a remarkable
lack of deterioration in Kingsbury autography between 1843 and 1878.
Additional verification of the existence of the plural mar-
niage document can be seen in evidence that the revelation was read
before the Nauvoo High Council in Hyrum Smith's office on August 12,
1843. David Fullmer, a member of the High Council at the time, said
that Dunbar Wilson, another Council member, prompted the reading with
an inquiry relative to the rumors concerning polygamy in Nauvoo.
Hyrum Smith went across the street to his home and soon returned with the revelation, which he then read to the men assembled. Thomas Grover, another participant that evening, said Hyrum Smith read the revelation, then said, "Now you that believe this revelation and go forth and obey the same shall be saved, and you that reject it shall be damned." This episode finds important corroboration in the minutes of the Nauvoo High Council. Under the date of August 12, 1843, the minutes read: "Council met according to adjt. [adjournment] at H. Smith's office [. ] No business before the Council. Teaching by Prests. [Presidents] Hiram [sic.] Smith & William Marks." A search of the Council minutes from 1842 through 1844 reveals this as the only occasion on which Hyrum Smith addressed the Council when no business was before it. In 1869 four council members asserted that


74 Thomas Grover to A. M. Musser, January 10, 1885 as quoted in Jenson, HR 6:226-227, compare also MS, XLV (July 16, 1883), 454. Hyrum Smith's wife, Mercy, Ebenezer Robinson, and James Leithhead, also confirm the reading before the High Council. (See Deseret News, February 6, 1886. Ebenezer Robinson, Items of Personal History, p. 167, and Deseret News, April 8, 1904, respectively.)

75 Minutes of the Nauvoo High Council, August 12, 1843.

76 The council met at Hyrum Smith's office at least ten times between March and October of 1843. On February 11, March 11, July 15, August 5, 26, September 29, 1843; and January 21, 27, February 3, and March 23, 1844 the council had no pressing business and in each case adjourned. The August 12, 1843 meeting is unique in that "teaching" occurred when no business lay before the group.
"the teaching . . . referred to in the minutes . . . was on the subject of said revelation endorsing the same and enjoining it on the council."77

Furthermore, it is known that three of the men present on this occasion rejected the revelation. They were: William Marks, stake president; Austin Cowles, counselor in the stake presidency; and Leonard Soby, high councilman. All three eventually left the Church, but Soby and Cowles affirmed the fact that the revelation was read to the High Council.

The story of Leonard Soby's testimony is particularly interesting. In 1883 there was a debate between Lyman O. Littlefield and Joseph Smith III, President of the Reorganized Church. In the course of the exchange, Smith requested the names of those who were supposed to have been on the High Council and heard the reading. Soby's name was on the list, and Smith dispatched Zenos Gurley to visit him at his home in New Jersey. Apparently Gurley arrived with an affidavit already prepared for Soby's signature. It denied the whole story of the reading. Soby refused to sign the document, but offered to sign a corrected statement if Gurley would write it up.78

This affidavit was signed by Soby on November 14, 1883.79

77 David Fullmer, et al., Affidavit, op. cit. Interestingly, Hyrum and Joseph Smith discussed this revelation on August 25. (HC 5:54.) And on October 23, H.C. Kimball, George A. Smith and Brigham Young visited Smith. Young said: "He taught us many principles illustrating the doctrines of celestial marriage, concerning which God had given him a revelation, July 12." (Journal History, October 23, 1843.)

78 Bays, op. cit., pp. 379-381.

On January 5, 1886, the Ogden Herald reviewed the Littlefield-Smith letters, and a James Brooks took it upon himself to write to Soby for confirmation of the Gurley visit. The affirmative reply was dated February 26, 1886. In the meantime, James Hart and Samuel Harrison also visited Soby's home. Again he provided them with an affidavit which he signed March 23, 1886. In it he declared that, after reading the published version of Section 132, he was satisfied that it was the same one he had heard Hyrum Smith read in Nauvoo.

But the most conclusive, although mystifying, evidence for the whole affair comes from early Nauvoo newspapers, printed before the death of the Smiths. The first and only issue of the Nauvoo Expositor carried an affidavit from the disgruntled Austin Cowles, former member of the Nauvoo Stake Presidency. He testified:

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; . . . 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." To this we add a synopsis of remarks of Hyrum Smith made at the Nauvoo Municipal Council meeting the night that body decided to

80 Jenson, HC 6:228
81 KS 48:252.
83 Austin Cowles, affidavit, May 4, 1844, cited in the Nauvoo Expositor, June 7, 1844.
destroy the Expositor. The minutes read:

Councilor, H. Smith . . . referred to the revelation read to the High Council of the Church, which has caused so much talk about a multiplicity of wives; that said Revelation was in answer to a question concerning things which transpired in former days, and had no reference to the present time. 84

The revelation was also read privately to a number of individuals, usually with Hyrum Smith sharing the news. In a June 16, 1844 letter to her mother in New England, Sarah Scott confirmed the rumor of Smith's support of plural marriage in these words:

Joseph had a revelation last summer purporting to be from the Lord, allowing the saints the privilege of having ten living wives at one time. . . . Mr. Haven knows these statements are correct, for they have been taught in the quorum to which he belongs by the highest authority in the Church. 85

In another letter to her parents written in July of 1844, Sarah Scott added this comment.

Mr. Haven told me last spring before I was married that those doctrines tried his faith very much till he heard Hyrum Smith explain them and now or then he thought it was right. But a few weeks before the murder Hyrum denied that he and Joseph had the revelation concerning it but said it referred to ancient times; and it was published in the Neighbor. After I saw it I said to Mr. Haven: 'What do you think of that? Is it not a plain contradiction to what you told me? What do you think of it?' He said that he supposed Hyrum saw what a disturbance it was making and thought he would say it on account of there being such an excitement. 86

84 Nauvoo Neighbor [Nauvoo, Illinois], June 19, 1844.


86 Ibid., p. 598.
William and Jane Law also produced affidavits that were printed in the apostate-controlled *Expositor*, testifying that Hyrum Smith had allowed them to take a copy home to read. William Law described the document as containing a "revelation [which] authorized certain men to have more wives than one at a time, in this world . . . ," and that it was the law of God. His wife was equally specific in saying it "sustained in strong terms the doctrine of more wives than one at a time." According to Howard Coray, Hyrum Smith had committed the revelation to memory and ten days after it was written he rehearsed it to Coray and his wife while riding in a carriage. Bishop S. A. Wolley likewise claimed that he heard the revelation read in his home the following October.

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87 William and Jane Law, affidavits, May 4, 1844 cited in the *Nauvoo Expositor*, June 7, 1844.

88 Howard Coray, affidavit, June 12, 1882. Original in the Vault Folder in the LDS Church Archives, also published in Jenson, *HR* 6:228-229.

89 Jenson, *HR* 6:231. Charles Lambert said William Clayton read the revelation to him and Stephen Hales in the basement of the temple. This would have been after mid-March of 1844 when he arrived in Nauvoo. He also said: "The Prophet used to hold meetings in a log house of his sometimes . . . at one of these he said he wished he had a people that he could reveal to them what the Lord had shown to him but one thing I will say there are thousands of Spirits that have been waiting to come forth in this day and generation their proper channel is through the Priesthood a way has to be provided but the time has come and they have got to come away and thus left me in a fix [sic.]." (Charles Lambert, "Autobiography," typescript in the LDS Church Archives.)
Joseph Smith longed for the time when he could freely unburden himself of the religious ideas that filled his mind. Although secretiveness was not new to the Church, his past experience and present circumstances led the Prophet to be extremely discrete in diffusing the new doctrine among his followers. His mode of operation at Nauvoo was to privately explain these new tenets to his closest and most trusted friends. At first, the reactions of the male leadership was universally negative to this revelation. Like their sisters, many Mormon men only participated in plural marriage after much soul-searching or out of a sense of loyalty to their prophetic leader.

Such denials as came from church leaders in this period can be understood as attempts to evade potential criticism and persecution rather than as repudiations of the beliefs of Smith and his inner circle of initiates. Paradoxically, Smith harbored two conflicting motivations. His impulse toward self-preservation and safety from public attack was at times contradicted by his desire to prepare his people to tolerate more liberal attitudes and practices. Whereas he went to extreme lengths to conceal his own marriages, he was almost careless about the circulation of the revelation once it was recorded. These vacillations created conditions which were readily utilized by zealous, ill-informed, and opportunistic gentiles to promulgate distorted and false notions about Mormonism. They also tended to cause confusion, doubts, and suspicions among the Latter-day Saints.
CHAPTER VII

JOHN C. BENNETT AND THE APOSTASY OF 1842

As was noted in the discussion of the Ohio period, the introduction of plural marriage into the Mormon Church was destined to create serious problems. Indeed, the rift between Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery foreshadowed events in Nauvoo. The present chapter focuses on the nature of the difficulties which the new doctrine created when it was more widely promulgated.

Background on John C. Bennett

"Mormonism certainly picked up some damned odd moss as it rolled around America!" ¹ This was Dale Morgan's comment to Fawn Brodie after reviewing for her some material he had just discovered about John Cook Bennett, an early convert to Nauvoo Mormonism. Bennett was among the Saints for less than two years, but the results of that experience brought about one of the most severe crises in the Church's history. He was the principal character responsible for: (1) instigating three major splits in the highest levels of Mormon hierarchy (including his own and Sidney Rigdon's from the First Presidency, and Orson Pratt from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles,); (2) causing numerous lesser

¹ Dale Morgan to Fawn Brodie, August 2, 1947. Original in the Marriott Library, University of Utah.
excommunications and defections; (3) stimulating a vast amount of public pressure and persecution against the Mormons; (4) diverting the Church from missionary, administrative, and commercial concerns to internal problems; and, finally, (5) initiating a series of events and circumstances which created the volatile atmosphere in which the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith occurred. Many factors contributed to these developments, but the leading issues were associated with the doctrine of plural marriage.

Bennett was no ordinary fellow. Arriving in Nauvoo in the summer of 1840, at the age of thirty-six, he had an interesting and varied background as a promoter of medical schools, state militias, and Masonic lodges.² He was also said to have been particularly successful in promoting himself among the women.

As a young man, Bennett was encouraged to practice medicine by relatives.³ Extant records do not show how much medical education he may have received or indicate whether he earned a degree from a reputable institution.⁴ Between 1825 and 1830 he pursued his profession

² John C. Bennett, op. cit., p. 42. Bennett was born in Bristol County, Massachusetts, in August of 1804, he was Smith's senior by a year and a half. Shortly thereafter his parents moved to Washington County, Ohio.

³ Frederick C. Waite, "An Attempt to Establish a Medical College in Wheeling in 1831," The West Virginia Medical Journal, XLII (December, 1846), 316.

⁴ Frederick C. Waite, Western Reserve University Centennial History of the School of Medicine (Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1946), p. 47. Waite says, "A careful search of the lists of graduates of all medical colleges in the United States before 1833 does not reveal his name, and his career before 1833 certainly did not entitle him to the degree of Doctor of Laws from any reputable institution." (See also, F. C. Waite to Ralph Chamberlain, January 24, 1951. Copy in the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.)
in several southeastern Ohio towns, and according to one researcher, occasionally preached as a Methodist minister. 5 He took the lead in petitioning the Virginia legislature for a medical college at Wheeling in 1831, but left the area in late 1832 without success. 6 In January of 1833 he was named as one of the incorporators of The Christian College in New Albany, Indiana. The school's name reflected the fact that Bennett, and perhaps other incorporators, were disciples of Alexander Campbell. 7 Subsequently the institution was redesignated as the University of New Albany, and for a time, as the University of Indiana. It was a marginal school, used by Bennett to circumvent some of the higher standards of medical education then emerging in America. Thus he issued medical diplomas, apparently on the basis of examinations administered without course and enrollment prerequisites. 8

In 1834 Bennett promoted the establishment of Willoughby University, a medical school in the Western Reserve in northeastern Ohio. 9 Since many of his fellow Campbellites of that area were then


6 Ibid., pp. 316-319.


8 Waite, "The First Medical Diploma Mill . . . ," pp. 495-503. For more on this subject and an example of one of the diplomas, see A. E. Wailer, "A Fictitious Medical Degree of the 1830's," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XX (November, 1946), 505-512.

9 J. C. Bennett, op. cit., p. 12. See also, F. C. Waite, Western Reserve University Centennial History, pp. 42-49.
turning to Mormonism, it is quite possible that he may have had contact with church leaders at Kirtland, just four miles from Willoughby, at that time. Later that year, he gave a series of lectures as president of the medical faculty and "Professor of the Principles and Practice of Midwifery, and the Diseases of Women and Children." 

Early in 1838 Bennett was active in the vicinity of Marietta, Ohio, the home of his in-laws, but in June of that year he moved to Illinois, where he was quickly accepted into military and medical circles. Governor Thomas Carlin commissioned him Brigadier General of the dragoons in the state militia in February of 1839 and as his state's Quarter-Master General on July 20, 1840. Bennett also attended a meeting of Illinois physicians in Springfield in June of 1840, signing a report which called for better organization of the medical profession in the state. He not only ingratiated himself with the politicians and civic leaders in Illinois, but in 1840 he stuck up a correspondence with Mormon Church leaders, even counseling them on the relocation of the Missouri refugees and promising to move to Nauvoo and join the Church. True to form, upon his arrival in Nauvoo that

10 Frederick C. Waite to Ralph V. Chamberlain, May 15, 1948. Copy in the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. Waite said, "It is clear to me that Bennett first met Smith and Rigdon at Kirtland when Bennett was head of the medical college at Willoughby only four miles distant. However, Bennett had met Rigdon prior to that time when both were preachers of that church." Waite gives no documentation for this statement, and as of the present the author has been unable to substantiate it.

11 Bennett, op. cit., p. 12.


13 Western World [Warsaw, Illinois], July 1, 1840.

J Bennett soon rose to positions of prominence and leadership among the Saints. 15

Joseph Smith's acceptance of Bennett's proffered services benefitted Mormonism in several respects. 16 During his eighteen-month sojourn among the Mormons, Bennett carried out some important tasks. He acted as the chief Mormon lobbyist in Springfield, securing the Nauvoo charter, and was elected the city's first mayor. As Major General of the Nauvoo Legion, he organized and trained that body—one of the largest militia organizations in the state. Likewise, he was Chancellor of the University of Nauvoo, helped to select textbooks for use in the common schools, and was one of the founders of the Nauvoo Agricultural and Manufacturing Society. In May of 1841, Stephen Douglas appointed Bennett Master in Chancery for Hancock County. 17

15 This happened despite the fact that upon his arrival the Times and Seasons defended him against an article written in the Warsaw Signal, May 19, 1841, saying, "He came here followed by evil report. . . ." (T&S 2:431-432.)

16 In retrospect, virtually all commentators have found little in Bennett to praise. Thomas Ford, Governor of Illinois said he was "probably the greatest scamp in the Western Country . . . he was everywhere accounted the same debauched, unprincipled, and proligiate character." (Thomas Ford, A History of Illinois from its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847, II [Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1946], Thomas Gregg, a Warsaw, Illinois newspaper proprietor said, "He was a man of liberal education, excessively vain and pompous, and of good address; and yet he brought with him, if not a tainted, at least a questionable reputation, which his career at Nauvoo did not improve." (Thomas Gregg, The Prophet of Palmyra, p. 173.) Other assessments of his character and influence on Mormonism can be found in B. H. Roberts, The Rise and Fall of Nauvoo (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), pp. 128, 136, 140; Kenneth Godfrey, "The Road to Carthage Led West," BYU Studies, VII (Winter, 1968), 209; F. Mark McKiernan, The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness: Sidney Rigdon, Religious Reformer 1793-1878 (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1971), pp. 112-114, which is very similar to the view expressed by Flanders. (Flanders, op. cit., pp. 260-261.)

17 Bennett, op. cit., pp. 19-25. Master in Chancery was
month earlier he was elevated to the First Presidency of the Church, replacing the ailing Sidney Rigdon. While he did not accomplish much in this office spiritually or administratively, contributions to the material betterment of the Mormon people were demonstrated, one scholar has argued, by the later re-establishment of many of his economic policies in Salt Lake City.

John C. Bennett, Spiritual Wifery, and Conflict

In the spring and summer of 1841 the brilliance of the light of John C. Bennett began to flicker. Missionaries in Ohio and Pennsylvania sent Joseph Smith letters to the effect that Bennett was a shiftless drifter with grandiose ambitions. They said he had resided in at least twenty different towns in four states, repeatedly insinuating himself into positions of power and influence. His wife had followed him through most of this, the report said, although he had been unfaithful to her on numerous occasions. In desperation, though, she finally left her charlatan husband and took her children to her home in Marietta, Ohio. Joseph Smith said that he did not confront Bennett apparently a judicial office held by appointment.

18 Ibid., p. 26; T&S 2:387.

19 Leonard J. Arrington, “Centrifugal Tendencies in Mormon History,” in To the Glory of God, ed. by Truman G. Madsen and Charles D. Tate (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972), p. 168. To date this is the most favorable appraisal of Bennett, but it focuses on his significant post-Mormon contributions.

20 George Miller to Joseph Smith, March 2, 1841, as found in The Wasp, June 25, 1842. Miller was writing from McConnelsville, Morgan County, Ohio and had been sent by Smith for the purpose of investigation for he said, “By your request I have made inquiries into the history of John Cook Bennett and am enabled to give you the following facts which
with this evidence until after his affections to a young woman in Nauvoo came to light. The subject was not brought up sooner, he explained, because he was used to good men being defamed. 21

The Prophet later reported to his people that Bennett admitted that the allegations were true. The doctor seemed so remorseful that he apparently attempted to poison himself, but failed. Because of this display of penance, Smith gave him a second chance, admonishing him to break off his amorous acquaintance. Bennett, however, clandestinely maintained the relationship, and it was not long before he was again confronted with his misconduct. For some unexplained reason, he was once more let off the hook, only to become more deeply involved. To give added effect to his advances, he taught one Mormon sister that promiscuous intercourse was a doctrine of the Church and that there was no harm in it so long as it was kept secret. His ploy was successful only when he told her that Smith and other leaders sanctioned such conduct and even had illicit relationships of their own. Once this method proved successful, Bennett apparently employed it numerous times and involved other men in the scheme as well. When the news reached Smith, he was irate.

may be relied on as correct." In June of 1841 Hyrum Smith and William Law confirmed Bennett's marital difficulties. (Ibid.) Frederick Waite told Ralph Chamberlain he found that Bennett sued for divorce in 1842 and his charge was that his wife had deserted him. From this Waite infers that Bennett has been ill-accused by Mormon historians. (Frederick Waite to Ralph Chamberlain, September 5, 1950. Copy in the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.) However, this may have been another of Bennett's "do unto others before they do unto you" maneuvers. The author has written to the state of Illinois to obtain a copy of the divorce decree, but received no reply.

21 The Wasp, June 25, 1842. The young woman was very likely Mrs. Sarah Pratt, see the discussion below.
A third time he confronted Bennett, and a third time the Doctor confessed. At this point Smith decided to put a stop to the debauchery. Through a church court he started a series of investigations in mid-May, going so far as to gather testimony from the women involved. 22

The details of the investigation proved shocking and revealed extensive corruption in the city. Things had gone far beyond Bennett's licentious behavior. As a doctor, with special interests in gynecology, he took advantage of intimate contacts among his female patients. In some cases he promised and perhaps performed abortions. 23 A married patient testified that he tried to poison her husband in order to get him out of the way. 24 He also frequented and perhaps operated a local brothel. 25

Francis M. Higbee, one of those who adopted Bennett's

22 Ibid. The following quote from Robert D. Foster suggests who he may have been referring to. "Alas, none but the seduced join the seducer; those only who have been arraigned before a just tribunal for the same unhallowed conduct and they, too, detest him for his seduction, those are the ladies to whom he refers his hearers to substantiate his assertions. Mrs. White, Mrs. Pratt, Nieman, Miller, Brotherton, and others. Those that belong to the church have had to bear the shame of close investigation as to their adulteries, and have been dealt with according to church order, in such case made and provided in the Book of Covenants... Mrs. White never was a member of the Mormon church. . . ." (Ibid., October 15, 1842.)

23 Zeruiah N. Goddard, affidavit, August 28, 1842, in Affidavits and Certificates, Disproving the Statements and Affidavits Contained in John C. Bennett's Letters (Nauvoo; n. p., August 31, 1842, hereafter cited, Affidavits and Certificates). See also, Hyrum Smith, affidavit July 23, 1842, in The Wasp, July 27, 1842. Gynecology was in its infant stages at this time, and if Ann Douglass Wood is correct, Bennett was not alone in his abuse of his clinical contacts with women. ("The Fashionable Diseases": Women's Complaints and Their Treatment in Nineteenth-Century America, The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, IV [Summer, 1973], 25-52; and Regina Morantz, op. cit., pp. 38-52.)


25 L. D. Wasson to Joseph Smith, July 29, 1842, found in T\&S 5:891-892. Robert Foster reported that while mayor, Bennett pleaded the
methods, had to be treated by Bennett for venereal disease he contacted from the "French woman from Warsaw." 26

John Bennett was not alone in his intrigue. Several witnesses affirmed that others were seducing females in Nauvoo under the guise of church doctrine and authority. At least four men seem to have been involved. Chauncy and Francis Higbee were sons of the prominent Nauvoo citizen and friend of Joseph Smith, Judge Elias Higbee. Robert Foster and Gustavius Hills were also involved. Four women swore that young Chauncy Higbee seduced them under the same pretext Bennett had used. Margaret and Matilda Nyman also testified that he said he had been so instructed by the Prophet and that they should keep it a secret because "there was no sin where there is no accusser [sic.]." 27 Catherine Warren reported that he "gained his object about five or six times" with her because he told her that President Bennett was teaching the doctrine. 28 Higbee also told the widow Sarah Miller that she could never be guilty of the sin of adultery because she was single. 29 Higbee and Bennett cause for retaining the local brothel in a city council meeting. (The Wasp, October 15, 1842.) He also called Bennett a whoremonger. (Ibid., September 24, 1842.) See also T&S 5:536-542; the testimony of John Taylor in Temple Lot Case, pp. 190-192; and stanza six of "Buckey's [sic.] First Epistle to Jo," Warsaw Signal, April 23, 1844. See appendix F.

26 T&S 5:536-542.

27 Margaret and Matilda Nyman, affidavits, May 24, 1842, found in the Nauvoo Neighbor, May 29, 1844. This was testimony taken before the Nauvoo High Council May 21, 1842. Reportedly Smith taught some such doctrine in 1841 taking his idea from John 8:3-11 ("Words of the Prophets," op. cit.)

28 Nauvoo Neighbor, May 29, 1844.

29 Sarah Miller, affidavit, May 24, 1842 in Ibid.
were excommunicated in May of 1842.

In the latter part of August of 1842, Mary Clift swore that she was then pregnant with a child sired by Gustavius Hills sometime in mid-January. She testified that Hills told her that "he was intimate with another woman in town besides his wife & that the authorities of the church countenanced and practiced illicit connexion [sic.] with women & said there was no harm in such things provided they kept it secret."  

He tried to get her to take medicine to abort the fetus, but, when she refused, he urged her to leave town for the remainder of her pregnancy.  

Hills was brought to a church trial on September 3, 1842 for "illicit intercourse" and for teaching "that the time would come when men would have more wives than one."  

The next day, after obtaining affidavits from Miss Clift and hearing details of the seduction, the council disfellowshipped Hills.  

Ferreting out these facts was an arduous and distasteful task that angered Smith and embittered Bennett. On May 7, 1842, Smith suspected Bennett of leading a plot to kill him in a sham battle of

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30 Mary Clift, affidavit, September 4, 1842. Original in the Statements Collection in the LDS Church Archives.  

31 Ibid.  

32 Minutes of the Nauvoo High Council, September 3, 1842; and Mary Clift, affidavit, August 29, 1842. Original in the Statements Collection in the LDS Church Archives.  

33 Ibid., September 4, 1842. (See also, Mary Clift, affidavit, September 4, 1842. Original in the Statements Collection in the LDS Church Archives.) An account of this trial taken from the minutes is also in the Journal History under the dates of September 3 and 4, 1842.
the Nauvoo Legion. 34 Ten days later Bennett wrote out an affidavit denying that the Prophet taught illicit doctrines. Later, however, he claimed that he made this statement involuntarily. 35 Upon hearing of this, Smith instructed his recorder to allow Bennett to withdraw his name from the church records. As it turned out, this procedure enabled Bennett to represent his withdrawal as a move to dissociate himself from the immoral Saints. 36 He also resigned as Mayor at this time. 37

In a city council meeting, held on May 19, Smith said that Bennett had falsely accused him of indecorous actions and had been guilty of countenancing vice. Once again Bennett denied the charge. So female testimony against him was secured, and on May 25 he was informed that he was no longer a member of the Church. Bennett was also privately threatened with public exposure, but begged that the Council

34 HC 5:4-5.

35 John C. Bennett, affidavit, May 17, 1842, as found in The Wasp, June 25, 1842. (See also HC 5:11.) For his statement that he was under duress see his affidavit of July 2, 1842. (Sangamo Journal, July 15, 1842.) This was countered by an affidavit of Daniel H. Wells who notarized Bennett's initial deposition. (Affidavit, July 22, 1842, found in The Wasp, July 22, 1842.) Chauncy L. Higbee also swore an affidavit on May 17, 1842 to the effect that "he never knew said Smith to countenance any improper [sic.] conduct whatever, either in public or private and that he never did teach to me in private, that an illicit intercorse [sic.] with females was under any circumstances justifiable and that I never knew him so to teach others." (Original in the Statements Collection in the LDS Church Archives.)

36 James Sloan, statement of May 17, 1842. Copy of the original located in the LDS Church Archives. This statement itself says that Bennett retained the original. He made this a bone of contention when on May 25 the Church withdrew its fellowship from him. He said the notice of excommunication contained three forged signatures of Apostles who were not even in town at the time. (J. C. Bennett, op. cit., p. 41.)

37 The Wasp, June 25, 1842.
"would spare him from the paper, for his mother's sake."38 Thereupon
the proposed notice was withdrawn. The next day, as Smith reports,
Bennett "cried like a child" before nearly 100 men, confessing his
"wicked and licentious conduct," and pleading for mercy. He was again
forgiven.39

John C. Bennett also experienced difficulties with the local
Masonic lodge. It was predominantly Mormon, and Bennett had been acting
as its secretary. Hyrum Smith said that Bennett was charged with
sexual misconduct before the Masonic lodge and that he confessed to sixty
Masons. Furthermore, he promised that he would "never be guilty of
the like crimes again."40 According to Hyrum Smith, the allegations
were deferred "until he could be heard on other charges which had been
preferred against him by members of the Pickaway Lodge of Ohio,
through the communications of the Illinois Grand Master A. Jonas."41
According to George Miller, Master of the Nauvoo lodge, Bennett was an
expelled Mason and had pawned himself on the fraternity in Nauvoo.42

The minutes of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, however, vary somewhat
from this official position. On May 7, 1842 a communication was read
from Jonas which indicated Bennett was an expelled Mason. He reportedly

38 Ibid.
39 HC 5:18-19.
40 Hyrum Smith, affidavit, July 23, 1842, cited in The Wasp,
July 27, 1842.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., June 25, 1842.
denied the charge. But there is no evidence in the minutes that he confessed his sins. On May 13, Thomas Grover formally accused Bennett of deceitfully gaining entrance into the Nauvoo fraternity. The most damaging evidence on this point seemed to come from a Brother Patterson who said he had initiated action against Bennett in the Pickaway Lodge in Ohio. Joseph King conversed with Patterson on the matter and confirmed the report. Bennett was instructed to appear before the lodge on June 2. However, there was not sufficient evidence to substantiate Jonas' complaint at that meeting, so the investigation was postponed until June 16.

Additional communications from Jonas were read at the June 16 meeting. They contained evidence that satisfied those present that Bennett was feigning his membership. But he produced character references from his medical colleagues at Willoughby and the lodge there. Therefore, the matter was again postponed to allow time to obtain the minutes from the Pickaway Lodge. By July 27, Nauvoo still had not heard from the Ohio fraternity. Nevertheless they did not judge it necessary to postpone the action of the Lodge in his case any longer. It was therefore resolved that the lodge is fully satisfied that John C. Bennett, is an expelled mason, and that this lodge

43 Minutes of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, Saturday, May 7, 1842. Original in the LDS Church Archives. See the minutes of June 16, to confirm the nature of Jonas' letter.

44 Joseph King to Dr. M. Helm, May 17, 1842. Original in the LDS Church Archives.

45 Minutes of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, June 2, 1842.

46 Minutes of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, June 16, 1842.
regards him as totally unworthy the fellowship, or regard, of all good and honorable men or masons.47

With the feelings as they were in Nauvoo in June and July, it is unusual that the Nauvoo Lodge delayed so long in taking action against Bennett. But on August 4, 1842 another letter was received from the non-Mormon Grand Master directing the lodge to expel Bennett "for his conduct"—regardless of what happened in Ohio. Since the bylaws required two-thirds of the membership to be present in order to expel a member, a meeting was scheduled for August 8, 1842.48

At this meeting six indictments were brought against Bennett. He was accused of seducing "certain previously respectable females of our city by using Joseph Smith's name as one who sanctioned such conduct."49 He was also charged with adultery, lying, perjury, embezzlement of lodge funds, and for "illicit intercourse with a Master Mason's wife." One hundred and thirty Nauvooans attended the meeting. Separate votes were taken on each charge. Bennett was unanimously found guilty and excommunicated. The resolution of expulsion considered Bennett, among other things, "one of the most base and infamous adulterers, liars, and a general plunderer of female chastity."50

When Bennett left Nauvoo, things quieted down somewhat in the fore part of June. Yet, keeping such a widespread cancer contained proved impossible. By mid-month Smith had decided to make the affair

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48Ibid., August 4, 1842.
49Ibid., August 8, 1842.
50Ibid.
public. On June 18 he spoke to "thousands" in "great plainness" about Bennett's wickedness. A week later he had the entire episode published in *The Wasp* and reprinted it again on July 1, in the *Times and Seasons*.

Had Smith let well enough alone, perhaps Bennett would have dropped out of the scene quietly. But the Prophet's efforts to protect himself, the Church, and those directly involved led to some of the most serious miscalculations of his life. Bennett had been humiliated before the High Council, the Nauvoo city council, the Masonic lodge, members of the Mormon Church, and the general public. He did not take it silently, but struck back bitterly. His own writings reveal that he spent early July in Carthage and Warsaw, Illinois—towns known for their extreme anti-Mormon attitudes. From there he traveled to Springfield, where he contacted the politically partisan *Sangamo Journal*. As will be noted in the next chapter, the Whigs received him with open arms.

The first salvo in his counterattack appeared via letter in the July 8 issue of the *Sangamo Journal*. Three more lengthy letters were printed in quick succession during the next two weeks. The onslaught continued with two more statements in August and September. These six letters, bitter and vindictive in spirit, were filled with accusations against the Mormons. Among other things, the charges

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51 Woodruff, *op. cit.*, June 18, 1842.

52 Bennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-282.

53 Letters appeared in the *Sangamo Journal* on July 8, 15, and 22; August 19; and September 2, 1842.
claimed that they: (1) were maneuvering to gain political control of Hancock County and the state; (2) had a group of militant henchmen, bound by a mysterious, secret oath; (2) were responsible for the recent attempt on the life of Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs; (4) had perpetrated numerous misdeeds and crimes; (5) and were led by a hierarchy degenerated by gross sexual corruption.

Bennett's allegations concerning Mormon licentiousness revealed more detail on the events of the spring of 1842. The most serious criminations were leveled against Joseph Smith for seduction of many women in Nauvoo and for preaching what Bennett called "spiritual wifery." The indictments were grave because Bennett specifically alleged that the Prophet sought Mrs. Sarah Pratt, Miss Nancy Rigdon, daughter of Sidney Rigdon, and other women as plural wives. They created another crisis at the highest level of church leadership, threatening to cause a second major breach or perhaps the dissolution of the Church. Bennett hoped that it would.

The Pratt Incident

Orson Pratt, member of the distinguished Quorum of Twelve Apostles since 1835, and among non-Mormons a highly respected intellectual, had been serving as a missionary in England during 1840-1841. Bennett told a provocative story about events occurring in Pratt's absence, claiming that Joseph Smith wanted Sarah Pratt as a spiritual wife and had tried to seduce her. The ex-Mormon said that he refused the Prophet's request to help secure her favors, and that he later warned her of the intrigue. Mrs. Pratt would not believe such a thing, but was told that Smith's true character would soon be known.
Thereafter, Smith supposedly took Bennett to the Pratt home and immediately broached the subject. Sarah was outraged at his advances, and when he persisted she finally threatened to tell her husband. According to Bennett, Smith begged not to be exposed. 54

This is an interesting tale, but additional information suggests that Bennett did not tell the whole story. In the Mormon version, Bennett is the villain. The young woman with whom he was said to have engaged in improper conduct in 1841 was probably Sarah Pratt. He apparently built the Pratts a small house and lived with them for a time. After Orson Pratt left for England Mrs. Pratt was at home with an infant son and the two were in quite destitute circumstances without the economic support of their husband and father. Sarah took up sewing to provide an income and periodically lived with other families. 55 Bennett provided her with some work and frequently visited her residence, often staying late into the night. Zeruiah Goddard claimed that she

54 *Ibid.*, July 15, 1842. Interestingly, there are two accounts attributed to Sarah Pratt which confirm Bennett’s charges, but both are somewhat suspicious in nature and therefore must be used with care. The first comes from Wilhelm Wyl, editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, who claimed that he interviewed Sarah Pratt in 1885-1886. (Wyl, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-63.) The second is a manuscript which purports to have been related by her to an unnamed author in 1884. But there are some difficulties with this document. Besides being unsigned, the author has confused Mrs. Pratt with Mrs. Orson Hyde throughout the Mss. by referring to her as Mrs. Hyde. ("Workings of Mormonism Related by Mrs. Orson Pratt, Salt Lake City, 1884." Original in the LDS Church Archives.) The details of both accounts are remarkably similar.

55 She apparently lived with several families while Pratt was absent. Records show that she lived with the Smiths, ("Workings of Mormonism," *op. cit.*), with the Robert Fosters, (Stephen H. Goddard, affidavit, August 31, 1842, found in *Affidavits and Certificates.*), in the home of Stephen and Zeruiah Goddard, (Stephen and Zeruiah Goddard, *Ibid.*).
once caught the Doctor "taking his hands out of her [Mrs. Pratt's] bosom," as they lay on the bed. The implication of the testimony of the Goddards, Robert D. Foster, and J. B. Backenstos is that Bennett and Mrs. Pratt were having an affair.

When and how Orson Pratt finally learned of the episode is not presently known, but apparently he was told Bennett's version of the story. It seems clear that he did not discuss the matter with the Prophet directly, and when fellowship was later withdrawn from Bennett, Pratt refused to sign the petition. Smith did not relieve tensions any. The Sangamo Journal reported him saying in a speech on July 14,

56 Ibid.

57 The Wasp, October 15, 1842. Foster spoke of Mrs. Pratt as one of the "seduced." Backenstos, affidavit, July 28, 1842. Original in the LDS Church Archives.

Mary Ettie V. Smith who claimed that she lived across the street from Sarah Pratt in Nauvoo said she saw Smith call "upon her one day, and alleged he found John C. Bennett in bed with her ... we saw and heard the whole uproar. Sarah ordered the Prophet out of the house, and the Prophet used obscene language to her." (N. W. Green, Mormonism: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition Embracing the Narrative of Mrs. Mary Ettie V. Smith of Her Residence and Experience of Fifteen Years with the Mormons [Hartford: Belknap & Bliss, 1870], p. 31.)

It should be noted, however, that it was reported that Mrs. Pratt challenged the Goddard affidavits and they supposedly admitted that they were pressured into signing them by Hyrum Smith. (Wyl, op. cit., pp. 62-63.)

T. Edgar Lyon tries to harmonize these two accounts by suggesting that Bennett told Sarah the Prophet wanted her as his wife with the intention of stepping in if she agreed, but Sarah rejected the idea and told her husband. This theory discounts the affidavits to the effect that an affair had developed between the two. (T. Edgar Lyon, "Nauvoo and the Council of the Twelve," in The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History, ed. by F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards [Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1973], p. 177.)

58 Sangamo Journal, July 8, 1842.
that Mrs. Pratt "had been a ______ from her mothers breast." The next day Smith recorded in his journal that Pratt was missing from the city. Rumor had it that he was despondent over the conflicting reports from both sides and was going to take his own life. Ebenezer Robinson remembered that Pratt's "mind temporarily gave way, and he wandered away, no one knew where." The Prophet dispatched the temple workmen to search for him, and Robinson said "he was found some 5 miles below Nauvoo sitting on a rock, on the bank of the Mississippi River, without a hat." Rumor of the incident arrived in Warsaw via the stagecoach driver who reported that about 500 men had been searching for the Apostle.

The conflict remained unresolved, and, on July 22, Pratt refused to support a public resolution sustaining the virtuous character of Smith. "Have you personally a knowledge of any immoral act in me toward the female sex, or in any other way?" Smith demanded. Pratt admitted he did not, but he "responded at some length" concerning his negative vote. Early in August, Joseph Smith assigned Young, Kimball, and George A. Smith to assuage Pratt's opposition. Brigham Young reported that Pratt's mind was "so darkened by the influence and statements of his wife, that he came out in rebellion against Joseph,

59 Ibid., July 39, 1842.
60 HC 5:60, 138.
61 Robinson, Items of Personal History, pp. 154-155.
62 Warsaw Signal, July 16, 1842.
63 The Wasp, July 27, 1842.
refusing to believe his testimony or obey his counsel. He said he would believe his wife in preference to the Prophet." If he did, said Smith, "he would go to hell." Wilford Woodruff recorded that for four days a council of the Apostles labored with Pratt, but "he persisted in his wicked course & would not recall any of the sayings which were made in public against Joseph. . . ." Consequently, on August 20, 1842, Pratt and his wife were excommunicated from the Church.

Through the next few troubled months the Pratts remained in Nauvoo. Countering rumors that he was about to leave the city and make an expose of his own, Pratt denied being away for more than twenty-four hours at any one time since his return from England. He said he had not "renounced the church," but believed in its doctrines. Late in September he wrote a second letter to The Wasp, refuting similar charges. Nauvoo was his residence and Mormonism his motto, he declared. He also denied corresponding with Bennett since he left the city. In fact, Pratt paved the way for his re-entry into the Church by passing along to Smith a letter Sidney Rigdon had received from Bennett seeking support from both of them. The Pratts were reinstated

64 Brigham Young, "History of Brigham Young," MS 26:151. Years later Pratt admitted that "he got his information from a wicked source, from those disaffected. . . ." (Ibid., 40:788.)

65 Woodruff, op. cit., August 20, 1842. John Taylor also said he talked with Pratt for two hours to prevent his apostasy. "But he was very sorely tried, and was very self-willed and stubborn in his feelings, and would not yield." (John Taylor, Succession in the Priesthood, [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1882], p. 18.)

66 The Wasp, September 3; October 1, 1842.

67 This was the view of B. H. Robers. (See his, The Rise and Fall of Nauvoo, p. 162.)
five months after their excommunication, but Pratt lost his seniority in the Quorum of Twelve and therefore the opportunity to preside over the Church as its President. 68

The Nancy Rigdon Episode

Sidney Rigdon had been a member of the Mormon Church since its earliest days. Counselor to Joseph Smith and among the best early church orators, Rigdon was well respected in and out of the Church. He was one of its chief assets in countering the notion that Mormonism appealed only to the ignorant and gullible. By 1842, however, his influence was waning. Ill health had plagued him periodically since the 1832 mobbing, 69 and his age made it difficult for him to keep pace with younger church leaders. Perhaps, too, he felt he was being shoved into the background in relation to the ambitious John C. Bennett. Things came to a head during the spring and summer of 1842.

Bennett's second letter to the Journal told a long story about how Joseph Smith tried to entice Rigdon's daughter Nancy into his seraglio. As Bennett told it, Smith offered him five hundred dollars

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68 For the reinstatement see, Brigham Young, "History," MS 26:167; and Woodruff, op. cit., January 19, 1843. Young records the event on January 20, and Woodruff on January 19. The conflict is unexplainable at present.

The Mormon Presidency as we have noted is achieved by seniority in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. Brigham Young died in 1877 and was replaced by John Taylor instead of Pratt. Pratt was first ordained to the apostleship on April 26, 1835. Taylor was ordained on December 19, 1838. (For an explanation of the arrangement of Quorum members for succession see, John Taylor, op. cit., pp. 16-17.)

69 Rigdon had been dragged by his heels over the cold March ground the night Smith was tarred and feathered. Periodically he suffered seizures and mental lapses.
or the best lot on Main Street if he would help "procure" Miss Rigdon because a special revelation had authorized the marriage. Bennett said that he refused the request and immediately warned Miss Rigdon's boyfriend, Francis Higbee. The trio decided to trap the Prophet, so Nancy met him privately at the printing office. When Smith made advances, she threatened to arouse the neighbors. Failing in his proposal and hoping to convince her, Smith promised to write a letter in a few days explaining the principle in more detail. Bennett published this document in his sixth letter to the *Journal*, stating that he had obtained it from Chauncy Higbee, to whom Miss Rigdon had given it to use as he wished.

The story caused immediate reaction in Nauvoo and in the press. The Mormon position was quickly established by William Smith, the Prophet's brother and editor of *The Wasp*. His effort to create doubt about the letter's authenticity came close to admitting it was genuine. It was without date or proof, the editor said, but even if it had these it was "upon the whole, more moral than Bennett ever was or will be. . . . Joseph Smith is not the author," he concluded. In his attempt to discredit the letter, Rigdon said Bennett was not authorized by his daughter to use her name or the letter and that she had never said Smith wrote it. Furthermore, he argued that the letter was in the handwriting of another person. "Mr. Smith denied to me the

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70 This story is told in the letter printed in the *Sangamo Journal*, July 15, 1842. The Smith-Rigdon letter was published in *Ibid.* August 19, 1842.

71 John C. Bennett, *op. cit.* pp. 45, 245.

72 *The Wasp*, August 27, 1842.
authorship of that letter," he concluded. The opposition press could read between the lines and remained unimpressed with the arguments. The *Sangamo Journal* editorialized: "We never supposed Joe Smith the writer of the communication. . . . It was unquestionably written by some of his numerous assistants." According to Bennett, Willard Richards wrote the letter for the Prophet.

By the end of August the relationship between Smith and Rigdon deteriorated even further. To counter the charges of Bennett, Smith sent out a number of missionaries with anti-Bennett certificates and affidavits. Unfortunately for both parties, Stephen Markham certified that he saw Miss Rigdon in a compromising situation with Dr. Bennett. "Many vulgar, unbecoming and indecent sayings and motions" passed between them he said. He was convinced they were "guilty of unlawful and illicit intercourse with each other." Smith immediately recognized the blunder and quickly let it be known he had not authorized the use of the affidavit, but the damage had been done. The September 23 issue of the *Sangamo Journal* published four affidavits refuting Markham. Miss Rigdon's defenders said Markham invented the episode and perjured himself. Ex-Mormon George W. Robinson, who was in the Rigdon house on the day Markham was there, said Bennett was merely

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74 *Sangamo Journal*, September 16, 1842.


76 Stephen Markham, affidavit, August 29, 1842, cited in Affidavits and Certificates.

77 *The Wasp*, September 3, 1842.
treatning Nancy in a professional capacity. Rigdon impotently defended his daughter, saying Markham's "word for truth and veracity was not good." 78

The circumstances of the story may be questionable, certainly the conflicting testimony is difficult to unravel, but two things seem certain. Smith did propose marriage to Miss Rigdon and was refused. Also, the letter from Smith to Nancy Rigdon, published by Bennett, is authentic. The proposal was confirmed by Miss Rigdon's brother John in an interview in Salt Lake City in 1900. 79

Orson Hyde, however tried to defend Smith's action, denying the Prophet really proposed to Nancy. Hyde said that her conduct was "notorious in this city," that "she was regarded generally, little, if any better, than a public prostitute." Therefore, Smith, in an attempt to "reprove and reclaim her if possible," had Hyde's wife invite her to their home. Whereupon, according to Hyde:

He wished to speak with her, and show her the impropriety of being gallanted about by so many different men, many of whom were comparatively strangers to her. Her own parents could not look upon it, and think that all was right; being blind to the faults of their daughter. There being so many of this kind of men visiting Mr. Rigdon's house at the steam boat landing (for he kept a sort of tavern or boarding-house,) that Mr. Smith did not care to go there to see her. Miss Nancy, I presume, considered her dignity highly insulted at the plain and sharp reproofs she received from this servant of God. She ran home and told her father that Mr. Smith wanted her for a spiritual wife, and that he employed my wife to assist him in obtaining her. 80

78 Carlos Grove, Sidney Rigdon, George W. Robinson, and Henry Marks, affidavits and certificates, in the Sangamo Journal, September 23, 1842.

79 Salt Lake Tribune, May 20, 1900.

80 Orson Hyde, Speech of Elder Orson Hyde, Delivered Before the
This same idea emerges from the letter Smith wrote to Miss Rigdon after she refused his proposal. He compared God to a loving parent who was willing to bestow certain privileges on his children, but only on His conditions. He wrote:

A parent may whip a child, and justly, too, because he stole an apple; whereas if the child had asked for the apple, and the parent had given it, the child would have eaten it with a better appetite; there would have been no stripes; all the pleasure of the apple would have been secured, all the misery of stealing lost . . .

Everything that God gives us is lawful and right; and it is proper that we should enjoy His gifts and blessings whenever and wherever He is disposed to bestow; but if we should seize upon those same blessings and enjoyments without law, without revelation, without commandment, those blessings and enjoyments would prove cursing and vexations in the ends, and we should have to lie down in sorrow and wailings of everlasting regret. 81

Some thought that Nancy had been divinely rebuked when her younger sister revived briefly from her deathbed and admonished Nancy: "It is in your heart to deny this work; and if you do, the Lord says it will be the damnation of your soul." 82

The best evidence that the letter to Nancy Rigdon is authentic is its reproduction without the addressee's name, in Smith's History

81 Sangamo Journal, August 19, 1842. (See also HC 5:134-136; and Joseph Fielding Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1967], pp. 255-257.) The idea that Smith was "testing" Miss Rigdon is also confirmed by George W. Robinson who said "He wished to ascertain whether she was virtuous or not, and took that course to learn the facts!!!" (J. C. Bennett, op. cit., p. 246.) Compare also stanz 13 and 14 of "Buckey's First Epistle to Jo," Warsaw Signal, April 25, 1844.

82 TS 3:922-923; HC 5:121.
and in Joseph Fielding Smith's compilation of the teachings of Joseph Smith. Roberts does, however, explain that it obviously referred to plural marriage. There is also a partial copy in the LDS Church Archives entitled, "The Letter of the Prophet Joseph Smith to Miss Nancy Rigdon."

The communication does not contain a specific proposal of marriage, because it was intended as a theological justification for the doctrine, apparently in answer to her objections. Smith told Nancy that at various times God had given commandments, but in specific instances He contravened them by revelation. "Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is" he told her. God gave Solomon all the desires of his heart, "even things which might be considered abominable to all who understand the order of heaven only in part," he wrote, "but which in reality were right because God gave and sanctioned by special revelation." After admonishing her about promiscuous conduct, Smith explained to Nancy, as he had to Benjamin Johnson before, that plural marriage was foreshadowed in the Parable of the Talents. The blessings of those who reject it, like the talent hid in the earth by the wicked and slothful servant, will be "bestowed on those who will receive and occupy; for unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have

83 HC 5:134. The original source for the inclusion of this document in Smith's History is unknown at present.

84 Original in the LDS Church Archives. See also the comments of T. F. Olney in the Sangamo Journal, September 23, 1842.

85 Sangamo Journal, August 19, 1842.
abundantly.” In conclusion he described God as “more liberal in His views, and boundless in His mercies and blessings, than we are ready to believe,” however, to those who are wicked He “is more awful in the executions of His punishments.”

The letter failed in its purpose, and the attempts on the part of both Smith and Rigdon to avoid permanent rupture were also fruitless.

On January 10, 1843, Bennett wrote a letter addressed to Sidney Rigdon and Orson Pratt. Boldly he told them the details of his plans to go to Missouri and there assist in the attempts to extradite or kidnap Smith. Rigdon received the letter first and passed it on to Pratt without a word to Smith, but Pratt immediately went to the Prophet with the news.

Smith was incensed that Rigdon, his counselor in the Presidency, had not shown him the letter. He saw in this additional evidence that Rigdon was co-operating with Bennett. He gave the letter to John Taylor, who wrote a scathing editorial for the *Times and Seasons.*

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87 Even before the publication of the letter by Bennett, Smith and Rigdon had been quarreling. (*HC* 5:46.) On July 11, 1842, Rigdon wrote a letter inviting Smith and his brother to meet him for a ride into the Prairie “that alone we may settle forever all difficulties, and be again at everlasting peace.” (Sidney Rigdon to Joseph Smith, July 11, 1842. Original in LDS Church Archives.) Several things indicate that Rigdon was trying to prevent an open break. He at least made a token effort to deny Smith’s authorship of the letter to his daughter, and if he was losing ground in the church leadership why didn’t he make a clean break? Furthermore there are several professions of faith by Rigdon during this period. (For example see, *T&S* September 15, 1842; and D. B. Huntington, statement, 1843. Original in the Statement Collection in the LDS Church Archives.)

88 *HC* 5:250-251.
Smith also instructed Taylor to bring Rigdon before a church court. When the type was set and Taylor was ready to proceed with the trial, he went to Smith and asked if he should continue as directed. Smith "paused for a moment, then replied, 'I think you had better not, we will save him if we can.'" 89

As it turned out they could not. From the summer of 1842, Rigdon continued to drift from the Church. On at least three occasions, Smith tried to oust him from the Presidency. 90 Before the martyrdom Rigdon moved to Pittsburgh, but, on the death of Joseph Smith, he returned to Nauvoo in a vain attempt to capture the leadership of the Church. Failing at this, he went back to Pennsylvania and started a church of his own. Mormonism had lost another of its brightest lights.

Other Defections

Other defections of lesser importance resulted from the scandal in the summer of 1842, and collectively they demonstrate that the Bennett revelations were hurting the Church internally. The illiterate Melissa Schindle provided General Bennett with another tale of attempted seduction by Joseph Smith. He not only tried to seduce her, she said, but she also knew he had been in bed with another woman. However, William Smith warned his readers that Schindle's credibility was severely jeopardized because she was a harlot. 91

89 Journal History, January 10, 1842. This has been erroneously placed in the Journal History a year too early due to a misdate in the letter.

90 McKiernan, The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness, p. 123.

91 The Wasp, July 27, 1842.
Miss Martha Brotherton also accepted Bennett's call to tell her story. It was first published in the *St. Louis Bulletin* on July 15, 1842, and was quickly copied in the *Sangamo Journal* and the *Warsaw Signal*. Her account was filled with all the familiar elements. She told of being taken to a locked room by Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young. There she was told of the special revelation permitting plural marriage. She repeatedly refused their advances and finally Smith was brought in, but he too failed to sway her. Brigham Young denied the story as a "base falsehood;" Kimball said it was "without foundation in truth;" and *The Wasp* sneered that Bennett was the "pimp and file leader of such mean harlots as Martha H. Brotherton. ..."\(^{93}\)

Troubles with Miss Brotherton antedated her July affidavit. Joseph Fielding, a member of the same company which came from England as the Brothertons, reported that he preached to the immigrants several times on the doctrine of the gathering. Several, including the Brothertons, were "rather hurt at my plain way of telling them what tribulations they might expect." He anticipated that "brother B. from Macclesfield" was likely to send home an evil report.\(^{94}\) William Clayton wrote to William Hardman and explained in detail the Brotherton difficulties.

Old Mr. B. and daughter, like many others, were assailed by the apostate crews, who lay scattered on the banks of the river; and all manner of evil reports

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93 Brigham Young, affidavit, August 25, 1842; Heber C. Kimball, affidavit, August 27, 1842, both in Affidavits and Certificates; and *The Wasp*, August 27, 1842.

94 Joseph Fielding to Parley P. Pratt, August 1842, in *MS* 3:77.
were sounded in their ears, until they became discouraged; and, finally, almost denied the faith before they came near Nauvoo.

People coming here with their minds thus prejudiced, will naturally construe everything they see and hear into evil, and will imagine evil where there is none. In this state the B--ton family came, and were something like spies, afraid to be spoken to by any one, lest they should be ensnared, and especially afraid to meet Joseph Smith, lest he should want their money. After remaining a short time here, they went back to Warsaw, where some of the greatest enemies reside, and, I am sorry to say, have joined in the general clamour and business of circulating evil reports, some of which I, MYSELF KNOW POSITIVELY TO BE FALSE.95

Martha was also implicated in the original investigation of Bennett in May of 1842.96 At the April 1842 general conference, both the Prophet and his brother Hyrum took note of stories "alleging that a sister had been shut in a room for several days, and that they had endeavored to induce her to believe in having two wives."97

Testimony is conflicting about the Brotherton case, but the evidence of Martha's besmirched reputation is compelling. Besides associating with anti-Mormons in Warsaw, she may have also been associating with ladies of ill repute in that city. Certainly members of her own family considered her unworthy. Her sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, as well as her brother-in-law, John McIlwrick, swore an affidavit to the effect that Martha was a liar, was guilty of dishonesty, and was seen in a compromising situation with a young

95William Clayton to William Harding, March 30, 1843, in MS 3:75.
96The Wasp, October 15, 1842.
97T&S 3:763.
Interestingly, if Smith and others did approach Martha on the plural marriage issue, it may have been on a similar basis as that of the one made to Nancy Rigdon. In 1849 John Bowes said that William Arrowsmith talked with Joseph Smith about the case and reported: "Smith did not deny what Martha relates, but said that Brigham Young and he did it to try her, as they had heard an evil report of her."99

The story has a somewhat ironical conclusion. On June 27, 1843 Vilate Kimball wrote to her husband that Parley P. Pratt and his wife had come to her for instruction about plural marriage. Smith had started to teach them but they were interrupted in the middle of the conversation. They told her Smith had "appointed" a plural wife for Pratt. "I dare not tell you who it is," she said, "you would be astonished and I guess some tried."100 The one "appointed" was Elizabeth Brotherton, Martha's sister. Pratt married her on July 24, 1843.101

In September, the Sangamo Journal carried a letter from T. F. Olney who said that he could no longer remain a member of the Church while "polygamy, lasciviousness and adultery are practiced by some of its leaders."102 Other defections occurred that fall, and it is probable that they were related to the Nauvoo difficulties. The Wasp

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98 John McIlwrick, Elizabeth Brotherton, Mary McIlwrick, affidavit, August 27, 1842, in Affidavits and Certificates.
99 Bowes, op. cit., pp. 63-64.
100 Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, June 27, 1842. Original in the LDS Church Archives.
102 Sangamo Journal, September 23, 1842.
noted on September 17 that forty apostate Mormons passed down the river from Nauvoo. Then, in October ten Saints withdrew. "Agrieved [sic.] by the conduct of Joseph Smith and others of the leaders of the Church," they said, "we have been most scandalously imposed upon in matters and things of Divine character." 103

Bennett's Whirlwind Tour

John Cook Bennett was not content with a mere newspaper campaign against Mormonism. The interest and controversy created by his letters as well as his personal animosity convinced him that there was more to do and that there was also money to be made if the matter were properly exploited. After his visits to Carthage, Warsaw, and Springfield, he embarked on an extended speaking tour, beginning at St. Louis. From there he went to Louisville, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and on to the East. Illinois newspapers kept track as his itinerary took him to New York, Boston, Salem, back to New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Kalamazoo, Chicago, and eventually to Springfield and St. Louis. As the reports came in, the Saints in Nauvoo were quick to respond to his newest allegations. 104

Details of Bennett's travel between St. Louis and New York are sketchy, but they do reveal his basic purpose and intention. While

103 The Wasp, September 17, 1842; Sangamo Journal, October 14, 1842.

104 For example, Bennett was fond of saying certain people in Nauvoo were about to leave the Church and reveal what they knew of the corruption there. For several denials of such charges by Sidney Rigdon, John Weld, Chauncy and Francis Higbee, see The Wasp, September 24, 1842; December 3, 1842; and T&S 3:47, respectively.
in St. Louis in July of 1842 he was apparently contemplating publishing a book on Nauvoo Mormonism. However, two local papers reacted negatively to the idea. The St. Louis Gazette was opposed to it because there were already too many seeking to make money through accounts of the Saints. They also suspected his motives and wondered why he waited until after his expulsion to attack the Mormons. 105

On Saturday July 23, he passed through Louisville on board the steamer Importer. The editors of the Louisville Daily Journal met with him, publishing a letter in which he outlined five reasons why he opposed Mormonism. His fifth point read: "Under the new order of things, all the property of the saints, with their wives and little ones, is to be consecrated to Joe, to subserve his purposes and gratify his passions!" 106 On Sunday Bennett was in Cincinnati. At the Broadway Hotel he made "many startling disclosures of the iniquities practiced by Joe Smith. . . ." 107 He was in Cleveland on July 30, and at that time he outlined the basic structure of his book. "The 'History of the Saints' will give a full account of this nondescript lodge of the Mormon ladies of pleasure and the fine arts, including all their Cloistered, Chambered, and Cyprian maids and maidens!!" 108


108 J. C. Bennett, op. cit., p. 217.
A number of reports arrived which related the details of Bennett's lectures and his frequent encounters with Mormon missionaries. Late in August, Bennett and a companion, noted anti-Mormon Origen Bacheler, were lecturing on "The Secret Wife System at Nauvoo" at the Second Congregational Church in New York City. An advertisement promised their lecture would "lay bare the absurdities, enormities and dangers of Mormonism." Indeed, they proved so controversial that one correspondent to the New York Herald complained that the lectures were "too licentious for the age," suggesting if they were continued Bennett and Bacheler deserved "tar and feathers." Robert Foster, a Mormon who attended the August 31 lecture, agreed. But he found that, even with his "fiend like smile and feigned vivacity," Bennett could not get a response from the audience. Bennett's attack was so personal that Foster could not resist fighting back. He called Bennett a liar and the audience shouted for a debate. Foster declined, but assured them that their lecturer was a whoremonger and blasphemer. Foster reported that the next lecture was so obscene it was for gentlemen only.

In a second communication from New York, Foster said that he had read the Herald's report of the Bennett lecture in its September 4


110 The New York Herald, September 1, 1842.

111 The Wasp, September 24, 1842.
issue and was so incensed that he wrote to the editor. But his letter was not published. He described the lecture as "one of the filthiest mouthfuls that ever dropped from the lips of mortal man." On the other hand, Bennett got J. W. Hallenback, to swear that Foster was a sinister "Danite" henchman, sent to kill Bennett and that he had a "bold and unblushing female" with him who was thought to be a spiritual wife.

Bennett spent his time in Boston lecturing and gathering information in preparation for the publication of his book. The still famous *History of the Saints* came off a Boston press in the fall of 1842. In Salem, Massachusetts, two merchants assailed Bennett's co-lecturer, Mr. West, prior to his debate with Mormon missionary Erastus Snow. Speaking in phrenological terms, *The Wasp* said that the report of the merchants showed that West's "bump of amitiveness was quite as prominent as that of John C. Bennett's."

Sometime in November Bennett was lecturing in Buffalo. The *Illinois State Register* noticed that he was "making money by it very fast." But editor Walters quoted Sir William Scroggs, who said, "I know of no man so likely to invent his testimony, as he who makes his living by the wonderful character of his testimony."

Bennett encountered another Mormon missionary in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The

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114 *The Wasp*, November 12, 1842.

115 *Illinois State Register* [Springfield, Illinois], December 16, 1842.
General told the townspeople that E. M. Webb was a "Danite" sent out to execute him. This was a good excuse to skip town without paying his debts to the Presbyterians and his tavern bill. The local citizens thought it took an "uncommon degree of credulity" to believe Bennett's stories. 116 The Chicago Democrat likewise reported a debate between a Mormon minister and Bennett. Although the minister, a Mr. Anderson, "had not the advantage of an education," his talent and tact reportedly "sustained his part admirably well and proved himself a great proficient in scriptural knowledge." The Chicago Mormons said Bennett's lectures on "female fixings" and similar things at Nauvoo were "false as hell." 117

Bennett was back in Illinois in January of 1843. Smith stood trial in Springfield in the last week of December and reported that Bennett was there "a few days after we left there . . . [because] he is determined, if possible, to keep up the persecution against me." 118 From Springfield Bennett attempted to enlist the aid of the defected Rigdon and Pratt, telling them that he was on his way to Missouri to assist in the effort to take Smith. On January 13, he was in Alton, Illinois where he was giving a lecture in the "Old Court Rooms." The broadside advertising the event is the only one known to be extant. It shows the variety of subjects his lectures covered. Bennett was to:

- give an account of Joe Smith's Golden Bible;
- the Divining Rod;
- the Urim and Thummin;
- the Daughter of Zion, (Danites);
- Destroying Angel, (Destructives);

116 The Wasp, January 14, 1843.
117 HC 5:250.
Mormon Miracles; Joe's Spiritual Wife System; the Great Mormon Seraglio; Holy Order Lodge; the Mormon Priesthood, &c. &c., together with the Treasonable Designs of the Leaders of that Sect--their Burglaries, Robberies, and Murders.\textsuperscript{119}

All of this was to cost only twelve cents, and only gentlemen were admitted.

Bennett continued the same pattern in St. Louis while he also promoted another attempt to extradite Smith. However, this attempt was defused by Smith's release by Judge Pope in Springfield in December. Shortly after this, Bennett disappeared from the scene of active opposition to the Mormons, although one suspects he was not far away. As he wrote Rigdon, "the war goes bravely on, and although Smith thinks he is now safe, the enemy is near, even at the door. He has awoke the wrong passenger."\textsuperscript{120}

It is difficult to measure the effect Bennett's attacks had upon the Church because both Mormon and gentile reaction to them varied.

\textsuperscript{119} Broadside, January 13, 1843. Original in the LDS Church Archives.

\textsuperscript{120} Journal History, January 10, 1842, p. 3. (See also HC 5:250.) Bennett is known to have associated for awhile with the Strang faction. He also forged a fascinating revelation purported to be from Joseph Smith appointing Sidney Rigdon as his successor. (The Prophet, May 10, 1845; and Orson Hyde, Speech, p. 29.) Research needs to be done to evaluate Bennett's possible role in authoring other documents which are suspected as forgeries with Masonic motifs, like the letter of appointment to Strang and an alleged letter from Joseph Smith regarding a plan for world wide government based on a Masonic pattern. (See Reed Durham, "Is There No Help For the Widow's Son," Presidential Address to the Annual Mormon History Convention at Nauvoo, Illinois, April, 1974. Mimeograph copy in possession of the author.) It seems paradoxical that Bennett would associate with either Strang or Rigdon in a religious context unless he felt he could dupe them into giving him power or promote additional sexual escapades.
His book, for example, met with mixed reaction. It was universally rejected by the Saints. Non-Mormons responded unevenly, depending on their position regarding Mormonism. 121

Mormons who encountered Bennett or his influence were not agreed as to the impact he was having. At first Smith himself apparently thought Bennett could not "do much" to hurt the Church. 122 In the early stages perhaps this was so, for on July 14, 1842 Abraham Lincoln wrote of the publication of Bennett's first letter in the Sangamo Journal that "Bennett's Mormon disclosures [sic.] are making some little stir here, [Springfield] but not very great." 123 In December of 1842 a Mormon missionary in Franklin County, Indiana said that "Bennettism has militated in our favor there, for he is personally known by some of the citizens." 124 Similarly, Isaac Galland noted that in St. Louis Bennett's affidavits and lectures "are taken . . . with great allowances." 125 Newel Knight was also optimistic in his retrospective evaluation. He recalled that Bennett's "sudden light," like a "streak of lightening, left a black cloud and disappeared with a hush mumbling of distant thunder, that never hurt any body."

121 A negative New York Herald review is quoted in The Wasp, November 12, 1842. See also a review of J. L. Colby in Ibid., January 7, 1842.


125 Isaac Galland to Joseph Smith, March 11, 1843. Original in the LDS Church Archives.
Knight continued:

He exposed his own sins, and went to the devil where he belonged. There was a clan of apostates, associated with Bennett, who now stalked forth to help destroy the Prophet's character, and even the Church, but all their efforts like steam from a boiling kettle, made a shower an instant then dissolved to come again. 126

But Knight and the others were somewhat overoptimistic or premature in judgment. Evidence shows that there was widespread fear among many churchmen that Bennett had successfully impeded the progress of Mormonism. Isaac Haight, who arrived in Nauvoo from New York early in July, found Nauvoo "very excited" about Bennett's recent excommunication. 127 Later that month, James Flanagan encountered a Campbellite minister in Kentucky. He was warning the people about the false teachers of Mormonism. He also demanded from Flanagan a sign that he represented the true God, whereupon he "read a Newspaper which contained some of Bennett's base calumnies & Sat Down." Flanagan retorted that the best sign he had was that the servants of Satan "always came round with as strong testamony [sic.] as a Newspaper or an Almanack [sic.] and demanded signs," whereas "the Servants of God came

126 Newel Knight, op. cit., p. 25.

127 Journal History, July 5, 1842. On July 16, 1842 Robert D. Foster wrote to Joseph Smith from De Ruyter, New York. He had just arrived from Nauvoo. Of the Bennett scandal he writes: "be assured Sir that he has found many votaries but it gives me much pleasure to state that they are mostly birds of the same feather (viz.) (Blackbirds). . . . His career is very short [.] [i]Illustrated better by one of your own familiar trite sentences . . . (viz.) its affect upon reasonable community is equal to the affects of water upon the Gooses Back, producing no change deeper than its glassy surface like Bennetts Borrowed Oratory [,] deep tond [sic.] far fetched. . . ." (Robert D. Foster to Joseph Smith, July 16, 1842. Original in the LDS Church Archives.)
with the Scripture & the word of God in their mouth to substantiate [sic.] the truth." 128

On a more serious note, Lorenzo Wasson observed that in Philadelphia the disclosures of Bennett caused the faith of some to fail and others to doubt. In September of 1842 Erastus Snow said that, in Massachusetts, Bennett and West "turned away some from the faith that were beginning to believe, and the enemies of the cause were hardened more for they seemed to believe 20 lies before one truth." Snow immediately published a pamphlet "refuting Bennett's falsehoods." 129 According to John Eldridge, who wrote to Brigham Young in January of 1844, the Bennett scandal was still around, but was dying "very fast." 130

The Mormon Counter-Attack

Joseph Smith and the Church also reacted as though they had been deeply wounded by Bennett. They responded vigorously. The basic tack of the Church was to vilify and discredit Bennett's character so severely that his reputation for honesty, integrity, and morality could not be relied on. Moreover, the character of Smith would shine out in bold relief against such a dark backdrop.


129 Erastus Snow, op. cit., pp. 33-34. A search in the most extensive bibliography available, located in the LDS Church Archives turned up no known copy of this pamphlet.

130 John Eldridge to Brigham Young, January 2, 1844, as quoted in the Journal History, January 2, 1844.
In its countermaneuvers the Church adopted its traditional two-pronged approach. First, Smith met Bennett point for point in the press and in public sermon. On Thursday, July 27, 1842, *The Wasp* published an "extra" with the headline "BENNETTIANA: or the Microscope With Double Diamond Lenses." The first of four pages contrasted Bennett's writings in the *Times and Seasons* with his letters in the *Journal*. This "Bennett as he was--Bennett as he is" approach was followed up by three pages of affidavits, letters, and rebuttals. Thereafter a continuous stream of vitriol flowed from the pen of William Smith and his contributors regarding the Bennett scandal.  

Some Mormons also developed a behind-the-scenes strategy against Bennett's character. In the early days of his church activity, Bennett had written many articles for the *Times and Seasons* under the pseudonym Joab. In January of 1842, Charles V. Dyer wrote to Bennett questioning him on his views of slavery, specifically asking about a recent occurrence in Missouri. Bennett's reply revealed his abolitionist leanings. Smith also responded to the correspondence with a letter against the oppressive character of the Missourians.  

When Bennett went to Missouri in 1842 to agitate the people in their anti-Mormon feelings, Calvin Warren wrote to Smith suggesting that the Bennett letter to Dyer, "will ensure no little attention for Bennett in Jefferson City! They

131 Almost every issue of *The Wasp* contained some reference to Bennett and the scandal he had caused.

132 *T&S* 3:723-725. In June of 1842 Smith argued that neither his nor Bennett's letter showed them to be abolitionist. (*T&S* 3:808.)
say they can kill him with it. I suppose they don't [sic.] mean murder." 133

When Bennett was in Missouri again in 1843 George Bachman wrote to Missourian Moses Wilson reminding him that

Bennett possesses those feelings and sentiments in relation to your beloved and happy state; which if carried out would cause Jackson County to become the scene of action for the same bloody tragedy which was acted in Southampton County Virginia and of which the writer was unfortunately a witness. . . . That Bennett possesses those feelings and sentiments may be learned from his conversations, his speeches and his writings [. . .] Under that insidious and hypocritical smile and profession of friendship of his you find concealed a heart black with sentiments of abolitionism, libertinism falsehood deceit and treachery. . . . A coat of tar and feathers is what abolitionist generally get with us. But your people must be judge of what punishment this insulter of their laws and institutions deserves. 134

The second thrust of the attack involved sending missionaries throughout the states, armed with published refutations of Bennett's charges. Brigham Young recorded in his history that on August 26, 1842 some of the Twelve Apostles met with the Prophet. At that time, Smith directed that Elders should be sent out to "disabuse the public mind in relation to the false statements of Dr. J. C. Bennett." 135

133 Calvin Warren to Joseph Smith, July 13, 1842. Original in the LDS Church Archives.

134 George Bachman to Moses Wilson, January 20, 1843. Copy in the LDS Church Archives. This copy was sent to Joseph Smith with a cover letter of explanation that Bachman conceived himself as acting a similar part in protecting Joseph Smith that Jonathan did for David by shooting an arrow into the air to warn of evil or to deter the attacker. (See George Bachman to Joseph Smith, January 21, 1843. Original in the LDS Church Archives.) Compare 1 Samuel 20:18-42.

135 26:151.
stated that he wanted them to "deluge the state with a flood of truth." 136 He appointed a special conference for the purpose of calling these Elders and further directed that the affidavits against Bennett be printed so that the missionaries "might have authentic and strong testimony to lay before the public." 137 On Monday, August 27, 1842, 380 Elders volunteered to accept the assignment. 138 In the meantime Young helped prepare the affidavits, which were printed on the press of The Wasp on August 31. Immediately Young and others were busily engaged in countering Bennett's influence.

Present research has not shown who these 380 missionaries were or to what extent they carried out Smith's desires, but, as we have noted above, a number of them regularly reported to Nauvoo on their encounters with the Bennett problem. Certainly much manpower and effort was channeled away from normal proselytizing efforts to this public relations matter. It is also clear that Bennett stirred emotions that did not dissipate in 1844, but burst forth with renewed intensity to help bring Smith to his death in June of that year.

136 HC 5:132.
137 MS 26:151.
138 Ibid. For Smith's remarks on this occasion see HC 5:136-139.
Thus far this study has revealed significant turmoil within the Church over the plural marriage issue, and it has hinted that there was an equal external displeasure which contributed to persecution and pressure upon the Church. Although Nauvoo had peaceful beginnings and gave initial promises of progress for Mormonism, the Saints' experience in this community came to a tragic end. Pressure continued to mount until it violently exploded like an overheated steam boiler. Over the years there had been at least three attempts to extradite the Prophet to Missouri on charges against him for crimes allegedly perpetrated prior to his settlement in Illinois. Increasingly, non-Mormon neighbors turned against Smith and his followers. Then, on June 27, 1844, a mob invaded the Carthage city jail and murdered Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Subsequently, in 1846, approximately 12,000 Mormons were driven from the state.

The present chapter seeks to evaluate the extent to which plural marriage may have been a factor in these difficulties, specifically in the death of the Smith brothers. Traditional examinations of Mormon non-Mormon conflict in Illinois and elsewhere have emphasized the obvious social, cultural, and religious tensions between the Saints and
their gentile neighbors. In these studies plural marriage is often treated as a factor that stimulated conflict. In other words, some analysts have concluded that Mormon sexual standards were so divergent from the norms of Illinois society that they caused extreme reactions. This view has considerable validity, but certain recent studies of community conflict and violence also suggest other fruitful approaches to this subject. The studies of Richard Dykstra, Ronald Walters, and Gustive Larson are relevant to an understanding of the conflict, both in the more confined Mormon religious community and in the larger Mormon-gentile social situation in Illinois.

The first step in assessing the role of plural marriage and its importance in the Nauvoo crisis is to determine what the non-Mormon attitudes were toward the principle. Very few archival materials on this topic and period have been collected by the major repositories of Mormoniana. However, anti-Mormon critics in and around Nauvoo freely expressed their opinions in newspapers. Therefore, the most readily available source of information on their attitudes toward the events of the time is the local press.

Internal Schism and the *Nauvoo Expositor*

Many and varied pressures faced Joseph Smith in the last six months of his life. He was wanted in Missouri as a fugitive from justice, and there was clamor around Nauvoo to the effect that he was a

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1See n. 25 chapt. ii.

tyrant, shielded from justice by a contrived city charter. There was also considerable excitement over the large Nauvoo Legion as well as concern over Mormon domination of the local Masonic order and political scene.

In addition, the Prophet faced increasing difficulties with internal apostasy. After the departure of John C. Bennett, dissident Mormons remained leaderless and maintained no discernible organization. Disillusioned and apostate Saints tended to leave Nauvoo and attack the monolithic church from a safe distance. But a series of minor events set the stage for the dramatic events of 1844, climaxed by the creation of a major organized conspiracy against Joseph Smith. The investigations and disciplinary actions of the summer of 1842, the reading of the revelation on plural marriage before the High Council, the secret diffusion of polygyny among an ever-widening group of believers, and the unusual techniques Smith used in implementing the doctrine—all produced negative reactions and aroused the ire of opponents.

Before Joseph Smith's death, three pairs of Mormon brothers became alienated and formed a nucleus for dissent. One source of disunion by the end of January, 1844 was Smith's counselor, William Law. A lengthy session of the city council on January 5th of that month brought the matter into the open. On the night of the meeting, Smith confided in his journal his suspicions that aides Law and William Marks were traitors.³

³HC 6:170.
There were persistent rumors that Smith had designs on Law's wife, while, as has been noted, there may have been some attraction between Emma Smith and William Law. On April 18, 1844, Law, his wife Jane, his brother Wilson, and Robert D. Foster were excommunicated from the Church for "unchristian like conduct."4 The full nature of the difficulty between William Law and Smith is unknown, but Alexander Neibaur recorded in his journal that the Prophet told him Law wanted to be sealed to his own wife for eternity. Smith, however, refused on grounds that Law was guilty of adultery. Jane Law wanted to know the reason for refusal, but Smith would not tell her. A few days later she enticed Smith into her home, unsuccessfully playing the part of Potiphar's wife with him. When Law came home, she told him that the Prophet had proposed marriage to her.5

Law's brother, Wilson, also had a falling out with the Prophet. The latter's church status remains somewhat puzzling since his brother said he never joined the Church, but Smith's records show that Wilson was excommunicated on April 18. However, he had seemed friendly toward Smith and had served as Major General in the Nauvoo Legion. Evidently the split was revealed by a poem that Smith thought Wilson Law submitted to the Warsaw Message on February 1. This piece, entitled "Buckeye's Lamentation for Want of More Wives," attacked the Mormon Leader and spiritual wifery in these words:

\[ \text{HC} \ 6:341. \]

\[ ^5 \text{Alexander Neibaur, Journal, p. 15. Typescript in the LDS Church Archives.} \]
But Joe at snaring beats them all,
And at the rest does laugh;
For widows poor, and orphan girls,
He can ensnare with chaff
He sets his snare around for all,
And very seldom fails
To catch some thoughtless Partridges,
Snow-birds or Knight-ingles!6

Smith called this a bit of "doggerel" which breathed a "very foul and malicious spirit."7

In April the Warsaw Signal printed a second poem, entitled "Buckey's [sic.] First Epistle to Jo." Primarily concerned with the Nancy Rigdon episode, it is not mentioned in Smith's History.8 But four days after its appearance, the Prophet suspended Law for "unbecoming conduct," and directed Charles C. Rich to take command of the Legion.9 Wilson Law faced a court martial and was cashiered on May 9, 1844.10

At the same meeting in January when Smith began to suspect Law and Marks, he also made new public charges against Francis Higbee. He referred to some private matters which he said Higbee would prefer to keep hidden. Suggesting that Higbee was not the best company for young men, Smith said, "I by no means consider him the standard of the city."11 Within five days Higbee preferred charges against Smith for

6 Warsaw Message, February 4, 1844. See appendix E for the entire poem.
8 Warsaw Signal, April 25, 1844.
9 Joseph Smith, Orders to Charles C. Rich, April 29, 1844. Original in the LDS Church Archives.
10 HC 6:362.
11 HC 6:169.
slander, and a few days later Orson Pratt initiated countercharges against Higbee. The young lawyer was brought before the Municipal Court in Nauvoo on January 16, at which time a tenous reconciliation was achieved between the parties, each man forgiving the other. 12

It was to be a short-lived reunion, however. Late in February, Orismus Bostwick was fined $50.00 for supposedly boasting that "he could take half a bushel of meal . . . and get what accomodation he wanted, with almost any woman in the city." 13 Indignant at this aspersion upon their virtue, the women of Nauvoo held four separate meetings on March 9 and 16. They unanimously approved a strongly-worded statement censuring Bostwick for his conduct and adopted resolutions thanking the city officers for ridding their society of his presence. 14 Francis Higbee, attorney for the defendant, announced that he would appeal the case. Smith publicly wondered if Higbee did not want to take the case to Carthage—a center of rabid anti-Mormon activity in Hancock County—in order to stir up a mob. 15

By May Smith and Higbee were again openly at odds with one another. Higbee signed a complaint against Smith seeking $5,000.00 damages. When notice of this suit was served on him on May 6, Smith petitioned the Nauvoo Municipal Court for a writ of habeas corpus. The Prophet contended that he had not committed an identifiable crime and

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12 HC 6:174, 177, 178.
13 Nauvoo Neighbor, March 20, 1844. See also the Warsaw Signal, March 27, 1844.
14 Nauvoo Neighbor, March 20, 1844.
15 HC 6:225.
that Higbee was acting maliciously and vindictively. Higbee initiated the proceedings in Carthage. It was the practice, though, to rely on the nearest Justice of the Peace to try the accused person. Smith had escaped arrest on previous occasions by going to friendly Nauvoo justices. When the petition was heard, it appeared that Higbee was the one on trial. Several witnesses rehashed the sordid details of the Bennett-Higbee sexual exploits. The published minutes of the hearing are vague, but on May 17, A. W. Babbitt wrote from Carthage requesting Smith to provide him with documents to be used in his defense against Higbee there. The next day Higbee was excommunicated from the Church.

Smith followed his past procedure by publishing the minutes of the hearing on the petition in the *Times and Seasons* on May 15. Also, on May 29, the High Council published the old material from the 1842 investigation of Higbee's brother, Chauncy. That same day a lengthy letter from Francis Higbee appeared in the *Warsaw Signal*. It revealed that he was still fuming over the Prophet's treatment of Nancy Rigdon. He accused Smith of slandering her and himself. In the meantime the Higbee-Smith case remained on the docket in Carthage. On May 23 Smith received word that William Law had pressed charges against him for

16 *T&C* 5:536-542.
17 A. W. Babbitt to Joseph Smith, May 17, 1844. Original in the LDS Church Archives.
18 *HC* 6:398.
20 *Warsaw Signal*, May 29, 1844.
adultery. Four days later he decided to go to Carthage and settle the affair. When he arrived, he found the Higbees there too. Smith's lawyers tried to bring the case to trial immediately, but the prosecution delayed, and the case was continued until the next term. 21

While these problems were transpiring, Smith also had a personal falling out with Robert D. Foster. Although Foster had been implicated in the 1842 difficulties, he had remained somewhat faithful to Smith, keeping him informed of Bennett's activities while in New York. But here too, the peace was temporary. Late in March of 1844 M. G. Eaton swore that Foster told him that, while he [Foster] was away from home, Joseph Smith paid a visit to his wife. In the course of the visit he allegedly tried to seduce her after proposing spiritual marriage. Smith stayed for dinner, and, while the meal was in progress, Foster returned home. Later Foster demanded that his wife explain what the Prophet had been up to. When she refused to tell him, he angrily threatened her life. He frightened her so much that she fainted. Upon regaining her senses, she finally told him what had happened. 22 On March 23, 1844 Joseph Smith's secretary entered the following in his journal, describing a second visit to Mrs. Foster.

Clayton wrote:

President Joseph asked Sister Foster if she ever in her life knew him guilty of an immoral or indecent act. She answered, "No." He then explained his reasons for asking; which were, he had been informed that Dr. Foster had stated that Joseph made propositions to his wife calculated to lead

21 HC 6:403, 413.

her astray from the path of virtue; and then asked if ever he had used any indecent or insulting language to her. She answered, "Never." He further asked if he ever preached anything like the 'plurality of wife' doctrine to her other than what he had preached in public? She said, "No." He asked her if he ever proposed to have illicit intercourse with her, and especially when he took dinner during the doctor's absence. She said, "No." 23

At a municipal council meeting on April 13, Smith openly confronted Foster, asking him if he knew of any time that he had made untoward advances to Foster's wife. Foster refused to answer the questions put to him. Thereupon the Prophet preferred charges against him for "unchristian-like conduct in general, for abusing my character privily, for throwing out slanderous insinuations against me, [and] for conspiring against my peace and safety..." 24 Oh May 18, Foster was excommunicated from the Church along with the Laws.

The situation grew even more tense on April 26. On that date Smith accompanied the town marshal when he went to arrest Augustine Spencer for assaulting his own brother, Orson. A crowd gathered, and Robert Foster's brother, Charles, drew a pistol, threatening Smith's life. A struggle followed in which the two Fosters and Chauncy Higbee were arrested. They were each fined $100.00, but immediately appealed the case. Smith then had Robert Foster arrested for threatening his secretary, Willard Richards. The next day at the hearing Smith and Foster engaged in verbal combat. 25

23 HC 6:271.

24 HC 6:333.

25 HC 6:344. See also the statement by the city marshall J. P. Greene in the Nauvoo Neighbor, May 1, 1844 and reproduced in HC 6:348-349. Greene later put the story in affidavit form. (Affidavit, May
As late as Friday, June 7, 1844, Robert Foster gave indications of some desire to return to the Church if he could have a private interview with the Prophet. Smith suspected treachery and declined, but he did offer to meet publicly if each man's friends were present. Foster rejected this proposal, and that evening it was reported that he was telling people that Smith offered him money to return to the Church and keep quiet. He also sent Smith an "extremely saucy and insulting letter" Among other things, he charged: "You have trampled upon every thing we hold dear and sacred. You have set all law at defiance, and profaned the name of the Most High to carry out your damnable purposes." 27

Meanwhile the Laws, Higbees, Fosters, and others concluded that Smith was a fallen prophet, and started a church of their own. There is some evidence, not yet fully researched, suggesting that the new coalition also began to plot the overthrow and perhaps the death of Joseph Smith. At the very least, the freedom with which members of this group brandished pistols and heaped abusive language upon him

Augustine Spencer was very likely a member of the dissident faction. Parley P. Pratt wrote to Smith from Richmond, Massachusetts to the effect that Spencer had written a letter that was "going the rounds in this naboourhood [sic.] and is fraught with the most Infamous Slander and Lies concerning Joseph Smith and Others...." (Parley P. Pratt to Joseph Smith, May 30, 1844. Original in the LDS Church Archives. See also HC 6:354-355.) The nature of the charges was that Smith was drinking, carousing, dancing, swearing, and "Keeps six or Seven young females as wives etc."

26 HC 6:430.

27 Robert D. Foster to Joseph Smith, June 7, 1844. Original in the LDS Church Archives. See also HC 6:437.
The dissident group also decided to print a newspaper in Nauvoo. On May 7, 1844 their press arrived in Nauvoo, and three days later the prospectus of the new *Nauvoo Expositor* came off the press. It promised to devote itself to a "general diffusion of useful knowledge" and to political independence. Part of its columns were to be "devoted to a few primary objects, which the Publishers deem of vital importance to the public welfare. . . ." These "primary objects" included the abuses of the city charter, advocacy of its repeal, political revelations, disquisitions on religious toleration, opposition to a union of church and state, and the censure of "gross moral imperfections." Ostensibly it appeared that the editors did not intend to emphasize sexual abuses. However, a letter from Francis Higbee to Thomas Gregg in May of 1844, reveals that they intended to exploit this matter.

28 Contemporary evidence is scattered throughout volume six of Smith's *History*. (See also Jesse Price, affidavit, August 5, 1844, in the LDS Church Archives, and Cyrus Cadfield and Gilbert Bilnap, affidavit, June 18, 1844. Original in the LDS Church Archives.) There are two traditions that young boys were invited to participate in the plot but they acted as spies and helped Joseph Smith. Both accounts lean toward the miraculous and melodramatic. (See Hannah R. Larson, affidavit, undated. Carbon copy in the LDS Church Archives, and Horace Cummings, "Conspiracy at Nauvoo," *The Contributor* V [April, 1844], 251-260.) The latter is an account of two young boys who got embroiled in the conspiracy and supposedly attended, at Smith's request, a meeting where 200 people took an oath to kill Smith. When the boys turn came they refused and were only saved by divine intervention. This account has considerable doubt cast upon its historicity due to many factual errors, (i.e., the discussion about plural marriage between Smith and the boys) the second hand nature of the account, and the obvious intent of the author to relate a "faith promoting" story.

29 Prospectus of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, May 10, 1844. A copy of the prospectus can be found in the Journal History, May 10, 1844.
for all it was worth. "Above all," Higbee wrote,

it shall be the organ through which we will herald
the Mormon ribaldry. It shall also contain a full and
complete exposé of his Mormon Seraglio or Nauvoo Harem--;
and his unparalleled and unheard of attempts at seduction.
As it regards Joe I am as well satisfied that he excels
Solomon, Tiberius, or even the black prince of Dahomeny
himself, among the women as I am that he is the biggest
[sic.] villain that goes unhung.30

Dr. Dallin Oaks has shown that the paper, when it was issued
on June 7, 1844, "assailed the Mormon leaders on three fronts:
religion, politics and morality."31 Of the three, the "most pervasive
theme" was the alleged immoral conduct of Smith and his associates.
It was conspicuously discussed in a lengthy "Preamble" which included
a series of resolutions and affidavits.

Smith was outraged at this affront in his own city. He con-
vened a session of the city council on June 8, 1844. The council
declared the rival newspaper a public nuisance and ordered the constable
to close down the establishment. On the night of June 10, 1844 the
press was destroyed and the type scattered.32 The proprietors im-
mediately went to Carthage and swore out a writ for Smith's arrest.
Subsequent events are complicated. Suffice it to say that Smith
agreed to stand trial under the promised protection of Governor Thomas

30 F. M. Higbee to Mr. Gregg May ?, 1844. Original in the
Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

31 Dallin Oaks, "The Suppression of the Nauvoo Expositor,"

32 The minutes of the June 8, meeting are found in the Nauvoo
Neighbor, June 19, 1844.
Ford. He went to Carthage and was incarcerated there with his brother and other allies in the town jail. On the sweltering afternoon of June 27, 1844 the jail was stormed and the brothers killed. There are reports that some of the proprietors of the *Nauvoo Expositor* were in town and encouraged those who took part in this attack.  

Given the past histories of the publishers of the *Nauvoo Expositor* and their own ethical limitations it is doubtful that they were genuinely concerned about Mormonism as a moral threat. In view of Smith's propensity for open, and often public confrontation with these men and his unrestrained habit of exposing their misconduct, it seems more likely that theirs was a personal vendetta. But they may have had other motives as well.

Robert Dykstra, in a recent study of frontier cattle towns, has discovered some interesting tendencies toward conflict similar to those that existed in Nauvoo. Dykstra specifically differs with those who have sought to validate Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis that democracy was a natural outgrowth of frontier conditions. He rejects the notion that democracy evolved most fully in settlements where the range of problems was greatest, where there was a "similar level of social and economic status and aspirations among the people" (homogeneity), and where there was an absence of a ready-made leadership structure.

Under these conditions, Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick argue,  

33 *HC* 6:543, 553, 554, 560.
community problems led to collective and peaceful decision-making, which was the essence of democracy. 34

Dystra, however, finds four major conceptual and interpretative errors in this thesis. First, he notes that the typical frontier town was not self-contained and hermetically-sealed from outside cultural and religious issues. Public opinion from outside the community did play a major role in the decision-making process. Second, the pioneer community did not possess a formal organization which logically and rationally strove to achieve specific goals, as a modern corporate body might do. In other words, these towns sometimes languished because of internal economic conflict or "non-purposeful" community behavior. Third, local problems sometimes divided rather than unified early town-dwellers. Finally, Dykstra questions the idea that popular decision-making was necessarily peaceful in character.

Dykstra does not argue that democracy was absent on the frontier. Indeed, he accepts the view that certain democratic mechanisms were often fostered by the pioneer town-building process. But he does question the type of experience which spawned these mechanisms. His study of cattle towns suggests that community conflict was the more typical decision-making apparatus. 35

These observations seem relevant to a study of the internal difficulties in Nauvoo. It was a frontier town, but not a democratic community. Smith was opposed by dissidents who were anxious about his

35 Ibid.
increasing authoritarianism in religious, political, and social matters as well as the general growth of secular interests within Mormonism. With his anti-pluralistic tendencies, Joseph Smith tried to keep a tight reign on Nauvoo in the tradition of biblical theocracies. Indeed, his notion of the kingdom of God stressed the legitimacy of political power. He taught that the true order of government was a "theodemocracy." That meant that God would reveal His will to His spokesman and the Prophet would govern the people with their consent. However, if the people withheld their consent, this did not negate the legitimacy of Smith's authority or his measures. It merely meant that nonconformists could not participate in the Zion society.

This growing authoritarianism in the Church and an endless appeal to "Higher laws" alarmed many, led by the Nauvoo coalition of dissidents. It appears that the editors of the Expositor were using the sexual issue for its sensational and shock value. The real issue, though, was Smith's assertion of power. In 1887 William Law wrote:

> When I left Nauvoo I left Mormonism behind, believing that I had done my part faithfully, even at the risk of my life, and believing also, that the Expositor would continue to do the work it was intended to do. The Saints thought that they had killed it; whereas, by destroying the press, they gave it a new lease of life and extra power to overthrow them and drive their followers from the state.

Similar testimony comes from anti-Mormon Joseph Jackson who swore on June 21, 1844 that he had heard Francis Higbee say that the critics'...
press had been "set up ... for the destruction of the city." Moreover, said Jackson, Higbee indicated that he "meant to kill" Joseph and Hyrum Smith. 39

While it cannot be asserted positively that internal conflict was ultimately successful in achieving a more democratic operation in Nauvoo, it appears that this was one of the purposes of anti-Smith agitation. Attacks on the sexual and marital behavior of the Mormon leadership was an effective means of creating prejudice against the methods and tactics of arbitrary administration.

Whereas political considerations may have outweighed sexual concerns in the arguments of some Nauvoo dissenters, this was certainly true of the positions taken by the non-Mormon press in other parts of Illinois. 40 Evidence gathered from a survey of selected Illinois newspapers shows that, except for isolated periods, Mormon plural marriage was not the major issue in the press during the Mormon stay in Illinois. This was the case with the most rabidly anti-Mormon as well as the more moderate newspapers. Even when the Saints' sex and marriage patterns were discussed, reference was commonly made to their political influence.

38 William Law to Wilhelm Wyl, January 7, 1887, in the Salt Lake Tribune, July 3, 1887.
39 Joseph H. Jackson, affidavit, June 21, 1844. Original in the LDS Church Archives.
The climate of opinion in Springfield, as might be expected, was greatly conditioned by the state political situation. The foremost factors in shaping the political mood, aside from the state politicians themselves, were the Whig-dominated Sangamo Journal and the Locofoco-controlled Illinois State Register. The continuing feud between the two papers gathered momentum with the publication of Bennett's disclosures. Each paper accused the other of partisan reaction to the revelations, and both were probably right. Political power was the overriding issue in the debate.

As soon as Simeon Francis learned that John C. Bennett had bolted from Mormonism and heard rumors that the "Danites" were after him, he called upon Bennett through the columns of the Sangamo Journal to come out with an immediate exposure of the corruption in Mormonism. As a partisan Whig organ, the Sangamo Journal received Bennett with open arms, and, from the editors' point of view, with good reason. August was an election month, and this was their chance to retaliate against the Mormons for recently switching their support from the Whigs to the Democrats.

In Missouri the Mormons had supported the Democratic party, but Joseph Smith lost his confidence in Democratic President Martin Van Buren after a visit to Washington in 1839 when Smith failed to convince the President to support Mormon efforts to gain redress for the Missouri expulsion. Therefore the Prophet and the growing Mormon block vote supported William Henry Harrison and local Whig candidates in the August, 1840 election. Whig pleasure with the Mormons continued
through the next year as the Mormons voted for their candidates in the 1841 Congressional runoff. Things were different, however, in the 1842 gubernatorial election. Whigs who had counted on the Mormon majority in Hancock County to break the near split between the two parties there were rankled when Smith switched support to Locofoco candidate Thomas Ford. 41

The Democratic press quickly charged the Whig "junto" in Springfield with deal-making when Bennett's initial exposé appeared in the July 8 issue of the Sangamo Journal. William Walters, editor of the State Register, said that the Journal was merely the organ of political opportunists who were using Bennett to serve their own ends. According to Walters, Bennett had been in Springfield in the last of June to bargain with the junto. The editor further accused the Whigs of trying to turn attention from the important issues of the upcoming election to that of Mormonism. Bennett's dagger, he said, "is aimed at the breast of democracy concealed by a pretended aim at Mormonism." 42

This was to be the Register's motto through the remainder of the debate. Walters would encourage the publication of Mormon disputes, he said, if they were intended to do justice. But, since they were designed to influence the approaching gubernatorial election, he could place no confidence in them. Bennett, he argued, was cast out of the

41 In addition to the references cited in n. 39, a good overview of the political situation can be found in JoAnn Shipps, "The Mormons in Politics: the First Hundred Years" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1965).

42 Illinois State Register, July 8, 1842.
Mormon temple and summoned to Springfield by "a herd of kindred spirits." The junto was a harlot about to bring forth a "litter of crippled and mis-shapen [sic.] half witted men, women and children, and divert the attention of the people from a sober consideration of the important interests involved in the election." 43

Refusing to take Bennett seriously, the Register twitted Simeon Francis' report of great excitement over the disclosures. The only excitement Walters noticed was among the "whig loafers about town." 44 On a more serious note, Walters admitted that a hot controversy was going on between the Mormons and the Journal, but objected to the publication of Bennett's letters on the grounds that they were too obscene and vulgar for print in respectable newspapers. Francis, he charged, was disregarding public decency by printing statements that shocked the virtuous, chaste, and moral citizens of the state. 45

Evidence in the Journal confirms Walter's assertions. From the first, Simeon Francis' intent was politically motivated. He encouraged Bennett to expose Mormonism because he desired the people of Illinois to denounce Smith, preventing the Prophet from filling the two highest offices in the state "with his own creatures." 46 When

43 Ibid., July 15, 1842.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid. Walters found this to be even more reprehensible because Francis had criticized some years before, the publication of an account of a squirrel's head being shot off on grounds that the subject was "unfit to be introduced to the families." He wanted to know where the concern for family morality was now.
46 Sangamo Journal, July 1, 1842.
Smith denounced Bennett and maligned Mrs. Pratt's character, Francis condemned the insults, hoping that now the Democrats "would be ashamed of their allies, by whose vote they wish to elect him Governor. . . ." 47 After the August election, Francis chastized the Mormons for throwing away their franchise by becoming dupes of Smith. "They do not deserve," he warned, "the sympathies--and we were going to say--privileges, of freemen." 48 And when Bennett's credibility came under the attack, the Journal defended him as reliable and contended that everyone not "tinctured with Mormonism" or not expecting to gain "by pandering to the wishes of Joe Smith" should accept him as reliable too. 49

Simeon Francis needed very little help in seeing the political motivation behind the Register's reaction to Bennett. The Register gave little notice to the entire episode; but what little it did give was generally favorable to the Mormons and critical of Bennett. Francis asserted that the Democratic attempt to cover-up the Mormon dispute was intentional; that in reality the Democrats had made a deal with the Mormons in granting the Nauvoo charter in 1840 and were now seeking a return favor from them in accordance with the previous contract. 50

What position did the Locofocos and the Register take in relation to the disclosures? he asked rhetorically. Answering his own question, Francis said that some Democrats ignored them, others wanted them

47 Ibid., July 29, 1842.
48 Ibid., August 19, 1842. (Italics in the original.)
49 Ibid., November 11, 1842.
50 Ibid., July 29, 1842.
repressed until after the election, but the net effect was to conceal crimes of the blackest dye simply to insure the Mormon vote.\textsuperscript{51} Later in July, when Mormon James Adams was speaking in Springfield, the \textit{Journal} said he was there to "arrest the current indignation" against the Mormon-Democratic coalition.\textsuperscript{52}

After this initial battle was over, the sex issue soon fell into the background in the Springfield press, as did Mormonism generally. Again this suggests that politics was the primary focus of editorial interest. The \textit{Register} remained almost totally aloof from the Mormons' religious differences even into the month of June, 1844.\textsuperscript{53} The \textit{Journal} was somewhat more attentive to the subject, but presented it in a low key between the fall of 1842 and the late spring of 1844. The \textit{Journal}'s criticism of Smith even mellowed somewhat when he gave himself up to

\textsuperscript{51}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Ibid.}, July 29, 1842.
\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Ibid.}, January 19, 1843 and subsequent issues. The notion that the dominant concern was Mormon influence in politics is strengthened by a rough analysis of the number of issues in which politics and marriage were brought up. Between July 1, 1842 and December 29, 1842, the \textit{Sangamo Journal} printed articles concerning the Bennett episode (including the letters) in fourteen separate issues. For the same period eleven separate issues had articles on politics. It should be remembered, however, that even the articles on sex and marriage were couched in a political context. More importantly, while the polygamy issue died out during the years 1843 and 1844 (only two articles were found) politics and other issues continued to show up. At least ten issues had articles on Mormon involvement in politics.

The same trend is true for the \textit{Register}. There was also a significant decline in Mormon-related articles after the August election. The decline persisted with only periodic mention of the Mormons until the election of 1843 when there was again a minor flurry of activity. The year 1844 is virtually a desert until the fatal month of June. During this period the author found Mormon related items in twenty-six separate issues, one of which was related to plural marriage and seven which were definitely political in nature.
Judge Pope for trial on Missouri's extradition request. Upon learning that Smith had submitted to Illinois law, editor Francis' fears were eased. But, when events grew more serious in Hancock County, he renewed his political harangues against the Saints' leadership.

The Warsaw Papers

Examination of the newspapers printed in the Hancock County town of Warsaw confirm the notion that the Mormon political threat was the focal point of most editorial comment, while the Mormons' sexual behavior in Nauvoo was a secondary issue. Three papers were printed in Warsaw in the years 1840-1844. First to appear, the *Warsaw Signal* was printed in two different periods by Thomas Sharp. Between runs of the *Signal*, Thomas Gregg published the *Warsaw Message*. Both papers played an important role in Mormon non-Mormon relations.

Thomas Sharp had not been publishing his paper long before it was evident that he was one of the county's most bitter Mormon-haters. It is not known what caused this attitude, but Mormons certainly did little to assuage it. Less than a month after its inception, Joseph Smith cancelled his subscription to the paper, referring to it as a "filthy sheet--that tissue of lies--that sink of iniquity." These caustic remarks by Smith were accompanied by vituperative

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54 The first run of the *Signal* was from May of 1841 through October 1, 1842. The second was from February 14, 1844 through the end of the Nauvoo period.

55 *Warsaw Signal*, June 2, 1841. See also the June 9, 1841 issue.
personal attacks upon Sharp by William Smith, editor of *The Wasp* and brother to Joseph Smith.\(^{56}\)

Early in his editorial career, Sharp underwent an interesting political transition which was reflected in his editorial comment. Initially his paper was Whig-oriented. However, as Sharp's animosity toward the Mormons grew, he became an independent. He took this position in an effort to create a bi-partisan, anti-Mormon coalition.\(^{57}\) In 1841, he helped to organize the Hancock County anti-Mormon party, designed to combat "political Mormonism."\(^{58}\) From 1842 until the death of Joseph Smith, this organization played an increasingly significant role in the Hancock County conflict.

It is difficult to overestimate Sharp's concern that Mormonism was a political cancer spreading rapidly in the county and that it threatened to envelop state politics. He considered the Mormons dupes of Smith who somewhat slavishly submitted to his political dictums. One example of this attitude was expressed when Smith issued a directive to the Mormons scattered in outlying settlements to gather at Nauvoo. Sharp shuddered, "What will become of your dearest rights and most valued privileges when that ascendency is gained which the . . .

\(^{56}\)William Smith was fond of calling sharp, "Thom-ASS," and poking fun at the size of his nose. (*The Wasp*, April 30, 1842.) He also had a propensity for sarcasm and crudity. His vitriol and lack of good taste can be seen in his reference to Bennett in the July 16, 1842 issue when he said, "while he is unlocking his pandoran box for the *Sangamo Journal*, his friends, (if he has any) ought to give him a little State titty as well as suckle Tom Sharp on asses' milk."

\(^{57}\) *Warsaw Signal*, July 16, and 23, 1841.
proclamation is intended to effect?" If the Saints wanted to buy a local section of school property that was up for sale, Sharp saw this as an attempt to squeeze the old citizens out. The growth of the Nauvoo legion created near panic as he exploded, "Is an army necessary to propagate religion?" At the end of 1841, Sharp announced, "Politics are dead in this county." And he surmised that it would continue that way unless the political parties "consent to the degradation of uniting [with] a corrupt and degraded church, and suffer Joe Smith to become sole Dictator." It is therefore somewhat surprising to observe that Sharp, who had such animosity and preoccupation with Mormons, did not enlarge upon John C. Bennett's spicy accusations. Actually, Sharp was woefully uninformed about Bennett and was forced to rely on the Journal for his information. His low opinion of Bennett probably caused him to ignore the first hints of schism in Nauvoo. In reprinting the second and third letters from Smith's critic, Sharp commented that some might be offended by them. Nevertheless, he concluded that reader interest was so high that he "did not feel at liberty to withhold them on account of the author's want of delicacy."

58 Ibid., July 9, 1842.
59 Ibid., June 9, 1841.
60 Ibid., June 29, 1841 and June 9, 1841.
61 Ibid., December 1, 1841.
62 Ibid., July 23, 1842. On July 9, Sharp said, "Give it to them General, we like to see it--although there is no doubt that you yourself deserve a few SMALL compliments." (Compare also the Signal of August 6, 1842.)
To be sure, Sharp was personally incensed at the disclosures. But they merely confirmed his previous notions that Smith and other Mormon leaders were power-hungry tyrants, knaves, imposters, and immoral servants of Satan. So he persisted in his narrow political concerns for about two years.

Financial difficulties forced Thomas Sharp to abandon the Signal in October of 1842. One of his associates, Thomas Gregg, filled the need of a non-Mormon newspaper in Hancock County with the publication of his Warsaw Message in January of 1843. Devoted specifically to agricultural, political, and commercial matters, the Message at first took a moderate approach to the Mormon problem. This was probably due to the fact that Gregg had been a resident in Missouri and had observed the dreadful persecutions the Mormons endured there. However, after the Whigs lost the congressional election in the summer of 1843, Gregg, who was a Whig, shifted in his attitude toward the Mormons. That was not a year of important revelations or disclosures about Mormon sexual deviations in the press, yet Gregg was not adverse to

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63 Ibid., October 6, 1841.

64 The two men had significant differences of opinion relating to a statement made by Sharp in the Signal, August 13, 1842. Sharp in reference to the arrest of Smith for extradition said, "If he had resisted, we should have had the sport of driving him and his worthy clan out of the State en masse. . . ." Gregg repudiated such a position in the August 20 issue.

65 Warsaw Message, May 10, 1843. Gregg refused to print an anti-Mormon poem, "For our lives we can see no good reason, why we or our correspondents, in our columns, should attack this or any other religious body." He also took a neutral position on the anti-Mormon parties proposal to divide Hancock County between the Mormons and non-Mormons. (Ibid., January 28 and February 11, 1843.)

66 Ibid., September 13, 20, 1843.
exploiting such tidbits as came to his attention. 67

Still, Gregg was primarily anxious about the Mormons' political strength. The publicity he gave to the numerous anti-Mormon conventions around the country completely overshadowed all other issues. 68 By mid-1843 the non-Mormons of Hancock County were becoming excited about lawlessness among the Saints. Conventions were called to discuss numerous reports of Mormon thefts, of gentile molestations in Nauvoo, and, above all apparent abuses of the Nauvoo charter. 69 Delegates to these meetings sometimes listened to charges of "spiritual wifery" and debauchery in Nauvoo. But the essence of their petitions was summed up in a plea agreed to at St. Mary's precinct on October 14, 1843, praying for action "to relieve us from this great moral and political evil." 70 As the situation deteriorated toward open violence, Gregg suggested that a compromise could be reached if the Saints would put aside Smith. Yet the editor feared that the Prophet would never yield the power he had obtained by his "hellish knavery." Indeed, his

67 For example, in the October 4 issue he called Smith a "Lusty Prophet" and also reprinted an article from the Chicago Express about Mormon missionaries persuading females to leave their homes to come to Nauvoo the "city of delights and terrestrial paradise."

68 Warsaw Message, September 3, 20, 27; October 4, 18; November 1, 8, 1843.

69 In the summer of 1843 Smith had successfully evaded extradition to Missouri for the third time. This last time it was by obtaining a writ of habeas corpus from the Municipal Court in Nauvoo, a power which Smith claimed was granted it by the charter. Citizens in the county viewed this action as a tyrannical abuse. It also convinced them that Mormons would not be brought to justice in Nauvoo.

70 Ibid., November 1, 1843.
proposal was ignored by some Mormons and rebuffed by others. 71

Thomas Gregg also succumbed to the financial pressures of operating a press in Hancock County, but by February of 1844, Thomas Sharp was ready to try again. When he resumed publication of the *Warsaw Signal*, his hatred of the Saints was ill-concealed. He acknowledged that his paper was anti-Mormon, stating, however, that he had no intention of trying to "lash the present angry state of feeling into a tempest." 72 Nonetheless, he probably helped to do just that.

Actually, Sharp underwent a significant change in his feelings regarding mob action against the Mormons. In 1841, at the instigation of rumors, he pleaded that old settlers should not take the law into their own hands, and as late as February of 1844, he was still suing for peace. 73 But subtle shifts were beginning to appear. For example, in August of 1842, after Smith was arrested on the second extradition attempt, Sharp intimated that if Smith had not gone peacefully the community should have driven the Mormons out. 74 Late in February of 1844, he said that the gentiles must obey the law only as long as it

71 "Hanibal" answered Gregg in the following words: "I can make no compromise with Nauvoo, as a community, while it avows allegiance to the Beast and the False Prophet. . . . No, Sir, I can never compromise with Jo Smith; nor yet with a community who consider his will as their pleasure—no matter how absurd. And more especially cannot I compromise with Jo Smith, until I shall have seen his inflated vanity and his intolerable audacity humbled and subdued. I have seen too much of his treachery, and felt too much of his dastardly tyranny, when in the plentitude of his power, he expected no resistence. Who, then, in view of his whole character, can make terms with such a being, . . . ?" (Ibid., January 17, 1844.)

72 *Warsaw Signal*, February 14, 1844.

73 Ibid., February 21, 1844.

74 Ibid., August 13, 1842.
was a protection to them. Then in May he declared that if the Mormons shed one drop of blood the conflict would soon be general. At the destruction of the Nauvoo Expositor, where no blood was shed, Sharp cried out, "War and extermination is inevitable! Citizens, ARISE, ONE, AND ALL. . . . We have no time for comment, every man will make his own. Let it be made with POWDER AND BALL!!!"

As the storm gathered force Sharp did not ignore the moral issues. In fact, he emphasized them more in 1844 than in 1842. However, his attacks were usually tied to political ramifications and were almost always very short. For example, in answer to a query from the Alton Telegraph as to why the Signal was giving such fierce opposition to the Mormons, Sharp listed numerous factors. Political domination led the list, followed by complaints of repeated insults and injuries to the people, of violations and evasions of the law, of the exploitation of immigrants, of tyranny and counterfeiting. Included in the list was the charge that the leaders of the Church were base seducers and violators of female virtue, all of whom were upheld by Smith. In fact, Sharp was so angry he sought any and every charge he could find to lay at the feet of the Church. Mormon sexual practices simply added fuel to his fiery outbursts.

75 Ibid., February 21, 1844.
76 Ibid., June 12, 1844.
77 Ibid., April 25, 1844.
George Davis, Whig editor of the *Alton Telegraph* was less
discrete about his motives for encouraging Bennett in 1842. He hoped
the length of Bennett's letters would not discourage his readers
because "we are beset by dangers which call for immediate and prompt
action." He continued:

> We intreat every man to read the statements of Bennett,
> and after he has done so, lend it to his neighbor. Unless
> Judge Ford is defeated for Governor, Mormonism will be
> triumphant in the State, and no man will be secure in
> either his life, liberty, or property.\(^7\)\(^8\)

Davis also claimed that some of Ford's friends had tried to dissuade
Bennett, reasoning that he was hindering the campaign. But, said
Davis, Bennett refused to desist because "he believes . . . that Judge
Ford's consenting to be run as the Mormon candidate for Governor, should
defeat him."\(^7\)\(^9\)

Just before the election Davis noted that important principles
were at stake. If Ford was elected, he said, "Mormonism and religious
despotism," under the leadership of the "adulterer" Joseph Smith, would
"have succeeded in Illinois."\(^8\)\(^0\) Yet, after the Whigs lost the election
Davis had to admit that Bennett's disclosures may not have swayed the
people in favor of the Whigs. In fact, they likely hurt the cause. He
could not decide whether it was the "character of the witness" that
led to the incredulity of the people; or his poor timing just prior to

\(^7\) *Alton Telegraph* [Alton, Illinois], July 16, 1842.

\(^8\) Ibid.

\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^0\) Ibid., July 30, 1842.
the election which caused them to distrust his motives; or whether
citizen apathy toward the corruption in Nauvoo caused the defeat. But
Davis was confident that the lack of Whig organization in the state was
the source of the Whigs' impotence. 81 Thereafter, Mormon marital
practices and sexual mores virtually disappeared from the Telegraph as
issues.

Perhaps the attitude of the press toward Joseph Smith and
Mormonism just prior to the Carthage incident is best summarized by the
editor of the Quincy Whig. One of the Higbees and a companion had been
in Quincy in mid-May. They spoke about Smith and spiritual wifery, and
shortly thereafter some Mormon missionaries came into town and refuted
Higbee's statements. The Quincy Whig responded:

We think these Mormon missionaries are laboring under
a mistake in one particular. It is not so much the
particular doctrines, which Smith upholds and practices,
however abominable they may be in themselves, that our
citizens care about--as it is the anti-republican nature of
the organization, over which he has almost supreme control
--and which is trained and disciplined to act in accord-
ance with his own selfish will. The spectacle presented
in Smith's case--of a civil, ecclesiastical and military
leader, united in one and the same person, with power
over life and liberty, can never find favor in the minds
of sound and thinking republicans. 82

These findings regarding the attitudes of anti-Mormon editors
are consistent with contemporary research by other scholars. It is
interesting to note that Gustive Larson's recent study of the national
campaign against Mormon polygyny in Utah, suggestively entitled The
"Americanization" of Utah for Statehood, finds the same pattern of

81 Ibid., July 30, 1842.
82 Quincy Whig [Quincy, Illinois], May 22, 1844.
reaction. Larson's thesis is that national politicians objected to the iron-handed political control that the Mormon leadership wielded over its members. Therefore, they resisted all attempts by the people of Utah territory to achieve the status of statehood until they could be assured that the Mormons were entering the mainstream of American democratic politics. Significantly, the weapon they used to create the necessary support for their measures was Mormon polygyny. 83

Moreover, a recent article by Ronald Walters has shown such an approach to be both understandable and indicative of many reformist attitudes. The immediacy of the desire to eliminate the Mormon problem was quite similar to the post-1830 drive to immediately abolish slavery. Walters notes that the sexual content in abolitionists' arguments was "not simply a result of sexual fears or sexual repression." 34 Rather, it had intellectual underpinnings in "changing, culturally determined attitudes about sex which made it understandable."

These attitudes, combined with other assumptions, also guided abolitionists and shaped their proposals.

According to Walters, Americans generally feared any "dominance-submission" relationship in society, particularly in politics, because it violated freedom and individualism. Such a relationship ultimately led to the degradation, corruption, and final dissolution of society. Abuse was merely an "effect" of this relationship. The most extreme form of this type of an interface was found in the sexual conduct of men and women. Anti-slavery groups, anxious to prove that forced labor" 83

Gustive Larson, op. cit.

Ronald G. Walters, op. cit., p. 178.
had totally corrupted its adherents and was about to do the same to the nation, argued that masters and slaves engaged in considerable erotic conduct, imposed upon slaves by totally depraved masters.

This seems to have been the underlying issue in the anti-Mormon crusade in Illinois. The typical symbol used to describe Joseph Smith at this time was Mohammed, a symbol of uninhibited force. As events unfolded in Nauvoo, it appeared more certain each day to outsiders that Smith was a tyrant and that his followers were ready to answer his beck and call. Such power in the hands of one man endangered both the Saints' immediate neighbors and the state in general as foreign immigrants continued to flow up the Mississippi. From the viewpoint of the gentiles, this power was already leading to abuses in the early forties. The ultimate proof of the challenge and degrading effects this power possessed was the unnatural lust that had been wantonly unleashed in the city of the Saints. The only thing worse than a master abusing a female slave woman was a church leader who beguiled and overpowered women under religious pretexts, tearing down the restraints of conscience and society. Surely this was the ultimate in corruption and degradation. The solution had to be immediate and sure, and like the eradication of slavery it could only be enforced by violence.

**Summary**

Thus it appears that the internal schisms created in Nauvoo were not primarily doctrinal or theological or disputes about sexual matters. However, these issues were exploited for their full propaganda
value once the Smith-dissident controversy was under way. The primary
issue for many of the apostate Mormons was Smith's inordinate use of
his theocratic clout. Similarly, outsiders experienced a growing
awareness of the political strength of the Mormon block vote. There
was growing apprehension that Smith and his followers sought control
of the county, the state, and, perhaps, the nation.
CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY

Perhaps no other topic in Mormon history has received more historical attention by historians than plural marriage. Yet the historiography of the subject is marred by serious omissions, both in content and interpretation. Heretofore, scholars have understandably neglected the beginnings of Mormon polygyny while commenting on its development in more easily studied later periods. The present investigation delves deeply into the roots of the matrimonial concept, which may have begun to emerge in the 1829 translation of the Book of Mormon. Certainly its outlines were evidenced in Smith's thinking by 1831 and throughout the Kirtland sojourn. The expansion of both the theology and the practice of plural marriage have been traced into the Nauvoo era and up to the death of Joseph Smith.

The popular psychological approach which attributes Smith's marital and sexual behavior to an overpowerful and uninhibited id, while tracing his theology to the protective propensities of the superego has been rejected. It has been demonstrated that Smith's major doctrinal innovations were essentially incubated in a peculiar prophetic, theological, and religious context. Whatever one may think of Joseph Smith as a religious leader, it is clear that he and those who followed him believed that he was an inspired prophet of God. The theory that he
invented plural marriage simply to gratify his personal lust cannot adequately explain the inception and evolution of the doctrine of polygyny in Mormonism.

Smith's prophetic self-image provided him with an unusual freedom to engage in novel thought and left him uninhibited by many societal norms. His concept of plural marriage was not just a utopian reaction to perceived shortcomings in contemporary marital systems. Rather, it enlarged the traditional importance of the family in American society by casting it in an eternal perspective. Plural marriage was part and parcel of the outgrowth of other significant and far-reaching ideas in Mormon hierology. Polygyny facilitated the unfolding practice of Mormon dynasticism; both concepts were foundation stones in the ideology of the kingdom of God and the creation of a perfect Zion society. However, it appears that there was a gradual theological development of these ideas. Incomplete comprehension, combined with characteristic zeal, sometimes led Smith to overreact or act unwisely in implementing his ideas. In turn, this caused misunderstanding and conflict, both in the Church and among non-Mormons.

A close examination of the attitudes of Joseph Smith's wives and others who engaged in the practice of polygyny reveals that the introduction of plural marriage initially encountered almost universal resistance. Only a sense of duty or a religious experience that convinced them that it was the will of God induced most Saints to accept their leader's revelations. A consideration of the number of Smith's plural wives also leads to the conclusion that other authors have not been as critical as they might have been in assessing pertinent source
materials. In many cases they have exaggerated the extent of his marital involvements, probably because of their desire to ridicule him and diminish his religious convictions. There were, it seems, some profound and highly complex theological as well as social reasons why Smith took plural wives who were widowed, orphaned, indigent, or already married.

Conflict was the most consistent product of the infusion of plural marriage into Mormon life. The most basic level of this conflict existed between the husband and his first wife. Even Joseph Smith experienced marital strains associated with the addition of plural wives to his family.

Next, friction arose among two groups within the Church. First, there were those who rejected multiple marriages on moral, ethical, or other grounds. Some such people left Nauvoo, convinced that their leaders were advocating or engaging in sinful practices. Most of these disaffected Mormons did not actively challenge or injure the the Church per se. The second group, however, had an important impact upon the course of events, particularly in Nauvoo. They include persons who had conflicts with Smith, engaged in unauthorized plural marriages, or otherwise rejected established doctrines. In such cases, Smith acted swiftly, harshly, and, often, publicly. Many of those who were excommunicated remained bitter critics of Mormonism. They commonly vented their anger against Smith by attacking him in the local press. And their negative stand on plural marriage contributed to four major splits in church hierarchy between 1838 and 1844.
A third level of strife pitted the Mormons against the non-Mormon community. Personal vendettas arising from internal difficulties generated considerable public sentiment against the Church and created a vast public relations problem for its leaders. The existence of polygyny among the Mormons certainly offended a lot of the Saints' immediate neighbors. Yet plural marriage was secondary to power politics as a cause of the ferocious gentile opposition to Mormonism in Illinois. It was only one of the irritants which activated non-Mormons, bent upon forcing the Saints to conform to the standards of the dominant majority or suffer the consequences of ostracism and discrimination.
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APPENDIX B

SECTION 132 OF THE LDS DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

1. Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that
inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand where-
in 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—

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

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

4. 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.

5. For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the
law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof,
as were instituted fr'm before the foundation of the world.

6. And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it
was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a
fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned,
saith the Lord God.

7. And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law
are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths,
vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that
are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of
promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all
eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment
through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the
earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph
to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on
earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred, are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.

8. Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.

9. Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name?

10. Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed?

11. And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was?

12. I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord.

13. And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God.

14. For whatsoever things remain are by me: and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed.

15. Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world.

16. Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven; which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory.

17. For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever.

18. And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife, and make a covenant with her for time and for all eternity, if that covenant is not by me or by my word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power, then it is not valid neither
of force when they are out of the world, because they are not joined by me, saith the Lord, neither by my word; when they are out of the world it cannot be received there, because the angels and the gods are appointed there, by whom they cannot pass; they cannot, therefore, inherit my glory; for my house is a house of order, saith the Lord God.

19. And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said unto them—Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths—then shall it be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, and if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

20. Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.

21. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory.

22. For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me.

23. But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also.

24. This is eternal lives—to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law.

25. Broad is the gate, and wide the way that leadeth to the deaths; and many there are that go in thereat, because they receive me not, neither do they abide in my law.
26. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment, and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation; but they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffettings of Satan unto the day of redemption, saith the Lord God.

27. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in the world nor out of the world, is in that ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God; and he that abideth not this law can in nowise enter into my glory, but shall be damned, saith the Lord.

28. I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was.

29. Abraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord, and hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne.

30. Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins— from whose loins ye are, namely, my servant Joseph—which were to continue so long as they were in the world; and as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the world they should continue; both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them.

31. This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham, and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself.

32. Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham; enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved.

33. But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham.

34. God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law; and from Hagar sprang many people. This, therefore, was fulfilling, among other things, the promises.

35. Was Abraham, therefore, under condemnation? Verily I say unto you, Nay; for I, the Lord, commanded it.
36. Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac; nevertheless, it was written: Thou shalt not kill. Abraham, however, did not refuse, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness.

37. Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods.

38. David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me.

39. David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife; and, therefore, he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion; and he shall not inherit them out of the world, for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord.

40. I am the Lord thy God, and I gave unto thee, my servant Joseph, an appointment, and restore all things. Ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto you according to my word.

41. And as ye have asked concerning adultery, verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man receiveth a wife in the new and everlasting covenant, and if she be with another man, and I have not appointed unto her by the holy anointing, she hath committed adultery and shall be destroyed.

42. If she be not in the new and everlasting covenant, and she be with another man, she has committed adultery.

43. And if her husband be with another woman, and he was under a vow, he hath broken his vow and hath committed adultery.

44. And if she hath not committed adultery, but is innocent and hath not broken her vow, and she knoweth it, and I reveal it unto you, my servant Joseph, then shall you have power, by the power of my Holy Priesthood, to take her and give her unto him that hath not committed adultery but hath been faithful; for he shall be made ruler over many.

45. For I have conferred upon you the keys and power of the priesthood, wherein I restore all things and make known unto you all things in due time.
46. And verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and whosoever sins you remit on earth shall be remitted eternally in the heavens; and whosoever sins you retain on earth shall be retained in heaven.

47. And again, verily I say, whomsoever you bless I will bless, and whomsoever you curse I will curse, saith the Lord; for I, the Lord, am thy God.

48. And again, verily I say unto you, my servant Joseph, that whatsoever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you give any one on earth, by my word and according to my law, it shall be visited with blessings and not cursings, and with my power, saith the Lord, and shall be without condemnation on earth and in heaven.

49. For I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father.

50. Behold, I 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.

51. Verily, I say unto you: A commandment I give unto mine handmaid, Emma Smith, your wife, whom I have given unto you, that she stay herself and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her; for I did it, saith the Lord, to prove you all, as I did Abraham, and that I might require an offering at your hand, by covenant and sacrifice.

52. 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.

53. For I am the Lord thy God, and ye shall obey my voice; and I give unto my servant Joseph that he shall be made ruler over many things; for he hath been faithful over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him.

54. And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my law.

55. But if she will not abide this commandment, then shall my servant Joseph do all things for her, even as he hath said; and I will
bless him and multiply him and give unto him an hundred-fold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds.

56. And again, verily I say, let mine handmaid forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; and then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she has trespassed against me; and I, the Lord thy God, will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to rejoice.

57. And again, I say, let not my servant Joseph put his property out of his hands, lest an enemy come and destroy him; for Satan seeketh to destroy; for I am the Lord thy God, and he is my servant; and behold, and lo, I am with him, as I was with Abraham, thy father, even unto his exaltation and glory.

58. Now, as touching the law of the priesthood, there are many things pertaining thereunto.

59. Verily, if a man be called of my Father, as was Aaron, by mine own voice, and by the voice of him that sent me, and I have endowed him with the keys of the power of this priesthood, if he do anything in my name, and according to my law and by my word, he will not commit sin, and I will justify him.

60. 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.

61. And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood— if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else.

62. 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.

63. But if one or either of the ten virgins, after she is espoused, shall be with another man, she has committed adultery, and shall be destroyed; for they are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfill 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.

64. And again, verily, verily, I say unto you, if any man have a wife, who holds the keys of this power, and he teaches unto her the law of my priesthood, as pertaining to these things, then shall she
believe and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed saith the Lord your God; for I will destroy her; for I will magnify my name upon all those who receive and abide in my law.

65. Therefore, it shall be lawful in me, if she receive not this law, for him to receive all things whatsoever I, the Lord his God, will give unto him, because she did not believe and administer unto him according to my word; and she then becomes the transgressor; and he is exempt from the law of Sarah, who administered unto Abraham according to the law when I commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife.

66. And now, as pertaining to this law, verily, verily, I say unto you, I will reveal more unto you, hereafter; therefore, let this suffice for the present. Behold, I am Alpha and Omega. Amen.
### APPENDIX C

**BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON THE WIVES OF JOSEPH SMITH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth</th>
<th>Marriage</th>
<th>Age at Marriage</th>
<th>Marital Status at Time of Marriage</th>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Date First Marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fanny Alger</td>
<td>Sept. 30, 1816</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Geo. W. Harris</td>
<td>1831 (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lucinda Morgan</td>
<td>Sept. 21, 1801</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Norman Buell</td>
<td>Jan 26, 1827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prescinda Huntington</td>
<td>Sept. 7, 1810</td>
<td>Dec. 11 1841</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Orson Hyde</td>
<td>Sept. 4, 1834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Harinda Johnson</td>
<td>June 28, 1815</td>
<td>May, 1843</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Levi Hancock</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Clarissa Hancock</td>
<td>Dec. 18, 1814</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Delcena Johnson</td>
<td>Nov. 19, 1806</td>
<td>Before June, 1842</td>
<td>34-36</td>
<td>Widow Lyman R. Sherman</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Eliza Snow</td>
<td>Jan. 21, 1804</td>
<td>June 29, 1842</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Dec. 5, 1887(83)</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Birth</td>
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<td>John Holmes</td>
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<td>Hanna Ellis</td>
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<td>Melissa Lott</td>
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<td>Roswell Murry</td>
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<td>Mary Huston</td>
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<td>Vienna Jacques</td>
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<td>Cordelia Morley</td>
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<td>Sarah Scott</td>
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<td>Sylvia Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jane Tibbetts</td>
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<td>36-40</td>
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<td>Name</td>
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<td>Known</td>
<td>Supposed Death</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX D

HELEN MAR KIMBALL'S RETROSPECTION ABOUT HER INTRODUCTION TO THE
DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF PLURAL MARRIAGE IN NAUVOO AT AGE 15

I thought through this life my time will be my own
The step I now am taking's for eternity alone,
No one need be the wiser, through time I shall be free,
And as the past hath been the future still will be.

To my guileless heart all free from worldly care
And full of blissful hopes—and youthful visions rare
The world seamed bright the threatening clouds were kept
From sight and all looked fair but pitying angels wept.

Then saw my youthful friends grow shy and cold,
And poisonous darts from slanderous tongues were hurled,
Untutor'd heart in thy gen'rond sacrifice,
Thou did'st not weigh the cost nor know the bitter price;

Thy happy dreams [sic.] all o'er thou' it doom'd alas to be
Barr'd out from social scenes by this thy destiny,
And o're thy sad'nd mem'ries of sweet departed joys
Thy sicken'd heart will brood and imagine future woes,

And like a fetter'd bird with wild and longing heart,
Thou'lt dayly [sic.] pine for freedom and murmure at thy lot;
But could'st thou see the future & view that glorious crown,
Awaiting you in Heaven you would not weep nor mourn.

Pure and exalted was thy father's aim, he saw
A glory in obeying This high celestial law,
For to thousands who've died without the light
T'll bring eternal joy & make thy crown more bright.

I'd been taught to revere the Prophet of God
And receive every word as the word of the Lord,
But had this not come through my dear fathers' [sic.] mouth,
I should ne'r have received it as Gods' [sic.] sacred truth.
APPENDIX E

Buckeye's Lamentation for Want of More Wives

1
I once thought I had knowledge great,
But now I find 'tis small;
I once thought I'd Religion, too,
But I find I've none at all.
For I have got but one Zone wife,
And can obtain no more;
And the doctrine is, I can't be saved,
Unless I've half a score!

2
The narrow gate that Peter kept,
In ages long ago,
Is locked and barred since he gave up
The keys to beardless Joe.
And Joe proclaims it is too small,
And causes great delay,
And that he has permission got
To open the broad way.

3
The narrow gate did well enough
When Peter, James, and John,
Did lead the saints on Zion-ward,
In single file along:
When bachelors, like good old Paul,
Could win the glorious prize,
And maids, without a marriage rite,
Reach "mansions in the skies."

4
But we have other teaching now,
Of greater glories far;
How a single glory's nothing more
Than some lone twinkling star.
A two-fold glory's like the moon,
That shines so sweet at night,
Reflecting from her gracious lord
Whatever he thinks right.
A tenfold glory--that's the prize!
Without it you're undone!
But with it you will shine as bright
As the bright shining sun.
There you may reign like mighty Gods,
Creating worlds so fair;
At least a world for ever wife
That you take with you there.

The man that has got ten fair wives,
Ten worlds he may create;
And he that has got less than this,
Will find a bitter fate.
The one or two that he may have,
He'd be deprived of them;
And they'll be given as talents were
To him who has got ten.

And 'tis so here, in this sad life--
Such ills you must endure--
Some priest or king, may claim your wife
Because that you are poor.
A revelation he may get--
Refuse it if you dare!
And you'll be damned perpetually.
By our good Lord the Mayor

But if that you yield willingly,
Your daughters and your wives,
In spiritual marriage to our Pope,
He'll bless you all your lives;
He'll seal you up, be damned you can't,
No matter what you do--
If that you only stick to him,
He swears HE'LL take you through.

He'll lead you on to the broad gate,
Which he has opened wide--
In solid column you shall march,
And enter side by side.
And no delay you'll meet with there,
But "forward march" you shall:
For he's not only our Lord Mayor
But Lord LIEUTENANT-RAL
This is the secret doctrine taught
By Joe and the red rams--
Although in public they deny--
But then 'tis all a sham.
They fear the indignation just,
Of those who have come here,
With hands that's clean and honest hearts,
To serve the Lord in fear.

Thus, all the twelve do slyly teach,
And slyly practice, too;
And even the sage Patriarch,
Wont have untied his shoe:
For sure, 'twould be quite impolite,
If not a great disgrace,
To have a widow sister fair
Spit in a Prophet's face!

But Joe at snaring beats them all
And at the rest does laugh;
For widows poor, and orphan girls,
He can ensnare with chaff,
He sets his snares around for all,
And very seldom fails
To catch some thoughtless Partridges,
Snow-birds or Nightingales!

But there are hundred other birds
He never can make sing;
Who wont [sic.] be driven nor draged [sic.] to hell,
By prophet, priest nor king:
Whose sires have bled in days gone by,
For their dear country's cause;
And who will still maintain its rights,
Its Liberty and Laws!

*B.Y. & O.H.

Warsaw Message, February 4, 1844.
APPENDIX F

The Buckey's [sic.] First Epistle to Jo

1
Friend Jo, I have been told of late,
That you had got it in your pate
A certain chief, to vent his hate,
Had learned to sing;
And had turn'd out a poem great,
Or some such thing.

2
Because the "Warsaw Message" came
With tidings from that state of fame,
Like some great herald to proclaim
Your wicked ways,
Your tyranny [sic.] your sin and shame,
In these last days.

3
With Buckey's trumpet sounding clear,
That Democrat and Whig might hear,
And Priest-rid Mormons, who in fear,
Bow down to thee;
That there is still one child who dare
And will be free.

4
That Buckeye child lives in Nauvoo,
And some there are, who know how true
A friend, he ever was to you,
In days that's past,
Till slanders base around you threw
Fair fame to blast.

5
Till for himself he's fairly seen
That you were not what you had been,
But that iniquity you'd screen
In every way;
And from fair virtue's paths did lean
Vile plans to lay.
6
Have you forgot the snare you laid
For Nancy, (lovely Buckeye maid?)
With all your priestly arts-array'd
Her to seduce;
Assisted by that wretched bawd
Who kept the house.

7
But she, in virtues armour steel'd
Was proof against what you revealed.
And to your doctrines would not yield
The least belief;
Although the scriptures you did wield
In your relief.

8
And when you saw, she would detest
Such doctrines, in her noble breast,
And did despise the man, 'tho priest;
Who taught them too
A sallow, yellow, lustful beast,
Poor Jo, like you.

9
'Twas then you chang'd your lovers sighs
And vengeful hate flash'd in your eyes
When you found out she did despise
You as a man;
So took to circulating lies,
Your usual plan.

10
Just that you might destroy her fame,
And give to her a ruin'd name,
So that if she should ever proclaim
What you had tried;
Your friends might turn on her the shame
And say she lied.

11
But Joe, in this you fairly fail'd
Though you her father's house assail'd
She met you face to face; you quail'd
Before her frown,
And like a counterfeit she nail'd
You tightly down--
12
Although you tried, by priestly power
To make this gentle creature cower
And eat her words, that you might tower
In priestly pride;
But strong in truth, she in that hour
Told you you lied.

And when you found it would not do,
Then like a coward paltoon, you
Acknowledg'd what she had said, was true
Unto her sire;
But then you'd nothing more in view
Than just to try her--

And put her on her guard, that she
Might keep herself all pure and free
From base seducers like to me,
Joab vile--
For that it was reveal'd to thee
We would beguile.

0 Jo! 0 Jo!! thy slanderous tongue
Some burning tears from me have wrung,
And I had thought t' have held my tongue
And nothing said--
If thou had'st but repentance shown
And shut thy head.

But thy repeated slanders vile
Shall not be long borne by this child;
Although by nature he is mild,
And well disposed;
Thy sins from continent to isle
Shall be exposed.

Missouri's deeds shall come to light
Though perpetrated in the night,
By hirelings who thought it right
To do thy will--
By cabin conflagration bright
To scalp and kill.
Repent, repent, there still is time--
And add no more dark crime to crime.
But think, how mighty and sublime
Thy calling first--
And in black sackcloth bow thee down
Low in the dust--

And put away far from thy heart,
Each wicked, sensual sinful art;
And from the truth no more depart
Long as you live--
But stop and make another start,
And I'll forgive.

If no, your dark deeds in Nauvoo,
As well as in Missouri too--
Like Hamlet's ghost shall rise to view,
With old white hat--
Then tremble tyrant, for but few
Will sanction that.

But I must stop this long epistle,
"My pen is worn down to the gristle,"
And 'tis the poet's only missill [sic.]
In truth's relief--
For, be it known to all, this child
Aint yet a chief--

'Tho he his lineage can trace
Back to the Bruce and Wallace days,
When they for Liberty did raise
The sword, and broke
(As I intend in these last days)
A tyrant's yoke.

Warsaw Signal, April 23, 1844.
APPENDIX G

MAP OF WESTERN ILLINOIS

- Nauvoo
- Carthage
- Warsaw
- Quincy
- Springfield
- Alton
## APPENDIX H

**AFFIDAVITS AND CERTIFICATES RELATING TO MORMON PLURAL MARRIAGE BEFORE THE DEATH OF JOSEPH SMITH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiant</th>
<th>Date of Deposition</th>
<th>Subject of Deposition</th>
<th>Source</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Thomas B. Marsh</td>
<td>Feb. 15, 1838</td>
<td>Oliver Cowdery admitted he never said Joseph Smith was an adulterer.</td>
<td><em>EJ</em> July, 1838</td>
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<tr>
<td>George W. Harris</td>
<td>Feb. 15, 1838</td>
<td>Oliver Cowdery admitted he never said Joseph Smith was an adulterer.</td>
<td><em>EJ</em> July, 1838</td>
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<tr>
<td>George M. Hinckle</td>
<td>Feb. 15, 1838</td>
<td>Oliver Cowdery admitted he never said Joseph Smith was an adulterer.</td>
<td><em>EJ</em> July, 1838</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. C. Bennett</td>
<td>May 17, 1842</td>
<td>Joseph Smith never taught him immorality.</td>
<td><em>TW</em> July, 1842; <em>HC</em> 5:11</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. L. Higbee</td>
<td>May 17, 1842</td>
<td>Joseph Smith never taught him immorality.</td>
<td>LDSCA</td>
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<td>Margaret J. Nyman</td>
<td>May 24, 1842</td>
<td>She was seduced by Chauncy Higbee under pretext of church doctrine.</td>
<td><em>NH</em> May 29, 1844; <em>MS</em> 23:657</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matilda J. Nyman</td>
<td>May 24, 1842</td>
<td>She was seduced by Chauncy Higbee under pretext of church doctrine.</td>
<td><em>NH</em> May 29, 1844; <em>MS</em> 23:657</td>
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<td>Sarah Miller</td>
<td>May 24, 1842</td>
<td>She was seduced by Chauncy Higbee under pretext of church doctrine.</td>
<td><em>NH</em> May 29, 1844; <em>MS</em> 23:657</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. M. Higbee</td>
<td>June 30, 1842</td>
<td>Joseph Smith wants J. C. Bennett out of the Church.</td>
<td><em>SD</em> July 15, 1842; <em>HEPS</em> 288-289</td>
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<td>J. C. Bennett</td>
<td>July 2, 1842</td>
<td>Claims his testimony before the High Council was given under duress.</td>
<td><em>SD</em> July 15, 1842</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa Schindler</td>
<td>July 2, 1842</td>
<td>Joseph Smith sleeps with widow Fuller.</td>
<td><em>GW</em> July 16, 1842; <em>HEPS</em> 253-254</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Clayton</td>
<td>July 12, 1842</td>
<td>Bennett not under duress.</td>
<td><em>A&amp;C</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Martha Brotherton</td>
<td>July 13, 1842</td>
<td>Attempts by church leaders to secure her for a plural wife.</td>
<td><em>HEPS</em> 236-240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nauvoo City Council</td>
<td>July 20, 1842</td>
<td>Bennett testimony not taken under duress.</td>
<td><em>TW</em> July 27, 1842; <em>HC</em> 5:67-68</td>
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<td>William Law</td>
<td>July 20, 1842</td>
<td>Date of Bennett's excommunication.</td>
<td><em>TW</em> July 27, 1842; <em>HC</em> 5:75-76</td>
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<td>Daniel H. Wells</td>
<td>July 22, 1842</td>
<td>Bennett's conduct toward Smith after his trial.</td>
<td><em>TW</em> July 27, 1842; <em>HC</em> 5:80-82</td>
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<td>Elias Higbee</td>
<td>July 22, 1842</td>
<td>Bennett's letters to the <em>Sangamo Journal</em>.</td>
<td><em>TW</em> July 27, 1842; <em>HC</em> 5:77-78</td>
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<td>18. F. M. Higbee</td>
<td>July 22, 1842</td>
<td>Bennett's letters to the Sangamo Journal.</td>
<td>TW, July 27, 1842; HC 9:77-78</td>
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<td>19. Sidney Rigdon</td>
<td>July 22, 1842</td>
<td>Denies association with Bennett.</td>
<td>TW, July 27, 1842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Hyrum Smith</td>
<td>July 23, 1842</td>
<td>Bennett's trial and conduct.</td>
<td>HC 9:71-75; A&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. William Marks</td>
<td>July 26, 1842</td>
<td>Denies Bennett's charges. Bennett immoral.</td>
<td>A&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Brigham Young</td>
<td>Aug. 27, 1842</td>
<td>Brotherton affidavit false.</td>
<td>A&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Heber C. Kimball</td>
<td>Aug. 27, 1842</td>
<td>Brotherton affidavit false.</td>
<td>A&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. John Mollwrick Elizabeth</td>
<td>Aug. 27, 1842</td>
<td>Character and conduct of Martha Brotherton.</td>
<td>A&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mollwrick Mary Mollwrick</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Zerulah Goddard</td>
<td>Aug. 28, 1842</td>
<td>Conduct of Bennett and Sarah Pratt.</td>
<td>A&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. J. B. Backenstos</td>
<td>Aug. 28, 1842</td>
<td>Conduct of Bennett and Sarah Pratt.</td>
<td>LDSCA, A&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Stephen Markham</td>
<td>Aug. 29, 1842</td>
<td>Bennett and Nancy Rigdon,</td>
<td>A&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Mary Clift</td>
<td>Aug. 29, 1842</td>
<td>Gustavus Hills seduced her under pretext of church doctrine.</td>
<td>LDSCA, JH, Aug. 29, 1842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Vilate Kimball</td>
<td>Aug. 30, 1842</td>
<td>Denies Brotherton affidavit.</td>
<td>A&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Carlos Grove</td>
<td>Sept. 3, 1842</td>
<td>Nancy Rigdon character.</td>
<td>SJ, Sept. 23, 1842; HofS, 251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Sidney Rigdon</td>
<td>Sept. 3, 1842</td>
<td>Markham affidavit denied.</td>
<td>SJ, Sept. 23, 1842; HofS, 251-252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. George W. Robinson</td>
<td>Sept. 3, 1842</td>
<td>Markham affidavit denied.</td>
<td>SJ, Sept. 23, 1842; HofS, 252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Mary Clift</td>
<td>Sept. 4, 1842</td>
<td>Seduced by Gustavus Hills under pretext of church doctrine.</td>
<td>LDSCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Mary Clift</td>
<td>Sept. 4, 1842</td>
<td>Answers to questions by Gustavus Hills.</td>
<td>LDSCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Henry Marks</td>
<td>Sept. 10, 1842</td>
<td>Markham affidavit denied.</td>
<td>SJ, Sept. 23, 1842; HofS, 252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiant</td>
<td>Date of Deposition</td>
<td>Subject of Deposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. C. Bennett</td>
<td>Sept. 13, 1842</td>
<td>F. M. Higbee affidavit of June 30 is true. He was under duress.</td>
<td>Hofs, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Carter, William Whitney, Emerson Leland</td>
<td>Sept. 17, 1842</td>
<td>J. C. Bennett's veracity concerning Pratt and Rigdon.</td>
<td>SA, Sept. 23, 1842; Hofs, 233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. G. Eaton</td>
<td>March 27, 1844</td>
<td>Conspiracy. Higbee on the spiritual wife system.</td>
<td>TSS 5:541-542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Law</td>
<td>May 4, 1844</td>
<td>Read the revelation on plural marriage.</td>
<td>NE, June 7, 1844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Law</td>
<td>May 4, 1844</td>
<td>Read the revelation on plural marriage.</td>
<td>NE, June 7, 1844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin Cowles</td>
<td>May 4, 1844</td>
<td>Hyrum Smith read the revelation to the High Council.</td>
<td>NE, June 7, 1844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily D. P. Young</td>
<td>May 1, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by H. C. Kimball on March 4, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:22, 4:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily D. Young</td>
<td>May 1, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by James Adams on May 11, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:13; 4:13; DEN, Oct. 18, 1879; HR 6:233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth V. Sayers</td>
<td>May 1, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by Hyrum Smith in February of 1843</td>
<td>SAB 1:9; 4:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zina D. H. Young</td>
<td>May 1, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by her brother on October 27, 1841.</td>
<td>SAB 1:5; 4:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhoda R. Smith</td>
<td>May 1, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by Willard Richards on June 12, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:17; 4:17; BA, 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescindia L. H. Kimball</td>
<td>May 1, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by her brother on December 11, 1841.</td>
<td>SAB 1:7; 4:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. B. Huntington</td>
<td>May 1, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed Zina Huntington to Joseph Smith on December 11, 1841.</td>
<td>SAB 1:19; 4:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanny M. Huntington</td>
<td>May 1, 1869</td>
<td>Witnessed the marriage of Zina and Prescindia Huntington to Joseph Smith.</td>
<td>SAB 1:21; 4:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marinda N. J. Hyde</td>
<td>May 1, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by Brigham Young in May of 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:15; 4:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa L. Wells</td>
<td>May 20, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by Hyrum Smith on September 20, 1843. Parents witnesses.</td>
<td>SAB 1:23; 4:23; BA, 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiant</td>
<td>Date of Deposition</td>
<td>Subject of Deposition</td>
<td>Source</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Eliza R. Snow</td>
<td>June 7, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by Brigham Young on June 39, 1842.</td>
<td>SAB 1:25; 4:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. David Fullmer</td>
<td>June 15, 1869</td>
<td>He was present when Hyrum Smith read the revelation on plural marriage to the High Council.</td>
<td>SAB 1:27-28; 4:27-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Lovina Walker*</td>
<td>June 16, 1869</td>
<td>Emma witnessed the sealing of the Partridge sisters to Joseph Smith.</td>
<td>SAB 1:30; 4:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Desdemona Fuller Smith</td>
<td>June 17, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by Brigham Young in July of 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:32; 4:32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Mercy R. Thompson</td>
<td>June 19, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Hyrum Smith for time by Joseph Smith on August 11, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:34; 4:34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Joseph B. Noble</td>
<td>June 26, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed Louisa Beaman to Joseph Smith on April 5, 1841.</td>
<td>SAB 1:3; 4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. Eliza Partridge</td>
<td>July 1, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by James Adams on May 11, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 2:33; 3:33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. Eliza M. P. Lyman</td>
<td>July 1, 1869</td>
<td>Witnessed the marriage of Lucy Walker to Joseph Smity by William Clayton, in 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 2:30; 3:30; VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. Eliza M. P. Lyman</td>
<td>July 1, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by H. C. Kimball on March 8, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 2:32; 3:32; VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. Eliza M. P. Lyman</td>
<td>July 1, 1869</td>
<td>Witnessed the sealing of Emily Partridge to Joseph Smith by James Adams on May 11, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 2:34; 3:34; VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67. Thomas Grover</td>
<td>July 6, 1869</td>
<td>Present when the revelation was read to the High Council by Hyrum Smith.</td>
<td>SAB 1:42; 4:42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. Thomas Grover</td>
<td>July 6, 1869</td>
<td>Two wives sealed to him by Hyrum Smith in August of 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:44; 4:44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69. Martha H. Kimball</td>
<td>July 8, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by H. C. Kimball in the summer of 1842.</td>
<td>SAB 2:36; 3:36; VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ann Young</td>
<td>July 10, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Brigham Young by Hyrum Smith.</td>
<td>SAB 1:46; 4:46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Ann Young</td>
<td>July 10, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Brigham Young by Joseph Smith on June 12, 1842.</td>
<td>SAB 1:48; 4:48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta A. Young</td>
<td>July 12, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Brigham Young by Joseph Smith on November 2, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:50; 4:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta A. Young</td>
<td>July 12, 1869</td>
<td>Witnessed the marriage of Fanny Murray to Joseph Smith on November 2, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:52; 4:52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles C. Rich</td>
<td>July 12, 1869</td>
<td>Hyrum Smith taught him about plural marriage in May of 1844.</td>
<td>SAB 1:54; 4:54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna Jaques **</td>
<td>July 20, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith (?)</td>
<td>SAB 4:56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Pack</td>
<td>July 22, 1869</td>
<td>Hyrum Smith taught the family eternal marriage in August of 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:56-57; 4:59-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia Lyon **</td>
<td>July 8, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith on February 8, 1842.</td>
<td>SAB 1:60; 4:62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth B. Pratt</td>
<td>Aug. 2, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Parley P. Pratt by Hyrum Smith on July 24, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:62; 4:64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Herkley</td>
<td>Aug. 3, 1869</td>
<td>Zenas Gurley's wife admits that Joseph Smith has plural wives. Difficulty between Joseph and Emma Smith.</td>
<td>SAB 2:21-23; 3:21-23; VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ellen Kimball</td>
<td>Aug. 6, 1869</td>
<td>Witnessed a plural marriage of Howard Egan by Hyrum Smith in 1844.</td>
<td>SAB 1:64; 4:66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy W. Kimball</td>
<td>Aug. 9, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by William Clayton on May 1, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:66; 4:68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph F. Smith *</td>
<td>Aug. 9, 1869</td>
<td>Certified an extract from William Clayton's journal explaining that he sealed Lucy Walker to Joseph Smith on May 1, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:67; 4:69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Henry Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. H. B. Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John L. Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth and Sarah Whitney</td>
<td></td>
<td>The authenticity of the August 18, 1842 letter from Joseph Smith, and donate it to the Church.</td>
<td>SAB 2:27-28; 3:27-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph F. Smith</td>
<td>Aug. 17, 1869</td>
<td>Certified an extract from William Clayton's journal about Joseph Smith's difficulties with Emma over plural marriage.</td>
<td>SAB 4:70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Henry Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert L. Campbell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos Fielding</td>
<td>Aug. 24, 1869</td>
<td>Learned of the revelation in December of 1843. On March 9, 1844 Joseph Smith pointed out one of his plural wives to Fielding.</td>
<td>SAB 1:70; 4:72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiant</td>
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<tr>
<td>86. John Benbow</td>
<td>Aug. 28, 1869</td>
<td>Joseph taught him about plural marriage in the summer of 1843. Smith visited Hanna Ellis, his plural wife.</td>
<td>SAB 1:74; 4:76; DEW, Oct. 18, 1879; HRS, 6:222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87. Elvira A. C. Holmes</td>
<td>Aug. 28, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by H. C. Kimball on June 1, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 1:78; 4:80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88. Nathan TANNER</td>
<td>Aug. 28, 1869</td>
<td>Heard Joseph Smith teach plural marriage in Montrose, Iowa in the spring of 1844, and also on the stand at Nauvoo.</td>
<td>SAB 1:76; 4:78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90. Elizabeth A. Whitney</td>
<td>Aug. 30, 1869</td>
<td>Witnessed the sealing of her daughter to Joseph Smith by her husband on July 27, 1842.</td>
<td>SAB 1:72; 4:74; BA, 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91. Mary Ann Pratt</td>
<td>Sept. 3, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Parley P. Pratt by Hyrum Smith on July 24, 1842.</td>
<td>SAB 2:38; 3:38; VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92. Mary Ann Pratt</td>
<td>Sept. 3, 1869</td>
<td>Witnessed the sealing of Elizabeth Broitherton to P. P. Pratt by Hyrum Smith on July 24, 1842.</td>
<td>SAB 2:40; 3:40; VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93. Adeline B. A. Benson</td>
<td>Sept. 5, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to E. T. Benson by Hyrum Smith on April 27, 1844.</td>
<td>SAB 2:42; 3:42; VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94. Pamella A. Benson</td>
<td>Sept. 6, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to E. T. Benson by Hyrum Smith on April 27, 1844.</td>
<td>SAB 2:44; 3:44; VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95. Sarah P. Kimball</td>
<td>Sept. 7, 1869</td>
<td>Joseph Smith personally taught her about plural marriage and sealed her to H. C. Kimball in 1842.</td>
<td>SAB 1:80; 4:82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96. Orson Hyde</td>
<td>Sept. 15, 1869</td>
<td>Sealed to Martha Browitt and Mary Ann Price by Joseph Smith.</td>
<td>SAB 2:45-46; 3:45-46; BA, 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97. James Allred</td>
<td>Oct. 2, 1869</td>
<td>Present when Hyrum Smith read the revelation to the High Council.</td>
<td>SAB 1:82; 4:84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98. Aaron Johnson</td>
<td>Oct. 2, 1869</td>
<td>Present when Hyrum Smith read the revelation to the High Council.</td>
<td>SAB 1:84; 4:86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>101. Benjamin F. Johnson</td>
<td>March 4, 1870</td>
<td>Introduced to plural marriage in April of 1842. Joseph Smith married his sister Almira. His mother sealed to John Smith.</td>
<td>SAB 2:3-0; 3:3-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102. Harriet Cook Young</td>
<td>March 4, 1870</td>
<td>Sealed to Brigham Young by Joseph Smith on November 2, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 2:12; 3:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103. Harriet Cook Young</td>
<td>March 4, 1870</td>
<td>Witnessed the sealing of Fanny Murray to Joseph Smith by Brigham Young on November 2, 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 2:14; 2:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104. Clara Decker Young</td>
<td>March 4, 1870</td>
<td>Sealed to Brigham Young by Willard Richards on May 8, 1844.</td>
<td>SAB 2:16; 3:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105. Joseph C. Kingsbury</td>
<td>March 7, 1870</td>
<td>Wrote the revelation on or about July 15, 1843 as Newel K. Whitney read it from the original.</td>
<td>SAB 2:18; 3:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106. Jacob Peart</td>
<td>April 23, 1870</td>
<td>Hyrum Smith sealed his deceased wife to him in November of 1843.</td>
<td>SAB 2:50; 3:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107. Ebenezer Robinson</td>
<td>Dec. 29, 1873</td>
<td>Hyrum Smith taught them plural marriage in the fall of 1843.</td>
<td>D&amp;D, 368-371; TO, 164; FY, 50-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108. William Clayton</td>
<td>Feb. 16, 1874</td>
<td>Taught about plural marriage in February of 1843. Sealed to Mary Moon by Joseph Smith on April 27, 1843. Sealed Lucy Walker to Smith on May 1, 1843. Recorded the revelation.</td>
<td>VF; SAB, March 20, 1886; HR 6:224-225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109. Gideon Carter</td>
<td>Feb. 27, 1874</td>
<td>Joseph Smith taught Lyman Wight plural marriage, Wight practiced it.</td>
<td>VF; SAB, 122-125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110. Howard Coray</td>
<td>June 12, 1882</td>
<td>Taught plural marriage by Hyrum Smith on July 22, 1843.</td>
<td>VF; HR 6:228-229; BA, 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111. Almira Johnson Smith Barton</td>
<td>Aug. 1, 1883</td>
<td>Taught about plural marriage by Joseph Smith and became his plural wife.</td>
<td>VF; BA, 70-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112. Leonard Soby</td>
<td>Nov. 14, 1883</td>
<td>Present when Hyrum Smith read the revelation to the High Council.</td>
<td>D&amp;D, 378-379; TO, 98-99; OH, Jan. 5, 1886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113. S. F. Whitney</td>
<td>March 6, 1885</td>
<td>Martin Harris received revelation to marry an Indian Squaw.</td>
<td>MLM, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114. William Law</td>
<td>July 17, 1885</td>
<td>He read the revelation in 1843. Confronted Joseph Smith about the difficulties it would bring.</td>
<td>TO, 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115. Ebenezer Robinson</td>
<td>Oct. 24, 1885</td>
<td>Hyrum Smith taught Robinson and his wife about plural marriage in the fall of 1843.</td>
<td>D&amp;D, 368-371; TO, 164; FY, 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>116. Leonard Soby</td>
<td>March 23, 1886</td>
<td>Present when Hyrum Smith read the revelation to High Council.</td>
<td>VF; BA, 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117. Joseph C. Kingsbury</td>
<td>May 22, 1886</td>
<td>Copied the revelation from Clayton Ms. for Newel K. Whitney.</td>
<td>VF; HR 6:226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118. Charles S. Zane,</td>
<td>May, 1886</td>
<td>Sarah Pratt honest and of good reputation.</td>
<td>TO, 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. J. W. Jackson</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119. Justus Morse</td>
<td>March 24, 1887</td>
<td>Taught plural marriage by Amasa Lyman. Had wives sealed to him by John Smith.</td>
<td>TO, 168-171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120. Malissa Wells</td>
<td>Aug. 4, 1893</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by Hyrum Smith on September 20, 1843. Her visit with Joseph Smith II.</td>
<td>&quot;ES&quot;, 98-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121. Joseph A. Kelting</td>
<td>March 1, 1894</td>
<td>Introduced to plural marriage in the spring of 1844. Married two women shortly thereafter.</td>
<td>VF; SFp, 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122. B. F. Johnson</td>
<td>Dec. 10, 1897,</td>
<td>His sister married to Joseph Smith. Emma consented.</td>
<td>Letter to Frank Feeley, Dec. 10, 1897, and certified to Oct. 28, 1898, UcF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 28, 1898</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123. Mary E. R. Lightner</td>
<td>Feb. 8, 1902</td>
<td>Marriage to Joseph Smith.</td>
<td>NM, 444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124. Lucy Walker</td>
<td>Dec. 17, 1902</td>
<td>Sealed to Joseph Smith by William Clayton on May 1, 1843. Cohabited.</td>
<td>VF; JH, May 2, 1843; BA, 68-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125. Catherine P. Smith</td>
<td>Jan. 28, 1903</td>
<td>Sealed to Hyrum Smith by Joseph Smith in August of 1843.</td>
<td>VF; BA, 69-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126. Joseph A. Kelting</td>
<td>Sept. 11, 1903</td>
<td>He asked Joseph Smith about plural marriage and received an affirmative reply.</td>
<td>VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127. Bathsheba Smith</td>
<td>Nov. 18, 1903</td>
<td>Emma Smith opposed to plural marriage.</td>
<td>VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128. Bathsheba Smith</td>
<td>Nov. 19, 1903</td>
<td>Joseph Smith taught plural marriage in 1840 saying the ancient order as it was in the days of Abraham would be restored.</td>
<td>VF; SAB 2:51-54; BA, 97-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129. John W. Rigdon</td>
<td>July 28, 1905</td>
<td>Joseph Smith proposed to Nancy Rigdon.</td>
<td>VF; BA, 81-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130. Bathsheba Smith</td>
<td>June 5, 1907</td>
<td>She was sealed for eternity to her husband. Emma Smith's remarks.</td>
<td>LDSCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131. Almira K. Hanscom *</td>
<td>July 24, 1908</td>
<td>Joseph Smith proposes to her for Hyrum Smith.</td>
<td>LDSCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiant</td>
<td>Date of Deposition</td>
<td>Subject of Deposition</td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josephine R. Fisher</td>
<td>Feb. 24, 1915</td>
<td>Her mother told her she was a child of Joseph Smith.</td>
<td>VF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James A. Armstrong</td>
<td>Nov. 18, 1952</td>
<td>A 1907 interview with Smith's coachman who verified that Joseph Smith taught plural marriage</td>
<td>LDSCA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY:**

- **C** = Certificate
- **CA** = Incomplete affidavits. See ns. 10 and 26, chapt. iv.
- **ASC** = Affidavits and Certificates
- **BA** = J. F. Smith, Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage
- **DEI** = Deseret Evening News
- **DDO** = Boys, Doctrines and Dogmas of Mormonism
- **EJ** = Elders Journal
- **ES** = Bailey, "Emma Smith"
- **FY** = Evans, Forty Years Among the Mormons
- **HC** = Smith, History of the Church
- **HR** = Jenson, Historical Record
- **HBFS** = Bennett, History of the Saints
- **JH** = Journal History
- **LDSCA** = LDS Church Archives
- **MLN** = Tanner, Mormonism Like Watergate?
- **NS** = Millennial Star

**Source Codes:**

- **NE** = Nauvoo Expositor
- **NM** = Brodie, No Man Knows My History
- **NN** = Nauvoo Neighbor
- **OHI** = Ogden Herald
- **QW** = Quinney Whig
- **SAB** = Smith, Affidavit Books (1-4)
- **SinP** = Roberts, Succession in the Presidency
- **SJ** = Sangamo Journal
- **SH** = Shook, True Origin of Mormon Polygamy
- **TAS** = Times and Seasons
- **TW** = The Wasp
- **UOFU** = Marriott Library, University of Utah
- **VF** = Vault Folder, LDS Church Archives