"When I was eighteen years or nineteen old Joseph said to me one day, "Emily, if you will not betray me, I will tell you something for your benefit." Of course I would keep his secret, but no opportunity offered for some time, to say anything to me. As I was passing through the room where he sat alone, he asked me I would burn it he would write me a letter. As I felt very anxious to know what he had to tell me, I promised to do as he wished, and left the room. I began to think that was not the proper thing for me to do, and I was about as miserable as I would ever wish to be, for a short time. I went to my room and knelt down and asked my Father in Heaven to direct me in the matter. I had no where else to go. I could not speak to any one on earth—I had to send alone, and act for myself. I received no comfort till I went back and watched my opportunity to say I could not take a private letter from him. He asked me if I wished the matter ended. I said I did, and it rested so for some time, and I had plenty of time to think, and began to wish I had listened to what he would have said, and I began to be as miserable as I was before. Mrs. Durfee came to me one day, and said Joseph would like an opportunity to talk with me. I asked her if she knew what he wanted. She said she thought he wanted me for a wife. I think I was thoroughly prepared for almost anything. I was to meet him in the evening at Brother Kimball's (sic). I had been helping with wash all day, and I was so afraid somebody would mistrust where I was going, that I dare not change my wash dress, so I threw a large cloak over me, and said I was going to run over to see mother; which I did, but did not stay long, and started out as if going back, but went to the place appointed instead. When I got there nobody was at home but William and Hellen Kimball. I don't know what they thought to see me there at that hour. I did not wait long before Brother Kimball and Joseph came in. Brother Heber told his children they had better go in to one of the houses, as there would be a council that evening at their house and said to me, "Vilate is not at home, and you had better call another time, so I started out with W., and Hellen and bid them goodbye. I started for home as fast as I could, so as to get beyond being called back, for I still dreaded the interview. However, I soon heard Brother Kimball call, "Emily, Emily" rather low—but loud enough for me to hear. I thought at first I would not go back, and took no notice of his calling, but he kept calling, and was about to overtake me, so I stopped and went back with him. I cannot tell all Joseph said, but he said the Lord had commanded him to enter into plural marriage, and had given me to him, and although I had got badly frightened, he knew I would yet have him, so he waited till the Lord told him. My mind was not prepared and would not receive the principles. I do not think if I had not gone through the ordeal I did, that I could ever gone off at night to meet him, but that was the only way that could be done then. Well, I was married there and then—Joseph went home his way, and I going my way alone. A strange way of getting married, wasn't it? Brother Kimball married us, the 4th of March 1843.

I will mention here that soon after I refused to receive a letter, Mrs. Durfee invited my sister Eliza and myself, to her house, to spend the afternoon. She introduced the subject of spiritual wives as they called it in those days. She wondered if there was any truth in the report we heard. I thought I could tell her something that would make her open her eyes if I chose, but I did not choose to, so I kept my own counsel and said nothing, but going home I felt impressed to tell Eliza. I knew she would not betray me. She felt very bad indeed for a short time, but it served to prepare her to receive the principles that were revealed to her soon after.

I learned afterward that Mrs. D. was a friend to plurality and knew all about it, and took that means to test me and draw me out, if I was disposed. So to me things remained as they were for a few months when sometime in the first part of May, Emma told Joseph she would give him two wives if he would let her choose them for him. She chose my sister and I, and help explain the principles to us. We did not make much trouble, but were sealed in her presence with her full and free consent. It was the 11th of May, but before the day was over she turned around or repented of what she had done and kept Joseph up till very late in the night talking to him. She kept close watch of us. If we were missing for a few minutes, and Joseph was not at
home, the house was searched from top to bottom and from one end to the other, and if we were not found, the neighborhood was searched until we were found. She sent for us one day to come to her room. Joseph was present, looking like a martyr. Emma said some very hard things—Joseph should give us up or blood should flow. She would rather her blood would run pure than be polluted in this manner. Such interviews were quite common, but the last time she called us to her room, I felt quite indignant, and was determined it should be the last, for it was becoming monotonous (sic), and I was ashamed to say, I felt indignant towards Joseph for submitting to Emma, but I see now he could do no different. When we went in Joseph was there. His countenance was the perfect picture of despair. I cannot remember all that passed at that time, but she insisted that we should promise to break our covenants that we had made before God. Joseph asked her if we made her the promises she required, if she would cease to trouble us, and not persist in our marrying some one else. She made the promise. Joseph came to us and shook hands with us, and the understanding was that all was ended between us. I for one meant to keep the promise I was forced to make. Some might think that Emma was justified in the course she took. She might have been in some cases, but when the Lord commands, his word is not to be trifled with. She sought to anoy us in various ways, she once proposed to a young man to ask Eliza to take a ride with him, and then give her the mitten—and take one of the other girls instead, but the young man would not consent to it.

After our interview was over we went down stairs. Joseph soon came into the room where I was. Said, "how do you feel Emily?" My heart being still hard, I answered him rather short "that I expect I felt as anybody would under the circumstances." He said, "you know my hands are tied" and he looked as if he would sink into the earth. I knew he spoke truly, and my heart was melted. All my hard feelings was gone in a moment, (towards him) but I had no time to speak for he was gone. Emma was on his track, and came in as he went out. She said "Emily, what did Joseph say to you?" I answered, "he asked me how I felt." She said, "you might as well tell me, for I am determined that a stop shall be put to these things, and I want you to tell me what he says to you." I replied "I shall not tell you, he can say what he pleases to me, and I shall not report it to you, there has been mischief enough made, by doing that. I am as sick of these things as you can be," I said it in a tone that she knew I meant it. I was not sick of Polygamy, for I knew that was a commandment from God, but I was sick of her abuse. I did not know what effect my words might have, but learned afterwards that she gloried in my spunk. There were times, one in particular, that I was really afraid of my life, but I could plainly see the hand of Providence in making a way for my escape.

Emma could not rest till she had got us out of the house, and then she was not satisfied, but wanted us to leave the city. She offered to give us money to pay our expenses if we would go. We consulted Joseph. He said we might make a visit to some of our relatives who were living up the river, two or three hundred miles. So we agreed to go, and she gave us ten dollars. Joseph said it was insufficient, and for us not to go, so we gave it up, and returned the money to Emma.

I got a place, or Joseph did, for me with a respectable family . . . I do not remember of seeing Joseph but once to speak to after I left the Mansion House, and that was just before he started for Carthage. His look spoke the sorrow of his heart, although his words were guarded.

NOTE: after the death of Joseph she called on Emma to see the baby David. She said Emma "was very gracious, for there was no Joseph to be jealous of then."

"While in Nauvoo I had kept my child secreted, and but few knew I had one, but after I started on my journey, it became publicly known, and people would stop at our house to see a "spiritual child," and some have told me years after that he was the handsomest child they ever saw. One woman told me she thought he was the shortest child she had seen. I said "don't you think they are as smart as other children?" She said"no, she did not think they were." There was a good deal of that spirit at that time and sometimes it was very oppressive."
"4 Nov 1883 "After these many years I can truly say; poor Emma. She could not stand polygamy, but she was a good woman, and I never wish to stand in her way of happiness and exaltation. I hope the Lord will be merciful to her, and I believe he will. It is an awful thought, to contemplate the misery of a human being. If the Lord will, my heart says let Emma come up and stand in her place. Perhaps she has done no worse than any of us would have done in her place. Let the Lord be the judge."

24 July 1883 "I look back upon the early days of this church; the days in Nauvoo; when the Prophet Joseph was with us; when he taught us the principles of plural marriage; my obedience to the same; the varied circumstances attending it. . . . In the days of Nauvoo the holy order of Celestial marriage was in its infancy; it was not taught publicly, consequently the people generally did know of it. After we crossed the Mississippi River it was not considered necessary to any longer to conceal it. I remember after crossing the river I set myself upon a fallen tree with my babe in my arms; the snow was falling in large flakes, thick and fast. I was cold and hungry, for food and clothes were scarce, and much had to be done before comfortable quarters could be provided. Many eyes were turned upon me, or rather upon my baby; some with favor and some with disfavor and or contempt. Spiteful things were said, the oppressive influence that hovered over and around me was so distressing that it seemed as though I must sink; but God has sustained me through it all.

Spiritual wives, as we were then termed, were not very numerous in those days and a spiritual baby was a rarity indeed. (The word "spiritual wives" originated with John C. Bennett, I think) On our journey from Nauvoo the saints would stop and form small settlements to recruit. I stopped at one of those places a short time, company after company passed, and many hearing that a "spiritual wife and child" were there, curiosity led them to seek an interview. All pronounced the child a bright and beautiful boy, the handsomest child they ever saw. And it was a child too born in that despised relation called plural marriage. . . .

I remember when my babe was about eighteen months old I took him to a neighbors. One woman asked him and said, "well, that is the smartest spiritual child I ever saw." Another lady asked her if she did not think spiritual children were as smart as other children. She ansered she did not. I had my own had my own thoughts. Was it consistent to think the Lord would command his people to adopt a system of marriage that would degenerate the mind of the humane specie? I could not see it in that light. Well in those days the principle was new and strange, and so different from our traditional and the customs of our former lives, that we cannot wonder that some balked a little. . . .

22 Feb 1896 Last night—or rather this morning, I dreamed that the Prophet Joseph had returned home, and he was as busy as he could be. The next I remember he and Emma were in bed in one room and I was in bed in another room with a thin partition between. The side of their bed was against the petition and Joseph lay on that side of the bed. My bed the head was against the partition opposite their bed and I could hear what they said. They were talking about the course government had taken with this people in prohibiting them living with their plural wives. I was thinking, as I had been deprived of Joseph society all my life, would it be the same now he had returned. I thought, very likely it would. As he had so many wives it seemed that some would have to be neglected. Then it seemed we interchanged thoughts, and it was that he had many women sealed to him that he would not keep, he then spoke and said, Emily I shall keep you with me. I said thank you for those comforting words.

July 17, 1877 "Different ones have told me that they heard Pr. Young say, "Sister Emily ought to take care of herself; and he did not intend to do anything for her much longer." And the men in his employ would hardly let me have anything saying, "It was Pr. Yound's orders" and one man said he knew it was hard work for me to get anything as no one wanted to do anything for me, and said he "I actually have to lie when I bring the brand for your cow and tell William it was for someone else" and I and
my family have to take insult upon insult from the hands until I feel as if I want to be free from such things. When I go to Pr. Young for anything he seems annoyed and perhaps will give me no answer. And all these things, with many others, as disagreeable, have caused me to worry, and I have laid away many nights thinking and contriving some way to get along independent of Pr. Young, but being in poor health and not able to work."

27 June 1897 letter of Emily Partridge (written on 50th anniversary of Smith's deaths)

"His troubles at home being more sad, and harder to bear than all the trials that could be heaped upon him by outside enemies. My heart is filled with bitter regret when I think that I might have added, even one drop of sorrow to the abundance already heaped upon him. I was intimately acquainted with him for several years. More acquainted with his home life than with his public—or rather his private life outside of his home. I have known him to come in with his head bowed; he would walk the floor back and forth, with his hands clasped behind him (a way he had of placing his hands when his mind was deeply troubled) his countenance showing that he was weighed down with some terrible burden. Many times my heart has ached for him. He did not often speak of his outside troubles to his family."