

INTRODUCTION OF PLURAL MARRIAGE AT HAUVOO

Just previous to my father's starting upon his last mission but one, to the eastern states, he taught me the principle of celestial marriage, and having a great desire to be connected with the Prophet Joseph, he offered me to him; this I afterwards learned from the Prophet's own mouth. My father had but one ewe lamb, but willingly laid her upon the altar. How cruel this seemed to the mother whose heartstrings were already stretched until they were ready to snap asunder, for he had taken Sarah Moon to wife and she thought she had made sufficient sacrifice, but the Lord required more. I will pass over the temptations which I had during the twentyfour hours after my father introduced to me this principle and asked me if I would be sealed to Joseph, who came next morning and with my parents I heard him teach and explain the principle of celestial marriage, after which he said to me, "If you will take this step, it will insure your eternal salvation and exaltation and that of your father's household and all of your kindred." This promise was so great that I willingly gave myself to purchase so glorious a reward. None but God and his angels could see my mother's bleeding heart when Joseph asked her if she was willing, she replied, "If Helen is willing I have nothing more to say."

Statement written and signed by Helen Mar Whitney Smith Whitney, dated at Salt Lake City, March 30, 1881. "Papers, Whitney, in folder for Helen Mar Mattell Smith Whitney." Ch. Hist. Lib.

Having been on a mission in the East for some time, Erastus Snow returned to Nauvoo in the spring of 1843, arriving shortly after the April Conference. Of this period of his life, he wrote:

"I had a very enjoyable visit for about a month with the Prophet and my kindred and brethren. It was during this visit that the Prophet told me what the Lord had revealed to him touching upon baptism for the dead and marriage for eternity, and requiring his chosen and proved servants to take unto themselves wives and introduced several of those who had been sealed to himself and others of the first Elders of the Church. Foremost among the former was my wife's sister Louisa, whose integrity, devotions and purity of soul was known to all her acquaintances."

Autobiography of Erastus Snow, dictated to his son Franklin R. Snow in 1875, p. 8 "Erastus Snow Papers." Ch. Hist. Lib.