
Houston, Woodworth, and Pratt were all sealed and anointed to Joseph Smith by proxy in the Nauvoo Temple, a privilege suggesting a plural marriage during Smith’s lifetime. In fact, Woodworth’s daughter, Flora Ann, had married Smith during May or June 1843, probably at around the same time as her mother’s own possible plural marriage to Smith. Sarah Scott, who had married James Mulholland (1810–39) in early 1839, wed Alexander Mullinder/Mullinder (born ca. 1810) civilly on October 25, 1843, with Apostle John Taylor performing the ceremony. Mulholland was probably a "front" husband to conceal Sarah’s plural marriage to Smith—much the same arrangement by which Smith had authorized Joseph Kingsbury and Sarah Whitney’s "pretend[ed] marriage" on April 29, 1843. Scott was sealed to Mulholland for eternity and to Heber Kimball, not Mullinder, for time on February 3, 1846, in the Nauvoo Temple. The record of that ceremony identifies her explicitly as "Sarah Smith," implying an earlier sealing to Joseph Smith. Finally, Orson F. Whitney, son of Helen Mar Kimball Smith Whitney, Joseph Smith’s youngest plural wife, wrote in his biography of his grandfather, Heber C. Kimball, that Mary Houston and Sarah Scott were known plural wives of Joseph Smith during Smith’s lifetime.

A few other clarifications seem appropriate. First, although Zina Huntington’s family history reports that Joseph Smith initially approached her as a prospective plural wife in the winter of 1839–40, Zina herself insisted that Smith never directly broached plural marriage with her until the day of their marriage in October 1841. Rather, "my brother Dimick told me what Joseph had told him [regarding plural marriage]," she recounted. "Joseph did not come until afterwards...[T]he Lord had revealed to Joseph Smith that he was to marry me. I received it from Joseph through my brother Dimick." Joseph Smith may have initially raised the topic indirectly with Dimick, possibly at the same time in late 1840 when he was preaching plu-

74. See Richard Lloyd Anderson and Scott H. Faulring, Review of In Sacred Loneliness, in PARMS Review of Books 10 (1998): 2. But see Compton’s response, “Truth, Honesty and Moderation in Mormon History: A Response to Anderson, Faulring and Bachman’s Reviews of In Sacred Loneliness” (July 2001), privately circulated. Compton identifies thirty-three plural wives, Anderson and Faulring twenty-nine. In his response, Compton presents his reasons for keeping thirty-three and even notes that the actual number may be higher.

75. I do not believe that Fanny Alger, whom Compton counts as Smith’s first plural wife, satisfies the criteria to be considered a “wife.” Briefly, the sources for such a “marriage” are all retrospective and presented from a point of view favoring plural marriage, rather than, say, an extramarital liaison, which seems clearly to be Oliver Cowdery’s interpretation of the relationship. In addition, Smith’s doctrine of eternal marriage was not formulated until after 1839–40. For Compton’s counter-argument, see his In Sacred Loneliness, 25–42. I also believe the circumstances of Lucinda Pendleton Morgan Harris’s plural marriage to Smith better fits the context of Smith’s pattern of contracting plural marriages ca. 1841–42 with married or widowed women than it does to the late 1830s, the period some have assigned to Harris’s and Smith’s plural marriage. Most recently, Lyndon W. Cook, comp., Nauvoo Marriages Proxy Seals, 1843-1846 (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 2004), 12–13, has suggested that three more women be added to the list of Smith’s plural wives: Lydia Kenyon Carter (married ca. 1841–43), Sarah Bapson (probably Sarah [Bapson] Polterer, married ca. 1841–43), and Hannah Ann Dubois Smith Dibble (married ca. 1842–43). Whitney, Life of Heber C. Kimball (1888), 431; (1945), 419.

77. See Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, 80; and Martha Sonntag Bradley and Mary Brown Firmage Woodward, Four Zinas: A Story of Mothers and Daugh ters on the Mormon Frontier (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2003), 111–12.

78. See Zina D. H. Young, Interviewed by John W. Wight (an elder of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), October 1, 1898, in Bergren: The Earliest Mormon Polygamists
Fanny Alger, the first plural wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.,
by Thomas M. Finney

921, 73
A1 no. 467
28 leaves
not there - 6/16/01 to 4/29/03
Alger Marriage Questioned

In order to accept the narrative of Joseph Smith's and Fanny Alger's relationship as Todd Compton presents it in "Alger Fanny Smith Custer: Mormonism's First Plural Wife?" (Spring 1996), we must suspend our disbelief. We must accept that Ann Eliza Webb Young, who wasn't even a twinkle in her parents' eyes when all this was going on, was a credible witness; that sixteen-year-old Fanny Alger, three to four years younger than most women when they married, quickly accepted a "marriage" that would give her no legal or financial claims on her husband, and that her parents approved the marriage; that Warren Parrish, who in 1837-38 did his best to publicly destroy Smith, failed to mention the alleged Alger pregnancy in all his verbal attacks; and that the national press, which loved to extrapolate on Smith's foibles, ignored the polygamy angle during the 1890s.

We must also accept that two years prior to Smith's public denunciation of Smith, he would assume the authority to perform marriages. Levi Hancock, a man who had no civil authority, willingly and quickly accepted Smith's demand that he perform a "marriage." We must also believe that even with a wagon Hancock was able to get a pregnant Fanny out of a window that was more than twenty feet above the ground. This is all a bit much to swallow.

There are some facts we do know: On 16 November 1836 Fanny Alger married Solomon Custer in Wayne County, Indiana. That fact alone should speak loudly and authoritatively—and should put this matter to rest. Whatever the relationship between her and Smith, Fanny Alger did not behave as if it were a marriage. Nor, apparently, did Fanny's parents. They took her to Indiana against Smith's wishes that she go to Missouri with Levi Hancock, and they permitted her marriage to Custer. Considering the nineteenth-century legal and social demands on husbands and the required submissiveness of wives, Fanny's and her parents' actions are a good indication that no "marriage" existed.

This article is an excellent example of the common failure of Mormon historians to consider what little evidence female participants do have with the same determining weight they give the public discourse and memories of the men involved. What more could Fanny Alger have done to prove to us, and perhaps to her contemporaries, that she was not Smith's wife?

What did go on between the two of them? I don't know. Smith probably thought of his relations with Fanny as divinely sanctioned, as he viewed nearly everything that he did. But there is no contemporary evidence, in either Smith's words or actions, that he thought of it as a marriage. Nor is there any contemporary evidence that by 1833, or even 1836, the ideological underpinnings were in place that could make polygamy reasonable and acceptable to the Alger family. Demonstrating little understanding of nineteenth-century marriages, Compton seems willing to call this a "marriage" when he found evidence that a ceremony was performed and that the couple consummated the union with sexual intercourse. This is a rather sparse definition of a very complex, socially and legally defined relationship. Even if all took place as Compton states, by any definition of marriage, Cowdery was closer to the mark when he called the relationship an affair.

In later nineteenth-century Utah, the Hancock and Alger families had everything to gain by remembering and promoting Fanny's relationship with Smith as a celestial polygamous marriage. As Compton notes, her sealing to him guaranteed their eternal salvation. And they had a great deal to lose by accepting the continuing public allegations of Fanny's fornication and Smith's adultery. Without Levi Hancock's particular spin on the events, Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet, and the Hancock and Alger families were committing a damnable sin by having sexual relationships with persons other than their lawfully wedded spouses. That is a powerful incentive to remember history in a particular way. And those memories continue to cloud our understanding of early Mormon sexual relations.

Janet Ellingson
Salt Lake City, Utah
Plural Marriage, Singular Lives


Reviewed by Lawrence Foster, Professor of American History, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia.

Joseph Smith's polygamous relationships have been a topic of great interest and controversy among Mormons and non-Mormons alike. The reactions of the women whom Joseph Smith took as plural wives and the way in which their relationships with the Mormon prophet were part of their own larger life experiences, however, have seldom been studied systematically. Most writers have contented themselves with making head counts of Smith's alleged plural wives. The Mormon church historian Andrew Jenson listed twenty-seven probable plural wives, Fawn Brodie identified forty-eight, and more recent Mormon historians such as Daniel Bachman, D. Michael Quinn, and George D. Smith have identified thirty-one, forty-six, and forty-three plural wives, respectively. These lists often do not adequately distinguish between different types of plural wives, particularly between those who probably sustained full consensual relations with Joseph Smith and those who were only posthumously sealed to him "for eternity." Todd Compton's massive and path-breaking, 789-page study in Sacred Loneliness provides the most comprehensive assessment yet available of the lives of thirty-three women whom he considers "well-documented wives of Joseph Smith" (1). Compton begins with a twenty-three-page introduction that discusses some of the complex issues that must be addressed if Joseph Smith's plural marriages are to be understood, and then he briefly summarizes the evidence on each of the wives in chart form. The 506-page core of the book consists of thirty well-written and thoroughly documented chapters that symmetrically reconstruct, using detailed quotations from a wide range of primary sources, the lives of the thirty-three women he has identified as plural wives. These include two sets of sisters and one mother-daughter pair whose stories are combined in three of the chapters. Instead of in-text source citations, 148 pages of bibliographic and chapter references are provided. A fifteen-page index concludes the study.

Although scholars may take issue with some of Compton's assumptions and arguments, his study is a major step forward in understanding early Mormon plural marriage. First and most impressively, Compton is concerned with treating each of the women whom he studies as a real person in her own right and reconstructing the entire life stories from birth to death of the often quite remarkable women, many of whom became among the most respected and influential female leaders in pioneer Utah. For many of these women, their relationship with Joseph Smith was only a brief interlude in a much larger and more complex life; for others, the issues of their polygamous relationships with Joseph Smith and, subsequently, with other Mormon leaders such as Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball were a focus of recurrent concern and tension. Compton masterfully reconstructs the often poignant stories of these women without reducing them to stereotypical heroines or victims, as so many earlier accounts have done.

Equally if not more important, Compton has provided in this study the massive primary documentation from widely scattered sources that will allow both scholars and the general public alike to form their own opinions about just what was going on in Joseph Smith's polygamous relationships and how those relationships affected the women who participated in them. As a non-Mormon scholar, I had the exceptional opportunity of spending more than four months reading primary diaries, journals, records, and affidavits held in the Church Archives in Salt Lake City while working on a study of the early development of Mormon polygamy that eventually would be published as Religious and Sexual. Only one woman who has worked closely with these documents can comprehend Compton's full achievement in identifying and providing detailed quotations with exact original spelling and punctuation) from virtually all of the most relevant portions of this substantial corpus of primary materials relating to Joseph Smith's polygamous relationships and the larger life experiences of these women.

Finally, Compton is to be commended for candidly trying to come to terms with some of the most knotty and controversial aspects of early Mormon polygamy, including the evidence that Joseph Smith took as plural wives in a full physical sense women who were already married to other men. Compton argues, for example, that "fully one-third of his [Joseph Smith's] plural wives, eleven of them, were married civily to other men when he married them... Polygamy might be easier to understand if one viewed these marriages to Smith as a sort of de facto divorce with the first husband. However, none of these women divorced their first husbands' while Smith was alive and all of them continued to live with their civil spouses while married to Smith" (15-16). Compton further points out that "there is evidence that he did have [sexual] relations with at least some of these women, including one polyandrous wife, Sylvia Sessions Lyon, who bore the only polygamous offspring of Smith for whom we have affirmative evidence.

While Compton deserves much credit for tackling squarely and sensitively the thorny issue of these unusual relationships with Joseph Smith, I am extremely dubious about his characterization of them as "polyandrous." As I have pointed out in Religion and Sexual- ity, 159-166, and in "Sex and Prophetic Power" (Dialogue 31, no. 4, Winter 1998), I see no evidence that the behavior in which Joseph Smith apparently engaged was viewed, either by the Mormon prophet himself or by his close followers who knew about it, as a form of "polyandry." Rather, it seems far more likely, given the intensely patriarchal emphasis in early Mormon plural marriage, that such relationships were interpreted as a complex millenarian version of patriarchal levirate polygamy. Even this interpretation, which cannot be detailed here, may not be sufficient to ex-
plain all instances of this kind, however. For example, the most tangled such relationship, that of Zina Diantha Huntington, skillfully analyzed in pages 71-113 of her Sacred Loneliness, suggests the possibility of the demand for total loyalty to the leadership of the prophet and to his will may ultimately be the only way in which some of these relationships can be understood.

Another point that I have about this study is Compton’s tendency to state as matters of fact what are, at best, only highly suppositional. This is most apparent in the first paragraph of his chapter on Fanny Alger, the first of the thirty core chapters on Joseph Smith’s plural wives. Compton asserts, without initial qualification in the chapter, that she “was one of Joseph Smith’s earliest plural wives” (25). This is only Compton’s debatable supposition, not an established fact. While contemporary evidence strongly suggests that Smith sustained sexual relationships with Fanny Alger, it does not indicate that this was viewed either by Smith himself or by his associates at the time as a “marriage.”

The most substantial contemporaneous description of the relationship comes from a letter written by Oliver Cowdery on January 21, 1836, in which he declares that “in every instance I did not (a) to affirm that what I said was strictly true. A dirty, nasty, filthy affair of his and Fanny Alger’s was talked over in which I strictly declared that I never deviated from the truth” (98).

There is strong evidence from later sources that Joseph Smith may have considered, at least as early as July 1831, the possibility of introducing a form of patriarchal Old Testament polygamy. There is no reliable contemporary evidence, however, that any of the sexual relationships that Joseph Smith may have sustained with women other than his wife Emma prior to the formal documented plural marriage ceremony with Louisa Beaman in Nauvoo, Illinois, on April 5, 1841, was necessarily viewed at the time as a “marriage.” Such earlier sexual relationships may have been considered marriages, but we lack convincing contemporary evidence supporting such an interpretation. Later Mormon writers simply have assumed that if there was a sexual relationship involving Joseph Smith, then it must have involved a “marriage.” For this debate script Compton’s interpretation of Fanny Alger, which first appeared in an article in the Journal of Mormon History 23 (Spring 1996): 174-207, see Janet Elliott’s letter in the Journal of Mormon History 23 (Spring 1997): vii, viii, and Compton’s response in the Journal of Mormon History 23 (Fall 1997): xvii-xix.

From a larger perspective, this and other scholarly reservations that one might have about his Sacred Loneliness are far less significant than the remarkable achievement of this study. Just as the superb biography Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith by Linda K. Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery for the first time presented a full, sympathetic, and well-rounded scholarly analysis of the life of Joseph Smith’s dynamic but much misunderstood first wife, so Sacred Loneliness provides a thorough, sympathetic, and well-rounded scholarly analysis of thirty-three other women who also sustained important relationships with the Mormon prophet. Anyone seeking to grapple with the complex issues of Mormon plural marriage originated and what it meant to some of the more articulate Mormon women who participated in the practice and will find this study an invaluable starting point.

Mission Complexities in Asia


Reviewed by Glen M. Cooper, associate editor, Islamic Translation Series, and research associate, Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts, Brigham Young University.

As a missionary in Taiwan many years ago, I often reflected on the historical significance of our work. President Hyrum Smith humbly reminded us that we were only the most recent phase of an historical process which began centuries ago with the efforts of the first Christian missionaries to Asia. As we neared what they had seen, we helped to fulfill the selfless labors of all Christian missionaries who had gone before us. I wondered if someone would ever attempt to write the history of the LDS missionary involvement with Asia. The task would be huge, given the geographical vastness and ethnic diversity of the region. R. Lanier Britsch, a professor of Asian history at Brigham Young University, has made an admirable attempt to write such a history.

The title From the East refers to the prophecy in Matthew 8:11 that many from both the east and west would eventually be numbered among the children of Abraham. The melding of Asian tradition with the message of the Restoration is reflected artistically on the book’s jacket, which features a gold-embossed pattern: a curiously Asian design with a trumpet-blowing angel Moroni placed at the center. At a hefty 651 pages, the book is packed with useful and well-documented details. It provides many helpful features for the reader interested in the complex history of LDS missions in Asia, including maps, extensive bibliographies, and a schematic timeline showing how the many current missions evolved from the earliest entities. The bibliographies deserve particular praise since they indicate the diverse types of sources necessary to make a work of this scope as thorough as possible. Cited sources include books, pamphlets, and a wealth of unpublished sources such as manuscripts, letters, journals, oral histories and interviews, and personal correspondence.

The first attempt to cover LDS involvement in Asia comprehensively and the product of nearly three decades of thought and writing, From the East succeeds rather well as a whole, though with a few shortcomings. LDS missionary work in Asia began during the 1850s with abortive early missions to India, Burma, Siam (Thailand), and China. Serious, sustained missionary efforts began in Japan in the period after 1891. Discouraging results of the nineteen-century missions and suggests factors to account for their failures. He then, through several chapters, traces the growth of missionary work in other parts of Asia grew out of the foundation established in Japan in the twentieth century. His account continues through 1996, covering the declining geographical areas: Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand; Cambodia and Vietnam; Singapore and Malaysia; Indonesia; Nepal; Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Mongolia. Many of these regions receive less than a chapter of attention, since missionary work there is of more recent date. Japan receives five chapters, the Chinese "realm" (Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the


I have witnessed first-hand the stunning of Bosnian refugees because members felt "that all Muslims are dangerous." I have seen good members avoid Turkish, Vietnamese, and African investigators even when there was not the slightest indication that they were criminals or incapable of providing for their own needs.

Yet I have also seen beautiful examples of reaching out to new members of other racial backgrounds in various congregations. For example, to see French members in Versailles show love to new converts from the French Caribbean and long-time members in London’s Hyde Park Ward hug Indian converts from Hinduism. I do not wish to sound defensive. I reiterate that I am not attacking my European brothers and sisters here but rather am identifying a challenge that faces all of us prior to the second coming of the Master.

Conclusion

When all is said and done, I believe that Wilfried Decoo and Bruce Van Orden are allies in the same work. Enthusiastically endorse Decoo’s constructive suggestions for improving missionary work. In my teaching and in privately distributed handouts, I have suggested similar strategies myself.

Since becoming the prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley has gone about the world urging the Saints to be grateful to the Church which has served them as "a generous mother," a phrase he used when he addressed our congregation in Jerusalem in June 1986. My literal mother and I have a

good relationship. But she, who was twenty-three when I was born, knows me now as a middle-aged man with several faults and foibles. I am acquainted with her weaknesses as well. Yet in our love for each other we often choose to accentuate the positive aspects of our relationship and hopes for eternal togetherness. It was in this same attitude of recognizing challenges, but having a positive attitude about the triumph of truth and the restored Church, that I wrote Building Zion: The Latter-day Saints in Europe.

Now to my fellow historians of Mormonism: Please get involved even more than you have in the past in assessing the generalization of the movement. I have contributed to a start with Europe. Now, would others please join in the fun? There will always be diversity in the way people work. We all have a great deal to learn from each other.

Bruce A. Van Orden
Springville, Utah

Willfried Decoo's response will be published in the Spring 1998 issue. Ordinarily, the journal's policy with letters is to invite responses for the same issue, if time permits. Because Bruce Van Orden was returning from teaching at the Semester Abroad program at BYU's Jerusalem Center and was traveling in Europe in June, there was not sufficient time before the typesetter's deadline to accommodate this more desirable arrangement.


todd compost: Response to Janet Ellingson

My article, "Fanny Alger Smith Custer: Mormonism's First Plural Wife?" (Spring 1996), was meant to be "certain" or definitive, so I welcome Janet Ellingson's further discussion on this topic.

Her letter proposes an interpretation that is possible and should be pursued—the idea that either Mosiah or his father Levi concocted the story of Levi marrying Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger. I will even suggest some phenomena that might lead to such a fabrication: beginning in 1863, LDS missionaries (including Joseph Smith III himself) came to Utah and claimed that Joseph Smith, Jr., had not been a polygamist, so one would not be surprised to find Mosiah "heightening" the truth in order to refute the RLDS. One might theorize that Levi Hancock told his son that Smith had had a relationship with Mosiah's cousin, Fanny, and that Mosiah, in telling the story, "improved" it to an actual marriage with ceremony. (Or Levi "heightened" it.)

Furthermore, another phenome non common in Mormon reminiscences and family history, self-heroization or heroization of family members, would cause Mormons to associate themselves (or their relatives) with Joseph Smith. Davis Bitton's fine article, "Joseph Smith in Mormon Folk Memory," Restoration Studies 1 (Independence, Mo.: Temple School, 1980), 75-94, documents the accretion of legend in "folk" narratives of Joseph Smith.

Nevertheless, I personally have accepted that the Hancock narratives concerning Fanny Alger reflect historical events in their main outlines. I agree that late, second-hand reminiscences are not perfect evidence, but no evidence is perfect. (See my article's critique of even "contemporary" evidence.) One important area in which I think Ellingson and I see things differently is this: I feel that it is common to find mistakes and dislocations, even supernatural elaborations, in Mormon autobiography but rare to find extended examples of total concoction. And the whole story of the "woman exchange" in the Hancock/Fanny Alger narrative turns upon an actual marriage. Otherwise, one doubts that Fanny's parents would have agreed to the relationship. Certainly, it was less risky for Joseph Smith to propose a marriage than an affair.

Mosiah might have gotten the floors of the Kirktland Temple mixed up—especially since he left Kirtland in August 1836 when he was two years and four months old and probably had no firsthand memories of the temple, completed in March 1836; it is less likely that he made up the story from scratch. And it is common for even educated writers to get details mixed up in autobiography. Biographical, a very sophisticated writer, wrote an autobiography, Something of Myself, that is notorious for its factual errors, but no Kipling biographer would ignore it. Mosiah was an extremely unsophisticated writer.

By the way, neither Mosiah, nor I, said that Fanny was pregnant at the
time of the Kirtland Temple story. By my extremely tentative chronology, there is a slight window of possibility that she was, but there is a big window of probability that she wasn't.

Another important point where Ellington and I vary: she takes Fanny Alger's marriage to Solomon Custer as absolute proof that Alger had not married Joseph Smith. I see the pattern of marriage, the marriage not working out, then remarriage, as entirely possible, a pattern common both in our times and in early nineteenth-century America.

Ellington seems to think that I do not believe the Alger-Custer marriage important; I consider it very important, but I view it as a reflection on the quality of the Smith-Alger marriage rather than as absolute proof that Alger and Smith did not marry. Even though the evidence is severely fragmentary, in my reconstruction of the marriage, Joseph Smith did not give Fanny Alger adequate emotional and practical support, a common phenomenon in the history of polygamy.

A couple of other details. When I wrote the article, I had not checked Ann Eliza Webb's birthday, but obviously, she is depending on her parents' account of the Fanny Alger relationship. Considering the scarcity of evidence on Alger, it would be foolish not to consider Ann Eliza. The story of the pregnancy came from Chauncey Webb, not from Ann Eliza.

As for Warren Parrish not mentioning Fanny Alger's pregnancy (and I nowhere state that this pregnancy is certain), pregnancies can get hushed up, sometimes fairly successfully. If there was a miscarriage or if the child died as an infant, it could have been hushed up even more successfully. Fanny moved out of Kirtland, back to Mayfield, which would help conceal a pregnancy even more. In addition, although Parrish knew something about Kirtland polygamy, he wasn't in the inner polygamous circle, so he didn't know everything. People not in the inner polygamy circles would have had a very limited understanding of the practice. Levi and Mosiah Hancock, by the way, were very much in the "Fanny Alger" circle, as they were close relatives. For that reason alone, their writing on Alger deserves serious consideration.

As for the national press ignoring Mormon polygamy, in my paper I showed irresistible evidence that Mormons were beginning to be accused of polygamy before Nauvoo, as early as August 1835. The Article on Marriage, which was included in a book of scripture, uses the word "polygamy." I doubt that Mormons would have simply made up that accusation.

Ellington finds it unbelievable that Levi Hancock would consent to perform a marriage without civil authority. Personally, I find it very believable—both that Smith would place his religious authority above civil authority and that one of Smith's disciples would give him unquestioning obedience. Ellington writes, "Compton seems willing to call this a 'marriage.'" For the purpose of my work, I define as marriage any relationship in which there was a marriage ceremony. Other definitions of marriage are certainly possible. For instance, Joseph Smith III took as his definition of "real" marriage a public acknowledgement of the wife and cohabitation. By this definition, none of Joseph Smith's secret marriages were marriages.

Did Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger have a relationship solemnized by a marriage ceremony? Historians, writing from "conservative" or "liberal" viewpoints, have answered that question in different ways in the past and will continue to do so in the future. As in much Mormon history, there is a maze of seemingly contradictory evidence. Hopefully, more documentary evidence will be found to further illuminate the story.

Todd Compton
Santa Monica, Calif.

RICHARD VAN WAGONER: Response to David Whitaker

It was no surprise to me that David Whitaker, a respected archivist employed by Brigham Young University, would find fault in my book review (Spring 1997) with certain interpretative positions I take in my Sidney Rigdon biography. Historically, it has been the hallmark of human institutions to kill the messenger bearing bad or uncomplimentary news. In religious institutions such as Mormonism, the pattern is to discredit the message by trivializing it through in-house criticism or to ignore its undeniable truths. Numerous recent messengers of historically more accurate "bad news" have found their major issues not addressed by the Church. Worse still, the messenger can be attacked directly or discounted just enough to ensure that the majority of Mormons will still be reading or promoting historical fantasy.

I don't want to address all of David's criticisms in this letter. However, in defense of my Rigdon book, which was edited to 50 percent of its original length, I will say that the work won the Best Book Award from the John Whitmer Historical Society and the Best Biography Award from the Mormon History Association. I stand firm on my different observations and interpretations of early Mormon history.

While I don't merely shrug off opposing arguments such as Whitaker's, I long ago recognized the improbability of convincing most Mormons that a considerable portion of our history has been smoothed over and tidied up by well-meaning though misguided ministers of the faith. As I stated in the Sidney Rigdon introduction: "I do not apologize for exposing the warts and double chins of religious leaders. Falible men and women are all God has on earth. Perhaps through the observations and interpretations I attempt here, others will feel more at ease with their own wrinkles."

I do not believe Whitaker is being either fair or accurate in saying that I "rely too heavily on the more negative material" and have written a "history by innuendo." Although David Whitmer, John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Ena Booth, John C. Bennett, and Sidney Rigdon either left the Church or were driven from it, they should not be denied their voice simply because they
Marriage Record of Solomon Custer and Emma Alger

Book B, page 556

Wayne County Clerk
Richmond, Indiana 47374

(26 June 1873)

16 Nov. 1876

Richard S. Van Wagner
Collector

6 + 4
Thomas McTune
Fanny Alger 1946 [not orphan] parents came to Utah
Nov 13, 1999

Fanny Alger 1986

Folder 5
GS #540,243 is a copy, typed copy of Wayne County, Indiana Marriage Records, 1811-1883

Book B: Solomon Carter [Custer] - Fanny Alger 11-16-1836 No. #
Page number missing?

Original source number errant between pages 556 and 558

1850 Census: Dublin, Jackson, IN, Wayne Co, Indiana, 65 #412,958 #147-149
Mary A. Carter, age 10, in 1850 Census, born Indiana about 1840
Prologue

"Either from misinformation from the Samuel Alger family or, as a coverup to protect the life and personality of Fanny Alger, Andrew Jenson, LDS Church historian, conveyed information that does not appear to conform to historical facts."

MS 386, Bd 2, Fd 7
H. Michael Marquardt
445 Pioneer Ave. Sandy, UT 84070-1174 (801) 255-7377

October 19, 1995

Mr. Gary J. Bergera
Signature Books
564 West 400 North
Salt Lake City, UT 84116-3411

Dear Gary,

I have finished reading the manuscript submitted to Signature Book by Todd Compton titled "Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith." The manuscript is 1,038 pages+ long, double spaced with small type. The author has done very good job of research. The story of each wife is told in a way that the reader has a sense of the struggles they had in their lives because of their relationship with Joseph Smith. The majority of the women traveled to what is now the state of Utah.

The research behind the manuscript evidently was a lengthy process. I enjoyed the work and it would be good to have it published. I do suggest that it be edited to make sure it flows smoothly and to eliminate any obvious duplication of factual material. The book should have a complete index since they are many individuals and extended family members mentioned.

I have noted in red ink any questions, suggestions and corrections on the manuscript. I return it to you so that you can review it and send it to Mr. Compton.

There were a few areas that I thought could be clearer. How early Joseph Smith had women sealed to him is a problem. It appears that certain concepts developed in the course of time with Joseph Smith and that practices of these concepts occurred at a later time.

Because of stories concerning Fanny Alger have circulated many writers have proposed that Joseph Smith had received a specific revelation concerning celestial or plural marriage during the Kirtland era of church history. Some have even stated that it was during the dictation of the Book of Mormon that this principle was made known or during the Bible revision.
Since plural marriage was practiced during the Nauvoo era including the revelation of LDS D&C 132, writers have tried to have the contents of portions of that document being revealed to Joseph Smith in an earlier time frame. There is no known evidence that during the revision of the King James Bible (1830-33) that members of the church should have more than one wife. The 1861 recollection written by William W. Phelps of a July 1831 revelation to Joseph Smith about marrying Indians probably had nothing to do with polygamy. (See David J. Whittaker, "Mormons and Native Americans: A Historical and Bibliographical Introduction," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 18 [Winter 1985]:35)

Hyrum Smith while speaking at the April 1844 conference said, concerning his first wife who died on October 13, 1837: "she fell in the grave before God showed us his order." (Thomas Bullock’s report, April 8, 1844, p. 31, LDS archives) The sealing ceremony for eternity may have been different in Nauvoo especially the sealing of married women to Joseph Smith.

Concerning Fanny Alger I have compiled some material relating to what has been said concerning her and Joseph Smith (copy enclosed). It appears that whatever occurred with Fanny Alger probably happened in the year 1836 with Fanny leaving Kirtland, Ohio. This year is closer to the events relating to Oliver Cowdery as Cowdery had discussed the matter with Joseph Smith and others in the summer and fall of 1837. It was an important item that Cowdery tells his Warren that he did not lie about.

Whether there was a marriage ceremony as proposed by Mosiah Hancock in his autobiography is questionable.

1. The autobiography is late (1896) as the author Mosiah Hancock was born in 1834 and at the death of Joseph Smith was a boy of 10 years and was 62 when his life story was written.

2. While the manuscript in the LDS archives (#570) has what purports to be an account of how Fanny Alger was married to Joseph Smith by Levi Hancock this may have been a family tradition but it appears out of place.

3. There evidently is another autobiography of Mosiah Hancock that has appeared in typescript form. This account was also made by Mosiah Hancock. The typescript I have read is on CD ROM (Infobases "LDS Historical Library") and has items that are not in MS #570. There are also recollections in this autobiography that do not appear in MS #570. Both are reported to have been written by Mosiah Hancock.

There are a few dates of sealings that I question or have a different date:

1. Fanny Alger - not sure if this was a sealing

2. Lucinda Morgan Harris - do not know when this would have occurred but probably 1841-42?

3. Nancy Johnson Hyde - evidently her affidavit has May 1843 after Orson Hyde returned from his mission to Jerusalem
4. Almera W. Johnson - Spring 1843, probably after April 1843, she was to have been sealed by Hyrum Smith

5. Desdomona W. Fuller - July 1843

6. Ruth Vose Sayers - Feb. 1843 [1844], evidently her affidavit has the date of Feb. 1843 by Hyrum Smith but it was probable that it was later than Feb. 1843 since Hyrum Smith did not perform marriages until May 1843.

The Selected Bibliography with Abbreviations - some titles need to be more complete and the full name of book should be given.

chart of wives - ages when sealed to Joseph Smith:

Ruth Vose 33 = 34-35
Desdomona W. Fullmer 32-33 = 33
Fanny Young 56 = 55

The manuscript is missing page 299 of the Agnes Smith chapter. The pages numbers of the Agnes Smith chapter are pp. 256-300 and of the Sessions chapter pp. 295-349 so these is a duplication of pages numbers 295-300 for these two chapters of the manuscript.

p. 301 of the Sessions chapter - Sylvia Sessions married Windsor Lyon on April 21, 1838 = should add to the text that Joseph Smith performed the ceremony (see Woman's Exponent 13 [1 Nov. 1884]:86)

p. 404 May 1843 Marinda Hyde and Joseph Smith apparently repeated their marriage ceremony. Do not know of any early source that says they repeated the ceremony. Marinda Hyde has the date of the sealing as May 1843.

p. 646 Ruth Sayers and Joseph Smith Feb. 1843 by Hyrum Smith? - The sealing may have been in 1844

pp. 686-87 does not mentioned a passage in William Clayton Journal. May want to add something like the following:

"This A.M. J[oseph]. told me that since E[mma]. came back from St. Louis she had resisted the P[riesthood]. in toto & he had to tell her he would relinquish all for her sake. She said she would given him E[liza] & E[mily] P[artridge] but he knew if he took them she would pitch on him & obtain a divorce & leave him. He however told me he should not relinquish any thing"

(William Clayton Journal, 16 August 1843, typed copy)
Emily and Eliza Partridge had already been sealed to Joseph Smith for a second time with Emma Smith’s permission in May 1843. This may have been near the time period when Joseph Smith shook their hands and released them from their sealing. The passage is not recorded clearly and deals with what Joseph Smith told Clayton about Emma. The part about divorce is not clear because the Partridge sisters were already sealed to Smith with Emma’s permission in May 1843, months prior to August 16, 1843.

I would suggest that to the chapter on Helen Mar Kimball Smith Whitney that additional material be added concerning the last years of her life. Diaries of Helen Mar Whitney are available for the period from Sept. 11, 1885 to Dec. 10, 1886 and from May 1888 to Oct. 21, 1896. They are located in the Helen Mar Whitney Family Papers, MSS 179, Boxes 3 and 4, Special Collections, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

Respectfully submitted,

H. Michael Marquardt

Enclosures

cc: Todd Compton
Fanny Alger

At Kirtland, Ohio, Joseph Smith was associated with a girl by the name of Fanny Alger. Exactly what occurred between them has been a subject of controversy. Since Fanny Alger married Solomon Custer on 16 November 1836 at Dublin, Indiana it is apparent that whatever happened between them was prior to November 1836. Fanny Alger was born September 20, 1816. It is evident that rumors relating to Joseph Smith and the girl was still circulating in 1838. See Richard S. Van Wagoner, Mormon Polygamy: A History (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2nd ed., 1989), 5-11.

The following are from minutes, letters and various recollections.

Oliver Cowdery:
Letter of Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith:
"I learn from Kirtland, by the last letters, that you have publicly said, that when you were here I confessed to you that I had willfully lied about you - this compells me to ask you to correct that statement, and give me an explanation - until which you and myself are two."
(Letter dated 21 Jan. 1838, a copy contained in a letter of Cowdery to Warren A. Cowdery, 21 Jan. 1838, Oliver Cowdery Letterbook, 80, Huntington Library)

Letter of Oliver Cowdery to Warren A. Cowdery:
"You will see from the other page that your own and Brother Lyman's requests concerning the Stated confession made to Mr. Smith, is, if I am to be credited, not so. From what he pretended to have made it, is to me unaccountable. I can assure you and bro. Lyman, that as God is to judge my soul in the world to come, I never confessed intimated <or admitted> that I ever willfully lied about him. When he was here we had some conversation in which in every instance I did not fail to affirm that what I had said was strictly true. A dirty, nasty, filthy affair of his and Fanny Alger's was talked over in which I strictly declared that I never deviated from the truth on the matters, and as I supposed was admitted by himself. At any rate, just before leaving, he wanted to drop every past thing, in which had been a difficulty or difference - he called witnesses to the fact, gave me his hand in their presence, and I might have supposed of an honest man, calculated to say nothing of former matters. Never believe that Oliver will disgrace the gray hairs of his father, or the high sense of honor in the bosom of his brothers, so much as to acknowledge to Joseph Smith, Jr. that he has lied about him. There is something to[o] damning in the thought."
(Letter dated 21 Jan. 1838 to Warren A. Cowdery, Oliver Cowdery
Letterbook, 81, Huntington Library)

Thomas B. Marsh:

"Agre[e]able to your request, brother Harris and myself wrote, and sent to you our testimony, relative to what Oliver Cowdery said about the girl, and mailed it on the 4th inst. but lest that letter should not reach you through the iniquity of men, I here send you the same, with the addition of brother Hinkle's testimony. They may not be the same words as the other, for we have not a copy of the former letter, however, this is the same in substance, with some addition." (Letter of Thomas B. Marsh to Joseph Smith, 15 February 1838, Elders' Journal 1 [July 1838]:45)

Testimony ca. Feb. 1838 in above letter:

"This may certify, that I heard O. Cowdery say to Joseph Smith Jr., while at George W. Harris; house, in Far West, that he (Joseph) never confessed to him, (Oliver) that he was guilty of the crime alleged to him. And O. Cowdery gave me to understand that Joseph Smith Jr. never acknowledged to him, that he ever confessed to any one, that he was guilty of the above crime.

THOMAS B. MARSH."

(Ibid.)

Trial of Oliver Cowdery, April 12, 1838, Far West Record, Ebeneser Robinson, Clerk. One of the charges against Cowdery was "For seeking to destroy the character of President Joseph Smith Jr by falsy insinuating that he was guilty of adul[e]ry &c."

"Thomas B. Marsh testifies that while in Kirtland last summer, David W. Patten asked Oliver Cowdery if he Joseph Smith Jr had confessed to his wife that he was guilty of adultery with a certain girl, when Oliver Cowdery cocked up his eye very knowingly and hesitated to answer the question, saying he did not know as he was bound to answer the question yet conveyed the idea that it was true. Last fall after Oliver came to this place he heard a conversation take place between Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery when J. Smith asked him if he had ever confessed to him that he was guilty of adultery, when after a considerable winking &c. he said No. Joseph then asked him if he ever told him that he confessed to any body. when he answered No."

(Far West Record, 167-68)

George W. Harris:

Testimony ca. Feb. 1838

"This may certify, that I heard Oliver Cowdery say, in my house, that Joseph Smith Jr. never confessed to him, that he was guilty of the crime alleged against him, and Joseph asked if he ever said to him (Oliver) that he confessed to any one that he,
(Joseph) was guilty of the above crime, and Oliver, after some hesitation, answered, no.

GEORGE W. HARRIS."

Trial of Oliver Cowdery, April 12, 1838, Far West Record, Ebenezer Robinson, Clerk.

"George W. Harris testifies that one evening last fall O. Cowdery was at his house together with Joseph Smith jr, and Thomas B. Marsh, when a conversation took place between Joseph Smith jr & O. Cowdery, when he seemed to insinuate that Joseph Smith jr was guilty of adultery, but when the question was put, if he (Joseph) had ever acknowledged to him that he was guilty of such a thing; when he answered No."

(Far West Record, 167)

George M. Hinkle:
Testimony 15 Feb. 1838

"This may certify, that having heard the report about the crime above referred to, I asked Oliver Cowdery, last fall, when Joseph Smith was in the Far West, if the report was true, for said I, if it is, as he is to be presented before the church, I wish to know the truth of this matter before hand. And he gave me to understand, either in plain words or implications, that it was false. I bear this testimony for the good of the honest hearted in the east, and else where, and for the good of brother Joseph Smith Jr. Brother Marsh will please copy this in the letter to the east, and keep the original here.

GEORGE M. HINKLE.

Far West, Feb. 15, 1838."

(Elders' Journal 1 [July 1838]:45)

Trial of Oliver Cowdery, April 12, 1838, Far West Record, Ebenezer Robinson, Clerk.

"David W. Patten testifies, that he went to Oliver Cowdery to enquire of him if a certain story was true respecting J. Smith's committing adultery with a certain girl, when he turned on his heel and insinuated as though he was guilty; he then went on and gave a history of some circumstances respecting the adultery scrape stating that no doubt it was true. Also said that Joseph told him, he had confessed to Emma."

(Far West Record, 167)

Trial of Oliver Cowdery, April 12, 1838, Far West Record, Ebenezer Robinson, Clerk.

"Joseph Smith jr testifies that Oliver Cowdery had been his bosom friend, therefore he intrusted him with many things. He then
gave a history respecting the girl business."
(Far West Record, 168)

William E. McLellin visited Emma Smith in Nauvoo. He discussed the events concerning her husband Joseph at Nauvoo and previously during the Kirtland period. The conversation took place in August 1847.

In a letter to Emma's son Joseph Smith III, written in January 1861 McLellin wrote:

"I do not wish to say hard things to You of your Father, but Joseph [III], if You will only go to your own dear mother, she can tell You that he believed in Polygamy and practiced it long before his violent death! That he delivered a revelation sanctioning, regulating, and establishing it -- and that he finally burned the awful document before her eyes. Elder [William] Marks can tell you that (before its conflagration) it was read in the High Council of Nauvoo, over which he presided. Your Mother told me these items when I was in Nauvoo. I am not dealing in fictions, nor in ill founded slander -- and would now feel glad if these things had never been enacted. But Sir, I have felt it a solemn duty to lay these items before You. And Sir, Your Mother (if she feels disposed) can give You as rather black catalogue reaching back as far as the date of your birth. Then, Sir, if you are honest before the Heavens yourself, never, no never proclaim again publickly or privately that 'I believe my father was a good man', whilst the means to know his real character lies so near You -- even in the bosom & memory of your Mother!"

(Letter of William E. McLellin to Joseph Smith III, 10 January 1861, RLDS Archives)

Ten years later in 1872 McLellin wrote again to Joseph the III:

"Now Joseph [III] I will relate to you some history, and refer you to your own dear Mother for the truth. You will probably remember that I visited your Mother and family in 1847, and held a lengthy conversation with her, retired in the Mansion House in Nauvoo. I did not ask her to tell, but I told her some stories I had heard. And she told me whether I was properly informed. Dr. F[rederick]. G. Williams practiced with me in Clay Co. Mo. during the latter part of 1838. And he told me that at your birth your father committed an act with a Miss Hill -- a hired girl. Emma saw him, and spoke to him. He desisted, but Mrs. [Emma] Smith refused to be satisfied. He called in Dr. Williams, O[liver]. Cowdery, and S[idney]. Rigdon to reconcile Emma. But she told them just as the circumstances took place. He found he was caught. He confessed humbly, and begged forgiveness. Emma and all forgave him.
She told me this story was true!!

Again I told her I heard that one night she missed Joseph and Fanny Alger, she went to the barn and saw him and Fanny in the barn together alone. She looked through a crack and saw the transaction!!! She told me this story too was verily true.

Now I would not have told you this had it not been for one thing. You said in your speech at Amboy[,] April 6th[,] 1860, 'I believe my father was a good man, and a good man never could have promulgated such doctrines.' You refer to Polygamy. Now let me tell you my dear Sir. I asked your Mother particular[ly] upon this point. She said, one night after she and Joseph had retired for the night, he told her that the doctrine and practice of Polygamy was going to ruin the church. He wished her to get up and burn the revelation. She refused to touch it even with tongues [sic]. He rose from his bed and pulled open the fire with his fingers, and put the revelation in and burned it up. But copies of it were extant, so it was preserved. You say, 'I have never believed it and never can believe it.' Can you dispute your dear Mother? She related this to me, and will if you ask her[,] tell you the same thing. It made a powerful impression on my mind at the time, and I've often reflected on it since. Now Sir suppose you could be convinced that your father not only believed in Polygamy but actually practiced it his individual self, then what would you say - and then do about it? Was he an adulterer so long ago, and still a 'good man.'[?] You say, 'I believe in the doctrines of honesty and truth.' So do I. But I can't believe your father continued to be a religiously honest man. No sir. I can't for if I should I would have to believe your Mother a liar, and that would be hard for me to do, considering my acquaintance with her.'

(Letter of William E. McLellin to Joseph Smith III, commenced in July 1872, RLDS Archives)

McLellin's reported talk with Emma Smith was during the time when she talked to others about Joseph Smith's involvement with polygamy. It appears that Emma did not know about the majority of the women who had been sealed to her husband. She did give the hands of the Partridge and Lawrence sisters to Joseph as she admitted. The time period fits for when Emma was discussing other others the actions of Joseph Smith.

If McLellin was making up the story of what Emma Smith had confirmed to him in 1847 then Joseph Smith III would only need to see Emma and discuss the matter with her and she could point out any errors in McLellin's 1872 letter. It is not unlikely that Emma did not discuss matters with McLellin. But it appears that Joseph Smith III did not ask his mother if the stories that McLellin mentioned were correct.

McLellin wrote as follows concerning his discussion with Emma Smith:

"On Saturday, the 28th of August [1847], we visited the fated city of Nauvoo, and put up at the Nauvoo House, which is excellently kept by Mrs. Emma Smith, the enterprising widow of
Joseph Smith, deceased. I spent about twenty-four hours in the
deserted, and yet partly populated city. I had many hours
conversation with Mrs. Smith, and learned many particulars from
her, relative to the history of her husband from her first
acquaintance with him, until the time of his cruel death."
(William E. McLellin, Ed., The Ensign of Liberty 1 [December
1847]:34.)

McLellin also explained:
"Mrs[.] Joseph Smith, the widow of the Prophet, told me in
1847 that she knew her husband - the Prophet practiced both
adultery and polygamy."
(A photograph published in The Salt Lake Tribune, 2 December 1985)

On 6 September 1878 McLellin was visited by Orson Pratt and
Joseph F. Smith, a son of Hyrum Smith. Joseph F. Smith recorded in
his diary:
"He said Emma Smith told him that Joseph was both a polygamist
and an adulterer ...."
(Joseph Fielding Smith, Compiler, Life of Joseph F. Smith, [Salt
Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938], p. 239)

Emma Smith's 1846-47 Recollections of Polygamy

The following are from two persons who visited Emma Smith (the
widow of Joseph Smith) in 1846-47. Those who talked with Emma
mentioned what they had heard regarding Joseph Smith.

According to Buddy Youngreen, "Emma left with her children for
Fulton City, Whiteside County, Illinois, on 12 September 1846 ... she and her family returned posthaste to Nauvoo by land, arriving
19 February 1847."
119, fn. 63)

Lovina Smith Walker, who was the daughter of Hyrum Smith,
stated that she had talked with Emma. Lovina was nineteen years old
at the time she was at Fulton City.

"I, Lovina Walker, hereby certify that while I was living with
Aunt Emma Smith, in Fulton City, Fulton Co., Illinois, in the year
1846, that she told me that she, Emma Smith, was present and
witnessed the marrying or sealing of Eliza Partridge, Emily
Partridge, Maria Lawrence and Sarah Lawrence to her husband, Joseph
Smith, and that she gave her consent thereto.

Lovina Walker.

We hereby witness that Lovina Walker made and signed the above
statement on this 16th day of June, A.D. 1869, at Salt Lake City,
S.L. County, Utah Territory, of her own free will and record
[accord].
"Joseph W. Coolidge reported to Joseph F. Smith a conversation he had with Emma about 1846 regarding Nauvoo polygamy. Emma remarked to Coolidge that 'Joseph had abandoned plurality of wives before his death.' Coolidge, family friend and administrator of the Prophet's estate, indicated that he had personal knowledge that the Mormon leader had not discontinued the ancient practice. '[Emma] insisted that he had, Coolidge insisted that he had not, for he [Coolidge] 'knew better.' ' Emma Smith retorted with exasperation, 'Then he was worthy of the death he died'.'"
(Ibid., p. 82, fn 32; from the Diary of Joseph F. Smith, 28 August 1870, LDS Archives)

This report was repeated to Joseph F. Smith over twenty years after Joseph Coolidge spoke with Emma.

Ann Eliza Webb wrote in 1876:

"Yet Fanny Alger's mother says Fanny was sealed to Joseph by Oliver Cowdery in Kirtland in 1835 or 6, and Brigham says Oliver had a girl sealed to him at the same time. I only know that Emma Smith turned Fanny out of her house because of Joseph's intimacy with her. ... Fanny Algers had lived in Joseph's family several years and when she left there she came and lived with me a few weeks, I suppose your mother will remember what a talk the whole affair made which must lead he to suspect that Joseph the prophet was not infallible." (Letter of Eliza J. Webb to Mary Bond, dated April 24, 1876, RLDS archives)

A recollection by Mosiah Hancock was written fourteen years after his father's (Levi Hancock's death). Mosiah Hancock was born in 1834 and his autobiography was written about 1896 sixty-two years after his birth. His information may have been obtained through family tradition. In his account he has his father Levi perform a marriage ceremony between Joseph Smith (27 years old) and Fanny Alger (16 years old) near the date of March 29, 1833 when Levi Hancock was married. There is a question of the reliability of this late account relating to Fanny Alger."
Lockport April 24th 1876
Miss Mary Bond

[p. 1]
I will here say that I left Kirtland in Aug. 1837.

[p. 4]
The sealing ordiance began like this, Joseph Smith too
Louisa Beaman, and Bates Nobles took Sarah Alley one night
about twelve o'clock and went down to the bank of the
Mississippi and Joseph performed the ceremony for Bates and
his girl, and then Bates sealed Joseph and Louisa. I have been
told this by different parties, even Bates himself told me.
Yet Fanny Alger's mother says Fanny was sealed to Joseph by
Oliver Cowdery in Kirtland in 1835 or 6, and Brigham says
Oliver had a girl sealed to him at the same time.

[p. 5]
I only know that Emma Smith turned Fanny out of her house
because of Joseph's intimacy with her. Joseph never had any
living children by his polygamous women, although it is always
supposed that Eliza R Snow had a child, as she went into
retirement for a year before Joseph's death.
There are women living in Utah now who were sealed to Joseph
while living with their husbands and they say it was the
greatest trial of their lives to live with two men at the same
time.
Fanny Alger had lived in Joseph's family several years
and when she left there she came and lived with me a few
weeks, I suppose your mother will remember what a talk the
whole affair made which must lead her to suspect

[p. 6]
that Joseph the prophet was not infallible.

Eliza J Webb
RLDS Archives, March 21-22, 1991

Myron H. Bond P21, f11

May 4, 1876 to Miss Mary Bond [by Eliza J Webb]

Aunt Fanny Murray was sealed to Joseph she told me so herself. Mother Granger ... told me she herself was sealed to Hyrum Smith. There was eleven girls living in Joseph's house at one time; and Emma turned them all out in one night; ... I did not witness this myself ... towards a hundred women who were sealed to Joseph ...

[p. 3]

I do not know that the "sealing" commenced in Kirtland but I am perfectly satisfied that something similar commenced, and my judgement is principally formed from what Fanny Algiers told me herself concerning her reasons for leaving "sister Emma."
Fanny Alger -

Grant Underwood, review of *Far West Record* (Deseret Book)

"Cannon and Cook matter-of-factly state that Fanny Alger was 'Joseph Smith's first plural wife.' While this is plausible, it is still open to scholarly debate, and some qualifier would have been appropriate."

(*Sunstone* Vol. 10, No. 1 [January 1985], p. 59)
Levi Hancock Autobiography, typescript, BYU-S, Pg. 57

I saw the Prophet Joseph Smith and he told me to take Fanny Algers and go. I offered my place for sale and sold it before night. I made me a wagon of wood and got it iron rimmed on the wheels for Solomon and we started the latter part of August for his father-in-law's and got there about the first of September 1836.
the crime of fornication, and polygamy; we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in the case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.


Concerning the doctrine of celestial marriage the Prophet told my father (Levi) in the days of Kirtland, that it was the will of the Lord for His servants who were faithful to step forth in that order. But, said Brother Joseph, Brother Levi, if I should make known to my brethren what God has made known to me they would seek my life. My father made some things known to me concerning those days, and the part he took with the Prophet in trying to assist him to start the principle with a few chosen Friends in those days. My father had required of me to bear testimony of these things at a proper time.

13. Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs (Church Historian); 1903; Kirtland, Ohio, c. 1835.

In 1835, at Kirtland, I learned from my sister’s husband, Linay R. Sherman, who was close to the Prophet, and received it from him, that the ancient order of Plural Marriage was again to be practiced by the Church. This, at the time, did not impress my mind deeply, although there lived then with his family (the Prophet’s) a neighbor’s daughter, Fannie Alger, a very nice and comely young woman about my own age, toward whom not only myself, but every one seemed partial, for the amiability of her character; and it was whispered even then that Joseph loved her. ** Without doubt in my mind, Fanny Alger was, at Kirtland, the Prophet’s first wife, in which, by right of his calling, he was justified of the Lord. (pp. 11, 14) **

And there was some trouble with Oliver Cowdery, and whispers said it was relating to a girl then living in his (the Prophet’s) family; and I was afterwards told by Warren Parrish [sic], that he himself and Oliver Cowdery did know that Joseph had Fanny Alger as wife, for they were spied upon and found together. (p. 12) ** **

On learning from the Prophet, the Lord had required him to take plural wives; and he had then thought to ask for some of my sisters (in Nauvoo), the past (Kirtland days) with its conditions and influences began more fully to unfold to my mind, the causes that must, at least in part, have led to the great apostasy and disruption in Kirtland.... Oliver Cowdery, J. Carter, W. Parrish, or others were not justified in their criticism upon the doings of the Prophet, or in their becoming a law unto themselves, thru which they lost the light of their calling and
Birth: Alger, Samuel (Male)
   Date: February 14, 1786
   Place: Uxbridge, Worcester, MA, USA
   Alternate Place: Rehoboth, Bristol, MA, USA

Parents: Alger, Samuel (Male)
   Father: Alger, John
   Mother: Humes, Elizabeth

Death: Alger, Samuel (Male)
   Date: September 24, 1874
   Place: St. George, Washington, UT, USA

Marriage Information: Alger, Samuel (Male)
   Spouse: Hancock, Clarissa
   Date: February 25, 1808

Children: Alger, Samuel (Male)
   Name:      Birthdate:      Place:      Alternate Birth Place:      City, County, State, USA
   1. Alger, Eli Ward  March 11, 1809  Rehoboth, Bristol, MA, USA  New Lyme, Lebanon, Ashtabula, OH, USA
   2. Alger, Samuel  1811  Rehoboth, Bristol, MA, USA
   3. Alger, Amy Saphony  1813  Rehoboth, Bristol, MA, USA
   4. Alger, Fanny  September 30, 1816  Rehoboth, Bristol, MA, USA
   5. Alger, Amy Saphony  September 27, 1818  Rehoboth, Bristol, MA, USA
   6. Alger, John  November 5, 1820  Willoughby, Lake, OH, USA
      Alternate Birth Place: Ashtabula, OH, USA
   7. Alger, Alva  October 11, 1822  Willoughby, Lake, OH, USA
      Alternate Birth Place: Ashtabula, OH, USA
   8. Alger, Samuel H.  July 31, 1826  Mayfield, Cuyahoga, OH, USA
      Alternate Birth Place: Ashtabula, OH, USA
   9. Alger, Thomas  August 14, 1828  Mayfield, Cuyahoga, OH, USA
   10. Alger, Clarissa  June 2, 1830

Marriage Number 2 Alger, Samuel (Male)

Church Ordinance Data: Alger, Samuel (Male)
   Baptism
      Date: November 1830
   Ordained Seventy

Temple Ordinance Data: Alger, Samuel (Male)
   Baptism
      Date: December 11, 1964
Temple: Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah

Endowment  
Date: February 7, 1846  
Temple: Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois

Sealed to Parents  
Date: August 26, 1975  
Temple: Ogden, Weber county, Utah

Sealed to Parents  
Date: May 7, 1975

Sealed to Spouse  
Date: January 24, 1852

Sealed to Spouse  
Date: November 1, 1857

Places of Residence: Alger, Samuel (Male)  
Hancock, IL, USA  
Salt Lake, UT, USA

Vocations: Alger, Samuel (Male)  
Joiner

Comments: Alger, Samuel (Male)  
Samuel made a conciliation offer to the mob for peace on Sept. 12, 1845.  
In 1850, Samuel had $150.00 in real wealth.

Alger, Sarah Ann (Female)
"I saw the prophet Joseph Smith and he told me to take Fanny Alger and go."

Summer of 1836

(Levi W. Hancock's journal in his own handwriting)
Hancock, Levi Ward (Male)

Birth: Hancock, Levi Ward (Male)
   Date: April 7, 1803
   Place: Springfield, Hampden, MA, USA

Parents: Hancock, Levi Ward (Male)
   Father: Hancock, Thomas
   Mother: Ward, Amy

Death: Hancock, Levi Ward (Male)
   Date: June 10, 1882
   Place: Washington, Washington, UT, USA

Marriage Information: Hancock, Levi Ward (Male)
   Spouse: Reed, Clarissa
   Date: March 29, 1833
   Place: Kirtland, Geauga, OH, USA

Children: Hancock, Levi Ward (Male)
   Name:
   1. Hancock, Mosiah Lyman
   2. Hancock, Sariah
   3. Hancock, Elizabeth Amy
   4. Hancock, Francis Marion
   5. Hancock, John Reed
   6. Hancock, Leverison
   7. Hancock, Levi Ward
   8. Hancock, Joseph Smith
   Birthdate:
   1. April 9, 1834
   2. June 5, 1835
   3. May 14, 1836
   4. April 16, 1838
   5. April 19, 1844
   6. June 9, 1845
   7. February 28, 1847
   8. September 24, 1849
   Place:
   1. Kirtland, Geauga, OH, USA
   2. Kirtland, Geauga, OH, USA
   3. Kirtland, Geauga, OH, USA
   4. Far West, Caldwell, MO
   5. Nauvoo, Hancock, IL, USA
   6. Nauvoo, Hancock, IL, USA
   7. Indian Mills, Pottawattamie, IA, USA
   8. Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, UT, USA

Marriage Number 2 Hancock, Levi Ward (Male)
   Spouse: Richey, Emily Melissa
   Date: Before 1849

Marriage 2 Children:
   Name:
   1. Hancock, Emily Melissa
   2. Hancock, Temperance Jane
   3. Hancock, Levi Ward
   Birthdate:
   1. September 24, 1849
   2. January 1, 1852
   3. October 27, 1855
   Place:
   1. Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, UT, USA
   2. Manti, Sanpete, UT, USA
   3. Payson, Utah, UT, USA
Comments: Alger, Fanny (Female)
Fanny was Joseph Smith's first plural wife.

Ref: Far West Record, Cannon, Donald 1983
Page: 167, 171
Oliver Cowdery to Warren Cowdery, Jan. 24, 1838.
At the marriage of Sister Almera to the Prophet, there was still our youngest sister, for whom he manifest partiality, and would gladly have married, also, but she being young and partially promised to my first wife's brother, although reluctantly, the matter by him was dropped.

On learning from the Prophet that even in Kirtland "the Lord had required him to take plural wives, and that he had then thought to ask for some of my sister's" the past with its conditions and influences began more fully to unfold to my mind, the causes that must, at least in part, have led to the great apostasy and disruption in Kirtland. Without a doubt in my mind, Fanny Alger was, at Kirtland, the Prophet's first plural wife, in which, by right of his calling, he was justified of the Lord (see D&C 132:59-60); while Oliver Cowdery, J. Carter, W. Parish, or others were not justified of the Lord either in their criticisms upon the doings of the Prophet, or in their becoming a "law unto themselves," through which they lost the light of their calling and were left in darkness.

Fanny A., when asked by her brother and others, even after the Prophet's death, regarding her relations to him, replied: "That is all a matter of our own, and I have nothing to communicate." Her parents died in Utah, true to the church. And to my knowledge, was by President Kimball in the temple at St. George introduced as "Brother of the Prophet Joseph's first plural wife."
tice of plural marriage takes its place with the spiritual
gifts of the gospel.

Looked upon in this light it becomes a glorious privi-
lege of begetting bodies for the waiting spirits.

It is granted that this or any other explanation carries
along with it many unanswerable questions. Certainly,
however, plural marriage did not come because of eco-
nomic or social reasons as some have suggested.

The principle and the practice came to the Prophet
through revelation from the Lord. Its practice was always
permissive. Plural wives could be taken only under severe
restrictions and upon the recommendation of bishops,
stake presidents, General Authorities, and finally by the
President of the Church. The man who entered plural
marriage must be fitted in every way for this holy privi-
lege.

The divine purpose of plural marriage, since the Lord
has not explained it, is but dimly understood by man.

That Joseph Smith actually was the person who in-
roduced plural marriage into the Church and that he
practised it himself are amply proved by existing facts.

The revelation known as Section 132 in the Doctrine
and Covenants, which contains the doctrine of celestial
marriage and also the permission to practice plural mar-
rriage, was dictated to his scribe, William Clayton, by
Joseph Smith on July 12, 1843, a year before the martyr-
dom of the Prophet. It had been received by the Prophet
some years before and taught to many, but was not re-
duced to writing until 1843.

The evidence seems clear that the revelation on
plural marriage was received by the Prophet as early as
1831. A sermon delivered by Joseph F. Smith, then a
counselor in the First Presidency, later the President of
the Church, was reported as follows:

Here the speaker said, perhaps for the first time in public,
that the women who entered into plural marriage with the Prophet

Joseph Smith were shown to him and named to him as early as 1831,
and some of them were given in marriage to him as early as that
date, although it was not then prudent, under the circumstances,
to make these facts public. And when the Lord showed those
women to Joseph some of them were not even acquainted with
the Church much less him. God knew their hearts, as is proved by
the fact that they have been true and faithful through all the
trying vicissitudes through which they have passed, and that too
in the face of a frowning world; they have endured it all, and are
today examples of womanhood and purity.

It seems that Fannie Alger was one of Joseph's first
plural wives. She lived many years after the Prophet's
death and never denied her relationship to him. There
were other noble, pure women who gave like testimonies.

William Clayton lived as an honorable citizen of the
highest character. On December 4, 1879, thirty-six years
after the revelation was written he died. He never wavered
in his simple declaration that the revelation as now found
in the Doctrine and Covenants was dictated to him, sent-
tence by sentence, by the Prophet. He adds that "after the
whole was written, Joseph asked me to read it through
slowly and carefully, which I did, and he pronounced it
correct."

On the day the revelation was written, or the day
after, Joseph C. Kingsbury was asked to make a copy of
it. This copy was carefully compared with the original by
Bishop Newel K. Whitney and preserved by him. Elder
Kingsbury, of unblemished character and reputation, liver
fifty-five years after this event (he died October 5, 1898)
and always bore solemn testimony to the written origin
of the revelation in 1843 through the lips of the Prophet.
In further corroborations of the claim that the revelation
came from the lips of the Prophet are the statements of
numerous men and women, then living, who either saw
the revelation or heard it read. In fact, the document was
read to the high council and presidency of the stake of
Nauvoo on August 12, 1843, a month after it had been

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History of the Church, vol. 5, p. 261; Andrew Jessee, Historical Record, pp.
224-226.

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2 Journal History, February 17, 1898; Deseret News, February 17, 1882.
3 Andrew Jessee, Historical Record, pp. 233, 942.
4 Ibid., pp. 233-234.
5 Ibid., p. 227.
One of the most serious problems facing a student of Mormon history today is that those who have gone before us have not always been honest. Both Mormon and anti-Mormon writers have been guilty of this. The fact that some of these writers were not of Mormon ancestry, nor of the origin of the Mormon Church.

As a result, a number of years ago, an anonymous author wrote a book entitled "Defence of My Religion, Or How Myself Became a Saint." This book was widely read and widely praised. The author of this book was Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church.

However, it is now known that Joseph Smith did not write this book. The book was written by a pseudonym. The book was written in the 19th century, and in neither case can a 19th century copy be located. The most astonishing thing about this whole matter, however, is that the Overstreet "Confession" reveals the exact method that the impostor used in writing the "Defence." The reader will remember that we have previously stated that portions of Oliver Cowdery's early writings were used in the "Defence" to make it appear that it was written in his style. Now, in the Overstreet "Confession," Mr. Overstreet claimed that he was told to read some articles written by Oliver Cowdery so that he would be able to impersonate him. "To enable me to know what to say and do, Mr. Miller had me read some articles written by Cowdery and also gave me some voice drill, assuring me that he would make a verbatim record of my remarks, while personating Mr. Cowdery to be preserved for future use under the name of Brigham Young's direction, and that in part of the matter he was confident would never be known or suspected." (A Critical Look, page 1)

The fact that many portions of Oliver Cowdery's writings have been inserted into the "Defence" makes it very difficult to compare its style with that found in the "Confession." For instance, in an article published in the Messenger and Advocate, vol. 11, p. 14, Oliver Cowdery said: "I am ready to deliver a reflection past expression on this point is that, from this hand I received baptism, by the direction of the Angel of God. . . . Almost identical wording is found on page 3 of the "Defence": "And what served to render the reflection past expression in its bitterness to me, that from this hand I received baptism, by the direction of the Angel of God. . . ." The reader will notice that while most of the words were copied verbatim from the Messenger and Advocate, the words "in its bitterness to me" did not appear there. This is very interesting because in the Overstreet "Confession" we find the words "BITTER TO ME." (A Critical Look, page 1)

The reader will probably be pleased to learn that we have a further A Critical Look on the OVERSTREET "CONFESSION" AND THE COWDERY "DEFENCE." We have included it in a special offer which is explained on the last page of this issue of the Messenger and Advocate.

LIBRARY TAKE HISTORY

Although it is easy for Mormon writers to accept the fact that these two anti-Mormon documents are forgeries, it is very difficult for them to be as objective about the documents upon which their own church is founded. For instance, in our book MORNONISM--SHADOW OR REALITY? pages 126-142, we prove that more than 60% of Joseph Smith's History of the Church was not compiled until after his death although the Mormon leaders have published it under his name. The remaining portion—less than 40%—compiled in his lifetime had serious changes made to it after his death. We pointed out that material was taken from newspapers and journals and changed to the first person to make it appear that Joseph Smith had written it. One brief example.
The Friends of Church History got off to a great start. We understand that about 500 people attended the first meeting. Dr. Arrington was probably elated by the large turn out, but the Mormon leaders could see that this would cause serious problems for the Church. With a large group studying Church history the truth about Joseph Smith and the foundation of the Church would be very likely to emerge. They could not stand for their leaders to learn about the real Joseph Smith; therefore, an order was issued by the First Presidency that the next meeting should be cancelled. Meetings were to be held "the fourth Thursday of each month" instead. On April 27, 1973, we talked to a woman in Dr. Arrington's office. She admitted that the group did not meet in April and could not give a reason when the group might meet again. She went so far as to say that they were not sure of the standing of the Friends of Church History. It is reported that Dr. Arrington was recently asked why the Friends of Church History were not meeting. He replied that they were still "Thrashing out" the constitution. What a quaint comment on the Church's attitude! Arrington's statement, he said they were "thrashing out more than the constitution." William B. Smart, the man who was supposed to head the new Committee on History of Church Affairs, said that it was the "First Presidency" that gave the order to "hold" it up.

On Dec. 12, 1972, the Deseret News announced that "Elder Joseph Anderson has been appointed director of the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Elder Anderson is a man who believes in suppressing the records, and he can make it very difficult for Dr. Arrington." On March 8, 1973, a member of the Church asked Joseph Anderson concerning an unpublished revelation of Joseph Smith. His reply was that it "isn't available." It would now appear that the Mormon leaders are still in charge of the Historical Department and that Dr. Arrington is only the "Church Historian" in name. When asked about access to documents he states that he is in charge of writing and research but has nothing to do with persons wanting to do their research in the Church Historical Department of the Church. He refers a person to Earl Olsen who is the Church Archivist. Earl Olsen has been refusing access to the documents for many years. In the case where the man was trying to locate大事日志, he had asked Earl Olsen but the first asked Earl Olsen. Olsen told him he must get permission from the First Presidency. He called the First Presidency's Office on a back to back line and he told Olsen that he had used to go on when Joseph Fielding Smith was Church Historian. Even the Mormon scholar who claims to have better access to materials could not locate the journal entries, and was forced to use the journals of Joseph Smith available. For instance, the journal of George Q. Cannon may never be available because it contains so many important material concerning Joe, as mentioned in the last section. Although there has certainly been an improvement in the Church Historical Department since Dr. Arrington's appointment, some of the liberal Mormons fear that he is beginning to compromise. We know that he was planning to print Joseph Smith's journals but we also know that some of the Mormon leaders would be very opposed to this since it would tend to further undermine the History of the Church and to reveal the truth about Joseph Smith. We hope that a possible solution might be to print copies of the journals of Joseph Smith available. If pressure is not applied, it may very well be that these journals will never be made available.

In this regard, if enough people will unite against the suppressive measures of the Mormon leaders I believe there is a chance. I know of one woman who had the courage to tell the Mormon leaders to either make a suppressed document available or remove her name from the Church records. Of course they did not comply with either request, but we know that if enough people will stand up for the truth great things will be accomplished. We feel that the Mormon leaders were forced into appointing Dr. Arrington as Church Historian because of the pressure that was exerted upon them. Now that he has been appointed, however, they have tried to take away the powers of his office and to make him compromise his position. We feel that the documents belong to the Mormon people and that they should raise their voices in protest against these oppressive measures.

JOSEPH SMITH AND ADULTERY

When Mormon apologists are unable to refute our arguments against the Church they will often resort to attacking us by accusing us of adultery or polygamy. For instance, in a letter dated Feb. 26, 1973, we find the following:

"A close friend of mine was recently converted to Mormonism..." I gave my friend your original thesis, Mormonism, and I could tell he was somewhat disturbed after reading it. But after discussing the thesis with some elders of his church, he came back with this statement about you: "Gerald Tanner was excommunicated from the Church for polygamy." Mr. Tanner, I would be most appreciative to have your comment as to any truth that may surround this statement.

We, of course, replied that there is no truth in this statement and that we are careful not to use any improper language or anything unfavorable to the Church. We pointed out that we have photographically reproduced the actual text of some of the letters which were written to the Prophet and which show that the Prophet was not able to obtain the records of the Church. We pointed out that there were no "charge of adultery" involved. In a letter addressed to "Brother Gerald Tanner" and dated August 25, 1968, the Cannon Seventh Ward Bishopric stated: "In accordance with your request your name has been removed from the records and you are no longer considered a mormon."

Actually, the truth of the matter is that we felt that the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith was guilty of adultery. This helped lead us to the conclusion that he was not a prophet and that we should ask for our names to be removed from the records of the Church. In our book Mormonism—Shadow or Reality? pp. 202-203, we show that the Mormon doctrines of plural marriage was not the divine system that many people believe it was. In fact, there is evidence that Joseph Smith was involved with other women long before he gave his famous revelation on polygamy on July 22, 1843. Finally, Dr. Arrington made the following statement concerning a girl by the name of Fanny Alger: "The charge of adulterous relations with a certain girl was leveled against Smith by Cowdery in Missouri in 1837; this accusation became one of the complaints the Church had against Cowdery in his excommunication trial in Far West, April 12, 1838. In rationalizing Cowdery's accusation, the Prophet testified that 'Oliver Cowdery had been his bosom friend, therefore he entrusted him with many things'..."

Max Parkin's source for this information is the "Far West Record." This is an unpublished "record book containing minutes of meetings in Kirtland and Far West, Missouri". The original is in the Church Historical Department. At one time Michael Marquardt, the author of the book, stated that he was able to get a copy of the book from the Church Historian's Office. He copied some important material from it which has never been published. We take the following from his notes:

"David W. Patten testifies, that he went to Oliver Cowdery to inquire of him if a certain story was true respecting J. Smith's adjetures. Cowdery, when addressed, took a volume of the "Mormon Conference Minutes" and showed some pages to Mr. Patten, and told him he did not remember the occurrence. Patten then said, 'I believe you remember Mr. Tanner's testimony, and I have his testimony here. You remember the circumstance respecting the Masons. This was it, [Patten was referring to a conspiracy among the Mormon leaders to suppress the truth about Joseph Smith.] I have the minutes of the Masons. I want to produce the minutes of the Masons, and tell you what happened." Also said that Joseph told him, HE HAD CONFESSED TO MEISH, also that he has used his influence to urge on lawsuits. Thomas B. Marsh testifies that while in Kirtland last summer, David W. Patten asked Oliver Cowdery if Joseph Smith, Jr. had confided to his wife that he was guilty of adultery with a certain girl, when Oliver Cowdery COCKED UP HIS EYES VERY التركيب and hesitated to answer the question, saying, he could not answer the question, because he was bound to answer the question, but he knew, I was wrong, and the idea that it was true. Last fall after Oliver came to this place he heard a conversation take place between Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery when J. Smith asked him if he had
Although a few Mormon scholars had known of the existence of this material since about 1835, it was not generally available to most Mormon or to non-Mormon scholars. When the scholarly world through the Tanners' publication got their first glimpse, some Mormons became unsatisfied with the point of losing their faith in Smith's ability to translate Egyptian. Yet a more shattering blow to their faith was still to come the following year.

On November 27, 1837 the news media carried an unexpected announcement that a portion of the papyri which Joseph Smith had acquired in 1835 was still in existence and had been turned over to the Mormon church by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Now at last the official material was available for judging the Mormon leader's translating ability. What was heralded with great rejoicing by the Mormon community, has since turned into a nightmare for their scholars and has been responsible for some learned Mormons coming to reject the Book of Abraham and even renounce all the claims of their Prophet...

It is no wonder that some Mormons have come recently to reject Joseph's claim to a knowledge of Egyptian...not even the best scholarship can save a sinking ship, and Mormon integrity such as Dee Jay Nelson, whose competence in Egyptian is granted by all, have sorrowfully admitted that the Book of Abraham was not at all a divine production, but purely the work of Joseph Smith's imagination.

Wesley P. Walters gives a very good summary of the evidence against the Book of Abraham. He deals with Dr. Nibley's attempts to defend it and shows that he is in a state of confusion on almost every important issue. All of our readers should have a copy of Walter's new work, Joseph Smith Among The Egyptians: Hidden Revelation Revealed.

Just as we were preparing the last pages of the Messenger, Michael Marquardt brought to light an extremely important revelation which the Mormon leaders had suppressed since 1842. This revelation is concerning polygamy and is dated a year earlier than the one published in the Doctrine and Covenants. It sanctions Joseph Smith's secret marriage to Sarah Ann Whitney. (The reader will remember that Sarah Ann Whitney was secretly married to Smith, but that she had a "pretended" marriage to Joseph C. Kingsbury to cover up this relationship.) This revelation is dated July 31, 1842, and reads as follows:

"Verify, thus saith the Lord unto my servant N. K. Whitney, the thing that my servant Joseph Smith has made known unto you and your family and which you have agreed upon is right if mine eyes and shall be rewarded upon your heads with honor and immortality and eternal life to all your house, both old and young because of the lineage of my Priesthood, saith the Lord, it shall be upon you and upon your children after you from generation to generation, by virtue of the holy promises which I now make unto you, saith the Lord. These are the words which you shall pronounce upon my servant Joseph and your daughter S. A. Whitney. They shall take each other by the hand and you shall say, You both mutually agree, calling them by name, to be each other's companion as long as you both shall live, preserving yourselves for each other and from all others and also throughout eternity, reserving only those rights which have been given to my servant Joseph by revelation and commandment and by legal authority in times passed. If you both agree to covenant and do this, I then give you, S. A. Whitney, my daughter, to Joseph Smith, to be his wife, to observe all the rights which you both belong to that condition. I do it in my own name and in the name of my wife, your mother, and in the name of my holy progenitors, by the right of birth which is of priesthood, vested in me by revelation and commandment and promises of the Living God, obtained by the holy Melchisedec Getheu Getheu and others of the Holy Fathers, commanding in the name of the Lord all those powers to concentrate in you and through you to your posterity forever. All these things I do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that through this order he may be glorified and that through the power of assisting David may reign over Israel, which shall hereafter be revealed. Let immortality and eternal life hereafter be sealed upon your heads forever and ever." (Revelation given by Joseph Smith, July 31, 1842, typed copy, original in the LDS Church Historian's Office.)

In The Strange Marriages of Sarah Ann Whitney, Michael Marquardt shows that the Mormon historian Orson F. Whitney mentioned this revelation in 1885 but stated that "It has never been published." Mr. Marquardt has also found that the Mormon scholar Karl Paulsen admits that he has read it several times in the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City.

Although he did not include a copy of the revelation in his thesis written at Brigham Young University, Mr. Paulsen did include a description of it which seems to verify the copy we have printed above. In the ceremony uniting the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sarah Ann in celestial marriage, the ceremony having been given to the Prophet by revelation, Jehovah, the father-in-law of Moses, is mentioned as one of Bishopps Whitney's ancestors.

("The Life and Contributions of Newell Kimball Whitney," Brigham Young University, 1966, pp. 113-114, typed copy.)