

and it became the talk of the town that Joseph had made a proposition to Nancy Rigdon to become his wife, and that she refused him. A few days after the occurrence Joseph Smith came to my father's house and talked the matter over with the family, my sister, Mrs. Athalia Robinson also being present, who is now alive. The feelings manifested by our family on this occasion were anything but brotherly or sisterly, more especially on the part of Nancy, as she felt that she had been insulted. A day or two later Joseph Smith returned to my father's house, when matters were satisfactorily adjusted between them, and there the matter ended. After that Joseph Smith sent my father to Pittsburgh, Pa., to take charge of a little church that was there, and Ebenezer Robinson, who was then the Church printer, or at least had been such, as he was the printer of the paper in Kirtland, Ohio, and a printer by trade, was to go with him to print a paper there, and nine days before Joseph Smith was shot at Carthage we started, reaching Pittsburgh the day before he was killed.

Deponent further says: I have in my possession a paper called the *Nauvoo Expositor*, bearing date, Nauvoo, Illinois, Friday, June 7th, 1844, which said paper's printing plant was destroyed by the City Council at Nauvoo a night or two after that issue. There never was but one issue of this paper. Joseph Smith the Prophet was then Mayor of the City of Nauvoo. In the afternoon of the day on which the printing plant was destroyed, Henry Phelps, a son of W. W. Phelps, came down Main Street selling this paper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*, and everyone who could raise five cents bought a copy. In that paper the three following affidavits appeared, which I reproduce herewith.

AFFIDAVITS

I hereby certify that Hyrum Smith did (in his office) read to me a certain written document which he said was a revelation from God. He said that he was with Joseph when it was received. He afterwards gave me the document to read and I took it to my house and read it and showed it to my wife and returned it the next day. The revelation (so called) authorized certain men to have more wives than one at a time in this world and in the world to come. It said this was the law, and commanded Joseph to enter into the law. And also that he should administer to others. Several other items were in the revelation, supporting the above doctrines.

Wm. Law.

State of Illinois,
Hancock County.

I, Robert D. Foster, certify that the above certificate was sworn to before me as true in substance, this fourth day of May, A.D. 1844.

Robert D. Foster, J. P.

I certify that I read the revelation referred to in the above affidavit of my husband. It sustained in strong terms the doctrine of more wives than one at a time in this world and in the next. It authorized some to have to the number of ten, and set forth that those women who would not allow their husbands to have more wives than one should be under condemnation before God.

Jane Law.

Sworn and subscribed before me this 4th day of May, A.D. 1844.

Robert D. Foster, J. P.

To all whom it may concern:

Forasmuch as the public mind hath been much agitated by a course of procedure in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by a number of persons declaring against certain doctrines and practices therein (among whom I am one) it is but meet that I should give my reasons at least in part as a cause that hath led me to declare myself. In the latter part of the summer of 1843, the Patriarch Hyrum Smith did in the High Council, of which I was a member, introduce what he said was a revelation given through the Prophet, that the said Hyrum Smith did essay to read the said revelation in the said council; that according to his reading there was contained the following doctrines: 1st. The sealing up of persons to eternal life, against all sins save that of shedding innocent blood or of consenting thereto; and. The doctrine of plurality of wives or marrying virgins; that David and Solomon had many wives, yet in this they sinned not, save in the matter of Uriah. This revelation with others, evidence that the aforesaid heresies were taught and practiced in the Church, determined me to leave the office of first counselor to the President of the Church at Nauvoo, inasmuch as I dared not teach or administer such laws. And further deponent saith not.

Austin Cowles.

State of Illinois,
Hancock County.

To all whom it may concern: I hereby certify that the above certificate was sworn and subscribed before me, this fourth day of May, 1844.

Robert D. Foster, J. P.

John W. Rigdon.

Sworn to before me this 28th day of July, 1905.

[Seal.]

James Jack, Notary Public.

COWLES, Austin

Birth: May 1792, Brookfield, Orange, Vermont
Son of Timothy Cowles and Abigail Woodworth
Married: Phebe Wilbur, 14 January 1813, Unadilla, Otsego, New York
Irena Hix Elliott, 21 October 1827, Amity, Orange, New York
Death: January 1872, Hamilton Township, Decatur, Iowa

Austin Cowles was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1832. He served a mission to New Hampshire and Massachusetts. In 1842 he resided at Nauvoo, Hancock, Illinois, and attended the Nauvoo Fourth Ward. He was a counselor to President William Marks in the Nauvoo Stake.

Austin was opposed to plural marriage and sided with William Law and other dissenters in 1844. He wrote an affidavit against plural marriage that appeared in the Nauvoo Expositor on 7 June 1844. He later affiliated with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Source: Saints' Herald Obituaries, 8 March 1872, p. 160
Black, Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints: 1830-1848, 12:127-29
Temple Index Bureau
Backman, A Profile of...Camp, 1830-1839 Cook, The Words of
Joseph Smith, pp. 64, 87, 231, 292
Smith, Nauvoo Social History Project
Biographical Index, RLDS Card Catalog
Nauvoo Federal Census, 1842
Illinois, Nauvoo City Tax Lists, 1841-1844
Illinois, Nauvoo Property Transactions
Journal History of the Church, 1843-1844
Journal of History, 14:285; 16:56, 58, 64

Cowles, Elvira Annie

Born: 23 November 1813 in Unadilla, Oswego, New York
Daughter of Austin Cowles and Phoebe Wilber
Married: 1 December 1842 to Jonathan Harriman Holmes at Nauvoo by Joseph Smith
Died: 10 March 1871 in Farmington, Davis, Utah