one of his wives. On 15 September 1869, Hyde testified:

I, Orson Hyde, do hereby certify and declare according to my best recollection, that on the 4th day of Sept I was married to Miss Marinda N. Johnson, in Kirtland Ohio, in the Year of our Lord 1834. And in the Month of Feb or March, I was married to Miss Martha R. Browitt, by Joseph Smith the Martyred Prophet and by him she was Sealed to me for time, and for all Eternity, in Nauvoo Ill. And in the month of April of the same year 1843, I was married by the same person to Mss. Mary Ann Price, and by him she was Sealed to me for time and for all Eternity, in Nauvoo Ill while the woman to whom I was first married was yet living and gave her cordial consent to both transactions and was personally present to witness the ceremony's.

Mary Ann (Price) Hyde recorded in her memoirs (apparently in the 1860s):

On the return of Orson Hyde from his mission to Palestine [on 7 December 1842] he carried letters of introduction to me and invited me to visit his wife. I was there met by Joseph Smith, the Prophet, who, after an interesting conversation introduced the subject of plural marriage and endeavoured to teach me that principle. I resisted it with every argument I could command for, with my traditions, it was most repulsive to my feelings and rendered me very unhappy as I could not reconcile it with the purity of the gospel of Christ. Mr. Hyde took me home in a carriage and asked me what I thought of it and if I would consent to enter his family? I replied that I could not think of it for a moment. Thus it rested for awhile and Mr. Hyde married another young lady [i.e., Martha R. Browett]. In the mean time I was trying to learn the character of the leading men, for I sincerely hoped they were men of God. But, in my mind, plurality of wives was a serious question. I soon learned to my satisfaction, that Mr. Orson Hyde was a conscientious, upright[,] and noble man and became his third wife. Mrs. [Marinda Nancy] Hyde had two sweet little girls and I soon learned to love them and their dear mother who in the Spring of 1842 [sic, 1843] received me into her house as her husband's wife. Sealed to him by Joseph the Prophet in her presence.

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18 See also the genealogical information in Myrtle Stevens Hyde, *Orson Hyde: The Olive Branch of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Agreka Books, 2000), pp. 496-99.

19 In J. F. Smith Affidavits.

20 Browett and Hyde divorced ca. 1850.

The Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-1844
Gary James Bergera

[W]e hardly dared speak of it [i.e., plural marriage during Joseph Smith's lifetime]. The very walls had ears. We spoke of it only in whispers.
--Zina Diantha (Huntington) Jacobs Smith Young (1898)

Of course there was things manifestly that the church was not to know,--that they were not to reveal to the church, or were not to be revealed to the church ...
--Wilford Woodruff (1892)

From Joseph Smith's first documented eternal plural marriage in 1841 until his death more than three years later, some twenty-eight men and 105 women (as civil and plural wives) entered the prophet's order of celestial matrimony. Given the secrecy surrounding Smith's controversial (and illegal) practice, the exact number of these earliest polygamists may never be known. However, enough information in the form of diaries, letters, autobiographies, reminiscences, affidavits, statements, and family histories has accumulated since the early 1840s--coupled with reasonable inferences and educated guesses--to enable a compelling, albeit tentative, identification.3

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2This number counts Marinda N. (Johnson) Hyde and Mary Ann (Frost) Stearns Pratt once each. In addition, it does not include the deceased civil wives of John E. Page, Parley P. Pratt, Hyrum Smith, and Brigham Young, nor the husbands of women also married plurally to Joseph Smith, nor the men and women involved in John C. Bennett's alternative system of polygamy.

3In early 1994, George D. Smith published the results of his investigations into early plural marriage: "Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841-1846: A Preliminary Demographic Report," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 37 (Spring 1994): 1-72. Smith's analysis included a comprehensive appendix entitled "Nauvoo Polygamous Families" which listed every known--as of 1994--plural husband and wife sealed with Joseph Smith's (and later Brigham Young's) approval, together with dates of birth, marriage, sealing, age at sealing, and total family size prior to mid-1844, from mid-1844 to 1846, and from 1846 on.
If you need lessons, you may call or send to my house, and I think you may find several books that may assist you in your purpose. I am about out of cash. It is rather hard to raise it just now.

Prospect very good here, and an excellent newspaper prevails among the saints and also with many that have an amendment is going on between Sidney Rigdon and others to prove polygamy against some persons in Nauvoo. Now I think it will be hard for Rigdon or any of his party to severe to a thing that does not exist, or if it does exist that his party must be guilty. I see this course is recommended in the papers in this city. But still I think people will have more solved how to understand.

I have been told that the charges on his box were 200 or 300 dollars. He sent it over by me, Bulk & I got of him before. He must pay you the freight. I shall be at home in the course of a week.
Orson Hyde

Marinda Nancy Johnson, m. 4 Sept. 1834 in Kirtland

Martha Rebecca Brunett m. Feb. or March 1843 by J. Smith

Mary Ann Price m. 20 July 1843 by J. Smith

Affidavit of Orson Hyde, 15 Sept. 1869 has date of April 1843
Plural Wives

Name                          Martha Brown
sealed to                      Orson Hyde

date                          Feb 01 March 1843
performed by                 Joseph Smith

witnesses                    Marinda Hyde

known by Emma Smith?           [ ]
time and all eternity      Yes [x]  No [ ]
time only                    Yes [ ]  No [ ]
marrried when sealed to JS    Yes [ ]  No [ ]
birth date                   ________
age at time of marriage ___
location                     ________
consummated                 Yes [ ]  No [ ]
separated/divorced from JS   _____
death date                  ________
statements                  ________

sources:                     ________

Baptism                      ________
Endowment                    ________
Rebaptism                    ________
Sealed                       ________
2nd Anointing                ________
Plural Wives

Name: Mary Ann Price

sealed to: Orson Hyde

date: April, Spring (?) 1843 - July 26, 1843

performed by: Joseph Smith

witnesses: Mary Ann Hyde

known by Emma Smith? [ ]
time and all eternity: Yes [ ] No [ ]
time only: Yes [ ] No [ ]
mARRIED WHEN SEALED TO JS: Yes [ ] No [ ]
birth date: 
age at time of marriage:
location:
consummated: Yes [ ] No [ ]
separated/divorced from JS:
death date:
statements:
sources: 

Baptism: 
Endowment: 
Rebaptism: 
Sealed: 
2nd Anointing: 