

place in the fall of 1843, the ceremony may have actually occurred sometime during April-May 1844 (or perhaps in late spring 1843), as William was living in the eastern United States from the summer of 1843 to April 1844.

On October 19, 1845, William was excommunicated from the LDS Church for various infractions, including unauthorized plural marriages, undertaken after Joseph Smith's death. In late 1846, Covington married Joseph A. Stratton (born 1821). Stratton died in 1850 in Salt Lake City. In 1864 Covington wed Chauncey Walker West, who had married Mary Ann's sister Sarah in 1855 and who would add a third Covington sister, Susan, as his plural wife in 1867.<sup>88</sup> Later, Covington was sealed to Stratton, with West acting as proxy.

Like most early Mormon diarists, Erastus Snow did not record his first plural marriage. However, unlike most early diarists, he did record—in code—his early eternal sealing to his civil wife, Artemesia Beaman (married 1838). She was a sister of Joseph Smith's first Nauvoo plural wife, Louisa Beaman. As translated, Snow's diary entry for February 15, 1844, reads: "Record of Marriage On the 15th day of February 1844 I Erastus Snow according to the laws provisions of the Holy Priesthood, was married and sealed for Times Eternity to Artemesia Beman by Hyrum Smith Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."<sup>89</sup> According to a later statement by Snow, he was sealed to Minerva White, his first plural wife, in March 1844. Hyrum Smith, "officiating under the Prophet's direc-

serted that polygamy was not introduced into the LDS Church until after his brother's death. "Your father never sealed or married any plural wives to me," he also wrote to Joseph Smith III on July 20, 1892, "nor did he ever tell me that he believed in Polygamy—nor did he ever read any revelation in my presence [sic] in the Council of the twelve—nor did I hear of any talk of revelation on Polygamy until after the Brigham Mormons left Nauvoo—in the Spring 1846. . . . how much your father may have had to do with this doctrine—Previous to his death I know nothing about it: if any Person got Polygamy teachings from William Smith—no other one is responsible for it but himself." Holograph in Community of Christ Library-Archives.

88. See Franklin L. West, *Chauncey W. West: Pioneer-Churchman* (Salt Lake City: Author, 1965), 24, 32. Mary Ann bore two children, one of whom survived to adulthood, before Chauncey died on January 9, 1870.

89. Erastus Snow, *Diary*, June 1841–February 1847, text opposite p. 50, LDS Church Archives.

tion," performed the ceremony.<sup>90</sup> Both wives were later resealed and anointed to Snow in the Nauvoo Temple.

Five years before he died, Snow publicly described his introduction to early Mormon plural marriage:

The Prophet Joseph Smith in the year 1841 [sic, 1843] made known the principle of the Celestial Order of Marriage to him me. He invited me out for a walk with him and told me that when He was translating the Scriptures that part of it w[ould] be one of the Old Prophets was deviding His property to His ofspring. ^Then it was that the Lord revealed unto him ^That the time had come now when the principle should be practiced. Joseph told me the Names of some of the wives or wom[en] which had been sealed to him by Joseph B. Noble. That Emma His 1st wife was acquainted with ^these wom[en] ^ and had administered to him but she had turned against him now. That in the conversation the Prophet was pure and Noble. He [i.e., Erastus Snow] testified that He was perfectly acquainted with the Wives of the Prophet Joseph. The 1st ones Name was Luisa Demon [i.e., Louisa Beaman] who was a pure and virtuous woman all her life.

Emma believed that there could not be a Holy Alliance between the man and the woman unless the woman consented to it with all her heart. Emma used her womanly nature to teas and annoy Joseph and went so far as to threaten Joseph that she would leave Him and cohabit with another man and the Lord forbade her in the Revelation. . . .

I [i.e., Erastus Snow] know and do bare record that He [i.e., Joseph Smith] did [practice plural marriage] and counceled me to obey and enter into this order and about a year after my conversation with him upon the subject He sent His brother [i.e., Hyrum Smith] who sealed [on April 2, 1844] a second wife [i.e., Minerva White] to me and she is living now.

The Law was that the 1st wife place the right hand of the 2d into the hand of her husband and expressed her willingness and consent. He [i.e.,

90. "Apostle Erastus Snow's Testimony," in Jenson, "Plural Marriage," 232, courtesy H. Michael Margardt. In contrast, Snow family genealogical records report that this first plural marriage occurred on February 2, 1844. Moroni Snow, "The Descendants of Erastus Snow," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 3 (April 1912): 64. According to Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), 87, Joseph Smith performed Snow's plural marriage. However, Snow's personal report that Hyrum Smith officiated seems more likely. By 1844, Joseph Smith had ceded most such responsibilities to Hyrum.

Minutes of the Council of the Twelve:

Box 12, fd 1, Brigham Young Minutes [?], Jan. 17, 1840- (July) 1846

England

Conference of the Quorum of the Twelve at the house of President B. Young, Nauvoo, Aug. 31, 1841, "assist the Trustee" in Trust in his arduous duties

Nov. 31 [1841] "Voted that Eben Robinson be requested solicited to give up the Department of Printing the paper to Bro Richards."

Jan. 17, 1842, B. Young Pres. H. C. Kimball, O. Pratt, W. Woodruff, John Taylor, G. A. Smith, W. Richards, "the Revelation concerning Amos Fuller was read, when it voted unanimously that Amos Fuller take a mission to the city of Chicago. -- & that Henry Jacobs accompany Bro Fuller." ... "Moved <by the President> that all those who are in favor of assisting Bro Robinson in printing the Book of Mormon & the other Books, and backing up the concern, manifest it by the usual sign. Not a hand raised, but every hand was raised in the negative." W. Richards Scribe

Has minutes of May 27, 1843

Twelve – High Council. President, 70s. April 18<sup>th</sup>. 1844 ... Object of the meeting to take in consideration the Two Laws and Foster ...

Jack Scot = ... Went to Wm wife to attempt to seduce her. Joseph wanted her to come into the order. Not privilege to sell unless he obed.. & marry more privilege sealed to him – watch his opportunity Mrs. Out in bed room attempt to take her abed. Repent. & kill him – spare his life she told her husband. Get time told William. Joseph swore . &c Wm told Joseph Wm wife lied some where. Joseph said you did Joseph Joseph acknowledged & sealed William & wife. Was not a more gallant scoundrel ever hung between the heavens. and the earth.

Vote carried unanimously. Wilson Law Clayton moved Wm Law be cut off. 2d J. P. Green, Wm Clayton spoke C. C. Rich said Ho---? Said Wm Law made a statement at wedding last winter Joseph had revelation for the Devil

Box 33, fd 10, Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Aug. 31, 1841-Feb. 8, 1846

March 12, 1844: a meeting of the foregoing was called at the Assembly room -- ;but few attended The president of the Twelve was absent and all the Twelve except W. Richards. P~~r~~t Hyrum Smith & Sidney Rigdon were present.