Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young on the Witness Stand:
Recollections of a Plural Wife

by H. Michael Marquardt

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Emily Dow Partridge’s early life is connected with her father Edward Partridge who later became the first bishop in the early Mormon movement. Special emphasis in this paper will be on the sacred land purchased in 1831 by Partridge where the temple of the New Jerusalem would stand. Emily’s association with the prophet Joseph Smith as a house maid and later as a plural wife was a brief and overpowering force in her life. After Smith’s death she married Brigham Young and came west to what became Utah Territory. Her testimony in the Temple Lot Case can assist those studying the early Mormon experience. Plural marriage, celestial marriage, polygamy, or polygyny was an important factor in Emily Partridge’s life. May we begin to explore this fragment of Mormon history.

Emily Dow Partridge was born 28 February 1824 in Painesville, Geauga County, Ohio. Her father was Edward a hat manufacturer and her mother Lydia was rearing two children before Emily’s birth as the third daughter in a family of seven (five girls and two boys). About 1828 Edward and Lydia were baptized by Sidney Rigdon into the Disciples of Christ (Campbellite).¹

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As early as January 1828 Edward was advertising for sale his house, hatter's shop, and barn in Painesville, and also a one hundred acre farm.2

Young Emily was six years old when Lydia became the first member of the family to be baptized into the Church of Christ established by Joseph Smith, Jr. She received the ordinance in November 1830 from Parley P. Pratt one of the four missionaries called on a mission to the Native Americans. Edward wanted to meet Joseph Smith before making his decision about joining the church. With elder Sidney Rigdon they left for New York arriving in December. After meeting with the young church leader Smith received a revelation for Edward3 and he was soon baptized on 11 December 1830 by Joseph Smith.

After Edward return to Ohio, Joseph Smith revealed that elder Partridge was to be ordained the first church bishop.4 At a conference held on 3 June 1831 John Corrill and Isaac

in Sandy, Utah, and are the parents of five children.


2 Painesville Telegraph 6 (18 Jan. 1828):3, Painesville, Ohio. See also Painesville Telegraph, And Geauga Free Press 1 (1 Sept. 1829):3, where Partridge advertises that he is "wishing to quit the Hatting business, and leave Painesville," and was selling his hat shop and a 100 acre farm south of Harpersfield.

3 H. Michael Marquardt, The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 97; Doctrine and Covenants, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter cited as LDS D&C) and Doctrine and Covenants, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; name changed on 6 April 2001 to Community of Christ (hereafter cited as RLDS D&C); LDS D&C 36; RLDS D&C 35, [7-11] Dec. 1830. Partridge was ordained an elder by Sidney Rigdon on 15 December 1830.

4 Partridge received his ordination as bishop on 4 February 1831 by Sidney Rigdon.
Morley were chosen to be his assistants. A beautifully preserved bishop’s license is housed in the LDS Church Archives. Besides being signed by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, additional church elders who stopped in Independence, Missouri added their names to Partridge’s license between August 1831 and about January 1832. In the middle of June 1831 Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon along with Edward Partridge and others left to travel to Independence soon to be designated the gathering place of the saints.

As church members left New York in 1831 some of them traveled through Painesville going to Kirtland and stopped at the Partridge’s home. Soon after Emily caught the measles. She finally recovered but her “ear was sore for years.” She wrote fifty-three years later, “I can’t tell you how I suffered with it both from pain and mortification of pride. When my ear did get well, it left me deaf and I have been deaf (in that ear) ever since.”

Bishop Partridge in Independence

The important event of the trip by Joseph Smith and other elders was to dedicate the spot for the latter-day New Jerusalem temple and make plans for the gathering of the saints to build up

5 Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), 7. At this conference Partridge was ordained to the High Priesthood by Lyman Wight.

6 Original licence in LDS Church Archives. For a photograph see Church History in the Fulness of Times (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 121.

7 Emily D. P. Young, “What I Remember,” (7 April 1884), 7, Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young Papers, MS 113, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.
a righteous city. A short time after they arrived Joseph Smith received a revelation designation
Independence and land west to the Missouri River as the location where the saints were to live in
a Zion community. The revelation included the location of the temple to be built:

the land of Missouri which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the
gathering of the saints Wherefore this is the land of promise and the place for the city of
Zion yea and thus saith the Lord your God if ye will receive wisdom behold the place
which is called Independence is the center place and the spot for the temple is lying
westward upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse Wherefore it is wisdom that the
Land should be purchased by the saints and also every tract lying westward even unto the
line run[n]ing directly between Jew [Native Americans] and Gentile and also every tract
bordering by the prairies inasmuch as my disciples are enabled to buy lands behold this is
wisdom that they may obtain it for an everlasting inheritance⁸

Edward Partridge was instructed to divide unto the saints their inheritance. One church
member who had money was Book of Mormon witness Martin Harris. In another revelation it
stated, “It is wisdom in me, that my servant Martin [Harris] should be an example unto the
church, in laying his moneys before the bishop of the church.”⁹

Oliver Cowdery who was present at the dedication ceremony for the place where the

⁸ Marquardt, Joseph Smith Revelations, 142; LDS D&C 57:1-5; RLDS D&C 57:1, 20 July 1831.
temple was to be built recorded that on 3 August 1831 a number of elders “assembled together where the temple is to be erected. Sidney Rigdon dedicated the ground where the city is to Stand: and Joseph Smith Jr. laid a stone at the North east corner of the contemplated Temple in the name of the Lord Jesus of Nazareth. After all present had rendered thanks to the great ruler of the universe. Sidney Rigdon pronounced this Spot of ground wholy [wholly] dedicated unto the Lord forever: Amen.”

Sidney Rigdon dedicated the spot for the temple and John Whitmer mentioned that the stone laid was the "cornerstone of the Temple." William E. McLellin who visited Independence shortly after the dedication showed visitors in 1881 the spot where the cornerstone was placed. As McLellin explained it Joseph Smith “cut his way in through this thick growth of trees, brush and saplings, marked the spot by blazing a tree near by, cutting away the under brush for a few feet around and setting up a small stone that had been picked up in the ravine below. This was all the corner stone that was ever laid upon it, and it [was] only to mark the place of the corner.”

Ezra Booth wrote about the location of the temple:


11 Westergren, From Historian to Dissident, 85.

12 William H. Kelley to “Editor Herald,” 16 Jan. 1882 in Saints Herald 29 (1 March 1882):67. John L. Traughber wrote that in April 1881 William E. McLellin told him that Martin Harris was the person who picked up a rock that Joseph used for the cornerstone (John L. Traughber, “Some Statements by Dr. W. E. McLellan,” 23 May 1884 (John L. Traughber Collection, MS 666, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library).
Should the inhabitants of Independence, feel a desire to visit the place, destined at some future time to become celebrated, they will have only to walk one half of a mile out of Town, to a rise of ground, a short distance south of the road. They will be able to ascertain the spot, by the means of a sappling, distinguished from others by the bark being taken off on the north and on the west side. - On the south side of the sappling will be found the letter, T. which stands for Temple; and on the east side ZOM for Zomar; which Smith says is the original word for Zion. Near the foot of the sappling, they will find a small stone, covered over with bushes, which were cut for that purpose. This is the corner-stone for the Temple.  

In a letter from Edward to wife written in August he wrote, “And as Brother [Sidney] Gilbert or I must be here to attend the sales in December . . . I have thought it advisable to stay here for the present . . . You know I stand in an important station, and as I am occasionally chastened I sometimes fear my station is above what I can perform to the acceptance of my Heavenly Father.”

Former elder Ezra Booth wrote to Bishop Partridge in September 1831. Booth recounted Joseph Smith’s failed vision of the number of converts they would find in Missouri that Partridge

14 Partridge to Lydia Partridge, 5-6 Aug. 1831, LDS Church Archives, quoted in D. Brent Collette, “In Search of Zion: A Description of Early Mormon Millennial Utopianism as Revealed through the Life of Edward Partridge” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1977), 148-49.
had also complained about. Returning from Independence Joseph Smith received a revelatory message that said that Bishop Partridge was forgiven as he had sinned and repented. But Partridge did not leave the church as Booth expected.

Edward’s family was expected to travel to Independence to be with him as he administered to the gathered saints. The Partridges left the family holdings in Painesville under the management of Harvey Redfield.

**Move to Missouri**

In October 1831 Lydia and her children ranging in age from one to eleven years old, commenced their journey to Missouri with William W. Phelps’s and Sidney Gilbert’s families. At Independence the Partridge family rented a room from Lilburn W. Boggs. They later built a log house “on the corner of the temple lot, or quite near it.” In Jackson County the Partridge children went to school. When about nine years old Emily was baptized by John Corrill.

15 Booth to Edward Partridge, 20 Sept. 1831, copied into a letter of Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, 21 Nov. 1831, in Ohio Star 2 (24 Nov. 1831): 3. Edward was admonished in Jackson County “Behold his mission is given unto him and it shall not be given again” (Marquardt, Joseph Smith Revelations, 146; LDS D&C 58:16; RLDS D&C 58:4, [1-2] August 1831.


17 Collette, “In Search of Zion,” 43.

18 “What I Remember,” 7 April 1884, Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young Papers, MS 113, Marriott Library. In her autobiography Emily wrote, “I had now got to be eight years old and was baptized in a large creek” (“Autobiography of Emily D. P. Young.” Woman’s Exponent 13 [1 Dec. 1884]:103). In 1887 she wrote that she was about eight years of age (Historical Record 6 [May 1887]:240). Whatever the correct age she was baptized by elder Corrill. Emily may have been baptized in 1832 when her older sister Harriet was baptized (Times and Seasons 1 [June
As church bishop Edward Partridge made a number of land purchases in the area near Independence including the spot where the contemplated temple was to be erected. This purchase was made on 19 December 1831 from Jones H. and Clara Flournoy. The land included a little over sixty-three acres for one hundred and thirty dollars. A small portion of the sixty-three acres (two and a half acres) was involved in the Temple Lot Case almost ninety years later.

Bishop Partridge dedicated the printing office on 29 May 1832. The first church periodical The Evening and the Morning Star, edited by William W. Phelps and assisted by Oliver Cowdery, published its first issue in June 1832. On the church press was published the Evening and the Morning Star, the Upper Missouri Advertiser, and the projected Book of Commandments containing some of Joseph Smith’s revelations. Emily Partridge’s youngest brother Edward was born in Independence on 25 June 1833.

On 20 July 1833 Bishop Partridge was taken to the Independence public square and asked to agree to leave Jackson County. When Partridge responded that he would suffer for his religion and not consent to leave he was tared and feathered. In his calling as bishop in Missouri Edward Partridge held title to over two thousand acres of land in Jackson County. A mob of about 400 people threw the press from the upper-story, scattered the type, and destroyed most of the

1840):128).”


20 Cannon and Cook, Far West Record, 50.

printing establishment.

Emily told about Mary E. and Caroline Rollins obtaining some of the printed pages for the projected Book of Commandments from a table and hiding in a cornfield. Emily wrote that she remembered “many of the circumstances that transpired at that time, but was too young then to be able to remember the particulars well enough to tell them.” How much she actually recollected of her preteen years is hard to determine since she extracted material from the History of Joseph Smith for her autobiography.22

Refuge in Missouri

In November 1833 the Partridge family, along with other saints, were compelled to leave their homes because of persecution. They crossed the Missouri River out of Jackson County into Clay County. The families of Edward Partridge and John Corrill lived together in a one room home. Emily wrote concerning this time that it was cold “for I remember the ink would freeze in the pen as father sat writing close in the corner by the fire.”22 While his family stayed in Missouri Edward was absent from home from 27 January 1835 to 6 May 1836 doing missionary work, visiting Kirtland, and later participating in the dedication of the House of the Lord. In the fall of 1836 the Partridge family moved to Caldwell County and started life anew. In the city Far West


23 Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents of the early life of Emily Dow Partridge,” (Dec. 1876-7 Jan. 1877), 2 [account starts on this page], typescript by Georgie Y. H. Steed, 1970, Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young Papers, MS 113, Marriott Library.
Edward built a new home for his family.24

Two years later in the fall of 1838 Edward was taken from his home in Far West, "without any civil process, and driven off to Richmond[,] Ray Co. thirty miles, and kept a prisoner between three and four weeks" before he was liberated."25 Edward was charged with crimes of high treason against the state of Missouri but was released. When the Partridge family left the state of Missouri they went to Quincy, Illinois and lived there briefly from about February to June 1839. In a letter written in early March Edward wrote that he was expecting to move to Pittsfield, Pike County, Illinois.26

Early Commerce (Nauvoo)

After spending some time in Pittsfield the Edward Partridge family moved to Commerce (later named Nauvoo), Hancock County where Edward became the bishop of the Upper Ward.27 There were many who had various sicknesses and those who were well enough would comfort and help with the sick. Bishop Partridge pitched a tent for his destitute family. Not having a lot of

24 Petition of Edward Partridge in Johnson, Mormon Redress Petitions, 513. Emily wrote that "After Far West was laid out father built another house and we moved into the city" ("Autobiography of Emily D. P. Young," Woman's Exponent 14 [15 June 1885]:10).

25 Johnson, Mormon Redress Petitions, 514.


room in the family tent Emily spent time at Ebenezer Robinson’s home and then her father “rented a room, in what was called the ‘upper store house,’ built at the steam-boat landing.” Emily remembered that “Several families occupied other portions of the house. Bro. Hyrum Smith’s family had a room adjoining ours.” Edward was building a house for his family but as this was taking too much time “he concluded to build a stable for his cows and move his family into that.”

With such poor living conditions Emily and Eliza went to Jane and William Law’s home where they were treated with kindness.

Emily was sixteen years old when her older sister Harriet died because of sickness at the age of eighteen on 16 May 1840. Then tragedy struck again when her father Edward died eleven days later on 27 May. He was only forty-six years old. Emily wrote, “After father’s death Brother [William] Law took our whole family and administered to our wants and with such good and kind care we began to improve in health, and when we had sufficiently regained our health we went back into our little hut once more.”

Four months after the death of her husband Lydia married William Huntington, Sr. who was a widower of fourteen months.

Just short of being seventeen Emily received her first patriarchal blessing from Isaac Morley. In the blessing she was told “if thou wilt listen to the voice of wisdom length of days shalt


31 William Huntington’s wife Zina died on 8 July 1839 (1 Dec. 1839):32 and William married Lydia Partridge on 27 September 1840 (1 Oct. 1840):191. See also Martha Sonntag Bradley and Mary Brown Firmage Woodward, Four Zinas: A Story of Mothers and Daughters on the Mormon Frontier (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000), 105 where the date of the marriage is given as 29 September 1840 the same date given by William Huntington.
be given unto thee, and thou shalt have the blessing to see the winding up scene of this
generation; peace and tranquility restored to man.”

Contemplating their situation, Emily’s sister
Eliza, who was a good seamstress, went to work to earn income for the family. Younger Emily,
though she had a little schooling, says that she knew only basic household duties such as washing
dishes, sweeping, and scrubbing floors. Emily wrote of these times:

Sister Emma [Smith] sent for me to come and live with her and nurse her baby. It seemed
as if the Lord had opened up my way, it was so unexpected, and nothing could have suited
me better, for tending babies was my delight. My sister Eliza, also, went there to live,
which made it pleasanter [pleasant] for me and more home-like. Joseph and Emma were
very kind to us; they were almost like a father and mother, and I loved Emma and the
children, especially the baby, little Don Carlos.

Living in the home of the Smith family and doing domestic household chores made Emily
and Eliza suitable candidates to be taught that it was a revealed rite to be sealed to a married man
and become a plural wife. Emily was also attending school at Robert B. Thompson’s house.
Lessons were taught by Howard and Martha Coray during the summer of 1841.

32 Patriarchal Blessing given by Isaac Morley on 3 February 1841, quoted in “Autobiography of
Emily D. P. Young,” Women’s Exponent 14 (1 Aug. 1885):37.

33 Ibid. Don Carlos Smith, son of Emma and Joseph Smith, was born on 13 June 1840 and died
on 15 August 1841 (Times and Seasons 2 [1 Sept 1841]:533).

34 Charles D. Tate, Jr., “Howard and Martha Jane Knowlton Coray of Nauvoo,” in H. Dean
Garrett, ed., Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Illinois (Provo, Utah:
Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1995), 339.
Joseph's next child, a son, died 6 February 1842 the day on which he was born. Emma Smith was appointed president of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo of which Emily was a member on 28 April 1842. In her autobiography Emily wrote only briefly mentioning being married to Joseph Smith:

I was married to him on the 11th of May [1843], by Elder James Adams. Emma was present. She gave her free and full consent. She had always, up to this time, been very kind to me and my sister Eliza, who was also married to the Prophet Joseph with Emma's consent, but ever after she was our enemy.

What is not mentioned is the activity that led up to the first marriage in Emily's life. While she made an affidavit of an earlier March marriage, her published autobiography is silent. This may have been because after the death of Emma Smith in 1879 more emphasis was employed relating to Emma giving her prophet husband plural wives. Emily's assessment of Emma Smith was negative. An account written eight years earlier titled "Incidents of the early life of Emily Dow Partridge" is more telling of the beginnings of her life in plural marriage.

Angel of the Lord gives Commandment to take Wives

35 "A Book of Records Containing the proceedings of The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo," 28 April 1842, typescript, LDS Church Archives.

The prophet Joseph Smith conveyed in private that an angel had appeared to him and commanded him to enter into plural marriage. Joseph B. Noble, the high priest who in 1841 sealed Louisa Beaman to Smith, stated:

In the fall of the year A.D. 1840 Joseph [S]mith, taught him the principle of Celestial marriage or a "plurality of wives," and that the said Joseph Smith declared that he had received a Revelation from God on the subject, and that the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, Joseph Smith, to move forward in the said order of marriage.37

Lorenzo Snow returned from his mission to England on 12 April 1843. A few days later Joseph Smith explained to him "the doctrine of plurality of wives. He said that the Lord had revealed it unto him and commanded him to have women sealed to him as wives, that he foresaw the trouble that would follow and sought to turn away from the commandment; that an angel from heaven then appeared before him with a drawn sword, threatening him with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the commandment."38 The revelation on plural marriage was not read to the High Council in 1840 or 1841. But it appears that the commandment was told to apostles Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball after returning from their English mission.

37 Affidavit of Joseph B. Noble, 26 June 1869 (Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Book 1:38-39, typescript, LDS Church Archives. See also Historical Record 6 (May 1887):221. Helen Mar Whitney, one of Smith's wives wrote, "Joseph's own testimony was, that an angel was sent to command him to teach and to enter into this order. This angel, he states, stood over him with a drawn sword prepared to inflict the penalty of death if he should be disobedient" (Plural Marriage as Taught by the Prophet Joseph [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882], 13).

38 Affidavit of Lorenzo Snow, 28 Aug. 1869 (Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Book 2:19; 3:19-20, quoted in Historical Record 6 (May 1887):222.
Early in 1842 Heber C. Kimball told seventeen year old Martha Brotherton that she must learn to hold her tongue. They eventually went up to the second story of Joseph Smith’s red brick store where Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were at. Kimball and Smith left and Brigham Young locked the door and told her that “brother Joseph has had a revelation from God that it is lawful and right for a man to have two wives; for, as it was in the days of Abraham, so it shall be in these last days.” Brigham proposed to have Smith marry them that day. Sister Brotherton asked for time before deciding anything concerning Young’s marriage proposal. Martha declined, left Nauvoo, and made an affidavit regarding her experience.\(^39\)

Among the exposures of plural marriage was that of John Cook Bennett. Bennett had previously lived in the prophet’s home for nine months.\(^40\) This did not slow Joseph from taking additional wives. Statements on spiritual wifeism made by the opportunist Bennett were countered by Joseph Smith and friends.\(^41\) The 1835 Doctrine and Covenants states that husbands should have one wife. But Smith’s additional revelation was that a man could have two wives or

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39 Affidavit of Martha Brotherton, 13 July 1842, St. Louis, Missouri, as printed in John C. Bennett, The History of the Saints; or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), 238. Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball said that Martha Brotherton’s affidavit was false.


41 Helen Mar Whitney, another plural wife of Joseph Smith, wrote: “At that time a spiritual wife was the title by which every woman who entered into this order was called, for it was taught and practiced as a spiritual order and not a temporal one” (Plural Marriage as Taught by the Prophet Joseph [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882], 15).
more. This struggle of how to further the work of the priesthood and at the same time appear to be following the current standards of the community made it difficult for Joseph to operate during the last years of his life. Sex is a normal and desirable part of life. Joseph Smith was having sexual intercourse with his wife Emma for the last fifteen years. Why could not Joseph explain to Emma what the angel said in restoring this priesthood ordinance?

Joseph talks to Emily

One day in the spring of 1842 eighteen year old Emily was doing her household duties in the Smith family home. Joseph Smith said to Emily: "Emily if you will not betray me, I will tell you something for your benefit." On another occasion Joseph pressed further with Emily. As she recalled:

As I was passing through the room where he sat alone he asked me if I would burn it if he would write me a letter. As I felt very anxious to know what he had to tell me, I promised to do as he wished, and left the room. . . . I went to my room and knelt down and asked my father in heaven to direct me in the matter. . . . I received no comfort till I went back and watched my opportunity to say I could not take a private letter from him. He asked me if I wished the matter ended. I said I did.  

Nauvoo was different than we would think if we were to tour the town today. We also get

42 Emily Dow Partridge Young. “Incidents of the early life of Emily Dow Partridge,” 4.
a different image of Joseph Smith when we read the historical documents of the period. Nauvoo was a frontier town. The gathering of the saints brought in good and bad elements into the river city. The Joseph Smith we know about did things differently. The prophet Joseph was aggressive in his interaction with people. For example, socially Smith enjoyed pulling sticks and drinking wine. 43

In his theological development Smith taught the new doctrine of plural marriage. The doctrine was withheld from his public teachings being mentioned to only a limited number of church members. Many of the church practices were not firmly established. In 1841 the church patriarch was a high calling obtained by lineal descent. Baptisms for the dead were performed for either sex. If you were ill or sick you could be baptized for your health. Rebaptism was performed and you could purchase stock in the Nauvoo House. 44

Ideas relating to the afterlife in the celestial kingdom were given greater emphasis than previously. The endowment ceremony was performed in May 1842 and then not administered again until May 1843. Plural marriage ceremonies and sealings commenced on a limited scale. Single women were sealed to Joseph Smith for time and eternity. Married women could also receive a priesthood sealing to the prophet Joseph. Sealings of married couples commenced in

43 Joseph Smith “drank a glass of wine with Sister Jenetta Richards [wife of Willard Richards], made by her mother in England” (History of the Church 5:380). This event is based upon Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo journal kept by Willard Richards, entry of 3 May 1843, LDS Church Archives.

1842. How to be linked with one’s progenitors became important for religious reasons. There was no set pattern on when anything had to be solemnized. Plural sealings were performed without first receiving a priesthood endowment.

In regard to these plural marriages Joseph Smith selected close friends such as Joseph B. Noble and Dimick Huntington to perform such ceremonies. Then authority was given to apostles Brigham Young, Willard Richards, and Heber C. Kimball. Bishop Newel K. Whitney sealed his daughter Sarah Ann to Joseph Smith in July 1842. William Clayton sealed Lucy Walker to Smith in May 1843. After accepting celestial marriage church patriarch Hyrum Smith performed many of the plural marriages for about the next ten months. Joseph Smith performed plural sealings in 1842 and 1843.

**Spiritual Wives**

Elizabeth Durfee, wife of Jabez Durfee, one day invited Eliza and Emily to her home. Emily wrote, “She introduced the subject of spiritual wives as they called it in that day. She wondered if there was any truth in the report she heard.” Some time later Mrs. Durfee came to Emily one day and said “Joseph would like an opportunity to talk with me. I asked her if she knew what he wanted. She said she thought he wanted me for a wife. . . . I was to meet him in the evening at Mr. Kimballs.” After Emily finished the washing she left the Smith home in the evening still wearing her wash dress and went to see her mother Lydia and then walked to the place appointed – the house of Heber C. Kimball. Heber told Emily that his wife Vilate was not at home. So Emily started back to Smith’s home and she heard Heber’s voice calling her as he
caught up with her. They then returned to the Kimball home. Emily states clearly:

I cannot tell all Joseph said, but he said the Lord had commanded [him] to enter into plural marriage and had given me to him and although I had got badly frightened he knew I would yet have him. So he waited till the Lord told him. My mind was now prepared and would receive the principles. . . . Well I was married there and then. Joseph went home his way and I going my way alone. A strange way of getting married wasent [wasn’t] it.

Brother Kimball married us, the 4th of March 1843.45

Joseph was eighteen years older than Emily at the time of their marriage. Smith was thirty-seven years old and Emily became nineteen in February. She had a firm faith in the prophet Joseph. The Nauvoo journal of Joseph Smith kept by Willard Richards recorded for the date of 4 March 1843 in Taylor shorthand that Joseph went to the Kimball home.46 Four days afterwards Eliza Partridge became a plural wife of Joseph Smith.47

Emma places hand of wives in Joseph’s hand

45 Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents of the early life of Emily Dow Partridge,” 4.


47 Affidavit of Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, 1 July 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Book 2:32, typescript, LDS Church Archives. The ceremony was performed by apostle Heber C. Kimball.
Two months later Emma Smith became converted to the principle of Plural marriage. In the spring of 1843 Joseph explained to Emma and Brigham Young to Joseph’s older brother Hyrum that the marriage relationship was an important part of the restored gospel.\textsuperscript{48} Emma chose two sisters to be sealed to Joseph. They were daughters of Bishop Partridge deceased. In a religious ceremony Emma placed in Joseph’s hand each women’s hand and they were sealed by James Adams a church high priest. Unknown to Emma this sealing was a repeated ceremony of plurality performed for her benefit since Emily and Eliza were sealed to Smith two and a half months earlier without her knowledge.

As Emily explained, in May 1843 Emma told Joseph that she would permit him to have two wives:

sometime in the first part of May, Emma told Joseph she would give him two wives if he would let her choose them for him. She chose my sister and I and helped explain the principles to us. We did not make much trouble, but were sealed in her presence with her full and free consent. It was the 11th of May but before the day was over she turned around, or repented what she had done and kept Joseph up till very late in the night talking to him. She kept close watch of us.\textsuperscript{49}


\textsuperscript{49} Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents of the early life of Emily Dow Partridge,” 4-5. Ten years later Emily wrote, “To save the [Smith] family trouble Brother Joseph thought it best to have another ceremony performed” (\textit{Historical Record} 6 [May 1887]:240). The 11 May 1843 date is in error. James Adams made his May trip from Springfield arriving in Nauvoo on 21 May.
Joseph did not mention to Emma that a priesthood sealing took place two months earlier. Eliza and Emily did not say anything about a prior sealing either. The impression they gave to Emma was that she chose them as wives for her husband and Emma taught them the principle. James Adams performed a second ceremony as Emma placed the sister wives hands in Joseph’s even though they were already the prophet’s wives. Emma also selected another set of sisters, Maria and Sarah Lawrence who lived with the Smith family. Secrecy was a very important part of plural marriage in the lifetime of Joseph. This is why no one knows for certain how many wives Joseph Smith had. This is also why Emily Partridge’s recollections help in her specific case how she viewed her marriage to the prophet.

While historians would think that Emma Smith knew or should have known from rumors that Joseph was involved in the doctrine of men being able to have many wives his private teachings were kept private. It is doubtful if any of his close associates had an idea of the extensive nature of his involvement. Of those priesthood brethren who we know sealed a wife to Joseph Smith most were performed by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and church patriarch Hyrum Smith. After Hyrum’s conversion to plural marriage on 26 May 1843 he performed many Nauvoo sealings during Smith’s lifetime.

Emily’s Two Affidavits

Twenty-six years after her first sealing to Joseph Smith Emily signed two affidavits

concerning her marriage to Joseph Smith. Many of the dates of sealings to Joseph Smith are based upon 1869 affidavits. Emily’s two affidavits were made on the same day. The first affidavit concerns her first sealing on 4 March 1843 and the second affidavit concerns the repeated ceremony of 11 May 1843. Until 1892, during the Temple Lot Case, Emily’s testimony maintained this later date.

[Affidavit of Emily D. P. Young]

Territory of Utah    S.S.
County of Salt Lake

Be it remembered that on this first day of May A. D. 1869, personally appeared before me, Elias Smith Probate Judge for Said County, Emily Dow Partridge Young, who was by me Sworn in due form of law and upon her oath Saith, that on the fourth day of March A. D. 1843 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints by Heber C. Kimball, one of the Twelve Apostles of Said Church, according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage, in the presence of [blank space].

Subscribed and Sworn to by the Emily D. P. Young
said Emily D. P. Young, the day E. Smith
and year first above written,
Probate Judge⁵¹

[Affidavit of Emily D. P. Young]

Territory of Utah    S.S.
County of Salt Lake

Be it remembered that on this First day of May A. D. 1869, personally Appeared before me, Elias Smith, Probate Judge for Said County, Emily Dow Partridge Young, who was by me Sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath saith that on the eleventh day of May A. D. 1843 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by James Adams, a High Priest in said Church; according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage, in presence of Emma (Hale Smith,) and Eliza Maria Partridge (Lyman)

Subscribed and Sworn to by    Emily D. P. Young
the Said Emily D. P. Young, the day and
year first above written    E. Smith

⁵¹ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Book 1:11, typescript, LDS Church Archives. See Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery Papers, MS 447, Box 21, folder 17, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library.
Emma, Joseph, and the Partridge sisters

Emily mentions that after her marriage Mrs. Smith kept a careful watch over where she and Eliza were in the Smith home. But there finally came a time when Emma put a hold to this sealing. Emily wrote in her account that Emma Smith asked the sisters to come to her room:

When we went in Joseph was there, his countenance was the perfect picture of despair. I cannot remember all that passed at that time but [but] she insisted that we should promise to break our covenants, that we had made before God. Joseph asked her if we made her the promises she required, if she would cease to trouble us, and not persist in our marrying someone else. She made the promise. Joseph came to us and shook hands with us and the understanding was that all was ended between us. I for one meant to keep the promise I was forced to make.\(^{53}\)

After going downstairs, Emily continues, “Joseph soon came into the room where I was, said, how do you feel Emily. My heart being still hard, I answered him rather short that I expected

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52 Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Book 1:13, typescript, LDS Church Archives. This affidavit which gives the date of 11 May 1843 for the second marriage with Emma’s permission performed by James Adams when published in the “Joseph the Seer’s Plural Marriages,” Deseret Evening News 12 (18 Oct. 1879):2 omitted the words “according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage.”

53 Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents of the early life of Emily Dow Partridge,” 5.
I felt as anybody would under the circumstance. He said you know my hands are tied." 54 William Clayton recorded in his journal for the date of 16 August 1843 a passage concerning Emma Smith:

This A.M. J[oseph], told me that since E[mma], came back from St Louis she had resisted the P. 55 in toto & he had to tell her he would relinquish all for her sake. She said she would given him E. & E. P [Emily and Eliza Partridge] 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 anything. 56

This entry is difficult to understand since Emma had already given Eliza and Emily to Joseph as wives. Clayton’s words “if he took them” may have meant if Joseph kept them. In summary, Emma had returned from a trip to St. Louis on 12 August. Emily and Eliza Partridge were already sealed to Joseph Smith for a second time with Emma Smith’s permission about 23 May 1843. Joseph said to Clayton that he was not going to relinquish them. It may have been soon after this when Joseph in front of Emma shook the Emily’s and Eliza’s hands and released them from their marriage.

When Emily left the Smith home she mentions not “seeing Joseph but once to speak to

54 Ibid. Emily says they “remained in the [Smith] family several months after this” (Historical Record 6 [May 1887]:240).

55 The priesthood principle of plural marriage.

after I left the Mansion house and that was just before he started for Carthage."57 In a short time
Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed on 27 June 1844. Helen Mar Kimball (daughter of Heber C.
and Vilate Kimball) and Emily were sleeping in the home of Sylvia and Winsor Lyon.58 Helen Mar
Kimball, another plural wife of Joseph Smith, wrote of this time: "I well remember the morning
that the news came to our city of the murder of Joseph and Hyrum. I had slept that night with
Emily Partridge at the house of Winsor P. Lyon. The first sound that broke upon our ears was the
voice of Sister [Sylvia] Lyon, as she opened the door and told us that they were murdered."59

**Nauvoo under the direction of the Majority of the Quorum of the Twelve**

On 8 August 1844, forty-one days after the death of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young as
president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles together with the Quorum of the Twelve, were
sustained as the church leaders. At this meeting Sidney Rigdon and Amasa Lyman were sustained
as counselors to the Twelve.60

Many of the quorum were practicing polygamists. It is only natural that the principles

57 Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Incidents of the early life of Emily Dow Partridge," 6.
Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, eds., *A Woman's View: Helen Mar
Whitney's Reminiscences of Early Church History* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center,
Brigham Young University, 1997), 238-39.
60 See Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 142; Wilford Woodruff's *Journal, 1833-1898*, typescript,
edited by Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-85), 2:439-40; and
espoused by Joseph Smith would continue by those committed to his teachings whether known by the church at large, or practiced in secret in selected homes in Nauvoo. Besides Young and Kimball other apostles had plural wives. These included Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, John Taylor, and Willard Richards.

Emily Sealed to Brigham Young

A few months after Joseph Smith's death Brigham Young was sealed to a few of Smith's plural wives. Emily Partridge was now sealed by proxy to Joseph Smith for eternity and Brigham Young became her husband for time. The sealing according to Emily took place in the fall of 1844, probably in November. Emily and Brigham's first child was named Edward Partridge Young having been born on 30 October 1845 as a spiritual child, meaning from their spiritual marriage.\(^{61}\) On 29 December Emily received her endowment.\(^{62}\) She later was sealed in the Nauvoo Temple to Joseph Smith for eternity and again sealed for time to Young on 14 January 1846 by Heber C. Kimball. In the middle of February Emily left Nauvoo. She was living with her mother Lydia when Emily's stepfather William Huntington died. In 1847 at Winter Quarters Emily and

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61 Emily wrote, "While in Nauvoo I had kept my child secreted and but few knew I had one. But after I started on my journey it became publicly known and people would stop at our house to see a spiritual child" (Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Incidents of the early life of Emily Dow Partridge," 7). This child died on 26 November 1852.

62 Nauvoo Temple Record kept by William Clayton and recorded in Heber C. Kimball Journal, entry of 29 Dec. 1845, LDS Church Archives.
other sister wives of Brigham Young spoke in tongues.63

A Quit Claim Deed for Temple Lot Sold

In May 1848 a quit claim deed was made by Lydia Partridge and three of her daughters to James Pool for sixty-three acres of Jackson County property. A summary of a meeting previous to this date indicates that Martin Harris obtained the deed at an earlier date but did not have the deed recorded.

At council meeting held in the Recorder's Office, Winter Quarters, Neb. April 26, 1848, President Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt and Wilford Woodruff being present, the propriety of selling the Temple lot in Jackson County, Mo., was discussed. The lot had been deeded to Martin Harris, but he had neglected getting the deed recorded; the title was now in the hands of the heirs of the late Bishop Edward Partridge, and a certain party was offering $300 for a quit claim deed to the same. After a lively discussion, the brethren decided to advise the Partridge heirs to make the transfer, and thus to obtain means to emigrate to the Valley.64


64 Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830-present), 26 April 1848, LDS Church Archives. Microfilm copy at Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah. See Richard Price and Pamela Price, The Temple of the Lord (Independence, Missouri: authors, 1982), 52-53. For
At this meeting Brigham Young said: "The Temple lot in Jackson Co. is in the care of heirs of Bro. Partridge. A man offers [$]300 (two wagons, five yoke of cattle, and six horses) for Quit Claim Deed. Bro. Kelting will turn out the [$]300. The land was deeded to Martin Harris. He has not put the deed on record." J. A. Kelting stated: "There were 60 acres in the 1st place - sold to M[artin]. Harris. He wrote to Independence that he had sold that land - but there are no deeds, or ever made their appearance." Kelting asked "Did they know Mr. Harris held the Warrantee Deed[,] I know it. . . . If the Warrantee Deed is recorded now it is not good for any thing - the heirs have so many years to redeem it - it is out next August."65 We do not know the full details of this transaction. The talk about Martin Harris having the Warrantee Deed may mean that Harris was not to record the deed if an agreed amount of money was paid to him by a certain date.66

The quit claim deed to James Pool was signed on 5 May 1848 by Lydia Partridge (widow of Edward Partridge and William Huntington), Eliza M. Partridge and Caroline E. Partridge (plural wives of Amasa M. Lyman), and twenty-four year old Emily D. Partridge (plural wife of

the minutes of the council meeting of 26 April 1848 see Ibid., 44-46.

65 Journal History of the Church, 26 April 1848. See also Richard E. Bennett, We’ll Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus 1846-1848 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997), 332 note 82.

66 Former apostle William E. McLellin knew about the deed from his association with Martin Harris. McLellin wrote a letter in which he asked, "I wonder if Martin still has the deed to that lot" (William E. McLellin Correspondence, no date, Community of Christ Archives). In 1869 William McLellin inquired "I want to know if Martin's deed was ever recorded in Jackson Co." (McLellin to "Our very dear friends," 12 July 1869, Ibid.). By 1855 Martin Harris “concluded he would wait until the Saints returned to Jackson Co., and then he would repair there” (Thomas Colburn to Erastus Snow, 2 May 1855 in St. Louis Luminary 1 [5 May 1855]:94, St. Louis, Missouri). This visit to Harris by Thomas Colburn occurred after October 1854.
Brigham Young) for “consideration of the sum of three hundred dollars.”

A Utah Pioneer

After Emily’s arrival in Great Salt Lake City in the fall of 1848 rooms were prepared for Brigham Young’s families in the fort for the winter. Emily later went to Lorenzo D. Young’s house. Their daughter, Emily Augusta, was born on 1 March 1849 one day after her twenty-fifth birthday. Emily received a patriarchal blessing on 26 June 1849 from Uncle John Smith that stated “thou art of the blood and lineage of Joseph, through the loins of Ephraim, and a lawful heir to the priesthood, which shall be conferred upon thee in fulness in due time.” In a letter written on 30 June 1850 Emily wrote to her husband Brigham Young “My ever beloved friend and benefactor . . . You may think my affections are entirely placed upon Joseph [Smith] but there your mistaken, true I love him but no more than yourself.”

67 Deed Book N:203, Jackson County Courthouse, Independence, Missouri. See Price and Price, The Temple of the Lord, 55-56 and Hartt Wixom, Edward Partridge: The First Bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Springville, Utah: Council Press, 1998), 165. In May 1861 Wilford Woodruff was shown a copy of the deed by Benjamin Davis, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Utah Superintendency. Davis said he “was going to try to break the deed as being sold under force or duress I [Wilford Woodruff] spoke to Mrs [Lydia] Partridge about it & she said that she gave the deed under the counsel [counsel] of Pres’d Brigham Young (So all right) W Woodruff” (“Historian’s Private Journal,” 2 May 1861, typescript, original in LDS Church Archives).

68 Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents of the early life of Emily Dow Partridge,” 7.

69 The blessing was published in “Autobiography of Emily D. P. Young,” Woman’s Exponent 14 (15 Aug. 1885):43.

70 Emily D. Partridge Young to Brigham Young, 30 June 1850, quoted in Todd Compton, In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997),
For the next nine years Emily bore four children for Brigham Young. They were Caroline (born 1 February 1851), Joseph Don Carlos (born 6 May 1855), Miriam (born 13 October 1857), and Josephine (born 21 February 1860). Being a plural wife to President Brigham Young was not a happy go lucky experience. Her seventh and last child Laura was born on 2 April 1862 and died the same year. Emily was thirty-eight years old and Brigham sixty.

Emily's diary was started over a decade later in 1874 when she was fifty years old. Three of her children had not yet married. Her diary tells of her struggles in life, family visits, quotes from her father's writings, she expounds on topics of interest, and especially her March 1843 sealing to Joseph Smith. Shortly after she started her diary Emily recorded under the date of 6 March 1874, "The fourth of this month (31) thirty-one years ago I was sealed to Joseph Smith."

In April 1874 when Emily was asked about having a man help work on the water ditch or else pay seventy-five cents she recorded, "I had better pay it, and I do not think the President[']s men will help me in that. They know very well that he wishes me to take care of my self, and I do not know why he does not tell me himself. I almost wish he would, (although it would be very hard on me)[.] It would be preferable to being told of it so much by others." As a plural wife of Brigham Young Emily struggled to provide the necessities of life for herself and family.

On 28 December 1874 she wrote, "Feel very tired. Have been washing but could not finish. I am not able to wash or do any hard work. Nor have been for about six (6) years. There

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71 Emily Dow Partridge Young Diary, 1874-1899, Emily Dow Partridge Young Collection, Vault MS 5, p. 1, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

72 Emily Dow Partridge Young Diary, 1-2, entry of 16 April 1874.
seems to be no way for me, but work, work. I sometimes feel a little rest would not be amis[s]."

Two days later Emily was baptized for her health.73

In August 1877 at the death of her husband Emily wrote, "I believe Pr. [President] Young has done his whole duty towards Joseph Smith’s family."74 Seven years later her autobiography was published serially in Woman’s Exponent starting in December 1884. The autobiography commenced from her birth in 1824 and concluded with her patriarchal blessing given by Uncle John Smith in 1849. A large part of the work included lengthy quotations from letters of Joseph Smith to church leaders in Missouri, a few revelations, and excerpts from the History of Joseph Smith.

On 28 April 1886 Emily wrote to Mary Elizabeth Lightner: "Of course you heard of my sister Eliza[‘s] death. Also sister Marinda Hyde[‘s] death. Desdamony Fulmer has passed away also, all went pretty near together. It seems as if Joseph was calling his family home."75 Two years later she wrote to Mary Lightner, "My health is about as usual I am not good for much. I have a splendid appetite but it does not add much to my strength."76

Emily went to church president Wilford Woodruff’s office on 11 March 1892 and found Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith there. She wrote in her diary, "they were wanting me on business

73 Ibid., 4, entry of 28, 30 Dec. 1874.
74 Ibid., 25, entry of 29 Aug. 1877.
75 Emily P. Young to Mary E. Lightner, 28 April 1886, Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner Collection, Vault MS 363, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library. Eliza Partridge Lyman died 2 March 1886, Marinda Johnson Hyde died 24 March 1886, and Desdemona Fullner died 9 Feb. 1886.
76 Emily P. Young to Mary E. Lightner, 10 June 1888, Ibid.
pertaining to the Temple lot in Jackson County. I must have been led by inspiration for I knew nothing of their wanting me at the time. When we were speaking of br. Joseph [Smith] and br [Brigham] Young bro Woodru[f] I said—They are praying for you up there and when you go you will find a warm welcome and a good home prepared for you. I aske[d] him about my children names as there is a difference of opinion on that subject. He and brother Joseph F. Smith said that my children[‘]s names were, Young Smith and should so be called while working in the Temple, and if any one in the Temple objected I was to say that they both said so.”77

The Temple Lot Case

Granville Hedrick, a leader of another Latter-day Saint church, received a revelation on 24 April 1864 appointing the year 1867 as the time to return to Jackson County, Missouri.78 His followers were interested in purchasing the land where the temple would be built. A small portion of the sixty-three acres where it is believed that Joseph Smith had laid the stone for the single temple in 1831 had become in time part of the Woodson and Maxwell Addition to the City of Independence. Lots numbered fifteen through twenty-two, that included where the temple had been planned, were eventually purchased and obtained by Granville Hedrick, president and trustee-in-trust for the Church of Christ, known as the Temple Lot church.79

77 Emily Dow Partridge Young Diary, 94, entry of 11 March 1892.
79 Smith, Temple Lot Deed, 7-12; B. C. Flint, An Outline History of the Church of Christ Temple Lot (Independence: Board of Publications, Church of Christ, Temple Lot, 1953), 111.
The basis for the Temple Lot suit was a deed said to have been made in March 1839 by Edward Partridge to John Cowdery (seven years old), Jane Cowdery (three years old), and Joseph Smith Cowdery (one year old) minor children of Oliver Cowdery. This deed was to convey to the Cowdery children all the lands entered in Partridge’s name in Jackson County and “to embrace the lot known as the Temple Lot.”60 This deed lacks authenticity. One of many reasons for questioning it is there were no children from the marriage of Elizabeth Ann and Oliver Cowdery named John, Jane, and Joseph Smith Cowdery. In fact the deed appears to be a fraudulent document probably made in the 1860s when the Temple Lot land was being purchased.81

On 29 May 1886 a quit claim deed from Elizabeth Ann Cowdery (widow of Oliver Cowdery) to her daughter Marie Louise Cowdery Johnson, was made for one dollar for over one hundred and thirty acres of property in Jackson County.82 This was eight years after lots fifteen through twenty-two (two and a half acres) had been deeded to Granville Hedrick as Trustee-in-Trust.

Another quit claim deed was prepared for and executed on 9 June 1887 by Marie Cowdery Johnson, the only surviving child of Oliver Cowdery, and her husband Charles Johnson

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60 Deed Book 73:432 and following; The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Complaint, Vs. The Church of Christ at Independence; Richard Hill, Trustee . . Respondents, In Equity, Complainant’s Abstract of Pleading and Evidence (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House and Bindery, 1893), 242-43. Hereafter cited as Complainant’s Abstract.

81 Charles Johnson, widower of Marie Louise Cowdery Johnson (daughter of Elizabeth Cowdery), testified “I think it was about thirty years ago when I discovered that my wife had rights in real property here in Independence, and in Jackson county” (Complainant’s Abstract, 196).

82 Deed Book 146:139, quoted in Complainant’s Abstract, 246-47.
to George A. Blakeslee, Bishop and Trustee in trust of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) for lots fifteen through twenty-two. For the "Temple Lot" they received one hundred dollars.83

The RLDS church in August 1891 brought suit in U. S. Circuit Court, Western District of Missouri, by filing a bill of equity against the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) for possession of what was known as the Temple Lots or Lot. This became known as the Temple Lot Case.84 The outcome, made in March 1894 by Justice John F. Phillips, was that the RLDS church obtained judgment on the two and a half acre temple lot. This decision was appealed by the Church of Christ, and on 30 September 1895 the U. S. Circuit Courts of Appeal, Eighth Circuit reversed the decision. The RLDS church was denied possession since the Church of Christ had the only record title in forty years, paid taxes on the property since 1867, and erected a house of worship in 1882. Even though the lots were not actually occupied for the full term of ten years before the suit commenced, the court could not see clouding the record title to much other valuable property within the city.85 This granted the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) possession of this important spot in Latter-day Saint history.

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83 Deed Book 146:544, quoted in Complainant's Abstract, 243-44.


Among those who gave depositions were three plural wives of Joseph Smith, viz. Emily D. P. Young, Lucy Walker Kimball, and Melissa Lott Willis. Church president Wilford Woodruff also gave a deposition. Emily gave two depositions at the Templeton Hotel in Salt Lake City. The first deposition of 14 March 1892 related to the deed to the sixty-three acres in Independence. Emily said that her mother and sisters went to a town in Missouri and executed the deed in 1848. She said, “Neither myself, nor any of my brothers and sisters, nor my mother while she was living ever made any claim to the property.”\textsuperscript{86} The second deposition was concerned her claim of being a plural wife of Joseph Smith.

**Testimony of Emily Dow Partridge Young**

I have examined various aspects of Emily’s testimony in her deposition in the Temple Lot Case. What she says as a witness has been compared with her earlier statements concerning her marriage to Joseph Smith. Over forty pages of testimony by Emily as a plural wife were omitted when printed by the RLDS church publishing firm. On other witnesses as well the RLDS editors omitted references to plural marriage by editing entire sections of testimony in their abstract. As explained by James E. Elliott this “was achieved by deleting key words, phrases or entire sections of testimony that was not in harmony with RLDS practices of the 1890s.”\textsuperscript{87}

This testimony of Emily is a good (though late) source of her recollections. Emily gave her

\textsuperscript{86} Complainant’s Abstract, 177.

testimony on Saturday, 19 March 1892, when she was sixty-eight years old, forty-nine years after her first sealing to Joseph Smith as a plural wife. Emily wrote in her diary that on the day she gave her second deposition Mr. Hall, president of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), “came down with a buggy for me to go up to an office in the Templeton to take the witness stand. I was there several hours and underwent a rigid examination.”

Emily D. Partridge Young was a witness for the respondents (Church of Christ). The leading question relating to plural marriage was: “I will ask you to state what you know in regard to the principle of plural marriage, or what is some times called polygamy, as to its being taught or practiced in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, before the death of Joseph Smith, at Nauvoo, Illinois?” Emily answered, “Do I have to answer the question?” When Emily was told yes, she said, “personally I think he taught the doctrine, for he taught it to me with his own lips.”

Then she explained that while living in Joseph Smith’s home:

he came there into the room where I was one day, when I was in the room alone, and he asked me if I could keep a secret. I was about eighteen years of age then I think, - at any rate I was quite young[.] He asked me if I could keep a secret, and I told him I thought I could, and then he told me that he would some time if he had an opportunity, - he would tell me some thing that would be for my benefit, if I would not betray him, and I told him I wouldn’t.

88 Emily Dow Partridge Young Diary, 95, entry of 19 March 1892.

89 Deposition of Emily D. Partridge Young in Salt Lake City on 19 March 1892, Respondents Testimony, 349, copy in Community of Christ Archives and LDS Church Archives. Hereafter cited as Respondents Testimony.
After a period of time when Joseph Smith was sitting in a room he spoke to Emily and said to her “he would write me a letter, if I would agree to burn it as soon as I had read it.” She initially thought something was not right about it and told him so. Emily said she prayed to know what it was for she was “greatly troubled over it.” As she prayed for enlightenment, she explained, “I became convinced that there was nothing wrong about it, and that it would be right for me to hear what he had to say.”

A few months later Joseph Smith taught her the principle of plural marriage, “he told me that this principle had been revealed to him but it was not generally known; and he went on and said that the Lord had given me to him, and he wanted to know if I would consent to a marriage, and I consented.” Emily stated, “I was married to him on the 4th day of March 1843, and after that in the same year, I think it was in May” when Emma consented.90

Emily emphasized that Joseph’s wife Emma “had chosen myself and my sister, and we were married in her presence again because we thought [it] proper to say nothing about the former marriage, and it was done over again on the 11th of May 1843 in her presence, and she gave her consent fully and freely and voluntarily.” Asked for the reason why the ceremony was performed for a second time Emily testified, “Well Emma had a good many feelings we supposed, - she was a rather high strung woman of a very nervous organization, and we thought that she had her feelings, and so we thought there was no use in saying anything about it, so long as she had chosen us herself, - there was no use of having another ceremony only for that reason. That is the only reason I know for not saying anything about it.”91

90 Respondents Testimony, 350.
91 Ibid., 351.
When asked regarding what she knew concerning a revelation to Joseph Smith being given on plural marriage she responded there was a revelation given “that was not printed or generally known” and after Eliza and herself were married “there was one given that was made more public.” On being asked more specific on “How do you know that there was any revelation at all?” Emily said “he told me himself that he had had a revelation.” And then she said, “Joseph Smith told me himself that the angel had appeared to him and had given him that revelation.”

Under cross examination Emily mentioned she went to live in Joseph’s and Emma’s home “as a nurse girl, for they had a young baby and they wanted me to tend it for them. That is what I delighted in, - attending babies, and that is what they got me there to do more particularly.”

Joseph spoke to Emily about writing the letter in 1842 and the next time he spoke to her was in March 1843 at the home of Heber C. Kimball. Questions were asked Emily such as:

Q:- Did he offer to take your hand then? A:- No sir.
Q:- Or put his hand around you? A:- No sir.
Q:- He never did any such a thing as that? A:- No sir.
Q:- At any time or place? A:- No sir, - not before we were married.
Q:- Now did he tell you there about the principle of sealing? A:- Yes sir.
Q:- He did? A:- Yes sir.
Q:- He told you all about the doctrine or principle of sealing? A:- Yes sir.

92 Ibid., 352.
93 Ibid., 356.
Q: Was it sealing for eternity? A: Yes sir, - time and eternity.

Before being told by Joseph Smith about plural marriage Emily recalled that there were “reports around that made me think, - that gave me an idea of what it was he wanted to say to me but I did not know what it was about, or had no idea what it was that he wanted to speak to me about any more than that I had heard, which gave me a suspicion of what it was. . . . there was so many reports flying around there in Nauvoo, that I did not pay much attention to it until he spoke to me about it, and then I found out that the reports I had heard were connected with what he had to tell me. I did not think so much about it until he told me himself.”

When asked if she had seen the revelation, Emily responded, “No sir.” Then she was questioned:

Q: How did you come to marry him without seeing it? A: Well he told me it was all right and I just took his word for it.
Q: Well did you go and get married without ever knowing it was the law of the church? A: I got married on his own teachings, - he was the prophet of the church and he told me it was all right and I took his word for it.
Q: You took his word for it and got married to him in that way on his own teachings? A: Yes sir, and on my own convictions, for I believed it was all right or he would not have taught me and told me what he did.
Q: Now did he teach you that a man could have more women then one? A: Yes sir.

94 Ibid., 358.
Q: As wives? A: Yes sir.95

Emily testified that she was married to Joseph Smith the first time in the evening at Heber C. Kimball’s house and the second time at Joseph Smith’s home with Eliza and Emma Smith being there and James Adams performing the marriage ceremony.96 Questions were asked relating to the second marriage of 11 May 1843. Emily could not remember whether the ceremony took place in the forenoon or afternoon. At this point in her testimony she was still sure that the date of the marriage was 11 May. Next specific questions were asked her:

Q: Who roomed with Joseph Smith that night, - the night of that day the 11th of May 1843 when you say you and your sister were married to Joseph Smith? A: Well I don’t want to answer that question.

[By Mr. Hall, -] Q: Well answer it if you can, if you know? A: Well it was myself.

Q: Now you have answered it, and that will do?

[By Mr. Kelley, -] Q: You roomed with Joseph Smith that night? A: Yes sir.97

William Clayton’s 1874 affidavit was read concerning Hyrum Smith’s report that Emma

95 Ibid., 360.

96 Ibid., 361.

97 Ibid., 363-64. Emily believe that the date of the second marriage was 11 May 1843. She realized that it was not the right date and corrected herself. Emily said “when you read his diary I see that I was mistake[n] and I don’t say that was the date now, although it always ran in my mind that that was the time” (384).
was "very bitter and full of disappointment and anger" after Hyrum read the 12 July 1843 revelation to her. When asked about her comment that Emma turned bitter from the minute she was married, Emily replied, "Well I might have said that, but I meant from a short time after we were married, - It might have been from the hour we were married. I know she was bitter soon after that, but I can't say how long it was afterwards that she got that way, but I know it was very soon after that. . . . Well after the next day you might say that she was bitter." On asking Emily if she left the house right away after this, Emily said, speaking of herself and her sister Eliza, "We did not leave the house for several months after that."98

Emily wrote in 1887 "from that very hour, however, Emma was our bitter enemy" and that they remained in the family several months after this.99 Whether this perception was one of 1843 or years later is hard to determine. Emma was hot and cold regarding polygamy. On the day the revelation of 12 July 1843 was received the revelation told Emma to "receive all those that have been given unto my Servent Joseph [Smith], and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have Said they ware [were] pure Shall be destroyed."100 Emma according to Clayton's source "said she did not believe a word of it and appeared very rebellious."101 William Clayton was a clerk in church employment. His journal records not only his

98 Ibid., 366.
99 Historical Record 6 (May 1887):240.
100 Marquardt, Joseph Smith Revelations, 327; LDS D&C 132:52.
101 William Clayton Journal, 12 July 1843, typescript, LDS Church Archives. The next day 13 July Clayton recorded that Joseph sent for him and he met with Joseph and Emma in a private room where Emma and Joseph made an agreement between themselves and "stated their feelings on many subjects & wept considerable." Willard Richards recorded in Smith's journal, "In conversation with Emma most of the day" (Joseph Smith Journal, entry of 13 July 1843, LDS
own personal problems with the principle but he also records private moments with the prophet. Though his complete Nauvoo journal is not available the brief extracts that have been published show his personal struggle and the secret nature of the practice of plural marriage.

The 12 July 1843 revelation concerning wives and concubines became public when Hyrum Smith read and discussed it in a meeting of the Nauvoo High Council in August 1843.102 This was a year after John C. Bennett’s public lectures. William Clayton recorded in his journal two months later that Smith on 19 October 1843 privately told him (though Clayton was not a member of the Holy Order) about the second anointing and that Emma was “quite friendly & kind. she had been anointed & he also had been a[nointed]. K[ing].”103 The month previously Emma and Joseph received their second anointing in the upper room of the Mansion. Emma assisted in the sacred ordinances for women in early November.104

Error in date of 11 May 1843

Church Archives; Faulring, An American Prophet’s Record, 396.

102 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, 12 August 1843, typescript, LDS Church Archives. Hosea Stout who was the clerk of the High Council recorded “Teaching by Prest Hiram Smith & William Marks.” See also affidavit of William Law, 4 May 1844 and affidavit of Austin Cowles, 4 May 1844, published in the Nauvoo Expositor 1 (7 June 1844):2, Nauvoo, Illinois.

103 William Clayton Journal, 19 Oct. 1843, typescript. Clayton also wrote that if there was any trouble regarding the knowledge of the pregnancy of Clayton’s plural wife Margaret Moon, “I [Joseph] will give you an awful scourging & probably cut you off from the church and then I will baptise you & set you ahead as good as ever.”

After reading the entry from the “History of Joseph Smith” as published in the *Millennial Star* where it mentioned the activities for 11 May, Emily was told “Now that is the private journal of Joseph Smith for the 11th of May 1843, the day that you say you were married to him.” She was asked, “What do you say to that?” She responded, “Well it is possible that I have made a mistake in the dates, but I haven’t made any mistake in the facts.” She was then asked if she was married before or after the 11 May date. She said, “Well it must have been before that.”\(^\text{105}\) It appears that it was afterwards. A probable date is 23 May 1843.

The ordinance of rebaptism was common in Nauvoo since 1841. At the April 1841 conference president Joseph Smith requested those who wished to be baptized to go to the water.\(^\text{106}\) Smith and his counselor Sidney Rigdon went into the water for rebaptism.\(^\text{107}\) On another Sunday in 1842 Wilford Woodruff wrote, “Joseph the seer went into the river & Baptized all that Came unto him & I considered it my privilege to be Baptized for the remission of my sins for I had not been since I first Joined the Church in 1833. . . . I went forth into the river & was Baptized under the hands of JOSEPH THE SEER & likewise did Elder J[ohn] Taylor & many others.”\(^\text{108}\) Willard Richards made the following entry in Smith’s journal for May 1843: “Thursday

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\(^\text{105}\) Respondents Testimony, 367. About the 11 May 1843 date Emily said: “it was in my mind that that was the day that I was married to him the second time, but when you read his diary I see that I was mistake[n] and I don’t say that was the date now.” (Ibid., 384).


\(^\text{107}\) William Huntington recorded: “Joseph and Sidney baptised each other for the remission of their Sins as this order was then Instituted in the church” (William Huntington Journal, entry of 11 April 1841, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library).

May 11th 6 A.M. baptized [blank space] Snow. Louisa Beman. Sarah Alley &c”

Louisa Beman (another plural wife of Joseph Smith) and Sarah Alley (plural wife of Joseph B. Noble) received the ordinance of rebaptism early that morning.

It is quite possible that Emily and Eliza Partridge may have been rebaptized on this morning though there is no clear record. The date of 11 May stuck in their minds as the date of their second sealing to Joseph Smith. Neither woman kept a journal at the time. So Emily’s various accounts were oral histories. That the date Emily considered through the years as being the day she was married to Joseph the second time is in error is because James Adams arrived in Nauvoo from Springfield on 21 May. Sometime after, probably on 23 May, he sealed the Partridge sisters to the prophet Joseph Smith with Emma participating.

Marriage Certificate and Emma Smith Knowledge

Emily was asked regarding her 1843 marriage to Smith:

Q:- Have you got a marriage certificate? A:- No sir.
Q:- Did you ever have one? A:- No sir.

109 Joseph Smith Journal, entry of 11 May 1843, LDS Church Archives.


111 “At home in conversation with Judge Adams and others.” (Joseph Smith Journal, entry of 23 May 1843, LDS Church Archives. See Faulring, An American Prophet’s Record, 380.
Q: Why did you not get one? A: Well it was not thought necessary in those days.112

When asked “Did Emma take your hand and place it in Joseph Smith’s hand?” She said “I think she did.” Then she replied “I could not swear to it at all” maybe not wanting to tell about an important part of her second marriage ceremony.113 In cases where the first (legal) wife gave her husband an additional wife she would place the hand of the wife to be in the right hand of her husband. James Whitehead, a clerk who worked in Joseph Smith’s store and assistant to William Clayton, talked to William W. Blair in 1874. To make the diary passage clearer the few letters intended for words in Blair’s diary are included in brackets for easier reading:


Church Law

112 Respondents Testimony, 367.


114 William W. Blair Diary, entry of 17 June 1874, Community of Christ Archives. In his diary Blair wrote that the day before James Whitehead “Says J did te- p- and pr- too. That E- knows it too that She put hnd of Wives in Jos hnd W. Says Alex H. Smith asked him when sleeping with him at his house in Atlon, if J- did p & tea. p, and he, W. told him he did.”
On the church law regulating marriage Emily was asked if she knew "that the section on marriage was there, and you knew what it contained, - you knew what it was as it was printed in the book of Doctrine and Covenants?" She responded, "Yes sir, at that time I did." The following was asked with her answers:

Q: - And you knew at the time that you married him that he had a wife named Emma? A: - Yes sir I knew that too, - but if Joseph Smith had one revelation he could have others too. He had a revelation permitting, -

Q: - Well never mind about the revelation he had, - You say you knew that Joseph Smith had a wife named Emma at that time? A: - Yes sir I knew that.

Q: - And still in the face of that knowledge, - of the knowledge of what the law of the church was on the question of marriage as printed in the book of Doctrine and Covenants at that time, and the further knowledge that he had a wife living, you married him? A: - Yes sir.115

Emily was asked important intimate questions relating to sleeping with the prophet Joseph Smith:

Q: - Well do you make the declaration now that you ever roomed with him at any time? A: - Yes sir.

Q: - Do you make the declaration that you ever slept with him in the same bed? A: - Yes sir.


115 Respondents Testimony, 374-75.
Q: Only one night? A: Yes sir.

Q: Then you only slept with him in the same bed one night? A: Yes sir.

Q: Did you ever have carnal intercourse with Joseph Smith? A: Yes sir.

Q: How many nights? A: I could not tell you.

Q: Do you make the declaration that you never slept with him one night? A: Yes sir.

Q: And that was the only time and place that you ever were in bed with him? A: No sir.

Q: Were you in bed with him at any place before that time? A: Before what time?

Q: Before you were married? A: No sir, not before I was married to him I never was.

Q: Do you mean that you were in bed with him after the 4th of March 1843? A: Yes sir, but that was after I was first married to him. 116

Emily was asked under what revelation she was married to Joseph Smith. She replied that Smith told her “in so many words that he had a revelation, and that was the revelation we were married under. I just took his word for it, and I believed he had it.” 117 The ceremony under which they were married included time and eternity. Being asked what they agreed to when they were married, Emily responded, "we agreed to be each others companions, - husband and wife." 118

Testimony on sealing to Brigham Young

116 Ibid., 384.
117 Ibid., 385.
118 Ibid., 387.
Emily was asked about her marriage to Brigham Young as to the date. She thought it had taken place in the fall of 1844 and said “I think it was in November, but I would not be positive of that.” On the law of proxy Emily explained that her children conceived by Brigham Young were considered Joseph Smith’s children by proxy. As far as Mary Ann Angell Young giving permission for an additional wife to be sealed to her husband and putting the new wife’s hand in Brigham’s hand, a few interesting questions were asked Emily:

Q: Did not Brigham Young’s wife do that with you when you married Brigham Young? A: No sir.
Q: Why did she not do it? A: She was not present.
Q: Well did she give her consent to your marrying Brigham Young? A: No sir, not to my knowledge, for she was not there.
Q: Were you married the second time to Brigham Young? A: Yes sir.
Q: You were married twice to him also? A: Yes sir.
Q: Did she give her consent the second time you were married to him? A: No sir.

After Temple Lot Testimony

On 6 May 1892 Emily left “the original copy deed to the Temple lot in Independence” at

119 Ibid., 362.
120 Ibid., 369.
121 Ibid., 372.
church president Woodruff's office. Through her diary Emily remembers her sealing to Smith as illustrated in her diary for 1893: “March 4th. Today or rather this evening I was married to Joseph Smith the Prophet, 1843.” As the time neared for the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple Emily “Went up to the [Salt Lake] Temple. Went into the Annex and went through the passage into the Temple. Went through all the rooms. Up on the elevator to the top story also onto the roof. Went into the pulpit, sat on the First Presidency sofa. Took a drink of water from one of the fountains. Was very much pleased with all I saw.”

Emily attended the temple on 23 April. She recorded, “All had the promise of being forgiven of all their sins no matter what they were if it was not the sin against the Holy Ghost.” The next day she again went to the temple, “The same promised to the people if they would repent and confess to their God. The promise was extended to all whether they attended the conference or not. I would like to know if the promise will extend to the dead that have died under transgression.”

Emily was proud of her marriage to Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. She recorded in her diary under the 4 March anniversary of her first wedding for two successive years:

4 March [1895] Fifty two years ago today, I was married to Joseph Smith the Prophet. I

122 Emily Dow Partridge Young Diary, 96, entry of 6 May 1892. Original deed in LDS Church Archives. See “Jackson Temple Lot Deed Found in Church Relics,” Deseret News, Church Section (23 Jan. 1932), 1.

123 Emily Dow Partridge Young Diary, 97, entry of 4 March 1893.

124 Ibid., 97, entry of 3 April 1893.

125 Ibid., 98, entries of 23-24 April 1893.
went to one of the neighbors (Heber C. Kimbals) after dark and alone. When I went in, no one was in the house but br. Kimballs oldest son and daughter. I did not know what to do, or what excuse to make, but Well I don['']t like to think of those times, and will say no more now.126

March 4th. [1896] 53 years ago this evening about 8 p.m. I was married to the Prophet Joseph Smith, at the house of Heber Kimble, and he performed the ceremony. It was a rather peculiar wedding. I would be pleased to meet him again, if I could without going behind the veil, but not exactly as I did that evening. I desire to live some years longer.127

On Saturday, 22 February 1896 Emily recorded a dream concerning the prophet Joseph Smith and his words to her:

Last night-or rather this morning, I dreamed that the Prophet Joseph had returned home, and he was as busy as he could be. . . . I was thinking, as I had been deprived of Joseph[']s society all my life, would it be the same now he had returned. I thought, verily likely it would. As he had so many wives it seemed that some would have to be neglected. . . . he then spoke and said, Emily I shall keep you with me. I said thank you for those comforting words.128

126 Ibid., 103, entry of 4 March 1895.
127 Ibid., 106, entry of 4 March 1896.
128 Ibid., 105-106, entry of 22 February 1896.
Emily died on 9 December 1899 in the capital city of Utah at the age of seventy-five years ever hopeful of a joyful reunion with Joseph Smith in the bonds of celestial marriage. She is buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery.

**Summary of Emily’s Experiences**

Though Emily’s testimony in the Temple Lot Case is a late recollection, for the most part, it summarized her writings relating to her marriage to Joseph Smith as a plural wife. The revelation under which she was married was one that Smith received years earlier. Emily is a further witness that the prophet Joseph said an angel appeared to him and gave the revelation on plural marriage.

Emily’s marriage to president Smith was short lived because of Emma Smith’s intervention. Being sealed to Brigham Young she became the mother of seven children and they by proxy sealing were considered Joseph Smith’s children. Life for her was hard but she persevered and was looking forward to being with Joseph on resurrection day. Emily wrote in 1884: “For my part I am not ashamed of my religion . . . . Neither am I ashamed of my name, nor would I be even if it was, EMILY DOW PARTRIDGE SMITH YOUNG, ETC.”

129 Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young, “Testimony That Cannot Be Refuted,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12 (1 April 1884):165.