Some Statements by Dr. W. E. McLellan.

The following extracts are taken from letters which I received from the late Dr. William E. McLellan. Between the years 1875 and 1882 I corresponded a great deal with the Doctor, and received from him a great deal of information on the early history of Mormonism and the acts and doings of Joseph Smith and some of his principal men.

Extracts from a letter dated March 11th, 1875.

"Joseph's widow, (Emma Smith), told me in Nauvoo, in 1847, that she knew that Joseph practiced it [polygamy] himself; and I believed her then, and so I do now. She said she knew that Joseph did have the Polygamic revelation. No doubt they carried it to an alarming extent in Nauvoo before they were killed. Young Joseph knows better than to hold or publish that his father was not a polygamist. I wrote the facts to him, and referred him to his own mother; but still he publishes abominable falsehoods on that subject."

From a letter dated Dec. 6th, 1875.

"I visited Mrs. Emma Smith in Nauvoo, in 1847. She told me plainly and frankly that her husband did receive and deliver the Polygamic revelation himself, and she knew he practiced its provisions. And she said she knew he had committed adultery with girls previous to that."
Stress of close living quarters that resulted in Richards blaming Fielding's wife for her husband's preaching schedule. Later Richards, weary from criticism and in poor health, accused Sister Walmsley of saying "hard things" against his own wife. Asked to referee, Fielding declined, saying that "none are perfect" and that perhaps Richards was trying to get even. Walmsley sometimes let her tongue go at random, Fielding confided to his journal, and perhaps she was unused to polite company, but she was not one to bear grudges and possessed "a certain honesty" along with so much commitment that "she could not be whipped out of the Kingdom."  

What can be said about the disputes among these early Mormons is that, although not the happiest of proofs, they reveal that women were more than passive members of the church. They were an integral part of its progress and problems.

**Hard Times or Sublimated Anger?**

One approach to understanding dissension is to speculate on the origins of contention generally. One could argue that contention is normal, that had there been none we would be surprised. But disturbed feelings have causes. One can surmise several sources of tension in the British branches.

There was the obvious stress of belonging to an unpopular sect. Fielding voiced this frustration:

The Church is at this time in a State of depression almost throughout ... [There is] no lack of lies emigrating from America. Besides many native ones, they are all over the Country in the 43 Newspapers etc. The Priests everywhere are fortifying their hearers against us. A strong tide of Prejudice is flowing. Which ever way I go, trouble in the Church meets me.  

Doctrinal strain was another source of tension. Elders defused suspicions of polygamy by members and outsiders. Reuben Hedlock, for instance, apologized to Richards for having to mention that "delicate matter":

I have much trouble with the spiritual wife system, as it is termed here. It has caused much confusion among some of the branches and I have opposed it with all my power, and it is thrown in my face both by Saints and worldly people, that we do actually uphold such things, because they say Brother Hiram Clarke has made free with some of the sisters, so much so that in Macclesfield it is currently reported that he used, when there, to sleep with a certain sister, and also in Manchester.

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59 Ibid., 5 and 27 Feb. 1840.

60 Ibid., 31 Oct. 1838.
Spiritual wifery was a contributing issue in the Preston spiritualist episodes, for Fielding found along with too many visions "too great familiarity between the Brethren and Sisters in this Land." One elder was said to be assuring Preston sisters that bedding together was no evil unless they actually fornicated. The trouble was that occasionally he and a sister would be "overcome" and now one woman was pregnant.  

An organizational difficulty in the church itself was the scattered condition of the branches. Many drew membership from areas 900 miles square. Urban mill workers had an easier time getting to meetings than rural members, since missionaries tended to work the towns where public halls were available, but neither workers nor farmers nor miners could be easily reached when needed. The most common disappointment among missionaries was poor attendance, and logistics were more the culprit than apathy.

Primitive transportation and communication, and a sense of isolation and neglect, led to the disintegration of The Potteries branches in Staffordshire. Initially a strong conversion center, the area declined after 1844 when elders began to report increased apathy in attending meetings. The problems in Staffordshire were similar to those plaguing branches throughout the mission.

The cyclical flowering and waning of numbers and activity was also influenced by events in the American church. During up times, such as the Reformation of 1856 or whenever members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles could be dispatched, the British branches flourished. During hard times, such as the late 1850s when Utah was preoccupied with famine and invasion by federal troops, attendance and activism in the British branches flagged. An example is the London conference of early 1857 at the height of the Mormon Reformation in Britain when the Saints were paying tithing, saving their emigration money, distributing tracts, preaching out of doors, and accepting rebaptism as a sign of their recommitment to the church. On the other hand, much lower activity is evident for 1858, 1859, and 1860, years of the lag effect of the Utah War.

Yet an American event which might have created chaos and did

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61 Hedlock's letter indicates that the secret practice by some Mormon leaders of spiritual wifery was common knowledge in at least some of the British branches by roughly the time of Hedlock's letter (i.e., mid-1844).

62 Fielding Journal, 1 Sept. 1841. Fielding does not mention spiritual wifery. Apparently, it was not common knowledge in 1841.


64 London Conference, Manuscript History, 10 Feb., 5 Apr., and 28 June 1857.
CHAPTER 21.

Between Family and Friends

The sound has gone, her to oppress;  
Yes, Miss Rigdon now has to bear the slings,  
Because she did not conform  
To Joseph Smith’s word of God;  
But barely a youth, she for herself spoke,  
And showed that she was not to be duped.  
—Oliver Olney

Few years in the life of Sidney Rigdon’s family were more momentous than 1842. Apostasy and bankruptcy impacted the clan as did the healthy squall of newborn Ephraim Robinson Marks Rigdon, the last of Sidney’s and Phebe’s twelve children. Moreover, teenager Eliza, clenched in the jaws of death, miraculously revived with haunting messages from beyond the grave. None of these could compare, however, to the sensation precipitated by Joseph Smith’s proposal of plural marriage to nineteen-year-old daughter Nancy.

Perhaps the greatest ambiguity in Smith’s shrewd persona was his proclivity to test conventions, to live on the edge of his impulses. In an 1834 letter to Oliver Cowdery the prophet wrote, “I do not, do not ever have, pretended to be any other than a man ‘subject to passion,’ and liable, without the assisting grace of the Savior, to deviate from that perfect path in which all men are commanded to walk.”

Smith’s boundless appetite for life dogged him from his earliest years. He knew he was not what people expected of a prophet. His language was coarse, full of epithets, raucous, and braggadocio. His backwoods savoir-faire sometimes impressed visitors whom he lavished with food, wine, and tall tales, but his frequent misuse of Latin, Hebrew, and German were plainly pedantic. His relish for competition in sports, matched by his ambition in commerce and politics, was not what people expected from a divine. Nor could Smith resist the frivolities of military dress and parade, or dramatic staging of ritual and ceremony of all kinds. Embracing friends and lashing out verbally and physically at enemies, he was no Buddah. But perhaps the most scandalous manifestation of Smith’s lust for manly achievement was his inclination toward extra-marital romantic liaisons, which he believed were licensed by the Old Testament and countenanced by God’s modern revelation.

For example, his abrupt 1830 departure from Harmony, Pennsylvania, was attributed in part to accusations that he had dallied with a local girl.Nearly fifty years later Emma Smith’s cousin Hiel Lewis still repeated stories that Joseph attempted to “seize Eliza Winters.” Benjamin F. Winchester, a close friend of the prophet, later recalled the charges of “licentious conduct” hurled against Smith in Kirtland, “especially among the women.” He added that Smith’s name was “connected with scandalous relations with two or three families.” Stalwart Benjamin F. Johnson noted that the uproar was “one of the Causes of Apostacy & disruption at Kirtland although at the time there was little Said publicly upon the subject.”

The name most frequently linked with Smith’s in Kirtland was Fanny Ward Alger. Miss Alger, “a varry nice & Comly young woman,” according to Benjamin Johnson, was nineteen years old when she became the Smiths’ maid in 1835. Martin Harris, one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, recalled that the prophet’s “servant girl” claimed he had made “improper proposals to her, which created quite a talk amongst the people.” Mormon Fanny Brewster similarly reported “much excitement against the Prophet...involving an unlawful intercourse between himself and a young orphan girl residing in his family and under his protection.”

Former Mormon apostle William McLellan later wrote that Emma Smith substantiated the Smith-Alger affair. According to McLellan, Emma was searching for her husband and Alger one evening when through a crack in the barn door she saw “him and Fanny in the barn together alone” on the hay mow. McLellan, in a letter to one of Smith’s sons, added that the ensuing confrontation between Emma and her husband grew so heated that Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and Oliver Cowdery had to mediate the situation. After Emma related what she had witnessed, Smith, according to McLellan, “confessed humbly, and begged forgiveness. Emma and all forgave him.” While Cowdery may have forgiven his cousin, he did not forget the incident. Three years later, when provoked by the prophet, Cowdery communed by calling the episode “a dirty, nasty, filthy affair.”

Gossip in Ohio’s Western Reserve linked Smith to Athalia and Nancy Rigdon, Sidney’s sixteen- and fifteen-year-old daughters. Clark Braden, prominent RLDS Mormon, later testified in court that a “bitter quarrel between Rigdon and Smith shortly before they left Kirtland was because Smith wanted to have Nancy Rigdon a girl of 16 sealed to him.” William C. Smith (not Joseph’s brother) added that “I went to school with Athalia Rigdon, and there was talk among the boys about sealing. I think there was difficulty between Joseph Smith and Rigdon with reference to having Rigdon’s daughter sealed to Smith.”

The Mormon newspaper of the period published a letter from editor Warren
Cowdery to quell the gossip that had traveled to Milton and Palmyra in nearby Portage County:

Having learned from a respeebable source that rumors were afloat and had gained some credence in your towns, that were derogatory to the characters of Joseph Smith Jr. and the family of Sidney Rigdon[,] we therefore deemed it our duty to say in defence of injured innocence, that we have the best of reasons for saying that the reports to which we have alluded, are without any foundation in truth. Since our acquaintance with J. Smith Jr. there has been the strongest ties of friendship existing between himself and S. Rigdon. And we hazard nothing in saying, were those reports true that must have originated in our vicinity, the bonds of friendship would have been severed forever between them. We ... pronoune the whole a sheer fabrication.

Relative to the family of Sidney Rigdon, we have to say, that it is large, consisting mostly of females, young, innocent, unsuspecting, without reproach and for ought we know, above suspicion.14

Smith's career, in many respects, was the equivalent of a held breath. A sense of urgency attended every aspect of his life. Early accounts of his moral ambivalence—reflections of his youthful passions or romantic liaisons—were self-interpreted as divine promptings towards enlightenment. The orthodox Mormon interpretation of early references to Smith's sexual activities is that such incidents are proof of his involvement in the heaven-sanctioned Old Testament model of polygamy. The official stance, however, is muddled by the fact that Smith never claimed to have received the sealing power of plural marriage until 3 April 1836.15 Furthermore, the divinely mandated laws of the church, spelled out in both the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, labeled polygamy a sin. The prophet's public denunciations of plural marriage were specific and unmistakable.

During a 30 March 1842 meeting of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, President Emma Smith read a personal letter to the group from Joseph. The prophet warned against "sinuous characters ... [who] say they have authority from Joseph or the First Presidency [and] advising them not to "believe any thing as coming from us, contrary to the old established morals & virtues & scriptural laws, regulating the habits, customs & conduct of society." The sisters were urged to denounce any man who made polygamous proposals and to "shun them as the flying fiery serpent, whether they are prophets, seers, or revelators; Patriarchs, Twelve Apostles, Elders, Priests, Majors, Generals, City Councillors, Aldermen, Marshals, Police, Lord Mayors or the Devil, [they] are alike culpable & shall be damned for such evil practices."16

The prophet's most pointed denial of plural marriage occurred on 5 October 1843 in instructions pronounced publicly in the streets of Nauvoo. Willard Richards wrote in Smith's diary that Joseph "gave instructions to try those who were preaching, teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives. . . . Joseph forbids it and the practice thereof. No man shall have but one wife."17 Four months later, Joseph and brother Hyrum co-authored a letter for the 1 February 1844 Times and Seasons which "cut off from the Church for his iniquity" Hyrum Brown, a Mormon in Michigan, who was "preaching polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines."

Despite the prophet's barbed attack on spiritual wifery, plural marriage, polygamy, "the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," the practice was the central focus of his private life. William Clayton, Smith's scribe, made that point clear when he wrote:

During the last year of his life we were scarcely ever together, alone, but he was talking on the subject, and explaining that doctrine and principles connected with it. . . . From him I learned that the doctrine of plural and celestial marriage is the most holy and important doctrine ever revealed to man on the earth, and that without obedience to that principle no man can ever attain to the fitness of exaltation in celestial glory.18

A multitude of Mormon records provide irrefutable evidence for Smith's prerogative with an army of women, many of them just a few years older than his own children.19 And while the prophet now stands astride the Mormon world like a colossus, in Nauvoo he maneuvered within the charisma of his own mystique to defy both church,20 Nauvoo City,21 and Illinois22 marriage laws, as well as to conceal his behavior from his wife Emma. This equivocal department, secreted by a deferential and circumspect group of men and women,23 created two cultures in Nauvoo—one where monogamy and fidelity prevailed—the other where eros and duplicity seemed to subvert the highest moral values, and where exonerating the "Lord's Anointed" became more important than telling the truth.24

This dichotomy left Joseph's and Emma's marriage hanging by a thread. Emma spent the last three years of her husband's life jealously battling his errant yearnings, more than once threatening to return to her family in New York.25 On one occasion, according to Smith's private secretary, she threatened that if he continued to "indulge himself she would too."26 Although Emma apparently counseled two of her husband's 1843 sealings to Emily and Eliza Partridge, she remained within a day and demanded that Joseph give them up or "blood should flow."27 Her change of heart came after she found Joseph and Eliza Partridge secluded in an upstairs bedroom at the Smith home. The realization that the sealing represented more than a "spiritual marriage"28 or "adoptive ordination,"29 devastated her.30

Smith used this ruse that same month, May 1843, to convince another young woman, Helen Mar Kimball, that her sealing to him would be of a "spiritual order and not a temporal one." Helen, fifteen-year-old daughter of Apostle Heber C. Kimball, reported that the prophet admonished her: "If you will take this step, it will insure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that of your father's household & all of your kindred." "This promise was so great," Helen later remembered, "that I willingly gave myself to purchase so glorious a reward."31 Lamenting her
decision, Helen confided to a close Nauvoo friend: "I would never have been sealed to Joseph had I known it was anything more than ceremony. I was young, and they deceived me, by saying the salvation of our whole family depended on it." 32

Sidney Rigdon's family was likewise drawn into the labyrinth of spiritual wifery on 9 April 1842. At the funeral of young Ephraim R. Marks, Nancy Hyde, wife of Apostle Orson Hyde, gave nineteen-year-old Nancy Rigdon a message that Joseph wanted to talk with her at the Hyde residence. Nancy Marinda Johnson Hyde, a trusted friend of the Rigdons, was a clandestine facilitator for spiritual wifery, a role she espoused apparently to amend for her husband's 1838 apostasy. The conditions imposed on Orson Hyde to obtain his former standing, according to one account, were to relinquish his money and his wife to Joseph Smith "as a ransom for his transgression." 33

On 2 December 1841, while Orson Hyde was absorbed in his historic mission to the Holy Land, Smith revealed a divine directive ordering church printer Ebenezer Robinson to take Nancy Hyde and her children into his home, the first floor suite of the Times and Seasons office on the corner of Bain and Water streets. The revelation concluded: "[Let my handmaid Nancy Marinda Hyde hearken to the counsel of my servant Joseph in all things whatsoever he shall teach unto her, and it shall be a blessing upon her and upon her children after her, unto her justification, saith the Lord."

An entry four months later in the prophet's personal diary notes that Nancy was sealed to him in April 1842, one of several relationships contracted with married women during his lifetime. 34

Evidently Hyde, although sealed to the prophet, was shared with Smith's scribe, Apostle Willard Richards, whose wife was in Massachusetts. Ebenezer Robinson wrote that in late January 1842, after his family was forced to vacate the printing office, "Willard Richards nailed down the windows, and fired off his revolver in the street after dark, and commenced living with Mrs. Nancy Marinda Hyde." 35 John C. Bennett, former member of the First Presidency, wrote of Richards "Hyde-ing" and "Mrs. Hyde and Dr. Richards" residing at the printing office "on special business." 36

Sidney Rigdon, later commenting on Hyde's and Richard's illicit relationship, explained in an 1845 letter:

If Richards should take a notion to Hlyde's wife in his absence, all that is necessary to be done is to be sealed. No harm done, no adultery committed; only taking a little advantage of rights of priesthood. And after Richards has gone the round of dissipation with Hyde's wife, she is afterwards turned over to [Smith] and thus the poor silly woman becomes the actual dupe to two designing men, under the sanctimonious garb of rights of the royal priesthood. 37

In April 1842, however, the Rigdon family knew nothing of Apostle Richards's and Nancy Hyde's relationship. Thus Nancy Rigdon had no qualms about meeting Joseph Smith at the Hyde residence with Sister Hyde as chaperon. On arriving at the printing office, Willard Richards informed her that Joseph was detained elsewhere and wished her to return the following Thursday. In the meantime she discussed the situation with Francis M. Higbee, twenty-three-year-old son of Elias Higbee, who was courting her. Higbee, forewarned by John C. Bennett that Smith had confided to him a romantic interest in Nancy, cautioned her "not to place too much reliance on revelation," 39 but did not counsel her against going.

The various accounts of Nancy's second visit to the printing office are convoluted. The general consensus, however, is that upon her arrival Smith greeted her, ushered her into a private room, then locked the door. After swearing her to secrecy, wrote George W. Robinson, Smith announced his "affection for her for several years, and wished that she should be his ... the Lord was well pleased with this matter ... there was no sin in it whatever ... but, if she had any scruples of conscience about the matter, he would marry her privately." 40

But Nancy, a "buxom and winsome" girl according to one account, 41 was not cooperative. Despite her tender age, she did not hesitate to express herself. The prophet's seductive behavior shocked her; she rebuffed him in a flurry of anger. 42 Uncle Wyliff Rigdon wrote that Smith, flustered, beckoned Mrs. Hyde into the room to help win Nancy over. Hyde volunteered that she too was surprised upon first hearing of the tenet, but was convinced it was true, and that "great exaltation would come to those who received and embraced it." 43 Incredible, the feisty Nancy countered that "if she ever got married she would marry a single man or none at all." 44 Grabbing her bonnet, she ordered the door opened or she would "raise the neighbors." She then stormed out of the Hyde Richards residence.

Within a day or two Willard Richards delivered a private letter to Nancy. The prophet, as was his custom, had dictated the personal communication through his scribe. The essence of that message made an intriguing appendage to Sidney Rigdon's 9 April Ephraim Marks funeral sermon. According to observer: Wilford Woodruff, President Rigdon took as his text: "When we see a principle that makes us the most Happy if we will Cultivate that principle & practice it ourselves it will render others Happy." 45 The prophet, who habitually used language as much to conceal as he did to express, began his letter to Nancy with the cheerful assertion: "Happiness is the object and design of our existence." After a brief discussion on keeping the commandments, the message cut to the chase:

That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another. . . . Everything that God gives us is lawful and right; and it is proper that we should enjoy his gifts and blessings. . . . Blessings offered, but rejected, are no longer blessings. . . . Our Heavenly Father is more liberal in his views, and boundless in his mercies and blessings, than we are ready to believe or receive.

Citing God, Smith further declared "no good thing will I withhold from them
who . . . will listen to my voice and to the voice of My Servant whom I have sent; for I delight in those who seek diligently to know my precepts, and abide by the laws of my kingdom; for all things shall be made known unto them in mine own due time, and in the end they shall have joy.46

Although the timetable hereafter is sketchy, Nancy apparently first told her boyfriend Francis Higbee about the prophet's behavior. Higbee, who ultimately obtained the letter, spread the word through his circle of friends, including John C. Bennett, his superior officer in the Nauvoo Legion. Wickliffe Rigdon later wrote that "the story got out and it became the talk of the town that Joseph had made a proposition to Nancy to become his wife, and that she refused him."47 The prophet himself later admitted to Samuel James, Rigdon's cousin, that "he had approached Nancy Rigdon and asked her to become his spiritual wife and she had to go and blab it."

Sidney and Phoebe, who had given birth to Ephraim Robinson Marks Rigdon on 9 April, were incensed at the prophet's insolvency. Convention dictated that women be addressed only through their fathers. Rigdon perceived he had been hoodwinked by friend Smith. J. Gibson Divine, a close associate of Rigdon in 1845, asked in a newspaper letter: "[Is it not a system of oppression to lead a man, standing at the head of a family of interesting children, into a covenant to obey every revelation or every order coming from a certain source, asking no questions, and in a few days after one of his daughters to be demanded as a wife for a married man, and not a question to be asked by the father?]"49 George W. Robinson wrote that when Sidney confronted Smith at the Rigdon home, the enraged father demanded an explanation of the prophet's behavior. Smith "attempted to deny it at first," Robinson said, "and face [Nancy] down with the lie; but she told the facts with so much earnestness, and the fact of a letter being present, which he had caused to be written to her, on the same subject, the day after the attempt made on her virtue," that ultimately "he could not withstand the testimony; he then and there acknowledged that every word of Miss Rigdon's testimony was true."50

Wickliffe Rigdon, twelve years old at the time, later remembered additional details. He recalled that "Smith came to Rigdon[']s house and mentioned the subject and attempted to deny it." Nancy was one of those "excitable women," he added, and when she heard the prophet's denials from an adjacent room, she stormed into the parlor and said, "Joseph Smith you are telling that which is not true, you did make such a proposition to me and you know it." Another unnamed person said, "Nancy are you not afraid to call the Lord's anointed a cursed liar?"

"No," the strong-willed girl replied, "I am not for he does lie and he knows it."51

Robinson wrote that Smith, after acknowledging his proposition, sought a way out of the crisis by claiming he had approached Nancy "to ascertain whether she was virtuous or not, and took that course to learn the facts."52 But Sidney

found that rationalization feeble. Convinced of Smith's involvement in the "spiritual wife business," as Sidney later termed it,53 Rigdon concluded that Smith had "contracted a woring spirit."54 This is why, according to Wickliffe, Rigdon told family members immediately after the prophet left their home that Smith "could never be sealed to one of his daughters with his consent as he did not believe in the doctrine."55

Still unset in the spring of 1842, Sidney was caught in a double bind over the situation.56 On the one hand he was obligated to defend his daughter's honor, on the other he wished to avoid trouble. Wickliffe wrote that after the private confrontation with the Rigdon family, a "bad feeling existed" between Smith and Sidney Rigdon they did not often meet although they lived within a few rods of each other they did not seem to be on very friendly terms.57

By late April gossip about the prophet and Nancy, and perhaps others, began causing problems in the Smith household. Smith's account of 29 April notes "a conspiracy against the peace of my household was made manifest, and it gave me some trouble to counteract the design of certain base individuals, and restore peace."58 Two weeks later Joseph dictated a letter to Sidney "concerning certain difficulties, or surmises which existed."59 The following day his neighbor responded by letter. Although the contents of those letters are not known,60 that evening the prophet and Willard Richards walked next door to the Rigdon home, and, according to Smith's account, "had a private interview with Presl.[Rigdon] with much apparent satisfaction to all parties[,] concerning certain evil reports put in circulation by H Francis]. M. [Higbee about Presl]. Rigdon[']s family & others."61

Meanwhile Rigdon focused his energies on an unsuccessful bid for the Illinois state senate, a race he lost to Jacob C. Davis. The 14 June 1842 Wasp contains a letter to the Hancock County citizenry announcing Rigdon's candidacy. "Fellow-citizens," began the formal declaration, should you honor me with your suffrage, at the election in August next, and 1 should be the object of your choice, in the Senate chamber, I will be yourselves as nearly as I can. Your interest shall be my interest, and your will the rule of my action. As far as my abilities will admit, I will look closely to the interest of every part of the county, without partiality, or sectional feelings, in the smallest degree. These are the pledges, and the only ones, which I make, or am willing to make.

Ten days later, during the "Celebration of St. John's," a ritual of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge into which Rigdon had recently been initiated,62 he was the featured speaker before an estimated crowd of 6,000 and apparently delivered a political oration.

To all appearances, the imbroglio involving Rigdon and Smith seemed settled for awhile. But on 28 June, Smith again visited the Rigdon home. The official Mormon account of the incident, written by Willard Richards, states that although
intercourse with women and that the heads of the church also taught and practised it which caused her to be led away thinking it to be right.”69

William Smith's admonition for spiritual wifery was to serve a mission to Pennsylvania. John Bennett became the designated scapegoat for sexual misadventures, according to George W. Robinson, because of "the affair with Miss Rigdon." Smith had "suspicions that Bennett had cautioned her on the matter and he was further afraid that he would make disclosures of other matters."70 As part of the campaign to smear Bennett, who was then mayor of Nauvoo, the prophet and others named both Sarah Pratt (wife of apostle Orson Pratt)71 and Nancy Rigdon as Bennett's lovers.

A Mormon newspaper, The Wasp, printed on 20 July a petition signed by prominent Nauvoo citizens affirming Joseph Smith's "high moral character." Orson Pratt, Sidney Rigdon, and George W. Robinson refused to sign it, infuriating Smith. Addressing the Saints on 25 August, he admonished them to "support the character of the Prophet, the Lord's anointed." Lashing out at Pratt, Rigdon, and Robinson, he boasted, "I can kick them off my heels, as many as you can name."72 The bedeviling paradox for many regarding the Nancy Rigdon incident is that while Smith's fame as a prophet of God makes the charges against him hard to believe, her steadfast reputation makes them difficult to dismiss.73 Corroboration evidence exists in the accounts of at least three other Nauvoo women who similarly rejected the prophet's advances that spring of 1842. Sarah M. Kimball, wife of a prominent non-Mormon, told Smith merely to "teach it to someone else" when he approached her with his new ideas.74 Sarah Pratt and Martha Brotherton, however, were not intimidated by prophetic aura and went public with their tales of attempted exploitation. Their grievances were not taken seriously within the male-dominated Mormon society. Smith, Brigham Young, and others were deeply esteemed by the community and had at their disposal a number of adherents who would corrobore in their defense as proof of religious faith.

Inevitably, Nancy Rigdon, Sarah Pratt, and Martha Brotherton saw their reputations impugned by an avalanche of slander.75 The prophet labeled Sarah Pratt a "whore" from her mother's breast."76 Martha Brotherton was branded a "mean harlot,"77 while Nancy was tagged a "poor miserable girl out of the very slough of prostitution."78 Despite the drama of these events, neither Pratt, Rigdon, nor Brotherton stood to gain from exposing the prophet's prurience; none had obvious political motives to hurt him. Furthermore, documentation from orthodox Mormon sources provides evidence of the prophet's passion for women. In 1843, for example, he was sealed to at least nine Nauvoo women.79 The frenzied tempo of his life in 1843 may have merely reflected his need for new passion and challenges. In a 14 May 1843 sermon he declared, "Excitement has almost become the essence of my life. When that dies away, I feel almost lost."80
Another possibility is that Smith privately feared the predictions of a contemporary adventist prophet, William Miller, who predicted that the "apocalyptic moment," the end of the world, was to come in his own age, "about the year 1843. ... It may be significant that Smith took no more plural wives after November 1843 after seeing that Miller's predictions had failed.

In the midst of that tumultuous summer of 1842 a stressed and emaciated Sidney Rigdon, during Sunday services on 21 August, addressed those gathered in the grove near the temple. He was "not upon the stand to renounce his faith in Mormonism," he began, "but to bear his testimony of its truth, and add another to the many miraculous evidences of the power of God." He then unfolded "a scene of deep interest which had occurred in his own family." Although he had witnessed many instances of the power of God in his life, "never before had he seen the dead raised." His sixteen-year-old daughter Eliza, critically ill with typhoid pneumonia, after being declared dead by the attending physician, "rose up in the bed and spoke in a very powerful tone." Rigdon related that she told of a message from the Lord, after which she would return to his presence. She summoned the family around her and bade them farewell, with "a compoearse and calmness that defies all description."

At the time of her death she had expressed a "great unwillingness to die," but after her return "she expressed equally as strong a desire to go back." Addressing her older sister Nancy she said, "Ill is in your heart to deny this work, and if you do, the Lord says it will be the damnation of your soul." After delivering other messages for each of her sisters, "she swooned, but recovered again." Sidney explained that during this episode "she was as cold as when laid in the grave, and all the appearance of life was the power of speech." She remained this way for thirty-six hours then called her father to her bedside. Whispering in Rigdon's ear she said that the Lord had revealed that he had "dedicated her to God, and prayed to him for her, that he would give her back again." She then admonished him to "dry up his tears," go to bed and rest, "for in the morning she should be getting better, and should get well," a promise that proved true.

Rigdon then commented on the "many idle tales and reports abroad concerning him," saying that, rumors to the contrary, he had not denied the faith. Neither had he labeled Joseph Smith "a fallen prophet." He closed his testimony by declaring that "he had no controversy with the world, having an incontrovertible evidence, that through the obedience to the ordinances of the religion he now believes, the Lord had actually given back his daughter from the dead." 82

Hyrum Smith, the peacemaker in Joseph's family, was elated at Rigdon's dedication. In his address Hyrum "cited Elder Rigdon's mind back to the revelation concerning him, that if he would move into the midst of the city and defend the truth, he should be healed ... and showed that what Elder Rigdon felt in regard to the improvement in his health was a fulfillment of the revelation. He further told Rigdon that "inasmuch as he had seen the mercy of the Lord, exerted in his behalf, it was his duty to arise and stand in defence of the truth and innocence." 83 Six days later, the 27 August Wasp contained an engaging letter to the editor from Rigdon. "I am fully authorized by my daughter, Nancy," began the communication,

to say to the public through the medium of your paper, that the letter which has appeared in the Sangamo Journal, making part of General Bennett's letters to said paper, purporting to have been written by Mr. Joseph Smith to her, was unauthorized by her, and that she never said to Gen. Bennett or any other person that said letter was written by said Mr. Smith, nor in his hand writing, but by another person, and in another person's handwriting.

Failing to mention that the "other person" was the prophet's scribe William Richards, Rigdon also stated that Nancy had not given Bennett permission to "use her name in the public papers," classifying that as "a flagrant violation of the rules of gallantry." In a postscript Rigdon further added that "Mr. Smith denied to me the authorship of that letter." 84 The newspaper's editor, commenting that Rigdon's explanation was unsatisfactory, wrote that the Sangamo Journal had not concluded that Smith wrote the letter. "Nevertheless," the editor added, "it was written to accomplish his purposes."

Despite Rigdon's efforts to calm troubled waters, Nancy continued to suffer abuse from those around her. Stephen Markham, for example, a close friend of Smith, certified in the 31 August 1842 Wasp that he had witnessed Nancy early on in a compromising situation with John Bennett. Markham claimed "many vulgar, unbecoming and indecent sayings and motions" passed between them and testified that he was convinced they were "guilty of unlawful and illicit intercourse with each other." George W. Robinson, on Nancy's behalf, issued a sworn statement on 3 September 1842 that Markham had lied. Explaining that he was present on the occasion Markham referred to, he pointed out that Nancy was sick and that "Dr. John C. Bennett was the attending physician." Sidney Rigdon also swore out a refusal of Markham's story and employed an attorney to sue him.

Other Rigdon family friends rushed to defend Nancy's reputation. Oliver Olney testified in an 18 September 1842 letter to the Sangamo Journal (published 7 October) that "every person knows ... that Stephen Markham's affidavit was for the express purpose and design of helping the elders ... to refute the statements of Bennett.

In Nancy's defense he added: "I have been personally acquainted with Miss Nancy Rigdon from her infancy to the present time, and a more virtuous lady I believe never lived. I do not believe that any act in her life could give the least suspicion to the most designing, and eager of mischief makers." 85 Olney's brother John, in a 14 September 1842 letter to the Sangamo Journal, announced his withdrawal from the church because "polygamy, lasciviousness, and adultery, are practised by some of its leaders." He added, "I have heard the circumstances
of Smith's attack upon Miss Rigdon, from the family as well as herself, and knowing her to be a young lady who sustains a good moral character, and also of undoubted veracity, I must place implicit confidence in her statement."

Joseph H. Jackson added that: "When, as happens in the cases of Miss Martha Brotherton and Miss Nancy Rigdon, [the prophet's] oaths were rejected[,] with disdain and exposure [he] threatened he would set a hundred hell hounds on them, to destroy their reputations."

Significantly in the 3 September Wasp a small notation read: "We are authorized to say, by Gen. Joseph Smith, that the affidavit of Stephen Markham, relative to Miss Nancy Rigdon, as published in the handbill of affidavits, was unauthorized by him: the certificate of Elder Rigdon relative to the letter being satisfactory.

To the church's advantage, Bennett dramatically overstated his case in white-washing his own behavior, making it possible to discredit him in the eyes of the Saints and effectively equating his name with licentiousness and betrayal. A Wasp extra published on 27 July 1842 declared him "a spoiler of character and virtue, and a living pestilence, wailing in darkness to fester in his own infancy." A special pamphlet, Affidavits and Certificates Disproving the Statements and Affidavits Contained in John C. Bennett's Letters, denounced him for seduction, pandering, burglary, and abortion. But Bennett, like George W. Robinson, was sorely underestimated. Both men became formidable opponents and would play principal, although relatively unknown, roles in events culminating in Joseph Smith's 1844 imprisonment and subsequent murder.

Notes

Unless otherwise stated, all primary sources cited are located in the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

1. Oliver H. Olney, The Aburdancies of Mormonism Portrayed (Hancock County, Ill. by the author, 1843), 16.
2. Latter Days Saints' Messenger and Advocate (Kirtland, OH) 1 (Nov. 1834): 40.
6. Ibid., 38.
Law, because he was such a "sweet little man" (Joseph H. Jackson, A Narrative of the Adventures and Experiences of Joseph H. Jackson in Nauvoo: Discussing the Depths of Mormon Villainy Practiced in Nauvoo [Warsaw, IL: n.p., 1844], 209). Although there is nothing to suggest that Law and Emma were more to each other than friends, Law later confirmed that Joseph "offered to furnish his wife Emma with a substitute for him, by way of compensation for his neglect of her, on condition that she would forever stop her opposition to polygamy and permit him to enjoy his young wives in peace and keep some of them in his house and to be well treated etc." ("The Mormons in Nauvoo—Three Letters from William Law on Mormonism," Salt Lake Tribune, 3 July 1887).

27. Elraul, D. P. Young, "Occidets in the Life of a Mormon Girl." In a plot to appease his wife’s fur, William Clayton wrote, the prophet told Emma "he would relinquish all [others] for her sake." He nevertheless told Clayton privately, who recorded it immediately in his diary, that "he should not relinquish anything" (Clayton diary, 16 Aug. 1843, cited in Smith, 117).

28. Spiritual weirdy was a Swedenborgian concept whereby people who could not be lawfully united in this world might be enjoined in the afterlife. It was not expected that the union in question would be anything more than a spiritual connection; the notion that it should be consummated was especially disclaimed by Swedenborgians. Although "spiritual weirdy" in Mormon usage much later came to be equated with promiscuous intercourse or "freelove," this was not the contemporary Nauvoo meaning. "Polygamy," "spiritual weirdy," "spiritual marriage," and "plural marriage" were all apparently interchangeable terms in Mormon and non-Mormon contexts during the early 1880s. Emily Dow Partridge, a plural wife to both Smith and later to Brigham Young, uses "spiritual wife" as a reference to herself and others: "Spiritual wives, as we were then termed, were not very numerous in those days and a spiritual baby was a rarity indeed" (Emily D. P. Young, "Autobiographical Sketch," 72).

Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, another of Smith’s plural wives, added that in Nauvoo "spiritual wife was the title by which every woman who entered into this order [plural marriage] was called" (Whitney, 15). Heber C. Kimball, of the First Presidency in 1855, utilized that term in chiding the Saints for opposing the "spiritual wife doctrine the Patriarchal Order, which is of God" (Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. [London: Latter-Day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854-86], 3 [16 Oct. 1855]: 125; hereafter as Journal of Discourses).

Joseph H. Jackson, for a brief period a close friend and confidante of Joseph Smith, added that "a spiritual wife is a woman, who by revelation is appointed to be united in partners and passions, both for this life and for all eternity, whereas the union of a carnal wife and her husband comes at death" (Jackson, 121).}

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30. This 22 May 1843 encounter is described in William Clayton's journal entry for 23 May (see Smith, 105:106). In addition, Emma also learned that the Partridge sisters had actually been sealed to the prophet two months earlier. The second ceremony, according to Emily, was merely effected "to save family trouble." Young, "Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl," 185. In 1846, two years after Joseph's death, Emma Smith, in conversation with Joseph W. Coolidge, family friend and administrator of the prophet's estate, remarked that Joseph had abandoned plurality of wives before his death. Coolidge indicated that from personal experience he knew otherwise. After a heated exchange Emma returned with exasperation, "Then he was worthy of the death he died" (Joseph F. Smith diary, 28 Aug. 1870).

31. Helen Mar Kimball, "Helen Mar Kimball's Retrospective About Her Introduction to the Doctrine and Practices of Plural Marriage in Nauvoo at Age 15" (a sealed letter to be opened after her death).


33. William Hall, The Abominations of Mormonism Exposed, containing many facts and doctrines concerning that singular people, during seven years membership with them; from 1840 to 1847 (Cincinnati: I. Hart, 1852), 22.

34. History of the Church, 4:467.

35. Faulkner, 396.


38. In cited in Rigdon's letter "TO THE SISTERS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS," Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate (Pittsburgh), Oct. 1845. Ann Eliza Young commented in her 1876 book that when Hyde returned from his mission "it was hinted to him that Smith had had [Nancy] sealed to himself in his absence, as a wife for eternity ... that [Nancy] was his wife only for time" (Ann Eliza Young, Wife Number 19; or, The Story of a Life in Bondage, Being a Complete Expose of Mormonism, and Revealing the Sorrows, Sacrifices and Sufferings of Women in Polygamy [Harford: Dustin, Gillman, 1876], 324-26).

39. Orson and Nancy Hyde continued to live together for a short time after arriving in the Salt Lake Valley, but after Brigham Young married Hyde with the intimacy between Joseph Smith and his wife, Orson separated from her. The couple divorced in 1870 (Quinn, "Latter-day Prayer Circles," 79-105).

40. Bennett, 245.


42. This description is from William H. Whitson, "Sidney Rigdon—The Real Founder of Mormonism," 1885, 1233, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, hereafter Special Collections, U of U. John C. Bennett described Nancy as a "beautiful girl, of irreproachable fame, great moral excellence, and superior intellectual endowments" (Bennett, 241). Jessie Rigdon Secord wrote that even in her old age, Nancy Rigdon Ellis was "more than good looking, she was as beautiful as a Greek statue" (Second to Arlene Hess, 19 May 1967, Hess Collection, Special Collections, Harold

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B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; hereafter Special Collections, BYU.

42. During an 1884 interview, when asked whether she had ever been sealed to Joseph Smith, Nancy Rigdon Ellis said no. Asked whether she understood sealing to mean a "marriage and did it contemplate living together as husband and wife," she replied, "I never so understood it." As an explanation for Joseph Smith's behavior she then added that "she thought Joseph Smith ... quite a different man in spirit and manner the last year or two [of his life] than ... from 1831 to 1842 ... He seemed entirely different, but I never knew or even heard that he had more than one wife" (14 May 1884 interview with Elders William H. and E. L. Kelcy, cited in Smith and Smith, 4:452-53).

43. J. Wickliffe Rigdon, "Life Story of Sidney Rigdon," 164. Wickliffe left at least two other accounts of the "Nancy Rigdon Incident." He gave a lengthy interview which was printed in the 20 May 1900 Salt Lake Tribune. His 28 July 1905 statement, made while he was living in Salt Lake City, is in the LDS historical archives. In addition to the retrospective statements made by Wickliffe Rigdon, as well as the John C. Bennett and George W. Robinson accounts in Bennett's book, Oliver Olney, a close family friend of the Rigdons, wrote a contemporary account published in 1843. Olney's sketch noted:

Nancy Rigdon has repeated calls to visit Nancy Hyde. When she did make a visit, Smith was there and "told her that he had the word of God for her, that God had given her to him for a wife." Miss Rigdon said to him, "you have a wife." "Well," said he, "you know the ancient order was, one man had many wives, that is again to be." Miss Rigdon was abstinence. He then got Mrs. Hulsey to come in, and made use of her persuasive arguments, that she was first unbelieving in the order, but had been better acquainted with Miss Rigdon, although she had long been acquainted with Miss Rigdon, but her many arguments were of no account. Mr. Smith again used his influence by more rash means, that Miss Rigdon threatened to call for help, that he let her go, but soon a letter was conveyed to her, written by one of the clan, that argued the doctrine of Polygamy (Olney, 16).

44. Wickliffe Rigdon, 28 July 1905 statement.


46. History of the Church, 5:134-36. After showing the letter to her parents, Nancy then gave it to her sister, Francis Higbee. Higbee passed it on to John C. Bennett who published it in his book. According to the Historian's Office Journal, on 6 November 1855, Thomas Bullock, a clerk in the Historian's Office, inserted the Nancy Rigdon letter into the history of the church then being prepared. Bullock incorrectly dated the letter 27 August 1846. Internal evidence shows that he used John C. Bennett's book for the copy. The letter was published in the Deseret News, 12 Dec. 1855.

47. Wickliffe Rigdon, 28 July 1905 statement.


49. Letter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate (Pittsburgh), 15 Mar. 1845.


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assailed, to destroy the validity of his testimony, and save the contrôle from reproach" (Sangamon Journal, 26 Aug. 1842).

67. An interesting example of Willard Richards taking a spiritual wife without permission or following the protocol of an officiaor or third party witness is recorded in his 23 December 1845 diary. The entry reads: "[I] took Alice Linslithgow by the hand of our own free will and won her to my wife, in a covenant not to be broken in time or eternity, as though the seal of the covenant had been placed upon us" (Willard Richards Collection).


70. Robinson to John C. Bennett, 27 July 1842, cited in Bennett, 246-47.


73. This inconstancy was discussed by Nancy Rigdon’s son, S. M. Ellis, in a 17 November 1933 letter to L. J. Nuffer. "My grandfather knew of the secret conduct of the leaders of the church at that time," he wrote, "but for the welfare of the church he kept his mouth shut, the more he condemned the practice, the more bitter became the feeling against him with the result of which you know." Respecting the 1842 controversy that surrounded his mother he defended her by adding, "some one is wrong, but I KNOW MY MOTHER IS NOT. FOR SHE WAS THE PERSON MOST CONCERNED. . . . I would believe her, above any person living or dead. . . . SHE [WAS] NOT MISINFORMED OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES" (emphasis in original letter in Nuffer Collection).

74. On Mormon polyandry, see Van Wagoner, chap. 4.

75. Smith, after his rejection by Pratt, warned: "I hope you will not expose me, for if I suffer, all must suffer, so do not expose me . . . If you should tell, I will ruin your reputation" (Bennett 228-31).

76. Sangamon Journal, 1 Aug. 1842.

77. Watt, 27 Aug. 1842.


79. Van Wagoner, 35.

80. History of the Church, 5:389.


82. Times and Seasons 3 (15 Sept. 1842): 922. Bennett in his book gave his medical opinion of this near-death experience. He called it the "wild and incoherent symptoms of Miss Eliza Rigdon, uttered during her recent severe sickness, when she was perfectly delirious—(laboring under mental hallucination at the scene of consecutive exacerbations of high fever and cerebral excitement, consequent upon an attack of Pneumonia Typhoidea)" (Bennett, 340).

83. History of the Church, 5:123-24. The 21 Aug. 1842 source text for this History of the Church entry, the "Book of the Law of the Lord," shows that much of Rigdon’s defense of the prophet was deleted from the published account. The original reference notes that
Dissembling the Truth

The History of Joseph Smith is now before the world, and we are satisfied that a history more correct in its details than this was never published.

—George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff

After the dust had settled over Joseph Smith’s overtures to Nancy Rigdon, Smith was uncomfortable around the Rigdon family, viewing them with a keen sense of paranoia. Smith’s imposing presence usually overshadowed disaffection, and the Rigdons’ refusal to subordinate their interests to his angered him. He felt that his prophetic domain was compromised. Although the 1842-44 Smith-Rigdon relationship was not as acrimonious as depicted in official accounts, their mutual accommodation was an uneasy one. The unspoken truce was frequently disrupted by Smith’s groundless charges that Rigdon, in league with John C. Bennett, was behind legal efforts to extradite Smith to Missouri. This apprehension was particularly evident in matters related to the Nauvoo Post Office. By 1841 Nauvoo had become the second largest city in Illinois with a population of nearly 7,000 citizens, many of them mail-hungry emigrants from Europe. The Rigdon family was kept busy and well-compensated by the large number of letters and newspapers that arrived at the office daily.

From the earliest Nauvoo settlement years, Smith was envious that George W. Robinson then Sidney Rigdon held the financially lucrative position of postmaster. In the midst of the Bennett controversy Smith initiated a campaign to attain the postmastership for himself. He may have also wanted to monitor mail from such apostates as John C. Bennett, Francis High, and George W. Robinson. Because postal matters and the Rigdon family were outside of his control, Smith attempted to slander the Rigdons by asserting that the mails were regularly plundered and mishandled.

On 8 September 1842, while controversy over spiritual wifery raged, Smith dictated a letter to prominent New Yorker James A. Bennett (no relation to John C. Bennett). Read to the gathered Saints in Sunday meeting, the letter said:

Our post office in this place is exceedingly corrupt. It is with great difficulty that we can get out letters to or from our friends. Our papers that we sent to our subscribers
Exiled to the Land of Milk and Honey

ed., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1902), 2478-80, hereafter History of the Church.

4. Lorenzo Brown Journal, 3, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; hereafter Special Collections, BYU.

5. Kenney, 1:140. The Woodruff marriage was to have been pronounced by Smith. Rigdon was to have performed the nuptials for the Robinsons. Instead, both couples were wed by Frederick G. Williams, local justice of the peace. Because the Church of the Latter Day Saints was not a recognized legal entity in Ohio, Rigdon had been indicted in 1835 for performing the 4 September 1834 marriage of Orson Hyde and Marinda N. Johnson (see "Criminal Records, Common Pleas," Book T, 3, Geauga County Courthouse, Chardon, OH). The 30 Oct. 1835 Chardon Spectator and Geauga Gazette announced that during the trial, however, Rigdon produced a license of the Court, which had been granted to him several years ago, as a minister of the gospel of that sect usually called Campbellites. It appeared that the society of disciples kept written minutes of their proceedings, and no church record of his dismissal being offered, the Court rejected the testimony, and a nolle prosequi was entered.


7. Painesville Telegraph, 30 June 1837.

8. Ibid., 16 June 1837.

9. For a full treatment of this incident, see Max H. Parkin, Conflict at Kirtland: A Study of the Nature and Causes of External and Internal Conflict of the Mormons in Ohio Between 1830 and 1838 (Salt Lake City Department of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 1967), 21315.


14. Parley P. Pratt to Joseph Smith, 23 May 1837, in Richard Livesey, An Exposure of Mormons: Being a Statement of Facts Relative to the Self-Styled LDS and the Origin of the Book of Mormon (Provo, UT: Lipy Press, 1980), 9; emphasis in original. After his defection, Warren Parrish sent a copy of Pratt's letter to the editor of Zion's Watchman, a non-Mormon publication, which printed it on 6 March 1838. By then Pratt had amended his differences with Smith, felt that a clarification was necessary to exonerate himself, and apologized for his rash words. According to Pratt's account, the printed letter was "not a true copy" of his, but was "altered, so as to convey a different idea from the original." Although he did not say precisely what was altered and in what manner, he did admit to writing the letter in "great severity and harshness, censuring them both." He further acknowledged that his letter "was not calculated to admonish them in the spirit of
by doctors, Mormon Church officials, regulators, local law enforcement and the Idaho attorney general’s office.

"It’s a story eerily similar to a case in Lovell, Wyo,, where a family doctor was accused — and eventually convicted — of raping Mormon women in the privacy of his office, and with the initial complicity of a community, church and law enforcement officials."

Another article in the same issue explained why many Mormon women were reluctant to come forward.

"The LaVar Withers story is unfolding in a predominantly Mormon community where church values of deference to men and respect for authority are as much a part of the culture as the religion.

"Deep down within Mormon theology lies a fundamental difference that separates the sexes: Most men are members of the church’s priesthood, agents of God on Earth, no woman ever can be.

"It’s a sharp distinction that spills into everyday life for many Mormon women and creates a respect for men and a willingness, in some cases, to let men control.

"Since leaders in the priesthood have more authority and since no woman ever has the priesthood, no woman ever has as much authority as the men in her life," said Lavina Fielding Anderson, an excommunicated Mormon who still attends her ward in Salt Lake City and sings in the choir.

"She is still down on the totem pole and, in some cases, at the bottom of the totem pole."

"That fundamental difference could make it almost impossible for some Mormon women to step forward to acknowledge they’d been sexually abused by another church member.

"You wouldn’t have been believed in the past," said Marybeth Raynes, a Mormon and licensed marriage and family therapist in Salt Lake City. ‘Or, if you were believed, you would be told it would embarrass the church or that your job is to forgive.’

"Push too hard, and there’s the risk of being chastised for not supporting the church, putting church membership in jeopardy and even risking eternal salvation." (Ibid., page 10A)

At least two of Dr. Wither’s victims were only thirteen years old when he molested them (see page 8A).

On the same page we read that ‘Dr. LaVar Withers and the state’s medical board struck a secret deal in July 1995. Give up your medical license, the board told the Rexburg doctor, and no one will ever hear what went on behind closed doors. But word of the deal leaked.’

On Page 7A of the same paper the following appears:

"Religion, more than history or agriculture, is the common bond among Rexburg residents, 90 percent of whom are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"The mayor, City Council members and many law enforcement officials are Mormons. So is Withers. And so are most of his alleged victims....

"Knowing that their church leaders work closely together to solve problems in the community, Mormon women felt they could turn to church leaders.

"Joan filed a complaint with the church's regulatory agency for doctors... A devout Mormon, she took another step in January. She contacted Withers’ stake president, Rexburg dentist G. Farrell Young....

"‘He told me not to go to the police until he had a chance to deal with it,’ Joan said."

"Joan waited one month before turning to Rexburg police. Months passed without a response from Young....

"Young will not discuss Withers. But he defends his counsel to Joan: ‘I may have said do not go to the police immediately. Let me take care of it here. I was hoping to find out more about it.’"

It seems disgraceful that a doctor who abused so many women and even children over a period of about thirty years could get off with just a slap on the hand.

JOSEPH SMITH AND WOMEN

Unfortunately, Joseph Smith, the first Mormon prophet, seems to have had a sexual problem that significantly affected the lives of many of the women who converted to his church. All of the evidence points to the inescapable conclusion that Smith was unsatisfied living with just one wife. Consequently, he declared that God gave him a revelation that he was to enter into plural marriage.

The revelation regarding polygamy is still published in the Doctrine and Covenants, one of the four standard works of the church. The following is taken from that revelation:

"Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph.... if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery... And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery... therefore is he justified." (Doctrine and Covenants, Section 132, verses 1, 61-62)

Joseph Smith, of course, was obedient to the "revelation" which he dictated and proceeded to marry dozens of plural wives before he was murdered in 1844. The prophet also instructed many other Mormon men to enter into polygamy. Since the laws did not allow such a practice, there was a great deal of deceit practiced by Smith and his followers.

Today, the Mormon Church does not allow its members to practice polygamy. However, since church leaders never repudiated the doctrine itself, teach that it will be lived in heaven, and still retain the revelation on polygamy in the Doctrine and Covenants, many Mormons have secretly entered into the practice. These people are known as Mormon Fundamentalists because they cling tenaciously to some of the fundamental doctrines taught by Joseph Smith and Brigham Young — doctrines that the church now wishes to disregard.

Today, Mormons who are caught practicing polygamy are excommunicated. There are a large number of Mormon Fundamentalists who have severed all connections with the Mormon Church and have their own leaders. On the other hand, we believe that there probably are still many within the Mormon Church who, like Joseph Smith, are secretly practicing polygamy and playing a dual role so that they will not be excom-
rized an indictment against Joseph Smith for 'adultery and fornication.' (pages 132-134)

George D. Smith did a great deal of research on polygamy in the early years of Mormonism. He discovered that Joseph Smith was not only sealed to a fourteen-year-old girl, but also to a fifteen-year-old girl and to two girls who were sixteen years old. All of these sealings to young girls occurred when Joseph Smith was between thirty-seven and thirty-eight years of age.

In his article George Smith included a list of 153 men who took plural wives in the early years of the Mormon Church. When we examined this list, we noted that two of the young girls were only thirteen years old when they were married into polygamy. Thirteen girls were only fourteen years old. Twenty-one were fifteen years old, and fifty-three were sixteen years old when they were secretly enticed into this degrading lifestyle.

Fanny Stenhouse, who at one time had been a firm believer in Mormonism and had even allowed her husband to take another wife, wrote the following:

"It would be quite impossible, with any regard to propriety, to relate all the horrible results of this disgraceful system.... Marriages have been contracted between the nearest of relatives; and old men toasting on the brink of the grave have been united to little girls scarcely in their teens; while unnatural alliances of every description, which in any other community would be regarded with disgust and abhorrence, are here entered into in the name of God...."

"It is quite a common thing in Utah for a man to marry two or even three sisters.... I know also another man who married a widow with several children; and when one of the girls had grown into her teens he insisted on marrying her also.... and to this very day the daughter bears children to her step-father, living as wife in the same house with her mother!" (Tell It All, 1874, pages 468-469)

Because of the practice of polygamy there was a shortage of women in Utah. The competition for those who were not married became intense, and many men were marrying girls who were very young. On page 607 of her book, Stenhouse commented about the matter: "That same year [1872], a bill was brought into the Territorial Legislature, providing that boys of fifteen years of age and girls of twelve might legally contract marriage, with the consent of their parents or guardians! In stating this disgraceful fact, I feel certain that the reader who never lived among the Saints and is not versed in Utah affairs will think that I must be mistaken in what I say. It is, however, I am sorry to say, only too true, and the records of the Legislature will bear me witness. The fact was stated in the New York Herald of January 27, 1872." (Ibid., page 607)

An entry added to Joseph Smith’s private diary after his death confirms that Smith believed a man could be married for eternity to his own sister. It appears under the date of October 26, 1843, and reads as follows:

"The following named deceased persons were sealed to me (John M. Bernhisel) on October 26th 1843, by President Joseph Smith: Maria Bernhisel, sister; Brother Samuel’s wife, Catherine Kremer; Mary Shatto (Aunt).... [eight other names follow]"

John M. Bernhisel
Recorded by Rob[ert L. Campbell, July 29th 1868."


The reader will notice that Joseph Smith sealed John M. Bernhisel to his own sister. If the doctrine of Celestial Marriage were really true, in the resurrection John Bernhisel would find himself married to his own sister Maria Bernhisel!

Joseph Smith, the first Mormon prophet, asserted that “God himself, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, is a man like unto one of yourselves...” (Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, pages 613-14). He also taught that God was married and had billions of spirit children in the pre-existence. In other words, according to Smith’s theology, we were all born of God and his wife and lived as his sons and daughters before coming to earth.

Mormons believe that those who are accounted worthy of the highest glory in heaven have sex forever with those to whom they are sealed. They become Gods and Goddesses, giving birth to spirit children throughout all eternity. These spirit children eventually take physical bodies on other worlds. Consequently, when John Bernhisel had his sister sealed to him, he was planning to have sex with her forever. To the non-Mormon this would appear to be heavenly incest. In any case, Joseph Smith not only sealed Bernhisel to his sister, but also to four aunts and two cousins!

Brigham Young, the second prophet of the Mormon Church, reasoned that since all people who come to the earth were originally brothers and sisters, there is really no problem with brothers and sisters marrying on earth. On October 8, 1854, Brigham Young made these controversial comments:

"Then I reckon that the children of Adam and Eve married each other; this is speaking to the point. I believe in sisters marrying brothers, and brothers having their sisters for wives...."

"This is something pertaining to our marriage relation. The whole world will think what an awful thing it is. What an awful thing it would be if the Mormons should just say we believe in marrying brothers and sisters. Well we shall be under the necessity of doing it, because we cannot find anybody else to marry." (The Teachings of President Brigham Young, Compiled and Edited by Fred C. Collier, Vol. 3, pages 362, 368)

Mormon scholar Jessie L. Embry, of the church’s Brigham Young University, acknowledged that as late as 1886 Lorenzo Snow, who became the fifth prophet of the Mormon Church, still secretly held to the belief that brothers and sisters could marry. Embry cited from the journal of Apostle Abraham H. Cannon to prove the point:

"...Abraham H. Cannon, an apostle recorded in 1886 that he talked with 'Pres. [Lorenzo] Snow about various doctrines. Bro Snow said I would live to see the time when brothers and sisters would marry each other in this church. All our horror at such an union was due entirely to prejudice and the offspring of such union would be healthy and pure as any other. These were the decided views of Pres. Young when alive, for Bro. S. talked to him freely on this matter.' " (Journal of Mormon History, 1992, page 106)
3. Did Joseph Smith Introduce Plural Marriage?

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.340

Moral purity is required of all Latter-day Saints. Men must be as clean as women, and both must be free from any violation of the moral law. That is the basis of all marriages performed under the authority of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.340

The Church solemnizes two kinds of marriages. First, those that unite husband or wife for the duration of mortal life. These marriages end with death. Second, those that continue the family relationship after death, in the hereafter. This is often known as eternal or celestial marriage.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.340

Faithful members of the Church seek to enjoy both of these kinds of marriages. They wish to be wedded for time and eternity, that is, to continue their associations forever. To be able to do this is one of the happiest privileges of Church membership. Such marriages, usually called sealings, must be performed in the temples, whenever they exist.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.340

Several approaches to eternal marriage may be made: Two living person may be sealed to each other for time and eternity. A living man may be sealed for eternity to a dead woman, or a living woman to a dead man. Two dead persons may be sealed to each other. It is also possible though the Church does not now permit it, to seal two living people for eternity only, with no association on earth.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.340

Further, under a divine command to the Prophet Joseph Smith, it was possible for one man to be sealed to more than one woman for time and for eternity. Thus came plural marriage among the Latter-day Saints. By another divine command, to Wilford Woodruff, a successor to Joseph Smith, this order of marriage was withdrawn in 1890. Since that time the Church has not sanctioned plural marriages. Anyone who enters into them now is married unlawfully, and is excommunicated from the Church.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.340

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

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.340 - Pg.341

1. The revelation known as section one hundred thirty-two in the Doctrine and Covenants, which contains the doctrine of celestial marriage and also the practice of plural marriage, was dictated to his scribe, William Clayton, by Joseph Smith on July 12, 1843, a year before the
martyrdom of the Prophet. It had been received by the Prophet some years before, and taught to many, but was not reduced to writing until 1843. William Clayton lived as an honorable citizen, of the highest character until December 4, 1879, thirty-six years after the revelation was written. He never wavered in his simple declaration that the revelation as now found in the Doctrine and Covenants was dictated to him, sentence by sentence. He adds that "after the whole was written, Joseph asked me to read it through, slowly and carefully, which I did, and he pronounced it correct." (Andrew Jenson, *Historical Record*, Volume VI, pp. 225, 226)

John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, Pg. 341

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

John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, Pg. 341

2. A number of men, who in their lives showed themselves honest, have testified that they actually performed the ceremonies that united Joseph Smith to plural wives. Among these were Joseph B. Noble, Hyrum Smith, James Adams, Newell K. Whitney, Willard Richards, and others. Several of these men lived long after the Prophet’s death and always declared that they officiated in marrying the Prophet to a plural wife, giving place, date, and the witnesses present.

John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, Pg. 341

3. Many of the women who were thus sealed to Joseph Smith lived long after his death. They declared that they lived with the Prophet as husband and wives. These women were of unblemished character, gentle and lovely in their lives who spoke with loving respect of their martyr husband. They substantiated in detail the statements of those who performed the ceremonies.

John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, Pg. 342

4. Many of the elders in Nauvoo entered into plural marriage, under the authority of Joseph Smith who was yet living, as certified to by the men and their wives. Among these were William Clayton, Orson Hyde, Hyrum Smith John Smith, Erastus Snow, Lyman Wight, James J. Strang, Gladden Bishop, William Smith, Heber C. Kimball, and Brigham Young. These men and their wives who survived the Prophet, made affidavits of their marriages in Joseph’s day in answer to the charge by enemies of the Church that plural marriage was not instituted nor practiced, neither authorized by the Prophet. These men and women were good citizens, so well-known over such long periods of time that their concordant declarations cannot be gainsaid.

John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, Pg. 342

5. The Nauvoo Temple records, which are in the possession of the Church likewise furnish evidence that Joseph Smith practiced plural marriage. Before the completion of the temple, marriage sealings were usually performed in rooms in the home of the Prophet. When the temple was dedicated in 1846 for such ceremonies, the plural marriages of Joseph were given temple
sanction, and where the marriages were for time only, they were often made to continue through eternity.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.342

This was done within a year and a half of the assassination of the Prophet. Many received plural wives in the Nauvoo Temple. It is utterly improbable, if not impossible, that such a new doctrine could have been conceived and carried out by the men who succeeded the Prophet. There would have been a serious resentment among those who entered the temple, if the teachings of the Prophet had been violated. Such criticism would have overflowed to the outside.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.342

6. After the death of the Prophet, women applied for the privilege of being sealed to him for eternity. They felt no doubt that in the eternal ages they would then share the companionship of the Prophet. They wanted to enjoy eternity with the man whom they revered as one chosen of God to open the last dispensation of the gospel on earth. To these requests, assent was often given. Such action by women who lived in the days of the Prophet implies a belief in plural marriage. These women, who were not in any sense earthly wives of the Prophet, have been counted by uninformed or antagonistic writers as wives of the Prophet.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.342 - Pg.343

Women no longer living, whether in Joseph’s day or later have also been sealed to the Prophet for eternity. The request for such unions has usually come from relatives or friends who would have their loved one share eternity with the Prophet, rather than with anyone else. Unscrupulous and unreliable writers have even added such marriages to the list of Joseph’s wives.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.343

7. Another kind of celestial marriage seems to have been practiced in the early days of plural marriage. It has not been practiced since Nauvoo days, for it is under Church prohibition. Zealous women, married or unmarried, loving the cause of the restored gospel, considered their condition in the hereafter. Some of them asked that they might be sealed to the Prophet for eternity. They were not to be his wives on earth, in mortality, but only after death in the eternities. This came often to be spoken of as celestial marriage. Such marriages led to misunderstandings by those not of the Church, and unfamiliar with its doctrines. To them marriage meant only association on earth. Therefore any ceremony uniting a married woman, for example, to Joseph Smith for eternity seemed adulterous to such people. Yet in any day, in our day, there may be women who prefer to spend eternity with another than their husband on earth.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.343

Such cases, if any, and they must have been few in number, gave enemies of the Church occasion to fan the flaming hatred against the Latter-day Saints. The full truth was not told. Enemies made the most of the truth. They found it difficult to believe that the Church rests on truth and virtue.

John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg.343

The literature and existing documents dealing with plural marriage in Nauvoo in the day of Joseph Smith are very numerous. Hundreds of affidavits on the subject are in the Church Historian’s office in Salt Lake City. Most of the books and newspaper and magazine articles on

John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, Pg 343 - Pg 344

The careful study of all available information leads to but one conclusion. Joseph Smith received the revelation in question, and practiced plural marriage. The issue is not one of doctrine but of history. No honest student can declare the host of witnesses, hundreds of them, from Nauvoo days, Mormon and non-Mormon of various residence, pursuits and temperaments to have united in lying about the matter. The evidence is confirmed by those who place the introduction of plural marriage on others, for they seek feeble, unworthy shelter in the statement that Joseph Smith did practice plural marriage, but later repented of it. (The Saints Herald, Vol. 1, pp. 9, 26, 27) That is throwing dust in the eyes of seekers after truth. The case is clear. Authentic history says that plural marriage originated with Joseph Smith the Prophet. And so it did. The apparent denials by Church leaders in Nauvoo days that the Church practiced plural marriage were correct. At that time the Church members as a whole had not heard the revelation, nor had they been given an opportunity to accept it. But many of the leaders knew of it and were polygamists.

John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, Pg 344

The chaotic conditions of the years immediately following the Prophet's death, delayed the formal presentation of the revelation. Soon after the Church was established in the Great Salt Lake region, at the conference in 1852, the doctrine of celestial and plural marriage was accepted by the Church as a whole. During the intervening years, however, it was taught and practiced.

4. Did Joseph Smith Plan The Westward Migration Of The Church?
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William Phelps wrote to his wife Sally:

"A New idea, Sally, if you and I continue faithful to the end, we are certain to be one in the Lord throughout eternity; this is one of the most glorious consolations we can have in the flesh."

(Letter of William W. Phelps to Sally Phelps, 26 May 1835, in Journal History of the Church, 26 May 1835)
William Clayton Diary:

May 23, 1843 -

Conversed with H.C.K. concerning a plot that is being laid to entrap the brethren of the secret priesthood by bro. H. and others.

....

Prest. stated to me that he had had a little trouble with sis E. he was asking E. Partridge concerning Jackson conduct during Prest. absence & E came up stairs. he shut to the door not knowing who it was and held it. She came to the door & called Eliza 4 times & tried to force open the door. Prest. opened it & told her the cause &c. She seemed much irritated. He says Jackson is rotten hearted.

May 26, 1843 -

Prest. in meeting with the Twelve & Judge Adams. Hyrum received the doctrine of priesthood

.........

Aug. 16, 1843

... This A.M. J. told me that since E. came back from St Louis she had resisted the P. in toto & he had to tell her he would relinquish all for her sake. She said she would given him E. & E. P but he knew if he took them she would pitch on him & obtain a divorce & leave him. He however told me he should not relinquish any thing ...
Joseph Smith Nauvoo Diary, kept by Willard Richards:

May 11, 1843 -


Eliza R. Snow = 29 June 1842
Louisa Beman = 5 April 1841
Sarah Alley had been sealed as a plural wife to Joseph B. Noble on 5 April 1843.

D. Michael Quinn:

The blank space and "&c" of this 11 May 1843 entry in the Prophet's journal may be explained by the affirmations of Emily and Eliza Partridge that they were sealed to Joseph Smith as plural wives on this date in the presence of his wife Emma." (BYU Studies Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 231-32)

May 11, 1843 marriage of the Partridge sisters was performed by [signature].
Did words mean anything to Joseph Smith?

Revelation of July 27, 1842 - "...preserving yourselves for each other and from all others ..."

see comments in the book The God Makers

what is mentioned of this type in the book Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith?

what relationship?

1. wife
2. concubine

Did any of Joseph Smith's "wives" have sexual relations with their husband, Joseph Smith?

Did the wives of Joseph Smith have any important legal rights when the husband was living. Were there any legal rights if the husband died?

Were there different types of wives for Joseph Smith?

While marriage was described in religious terms (plural wives from God) is it possible that Joseph Smith responded from his own sexual drive? Were relationships like this that predate to pre-Nauvoo times with Joseph Smith having sexual relations with others besides his own wife, Emma?

What were Joseph Smith's pre 1830 views regarding marriage, divorce etc.?

Was Joseph Smith just a religious teaching prophet and only to be used when an idea would support you? Was Joseph Smith a prophet except when he was in bed?

Is it possible that Joseph Smith had ideas to "restore" the Old Testament practice of having wives before he wrote the Book of Mormon.

went by their maiden names
August that the Patriarchal Priesthood was the "greatest yet experienced in this church," he was well aware that the fulness of the Melchizedek priesthood was yet to be conferred through a higher ordinance.

In a sense the institution of this "higher ordinance" was the logical next step. The previous twelve years of pronouncements, sealings, and anointings "unto eternal life" guaranteed a status that, according to Joseph's 1843 teachings, was subsequent to that of the gods. From the perspective of these teachings, even the Nauvoo endowment administered to members of the "Holy Order" simply provided that the men who received it would live in the celestial kingdom as angels and servants. Until 1843, women had been excluded from these ordinances, possibly because of Joseph Smith's personal reluctance, Emma Smith's rejection of polygamy, John C. Bennett's lurid exposé, and/or the apostasy and subsequent reconciliation of Orson and Sarah Pratt over polygamy. However, Doctrine and Covenants 131 and 132 indicated that this exclusion deprived the men (who had received the previous ordinances) of the highest kingdom of glory — godhood. The higher ordinance was necessary to confirm the revealed promises of "kingly powers" (i.e., godhood) received in the endowment's initiatory ordinances. Godhood was therefore the meaning of this higher ordinance, or second anointing, for the previously revealed promises in Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–26 implicitly referred not to those who had been sealed in celestial marriage but to those who had been sealed and ordained "kings and priests," "queens and priestesses" to God. Such individuals would necessarily have received the "second anointing"; "Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them."

The special priesthood ordination was first administered on 28 September 1843 to Joseph and Emma Smith. The History of the Church gives a discreet account of this event:

At half-past eleven, a.m., a council convened over the store, consisting of myself, my brother Hyrum, Uncle John Smith, Newel K. Whitney, George Miller, Willard Richards, John Taylor, Anna Lyman, John M. Bernhisel, and Lucien Woodruff; and at seven in the evening we met in the front upper room of the Mansion, with William Law and William Marks. By the common consent and unanimous voice of the council, I was chosen president of the special council.

The president led in prayer that his days might be prolonged until his mission on the earth is accomplished, have dominion over his enemies, all their households be blessed, and all the Church and the world.

Joseph Smith's journal, the original source, gives a fuller account: "Basarak Ale [a code name for Joseph Smith] was by common consent, & unanimous voice chosen president: of the quorum. & anointed & ord[ained] to the highest and holiest order of the priesthood & companion." His "companion" was his wife, Emma, to whom he had been sealed for time and eternity four months earlier on May 28. Wilford Woodruff's record of this event, found in his 1858 History of His Church, 6:39.
Consequently, it is unclear precisely what long-term effect the second anointing had upon the lives of its recipients, nor, for that matter is it known to what degree the conferral of godhood by the second anointing was held to be conditional or unconditional. Most of the earliest nineteenth-century comments explicitly dealing with the second anointing clearly imply that the ordination was then held to be unconditional. As early as August 1843 Joseph Smith had expanded on the Calvinist doctrine of the elect in a sermon containing overtones of predestination. On August 15, the Prophet reportedly said, "When a seal is put upon the father and mother it secures their posterity so that they cannot be lost but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father." Another report recorded: "... the Covenant sealed on the fore heads of the Parents secured the children of the Clark家 thrones as one with the God-head joint Heirs of God with Jesus Christ." This promise seems to have been invoked in Heber C. Kimball's personal second anointing blessing given by Brigham Young on 8 January 1846 related to his posterity.

Indeed, even the promises of godhood outlined in Joseph Smith's revelation on celestial marriage (now D&C 132) seemed unconditionally dependent upon having received the key ordinances of celestial marriage and being "sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power" (v. 18), a reference to the second anointing. Joseph equated this "scaling" with the "Holy Spirit of promise" in a 10 March 1844 sermon as "Et Eliah." He then explained, "to obtain this sealing is to make our calling and election sure." This sealing power of Eliah is sufficient to make our calling & Election sure."

This sealing power of Eliah, the power to seal on earth and in heaven, even the "Holy Spirit of promise," was bestowed "by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and keys of the priesthood are conferred"

(2) (D&C 132:7). 18

93 William Clayton, Diary, 13 Aug. 1843, and Franklin D. Richards's "Scriptural Items," as cited in WJS, pp. 241-42, original in LDS Church Archives. Compare History of the Church, 5:320-21. In WJS, p. 200, Elkan and Cook argue that this effect upon the posterity of parents was conditional, not unconditional. Their comment is based only upon the Howard and Martha Gary Notebooks, cited in WJS, p. 241; furthermore, they assume the "sealing" spoken of by Joseph Smith is that of marriage. The actual "seal" discussed, however, was that of the Holy Spirit of Promise or the second anointing, not on a couple's marriage. This, as well as the comments cited in the narrative clearly show that Joseph Smith intended to state that the sealing unconditionally affected a couple's posterity after this life.

94 Book of Amoritions, 8 Aug. 1846.

95 "Scriptural Items," cited in WJS, p. 353; emphasis in original.

96 Wilford Woodruff, Journal, same date, cited in WJS, p. 350; see also D&C 124:12-14. This contemporary interpretation of equating the "Holy Spirit of promise" with the "calling and election sure" doctrine, particularly with respect to its conferral by a human intermediary, has since undergone significant reinterpretation.

97 This last conclusion of this powerful sealing authority from a sole human intermediary, Joseph Smith, represented a striking departure from Joseph Smith's earlier caution against

The unconditional promise of exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom as gods and goddesses inherent in this priesthood sealing ordinance of Eliah was weighty indeed, yet so was the sole postmortal alternative: banishment as sons and daughters of perdition for whom there is no forgiveness in this life or in the hereafter. The sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise seemingly did not leave recipients of the second anointing eligible for the graded degrees of judgment outlined in Doctrine and Covenants 76: they would be either gods or devils. Doctrine and Covenants 132:26-27 implies that such persons would be deprived of godhood only if they committed the unpardonable sin: i.e., "... murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and aest all unto my death." This would seem to give license to commit a wide variety of sins including adultery, rape, incest, theft, extortion, etc., and still be entitled to godhood after "they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffeting of Satan unto the day of redemption." Themes of the unconditional nature of the second anointing occasionally appeared in public sermons of Church authorities in Utah. On 7 April 1855, Orson Pratt stated, But we have no promise, unless we endure in faith unto the end .... In speaking of this, I will qualify my language by saying, that the Saint who has been sealed unto eternal life and falls in transgression and does not repent, but dies in his sin, will be afflicted and tormented after he leaves this vale of tears until the day of redemption, but having been sealed with the spirit of promise through the ordinances of the house of God, those things which have been sealed upon his head will be realized by him in the morining of the resurrection.

Pratt's September 1860 comments on this subject were given in the same vein: "This would seem to be as near an unconditional promise as can well be made to mortals. But this is not altogether unconditional, for there are some exceptions; but it would come as power in as much as we have ever read of." And in the two great abominations of all Christian primordial, papism and priestcraft; see Susans Curtis Merriott, "Palmyra Revised," pp. 33-35.

BUBERGER: "Falsity of the Priesthood"

18 See Brigham Young, 8 Aug. 1852, JD, 5:99.

19 It is possible that some early Mormons may have extended this deprivation of godhood to anyone who committed the unpardonable sin; John D. Lee's recollection of the deliberations prior to the Mountain Meadows massacre describes the concern of those involved that by killing the women and children, they might be guilty of shedding innocent blood. This task was left to the Indians so that "it would be certain that no Mormon would be guilty of shedding innocent blood — if it should happen that there was any innocent blood in the company that were to die." John D. Lee, Mormonism Unsealed; Or The Life and Confessions of John D. Lee (St. Louis: Brand & Company, 1877), p. 237; emphasis in original. Lee received his second anointing 17 Jan. 1846, John D. Lee, Diary, typescript copy for same date, original in LDS Church Archives.

20 This narrative may have provided some theoretical basis for the latter-day doctrine of blood atonement preached by several nineteenth-century Church authorities.

21 JD, 2:260.

22 16 Sept. 1860, JD, 8:311-312.
Apostles who were members of the Holy Order:

1. Wilford Woodruff
2. George A. Smith
3. John Taylor
4. Orson Hyde
5. Heber C. Kimball
6. Brigham Young
7. Orson Pratt
8. Parley P. Pratt
9. Willard Richards

Apostles not members:
[12] 3. Lyman Wight [? - check]

why were they not included?
were they at Nauvoo?
what dates at Nauvoo?
Secret Codes in Early Mormon History

It is well known that in early Mormon history, codes were used to conceal the meaning of revelations, diaries, and other documents. Reasons for concealing the specific meaning of certain messages ranged from maintaining normal business advantage, to protecting individuals from persecution, to preservation of secrecy regarding unannounced advanced gospel doctrines and practices.

The most obvious example of such codes are the pseudonyms which were employed in several of the revelations to Joseph Smith. The need to conceal the names has led to the belief that all but four of the encoded names which first appeared in published versions of D&C 78: 82, 92, 96, 103 and 104, were even included in the 1981 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. They were already not deciphered in time for the new edition. For example, John W. Phelps, the Prophet, and William D. Stowell are examples of such revelations to Joseph Smith.

It is well known that John D. Lee employed a much less sophisticated form of code to camouflage explicit notes he made in his diary of Council of Fifty meetings. Consistently he referred to the "Council of Fifty"—where "Yift" is the word "fifty" reversed. For precedent for concealing the activity of the Council of Fifty using the same type of cipher came from the original reporter of these meetings in Nauvoo—Willard Richards. But such a simple cipher even escaped detection by one of our present-day leading Mormon historians. The following word:

\[\text{\textsuperscript{\textdegree}7\textcircled{\textdegree}}\]

was transcribed by the historian as the name "Nakah." He believed this was the "Winnebago Chief Nawkaw II or Makekshushka." Based in part on this one mixed-up word, the conclusion was drawn that Joseph Smith and the Council of Fifty were intent on collaborating with Chief Nawkaw in an 1844 attempt to overthrow the U.S. government. The Prophet was frustrated from implementing such radical plans because of his untimely death three months later.

On the basis of these other words similarly encrypted in the same day's entry the word 'should have been read as "Not-nah"—that is, the name "Houston" spelled backward.

Far from attempting to overthrow the U.S. government, the Council of Fifty was actually planning to confer privately with Sam Houston, the governor of the Republic of Texas about the possibility of the Saint's establishing a new gathering place in the disputed region of that Republic. Secretly necessary so Joseph Smith and the Council of Fifty did not disrupt the already tenuous property values of Nauvoo by prematurely disclosing the possibility that the Church might leave Illinois.

Several of the early diarists' knew some form of shorthand by which they could disguise the meaning of part or all of a day's entry. Wilford Woodruff, William Clayton, Willard Richards, and many others occasionally encrypted their entries. Apostle Richards, for example, was familiar with the first of the world's great shorthand systems—Taylor shorthand. Because the doctrines of eternal marriage and plural marriage had not been publicly announced, he often concealed his record of such marriages performed during the lifetime of Joseph Smith by writing them into the Prophet's diary using this shorthand. In fact, it is possible that a significant portion of the Prophet's secretarial diary was written in密码contrafactum.

It comes from Brigham Young's Diary for January 6, 1842. If you think you can figure it out, two warnings are in order. First, remember that Brigham Young's spelling is not always up to today's standards, or he included abbreviations. And, second, as you will note, this is not a typical "pippin" or "fremasonic" code even though it appears to be related. The following key to the "pippin"-type of code is from Richardson's Monitor of Free-Masonry:

\[\text{\textsuperscript{\textdegree}7\textcircled{\textdegree}}\]

(Another way of ordering the key to this code is like the sample on the front cover of this issue which came from an 1850-"Church Historian's Office Journal" kept by Thomas Bullock.) As you see by comparison, the Richardson's version of the code does not provide for periods after each character, nor does it have an inverted "T" character, nor are there triangles as there are in the Brigham Young entry. If you ignore the differences between the V&Like characters and the triangle, the periods after each of the Brigham Young symbols, and if you assume that the inverted "T" character is only an identifier for the end of a word or an abbreviation, then Richardson's key gives the following cryptogram:

\[\text{\textsuperscript{\textdegree}7\textcircled{\textdegree}}\]

Naturally, this resulting cryptogram can be deciphered

Number 2
by “brute force.” By using a computer algorithm which systematically alters this string of characters through all possible permutations, you simply read the printed listing of 4,626,053,752,320,000 entries to find the two lines that make the most sense. Of course, it’s possible you might have wanted to do something else with your life. After all, assuming you can read five sets of two lines a second, and assuming you don’t miss the target lines on the computer printout, the reading should take you only 20,358.24 years.

Seriously, however, the entry is, historically speaking, a potentially significant one. We are genuine in our desire to decipher its meaning. Let us know of any favorable results and we will print your name along with the solution to the coded entry.

Send your solutions to: MORMON HERITAGE, P.O. Box 1471, Provo, UT 84603-1471. Our next issue will include other coded entries from the Mormon past.

FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Andrew F. Ehat. Inner Circles of Nauvoo—Temple Ordinances as The Key to Joseph Smith’s Final Vision for the Church & Kingdom of God (Orem, UT: Grandin Book, 1986), 815.95.

Joseph Smith said in the summer of 1842: “I have the whole plan of the Kingdom before me and no other person has.” Two summers later he was dead. What would happen to the Church with such an untimely loss? The Temple was not yet completed. Were the ordinances which were to be performed in that sacred edifice now lost from the earth because of his death?

Inner Circles of Nauvoo is the first book to tell us the fascinating and complex story of how these sacred blessings were not lost with his death. During the last two years of his life, Joseph Smith in public and private settings, unfolded to inner circles of his followers his final vision for the Church and Kingdom of God. What he unfolded to them not only made far less strenuous the transition of authority after the martyrdom, but by anticipating death, he made these his most important teachings, fundamental to the transmission of that authority.

Using numerous hitherto unused source materials, Inner Circles of Nauvoo answers for the first time many important questions about early Mormon history. For example, Why was it not until 1843 before Joseph and Emma Smith were sealed? Why was the doctrine of eternal marriage not taught in public until that year—a year after the endowment was first introduced—and only a year before the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith? Why were there no women present when the endowment was first administered in 1842? What were the temple ordinance-related reasons for the organization of the Relief Society in Nauvoo? What is the meaning of the secretly-coded entries in the Joseph Smith Diary kept during the Nauvoo period? Is the endowment the same as when first introduced by the Prophet? Who were the privileged recipients of these blessings during his lifetime? What is the temple meaning of the Joseph Smith III succession blessing, and why, therefore, could only the Quorum of the Twelve assume the leadership of the Church after the Martyrdom? Why was the Council of Fifty so important? Why was Sidney Rigdon excommunicated from the Church? Did Emma Smith ever have a testimony of the doctrine of plural marriage? These and many other important questions are answered in this new book.

Drawing upon his extensive research into the Prophet’s sermons and teachings, Andrew F. Ehat, author of the award-winning The Words of Joseph Smith, now publishes his exhaustive analysis of the public and published sayings of both Joseph Smith and those to whom he personally gave temple ordinances during the climactic last two years of his life. What he and they said regarding these blessings will be significant to all who desire to better comprehend the meaning and power of these ordinances introduced by the Prophet.

Thoroughly documented and attractively illustrated, this study not only analyzes the Nauvoo experience from a previously unappreciated point-of-view, but it establishes a framework for new insights into Mormon history far beyond the Nauvoo period. For these reasons, one leading Mormon historian has called this work, “An extraordinary contribution to our history.” This is not only an indispen-
sable work for students of Joseph Smith, but it is also an essential study of the history, doctrine, and theology of Mormonism.

For a special prepublication offer, see page 4.

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MORMON HERITAGE

What was

Periodically, MORMON HERITAGE provide representative books or manuscripts column asked question.

This record was

Apostle Franklin D. Richards to the Saints until household words, the donations, and a substance... should recorded in the Book of Mormon.

According to Wilford Woodruff's private office, E. Taylor Smith the titles and offering to Lord..." Soon, however, creased and Elder Richards ming the Saints that it recorded only on Sat apparent that broth
the Indians in the Southwest. After some hesitation Smith told Wight that he had made friends with the Winnebago chief, Nakah, and that if Nakah will embrace gospel anul Const & make it the voice of Jehovah and stand the U.S. But Smith did not live to implement this program.

His major efforts during the final months of his life, on the other hand, were directed toward finding a refuge by more cautious means. He petitioned Congress to have Nauvoo made a federal territory, free from state and local control, and petitioned several governors to provide an asylum for the Mormons within their states. His candidacy for the Presidency of the United States was similarly motivated. He confessed to his followers that he really did not want the office but that if his campaign was successful he would protect all minorities in their legal rights. His plans for exploring the Far West, which led in the spring of 1844 to his outfitting a company for that purpose, had the same objectives. He told the Twelve Apostles that he wanted them to send a delegation that would find a good location in California or Oregon where "we can have a government of our own" and "live in a healthy climate." Samuel W. Richards, a member of the company who recalled the prophet's instructions to Willard Richards, said the men were to "find a suitable place for the Saints to move to where they could rest for a time."

Smith returned to Carthage in June 1844 — after making good his escape across the Mississippi — primarily because the anti-Mormons threatened to reap vengeance upon the innocent at Nauvoo unless the prophet were taken into custody. The final decisive act of his life was intended to keep Nauvoo as a haven if not for himself at least for his people.

100See the prophet's unpublished journal kept by Willard Richards, 10 March 1844, Church Archives.
101Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 6:151. Sidney Rigdon's petition to the governor of Pennsylvania is in the Rigdon Papers, Church Archives.
102Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 6:188, 222.
103A written recollection by Samuel W. Richards is in the Brigham Young University Library.
104Smith was charged by some of the elders with being a coward and leaving Nauvoo to its fate. Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 6:549.
Willard Richards recorded the Prophet's words in Carthage on the day of the martyrdom:

"I have had a good deal of anxiety about my safety which I never had before - I could not help [it]."

Willard Richards, Joseph Smith Journal, June 26, 1844, ms. in LDS Historical Department.

(Richard L. Anderson, Ensign Vol. 15, No. 4, April 1985, p. 17)
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*KELLEY, William H. Palmyra/Manchester Interviews, Saints' Herald, June 1, 1881, p. 23.
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COWDERY, Oliver. 1836 Diary in BYU Studies 12 (1972), p. 7.

Selected Writings in M&A and Era, p. 20.

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*LIGHTNER, Mary E. Rollins. Auto (1830-1831), BYU, p. 5.

LYMAN, Amasa M. Auto (1813-1844) in Millennial Star 27 (1865), p. 11.

*MARSH, Thomas. Auto (1799-1838) in Millennial Star 27 (1865), p. 5.


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*PAGE, John E. Auto (1799-1838) in Millennial Star 27 (1865). p. 2.
*PETTIGREW, David. Sel. from Journal (1791-1832), BYU, p. 4.
*PORTER, Sanford. Sel. on conversion in Family History (1957). p. 3.
*Auto (1807-1844) in Millennial Star 26 (1864). p. 4.
PULSIPHER, Zerah. Auto (c. 1803-1838), BYU, p. 6.
1837 Letter, Richards' Papers, Church Archives. p. 3.
Letters (1842-1844) in Women's Voices (1892).
SMITH, George A. Auto (1817-1844) in Millennial Star 27 (1865). p. 7.
SMITH, Mary Fielding. Auto (1838-1839) in Women of Mormonism (1877).
*WHITMER, David. Selected writings and testimonies.
WOODRUFF, Wilford. Sel. from Auto in MS. p. 23.
