THE SUMMER OF 1842: JOSEPH SMITH’S RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE 12 WIVES HE MARRIED AFTER HIS FIRST WIFE, EMMA

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Abstract: Love and marriage through the summer of 1842, as experienced by the prophet Joseph Smith, his first wife, Emma, and several other women who knew Joseph as their celestial mate while he was hiding out at Grainger’s farm. During this time he was also quietly and selectively inviting close male adherents in Nauvoo to marry plural wives, leading his restored church, and evading Missouri peace officers who sought to incarcerate him. A romantic look at Mormon polygamy.

Defining the Subject

Last year Todd Compton published a well-documented account of Joseph Smith’s plural wives, a book compiled from their point of view. In Sacred Loneliness devotes a chapter to each of 33 wives, occasionally doubling up for sisters and mother-daughter combinations. This paper looks at these relationships from Joseph’s point of view, as he struggles to keep his marriage ceremonies private, his conjugal visits discreet, his legal marriage to Emma free from contention, and his church running smoothly. In the summer of 1842 the prophet began to have difficulty with this balancing effort. For example, on June 29, 1842, Eliza R. Snow became the prophet’s wife and moved into the Smith household. Shortly afterward, Smith wrote an adoring letter to his first wife Emma, then, days later, he invited his most recent wife, Sarah Ann Whitney, to visit him at his hideout at Grainger’s farm to “comfort” him. Simultaneous to these events, Smith issued revelations, evaded Missouri sheriffs, and encouraged select priesthood colleagues to secretly marry plural wives of their own.
This is polygamy from the perspective of the chairman of the board, so to speak, a day-to-day look at Smith's life during the summer of 1842 as he courted a series of women and encouraged other men to take additional wives, all the while trying to run the corporation and keep a step ahead of the law. The prophet seems harried and almost frantic. Polygamy was a dangerous enterprise, one that eventually cost him his life. In cataloging events in Nauvoo during the 1840s I won't differentiate between love and sex, nor try to judge the nature of Smith's relationship to these women—although he expressed a profound love for Emma. Nor do I wish to modify the inherently sensational quality of eyewitness accounts to make the story of polygamy in the summer of '42 appear "balanced." I leave it to you to determine the degree of commitment, risk-taking, recklessness or religiosity in the character of Joseph Smith.

Setting the Stage: The Backstory From 1827

What led up to the summer of '42? Smith's position on marriage evolved shortly after he eloped with Emma Hale on January 18, 1827. Over a 15-year period, he took several small steps toward the polygamous theocracy that flowered in 1842.

In 1827, Smith not only married, he completed a five-year ritualized search for gold plates buried in a hill 12 miles from his home. Each year, until the time was right to recover the treasure, he approached the hill at midnight on the autumnal equinox. During the next two years he dictated the Book of Mormon, which is where polygamy is first mentioned, interestingly enough as a prohibition: "There shall not any man among you have save it be one wife," followed by this qualification: "For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things" (Book
of Mormon, Jacob 2: 27, 30). In other words, polygamy was forbidden until allowed by deity, which only a prophet could determine. It is noteworthy that the audience for this revelation is presumed to be male; the possibility of plural husbands is not addressed.

So the stage was set. In his role as "prophet, seer, and translator," Joseph Smith published the Book of Mormon in 1830. The next year, as he and Oliver Cowdery studied the Bible, he became convinced that plural marriage as practiced by David and Solomon should be restored to the Latter-day Saints. When Mormon missionaries were sent preaching to Native Americans in 1831, Smith directed several married men to take Indians as wives "that their posterity may become white, delightsome and just."1 Such an outcome would fulfill the Book of Mormon prophecy that dark-skinned Indians would become "a white [pure] and delightsome people" (Book of Mormon, 2 Ne. 30:6). However, no record exists of any marriages resulting from this expedition.

About five years after he married Emma Hale, Smith became involved with Fanny Alger, his first known intimate relationship outside of legal marriage. Some observers at the time called this an affair; Oliver Cowdery said it was "a dirty, nasty, filthy, affair." Others, like Apostle William McLellin called this relationship Smith's first plural marriage.2

Alger's association with the prophet began in 1832-33 and ended by 1836 when she married Solomon Custer and left Ohio for Indiana. Whatever her status, Fanny was apparently the first young homeless female to reside with the Smiths as a domestic housegirl. According to McLellin, in 1832 Emma came upon her husband with Fanny in the barn, down on the hay. McLellin later calls her "Miss Hill" apparently confusing her with the character in a popular romance novel, *Fanny Hill.* In any case, he wrote that an embarrassed Joseph
Smith apologized to Emma in the presence of church colleagues Frederick G. Williams, Oliver Cowdery, and Sidney Rigdon. Even after Fanny left Kirtland by 1836, some church leaders expressed discontent over Smith's relationship with her. In 1838 Cowdery, Smith's primary Book of Mormon scribe and once second in command, was excommunicated, in part, for accusing the prophet of "adultery."

Smith may have had earlier liaisons. Mary Elizabeth Rollins recalled that long before she married Adam Lightner in 1835, in 1831, when she was just 13, she was "sealed" to Joseph Smith. This statement, if taken literally, would designate Mary Elizabeth as perhaps the first plural wife, although her marriage to Smith was not recorded until 1842. She explained that polygamy "was given to him before he gave it to the Church," referring to the 1843 revelation that authorized plural marriage. Beyond the Alger and Lightner accounts, Compton suggests that in about 1838 Smith probably married Lucinda Morgan, widow of abducted Masonic dissenter William Morgan, although there is no marriage record at that time.

The first recorded plural marriage was in 1841 between Joseph Smith and Louisa Beaman. On April 5, disguised in a man's hat and coat, Louisa met Joseph by the Mississippi River where they were wed by her brother-in-law, Joseph Noble. That autumn, Smith married two more women, the daughters of William Huntington. At that time both women, Zina and Prescindia, were already married to other church members, and Zina was six-months pregnant.

In 1841, not only did Smith begin to keep a coded record of marriages ("was" = wed and sealed), he also instructed a few others to take plural wives. In mid-1841 he taught
polygamy to some of his apostles returning from missionary work in England. Their response was less than enthusiastic. Brigham Young waited a year to marry his first plural wife, and others longer.

Smith had started out cautiously: but now he would shift gears and accelerate the rate of marrying in Nauvoo, adding a dozen more women to his collection of wives in 1842. In the winter and spring he married Mary Elizabeth Rollins (wife of Adam Lightner), Sylvia Sessions and her mother Patty Sessions, and Marinda Johnson (who was married to Orson Hyde), among others.

On March 1, he began to publish the Book of Abraham, which he said he translated from the Egyptian papyri he purchased along with two mummies from a traveling lecturer. The Book of Abraham revised the Book of Genesis to include multiple gods, a plurality of worlds, and numerous pre-existent intelligences, each of which was incorporated into a rationale for polygamy as a means to raise up a righteous seed to populate endless worlds. Since Abraham, the earliest Hebrew patriarch, had many wives, it was obvious that God approved of the custom. And since the Latter-day Saints thought the world would soon end, whereupon Christ would rule through his church, the Saints prepared for this imminent millenium by restoring the practices of the ancient church, including polygamy. Church members who had been let in on the secret practice called polygamy the "patriarchal law of Abraham."

Other events led up to the summer of '42. On March 15 Smith became a Mason, and two months later, on May 4, he introduced the endowment ceremony, performed in the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge. He organized the Holy Order, a secret society of endowment
initiates and polygamy confidantes. On May 17 he established the Female Relief Society, which would defend him against accusations of adultery. Smith also filed for bankruptcy in April. He took care of orphan sisters Sarah and Maria Lawrence and their parents' estate. In a year he would marry both of them. In another year those marriages, and Smith's questionable role as their guardian, would be litigated and would, in turn, lead to publication of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, an opposition newspaper. The *Expositor* revealed the prophet's involvement with the two minors and the rising level of discontent among the Mormons with plural marriages. On May 19 Smith assumed the office of mayor, a position which he would use two years later in quashing rumors of polygamy. Opposition over alleged sexual improprieties became more focused when he had the *Expositor* destroyed on June 10, resulting in his arrest and murder within two weeks.

Although Smith would not formally reveal plural marriage to Nauvoo priesthood leaders until 1843, his involvement with other women, some as recorded wives, had begun the practice already the year before, in 1841. Let's now look at events during the summer of 1842.

**Religion, Survival, and Love Among the Saints in 1842**

As summer began, Smith wrote a warm letter to Apostle Willard Richards's wife in suggesting that her husband would soon marry other women. After four years laboring in the English mission, Willard and Jennetta returned to America in mid-1841. On March 9, 1842, Richards performed the marriage of Joseph Smith to Patty Sessions, the mother of Sylvia, Smith's wife from a month earlier. Smith now prodded Richards into polygamy. On June 23, he wrote in a letter to Jennetta: "I want you beloved Sister, to be a Genral in this matter, in
helping him along, [by] which I know he will be able to teach you many things which you never have heard[,] you may have implicit confidence in the same." About six months later Willard would marry his first plural wife, Sarah Longstroth.

On the same day Smith corresponded with Jennetta, he published an address on the "conduct and character of Dr. John C. Bennett," his counsellor in the first presidency who had recently been expelled from the church. He said that shortly after Bennett joined the community of Saints in August 1840, "he began to keep company with a young lady, one of our citizens," who was "ignorant of his having a wife living." Smith is accusing Bennett of polygamy, albeit not authorized by himself. He said that Bennett approached "some of the females in the city" and began to teach them that "promiscuous intercourse between the sexes was a doctrine believed in by the Latter-Day Saints," and tried to "persuade them that myself [Joseph Smith] and others of the authorities of the Church, not only sanctioned but practiced the same wicked acts." Smith expressed outrage that Bennett had not only been guilty of adultery but that "he must needs make use of my name" in seducing several women.9 But this time, Smith had taken eight wives and, within a week, would quietly marry Eliza Roxy Snow.

Bennett and Smith accused each other of sexual sins. When, in the spring, two unsuccessful attempts to court women on Smith's part resulted in scandal and adverse publicity, Bennett made the most of this.

Not all women accepted the offer to marry a man expected to become a future god. On the first of April Brigham Young apparently locked Martha Brotherton in a room while trying to persuade her. By mid-July Brotherton had released her story to the press and

The story in brief: Three weeks after Martha's family had been in Nauvoo, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball invited her to spend the day. Along the way, Kimball asked her, "Sister Martha, are you willing to do all that the Prophet requires you to do?" He spoke of "many things revealed in these last days" and told her "You will see Joseph" and "he will tell you what you shall do." Kimball took her to a room in Smith's Red Brick Store, and Young "locked the door," "drew the curtain," and asked her if she could accept him as her husband and companion? Young told her "brother Joseph has had a revelation from God that it is lawful and right for a man to have two wives; for as it was in the days of Abraham, so it shall be in these last days." He promised, "if you will accept of me, I will take you straight to the celestial kingdom; and if you will have me in this world, I will have you in that which is to come, and brother Joseph will marry us here to-day, and you can go home this evening, and your parents will not know any thing about it." Young assured her, "I know it to be right before God, and if there is any sin in it, I will answer for it." Martha wanted time to think about it.

Young then told her that "brother Joseph wishes to have some talk with you on the subject" and left her in the locked room while he summoned the prophet. "Well, Martha," said Smith, "it is lawful and right before God—I know it is." Further assuring her, he said, "I have the keys to the kingdom, and whatever I bind on earth is bound in heaven, and whatever I loose on earth is loosed in heaven, and if you will accept Brigham, you shall be blessed—God shall bless you, and my blessing shall rest upon you." Smith offered her an escape, "if you do not like it in a month or two, come to me, and I will make you free again." "Sir," she
said, "it will be too late to think in a month or two after." She insisted, "I want time to think first."

Although having agreed to "never mention it to any one," Martha wrote the conversation down and gave it to her sister Elizabeth (who would marry Parley Pratt that year) who "was not a little surprised." After relating this matter to a justice of the peace, she left Nauvoo and published her account in the July 15 *St. Louis Bulletin*. Smith denied everything, and in the Nauvoo *Wasp* characterized Martha as a "mean harlot." After her death, however, Brigham Young had himself sealed to her by proxy, which lends credence to her account of his pursuit.13

On April 9 Smith proposed to Nancy Rigdon, daughter of former Baptist preacher, Sidney Rigdon, who now held a leading role in the LDS church. Accounts of this proposal would also reach into the summer of 1842. Three sources have recorded this event:

(1) George W. Robinson, Rigdon's son-in-law, wrote on July 27 to New York journalist James Arlington Bennett that "Smith sent for Ms. Rigdon to come to the house of Mrs. [Orson] Hyde, who lived in the under rooms of the printing office." According to Robinson, Smith took her into a room, "locked the door, and then stated to her that he had had an affection for her for several years, and wished that she should be his; that the Lord was well pleased with this matter, for he had got a revelation on the subject, and God had given him all the blessings of Jacob, &c., &c. and that there was no sin in it whatever." Robinson recalled that Nancy "repulsed him and was about to raise the neighbors if he did not unlock the door and let her out."14

(2) John Rigdon, Nancy's brother, said that "Nancy refused him, saying if she ever got
married she would marry a single man or none at all, and took her bonnet and went home, leaving Joseph.\textsuperscript{15}

(3) Joseph Smith, himself, had his personal secretary, Willard Richards, deliver a letter to Nancy, which survives today. In the letter Smith says: "That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another . . . Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire."\textsuperscript{16} A copy of the letter, labeled "The Letter of the Prophet, Joseph Smith to Miss Nancy Rigdon," is included in the Joseph Smith Collection, LDS Archives. It is printed in the \textit{History of the Church} 5:134-36 under the title, "Happiness," accompanied by B. H. Roberts's footnote suggesting the context was the new marriage law "being introduced by the Prophet": "It is not positively known what occasioned the writing of this essay," he wrote, but nevertheless added that "at this time the new law of marriage for the Church -- marriage for eternity, including plurality of wives under some circumstances -- was being introduced by the Prophet."\textsuperscript{17}

Nancy told her father about Smith's proposal at the Hydes' home and showed him Smith's letter. Her father confronted the prophet. George W. Robinson reported that Smith "attempted to deny it at first, and face her [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] he could not withstand the testimony; he then and there acknowledged that every word of Miss Rigdon's testimony was true."\textsuperscript{18}

Historian Richard Van Wagoner defined Smith's dilemma at this time as "walking a
tight rope, secretly courting both thirty-eight-year-old Eliza R. Snow and seventeen-year-old Sarah Ann Whitney [while] . . . the prophet was also at odds with his long-time friend and counselor Sidney Rigdon over a reputed polygamist proposal on 9 April 1842 to Rigdon's unmarried daughter Nancy." At the same time Smith was courting others and was "fighting extradition to Missouri as 'an accessory to an assault with intent to kill' former Governor Lilburn W. Boggs," whose possible death Smith had prophesied a year earlier.19

Throughout the summer of '42, heated discussions about Smith's struggles with Bennett were fueled by the Martha Brotherton and Nancy Rigdon accounts. Smith denied that he was a polygamist and enlisted the Relief Society to back him up.

On June 29 Brigham Young married Smith to Eliza Snow.20 On that day the History of the Church records only some administrative matters and that Smith "rode out in the city on business, with Brigham Young."21 Eliza commented that her marriage was not generally known except by those who were "enlightened on the subject," though she lived in the Smith home from mid-August 1842 to mid-February 1843, when Emma ejected her from the house. As Eliza's relationship with Emma's husband became apparent, the two women of the house reacted with increasing hostility. On Eliza's last day in the household, she described Emma's visit to her room: "Her appearance very plainly manifested the perturbation of her mind."

"How strangely is the human countenance changed when the powers of darkness reign over the empire of the heart! Scarcely, if ever, in my life have I come in contact with such forbidding and angry looks; yet I felt as calm as the summer eve, and received her as smilingly as the playful infant; and my heart as sweetly reposed upon the bosom of conscious innocence, as infancy reposes in the arms of paternal tenderness & love." A propitious time

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it seems for Joseph to have been hiding, and not just from the Missouri sheriff.

Throughout July Joseph and his former counselor in the presidency, John Bennett, traded charges and counter-charges of promiscuity. On July 1 the Times and Seasons described Bennett as having approached "some Nauvoo women" who had known "nothing of him but as an honorable man, & [had begun] to teach them that promiscuous intercourse between the sexes, was a doctrine believed in by the Latter-Day Saints, and not only sanctioned, but practiced." Bennett had told them that Joseph preached publicly against polygamy because "of the prejudice of the public, and that it would cause trouble in [Smith's] own house."

On July 15 Smith "gave the public a general outline of John C. Bennett's conduct." That same day Bennett published in the Sangamo Journal the alleged improprieties between Smith and Sarah Pratt, Apostle Orson Pratt's wife. Sarah supported these charges. In his open letter Bennett told of Smith's visit to Sarah's house when the prophet was to have said, "Sister Pratt, the Lord has given you to me as one of my spiritual wives. I have the blessings of Jacob granted me, as he granted holy men of old, and I have long looked upon you with favor, and hope you will not deny me." Sarah reportedly replied: "I care not for the blessings of Jacob, I have one good husband, and that is enough for me." Sarah added, "Joseph, if you ever attempt anything of the kind with me again, I will make a full disclosure to Mr. Pratt on his return home."

On July 20 William Law signed an affidavit defending Smith against Bennett's accusations. Two days later the "Ladies Relief Society drew up a petition affirming, among other things, the 'virtue' of Joseph Smith." On July 24 Smith wrote that "Bennett could not
be able to accomplish his designs."  

Then, on July 27, Smith married Sarah Ann Whitney, daughter of Newell K. Whitney, Presiding Bishop of the Church. The only statement recorded in Smith's journal is that he "attended meeting at the Grove and listened to the Electioneering Candidates, and spoke at the close of the meeting," the record also found in the History of the Church. A year later on April 29, 1843, Joseph Kingsbury would become Sarah Ann's so-called "front husband" in a civil marriage to protect Smith from public disclosure, "a pretended marriage for the purpose of bringing about the purposes of God in these last days." But in the summer of '42, Smith was operating without that cover, and the process was both more dangerous and romantically challenging.

While the History of the Church does not mention the Sarah Ann Whitney ceremony, it refers to another event on that day. On July 30 Smith wrote to Illinois Governor Carlin regarding "your favor of the 27th" and conveyed his "warmest thanks for the friendly treatment my lady as well as those with her received at your hands during the late visit." Does this entry suggest that Emma and others were at the governor's office in Carthage during the time that her husband was quietly marrying Sarah Ann Whitney? Did Emma visit the governor to appeal on Smith's behalf?

As the "dog days" of August fell upon Nauvoo, Smith married still another woman, Martha McBride, in a ceremony performed by Heber C. Kimball. That day the History of the Church only reported, "In the city transacting a variety of business in company with General James Adams, and others."

Other events took place that summer. For instance, on August 8 Joseph Smith and
Orson Porter Rockwell were arrested for attempting to murder Missouri Governor Lillburn Boggs on May 6, 1842. Smith was named as an "accessory." A writ of habeas corpus was issued to prevent a sheriff from taking Smith and Rockwell to Adams County for trial. They were left with the Nauvoo Marshall without a writ of arrest so he freed them. When the sheriff returned to Nauvoo on August 10, Smith records, "I was absent and he did not see me nor brother Rockwell." One week later, on August 14, Eliza Snow moved in with the Smith family, as mentioned previously. On that day, the History of the Church mentions only that Smith appealed in a letter delivered by his wife, Emma, to Major-General Wilson Law of the Nauvoo Legion to rescue him if taken by Missourians.

Two days later on August 16, Joseph wrote an affectionate letter to Emma and offered his "sincere thanks for the two interesting and consoling visits that you have made me during my almost exile situation. [On the evenings of August 11 on an island between Montrose, Iowa, and Nauvoo, Illinois, and August 13-14 at Edward Sayer's house north on the Nauvoo side of the river.] Tongue cannot express the gratitude of my heart, for the warm and true-hearted friendship you have manifested in these things toward me." He closes the letter with these words, "your affectionate husband until death, through all eternity; for evermore."

At the end of the letter he adds this businesslike postscript: "I want you to write to Lorenzo D. Wasson, and get him to make affidavit to all he knows about Bennett, and forward it." While church historian Andrew Jenson would list Sarah Ann Whitney as Smith's seventh plural wife at this time, Smith denied this and enlisted friends to tell whatever compromising stories they knew about Bennett. On the very day Smith sought information on John C. Bennett, church sympathizer James Arlington Bennett (no relation), wrote to
Smith that John C. was "arranging materials for publishing 'An Exposition of Mormon Secrets and Practices." In his letter to Emma, Smith bid "defiance to the world, to Carlin, Boggs, Bennett, and all their whorish whores."

In his journal on the date of his letter to Emma, Joseph records his thoughts about his first wife: "With what unspeakable delight, and what transports of joy swelled my bosom, when I took by the hand on that night [August 11], my beloved Emma, she that was my wife, even the wife of my youth and the choice of my heart... again she is here, even in the seventh trouble, undaunted, firm and unwavering, unchangeable, affectionate Emma."

He continues his affectionate words for Emma on Wednesday, August 17. The *History of the Church* quotes Smith's statement that "Emma came to see me at night," and notes that he departed with her and went to Carlos Grainger's, who lived in the north east part of Nauvoo. On Thursday, the following day, he appealed to his new wife Sarah Ann Whitney to come and comfort him. In the letter to Sarah Ann, whom Smith had secretly married the month before, he urges her to visit, but only if Emma is not around. Presumably Emma had already departed, but might return. He begins, "You will pardon my earnestness on this subject when you consider how lonesome I must be," and instructs his wife of three weeks where to find him. Addressing the letter to Sarah Ann's parents and cautiously referring to her as "and &c," he recommends that her father Newell "come a little a head and nock" at the window to be sure that Emma was not there: "when she is not here there is the most perfect saf[el]ty." He tells them "my feelings are so strong for you since what has passed lately between us [the Whitneys had willingly given their daughter to the prophet]... now is the time to afford me succor." He affirms that it is proper: "I know it is the will of
God that you should comfort me," and assures them that he is in a "room entirely by myself," that "the whole matter can be attended to with more [most?] perfect saf[et]y."

After advising them to "burn this letter as soon as you read it," he closes with a cautionary appeal: "I think Emma wont come to night if she dont [,] dont fail to come to night." In 1870 Sarah Ann and her mother reaffirmed the accuracy of this letter, a copy of which was deposited with the Salt Lake County Historian's Office. The story of Smith's marriage to Sarah Ann illustrates another stratagem. Smith had her disguise her relationship to him by pretending to marry Joseph Corodon Kingsbury on April 29, 1843. In his autobiography Kingsbury wrote: "I according to Pres. Joseph Smith & Council & others agreed to stand by Sarah Ann Whitney as though I was supposed to be her husband and [participated in] a pretended marriage for the purpose of . . . Bringing about the purposes of God in these last days . . ." After Joseph Smith was killed, Sarah Ann went to live with Apostle Kimball, "her husband for time," and Kingsbury married his own plural wives.

What do we make of all this? Does the incident at Carlos Granger's farmhouse represents the pinnacle of Smith's romantic involvements during the summer of 1842? What else transpired in the remaining weeks of summer? One more marriage, perhaps. By the end of summer, Smith's marrying was over for the rest of the year, as he was in mortal combat with Bennett and other opponents. He continued to publicly deny these developments in his private life. On August 26 he noted that "a great excitement had been raised, through the community at large, by the falsehoods put in circulation by John C. Bennett and others." In response he advised the Twelve "that all the affidavits concerning Bennett's conduct be taken and printed, so that each Elder could be properly furnished with correct and weighty
testimony to lay before the public." (HC 5:131-32.)

The following day, on August 27, the History of the Church includes the essay on happiness which editor B. H. Roberts related to the "new law of marriage," but which was actually more specific: the letter written by Joseph Smith to Nancy Rigdon to persuade her to become one more of his wives.36 There is nothing in the History of the Church to suggest that either Smith or his associates ever practiced plural marriage. There is no official church record that Smith ever had a relationship with any woman except Emma.

Conclusion

During the summer of 1842 Joseph Smith played out many roles: husband and father, covert polygamist, religious leader, town mayor, and fugitive. As he sought comfort from many quarters, and as he shared his esoteric practice with other male leaders from 1842 to 1844, polygamy became a public scandal. Opposition from the church community turned his liaisons of 1842 into a course of destruction which ultimately led to his arrest. Even though the ensuing tragedy of his death obscured for many years his relationships with the wives and daughters of colleagues, these associations reveal fascinating complexities in the character of the prophet.
Endnotes

1. W. W. Phelps to Brigham Young, August 12, 1861 (Joseph Smith's July 17, 1831 reported statement remains uncanonized), Brigham Young Collection, LDS archives. LDS church president Joseph F. Smith concluded that the principle of plural marriage must have been revealed to Joseph Smith in 1831 (Deseret News, May 20, 1886). Ezra Booth described a Mormon revelation to form a "matrimonial alliance with the natives" (Ohio Star, December 8, 1831).

2. Oliver Cowdery to Warren Cowdery, January 21, 1838, Cowdery Letterbook, Huntington Library, San Marino, California; Salt Lake Tribune, October 6, 1875, quotes McLellin's description of Emma finding Joseph with Fanny "in a barn on the hay mow . . . where the first well authenticated ease of polygamy took place."


6. Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, Remarks at Brigham Young University, April 14, 1905, LDS archives.


12. HC 4:585-86; Wasp, August 27, 1842.


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17. *HC* 5:134n

18. Bennett, 246.

19. On May 22, 1842, the *History of the Church* recorded that Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs was reported in the Quincy Whig newspaper as having been shot at home. Since Joseph Smith had prophesied "a year or so ago" that Boggs would die "by violent means," the Mormons became immediately suspect of the attempted assassination. [SMITH DENIED THIS LATER--VERIFY THAT HIS FOLLOWERS QUOTED HIM]


24. Smith Diaries, 245.

25. *HC* 5:120.

26. Joseph C. Kingsbury Journal, 1846-1864, Utah State Historical Society. Affidavit of Sarah Ann Whitney [Kimball] (p. 73): Sarah Ann Whitney affirmed on June 19, 1869, that on July 27, 1842, in Nauvoo, Illinois, "she was married or sealed to Joseph Smith" by her father Newell K. Whitney, presiding Bishop of the LDS church, and in the presence of her mother, Elizabeth Ann Whitney. Her mother also affirmed the date of her daughter's marriage to Joseph Smith.

27. Affidavit of marriage in J.F. Smith, 72.

29HC 5:89.

30.HC; John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints*.


33.Joseph Smith (in his own handwriting) to Newell K. Whitney, his wife, and &c. (presumably their daughter, Sarah Ann), Nauvoo, Illinois, August 18, 1842, LDS church archives, photocopy, George Albert Smith papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library; see Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 538-542. Smith had recently married Sarah Ann Whitney on July 27, 1842. On March 7, 1870, Sarah Ann Smith (Kimball) and her mother Elizabeth Ann Whitney affirmed the accuracy of a copy of "a letter written at Carlos Graingers by President Joseph Smith dated, Nauvoo August 18, 1842 to Newell K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney and their daughter Sarah Ann Smith who was married or Sealed to President Smith, July 17, 1842." The affidavit indicates "further that they have this day deposited said letter in the Historian's Office in the county and city of Salt Lake." The text of this letter follows:

Nauvoo August 18th 1842

Dear, and Beloved, Brother and
Sister, Whitney, and &c.-
I take this opportunity to communicate,
some of my feelings, privately at
this time, which I want you three
Eternally to keep in your own
bosoms; for my feelings are so
strong for you since what has
passed lately between us, that the
time of my absence from you
seems so long, and dreary, that
it seems, as if I could not live
long in this way: and if you three would
come and see me in this my lonely
retreat, it would afford me great
relief, of mind, if those with whom
I am allied, do love me, now is the
time to afford me succour, in the
days of exile, for you know I
foretold you of these things. I am
now at Carlos Grangers, just back
of Brother Hyrams farm, it is only one
mile from town, the nights are
very pleasant, indeed, all three of
you can come and see me in the
fore part of the night, let Brother
Whitney come a little a head, and
nock at the south East corner of
the house at the window: it is next to
the cornfield; I have a room inti
-rely by myself, the whole matter
can be attended to with more perfect
-saltly, I know, it is the will of God that you
should comfort me now in this time
of affliction, or not at all now is the

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time or never, but I have no kneeed of saying
any such thing, to you, for I know the
goodness of your hearts, and that you
will do the will of the Lord, when it is
made known to you; the only thing
to be careful of, is to find out when
Emma comes then you cannot be
-safe, but when she is not here, there
is the most perfect safety: only be
careful to escape observation, as
much as possible, I know it is a
heroick undertaking; but so much
the greater friendship, and the more
joy, when I see you I will tell you all
my plans, I cannot write them on
-paper, burn this letter as soon as you
read it; keep all locked up in
your breasts, my life depends
on it. one thing I want to see you
for is to get the fulness of my blessings
sealed upon our heads, &c. You
will pardon me for my earnest
-ness on this subject when you consider how
lonesome I must be, your good
feelings know how to make every allow
-ance for me, I close my letter.
I think Emma wont come to night
if she dont dont fail to come to
night. I subscribe myself your most
obedient, and affectionate,
companion, and friend.

Joseph Smith

34. "History of Joseph Kingsbury, Written by His Own Hand, 1846, 1849, 1850," [LOCATION OF ORIGINAL?] Stanley Snow Ivins Collection, 15:74-76, USHS.

35. Ibid.