William Walker, autobiography, photocopy of:

The Life Incidents and Travels of Elder William Holmes Walker and his association with Joseph Smith, the Prophet

(N.p.: Published by Elizabeth Jane Walker Piepgrass, 1943)

[p.9:] In the spring of 1843, my father, being away on a mission, the Prophet asked my consent, for my sister Lucy in marriage. I replied, that if it was her choice: that if she entered into the celestial order of marriage of her own free will and choice, I had no objection. This of course was in contrast with my former education and traditions. It also was altogether different from the course generally pursued by monogamists. Instead of taking a course to deceive and prostitute and bring about her ruin, he took a straight-forward, honorable, and upright course, in no way depriving her of her agency.

When father returned from his mission, the matter being fully explained

[p. 10:] in connection with the doctrine received his endorsement and all parties concerned received his approbation.

[my mss]
Lucy's father John Walker was at the time on a church mission so Joseph asked her twenty-two years old brother William for consent to marry Lucy. William replied that it was her choice and he had no objection.

[The Life Incidents and Travels of Elder William Holmes Walker, and His Association with Joseph Smith, the Prophet (Bountiful, Utah: John Walker Family Organization, printed by Horizon Publishers, 3rd ed., 1975), 22.]

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Diary of William Holmes Walker[,] Incidents, Travels, Life of Elder William Holmes Walker, including his immediate association with Joseph Smith, the Prophet...
(Notes taken from the original diary by Elizabeth Walker Stott and submitted by Cleone Walker Langley, Pleasant Grove, Utah)

Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah
1961
[typed copy]

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Incidents, Travels, and Life of Elder William Holmes Walker

Including His Immediate Association
With Joseph Smith, the Prophet.

In this Connection, I Shall Endeavor to Give Only Such Items
As Have Never Appeared in the Church History.

typescript, BYU. Grammar has been standardized.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.1
[p.1] William Holmes Walker, son of John and Lydia Holmes Walker, was born at Peacham,
Caledonia County, Vermont, August 28th, 1820. My parents were sincere believers in the
established Christian of the day, being members of the Congregational Church. I was trained in all
the tenets of the same and a firm believer in King James translation of the Old and New
Testaments as the word of God. In the spring of 1832, my father joined the Mormons. They in
that day were represented as the lowest and most degraded people on the face of the earth in
every point of view. At that time I was from home boarding with an uncle and going to school.
He, being on business in the vicinity where my father resided, he learned that my father had been
baptized by immersion and had joined that dreadful and most detestable Mormon religion, and old
Joe Smith, who claimed to be a prophet and leader and had found the Golden Bible.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.1
My uncle returned home and related the sad news. I felt worse, if possible, than if I had heard of
his death and burial. I felt that he had become suddenly deranged and had entirely lost his reason
or had willfully committed a crime by which he was unworthy of recognition as a father.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.1
However, at the close of the school, I had a great desire to see my mother and my brother and
sisters and on my visit I met my father. To my great surprise, I was unable to discover any change
in him for the worse; but to the reverse, he appeared to be very happy. I found that my mother did
not approve of his course and that she felt that he had disgraced himself and family.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.2
[p.2] A few months after my father was solicited to take charge of a manufacturing establishment
in Stanstead Plains "Cinidy"; in which he invested, and placed some improved machinery.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.2
In the meantime, for two years my mother was earnestly engaged in reading the Bible, thinking to
find something that would condemn and put down Mormonism. I heard her say repeatedly that
she, during the two years, had read more than she did in all her life before, for that purpose, and
was greatly disappointed to find that the more she read, the more she found to condemn herself;
and in favor of, and to confirm or establish Mormonism. After this rigid and thorough
investigation, and being fully convinced that God had again spoken from the heavens, and had
restored the everlasting Gospel in its fulness to the earth, and had conferred upon man the Holy
Priesthood, with authority to administer in all the ordinances thereof, she desired to be baptized
for the remission of her sins, and have hands laid on her head for the reception of the Holy Ghost;
and she was not only willing, but glad to unite her destinies with that unpopular people called

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Mormons.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.2
Notwithstanding all this, I had not yet fully concluded to accept of Mormonism, although, previous to leaving Vermont, unknown to my parents, I went and heard a Mormon elder preach. After meeting was dismissed, a number of my acquaintances, some of whom were well educated and well versed in the Bible, surrounded the Mormon elder and commenced an attack of severe criticism upon the doctrines that he had advanced. Although my prejudices were strong in favor of my acquaintances, and against the Mormon elder, yet I found they could [p.3] not refute one point of doctrine, or one argument he had advanced. Nor could they produce any proof from the Bible to overthrow the doctrine or principles he advocated. And in consequence they soon began to use insulting and abusive language. Then from this I began to reason, in my own mind. Has not the persecuting of this Mormon been strictly in harmony and consistent with the Bible that we all profess to believe? I cannot deny it and am obliged to admit that notwithstanding the abusive and insulting attack upon him, his deportment has been that of a gentleman. I cannot say that of his opposers. Then so far, my mouth was closed.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.3
In 1834 my father and family started as emigrants for the Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri. We stopped at Ogdensburg, New York. Here we became identified with an organized branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And many of the signs that Christ said should follow the believers were enjoyed by the Saints of this branch.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.3
One brother, two sisters and myself were baptized in 1835. Several of the members had the gift of tongues and the interpretation, and almost at every meeting, many spoke by the power of the Holy Ghost in another tongue, foretelling of future events that the Saints should pass through, the great blessings that were in store for them, and the great trials which they would be called on to pass through.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.3
In the spring of 1838, a company of eight families left Ogdensburg, New York, for western Missouri by wagons.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.3
On our journey, we created considerable surprise, and were told almost daily that in five years Mormonism would be at an end.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.4
[p.4] The company arrived at Missouri in October and as we proceeded on our journey the excitement increased. About the 15th we were surrounded by a mob while traveling. The company stopped, every wagon was searched and robbed of all of their firearms and ammunitions that they had supplied themselves with to kill game in a new country. The mob told us if we went on we would all be killed.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.4
Two men left the company to go to Far West to learn the true situation, if possible. They had not proceeded but a few miles when they were taken prisoners by the mob.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.4
Fearing that the threats would be executed that were made the day before by the mob, two
families stopped and would not proceed farther. The rest of the company continued to Shoal Creek, five miles below Haun's Mill and camped.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.4

The next day my father and one of the brethren started for Haun's Mill to learn the condition of matters there. They found a small settlement of Saints there. While they were there the mob came suddenly upon them and massacred men, women and children, 18 in number. My father was wounded. He managed to hide under some slabs that projected over the bank of the creek near the mill.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.4

While in this position he saw an old gray-haired man (Father [Thomas] McBride), running down in the bed of the creek a short distance from where he lay. One of the mob overtook the old man and cut him to pieces with a corn cutter and split his hands down when he raised them for mercy. Some of the party that had escaped and were fleeing for their lives came to our camp and reported the number of those that were killed at the mill, and that the mob would soon be there to kill every one that they could find.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.5

[p.5] Under the circumstances we would come to no other conclusion than that father was among the dead. Great consternation ensued; men, women and children running in every direction for their lives. Mother prevailed on a few to remain, and she took her children, ten in number, in her wagon and said we were just as safe there as anywhere, that the Lord could preserve us. She had her children kneel with her and prayed with much earnestness and faith for the protection of the Almighty in their behalf. No one closed their eyes in sleep that night.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.5

The next morning early, a young officer came to our camp. He said he would guide us to a place of safety and he was a friend of ours. The company started back, taking a different road than what we had come, traveling about one hundred miles, and camped for the time being.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.5

In about two weeks, Brother Clyde, who had been prisoner of this same mob from the time he left our company to go to Far West, escaped from the mob during the excitement of their attack and massacre at Haun's Mill. Being in this vicinity, he learned that my father was not dead, but wounded and unable to travel. No one could learn what had become of their families, nor the families what had become of them.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.5

Brother Clyde procured a horse and rode two weeks before he found his family, they being with us. We learned from him the condition of father.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.5

In the morning I took the horse that he rode and started alone to find my father, riding 75 miles that first day. The next day I [p.6] arrived at the mills and traveled all day from one place to another and found him about dark, having to keep hid, as they were determined to kill him. It was a happy meeting as he had not heard a word from any of us.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.6

He had recovered his strength sufficiently so that he thought he could venture to travel slowly. Leaving the horse with the owner, we started on foot next morning, traveling through a sparsely
settled country as best we could. On this journey, when we stopped to get something to eat, was
the first time in my life that I saw bread baked on a board before a fire.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.6
Arriving safe, we found all well. It being cold in November, father succeeded in procuring a log
house with a fire on the ground in one end, with a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.6
Some three or four weeks after, President Joseph Young arrived with his family in the
neighborhood from Far West, as exiles on their way to Illinois, some of the brethren bringing him
thus far and returning to bring their own families. My father sent me with a team to move Brother
Young to the Mississippi River, a distance of 150 miles.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.6
After my return, in order to obtain provisions, father engaged with a Missourian to haul a load to
LeGrand River Country. On the way back the man got drunk and abused me and my team and
threatened to compel me to return with another load. But on arriving at his home, his wife
succeeded in persuading him not to do so. Next morning I was permitted to go in peace.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.7
[p.7] Shortly after, father started with his family for Quincy, Illinois, arriving in April 1839 and
located nine miles east of Quincy, obtaining work at his trade as a carpenter. He rented a farm
which my brother Lorin and myself carried on.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.7
After making the best arrangements that he could under the circumstances for his family, he went
on a mission through the middle states and we worked for the support of the family. He returned
from his mission in the spring of 1840.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.7
He sent me to Nauvoo on some business with the President Joseph Smith, the Prophet. I arrived
at his house about nine o’clock, just as his family was singing before the accustomed evening
prayer. His wife, Emma, was leading the singing. I thought I had never heard such sweet,
heavenly music before. I was equally interested in the prayer offered by the Prophet. Much
pleased with my visit and business accomplished satisfactorily, I returned home in a few days.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.7
Being twenty years of age, my father gave me my time. I rented a large farm of the same man who
was very friendly. After my parents moved to Nauvoo, he offered me large inducements to get me
to leave the Mormons. But at the close of the year when he found I would not renounce my
religion for worldly gain, he turned against me.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.7
About this time I got news that my mother was very sick and not expected to live. The next day I
rode seventy-five miles to arrive at Nauvoo. I went to Joseph Smith’s and was made welcome. I
learned that mother was living on the island in the Mississippi River and that it was dangerous to
cross because of so much ice running.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.8
[p.8] The next morning the Prophet invited me to hitch up my horse with one of his in a buggy,
and ride with him. We were riding all day through the city and county making a number of calls
on business pleasure combined. On this occasion the subject of celestial, or plural marriage, was introduced to me. As we returned home he remarked, "If there was anything I did not understand, to hold on a little, and I would understand it."

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.8
My father came over in a skiff. Crossing back, we took great precaution in selecting an opening between the cakes of ice. When about halfway across, a large cake struck the shore, causing it to swing around and caught our boat, crushing it and causing it to leak so that we were compelled to dip water rapidly. We pulled the boat out on the ice and landed one and one-half miles below where we should have done.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.8
Finding her (my mother) some better I returned to Quincy and settled up my business and returned to Nauvoo. My mother died in 1841, while I was absent.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.8
I returned again to Joseph Smith's and entered his employ and was as a member of his family, taking an interest in his domestic affairs, remaining three years without asking any compensation. I went into the hayfield with him, and he assisted in mowing grass, with a scythe many a day, putting in ten hours good hard work. Very few, if any, were his superior in that kind of work. The more extensive my acquaintance and experience became with him, the more my confidence in him increased. I was entrusted by him with [p.9] important business. On one occasion when mayor of the city of Nauvoo, it became his duty to fine a Negro for violating the city ordinance with regard to selling liquor. The Negro pled for mercy and said that his object in doing so was to raise money to send for his family. The mayor would not shrink from his duty and he fined him $75.00 but, if he would not be guilty of doing so again, he would make him a present of a horse to assist him, which he accepted.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.9
The Urim and Thummim were once placed in my charge for the time being, and many other important trusts were confided to me, which I am happy to say, were held sacred to myself.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.9
The Prophet had a great many callers, not only those of his own faith, true and well-tried friends and those from different parts of the earth came to make a permanent home in Nauvoo, who were anxious to see him. But strangers from all parts of the country, traveling up and down the river, almost invariably made it a point to call and see the Prophet, as they called him. On one occasion, a man by the name of Jackson called. Not finding him at home, I heard him say to Mrs. Smith, "You tell the Prophet that the wickedest man on earth called to see him." Future developments proved that he told the truth for once.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.9
It was quite a common occurrence in those days for officers to suddenly appear with an arrest for "Old Joe Smith" on some flimsy trumped-up charge. One day in the summer of 1842 I was (Note in pencil: Grandfather told often to his children how the Prophet gave him a horse even though he stabled it. He would never take it to ride unless he asked permission from my grandfather.) [p.10] sitting at the dinner table with the Prophet when, without a word being spoken by any person present, he arose suddenly from the table and went out of the room. No sooner had he closed the door than an officer entered by another door, having come up the river bank. He (Joseph) walked some twenty rods across the block in a path leading to the brick store in full view of another
officer. Then he disappeared without being discovered by either.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.10

On another occasion some officers came into the city and put up at the hotel just above his residence. Joseph gave me directions to take his horse "Joe Dunkin," (named after Governor Dunkin) and put on his military bridle, saddle and portmanteau, (the articles costing $100.00), and ride up Main Street to the upper landing, cross on the ferry boat to Montrose, from there to Keokuk. From that, the report stated that I had taken the horse to Joe Smith and he had gone on west. Meantime, I returned to Nauvoo with the horse, but no one knew that the horse had returned, neither friend or foe.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.10

In the spring of 1843, my father, being away on a mission, the Prophet asked my consent for my sister Lucy in marriage. I replied that if it was her choice, that if she entered into the celestial order of marriage of her own free will and choice, I had no objection. This of course was in contrast with my former education and traditions. It also was altogether different from the course to generally pursued by monogamists. Instead of taking a course to deceive and prostitute and bring about her ruin, he took a straight-forward, honorable, and upright course, in no way depriving her of her agency.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.11

[p.11] When father returned from his mission, the matter being fully explained in connection with the doctrine, received his endorsement and all parties concerned received his approbation.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.11

On August 31st [1843], the Mansion House was finished and furnished, which was commenced the year before. The Prophet and his family moved into the mansion. I had charge of the house under his direction. An incident occurred which would go to show how detestable he felt towards, and the contempt he had for any person of questionable character. In regard to his private life, as to purity, honesty, virtue, charity, benevolence, liberality, refined and sensitive feelings and nobility of character, his superior did not exist on earth.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.11

On the 15th of September, 1843, the mansion was opened as a hotel. Not long after the opening of the house, one afternoon a stranger came and registered his name. Just before supper he insulted one of the hired girls. The Prophet heard of it after the stranger had retired. The next morning he was in the bar room to meet him as he came down from his room. Mr. Smith said to him, "Sir, I understand that you insulted one of the employees of this house last evening." He began to make all kinds of apologies, but nothing of this kind would answer the purpose. He told the stranger to get his baggage and to get and in a tone of voice that almost made his hair stand straight on his head. The man offered to pay his bill. "I want you to get. I want none of your money, or any other man's of your stamp." Upon that, the stranger stuck a lively exit.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.11

November 1, 1843, I married Olive Hovey Farr, daughter of Winslow and Olive Hovey Freeman Farr. Myself and wife boarded at the [p.12] mansion six months, then we moved into a two-story brick house on Parley Street belonging to the Prophet, but I still continued to be in his employ. We had living with us five of my younger brothers and sisters and gave them a home for a year. My father then returned from his mission and soon he provided a home for them.

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William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p. 12
In the spring of 1844, a number of prominent men, having become disaffected, finally turned traitors to President Smith, such as William Law, his first counselor (notation in pencil, 2nd), Wilson Law, brigadier general of Nauvoo Legion, William Marks, president of the stake, John C. Bennett, his staff officer, who figured in the organization of the legion, Dr. Foster and brother, two of Judge Bigbee's sons and others. The excitement becoming great in connection with that which prevailed outside, the apostates joined with the mob and to all appearances becoming insuppressible. President Smith thought it wise, considering that his life was in danger, to go west with his family and select friends.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p. 12
His wife and some others thought if they left that the city would be laid in ashes and the people destroyed. They were so zealous they said they would stay and die with them. However, Joseph Smith and his brother retired to the island in the river. Delegation after delegation were sent to him to prevail on him to return and give themselves up.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p. 12
Sunday morning, three days before the martyrdom, I was in front of the mansion with Emma. His wife, looking up the street, exclaimed, "There is lawyer Wood. I am glad, Joseph will have confidence in him and will come back."

[p. 13] Wood had been sent by Governor Ford with a pledge for his safety and fair trial. Several parties accompanied Wood to the island. In answer to the argument for Joseph to give himself up, he said, "If my life is of no value to my people, it is of no value to me." Sure enough, about sunset, June (23rd in pencil) third, he and his brother Hyrum returned to the mansion. I was at the time sitting alone in the private parlor. He was so overcome with grief he could hardly speak at first. As soon as he could control his feelings, he said he was going to give himself up for trial.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p. 13
He wanted me to go to Burlington that night. In half an hour I got ready and went aboard the steamer to get a witness that did not belong to the Church, a dentist that had been boarding at the mansion the past winter.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p. 13
We landed at Burlington at daybreak. I soon found that the party I wanted was at Mount Pleasant, thirty miles away in the country, and the road was so bad that the stage had stopped running.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p. 13
I got a good horse, which I favored, by walking and leading through the sloughs, which were from fifty to five hundred yards across. I found the doctor, whose wife was sick and not expected to live. He went before a justice and made affidavit on such points as he deemed beneficial, and evidence in favor of the Prophet and remarked, "that if that was not sufficient that he would appear in person."

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p. 13
I returned to Nauvoo and arrived next morning at 7 o'clock. The affidavit was sent to Carthage by express and returned the same day with the request that I should go for the doctor again.
William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.14
[p.14] I immediately started on my own horse, rode all night and while taking breakfast with George J. Adams at Augusta, the Laws, Fosters and Higbees came in town, with all possible speed, in a manner, as though fleeing for life, bringing the news that Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.14
Not knowing that the report was true, I concluded to return to Nauvoo with George J. Adams. When about half way we met a messenger who said that it was true. We arrived Thursday evening, having traveled night and day not sleeping from the 22nd to the 28th.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.14
The dead bodies of the Prophet and patriarch were brought and arrived shortly after I did.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.14
It was a most melancholy and trying time for the Saints.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.14
The next morning I started to meet Apostle John Taylor who had been shot at Carthage, with four balls, and was being brought in on a litter and was in a very critical condition.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.14
August 23 [1843], I assisted in raising the dome on the Nauvoo Temple. When completed, I stood upon the top of the dome. I worked steady three or four months and assisted in raising and putting on the entire roof.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.14
September 11, 1845, I went out in Colonel Markum's company to quell the mob, who were burning the houses, barns and stacks of grain of the Saints in the surrounding settlements, which we succeeded in doing. At our approach in any part of the country, the mob fled in great haste. On several occasions we gave them chase. We were out some fifteen days, a hard trip on our horses. My horse died shortly after our return to Nauvoo.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.15
[p.15] In a few days the Morley settlement was burned. From eighty to one hundred were rendered houseless. One hundred and thirty-five teams were sent out to bring them in. I was one of the number to go.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.15
During the fall and forepart of the winter, I worked with my father repairing wagons, preparatory to moving to the west.

William Walker, autobiography, typescript, BYU, p.15
In December [1845], my wife Olive H. and myself received our endowments in the Nauvoo Temple.
William Holmes Walker, Autobiography, BYU Special Collections
Including His Immediate Association
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Published by
ELIZABETH JANE WALKER PIEPGRASS
1943

FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY
35 NORTH WEST TEMPLE
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150
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Second Edition
Published by
John Walker Family Organization
1971

Third Edition
Published by
John Walker Family Organization
1975

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BOOK NUMBER
0-88290-050-1

Printed in the
United States of America
by

HORIZON
PUBLISHERS
Post Office Box 490
55 East 200 South
Bountiful, Utah 84010

We, the promoters and subscribers, desire to have the autobiography and diary of William Holmes Walker printed as he wrote it. We are furnishing sufficient means to have it published for the benefit of his descendants.

—Elizabeth Jane Walker Pfeppras
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Birthplace in Vermont
INCIDENTS, TRAVELS, AND LIFE OF ELDER WILLIAM HOLMES WALKER, INCLUDING HIS IMMEDIATE ASSOCIATION WITH JOSEPH SMITH, THE PROPHET. IN THIS CONNECTION, I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO GIVE ONLY SUCH ITEMS AS HAVE NEVER APPEARED IN THE CHURCH HISTORY.

William Holmes Walker, son of John and Lydia Holmes Walker, was born at Peacham, Caledonia County, Vermont, August 28th, 1820. My parents were sincere believers in the established Christian of the day, being members of the Congregational Church. I was trained in all the tenets of the same and a firm believer in King James translation of the Old and New Testaments as the word of God. In the spring of 1832, my father joined the Mormons. Then in that day was represented as the lowest and most degraded people on the face of the earth in every point of view. At that time I was from home boarding with an uncle and going to school. He, being on business in the vicinity where my father resided, he learned that my father had been baptised by immersion and had joined that dreadful and most detestable Mormon religion, and old Joe Smith, who claimed to be a prophet and leader and had found the Golden Bible.

My uncle returned home and related the sad news. I felt worse, if possible, than if I had heard of his death and burial. I felt that he had become suddenly deranged and had entirely lost his reason or had willfully committed a crime by which he was unworthy of recognition as a father.

However, at the close of the school, I had a great desire to see my mother and my brothers and sisters and on my visit I met my father. To my great surprise I was unable to discover any change in him for the worse; but to the reverse, he appeared to be very happy. I found that my mother did not approve of his course and that she felt that he had disgraced himself and family.

A few months after my father was solicited to take charge of a manufacturing establishment in Stansfield Plains
"Canady"; in which he invested, and placed some improved machinery.

In the meantime, for two years my mother was earnestly engaged in reading the Bible, thinking to find something that would condemn and put down Mormonism. I heard her say repeatedly that she, during the two years, had read more than she did in all her life before, for that purpose, and was greatly disappointed to find that she still read the more she found to condemn herself, and in favor of, and to confirm or establish Mormonism. After this rigid and thorough investigation, and being fully convinced that God had again spoken from the heavens, and had restored the everlasting Gospel in its fullness, to the earth: and had conferred upon man the Holy Priesthood, with authority to administer in all the ordinances thereof. She desired to be baptised for the remission of her sins, and have hands laid on her head, for the reception of the Holy Ghost: and was not only willing, but glad to unite her destinies with that unpopular people, called Mormons.

Notwithstanding all this, I had not yet fully concluded to accept of Mormonism, all though, previous to leaving Vermont, unknown to my parents I went and heard a Mormon elder preach. After meeting was dismissed a number of my acquaintances, some of who were well educated and well versed in the Bible, surrounded the Mormon elder and commenced an attack of severe criticism upon the doctrines that he had advanced. Although my prejudices were strong in favor of my acquaintances, and against the Mormon elder, yet I found they could not refute one point of doctrine, or one argument he had advanced. Nor could they produce any proof from the Bible to overthrow the doctrine or principles he advocated. And in consequence they soon began to use insulting and abusive language. Then from this I began to reason, in my own mind. Has not the persecuting of this Mormon been strictly in harmony and consistent with the Bible that we all profess to believe? I cannot deny it and am obliged to admit that notwithstanding the abusive and insulting attack upon him his deportment has been that of a gentleman. I cannot say that of his opposers. Then so far my mouth was closed.

In 1834 my father and family started as emigrants for the Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri. Stopping at Ogdenberg, New York. Here we became identified with an organized branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And many of the signs that Christ said should follow the believers were enjoyed by the Saints of this branch.

One brother, two sisters and myself were baptised in 1835. Several of the members had the gift of tongues and the interpretation, and almost at every meeting, many spoke by the power of the Holy Ghost in another tongue, foretelling of future events, that the Saints should pass through. The great blessings that were in store for them, and the great trials, which they would be called on to pass through.

In the spring of 1838, a company of eight families left Ogdenberg, New York, for western Missouri, by wagons.

On our journey, we created considerable surprise, and were told almost daily, that in five years Mormonism would be at an end.

The company arrived at Missouri in October and as we proceeded on our journey the excitement increased. About the 15th we were surrounded by a mob while traveling. The company stopped, every wagon was searched and robbed of all their firearms and ammunitions, that they had supplied themselves with, to kill game in a new country. The mob told us if we went on we would all be killed.

Two men left the company to go to the Far West to learn the true situation, if possible. They had not proceeded but a few miles when they were taken prisoners by the mob.

Fearing that the threats would be executed, that were made the day before by the mob, two families stopped and would not proceed farther. The rest of the company continued to Shoal Creek, five miles below Haun’s Mills and camped.

The next day my father and one of the brethren started for Haun’s Mills to learn the condition of matters there. They found a small settlement of Saints there. While they were there the mob came suddenly upon them and massacred men, women, and children. 18 in number. My father was wounded. He managed to hide under some slabs that projected over the
bank of the creek near the mill.

While in this position he saw an old gray-haired man (Father McBride), running down in the bed of the creek: a short distance from where he lay. One of the mob overtook the old man and cut him to pieces with a corn cutter, and split his hands down when he raised them for mercy. Some of the party that had escaped and were fleeing for their lives, came to our camp and reported the number of those that were killed at the mill. And that the mob would soon be there to kill every one that they could find.

Under the circumstances we could come to no other conclusion, than that father was among the dead. Great consternation ensued: men, women, and children running in every direction for their lives. Mother prevailed on a few to remain, and she took her children, ten in number, in her wagon and said we were just as safe there as anywhere. That the Lord could preserve us. She had her children kneel with her and prayed with much earnestness and faith for the protection of the Almighty in their behalf. No one closed their eyes in sleep that night.

The next morning early, a young officer came to our camp. He said he would guide us to a place of safety, and he was a friend of ours. The company started back, taking a different road to what we had come. Traveling about one hundred miles and camped for the time being.

In about two weeks Brother Clyde, who had been a prisoner of this same mob, from the time he left our company to go to Far West. He escaped from the mob during the excitement of their attack and massacre at Hauns Mills. Being in this vicinity he learned that my father was not dead, but wounded and unable to travel. No one could learn what had become of their families, nor the families what had become of them.

Brother Clyde procured a horse and rode two weeks before he found his family, they being with us. We learned from him the condition of father.

In the morning I took the horse that he rode, and started alone to find my father: riding 75 miles the first day. The next day I arrived at the mills, and traveled all day from one place to another and found him about dark, having to keep hid, as they were determined to kill him. It was a happy meeting, as he had not heard a word from any of us.

He had recovered his strength sufficiently so that he thought he could venture to travel slowly. Leaving the horse with the owner we started on foot next morning, traveling through a sparsely settled country as best we could. On this journey, when we stopped to get something to eat, was the first time in my life that I saw bread baked on a board, before a fire.

Arriving safe, finding all well. It being cold in November, father succeeded in procuring a log house with a fire on the ground in one end, with a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape.

Some three or four weeks after, President Joseph Young arrived, with his family, in the neighborhood, from Far West, as exiles, on their way to Illinois. Some of the brethren, bringing him thus far, and returning to bring their own families. My father sent me, with a team, to move Brother Young to the Mississippi River. A distance of 150 miles.

After my return, in order to obtain provisions, father engaged with a Missourian to haul a load to Legrand River country. On the way back the man got drunk, and abused me and my team, and threatened to compel me to return with another load: but on arriving at his home, his wife succeeded in persuading him not to do so. Next morning I was permitted to go in peace.

Shortly after, father started with his family for Quincy, Illinois. Arriving in April 1838, and located nine miles east of Quincy. Obtaining work at his trade as a carpenter. He rented a farm, which my brother Lorin and myself carried on.

After making the best arrangements that he could, under the circumstances, for his family. He went on a mission through the middle states, and we worked for the support of the family. He returned from his mission in the spring of 1840.

He sent me to Nauvoo on some business with the President Joseph Smith, the Prophet. I arrived at his house about nine o'clock, just as his family was singing, before the
acquainted evening prayer. His wife Emma, leading in the
singing, I thought I had never heard such sweet, heavenly
music before. I was equally interested in the prayer offered
by the Prophet. Much pleased with my visit, and business ac-
complished satisfactorily: I returned home in a few days.

Being twenty years of age, my father gave me my time.
I rented a large farm of the same man, who was very friendly.
After my parents moved to Nauvoo, he offered me large in-
ducements, to get me to leave the Mormons. But at the close
of the year, when he found I would not renounce my religion
for worldly gain, he turned against me.

About this time I got news that my mother was very
sick, and not expected to live. The next day I rode seventy-
five miles to arrive at Nauvoo. I went to Joseph Smith’s, and
was made welcome. I learned that mother was living on the
island in the Mississippi River, and that it was dangerous to
cross because of so much ice running.

The next morning the Prophet invited me to hitch up
my horse with one of his, in a buggy, and ride with him. We
were riding all day through the city and county making a
number of calls on business and pleasure combined. On this
occasion the subject of celestial, or plural marriage, was intro-
duced to me. As we returned home he remarked, “If there
was anything I did not understand, to hold on a little, and
I would understand it.”

My father came over in a skiff. Crossing back, we took
great precaution in selecting an opening between the cakes of
ice. When about half way across, a large cake struck the shore,
casting it to swing around and caught our boat, crushing it
and causing it to leak so that we were compelled to dip water
rapidly. We pulled the boat out on the ice and landed one and
one-half miles below where we should have done.

Finding her (my mother) some better I returned to
Quincy and settled up my business and returned to Nauvoo.
My mother died in 1841, while I was absent.

I returned again to Joseph Smith’s, and was as a member
of his family, taking an interest in his domestic affairs: re-
maining three years without asking any compensation. I went
into the hayfield with him, and he assisted in mowing grass,
the hotel: just above his residence. Joseph gave me directions to take his horse "Joe Dunkin," (named after Governor Dunkin); put on his military bridle, saddle, and portmanteaus. (The articles costing $100.00.) And ride up Main Street to the uperlanding, cross on the ferry boat to Montrose, from there to Keokuk. From that, the report started that I had taken the horse to Joe Smith, and he had gone on west. Meanwhile I returned to Nauvoo with the horse, but no one knew that the horse had returned, neither friend or foe.

In the spring of 1843, my father, being away on a mission, the Prophet asked my consent, for my sister Lucy in marriage. I replied, that if it was her choice: that if she entered into the celestial order of marriage of her own free will and choice, I had no objection. This of course was in contrast with my former education and traditions. It also was altogether different from the course generally pursued by monogamists. Instead of taking a course to deceive and prostitute and bring about her ruin, he took a straightforward, honorable, and upright course, in no way depriving her of her agency.

When father returned from his mission, the matter being fully explained in connection with the doctrine received his endorsement and all parties concerned received his approbation.

On August thirty-first the Mansion House was finished, and furnished: which was commenced the year before: and the Prophet and his family moved into the Mansion. I had charge of the House under his direction. An incident occurred which would go to show how detestable he felt towards, and the contempt he had for any person of questionable character. In regard to his private life, as to purity, honesty, virtue, charity, benevolence, liberality, refined and sensitive feelings and nobility of character, his superior did not exist on earth.

On the 15th of September the Mansion was opened as a hotel. Not long after the opening of the House, one afternoon a stranger came and registered his name. Just before supper he insulted one of the hired girls. The Prophet heard of it after the stranger had retired. The next morning he was in the bar room to meet him as he came down from his room.

Mr. Smith said to him. "Sir: I understand that you insulted one of the employees of this house last evening." He began to make all kinds of apologies: but nothing of this kind would answer the purpose. He told the stranger to get his baggage and to get away from there as soon as possible, in such unmistakable language, and in a tone of voice that almost made his hair stand straight on his head. The man offered to pay his bill. "I want you to get. I want none of your money, or any other man's of your stamp." Upon that the stranger struck a lively exit.

November 1st, 1843. I married Olive Hovey Farr, daughter of Winslow and Olive Hovey Freeman Farr. Myself and wife boarded at the Mansion six months, then we moved into a two story brick house on Parley Street, belonging to the Prophet: but I still continued to be in his employ. We had living with us five of my younger brothers and sisters and gave them a home for a year. My father then returned from his mission and soon he provided a home for them.

In the spring of 1844, a number of prominent men, having become disaffected, and finally turned traitors to President Smith. Such as Wilson Law, his first counselor (notation in pencil "2nd"). Wilson Law, brigadier general of Nauvoo Legion, William Marks, president of the stake: John C. Bennett, his staff officer, who figured in the organization of the Legion. Dr. Foster and brother. Two of Judge Higbee's sons and others. The excitement becoming great in connection with that which prevailed outside. The apostates joining with the mob and to all appearances becoming insupportable. President Smith thought it wise, considering that his life was in danger, to go west with his family and select friends.

His wife and some others thought, if they left that the city would be layed in ashes, and the people destroyed. They were so zealous they said they would stay and die with them. However, Joseph Smith and his brother retired to the island in the river. Delegation after delegation were sent to him to prevail on him to return and give themselves up.

Sunday morning, three days before the martyrdom, I was in front of the Mansion with Emma. His wife, looking up the street, she exclaimed: "There is lawyer Wood, I am glad,
Joseph will have confidence in him and will come back."

Wood had been sent by Governor Ford with a pledge for his safety, and a fair trial. Several parties accompanied Wood to the island. In answer to the argument for Joseph to give himself up he said: "If my life is of no value to my people, it is of no value to me." Sure enough, about sunset June third, he and his brother Hyrum, returned to the Mansion. I was at the time sitting alone in the private parlor. He was so overcome with grief he could hardly speak at first. As soon as he could control his feelings he said he was going to give himself up for trial.

He wanted me to go to Burlington that night. In a half hour I got ready and went aboard the steamer and got a witness that did not belong to the Church. A dentist that had been boarding at the Mansion the past winter.

We landed at Burlington at daybreak. I soon found that the party I wanted was at Mount Pleasant, thirty miles away in the country, and the road was so bad that the stage had stopped running.

I got a good horse, which I favored, by walking and leading through the sloughs. Which were from fifty to five hundred yards across. I found the doctor whose wife was sick and not expected to live. He went before a justice and made affidavit on such points as he deemed beneficial, and evidence in favor of the Prophet and remarked, "That if that was not sufficient that he would appear in person."

I returned to Nauvoo and arrived next morning at 7 o'clock. The affidavit was sent to Carthage by express and returned the same day with the request that I should go for the doctor again.

I immediately started on my own horse, rode all night and while taking breakfast with Geo. J. Adams, at Augusta the Laws, Fosters and Hygebes came in town, with all possible speed, in a manner, as though fleeing for life, bringing the news that Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed.

Not knowing that the report was true I concluded to return to Nauvoo with Geo. J. Adams. When about half way we met a messenger who said that it was true. We arrived Thursday evening, having traveled night and day, not sleeping from the 22nd to the 28th.

The dead bodies of the Prophet and Patriarch were brought and arrived shortly after I did.

It was a most melancholy and trying time for the Saints.

The next morning I started to meet Apostle John Taylor who had been shot at Carthage, with four balls, and was being brought in on a litter and was in a very critical condition.

August 23rd, I assisted in raising the dome on the Nauvoo Temple. When completed I stood upon the top of the dome. I worked steady three or four months and assisted in raising and putting on the entire roof.

September 11th, 1845. I went out in Colonel Markum's company to quell the mob, who were burning the houses, barns and stacks of grain of the Saints in the surrounding settlements, which we succeeded in doing. At our approach in any part of the country the mob fled in great haste. On several occasions we gave them chase. We were out some fifteen days. A hard trip on our horses. My horse died shortly after our return to Nauvoo.

In a few days the Morley settlement was burned. From eighty to one hundred were rendered houseless. One hundred and thirty-five teams were sent out to bring them in. I was one of the number to go.

During the fall and fore part of the winter I worked with my father repairing wagons, preparatory to moving to the west.

In December my wife Olive H. and myself received our endowments in the Nauvoo Temple.

January 1846, having disposed of some personal property and only having one horse I succeeded in purchasing a horse which had been foundered: otherwise good. Horses being in such great demand it was the best I could do. Having disposed of our furniture and everything but what we intended loading into our wagon. I was under the necessity of going to the island for a load of wood, in order to get our crackers and e.c. baked for our journey.

Being hard work for the foundered horse to travel on the ice he caught cold: also my best horse caught cold and settled on his lungs and died. Not having any means by which to buy...