

Eyewitnesses of Joseph Smith's Polygamy

The following list of eyewitness reports of Joseph Smith's personal introduction and practice of plural marriage is not exhaustive, but representative of the historical record.

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Church Presidents

Brigham Young

1. We came to Nauvoo, and the Twelve went to England. While we were in England, I think, the Lord manifested to me by visions and his spirit, things that I did not then understand. I never opened my mouth to any persons concerning them, until I returned to Nauvoo. Joseph had never mentioned this, there had never been a thought of it in the Church that I knew anything about at that time. But I had this for myself, and I kept it to myself, and when I returned home and Joseph revealed these things to me, I then understood the reflections that were upon my mind while in England. But this was not until after I had told him what I understood. I saw that he was after something by his conversation, leading my mind along, and others, to see how we could bear this. This was in 1841; the revelation was given in 1843, but the doctrine was revealed before this, and when I told Joseph what I understood which was right in front of my house in the street, as he was shaking hands and leaving me, he turned round and looked me in the eyes, and says he--"Brother Brigham, are you speaking what you understand,--are you in earnest?" Says I--"I speak just as the Spirit manifests to me." Says he--"God bless you, the Lord has opened your mind," and he turned and went off.¹
2. I recollect a sister conversing with Joseph Smith on this subject [plural marriage]. She told him: "Now, don't talk to me; when I get into the celestial kingdom, if I ever do get there, I shall request the privilege of being a ministering angel; that is the labor that I wish to perform. I don't want any companion in that world; and if the Lord will make me a ministering angel, it is all I want." Joseph said, "Sister, you talk very foolishly, you do not know what you will want." He then said to me: "Here, brother Brigham, you seal this lady to me." I sealed her to him. This was my own sister according to the flesh.²

John Taylor

1. I was riding out one day by the old grave yard where I met Joseph. Said he to me, "Elder Taylor stop, look at me." Speaking of the revelation lately given on Celestial Marriage he said, "These things must be entered into or the keys will be turned and the Church of God go on no further." There was nothing previous to that revelation by which men and women could be joined together for eternity. We had a good religion to live by, but it would not do to die by.³
2. I was riding out of Nauvoo when I met Joseph coming in. We met in the old graveyard—if any of you remember the place. And I moved to Brother Joseph and he moved to me, I think we were both on horseback, but of that I am not sure. Said he "Brother Taylor stop" and I stopped. He looked me right in the eye, and spoke with all the solemnity that I ever

¹ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 18:241, June 23, 1874.

² JD 16:166-67.

³ John Taylor, Report of the dedication of the Kaysville Relief Society House, November 12, 1876. *Women's Exponent*, 5 (March 1, 1877), 19: 148.

heard him speak, said he: "Brother Taylor, that principle has got to be complied with forthwith; and if not, the Key will be turned." He had told us before that if this principle was not entered into, the Kingdom could not go one step further. Well now that was a singular kind of a statement to make, Why? We had not made covenants that could reach unto eternity. We were married to our wives only until death did us part. And if we could not enter into covenants that the Gods had entered into in the eternal worlds of what use was religion? We had got, it is true, the first principles of the Gospel—doctrine that were very good to live by, but would not do to die by; or be resurrected by.⁴

3. I remember being with President Young and Kimball and I think one or two others with Brother Joseph soon after we had returned from England. He talked with us on these principles and laid them before us. It tried our minds and feelings. We saw it was something going to be heavy upon us. it was not that very nice pleasing thing some people thought about it. It is something that harried up our feelings. Did we believe it? Yes we did. I did. The whole rest of the brethren did but still we should have been glad to push it off a little further. We [would have] been glad if it did not come in our day but that somebody else had something to do with it instead of us.⁵
4. When this principle was first made known to us by Joseph Smith, it was in Nauvoo, and many of you will remember the place very well. We were assembled in the little office over the brick store, there being present Brs B. Young Heber C Kimball, Orson Hyde & myself. Br Willard Richards may have been present too, but I am not positive. Upon that occasion [sic], Joseph Smith laid before us the whole principle pertaining to that doctrine, and we believed it. Having done this, Joseph felt, as he said, that he had got a big burden rolled off his shoulders. He felt the responsibility of that matter resting heavily upon him. Notwithstanding, however, that we received the principle & believed it, yet we were in no great hurry to enter into it.⁶

Wilford Woodruff

1. Joseph Smith of course taught that principle while in Nauvoo, and he not only taught it, but practiced it too... He taught it to the twelve apostles and to some other individuals. I mean to some other individuals who were not members of the quorum of twelve... I heard him teach it, - he taught it to the quorum of twelve apostles, and he taught it to other individuals as they bear testimony. I know he taught it to us... he taught me and others... In his addresses to the quorum of twelve apostles, when he visited us, he would teach that... We were with him, - I don't know how many months, - but probably as much as six months...

⁴ John Taylor, Minutes of a Meeting of the First Presidency, Twelve Apostles, and Presidents of Stakes, held at President John Taylor's office, October 14, 1882, —in L. John Nuttall Papers, Vault MSS 790, Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, BYU.

⁵ John Taylor, "Sermon in Honor of the Martyrdom," June 27, 1854; Papers of George D. Watt MS 4534, box 2, disk 2, 1854 images 151-52, Sermon not in Journal of Discourses or in CR 100 317, Transcribed by LaJean Purcell Carruth 1 September 2009. Used by permission. Punctuation and capitalization added.

⁶ John Taylor, Minutes of a Meeting of the First Presidency, Twelve Apostles, and Presidents of Stakes, held at President John Taylor's office, October 14, 1882, —in L. John Nuttall Papers, Vault MSS 790, Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, BYU.

it was nearly six months, and he spoke of it frequently... He taught it to us as a principle amongst other things.⁷

Lorenzo Snow

1. In the month of April 1843 I returned from my European Mission. A few days after my arrival at Nauvoo, when at President Joseph Smith's house, he said he wished to have some private talk with me, and requested me to walk out with him; It was toward evening, we walked a little distance and sat down on a large log that lay near the bank of the river; he there and then explained to me the doctrine of plurality of wives. He said that the Lord had revealed it unto him, and commanded him to have women sealed to him as wives, that he foresaw the trouble that would follow, and sought to turn away from the commandment, that an angel from heaven appeared before him with a drawn sword, threatening him with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the commandment.⁸
2. I was a Joseph Smith's one afternoon on a visit, and after conversing upon different subjects he asked me to walk out with him, as he wished to speak to me privately. We went down to the banks of the Mississippi river and sat down on a log that lay there in the sand. Then and there he explained to me the principle of plural marriage most perfectly and clearly; he told me in regard to the angel coming to him and making this principle known to him, and what would follow if he did not practice it.⁹
3. At the interview on the bank of the Mississippi, in which the Prophet Joseph explained the doctrine of Celestial Marriage, I felt very humble and in my simplicity besought him earnestly to correct me and set me right if, at any time, he should see me indulging any principle or practice that might tend to lead astray, into forbidden paths; to which he replied, "Brother Lorenzo, the principles of honesty and integrity are founded without, and you will never be guilty of any serious error or wrong, to lead you from the path of duty. The Lord will open your way to receive and obey the law of Celestial marriage."¹⁰
4. There is one singular feature in it relating to plural marriage. In regard to that doctrine, allow me first to say I have a knowledge of it as a principle, revealed from God, belonging to the religion we have espoused. I was personally acquainted with Joseph Smith, the Prophet, during twelve or fourteen years, by whom I was first taught this doctrine, and knew him to be a man of truth and honor. But then, I am not dependent on his word for my knowledge of plural marriage; the Lord gave me a divine testimony confirming His teachings, which no man can give nor take away.¹¹

⁷ Wilford Woodruff, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), pages 10, 58, questions 62-64, 573-80:

⁸ Lorenzo Snow, Affidavit dated August 28, 1869, MS 3423, CHL; copied into Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books, 2:19.

⁹ Lorenzo Snow, "Discourse," *Millennial Star*, 61 (August 31, 1899) 35: 548.

¹⁰ Eliza R. Snow, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow*. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1884, 70

¹¹ Eliza R. Snow, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow*. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1884, 405.

5. [Joseph Smith] explained to me the principles of plural marriage distinctly and clearly, and told me that the Lord had revealed the principle and had commanded him to enter into that practice. And that he had received a revelation to that effect. He said that he had demurred to doing so as he foresaw the trouble that would ensue, but that an angel of the Lord had appeared before him with a drawn sword commanding him to do so and he could not go backward.¹²

Joseph Smith's Plural Wives

Eliza R. Snow

1. In Nauvoo I first understood that the practice of plurality of wives was to be introduced into the church. The subject was very repugnant to my feelings—so directly was it in opposition to my educated prepossessions, that it seemed as though all the prejudices of my ancestors for generations past congregated around me: But when I reflected that I was living in the Dispensation of the fulness of times, embracing all other Dispensations, surely Plural Marriage must necessarily be included, and I consoled myself with the idea that it was far in the distance, and beyond the period of my mortal existence. It was not long however, after I received the first intimation, before the announcement reach me that the "set time" had come—that God had commanded his servants to establish the order, by taking additional wives—I knew that God... was speaking... As I increased in knowledge concerning the principle and design of Plural Marriage, I grew in love with it ... I was sealed to the Prophet, Joseph Smith, for time and eternity, in accordance with the *Celestial Law of Marriage* which God has revealed—the ceremony being performed by a servant of the Most High—authorized to officiate in sacred ordinances. This, one of the most important circumstances of my life, I have never had cause to regret.¹³
2. Be it remembered that on this Seventh day of June A.D. 1869, personally appeared before me, James Jack, a notary public in and for Said county Eliza Roxcy Snow Smith who was by me Sworn in due form of law and upon her oath Saith, that on the twenty-ninth day of June A.D. 1842, at the City of Nauvoo, county of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by Brigham Young, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of Said Church, according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage, in the presence of Sarah M. Cleaveland.¹⁴

¹² Lorenzo Snow, Testimony in the Temple Lot Case, part 3, page 124, question 258.

¹³ Eliza R. Snow, "Sketch of My Life," in "Utah and Mormons" collection, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley, microfilm copy in CHL, under call number MS 8305, Reel 1, Item 11, page 13. See also Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed., *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow*, Logan, Utah: USU Press, 2000, 16-17.

¹⁴ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:25.

Mary Elizabeth Rollins

1. In January [1842]... Brother Joseph and Brother Brigham came to see me and invited me to go the next day to his office in the Brick Store. I was surprised at this. He asked me if I was afraid to go? I replied, "Why should I be afraid of a Prophet of God?" He said Brother Young would come for me.

That night I dreamed I was married to him and occupied an upper room in a new house. In the morning, we were called to breakfast. And I wondered what Emma would say to me for I was afraid of her, but Joseph took me by the hand and led me down stairs, at the foot of which, stood Emma smiling at us and conducted us to the breakfast room.

I awoke then and did not know what to think of my dream. But on going to the office [the] next day, I received the interpretation for what to my astonishment, when Joseph made known to me that God had commanded him in July, 1834, to take me for a wife. But he had not dared to make it known to me, for when he received the revelation, I was in Missouri and when he did see me, I was married. But he was again commanded to fulfill the first revelation or suffer condemnation, for I was created for him before the foundation of the earth was laid.

I said if the Lord told you such a thing, why doesn't He come and tell me? Furthermore, I never would consent to be sealed to him, unless I had a witness for myself. He told me a great many thing concerning the order and the blessings pertaining to it etc. I felt that he and I were both wrong for I had dreamed for years that I belonged to him; and had besought the Lord to take away such thoughts from my heart. No human being can tell my feeling on this occasion. My faith in him, as a Prophet about failed me. I could not sleep, and scarcely eat.

Next day, Brother Young came to see me, and said after we left the office, Joseph told him that an angel appeared to him, and told him that the Lord was well pleased with him and that I should have a witness that what he told me was true. I marveled at this, but made it a subject of prayer, night and day. One night in February I felt impressed to pray as Moses did in the battle of Israel with the Amalekites, by holding up my hands towards heaven. I also covered my head with a white cloth and I prayed with all my soul, that if the doctrine was true, to give me a witness of the same.

One night I retired to bed, but not to sleep, for my mind was troubled so sleep fled from me. My Aunt Gilbert was sleeping with me at the time when a great light appeared in the room. Thinking the kindling wood was on fire, that was spread on the hearth, I rose up in bed to look. When lo, a personage stood in front of the bed looking at me. Its clothes were whiter than anything I had ever seen. I could look at its person, but when I saw its face so bright and more beautiful than any earthly being could be, and those eyes piercing me through and through, I could not endure it. It seemed as if I must die with fear. I fell back in bed and covered up my head so as not to see it. I pushed Aunt very hard to have her look up and see it too. But I could not wake her and I could not speak. I thought if she were awake, I would not feel so afraid. As it is, I can never forget that face. It seems to be ever before me.

A few days after this Joseph asked me if I had received a witness yet. I said no. He said you soon will have, for the angel expressly told me you should have. Then I told him what I had seen, for I fully realized what I had lost by my cowardice. The family all said they knew something had happened to me, for my countenance was almost transparent. And when I told them of it, there was great rejoicing and they felt that I had been highly favored of the Lord. As yet they knew nothing of what Joseph had said to me.

When Joseph had enquired about the appearance of the person, and I had told him, he seemed much affected and told me that it was an angel from God and that it came for aught with more knowledge and revelation, than he dare reveal at that time. And that if I had prayed in my heart to God, all fear would have left me. As it was, Satan snatched the cup from my lips. He told me of many things to take place soon in my life. As a sign of the truth of what he had revealed to me, his words were verified to the letter.

After receiving other testimonies, I felt I could no longer disbelieve and in the month of March, [1842], Brigham Young sealed us for time and all eternity. Willard Richards and Heber C. Kimball knew of it, but were not present on the 23rd of March.¹⁵

2. When Joseph sent for me he told me all of these things. "Well," said I, "don't you think it was an angel of the devil that told you these things?" Said he, "No, it was an angel of God. God Almighty showed me the difference between an angel of light and Satan's angels. The angel came to me three times between the years of 1834 and 1842 and said I was to obey that principle or he would slay me. But," said he, "they called me a false and fallen prophet but I am more in favor with my God this day than I ever was in all my life before. I know that I shall be saved in the Kingdom of God. I have the oath of God upon it and God cannot lie; all that he gives me I shall take with me for I have that authority and that power conferred upon me."

Well, I talked with him for a long time and finally I told him I would never be sealed to him until I had a witness. Said he, "You shall have a witness." Said I, "If God told you that, why does he not tell me?" He asked me if I was going to be a traitor. "I have never told a mortal and shall never tell a mortal I had such a talk from a married man," said I. "Well," said he, "pray earnestly for the angel said to me you should have a witness." Well, Brigham Young was with me. He said if I had a witness he wanted to know it. "Why should I tell you?" said I. "Well," said he, "I want to know for myself." Said he, "Do you know what Joseph said? Since we left the office the angel appeared to him and told him he was well pleased with him and that you should have a witness."

I made it a subject of prayer and I worried about it because I did not dare to speak to a living being except Brigham Young. I went out and got between three haystacks where no one could see me. As I knelt down I thought, why not pray as Moses did? He prayed with his hands raised. When his hands were raised, Israel was victorious, but when they were not

¹⁵ Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins," copy of holograph in Susa Young Gates Papers, USHS box 14, fd 4. A major portion of this holograph has been published as *The Life and Testimony of Mary Lightner*, n.p., n.d., but the section quoted above was edited out and would have been included on page 24.

raised, the Philistines were victorious. I lifted my hands and I have heard Joseph say the angels covered their faces. I knelt down and if ever a poor mortal prayed, I did. A few nights after that an angel of the Lord came to me and if ever a thrill went through a mortal, it went through me. I gazed upon the clothes and figure but the eyes were like lightning. They pierced me from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. I was frightened almost to death for a moment. I tried to waken my aunt, but I could not. The angel leaned over me and the light was very great, although it was night. When my aunt woke up she said she had seen a figure in white robes pass from our bed to my mother's bed and pass out of the window.

Joseph came up the next Sabbath. He said, "Have you had a witness yet?" "No." "Well," said he, "the angel expressly told me you should have." Said I, "I have not had a witness, but I have seen something I have never seen before. I saw an angel and I was frightened almost to death. I did not speak." He studied a while and put his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands. He looked up and said, "How could you have been such a coward?" Said I, "I was weak." "Did you think to say, 'Father, help me?'" "No." "Well, if you had just said that, your mouth would have been opened for that was an angel of the living God. He came to you with more knowledge, intelligence, and light than I have ever dared to reveal." I said, "If that was an angel of light, why did he not speak to me?" "You covered your face and for this reason the angel was insulted." Said I, "Will it ever come again?" He thought a moment and then said, "No, not the same one, but if you are faithful you shall see greater things than that."¹⁶

[Regarding children born to Joseph Smith's plural wives]

3. I know he [Joseph Smith] had three children. They told me. I think two are living today but they are not known as his children as they go by other names.¹⁷
4. I don't know about his having children, but I heard of three that he was the father of.¹⁸

Emily D. Partridge

1. The first intimation I had from Brother Joseph that there was a pure and holy order of plural marriage, was in the spring of 1842, but I was not married until 1843. I was married to him on the eleventh of May, 1843, by Elder James Adams. Emma was present. She gave her free and full consent. She had always up to this time been very kind to me and my sister Eliza, who was also married to the Prophet Joseph with Emma's consent.¹⁹
2. He [Joseph Smith] taught it to me with his own lips... in Nauvoo... I was living at his house at the time, and had been living there for quite a while after my father's death, for he

¹⁶ Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, "Remarks" at Brigham Young University, April 14. 1905, vault MSS 363, fd 6, Harold B. Lee Library, Special Collections, 2.

¹⁷ Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, "Remarks" at Brigham Young University, April 14. 1905, vault MSS 363, fd 6, Harold B. Lee Library, Special Collections.

¹⁸ J. D. Stead, *Doctrines and Dogmas of Brighamism Exposed*, Lamoni, Iowa: RLDS Church, 1911, 218.

¹⁹ Emily D. Partridge, "A Living Testimony," *Millennial Star*, 47 (September 7, 1885) 570-71.

died there in Nauvoo... He came into the room where I was one day, when I was in the room alone, and asked me if I could keep a secret. I was about eighteen years of age then I think, - at any rate, I was quite young. He asked me if I could keep a secret, and I told him I thought I could, and then he told me that he would sometime, if he had an opportunity, - he would tell me something that would be for my benefit, if I would not betray him, and I told him I wouldn't. Well it run along for a good while, - I don't know just how long, and there was no opportunity of saying anything to me more than he had, and one day he sat in the room alone, and I passed through it and he called to me or spoke to me, and called me to him, and then he said that he had intended to tell me something, but he had no opportunity to do so, and so he would write me a letter, if I would agree to burn it as soon as I read it, and with that I looked frightened, for I thought there was something about it that was not just right, and so I told him that I would rather that he would not write to me, - that he would not write me any letter, and then he asked me if I wanted him to say any more, and I said yes, that I did not want to hear anything more about it at all, for I had got a little frightened about it.

Well it went in that condition and there was not anything more said about it for several months, not until 1843 I think, - some time in '43, for he had no other opportunity until then and I did not think he would ever say anything more about it until then, but I had thought a great deal about it in that time, and I had prayed for it to know what it was, and if it was my duty. I thought I ought to have listened to it, that is, to what he was going to tell me or write to me, for I was greatly troubled over it, as I feared I had done wrong in not listening to it, - and so I prayed to be enlightened in regard to what I should have done. Well, in time I became convinced that there was nothing wrong about it, and that it would be right for me to hear what he had to say, but there was nothing more said for a good while after I came to that conclusion. I think it was months before there was anything more said about it, but I don't know just how long it was. But he spoke to me again and wanted an opportunity to speak to me and I granted it...

He told me then what he wanted to say to me, and he taught me this principle of plural marriage called polygamy now, but we called it celestial marriage, and he told me that this principle had been revealed to him but it was not generally known; and he went on and said that the Lord had given me to him, and he wanted to know if I would consent to a marriage, and I consented ... I was married to him on the 4th day of March, 1843.²⁰

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

²⁰ Emily D. P. Young, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), pages 318-52, questions 18-24.

Kimball, one of the Twelve Apostles of Said Church, according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage.²¹

4. Q. “Did Joseph Smith, the Prophet claim to have a revelation on polygamy, or plural marriage?”... A. It is a positive fact that he did so claim, and teach, and also practice. I am a living witness of the same. With me it is neither guess work on or hearsay. I had it from his own mouth. To us, it was the word of the Lord. I accepted the pure and sacred principle, and was married, or sealed, to him, as his wife, for time and all eternity. In Nauvoo, 1843, I know, positively, that he had other wives. I have witnessed his performing the ceremony of plural marriage for others.²²

Eliza Partridge

1. After a time my sister Emily and myself went to live in the family of the Prophet Joseph Smith. We lived there about three years. While there he taught to us the plan of Celestial marriage and asked us to enter into that order with him. This was truly a great trial for me, but I had the most implicit confidence in him as a Prophet of the Lord and not but believe his word and as a matter of course accept of the privilege of being sealed to him as a wife for time and all eternity. We were sealed in 1843 by Heber C. Kimball in presence of witnesses. I continue to live in his family for a length of time after this.²³
2. Be it remembered that on this first day of July A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me, Edward Partridge, Probate Judge, in and for Said county, Eliza Maria (Partridge) Lyman who was by me Sworn in due form of law and upon her oath Saith, that on the eighth day of March A.D. 1843 at the City of Nauvoo County of Hancock State of Illinois She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by Heber C. Kimball, one of the Twelve Apostles in Said Church, according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage; in the presence of Orson Hyde.²⁴
3. Be it remembered that on this first day of July A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me, Edward Partridge, Probate Judge, in and for Said county, Eliza Maria (Partridge) Lyman, who was by me Sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath Saith, that Sometime in the year 1843 in the City of Nauvoo County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was witness to the marriage or Sealing of Lucy Walker to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by William Clayton, a high-Priest in Said Church, according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage.²⁵

²¹ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:11.

²² Emily D. P. Young to W. Collins, January 27, 1899, copy of holograph in possession of the author.

²³ Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, “Life and Journal of Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman,” n.p., n.d. [1877?], not paginated but covers pages 7-8 in the holograph, CHL, typescript MS 9546, holograph MS 1527.

²⁴ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 2: 32.

²⁵ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 2: 30.

Helen Mar Kimball

1. It was not till the summer [of 1842]... that I [Helen] learned of the existence of the plural order of marriage... My father [Heber C. Kimball] was the first to introduce it to me... he took the first opportunity to introduce Sarah Ann [Whitney] to me as Joseph's wife [married July 27, 1842]. This astonished me beyond measure; but I could then understand a few things which had previously been to me a puzzle, and among the rest, the meaning of his words at her party. I saw, or could imagine in some degree, the great trial that she must have passed through and that it had required a mighty struggle to take a step of that kind and had called for a sacrifice such as few can realize but those who first rendered obedience to this law.²⁶
2. He [Helen's father, Heber C. Kimball] taught me the principle of Celestial marriage and having a great desire to be connected with the Prophet, Joseph, he offered me to him; this I afterwards learned from the Prophet's own mouth. My father had but one Ewe Lamb, but willingly laid her upon the alter: How cruel this seemed to the mother whose heartstrings were already stretched until they were ready to snap asunder, for he had taken [a plural] wife and she thought she had made sufficient sacrifice, but the Lord required more. I will pass over the temptations which I had during the twenty four hours after my father introduced to me this principle and asked me if I would be sealed to Joseph, who came next morning and with my parent, I heard him teach and explain the principle of celestial marriage. After which he said to me, "If you will take this step, it will ensure your eternal salvation and exaltation and that of your father's household and all of your kindred." This promise was so great that I willingly gave myself to purchase so glorious a reward. None but God and his angels could see my mother's bleeding heart, when Joseph asked her if she was willing, she replied, "If Helen is willing I have nothing more to say." She had witnessed the suffering of others, who were older and who better understood the step they were taking, and to see her child, who had scarcely seen her fifteenth summer, following in the same thorny path, in her mind she saw the misery which was as sure to come as the sun was to rise and set; but it was all hidden from me... I am thankful that He [Heavenly Father] has brought me through the furnace of affliction and that He has condescended to show me that the promises made to me the morning that I was sealed to the Prophet of God will not fail and I would not have the chain broken for I have had a view of the principle of eternal salvation and the perfect union which this sealing power will bring to the human family and with the help of our Heavenly Father I am determined to so live that I can claim those promises.²⁷
3. My father taught it me, the first time that I ever heard of it, as a saving pure and holy principle. I afterwards at in my father's house with him & my mother listened to the Prophet teach it. I believed that it was right but did not know it until a few years after I passed

²⁶ Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, "Scenes in Nauvoo After the Martyrdom of the Prophet and Patriarch," *Woman's Exponent* 11 (March 1, 1883) 146

²⁷ Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, "Autobiography, 30 March 1881," MS 744, CHL. Typescript and copy of holograph reproduced in Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, eds., *A Woman's View: Helen Mar Whitney's Reminiscences of Early Church History*, Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1997, 482-87.

through the most intense suffering. It is true that my body was prostrated by sickness, but my spirit & my understanding was quickened & I was shown the workings of the Devil & his Agents or his Angels. I was overwhelmed by the power of darkness & really believed for a time that Satan had possession of me I suffered what I am confident that those will suffer who have once received the light of this Gospel & then rejected it. I saw what I had lost & that I by my own misdeeds my disobedience & murmuring against the <Providence> principles, of this gospel with <the more per[?]> the principle of Celestial marriage. I knew that it was from God... The vision of my mind was open to see & understand the will & design of the Almighty [*sic*]. I had a view of the order of plural marriage. The beauty & the glory which I saw in it was enough to make up for the trials in this life.²⁸

4. With all the false traditions in which we were born, and in consequence of the degenerate tide with which the human family has been drifting for generations past, and as the Lord had no organized priesthood on the earth, it is not to be wondered at that in our ignorance of His ways the feelings of our natures should rebel against the doctrine of a plurality of wives.

I remember how I felt, but which would be a difficult matter to describe--the various thoughts, fears and temptations that flashed through my mind when the principle was first introduced to me by my father [Heber C. Kimball], who one morning in the summer of 1843, without any preliminaries, asked me if I would believe him if he told me that it was right for married men to take other wives, can be better imagined than told. But suffice it to say the first impulse was anger, for I thought he had only said it to test my virtue... My sensibilities were painfully touched. I felt such a sense of personal injury and displeasure for to mention such a thing to me I thought altogether unworthy of my father, and as quick as he spoke, I replied to him, short and emphatically, "No, I wouldn't!" I had always been taught to believe it a heinous crime, improper and unnatural, and I indignantly resented it.

This was the first time that I ever openly manifested anger towards him, but I was somewhat surprised at his countenance, as he seemed rather pleased than otherwise. Then he commenced talking seriously, and reasoned and explained the principle, and why it was again to be established upon the earth, etc., but did not tell me then that anyone had yet practiced it, but left me to reflect upon it for the next twenty-four hours, during which time I was filled with various and conflicting ideas. I was skeptical--one minute believed, then doubted. I thought of the love and tenderness that he felt for his only daughter, and I knew that he would not cast her off, and this was the only convincing proof that I had of its being right. I knew that he loved me too well to teach me anything that was not strictly pure, virtuous and exalting in its tendencies; and no one else could have influenced me at that time or brought me to accept of a doctrine so utterly repugnant and so contrary to all of our former ideas and traditions. This was just previous to his starting upon his last mission but one to the eastern states. Fearing that I might hear it from a wrong source, knowing, as he did, that there were those who would run before they were sent, and some would not

²⁸ Helen [Mar Kimball Whitney], to Mary Bond, n.d., Biographical Folder Collection, P21, f11 [Myron H. Bond], item 22, 23, 24, Community of Christ Archives, pp. 3-4.

hesitate to deceive and betray him and the brethren, he thought it best that I should hear it from his own lips.

The next day the Prophet called at our house, and I sat with my father and mother and heard him teach the principle and explain it more fully, and I believed it, but I had no proofs, only his and my father's testimony. I thought that sufficient, and did not deem it necessary to seek for any further, but had I been differently situated like many were without a father and a mother to love and counsel me, probably my dependence, like theirs, would have been on the Lord, but I leaned not upon His arm.

My father was my teacher and revelator, and I saw no necessity then for further testimony; but in after years the Lord, in His far-seeing and infinite mercy, suffered me to pass through the rough waves of experience and in sorrow and affliction, I learned that most important lesson, that in Him alone must I trust, and not in weak and sinful man; and that it was absolutely necessary for each one to obtain a living witness and testimony for him or herself, and not for another, to the truth of this latter-day work, to be able to stand, and that like Saul, we "must suffer for His name's sake." Then I learned that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," and that "He is nigh unto all those that call upon Him in truth, and healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds."²⁹

Lucy Walker

1. When the Prophet Joseph Smith first mentioned the principle of plural marriage to me I felt indignant and so expressed myself to him, because my feelings and education were averse to anything the nature. But he assured me that this doctrine had been revealed to him of the Lord, and that I was entitled to receive a testimony of its divine origin for myself. He counselled me to pray to the Lord, which I did, and thereupon received from him a powerful and irresistible testimony of the truthfulness and divinity of plural marriage, which testimony has abided with me ever since.³⁰
2. Be it remembered that on this ninth day of August A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack, a Notary Public in and for Said County, Lucy W. Kimball who was by me sworn in due form of law, and on her oath saith, that on the first day of May A.D. 1843, in the City of Nauvoo County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed for time and all eternity to the Prophet Joseph Smith, by William Clayton, a High Priest in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints; in the presence of Eliza Maria Partridge.³¹
3. I went to live with Joseph Smith's family as a maid and after I had grown up, Joseph asked me if I would marry him. I felt highly insulted and he said that if I wanted to know whether

²⁹ Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, "Scenes in Nauvoo," *Woman's Exponent*, Vol. 11, no. 5, (August 1, 1882), p.39

³⁰ Lucy Walker, Affidavit dated December 17, 1902, MS 3423, CHL; *Journal History*, May 1, 1843; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1905) 68-69; Joseph F. Smith affidavit books, 1:66; 4:68. This affidavit contains the exact same wording as a second affidavit dated October 24, 1902 entitled: "Oath of Lucy Walker Smith: Wife of Joseph Smith, Jr.," photocopy in possession of the author.

³¹ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:68.

the principle was true, I could go to God and find out. One night after supper I went out into the orchard and I kneeled down and prayed to God for information. After praying I arose and walked around the orchard and kneeled again and repeated this during the night. Finally as I was praying the last time, an angel of the Lord appeared to me and told me that the principle was of God and for me to accept it.³²

4. When the Prophet Joseph Smith first mentioned the principles of plural marriage to me I became very indignant, and told him emphatically that I did not wish him ever to mention it to me again, as my feelings and education revolted against any thing of such a nature. He counseled me, however, to pray to the Lord for light and understanding in relation thereto, and promised me if I would do so sincerely, I should receive a testimony of the correctness of the principle. At length I concluded to follow this advice and the consequence was that the Prophet's promise unto me was fulfilled to the very letter. Before praying I felt gloomy and downcast; in fact, I was so entirely given up to despair that I felt tired of life; but after I had poured out my heart's contents before God, I at once became calm and composed; a feeling of happiness took possession of me, and at the same time I received a powerful and irresistible testimony of the truth of plural marriage, which testimony has abided with me every since. Shortly afterwards I consented to become the Prophet's wife, and was married to him May 1, 1843, Elder William Clayton officiating. I am also able to testify that Emma Smith, the Prophet's first wife, gave her consent to the marriage of at least four other girls to her husband, and that she was well aware that he associated with them as wives within the meaning of all that word implies.³³
5. In the year 1842, President Joseph Smith sought an interview with me, and said: "I have a message for you. I have been commanded of God to take another wife, and you are the woman." My astonishment knew no bounds. This announcement was indeed a thunderbolt to me. He asked me if I believed him to be a prophet of God. "Most assuredly I do," I replied. He fully explained to me the principle of plural or celestial marriage. He said this principle was again to be restored for the benefit of the human family, that it would prove an everlasting blessing to my father's house, and form a chain that could never be broken, worlds without end. "What have you to say?" he asked. "Nothing." How could I speak, or what could I say? He said, "If you will pray sincerely for light and understanding in relation thereto, you shall receive a testimony of the correctness of this principle. I thought I prayed sincerely, but was so unwilling to consider the matter favorably that I fear I did not ask in faith for light. Gross darkness instead of light took possession of my mind. I was tempted and tortured beyond endurance until life was not desirable. Oh that the grave would kindly receive me, that I might find rest on the bosom of my dear mother. Why should I be chosen from among thy daughters, Father, I am only a child in years and experience, no mother to counsel [she died in January, 1842]; no father near to tell me what to do in this trying hour [he was on a mission to a warmer climate to help his health]. Oh, let this bitter cup pass. And thus I prayed in the agony of my soul.

³² Untitled typed sheet "The following was given by Judge D. H. Morris of St. George, Utah..." copy in Vesta P. Crawford Collection, Marriott Library, University of Utah, MS 125, bx 1, fd 5.

³³ Andrew Jenson, "Plural Marriage," *Historical Record* 6 (July 1887): 229-30.

The Prophet discerned my sorrow. He saw how unhappy I was, and sought an opportunity of again speaking to me on this subject, and said: "Although I cannot, under existing circumstances, acknowledge you as my wife, the time is near when we will go beyond the Rocky Mountains and then you will be acknowledged and honored as my wife."³⁴ He also said, "This principle will yet be believed in and practiced by the righteous. I have no flattering words to offer. It is a command of God to you. I will give you until tomorrow to decide this matter. If you reject this message the gate will be closed forever against you."

This aroused every drop of Scotch in my veins. For a few moments I stood fearless before him, and looked him in the eye. I felt at this moment that I was called to place myself upon the altar a living sacrifice--perhaps to brook the world in disgrace and incur the displeasure and contempt of my youthful companions; all my dreams of happiness blown to the four winds. This was too much, for as yet no shadow had crossed my path, aside from the death of my dear mother. The future to me had been one bright, cloudless day. I had been speechless, but at last found utterance and said: "Although you are a prophet of God you could not induce me to take a step of so great importance, unless I knew that God approved my course. I would rather die. I have tried to pray but received no comfort, no light," and emphatically forbid him speaking again to me on this subject. Every feeling of my soul revolted against it. Said I, "The same God who has sent this message is the Being I have worshipped from my early childhood and He must manifest His will to me." He walked across the room, returned and stood before me with the most beautiful expression of countenance, and said: "God Almighty bless you. You shall have a manifestation of the will of God concerning you; a testimony that you can never deny. I will tell you what it shall be. It shall be that joy and peace that you never knew."

Oh, how earnestly I prayed for these words to be fulfilled. It was near dawn after another sleepless night when my room was lighted up by a heavenly influence. To me it was, in comparison, like the brilliant sun bursting through the darkest cloud. The words of the Prophet were indeed fulfilled. My soul was filled with a calm, sweet peace that "I never knew." Supreme happiness took possession of me, and I received a powerful and irresistible testimony of the truth of plural marriage, which has been like an anchor to the soul through all the trials of life. I felt that I must go out into the morning air and give vent to the joy and gratitude that filled my soul. As I descended the stairs, President Smith opened the door below, took me by the hand and said: "Thank God, you have the testimony. I too have prayed." He led me to a chair, placed his hands upon my head, and blessed me with every blessing my heart could possibly desire. The first day of May, 1843, I consented to become the Prophet's wife, and was sealed to him for time and all eternity, at his own house by Elder William Clayton.³⁵

³⁴ Lucy testified in 1892: "Under the circumstances we could not go by his name there... [He said eventually] we could be acknowledged as his wives...President Smith himself said that day would come... he proclaimed repeatedly that we would go beyond the mountains." (deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), page 467, questions 432, 435, 437, 446.)

³⁵ Lyman Omer Littlefield, *Reminiscences of Latter-day Saints: Giving an Account of Much Individual Suffering Endured for Religious Conscience*, Logan, Utah: Utah Journal Co, 1888, 46-48; see also testimony in Andrew Jenson, "Plural Marriage," *Historical Record* 6 (July 1887): 229-30.

Martha McBride

1. Be it remembered that on this eighth day of July A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me, Edward Partridge, Probate Judge, in and for Said county, Martha McBride Kimball who was by me Sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath Saith, that sometime in the Summer of the year 1842 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by Heber C. Kimball, one of the Twelve Apostles in Said Church, according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage.³⁶

Zina Huntington

1. Zina D. Young told of Bro. Joseph's remark in relation to the revelation on celestial marriage. How an angel came to his with a drawn sword, and said if he did not obey this law he would lose his priesthood; and in the keeping of it he, Joseph, did not know but it would cost him his life.³⁷
2. Be it remembered that on this first day of May A.D. eighteen sixty nine before me Elias Smith Probate Judge for Said County personally appeared, Zina Diantha Huntington ^Young^ who was by me Sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath Saith, that on the twenty-Seventh day of October A.D. 1841, at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by Dimick B. Huntington, a High Priest in Said Church, according to the laws of the same; regulating marriage; In the presence of Fanny Maria Huntington.³⁸
3. Q. You claim to have married Joseph Smith?
A. No, I do not claim any such thing; he married me. The Lord told him to take me and he did so.
Q. I believe you claim your brother officiated at the marriage?
A. He did...
Q. Can you give us the date of that marriage with Joseph Smith?...
A. No I do not remember. It was something too sacred to be talked about; it was more to me than life or death. I never breathed it for years. I will tell you the facts. I had dreams. I am no dreamer – but I had dreams that I could not account for. I know this is the work of the Lord; it was revealed to me, even when young. Things were presented to my mind that I could not account for. When Joseph Smith revealed this order, I knew what it meant; the Lord was preparing my mind to receive it...
Q. Did you hear the question of plural marriage discussed either privately or publicly, prior to your having been sealed to Joseph Smith?
A. No. We hardly dared speak of it. The very walls had ears. We spoke of it only in whispers.
Q. How, then, could you have been sealed to Joseph Smith without first having heard the doctrine of plural marriage?
A. Joseph Smith sent my brother Dimick to explain it to me.
Q. It is a fact, then, that you were never taught it by Joseph Smith himself?
A. My brother Dimick told me what Joseph had told him. I knew it was from the Lord, and I received it. Joseph did not come until afterward.

³⁶ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 2:36.

³⁷ Zina Huntington, quoted in "The Prophet's Birthday," *Deseret News* (January 12, 1881): 2.

³⁸ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:5.

Q. You mean by that, then, that after your brother Dimick had returned to Joseph and given him the information that you had accepted such teaching, that Joseph then came to you, prior to having been sealed, and taught you the doctrine of plural marriage?

A. I told you that the Lord had revealed to Joseph Smith that he was to marry me. I received it from Joseph through my brother Dimick.

Q. Who was present at the time that Joseph taught you the doctrine of sealing, besides, yourself and Joseph?

A. My brother Dimick.³⁹

Presendia Huntington

1. I was married to Norman Buell Jan 6th 1827. both joined the Church in in [sic] Kirtland Geauga Co Ohio he left the church in Mo in 1839 the Lord gave me strength to stand alone & keep the faith amid heavy persecution in 1841 I entered into the new & everlasting Covenant was sealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet & Seer & to the best of my ability I have honored Plural Marriage never speking one word against the principal.⁴⁰
2. Sister Presendia... became more familiarly associated with the Prophet and his teachings... Joseph himself taught the principle of plural marriage to Sister Presendia, and her heart was humble, and her mind open to receive the revelations of heaven. She knew Joseph to be a man of God, and she had received many manifestations in proof of this, and consequently when he explained to her clearly the knowledge which he had obtained from the Lord, she accepted the sealing ordinances with Joseph as a sacred and holy confirmation.⁴¹
3. Be it remembered that on this first day of May A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me Elias Smith Probate Judge for Said County Presenda Lathrop Huntington ^Kimball^ who was by me Sworn in due form of law and upon her oath saith, that on the eleventh day of December A.D. 1841, at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints by Dimick B. Huntington, a High-Priest in Said Church, according to the laws of the Same regulating Marriage; in the presence of Fanny Maria Huntington.⁴²

Sarah Ann Whitney

1. Be it remembered that on this nineteenth day of June A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me Elias Smith Probate Judge for said County, Sarah Ann Kimball, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath Saith, that on the twenty-seventh day of July A.D. 1842 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints, by

³⁹ John Wight, "Evidence from Zina D. Huntington Young," Interview with Zina, October 1, 1898, *Saints Herald* 52 (Januray 11, 1905): 29; see also in Martha Sonntag Bradley and Mary Brown Firmage Woodward, *Four Zinas: A Story of Mothers and Daughters on the Mormon Frontier*, Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000, 114.

⁴⁰ Presendia Huntington Kimball, "Biographical Sketch," 1881, MS 742, CHL, first copy page 2 and variant copy page 2.

⁴¹ "A Venerable Woman, Presendia Lathrop Kimball," *Woman's Exponent*, 11 (April 1, 1883) 21: 163.

⁴² Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:7.

Newel K. Whitney, Presiding Bishop of Said Church, according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage; in the presence of Elizabeth Ann Whitney, her mother.⁴³

Almera Johnson

1. That in the years 1842 and 1843, I resided most of the time at Macedonia, in the County of Hancock, State of Illinois, sometimes with my sister who was the wife of Almon W. Babbitt, and sometimes with my brother Benjamin F. Johnson. During that time the Prophet Joseph Smith taught me the principle of Celestial Marriage including plurality of wives and asked me to become his wife. He first spoke to me on this subject at the house of my brother Benjamin F. I also lived a portion of the time at Brother Joseph Smith's in Nauvoo, when many conversations passed between him and myself on this subject. On a certain occasion in the spring of the year 1843, the exact date \of/ which I do not now recollect, I went from Macedonia to Nauvoo to visit another of my sisters, the one who was the widow of Lyman R. Sherman, deceased, at which time I was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. At the time this took place Hyrum Smith, Joseph's brother, came to me and said, I need not be afraid. I had been fearing and doubting about the principle and so had he, but he now knew it was true. After this time I lived with the Prophet Joseph Smith as his wife, and he visited me at the home of my brother Benjamin F. at Macedonia. Deponent further says that I had many conversations with Eliza [Louisa] Beaman who was also a wife of Joseph Smith, and who was present when I was sealed to him, on the subject of plurality of wives, both before and after the performance of that ceremony.⁴⁴

Elvira A. Cowles

1. Be it remembered that on this twenty-eighth day of August, A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack, a Notary Public in and for Said county Elvira A. C. Holmes who was by me sworn in due form of law and upon her oath saith that on the first day of June A.D. 1843 at Heber C. Kimball's house, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed for time and all eternity to President Joseph Smith, by Elder Heber C. Kimball, in the presence of Vilate Kimball and Eliza Mariah (Partridge) Smith.⁴⁵

Patty Bartlett

1. I was sealed to Joseph Smith by Willard Richards March 9 1842 in Newel K Whitney's chamber Nauvoo for \time and all eternity/ Eternity ~~and I~~ and if I do not live to attend to it myself when there is a place prepared I want some one to attend to it for me according to

⁴³ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:36.

⁴⁴ Almera W. Johnson, affidavit dated August 1, 1883, digital holograph, MS 3423, CHL; typescript published in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1905), 70-71.

⁴⁵ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:80.

order Sylvia \my daughter/ was present when I was sealed to Joseph Smith. I was after Mr. Sessions death sealed to John Parry senior for time on the 27 of March 1852 G.S.L. City⁴⁶

2. I Patty Bartlett daughter of Enoch and Anna Bartlett was born February 4th 1795 town of Bethel State of Maine[.] I was Baptised into the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Saints July 2d 1834[. I] was sealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet by Willard Richards March the 9th 1842 in Nauvoo in Newel K Whitneys chamber Sylvia my Daughter was present[.] I received my Endowment in Nauvoo Dec 16 1845 I Never was sealed at the alter to any one. Yours Truly Patty Sessions⁴⁷

Marinda Nancy Johnson

1. On the [blank] day of May A.D. 1843, at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by Brigham Young, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, of Said Church, according to the laws of the same, regulating Marriage; in the presence of Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, and Emily Dow Partridge Young.⁴⁸

Rhoda Richards

1. In my young days I buried my first and only love, and true to that affianced, I have passed companionless through life; but am sure of having my proper place and standing in the resurrection, having been sealed to the prophet Joseph, according to the celestial law, by his own request, under the inspiration of divine revelation.⁴⁹
2. Be it remembered that on this first day of May A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me Elias Smith Probate Judge for Said County, Rhoda Richards ^Smith^ who was by me Sworn in due form of law and upon her oath saith, that on the twelfth day of June A.D. 1843 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by Willard Richards, one of the Twelve Apostles of Said Church, according to the laws of the same, regulating marriage.⁵⁰

Desdemona Fullmer

1. Having been convinced of the truth of polygamy I therefore entered into the order but I dared not make it known not even to my parents for I was forbidden by the Prophet for it would endanger the life of Joseph and also many of the Saints.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Patty Sessions journal, p. after June 16, 1860, Donna Toland Smart, ed., *Mormon Midwife: The 1846-1888 Diaries of Patty Bartlett Sessions*, Logan, Utah: Utah State University, 1997, 276,-77.

⁴⁷ Affidavit of Patty Session, undated, received June, 1867. Brigham Young Collection, CHL. Digitized MS 3423.

⁴⁸ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:15, 4:15, CHL.

⁴⁹ Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom*. New York City: n.p., 1877, 422.

⁵⁰ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:17.

⁵¹ Desdemona Fullmer, Autobiography, [not MS 734 in CHL], quoted in D. Michael Quinn papers – Addition – Uncat WA MS 244, bx 1, Yale University, Special Collections. The exact source of this quotation is unknown.

2. On the [blank] day of July A.D. 1843 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by Brigham Young, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of said Church according to the laws of the Same, regulating marriage, in the presence of Heber C. Kimball.⁵²

Agnes Coolbrith

1. I had a very pleasant visit at Oakland, [California] with Ina [Coolbrith, daughter of Agnes Coolbrith], who received me with much tenderness and affection... From her, I learned many things I was glad to know, one fact was, that her mother bore testimony to the “Boys” [Joseph and Emma Smith’s sons, members of the RLDS Church who visited in 1876] in regard to the faith and teachings of their Father and told them that what they had seen, and heard in Salt Lake was Truth, that those women were their Father's wives, and it was useless to promulgate falsehood to the world, and advised them to desist. They pretended not to believe, but she could plainly see they were stung with the truth of her testimony. David seemed struck dumb, astounded at the living testimony of so many – What could their object [could] be! Alexander said he would *not take any body's word* – not even Aunt Agnes. Jos. [Joseph Smith, III] would not talk on the subject. After they left [they] sent \Ina/ what purported to be the 'History of their Father with their Mother's dying testimony— and desired her to place them in the Library—She wrote them She could not with the knowledge She had—that they were false. (Emphasis in original.)⁵³

Ruth Vose

1. Be it remembered that on this first day of May, A.D. 1869, personally appeared before me, Elias Smith, Probate Judge for Said County, Ruth Vose Sayers who was by me Sworn in due form of law and upon her oath Saith that on [blank] day of February A.D. 1843 at the City of Nauvoo County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by Hyrum Smith, Presiding Patriarch of Said Church, according to the laws of the Same, regulating Marriage.⁵⁴

Malissa Lott

1. He [Joseph Smith] was the one that preached it [plural marriage], and taught it to me.⁵⁵
2. Q. 1 Were you married to my father?
Ans – yes
Q. 2 – When

Church historians have been unable to locate it in the archives. When contacted by Don Bradley on July 14, 2008, Quinn was unable to recall additional details, but was confident of the accuracy of the document.

⁵² Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:32.

⁵³ Lucy Walker Kimball to Joseph F. Smith ("My very dear Nephew"), Santa Rosa, February 24, 1884, in Franklin R. Smith collection, CHL, MS 13700, fd 2.

⁵⁴ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:9.

⁵⁵ Malissa Lott, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), pages 102, question 181.

Ans – I handed him the family Bible in which was recorded by my father at the time of my said marriage & told him he would find it there.

Q. 3– Was you a wife In very deed?

Ans – yes

Q 4 – Why was there no children say in your case?

Ans – Through no falt of either of us. Lack of proper conditions on my part probably or it might of been in the wisdom of the Almighty that we should have none. The Prophet was Martyred 9 mos. After our marriage

Q. 5 – Did you know of any brother or sister of mine by my father?

Ans – I did not know of any.⁵⁶

3. Be it remembered that on this twentieth day of May A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack a notary public of Said county Malissa (Lott) Willes, who was by me Sworn in due form of law and upon her oath Saith that, on the Twentieth day of Septr. A.D. 1842³ at the City of Nauvoo County of Hancock, State of Illinois She was married or sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by Hyrum Smith the Presiding Patriarch of the Said church according to the laws of the same, regulating Marriage; in the presence of Cornelius P. Lott, and Permelia Lott.⁵⁷
4. Q. - Did you read that revelation [discussing plurality of wives] when you were at Nauvoo?...
A. - Yes sir.
Q. - Where did you get it?
A. - I got it from Joseph Smith.
Q. - Now you are sure of that?
A. - I am.
Q. - Was it in print, or was it in manuscript? Just answer that question?
A. - Well it was in writing, - it was in manuscript.⁵⁸

Quorum of the Twelve

George A. Smith

1. [Letter to Joseph Smith III] When I (G.A.S.) returned to Nauvoo from my mission in the fall of 1843, I met Hyrum at the landing. He accompanied me on the way to my home, when he recited most of the revelation of patriarchal marriage, and invited me to his house to receive further instruction. Next day, I called on your father [Joseph Smith Jr.], who expressed his gratitude at the conversion of brother Hyrum, and gave me additional views on the subject, and spoke of the results of the same in the eternal worlds. Your father reasoned on the subjects in this wise. He said the Lord denounced in the Bible every species of crime. He proclaimed against adultery, fornication and divorce, but never against

⁵⁶ This manuscript is in possession of Preston Richard Dehlin. See also Raymond T. Bailey, "Emma Hale: Wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith." M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1952, 100–102.

⁵⁷ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1: 23.

⁵⁸ Malissa Lott, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), page 101, questions 165-69.

plurality of wives; and in all places where his faithful [*sic*] he blessed them for it... And any one who will read carefully the denials, as they are termed, of plurality of wives in connection with the circumstances will see clearly that they denounce adultery, fornication, brutal lust and the teaching of plurality of wives by those who were not commanded to do so; showing clearly that it was understood that such commandment would be given to others.⁵⁹

2. “At one of the first interviews thereafter [returning from his mission to England] with him [Joseph Smith] I was greatly astonished at hearing from his lips that doctrine of Patriarchal marriage, which he continued to preach to me from time to time. My last conversation with him on this subject occurred just previous to my departure from Nauvoo (May 9, 1844) in company with Elder Wilford Woodruff, to attend Conference in Michigan... He testified to me and to my father that the Lord had given him the keys of this sealing ordinance, and that he felt as liberal to others as he did to himself.”⁶⁰
3. [In Nauvoo] the Prophet goes up on the stand, and, after preaching about everything else he could think of in the world, at last hints at the idea of the law of redemption, makes a bare hint at the law of sealing, and it produced such a tremendous excitement that, as soon as he had got his dinner half eaten, he had to go back to the stand, and unpreach all that he had preached, and left the people to guess at the matter.⁶¹

Orson Hyde

1. I, Orson Hyde, do hereby certify and declare according to my best recollection, that on the fourth day of September, I was married to Miss Marinda N. Johnson, in Kirtland Ohio, in the year of our Lord 1834. And in the month of February or March (1843) I was married to Miss Martha R. Browitt, by Joseph Smith the Martyred Prophet and by him She was Sealed to me for all eternity, in Nauvoo Illinois; and in the month of April of the same year, 1843, I was married by the Same person to Mss. Mary Ann Price, and by him She was Sealed to me for time and for all eternity, in Nauvoo Illinois while the woman to whom I was first married was yet living and gave her cordial consent to both transactions, and was personally present to witness the ceremonies.⁶²

⁵⁹ George A. Smith to Joseph Smith III, October 9, 1869, “Journal History” for date; Richard E. Turley, Jr. Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Provo, Utah: BYU Press, vol. 2, DVD # 5.

⁶⁰ George A. Smith to Joseph Smith III, October 9, 1869, “Journal History” for date; Richard E. Turley, Jr. Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Provo, Utah: BYU Press, vol. 2, DVD # 5.

⁶¹ George A. Smith, March 18, 1855, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:217.

⁶² Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 2:45.

Witnesses of the July 12, 1843 Revelation (Section 132)

Joseph Smith

1. Received a Revelation in the office in presence of Hyrum [Smith]. & Wm Clayton.⁶³
2. Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded . . . And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God . . . And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood--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 for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else. (D&C 132:37, 52, and 61)

William Clayton

1. [July 12, 1843. Wednesday.] This A.M. I wrote a Revelation consisting of 10 pages on the order of the priesthood, showing the designs in Moses, Abraham, David and Solomon having many wives and concubines &c. After it was wrote Presidents Joseph and Hyrum presented it and read it to E[mma] who said she did not believe a word of it and appeared very rebellious. Joseph told me to Deed all the unincumbered lots to E[mma] and the children. He appears much troubled about E[mma].⁶⁴
2. I did write the Revelation on Celestial marriage given through the Prophet Joseph Smith on the 12th of July 1843. When the Revelation was written there was no one present except the Prophet Joseph, his brother Hyrum and myself. It was written in the small office upstairs in the rear of the brick store which stood on the banks of the Mississippi river. It took some three hours to write it. Joseph dictated sentence by sentence and I wrote it as he dictated. After the whole was written Joseph requested me to read it slowly and carefully, which I did, and he then pronounced it correct.⁶⁵
3. On the morning of the 12th of July, 1843, Joseph and Hyrum Smith came into the office, in the upper story of the brick store, on the bank of the Mississippi River. They were talking on the subject of plural marriage. Hyrum said to Joseph, "if you will write the revelation on Celestial marriage, I will take and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its

⁶³ Joseph Smith's journal for July 12, 1843, CHL.

⁶⁴ George D. Smith, ed. *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995, 110.

⁶⁵ William Clayton letter to Madison M. Scott, November 11, 1871, CHL, MS 3423 folder 1, images 28a, 28b, 29a, 29b; emphasis in original.

truth, and you will hereafter have peace.” Joseph smiled, and remarked, “you do not know Emma as well as I do.” Hyrum repeated his opinion and further remarked, “the doctrine is so plain, I can convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth, purity and heavenly origin,” or words to their effect. Joseph then said, “well, I will write the revelation, and we will see.” He then requested me to get paper and prepare to write. Hyrum very urgently requested Joseph to write the revelation by means of the Urim and Thummim, but Joseph, in reply, said he did not need to, for he knew the revelation perfectly from beginning to end.

Joseph and Hyrum then sat down, and Joseph commenced to dictate the Revelation on Celestial marriage, and I wrote it, sentence by sentence as he dictated. After the whole was written, Joseph asked me to read it through, slowly and carefully, which I did, and he pronounced it correct. He then remarked that there was much more that he could write, on the same subject, but what was written was sufficient for the present.⁶⁶

4. Hyrum then took the revelation to read to Emma. Joseph remained with me in the office until Hyrum returned. When he came back, Joseph asked him how he had succeeded. Hyrum replied that he had never received a more severe talking to in his life, that Emma was very bitter and full of resentment and anger. Joseph quietly remarked, “I told you, you did not know Emma as well as I did.” Joseph then put the Revelation in his pocket and they both left the office.⁶⁷

Joseph C. Kingsbury

1. I will say that Bishop Newel K. Whitney handed me the Revelation... the day [after] it was written or the day following and stating what it was asked me to make a copy of it. I did so, and then read my copy of it to Bishop Whitney, who compared it with the original to which he held in his hand while I read to him. When I had finished reading, Bishop Whitney pronounced the copy correct and Hyrum Smith came into the room at the time to fetch the original. Bishop Whitney handed it to him. I will also state that this copy, as also the original are identically the same as published in the present edition [1876] of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants.⁶⁸
2. Bishop Whitney got the revelation... and presented it to me, - and wanted me to copy it, and so I went into a room by myself, - a divided place, - a place that was divided, I went off in there by myself, and copied it, -that I copied the revelation on plural marriage that he handed me, and just as I got through the copying of it, Hyrum Smith came in and wanted the revelation, - the original revelation was what he wanted. He came in to see how I got along with it - That is Bishop Whitney did, and then he went out and told Hyrum Smith that he would hand him the revelation in a few minutes, for I was not quite through the copying

⁶⁶ Joseph F. Smith reported: “After it was done, Joseph said there that is enough for the present, but I have a great deal more, which would be given hereafter.” (Comments of Joseph F. Smith, at Quarterly conference held March 3-4, 1883, USHS #64904, page 271; CD manuscripts series 11, reel 2.) It does not appear that any additional information was later given. It is was, it was not recorded.

⁶⁷ William Clayton Statement, 1874, Ms 3423, folder 1, images 30-36.

⁶⁸ Joseph C. Kingsbury, Affidavit dated May 22, 1886, MS 3423, CHL. See also Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 2:18; Andrew Jenson, “Plural Marriage,” *Historical Record* 6 (July 1887): 226.

of it. Well, when I got through making the copy, I took the one I had made myself and read it and he took the original and read it at the same time to see if I had made any mistakes, and that it was correct, and when he found that it was all correct he took the one that I had made and went out to the door and handed it to Hyrum Smith who was outside of the door ready to take it.⁶⁹

3. On this Seventh day of March A.D. 1870 personally appeared before me, James Jack, a Notary Public in and for Said County Joseph C. Kingsbury who was by me Sworn in due form of law and upon his oath deposed and Saith, that on or about the Fifteenth day of July A.D. 1843, in the City of Nauvoo, Hancock Co. State of Illinois, he wrote the Revelation on Celestial or plural marriage from the mouth of Bishop Newel K. Whitney as he read from the original, which was in his possession Just previous to its reported destruction by Emma Smith. and that the same, as published in the Deseret News Extra of September fourteenth 1852 is a true copy of the original.⁷⁰
4. Joseph Smith taught me the principle of polygamy. He gave me to understand it with his own mouth that he had married wives more than one. Now in conversation with him, he told me that.⁷¹

David Fullmer, Thomas Grover, Aaron Johnson and James Allred

1. We hereby Jointly and Severally certify that on the twelfth day of August A.D. 1843 Hyrum Smith presented to the High Council in his brick Office at Nauvoo Assembled, the Revelation on Celestial marriage, given to Joseph Smith, and written on the twelfth day of July 1843. and that the teaching of Hyrum Smith referred to in the minutes of the Council on Said twelfth day of August 1843 was on the Subject of Said Revelation, endorsing the Same and enjoining it on the Council.⁷²

Leonard Soby

1. On or about the 12th day of August A.D. 1843, I was a resident of Nauvoo, Hancock County, State of Illinois. And being a member of the High Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints was present at a meeting of said Church at the time herein above stated. Thomas Grover, Alpheus Cutler, David Fulmer, William Huntington and others when Elder Hyrum Smith after certain explanations read the Revelation on celestial marriage. I have read and examined carefully said revelation since published in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants of said Church, and say to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is the same word for word as the revelation then read by Hyrum Smith. The dependent says further that the revelation did not originate with Brigham Young as some persons have falsely stated but

⁶⁹ Joseph Kingsbury, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), page 178, question 19.

⁷⁰ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 2:18.

⁷¹ Joseph Kingsbury, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), page 178, question 18

⁷² Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 2:47.

was received by the Prophet Joseph Smith and read in the said High Council by his authority, as a revelation to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints.⁷³

James Allred

1. He did not believe it at first, it was so contrary to his feelings, but he said he knew Joseph was a prophet of God so he made a covenant that he would not eat, drink or sleep until he knew for himself, that he had got a testimony that it was true, that he had even heard the voice of God concerning it.⁷⁴

David Fullmer

1. Be it remembered that on this fifteenth day of June A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me, James Jack, a Notary Public in and for said County, David Fullmer, who was by me Sworn in due form and upon his oath Saith; that on or about the twelfth ~~fourth~~ day of August A.D. 1843 while in meeting with the High Council, (he being a member thereof) in Hyrum Smith's brick office in the City of Nauvoo, county of Hancock, State of Illinois; Dunbar Wilson made enquiry in relation to the Subject of a plurality of wives as there were rumors afloat respecting it, and he was "Satisfied there was something in those rumors, and he wanted to know what it was." Upon which the said Hyrum Smith Stepped across the road to his residence and Soon returned, bringing with him a copy of the revelation on Celestial Marriage given to Joseph Smith July twelfth A.D. 1843 and read the Same to the High Council and bore testimony to its truth. The said David Fullmer further Saith that to the best of his memory and belief, the following named persons were present William Marks, Austin A. Cowles, [erasure] Samuel Bent, A. Cutler [in pencil] George W. Harris, Dunbar Wilson, William Huntington, Levi Jackman, Aaron Johnson, Thomas Grover, David Fullmer, [erasure] James Allred, and Leonard Soby. And the said David Fullmer further Saith, that Wm. Marks, Austin A. Cowles, and Leonard Soby were the only persons present who did not receive the Revelation and testimony of Hyrum Smith and that all the others did receive it from the teaching and testimony of the Said Hyrum Smith. And further that the copy of Said Revelation on Celestial Marriage published in the Deseret News Extra of September fourteenth A.D. 1852 is a true copy of the Same.⁷⁵

Austin Cowles

1. In the latter part of the summer, 1843, the Patriarch, Hyrum Smith, did in the High Council, of which I was a member, introduce what he said was a revelation given through the Prophet; that the said Hyrum Smith did essay to read the said revelation in the said Council, that according to his reading there was contained the following doctrines; 1st, the sealing up of persons to eternal life, against all sins, save that of shedding innocent blood or of consenting thereto; 2nd, the doctrine of a plurality of wives, or marrying virgins; that "David and

⁷³ Leonard Soby, signed affidavit, March 23, 1886, CHL.

⁷⁴ James Allred, "Statement," October 15, 1854. CHL. Copy of typescript in Richard Van Wagoner Collection, Marriott Library, University of Utah, bx 13.

⁷⁵ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:27.

Solomon had many wives, yet in this they sinned not save in the matter of Uriah. This revelation with' other evidence: that the aforesaid heresies were taught and practiced in the Church; determined me to leave the office of first counsellor to the president of the Church at Nauvoo, inasmuch as I dared not teach or administer such laws. And further deponent saith not.

Thomas Grover

1. Brother Hyrum Smith was called upon to read the revelation. He did so, and after the reading said: "Now, you that believe this revelation and go forth and obey the same shall be saved, and you that reject it shall be damned." We saw this prediction verified in less than one week. Of the Presidency of the Stake, William Marks and Father Cowles rejected the revelation. Of the Council that were present, Leonard Soby rejected it. From that time forward there was a very strong division in the high council. These three men greatly diminished in spirit day after day, so that there was a great difference in the line of their conduct, which was perceivable to every member that kept the faith. From that time forward we of ten received instructions from the Prophet as to what was the will of the Lord and how to proceed."⁷⁶

William Law

1. Hyrum gave it [the copy of the revelation] to me in his office, told me to take it home and read it and then be careful with it and bring it back again. I took it home, and read it and showed it to my wife. She and I were just turned upside down by it; we did not know what to do. I said to my wife, that I would take it over to Joseph and ask him about it. I did not believe that he would acknowledge it, and I said so to my wife. But she was not of my opinion. She felt perfectly sure that he would father it. When I came to Joseph and showed him the paper, he said: "Yes, that is a genuine revelation." I said to the prophet: "But in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants there is a revelation just the contrary of this." "*Oh,*" said Joseph, "*that was given when the church was in its infancy, then it was all right to feed the people on milk, but now it is necessary to give them strong meat*" We talked a long time about it, finally our discussion became very hot and we gave it up. From that time on the breach between us became more open and more decided every day, after having been prepared for a long time. But the revelation gave the finishing touch to my doubts and showed me clearly that he was a rascal. I took the revelation back to my wife and told her that Joseph had acknowledged it. "That is what I fully expected." said she. "What shall we do?" said I. She advised me to keep still try to sell my property quietly for what I could get. But I did not follow her advice.⁷⁷
2. In 1843 Hyrum Smith handed to me a writing to read and to be returned to him. I took it home and upon reading found that it purported to be a revelation to Joseph Smith,

⁷⁶ Letter from High Councilor Thomas Grover to A. Milton Musser, January 10, 1886, published as "Elder Grover's Letter," *Deseret Evening News*, January 11, 1886, page 2; copy of typescript in "Church Manuscripts," collection by Alan H. Gerber, BYU, HBLL, Special Collections, vol. 14.

⁷⁷ "The Law Interview," *The Daily Tribune: Salt Lake City*, July 31, 1887, italics in original.

authorizing polygamy in the Church. After reading it I went directly to Joseph Smith and showed him the document. He looked at it and said it was all right. Said it was a great privilege granted to the High Priesthood. He spoke strongly in its favor. I remarked that it was in contradiction to the “Doctrine and Covenant.” He said they were given when the Church was in its infancy, when they were babes, and had to be fed on milk, but now they were strong and must have meat. He seemed much disappointed in my not receiving the revelation. He was very anxious that I would accept the doctrine and sustain him in it. He used many arguments at various times afterwards in its favor. I suppose he dreaded my official influence in opposing and utterly rejecting the so called revelation.⁷⁸

3. I hereby certify that Hyrum Smith did, (in his office,) read to me a certain written document, which he, said was a revelation from God, he said that he was with Joseph when was received. He afterwards he gave me document to read, and I took it to my house, and read it, and showed it to my wife, and returned it next day. The revelation (so called) authorized certain men to have more wives than one at a time, in this world and in the world to come... It said this was the *law*, and commanded Joseph to enter in the law,--and also that he should administer to others.

Jane Law

1. I certify that I read die revelation referred to in the above [D&C 132]. Affidavit of my husband, it sustained in strong terms the doctrine of more wives than one at a time, in this world, and in the next, it authorized some to have to the number of ten, and set forth that those women who would not allow their husbands to have more wiles than one should be under condemnation before God.⁷⁹

James Leithead

1. I was engaged at that time [autumn 1843] in building a barn for Hyrum Smith, the Prophet’s brother, and this discourse was the subject of our talk. I ate dinner with Hyrum every day while laboring there... Brother Hyrum and I were alone at the dinner table, and I asked him if it was a revelation. He never hesitated one moment, but said that it was, and that he had carried that revelation to the High Council for their consideration and that all of the High Council accepted of it except two.⁸⁰

Charles Smith

1. Patriarch Hyrum Smith met with the Elders at Nauvoo in the winter of 1843-4 and there told them that the doctrine of Plurality of Wives had bothered him considerably and he felt constrained to ask wherein Abraham Moses, David & others could be justified before God

⁷⁸ Affidavit dated July 17, 1885. Quoted in Charles A. Shook, *The True Origin of Mormon Polygamy*. Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1914, 126.

⁷⁹ *The Nauvoo Expositor* [Nauvoo, Illinois] (June 7, 1844).

⁸⁰ “That Nauvoo Discourse,” *Deseret Evening News*, April 8, 1904.

in practicing this to him repugnant doctrine—He asked his brother the Prophet Joseph to ask this question of the Lord—Joseph did so and the Revelation given 12th July 1843 was the answer.⁸¹

Mary Ann West

1. He [Hyrum Smith] came into our house... and he said that there was a revelation, and I told him that I would very much like to read the revelation, that Joseph had received on plural marriage, and... he said he would go over and get it for us to read, and he went over and came back in a little while and he looked very sober [and downcast⁸²], and I asked him, said I, "What is the matter", - what is the matter? Can't you get it", and he said, "no, Emma took it out of Joseph's pocket last night and burned it", and so I did not get to read the revelation although I was very anxious to do so.⁸³

Jane Snyder Richards

1. A few months previous to Joseph Smith's death he had received a revelation in regard to Polygamy, and Hyrum Smith had talked of it in confidence with my husband, who mentioned it to me, though I spoke of it to no one. It seems that Joseph Smith had taken some more wives during these months, but the revelation required that he should do it ~~whether~~ without publicity at this time, as the mob spirit was already so much excited without this having been thought of at all. It was not on this account he was persecuted, as it was not known until after his death. The Celestial marriages, or sealing, were not solemnized until it could be done in the temple, although with Joseph Smith it necessarily was done elsewhere, as the temple was not then ready for use."⁸⁴

John Hawley

1. He [William Marks] toald me he knew the very day that Revelation was give\n/, he Said one morning Br Hiram was walking down the Streat pritty fast, and I haled him and Said Br Hiram which way, and he toald me he was going downe to Josephs, and we are going to get a Revelation on Patriarchal marage to day if we can, and in the eavning he came along back and handed him the Revelation.⁸⁵

Charles Lambert

1. The Prophet used to hold meetings in a Log house of his sometimes twice a week I donot [*sic*] remember missing one when I had a chance at one of these he said he wished he had a people that he could reveal to them what the Lord had shown to him but one thing I will say

⁸¹ Charles Smith, Remarks at Saint George Stake November 26, 1882, General Minutes, LR 7836, Reel 1, CHL.

⁸² Mary Ann West, Deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), page 525, question 748

⁸³ Mary Ann West, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), pages 523-24, question 717.

⁸⁴ Jane Snyder Richards, "Reminiscences of Mrs. F. D. Richards, San Francisco, 1880," in "Utah and Mormons" collection, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley, microfilm copy in CHL, under call number MS 8305, Reel 1, Item 2, page 18.

⁸⁵ John Hawley, "The Life of John Hawley," P13, f317, CofC Archives, Independence, Missouri, 95.

there are thousands of Spirits that have been waiting to come forth in this day and generation thier proper channel is through the Priesthood a way has to be provided but the time has come and they have got to come anyway and thus left me in a fix. Some time after this Wm Clayton told me if I would come down into the basement of the Temple he wanted to show me something and that I might bring Stephen Hales with me we went into a little place boxed of[f] for a paint shop for Wm Pitt he been present there Br Wm C. read unto us the Revelation on Plural Marriage. This explained the above I believed it yet did not obey the same until 1872. I think it was on or about the 6th of May 1844 the Prophet Joseph came up to the Temple and clasping his arms arround me and lifted me of[f] my feet then said the Lord bless thee and I bless thee.⁸⁶

Ebenezer Robinson

1. We returned home from that mission the latter part of November, 1843. Soon after our return, I was told that when we were gone, the revelation on polygamy was presented to, and read in the High Council in Nauvoo, three of the members which refused to accept it as from the Lord, viz. Presidents Marks and Cowles, and counselor Leonard Soby. At that time and place, and on that occasion, President Austin Cowles resigned his position as one of the Presidents of the High Council, which necessarily included his presidency of the church at Nauvoo. After that he was looked upon as a seceder, and no longer held a prominent place in the church although morally and religiously speaking, he was one of the best men in the place.⁸⁷

Other Accounts

William Clayton Journal

1. [April 27, 1843. Thursday.] At the Temple A.M. went to Presidents who rode with me to Brother H[eber] C. Kimballs where Sister Marg[are]t Moon was sealed up by the priesthood, by the president, and M[arried] to me.
2. [August 16, 1843. Wednesday.] This A.M. Joseph told me that since E[mma] came back from St. Louis she had resisted the P[riesthood] in toto and he had to tell her he would relinquish all for her sake. She said she would [have] given him E[liza] and E[mily] P[artridge], but he knew if he took them she would pitch on him and obtain a divorce and leave him. He however told me he should not relinquish anything. O God deliver thy servant from iniquity and bondage.
3. [September 15, 1843. Friday.] He finally asked if I would not give L[ydia] to him. I said I would so far as I had anything to do in it. He requested me to talk to her.

⁸⁶ Charles Lambert, "Autobiography [ca. 1885]," typescript, MS 1130, Folder 1, page 16, CHL.

⁸⁷ Ebenezer Robinson, "Items of Personal History." *The Return* 1 (July 1889) 30.

4. [September 17, 1843. Sunday.] At home all day with M[argaret]. I had some talk with Lydia. She seems to receive it kindly but says she has promised her mother not to marry while her mother lives and she thinks she won't.
5. [October 19, 1843. Thursday.] After we had got on the road he [Joseph Smith] began to tell me that E[mma] was turned quite friendly and kind. She had been anointed and he also had been a[nointed] K[ing]. He said that it was her advice that I should keep M[argaret] at home and it was also his council. Says he just keep her at home and brook it and if they raise trouble about it and bring you before me I will give you an awful scourging and probably cut you off from the church and then I will baptise you and set you ahead as good as ever.⁸⁸

Newel K. Whitney

1. Verily thus saith the Lord unto my se[r]vant N. K. Whitney the thing that my se[r]vant Joseph Smith has made known unto you and your Famely [Family] and which you have agreed upon is right in mine eyes and shall be crowned upon your heads with honor and immortality and eternal life to all your house both old & young because of the lineage of my Preast [Piest] Hood saith the Lord it shall be upon you and upon your children after you from generation to generation By virtue of the Holy promise which I now make unto you saith the Lord.

these are the words which you shall pronounce upon my se[r]vant Joseph [Smith] and your Daughter S. A. [Sarah Ann] Whitney. They shall take each other by the hand and you shall say:

you both mutu[al]ly agree calling them by name to be each others companion so long as you both shall live presser[v]ing yourselv[es] for each other and from all others and also through [o]ut all eternity reserving only those rights which have been given to my servant Joseph [Smith] by revelation and commandment and by legal Authority in times passed [past].

If you both agree to covenant and do this, then I give you S. A. [Sarah Ann] Whitney my Daughter to Joseph Smith to be his wife to observe all the rights betwe[e]n you both that belong to that condition. I do it in my own name and in the name of my wife your mother and in the name of my Holy Progenitors by the right of birth which is of Priest Hood vested in me by revelation and commandment and promise of the living God obtained by the Holy Melchizedek Gethrow [Jethro] and other of the Holy Fathers commanding in the name of the Lord all those powers to concentrate in you and through to your po[s]terity for ever all these things I do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that through this order he may be glorified [glorified] and [that] through the power of anointing Davied [David] may reign

⁸⁸ George D. Smith, ed. *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 99, 110, 117, and 120.

King over Iseral [Israel] which shall hereafter be revealed let immortality and eternal life henc[e]forth be sealed upon your heads forever and ever.⁸⁹

Elizabeth Whitney

1. Be it remembered that on this thirtieth day of August A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack, a Notary Public, in and for Said County, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, who was by me sworn in due form of law and upon her oath saith that on the twenty-seventh day of July A.D. 1842, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was present, and witnessed the marrying or Sealing of her daughter Sarah Ann Whitney, to the Prophet Joseph Smith, for time and all eternity, by her husband Newel K. Whitney, then presiding Bishop of the Church.⁹⁰

Dimick Huntington

1. Be it remembered that on this first day of May A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me Elias Smith Probate Judge for Said County, Dimick B. Huntington, who was by me Sworn in due form of law, and upon his oath Saith, that on the 27th day of October A.D. 1841, at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, he married or Sealed Zina D. Huntington to Joseph Smith President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and also on the eleventh day of December A.D. 1841 at the same place he married or Sealed, Presendia L. Huntington to the Said Joseph Smith, according to the laws of said Church, regulating marriage; in presence of Fanny M. Huntington.⁹¹

Vilate Kimball

1. I have had a visit from brother Parley [Pratt] and his wife, they are truly converted it appears that J[oseph] has taught him some principles and told him his privilege, and even appointed one for him. I dare not tell you who it is [Elizabeth Brotherton], you would be astonished and I guess some tried. She has been to me for council. I told her I did not wish to advise in such matters. Sister [Mary Ann] Pratt has been rageing against these things. She told me herself that the devil had been in her until within a few days past. She said the Lord had shown her it was all right. She wants Parley to go ahead, says she will do all in her power to help him; they are so ingagued I fear they will run to[o] fast. They ask me many questions on principle. I told them I did not know much and I rather they would go to those that had authority to teach. Parley said he and Joseph were interrupted before he got what instruction he wanted, and now he did not know when he should have an opportunity. He

⁸⁹ Revelation for Newell K. Whitney, July 27, 1842. Original manuscript in CHL; quoted in Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary*, Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999, 315-16; see also Revelations in Addition to Those Found in the LDS Edition of the D&C on *New Mormon Studies: A Comprehensive Resource Library*. CD-ROM. Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates, 1998.

⁹⁰ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:74.

⁹¹ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:19.

seemed unwilling to wait, I told him these were sacred things and he better not make a move until he got more instruction.⁹²

Joseph Kelting

1. I first knew Joseph Smith, the Prophet, in Ohio. I once called upon him afterwards at his residence in Nauvoo, Illinois, and told him I wanted a private interview. We walked up stairs together. His wife, Emma, was down stairs, and he did not wish her to hear what we were going to talk about. We went into the front room, and he locked the door. I told him it was mooted about that he was teaching plural marriage, and asked him the question, “Are you mooted plural marriage?” His answer was, “[I] cannot answer you, as you are both a lawyer and sheriff of Hancock County, and it might militate against you as an officer as well as against us.” I said, “Joseph, whatever you tell me as your friend is safe; I came here to find this out, and I assure you upon the *square* (and we were both Masons) it shall never injure you in any shape.” “I did moot plural marriage,” said the Prophet. “Did you have a revelation to teach this?” I asked. “I did,” he answered. “Have you more than one wife sealed to you by this authority,” I asked. “I have,” said he.”⁹³
2. He [Joseph Smith] then began a defense of the doctrine by referring to the Old Testament. I told him I did not want to hear that as I could read it for my self... He then informed me that he had received a revelation from God which taught the correctness of the doctrine of a plurality of wives, and command[ed] him to obey it. He then acknowledged to having married several wives.⁹⁴

Mary Ann Covington

1. I went to live at Orson Hyde’s and soon after that time Joseph Smith wished to have an interview with me at Orson Hyde’s. He had the interview with me, and then asked me if I had ever heard of a man’s having more wives than one, and I said I had not. He then told me that he had received a revelation from God that man could have more wives than one, and that men were now being married in plural marriage. He told me soon after that his brother William wished to marry me as a wife in plural marriage if I felt willing to consent to it... He said that there was power on earth to seal wives in plural marriages.⁹⁵

William W. Phelps

1. [Recalling in 1861, an 1831 revelation of Joseph Smith] Verily I say unto you that the wisdom of man in his fallen state, knoweth not the purposes and the privileges of my holy

⁹² Vilate Kimball, letter dated June 27-29, 1843, to Heber C. Kimball, in Winslow Whitney Smith Papers, box 5, folder 2, CHL. Also quoted in part in Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, “Scenes and Incidents at Nauvoo,” *Woman’s Exponent*, 11 (September 15, 1882) page 58.

⁹³ Joseph Kelting, affidavit date September 11, 1903, CHL.

⁹⁴ Joseph A. Kelting, “Statement,” Joseph Smith Affidavits, CHL, Ms 3423, Folder 2, images 11-16a; see also *Juvenile Instructor*, 29 (May 1, 1894) 289-90.

⁹⁵ Mary Ann West, Deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), pages 495-96, 504, questions 13, 272. According to her testimony, this was the only time she discussed plural marriage with the Prophet. See *ibid.*, page 503, questions 264-65.

priesthood. but ye shall know when ye receive a fulness by reason of the anointing: For it is my will, that in time, ye should take unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites, that their posterity may become white, delightsome and Just, for even now their females are more virtuous than the gentiles.⁹⁶

Mercy R. Thompson

1. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught me that principle himself, both publicly and domestically, or privately, - that is, in the domestic circles, and I knew it was being worked. I knew it of my own knowledge, - both taught and practiced... I really saw and heard ceremonies to that effect to prove that I know it was practiced, or must I state that I was told plainly and positively by friends, and those who knew positively what they were talking about, and knew all the circumstances... The Prophet himself told me it was a true principle, and was taught in the bible, - in the old bible, and I believed it of course, because I could read it for myself in the Bible and see that it was practiced in those days, and the Lord approved of it and sanctioned it, and I believed it was right of course, and believed what the Prophet taught me, and he taught me that... He was the one that introduced it to me, and he was the one that taught that principle of plural marriage to me first, and I heard him teach it to others. He taught it to me I know, and he must to others, for my sister was the first one that came to me and spoke to me about being sealed to Hyrum Smith.⁹⁷
2. I saw that revelation on polygamy, and had it in my hands – saw what kind of paper it was written on. It was written on foolscap paper. I do not know exactly how many pages there were of it—think there was not more than one whole sheet. If there had been more than one full sheet, I should have known it.⁹⁸
3. On the subject of Brother Hyrum reading it [the revelation] to the High Council, I well remember the circumstances. I remember he told me he had read it to the brethren in his office. He put it into my hands and left it with me for several days. I had been sealed to him by Brother Joseph a few weeks previously.⁹⁹

Almira Knight

1. [Almira, daughter of Martha McBride Knight, was asked if she had ever received a proposal to be a plural wife of Hyrum Smith] she looked startled and answered, "Yes and No." She said, "One day mother and I were in the front room and Joseph Smith came walking down

⁹⁶ W.W. Phelps to Brigham Young , August 12, 1861, Young Collection, CHL, copy of holograph in possession of the author. Reproduced in Fred C. Collier, *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd Ed., Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., 1981, part 10, verse 4, page 58; see also Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism Like Watergate?: An Answer to Hugh Nibley*, Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, 1974, 6-8.

⁹⁷ Mercy Rachel Thompson, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), pages 238-40, 263-64, questions 23-31, 512, 522.

⁹⁸ Undated quotation in Joseph Smith III, "Plural Marriage in America," *The Arena*, vol. XXIX (May, 1903) no. 5, page 460.

⁹⁹ "An important Testimony," letter of Mercy R. Thompson to A. M. Musser, January 31, 1886, published in the *Deseret News*, Feb. 6, 1886 [no page number].

the street and turned in at our gate. I had a hunch and as he entered the front door I went out the back and remained until he left. When I returned my Mother told me that Joseph had come at the request of his brother, Hyrum, to ask me to be his wife. And also asked Mother to ask me, seeing I wasn't in. So when my mother said, Almira what do you say about it?" I said, "No."¹⁰⁰

2. I (Almira K. Hanscom) know that Spiritual marriage, as it was called, was taught by Joseph and Hyrum Smith, when in Nauvoo before they were killed that this Spiritual marriage allowed men to have more than one wife at the same time. I also know, that Emeline and Harritt Page came to me and said this was a hard trial, that they (girls) tried to convince me. I also heard at this time that Joseph Smith (the Prophet as he was called) and his wife Emma quarled about this principle.¹⁰¹

Erastus Snow

1. [Erastus] spoke of the Angel of the Lord meeting Joseph with a drawn sword and of his going to slay him for his being neglectful in the discharges of his duties and of Joseph having to plead on his knees before the Angel for his Life.¹⁰²
2. The Prophet Joseph had said to him [Erastus Snow] also "I have not been obedient enough to this holy law and the Lord was angry with me and an angel met me with a drawn sword but I pled with the Lord to forgive me and he did so and I made the sacrifice required of my hand and by the help of the Lord I will obey his Holy Law."¹⁰³

Benjamin F. Johnson

1. I will Say That the Revilation to the Church at Nauvoo July 12th 1843 on the eternity of the Marriage Covenant and Law of plural Marriage was not the first Rivilation on that Law Received & Practiced by the Prophet – In 1835 at Kirtland I learned from my Sisters Husband, Lyman R. Shirman,¹⁰⁴ who was close to the Prophet, and Received it from him. "That the ancient order of plural marriage was again to be practiced by the Church This, at the time did not impress my mind deeply. Altho there lived then with his [Joseph Smith's] Family a Neighbors daughter Fannie Alger. A varry nice & Comly young woman about my own age [Benjamin was born in 1818]. towards \whoom/ not only mySelf, but every one

¹⁰⁰ Almira Hanscom statement, 1908 in "Autobiography of Hyrum Belnap" From a compilation by Della Belnap titled "Biographies of the Belnap and Knight Families" (typescript), copied by BYU library 1958; copy at BYU HBLL Special Collections—Amer BX 8670.1 .B41. This statement is found on page 55 of whole compilation, or page 20 of Hyrum Belnap Autobiography.

¹⁰¹ Almira Knight Hanscom, affidavit, July 24, 1908, copy of holograph in possession of the author.

¹⁰² Erastus Snow quoted in A. Karl Larson and Katherine Miles Larson, eds., *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, 2 vols., (Utah State University Press, Logan, Utah, 1980), 2:611, entry for June 17, 1883.

¹⁰³ Erastus Snow, St. George Utah Stake [Conference], General Minutes, Sunday 17 June 1883, 2 p.m., LR 7836 11, Reel 1.

¹⁰⁴ Sherman was a close friend and devout follower of Joseph Smith. He was called as an apostle but died before learning of the appointment. See Lyndon W. Cook, "Lyman Sherman--Man of God, Would-Be Apostle," *BYU Studies*, 19 (Fall 1978) 1:121-24.

Seemed partial for \the/ ameability for her character and \it/ was whispered eaven \then/ that Joseph Loved her.¹⁰⁵

2. On the first day of April A.D. (1843,) eighteen hundred and forty-three, President Joseph Smith, Orson Hyde, and William Clayton and others came from Nauvoo to my residence in Macedonia or Ramus in Hancock Co. Illinois, and were Joyfully welcomed by myself and family as our guests.

On the following morning, Sunday April Second, President Smith took me by the arm for a walk, leading the way to a secluded spot within an adjacent grove, where to my great surprise, he commenced to open up to me the principle of plural or celestial marriage, but I was more astonished by his asking for my sister Almera to be his wife.

I sincerely believed him to a prophet of God, and I loved him as such, and also for the many evidences of his kindness to me, yet such was the force of my education, and the scorn that I felt towards anything un-virtuous that under the first impulse of my feelings, I looked him calmly, but firmly in the face and told him that, "I had always believed him to be a good man, and wished to believe it still, and would try to;"-- and that, "I would take for him a message to my sister, and if the doctrine was true, all would be well, but if I should afterwards learn that it was offered to insult or prostitute my sister I would take his life." With a smile he replied "Benjamin, you will never see that day, but you shall live to know that it is true, and rejoice in it."

He wished me to see my sister and talk to her,-- I told him, I did not know what I could say to convince her, he replied, "when you open your mouth, you shall be able to comprehend, and you shall not want for evidence nor words." He also told me that he would preach a sermon that day for me, which I would understand, while the rest of the congregation would not comprehend his meaning. His subject was the ten talents Spoken of by the Savior, "unto him that hath Shall be given, and he Shall have abundently, but from him that hath not (or will not receive) shall be taken away that which he hath, (or might have had.)" plainly giving me to understand that the talents represented wives and children as the principle of enlargement throughout the great future, to those who were heirs of Salvation.

I called my sister to private audience and with fear and trembling, and feelings that I cannot express commenced to open the Subject to her, when, just as he had promised, the light of the Lord Shone upon my understanding and my tongue was loosed and I at least was convinced of the truth of what I was attempting to teach. My sister received my testimony, and in a Short time afterwards concented to become the wife of President Smith.

Subsequent to this I took her to the City of Nauvoo, where she was married or Sealed for time and eternity to President Joseph Smith, by his brother Hyrum, in the

¹⁰⁵ Dean R. Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets: An Analysis of the Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs*. Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1976, 37-38; Joseph H. Jackson referred to three Nauvoo women who served as intermediaries as "Mother's in Israel." (Joseph H. Jackson, *A Narrative of the Adventures and Experiences of Joseph H. Jackson in Nauvoo, Exposing the Depths of Mormon Villainy* [1844], reprinted for Karl Yost, Morrison, Illinois, 1960, 13.)

presence of myself, and Louisa Beman who told me She had also been Sealed or married to the Prophet Joseph,-- this was at the residence of my Sister, the widow of Lyman R. Sherman, who also was a witness.¹⁰⁶

Aroet L. Hale

1. Another incident that occurred in my hearing that I never shall forget: The Prophet Joseph was at our house at Nauvoo on a visit. Uncle Henry Harriman, wife, & others was there. In the evening Joseph was talking on the Order of Celestial Marriage. All at once he turned towards Uncle Henry Harriman: Says he, Brother Henry, your wife Clarisa is barren & will never have any children. You must take another wife. Without posterity your name will be lost. You are of the seed of Joseph, & the only one of the Harriman family that is of that lineage & the only one that will join the Church. The Prophet commanded Uncle Henry to rise up and take heed to this command that he had made of him. He then turned to Aunt Clarisa. Says he, Clarisa, if you will assist Henry in doing as I have commanded, the God of Heaven will bless you and you share these blessings in common with your husband.¹⁰⁷

Phebe W. Woodruff

1. When the principles of polygamy was first taught I thought it the most wicked thing I ever heard of; consequently I supp opposed it to the best of my ability, until I became sick and wretched. As soon, however, as I became convinced that it originated as a revelation from God through Joseph, and knowing him to be a prophet, I wrestled with my Heavenly Father in fervent prayers-, to be guided aright at that all important moment of my life. The answer came. Peace was given to my mind. I knew it was the will of God; and from that time to the present I have sought to faithfully honor the patriarchal law. Of Joseph, my testimony is that he was one of the greatest prophets the Lord ever called; that he lived for the redemption of mankind, and died a martyr for the truth.¹⁰⁸

Dennison Lot Harris

1. There was one thing that Joseph said which I have not related. He said: they accuse me of polygamy, and of being a false prophet, and many other things which I do not now remember; but, said he, I am no false prophet, I am no impostor; I have had no dark revelations, I have had no revelations from the devil. I have made no revelations; I have not got anything up myself. The same God that has thus far dictated and directed me, and inspired me and strengthened me in this work, gave me this revelation and commandment on Celestial and plural marriage; and the same God commanded me to obey it. He said to me that unless I accept it and introduce it, and practice it, I, together with my people, should

¹⁰⁶ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 2: 3-6.

¹⁰⁷ Aroet L. Hale, "Reminiscence," (ca. 1882) CHL, (MS 1509), 28-29; spelling and punctuation standardized. See also Aroet L. Hale, "Journal of Aroet L. Hale," typescript, USHS A 554, pages 8-9

¹⁰⁸ "Autobiographic Sketch of Phebe W. Woodruff, Salt Lake City, 1880," Phebe W. (Carter) Woodruff, in "Utah and Mormons" collection, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley, microfilm copy in CHL, under call number MS 8305, Reel 1, Item 7.

be damned and cut off from this time henceforth. And they say if I do so, they will kill me. What shall I do! What shall I do! If I do not practice it, I shall be damned with all my people. If I do teach it and practice it and urge it, they say they will kill me, and I know they will. But said he, we have got to observe it, that it is an eternal principle, and that it was given to him by way of commandment and not by way of instruction.¹⁰⁹

Joseph Smith III

1. Yours [letter from E. C. Brand] from Provo, of Jan 6 was received; and I have been getting used to contemplating my respective step-mothers, and possible half brothers & sisters by the same, before attempting a reply - as if it needed one... I asked you to look after the "limbs of the" family tree, I wanted to see if they were akin to the "root."... Now you will discover that while you have furnished me names; I would like particulars and proofs. And if you find any more mothers, or aunts, and can do so just get proofs, proofs, anything that is offered. I will be mighty easy to [indecipherable] only I want the proofs they offer.¹¹⁰
2. [To his father's brother, his William B. Smith] In regard to the matter of your Biography &c... Father's history is not yet written for the world, and ought to be written by a friend, of course... I have long been engaged in removing from Father's memory and from the Early church, the stigma and blame thrown upon them because of Polygamy; and have at last lived to see the cloud rapidly lifting. And I would not consent to see further blame attached, by a blunder now. Therefore uncle, bear in mind our standing today before the world as defenders of Mormonism free from Polygamy and go ahead with your personal recollections of Joseph & Hyrum ... If you are the wise man I take you to be, You will fail to remember anything [contrasting]¹¹¹ to the lofty standard of character by which we esteem those good men. You can do the Cause great good; you can injure it by injudicious sayings.¹¹²

Lucy Ann Decker

1. Be it remembered that on this tenth day of July A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack a Notary Public in and for Said County, Lucy Ann D. Young, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath Saith, that on the fourteenth day of June A.D. 1842, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed for time and all eternity to President Brigham Young, by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in the presence of Elder Willard Richards one of the Twelve.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Dennison Lott Harris, Statement, May 15, 1881, CHL, MS 2725. See also Horace Cummings, "Conspiracy of Nauvoo," from *The Contributor*, volume 5, pages 251-60, Salt Lake City: Magazine Printing, April, 1884.

¹¹⁰ Joseph Smith III to Bro. E.C. Brand, Joseph Smith III Letter Press Book, P6, JSLB4, pages 63-67, Community of Christ Archives.

¹¹¹ This typescript supplied to me by Community of Christ archivists contains the bracketed word "[contrasting]." The original word is unavailable in the typescript.

¹¹² Joseph Smith III, letter to William B. Smith, March 11, 1882, P6, Joseph Smith III Letter Book 3, page, 335-36.

¹¹³ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:48.

Mary Ann Angell

1. Be it remembered that on this tenth day of July A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack, a Notary Public in and for said County, Mary Ann Young who was by me Sworn in due form of law and upon her oath Saith, that on the [blank] day of [blank] A.D. 184[blank] in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, She was Sealed or married for time and all eternity, to President Brigham Young, by the Patriarch Hyrum Smith, in the presence of the Prophet Joseph Smith.¹¹⁴

Nathan Tanner

1. Be it remembered that on this twenty-eighth day of August A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me, James Jack, a Notary Public in and for Said county, Nathan Tanner who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon his oath Saith, that, in the Spring of 1844 at Montroes, Lee County, Iowa, he heard President Joseph Smith, while in conversation with himself, Harrison Sagers, [blank] Daniels and others, teach the doctrine of Celestial Marriage or plurality of wives, and subsequently he heard the Prophet teach the doctrine publicly from the Stand in Nauvoo, in a manner that he perfectly understood, not only that the Prophet believed it, but that it was in force at that time.¹¹⁵

Cordelia Cox

1. In the spring of forty-four [1844], plural marriage was introduced to me by my parents from Joseph Smith, asking their consent and a request to me to be his wife. Imagine if you can my feelings, to be a plural wife, something I never thought I ever could. I knew nothing of such religion and could not accept it. Neither did I. In June 1844, Joseph Smith was martyred and it was a time of mourning for all. After Joseph Smith's death, I was visited by some of his most intimate friends who knew his request and explained to me this religion, counseling me to accept his wishes for he now was gone and could do no more for himself. I accepted Joseph Smith's desire and in 1846, January 27... in the Nauvoo Temple... I was sealed to Joseph Smith for eternity.¹¹⁶

Roxsena Rachel Adams

1. Be it remembered that on this thirteenth day of October A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack a notary public in and for Said County, Roxsena Rachel Adams who was by me Sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath Saith that on the eleventh day of July A.D. 1843 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married to James Adams for time and all eternity, (James Adams already having one wife ^living^) by President Joseph Smith.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:46.

¹¹⁵ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:74.

¹¹⁶ Cordelia Morley Cox, Autobiography, holograph, HBLL, BYU, 4. See Richard Henrie Morely, "The Life and Contributions of Issac Morley," M. A. Thesis, BYU, 1965, 104-05.

¹¹⁷ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:88.

Sarah Peak

1. Be it remembered that on this Seventh day of September A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack a Notary Public in and for Said county, Sarah Perry Peak Kimball, who was by me Sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath saith that President Joseph Smith personally taught her the doctrine of a plurality of wives, and that on the [blank] day of [blank] A.D. 1842 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois She was married or Sealed for time and all eternity to Heber C. Kimball by President Joseph Smith in the presence of President Brigham Young.¹¹⁸

Thomas Charlesworth

1. I myself heard the Prophet Joseph Smith preach the sermon upon polygamy, or plural marriage in Nauvoo in the year 1843 . . . It was a new and strange doctrine to me.¹¹⁹

Joseph B. Noble

1. In the fall of the year A.D. 1840 Joseph Smith, taught him the principle of Celestial marriage or a 'plurality of wives,' and that the said Joseph Smith declared that he had received a revelation from God on the subject, and that the angel of the Lord had commanded him, (Joseph Smith) to move forward in the said order of marriage, and further, that the said Joseph Smith, requested him, (Joseph Bates Noble) to step forward and assist him in carrying out the Said principle.¹²⁰
2. Be it remembered that on this twenty-sixth day of June A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack, a notary-Public in and for said county, Joseph Bates Noble, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon his oath saith, that, on the fifth day of April A.D. 1841, At the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, he married or sealed Louisa Beaman, to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints, according to the order of Celestial Marriage revealed to the Said Joseph Smith.¹²¹
3. Be it remembered that on this twenty-six day of June A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack a Notary Public in and for said County, Joseph Bates Noble, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon his oath saith that, in the fall of the year A.D. 1840 Joseph Smith, taught him the principle of Celestial marriage or a "plurality of wives", and that the said Joseph Smith declared that he had received a Revelation from God on the subject, and that the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, (Joseph Smith) to move forward in the said order of marriage, and further, that the said Joseph Smith, requested him, (Jos. Bates Noble) to step forward and assist him in carrying out the Said principle, saying

¹¹⁸ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:82.

¹¹⁹ "Further Evidence," *Deseret Evening News*, April 2, 1904. Church member Harry Dalton recalled that "he did not hear the Prophet preach that particular sermon. Said he: 'I was not there that day, but I know that he did preach it.'" (*Ibid.* See also "Testimony of B. H. Watts.")

¹²⁰ Joseph B Noble, Affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Book 1:38, 4:38; printed in Andrew Jenson, "Plural Marriage," *Historical Record* 6 (July 1887): 221.

¹²¹ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:3.

"in revealing this to you I have placed my life in your hands, therefore do not in an evil hour betray me to my enemies."¹²²

Cyrus Wheelock

1. Joseph . . . taught us the principle of plural marriage, but his teaching was not specially directed to me, but to all who were in the company. We talked about it as we might here or any brother qualified and having authority to do so will discuss principles when he gets along with his brethren in friendly and confidential discourse.¹²³

Sarah Granger

1. Early in 1842, Joseph Smith taught me the principle of marriage for eternity, and the doctrine of plural marriage. He said that in teaching this he realized that he jeopardized his life; but God had revealed it to him many years before as a privilege with blessings, now God had revealed it again and instructed him to teach with commandment, as the Church could travel (progress) no further without the introduction of this principle. I asked him to teach it to some one else. He looked at me reprovingly and said, "Will you tell me who to teach it to? God required me to teach it to you, and leave you with the responsibility of believing or disbelieving." He said, "I will not cease to pray for you, and if you will seek unto God in prayer, you will not be led into temptation."¹²⁴

John C. Bennett

1. I will semi-state two or more cases, among the vast number, where Joe Smith was privately married to his spiritual wives – in the case of Mrs. A**** S****, by Apostle Brigham Young; and in that of Miss L***** B*****, by Elder Joseph Bates Noble. Then there are the cases of Mrs. B****, Mrs. D*****, Mrs. S*****, Mrs. G*****, Miss B***** etc. etc.¹²⁵

Augusta Adams

1. Be it remembered that on this twelfth day of July A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack, a Notary Public in and for said County, Augusta (Adams) Young who was by me Sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath saith that on the Second day of November A.D. 1843, She was married or sealed, for time and all eternity to Prest. Brigham Young, by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, in the presence of Mary Ann Young, Fanny Murray, and Harriet Cook.¹²⁶

¹²² Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:38.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 539, question 80. See also questions 107, 136, 139, 142. Available at <https://archive.org/details/TempleLotCaseTranscript>.

¹²⁴ Andrew Jenson, "Plural Marriage," *Historical Record* 6 (July 1887): 232.

¹²⁵ John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints: Or an Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism*. Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842, 256.

¹²⁶ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:50.

2. Be it remembered that on this twelfth day of July A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me, James Jack, a Notary Public in and for said County, Augusta (Adams) Young, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath Saith that on the Second day of November A.D. 1843, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, She witnessed the marrying or Sealing of Fanny Murray to President Joseph Smith, by President Brigham Young; Mary Ann Young and Harriet Cook, being present.¹²⁷

Bathsheba Smith

1. I heard the Prophet give instructions concerning plural marriage; he counselled the sisters not to trouble themselves in consequence of it, that all would be right, and the result would be for their glory and exaltation.¹²⁸
2. I heard him [Joseph Smith] tell the sisters one time not to feel worried, – that all was right... all will be well in the end.¹²⁹
3. We discussed it [polygamy]... that is, us young girls did, for I was a young girl then, and we talked a good deal about it, and some of us did not like it much.¹³⁰

Clara Decker

1. On this fourth day of March A.D. 1870, personally appeared before me, James Jack, a Notary Public, in and for Said County Clara Decker Young, who was by me Sworn in due form of law and upon her oath deposeth and Saith that on the eighth day of May A.D. 1844, in the City of Nauvoo, Hancock Co. State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed for time and eternity to President Brigham Young, by Elder Willard Richards, one of the Twelve, by Sanction of Prest. Joseph Smith, and in the presence of Elder Lorenzo D. Young, Harriet P. Young & Lucy Ann Young.¹³¹

Fanny Murry

1. Be it remembered that on this first day of May A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me, Elias Smith Probate Judge for Said County, Fanny Maria Huntington, who was by me Sworn and on her oath Saith that she was present when Zina D. and Presendia L. Huntington were married or Sealed to Joseph Smith President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, in the fall of 1841.¹³²

¹²⁷ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:52.

¹²⁸ Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith, Autobiography, MS 8606 (typescript is MS 16633), CHL; see also Barbara Fluckiger Watt, "Bathsheba B. Smith," in Vickey Burgess Olson, *Sister Saints*, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978, 206.

¹²⁹ Bathsheba Smith, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), pages 291, 313, questions 14, 466.

¹³⁰ Bathsheba Smith, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), page 292, question 21.

¹³¹ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 2:16.

¹³² Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:21.

Harriet Cook

1. On this fourth day of March A.D. 1870 personally appeared before me, James Jack, a Notary Public, in and for Said County, Harriet Cook Young who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath deposed and Saith, that on the Second day of November, A.D. 1843, in the City of Nauvoo, Hancock Co. State of Illinois, She was married to President Brigham Young by the Prophet Joseph Smith, for time and eternity, in the presence of Mary Ann Young, Fanny Murray Smith, and Augusta Adams Young.¹³³

John Benbow

1. Be it remembered that on this twenty-eighth day of August A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack, a Notary Public, in and for said county, John Benbow, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon his oath Saith that in the Spring or forepart of the Summer of 1843 at his house, four miles from Nauvoo, County, of Hancock, State of Illinois, President Joseph Smith taught him and his wife, Jane Benbow, the doctrine of Celestial Marriage, or plurality of wives, Hyrum Smith being present. And further, that Hannah Ells Smith a wife of the Prophet, boarded at his house two months during the Summer of the same year. And the Said Hannah Ells Smith also lived at his house Several months in 1844 after the Prophet's death.¹³⁴

¹³³ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 2:12.

¹³⁴ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL, 1:76.