

Refuting claims that Hyrum Smith was a polygamist

132 Problems with Polygamy (Michelle Stone's podcast)

The second president and prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was Hyrum Smith. On January 19, 1841, he was called by the voice of God to be a prophet, seer, and revelator, to act in concert with his brother, Joseph. He was to serve as co-president and co prophet. He was to receive counsel from Joseph who would show Hyrum the keys whereby he could ask and receive. The Lord acknowledged that Hyrum should take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch which had been appointed unto him by his father, Joseph Sr. on his death bed 4 months earlier. Hyrum was promised that "whoever he blesses shall be blessed and whoever he curses shall be cursed, that whatever he shall bind on the earth shall be bound in Heaven, and that whatever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven," essentially ordaining him to be a Holy Spirit of Promise upon the earth.¹

Timeline:

Born February 9, 1800, third son of Joseph Sr and Lucy Mack Smith.² Older brother to Joseph. Hyrum was of a more serious and somber nature and, according to family and friends, seemed mature beyond his years.

Hyrum was known as one of the most intelligent of the Smith children. At 11 years old he was sponsored to attend More's Charity school, which later became Dartmouth, but had to leave at the age of 12 when Typhus swept through the area.

He returned home due to being ill himself and to assist in caring for his siblings. He was imbued with a compassionate nature. After recovering from Typhus, he helped care for Joseph during the operation on his leg and his recovery. Lucy, who was worn down from the constant care of her children, wrote:

Hyrum, quite remarkable for his tenderness and sympathy, now desired that he might take my place. As he was a good, trusty boy, we let him do so. In order to make the task as easy for him as possible, we laid Joseph on a low bed and Hyrum sat beside him, almost day and night, for some considerable length of time, holding the affected part of Joseph's leg in his hands and pressing it between them, so that his afflicted brother might be enabled to endure the pain which was so excruciating that he was scarcely able to bear it.³

¹ D&C 124:91-96.

² Joseph and Lucy's first child was a son who was born and died prematurely. Their second child/son was Alvin. Hyrum was their third child and third son.

³ Smith, Lucy Mack (1845). *Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors*, p. 62. Reprinted in 1912 by the

Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House.

Despite the lack of formal education, Hyrum was one of the most educated of the Smith family. He was highly respected and had a reputation of being a man “of tried integrity and high standing in society.”⁴ As an adult he worked as a teacher and served as a trustee of the Palmyra school board where he was required to manage school affairs and funds, including the responsibility of interviewing and hiring teachers. It was through Hyrum that Oliver Cowdery met the Smith family and Joseph.

In May 1829, Samuel Harrison (younger brother to Hyrum and Joseph) had been to Harmony, PA to visit Joseph and Emma, was taught by Joseph and Oliver and baptized, came home and told the family. Hyrum immediately went for a visit. Trusting in Joseph’s ability to ask God a question and receive an answer, he asked for revelation through the Urim and Thummim which he received. He was baptized in June 1829 in Seneca Lake. Hyrum desire to get out to preach the word of God, but the Lord counseled him to be patient and “wait to obtain God’s word.” The Book of Mormon, which contains more of a fullness of God’s word, had not yet been printed. Hyrum became earnestly involved in the printing process, watching over it with great anxiety.

In late June or early July, 1829 he was one of the eight witnesses to the ancient plates from which an inspired revelation or translation of a portion became the Book of Mormon.⁵

He was one of six men who signed their names as charter members of the organized church on April 6, 1830.

He served as the presiding branch president of the Colesville, New York branch and was one of the first Latter Day Saint missionaries in the surrounding area. He served numerous missions over the next 14 years.

He relocated to Kirtland, Ohio, in 1831 and was next to Joseph’s side every step of the Restoration from that point on. He testified in 1842 that he and Joseph had not been apart more than 6 months their entire lives.⁶

Hyrum married Jerusha Barden November 2, 1826. He was 26 and she was 21. It appears, from the scant accounts existing, that theirs was a loving and happy marriage. They had 6 children. Their second child, Mary, died when she was just shy of three years old. Hyrum recorded in his journal, “I, Hyrum, on the 28th day of January after returning home from conference went to work with mine hands for the support of my family... and also in Churches whenever an

⁴See "Authorization for Hyrum Smith and Isaac Galland, 15 February 1841–A," p. [1], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed on July 20, 2022, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/authorization-for-hyrum-smith-and-isaac-galland-15-february-1841-a/1> and *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, No. 10, (May 15, 1844), p. 534. ⁵See Testimony of Eight Witnesses, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/eight?lang=eng> and <https://scriptures.info/scriptures/bofm/tow>.

⁶See *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 4, No. 16, (July 1, 1843), pp. 242-256 and Holst, Erika (2016, October 13). When Joseph Smith stood trial in Springfield, *Illinois Times*; retrieved from <https://www.illinoistimes.com/springfield/when-joseph-smith-stood-trial-in-springfield/Content?oid=11443543>.

opportunity permitted... not suffering much tribulation until the 29th day of May, then I was called to view a scene which brought sorrow and mourning. Mary was called from time to eternity on the 29th day of May. She expired in my arms—such a day I never before experienced, and oh may God grant that we may meet her again on the great day of redemption to part no more.” Their fourth child, Hyrum Jr., died at 7 years old.

In October 1837 the church in Kirtland was fracturing. The national bank crisis, embezzlement, and counterfeiting caused the Kirtland Safety Society to collapse. Many of the saints in Kirtland had begun rejecting Joseph’s prophetic calling, setting themselves up as prophets, seers, and leaders. The entire church in the area was in chaos. At conference that month, Frederick G. Williams was rejected as counselor in the first presidency. Hyrum was voted to replace him. Because there were two church headquarters, one in Kirtland and the other in Far West, Missouri, the brethren in Kirtland left for Missouri to hold a similar conference and vote in that area. Jerusha was due any day with she and Hyrum’s 6th child.

While he was on the road, Hyrum received news that his beloved wife, Jerusha, had died a couple of weeks after the birth of their sixth child, Sarah. Jerusha was 32 years old. Lucy said of that event, “[A] calamity happened to our family that wrung our hearts with more than common grief. Jerusha....after an illness of perhaps two weeks, died while her husband was absent on a mission to Missouri. She was a woman whom everybody loved that was acquainted with her, for she was [in] every way worthy. The family were so warmly attached to her, that, had she been our own sister, they could not have been more afflicted by her death.” (Biographical Sketches by Lucy Mack Smith, 214-215).

Hyrum returned to Kirtland two months later a widower with 5 living children to care for and heavy church responsibilities. Living in Kirtland was a convert, 35 year old Mary Fielding, who had never been married. Mary agreed to marry Hyrum, according to her she did so for to sake of his children. They were married in December 1837. They had two children together, Joseph Fielding Smith (who would eventually become a president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah) and Martha Ann Smith.

Hyrum and Mary’s marriage had many challenges. From the moment they married, their lives were intimately intertwined with a fast growing church with incredible burdens and responsibilities on their shoulders. Within weeks of their marriage, they fled Kirtland to Missouri. While in Missouri, Hyrum was imprisoned in Liberty Jail when Mary was 8 months pregnant with their first child. A severe cold caught after the birth of Joseph F left Mary near death and in a weakened state for several months. Mary suffered from ill health and was often bed ridden. While living in Nauvoo, rumors that she was a difficult step-mother caused tension and misunderstandings between the two. After Hyrum’s death, she was often morose, but she continued to care for all of the children. When she moved West with her siblings, who followed Brigham Young, she brought 5 of the 6 living children with her, caring for them until her death

in 1852.

Marriage was established in the beginning as a covenant by the word and authority of God between the woman and God, the man and woman, and the man and God, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall become one flesh."⁷

Life circumstances afforded Hyrum the challenge of learning and striving to become one with two different women. First with Jerusha and then after her death with Mary.

A few weeks before his death, Joseph declared that he had been married scarcely 5 minutes when it began being said of him that he had more than one wife. Rumors and accusations that Joseph was involved in polygamy followed him up until his death and continue today.

It seems plausible that rumors and innuendos of Hyrum's involvement in polygamy began as early as 1842 when it was exposed that John C. Bennett had been persuading women in Nauvoo to sleep with him because the "heads of the church" say it is right. While Hyrum's name was not linked to polygamy publicly until the Nauvoo years, 1842-1844, he was fighting the insidious practice from the earliest days of the church.

While on a mission to the East in the spring of 1833, Hyrum met with a man named Brother Morse and questioned him upon "the subject of his situation of his life he being a man that has had two wives he living with his second wife the first being yet a live."⁸ Hyrum believed that any man or woman who married another while their spouse was still living was an adulterer.⁹ Brother Morse "testified in all loliness of Heart" that his first wife "was put away for the cause of fornication he being innocent she the offender."¹⁰ Hyrum was satisfied with his answer and the man was "sett free."¹¹

Over the next several years, Hyrum supported and lived the Church's Statement or Law on Marriage, which was read to and voted on and unanimously accepted in 1835. It declares,

⁷See Genesis 2:21-25 (KJV), Moses 3:21-25 (PofGP), and OC Genesis 2:14 (RE).

⁸ Hyrum Smith *Mission Diary, 1832-1833*, p. 12.

⁹ Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 443-444. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books.

¹⁰ Hyrum Smith *Mission Diary, 1832-1833*, p. 12.

¹¹ Ibid.

“All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this church, should be held sacred and fulfilled. Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the *crime of fornication, and polygamy*: we declare that we believe, that *one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband*, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.¹²

**The statement or Law on Marriage, by the way, is the law Joseph was referring to when he had recorded in his journal on October 5, 1843, “walked up and down the st[reet] with Scribe and gave instructions to try those who were preaching, teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives. On this Law, Joseph forbids it, and the practice thereof. No man shall have but one wife.”

In 1842, Hyrum testified that several saints reported John C. Bennett’s sexual actions to him. Hyrum stated that “On becoming acquainted with these facts, I was determined to prosecute him, and bring him to justice.”¹³ Hyrum confronted Bennett, who admitted his guilt and claimed he would repent. He begged Hyrum not to prosecute or expose him, asking him to wait and let him speak with Joseph first. Hyrum agreed and was present when Bennett asked Joseph’s forgiveness and admitted that Joseph had never taught that fornication, adultery, or polygamy was right, either in private or in public.¹⁴ When it was discovered that Bennett had returned to his lascivious behavior, Joseph and Hyrum determined that he must be brought to a Church trial, whereupon he was excommunicated, and publicly exposed in May 1842.¹⁵

¹² 1835 Doctrine and Covenants 101:4, emphasis in italics added. It is printed in the appendix of this work. Brigham Young’s Latter-day Saint Church removed it from their scriptures in 1876 replacing it with their section on plural marriage which they claim came from Joseph Smith. In-depth research into this claim reveals that their D&C 132 was more than likely altered from its original state by Brigham Young’s followers to promote their pro-polygamy agenda and is not the original revelation Joseph Smith received which promoted monogamy. ¹³ See *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 19, (August 1, 1842), p. 870.

¹⁴ See John C. Bennett’s affidavit printed in the *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 17, (July 1, 1842), pp. 840-841, wherein he exonerated Joseph Smith Jr. of any and all charges and accusations that he was behind any public or private teachings relating to “spiritual wifery,” plurality of wives, or polygamy. Hyrum swore out an affidavit that he was a witness to the following conversation between Joseph and John C. Bennett: “Dr. Bennett . . . reached out his hand to Br. Joseph and said will you forgive me . . . I am guilty, I acknowledge it, and I beg of you not to expose me, for it will ruin me; Joseph replied, Doctor! why are you using my name to carry on your hellish wickedness? Have I ever taught you that fornication and adultery was right, or polygamy or any such practices? He said you never did. Did I ever teach you any thing that was not virtuous-that was iniquitous, either in public or private? He said you never did. Did you ever know anything unvirtuous or unrighteous in my conduct or actions at any time, either in public or in private? he said, I did not; are you willing to make oath to this before an Alderman of the city? he said I am willing to do so. Joseph said Dr. go into my office, and write what you can in conscience subscribe your name to, and I will be satisfied-I will, he said, and went into the office, and I went with him.” See *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 19, (August 1, 1842), pp. 870-871.

¹⁵ The June and July 1842 *Times and Seasons* revealed Bennett to be a sexual deviant and an abortionist. The June 15, 1842, edition ran a notice that the hand of fellowship had been “withdrawn from General John C. Bennett, as a christian, he having been labored with from time to time, to persuade him to amend his conduct, apparently to no

The entire summer and into the fall of 1842 was spent in exposing Bennett, attempting to exonerate Joseph, Hyrum, and the church of the rumors of polygamy.

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During this trying time dealing with Bennett, Joseph and Hyrum became more alarmed with a growing problem. By 1842, converts leaving husbands, wives, and even children behind when they gathered to Nauvoo because their companions were unbelievers or they were too poor to travel together was becoming a significant issue. Many of them, when they arrived in Nauvoo, were taking new husbands or wives, even though they were still legally married to their spouse back home. The Nauvoo High Council courts were filled with such cases, often finding those brought to the court guilty of adultery.¹⁷

To help correct this concerning, and escalating problem, on June 12, 1842, Hyrum wrote a letter to the church, under the direction of Joseph.

To our well-beloved brother Parley P. Pratt, and to the elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in England and scattered abroad throughout all Europe, and to the saints, Greeting.

Whereas in times past, persons have been permitted to gather with the saints at Nauvoo in North America, such as husbands leaving their wives and children behind, also such as wives leaving their husbands and children behind, and such as women leaving their husbands, and such as husbands leaving their wives who have no children, and some because their companions are unbelievers, all this kind of proceedings we consider to be an error and for want of proper information, and the same should be taught to all the saints, and not suffer families to be broken up on no account whatever, if it be possible to avoid it.

good effect.” See *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 16, (June 15, 1842), p. 830. On June 18, 1842, thousands of Nauvoo citizens assembled for a general meeting in which Joseph “spoke his mind in great plainness concerning the iniquity & wickedness” of John C. Bennett and “exposed him before the public.” See Wilford Woodruff *Journal*, 18 June 1842 and *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 17, (July 1, 1842), pp. 839-842. The *Times and Seasons* dedicated several pages to more fully exposing Bennett’s lies in the August 1, 1842, edition. It included the affidavits of several leading citizens of Nauvoo who declared that Joseph was a “good, moral, virtuous, peaceable and patriotic man, and a firm supporter of law, justice and equal rights.” See *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 19, (August 1, 1842), p. 869.

¹⁶ See *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 16, (June 15, 1842), p. 830.

¹⁷ See numerous high council cases in Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books.

Suffer no man to leave his wife because she is an unbeliever, nor no woman to leave her husband because he is an unbeliever. These things are an evil, and must be forbidden by the authorities of the church, or they will come under condemnation, for the gathering is not in haste, nor by flight, but to prepare all things before you, and you know not but the unbeliever may be converted and the Lord heal him. But let the believers exercise faith in God, and the unbelieving husband shall be sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the believing husband, and families are preserved and saved from a great evil, which we have seen verified before our eyes.

Behold, this is a wicked generation, full of lyings, and deceit, and craftiness, and the children of the wicked are wiser than the children of light, i.e., they are more crafty, and it seems that it has been the case in all ages of the world. And the man, when he leaves his wife and travels to a foreign nation, while on his way, darkness overpowers his mind, and Satan deceives him and flatters him with the graces of the harlot, and before he is aware, he is disgraced for ever. And greater is the danger for the woman that leaves her husband. And there are several instances where women have left their husbands and come to this place, and in a few weeks or months they have found themselves new husbands and they are living in adultery, and we are obliged to cut them off from the church. There are men also that are guilty of the same crime, as we are credibly informed, we are knowing to their having taken wives here, and are credibly informed that they have wives in England.

There is another evil which does exist. There are poor men who come here, and leave their families behind in a destitute situation, and beg for assistance to send back after the families. Every man should tarry with his family until providence provides for the whole, for there is no means here to be obtained to send back. Money is scarce and hard to be obtained. The people that gather to this place are generally poor, the gathering being attended with a great sacrifice, and money cannot be obtained by labor; but all kinds of produce is plentiful and can be obtained by labor. Therefore, the poor man that leaves his family in England cannot get means, which must be silver and gold, to send for his family, but must remain under the painful sensation that his family must be cast upon the mercy of the people, and separated, and put into the poorhouse. Therefore, to remedy the evil, we forbid a man's leaving his family behind because he has no means to bring them. If the church is not able to bring them and the parish will not send them, let the man tarry with his family, live with them and die with them, and not leave them until providence shall open a way for them to all come together.

And we also forbid that a woman shall leave her husband because he is an unbeliever. We also forbid that a man shall leave his wife because she is an unbeliever. If he is a bad man (i.e., the unbeliever), there is a law to remedy that evil, and if she is a bad woman, there is a law to remedy that evil. And if the law will divorce them, then they are at liberty. Otherwise, they are bound as long as they two shall live, and it is not our

prerogative to go beyond this. If we do it, it will be at the expense of our reputation.

These are the things in plainness which we desire should be publicly known, and you can publish them in the Millennial Star in full, or extract, as you please.

It is a general time of health in Nauvoo. Everything begins to flourish and look prosperous. Crops of grain have the appearance of a rich harvest. Immigration continues to increase, so does also the city. We expect to see Brother P. P. Pratt probably as soon as next spring. Brother Amos Fielding will be the bearer of this; he will start from here in a few days.

May the Lord bestow his blessings upon you richly, and hasten the gathering, and bring about the fullness of the everlasting covenant, are the prayers of your brethren.

Written by Hyrum Smith, Patriarch, by the order of Joseph Smith, president over the whole Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Hyrum Smith

N. B.¹⁸ Brother Parley P. Pratt will send over 3 families — namely brother John Allaby's, John Farrar's and David Clayton's — by the donation money that shall be given in for the building of the temple. They are now at work on the temple under that special contract that their families shall be forwarded to this place by moneys donated for the temple. Brother John Allaby's family lives in No 33. Brownlow Hill, Liverpool. John Farrar and David Clayton's families live at Messrs. [William] Bashall and [William] Boardman's mill, Farington, near Preston, Lancashire. Direct Ann Farrar care of Mr. Thomas Beardwood, shopkeeper, Messrs. Bashall and Boardman's mill. Also Elizabeth Clayton care of Mr. Thomas Beardwood, shopkeeper, Messrs. Bashall and Boardman's mill, Farington, near Preston, Lancashire. Brother Amos Fielding will understand the particulars. This is a precedent that we cannot establish, therefore you will be particular and keep this to yourself.

Joseph Smith

Trustee in Trust

Hyrum Smith

We wish to have these families sent this fall if possible, or they must suffer. J. S.

¹⁸The abbreviation N.B. stands for nota bene, which literally translates as "note well," although in practice you can read it as "pay attention." It is used in endnotes or footnotes to call the reader's attention to a particularly

important piece of information-such as a key assumption of or exception to an argument.

H. S.

We assure you that you have our best feelings and our prayers and have no fault to find. Believing every man has done the best he could, that is the elders, such as have remained in England. And we desire your prayers, even all the saints, etc., etc.

H. S.

J. S.¹⁹

On June 18, 1842, thousands of Nauvoo citizens assembled for a general meeting in which Joseph “spoke his mind in great plainness concerning the iniquity & wickedness” of John C. Bennett and “exposed him before the public.”²⁰

The *Times and Seasons* August 1, 1842, edition dedicated several pages to more fully exposing Bennett’s lies. It included the affidavits of several leading citizens of Nauvoo who declared that Joseph was a “good, moral, virtuous, peaceable and patriotic man, and a firm supporter of law, justice and equal rights.”²¹

John C. Bennett did not go away quietly. Imbued with a spirit of malevolence, he published exposés smearing the character of Joseph Smith and stirring up enemies toward the Church.²² Concerned that Bennett’s lies would incite mobs to come after the saints, Joseph gathered dozens of affidavits and statements proving he was innocent of the charges levied at him by Bennett and printed them in a pamphlet.²³ He then called a special meeting for the elders on August 29, 1842. Joseph recorded the following:

Hyrum introduced the object of the conference by stating: that the people abroad had been excited by John C. Bennetts false statements and that letters had frequently been received inquiring concerning the true nature of said reports; in consequence of which it is thought wisdom in God that every Elder who can, should now go forth to every part of the United States, and take proper documents with them setting forth the truth as it is and also preach the gospel, repentance, baptism & salvation and tarry preaching untill they shall be called home. They must go wisely, humbly setting forth the truth as it is in God, and our persecutions, by which the tide of public feeling will be turned. There are

¹⁹ *The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, Vol. 3, No. 7, (November 7, 1842), pp. 115-116 and “Letter to Parley P. Pratt and Others, 12 June 1842,” p. [1], *The Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed April 5, 2023, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-parley-p-pratt-and-others-12-june-1842/1>. ²⁰ See Wilford Woodruff Journal, 18 June 1842 and *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 17, (July 1, 1842), pp. 839-842. ²¹ See *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 19, (August 1, 1842), p. 869.

²² In late 1842, Bennett published *History of the Saints: Or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism*; he also published articles in local newspapers.

²³ See a photo image of the original pamphlet “Affidavits and Certificates, Disproving the Statements and Affidavits contained in John C. Bennett’s Letters,” retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/AffidavitsCertificates/mode/2up>. many Elders here doing little and many people in the world who want to hear the truth. We want the official members to take their staff and go East, (not West) and if a mob should come here they will only have women and children to fight with. . . . Every one is wanted to be ready in two or three days, and expects there will be a liberal turnout.²⁴

About 380 elders volunteered for this special mission. Accompanied by brothers Erastus Derby and Edwin Woolley, Hyrum and William Law headed east with the anti-polygamy pamphlets on September 4, 1842.²⁵ Hyrum and William returned two months later bringing “very good reports concerning the public feeling, and say that John C. Bennett’s exposé has done no hurt.”²⁶

Unfortunately, the rumors that “the heads of the church” (which most saints assumed meant Joseph and Hyrum) were involved in polygamy continued to expand over the next two years (1842-1844). In addition, letters were arriving in a constant stream asking if “men with a certain priesthood can have more than one wife.”

Taking these inquiries seriously, in May 23, 1843, Hyrum decided to formulate a plot to “entrap the brethren of the secret priesthood” who were covertly teaching and practicing polygamy. Hyrum naively and unknowingly trusted the very men who were involved. William Clayton, a clerk for Joseph and one of Heber C. Kimball’s converts from England, was involved in Brigham and Heber’s plural wife scheme and was a member of the so-called “secret priesthood.” Clayton alerted Kimball to Hyrum’s plan, thus enabling the group to continue to escape detection.²⁷

Sometime during May 1843, Joseph taught Hyrum about the idea of eternal marriage. Joseph had been pondering on the scripture, “in the resurrection they neither marry or are taken in marriage” and received for an answer that a man must be married in view of eternity, and that

²⁴ The Joseph Smith Papers (2011). *Journals, Vol. 2, December 1841-April 1843*, pp. 121-122. ²⁵ The Joseph Smith Papers (2011). *Journals, Vol. 2, December 1841-April 1843*, p. 131. Hyrum and William Law went as far as Salem, Massachusetts, partly to disabuse people of the notion that Joseph was involved in the same sexual misconduct that Bennett had been. During the mission, Hyrum visited his uncle Solomon Mack Jr. See Hyrum Smith letter to his cousin, Harriet Whitmore, April 9, 1843. Hyrum and William returned on November 4, 1842. About 300-380 elders left Nauvoo with the pamphlets on missions to defend Joseph’s name and reputation and that of the Church.

²⁶ The Joseph Smith Papers (2011). *Journals, Vol. 2, December 1841-April 1843*, p. 166.

²⁷ William Clayton was married to Ruth Moon when he served a mission in England. He recorded in his journal on several occasions that a woman named Sarah Crooks would “wash his feet” after which they would go to bed together. Clayton secretly took his first plural wife, his sister-in-law Margaret Moon, in 1843, thereby inducting him into the “spiritual wifery” ring. William worked as a clerk for Joseph from 1842-1844, which gave him access to

information regarding Joseph and Hyrum's plans. Clayton recorded in his journal on May 23, 1843, "conversed with H.C.K. [Heber C. Kimball] concerning plot that is being laid to entrap the brethren of the secret priesthood by bro. H[yrum] and others."

was the full amount of the revelation.²⁸ Hyrum asked Joseph what could be done for his first wife since they were married and she had died before the eternal marriage covenant was restored. Joseph told him that he could be sealed to her with someone standing as proxy, just as baptism for the dead can be done by proxy. Hyrum then asked what, if anything, could be done for his second wife, Mary? Joseph answered that he could be sealed to her, if he chose to be. Hyrum left the choice up to Mary and for reasons unknown to us today she chose to stand as proxy for Jerusha so that Hyrum could be sealed to his first wife on May 29, 1843.²⁹

No one involved in this event recorded at the time who they were married, or sealed, to on this occasion. Almost one year later, Hyrum publicly stated that he had been sealed to Jerusha for eternity with Mary standing as proxy. Additionally, Mary's sister Mercy Fielding Thompson stated decades later that Mary stood as proxy for Jerusha. The strongest proof that Hyrum was sealed to Jerusha comes from Hyrum's own words. Mary left no journal, diary, or letter explaining why she chose to have Hyrum sealed to Jerusha rather than to herself. Due to the way Thomas Bullock reported Hyrum's conference address, some scholars confuse Hyrum's meaning and intention to believe that he was eternally married, or sealed, to both Jerusha and Mary on May 29, 1843. Years later, when the History of the Church was being compiled in Salt Lake City, Utah, men added an additional line in Hyrum's conference address claiming that Mary had chosen to also be sealed to Hyrum for eternity on that day, essentially making Hyrum a polygamist with two wives. However, this doctored document never made it into the published edition of the Church History. Furthermore, contemporary sources state that both Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball acknowledged in the years right after Hyrum's death that Mary had not been sealed to Hyrum. Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball claim to have sealed her to the deceased Hyrum for eternity and then to Heber C. Kimball as a living husband for time on January 15, 1846 (a change to Marriage sealings that Brigham and Heber introduced right after Joseph's death). If Mary had been sealed to Hyrum while he was living there would have been no reason to re-do the sealing with Heber acting as proxy.

July 16, 1843: Joseph publicly teaches the concepts of the revelation on eternal marriage: No man can obtain an eternal Blessing unless the contract or covenant be made in view of Eternity. All contracts in view of this Life only terminate with this Life. . . . Those who keep no eternal Law in this life or make no eternal contract are single & alone in the

²⁸ See Mark 12:24-27, Matthew 22:29-33, Luke 20:27-40 (KJV), Mark 5:43, Matthew 10:22, and Luke 12:10 (RE) and Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, p. 255. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books.

²⁹ This date was significant to Hyrum and Jerusha as their little girl, Mary, had passed away on May 29, 1832.

Joseph Smith's journal states on May 29, 1843 "9 A.M.— met pursua[n]t to adjurmnt. Hyrum [Smith]. Brigham [Young]. Willard [Richards], & sis [Mercy Fielding] Thompson.— w-r m-r-r-d [were married]." The Joseph Smith Papers (2015). *Journals, Vol. 3, May 1843-June 1844*, p. 25. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian's Press.

eternal world and are only made Angels to minister to those who shall be heirs of Salvation never becoming Sons of God having never kept the Law of God.³⁰

This restoration of Light and Truth revealed a necessary step for a man and his wife to be reconnected to the family of God and was preparatory for the fullness that was promised to be restored if the Nauvoo Temple was completed.

The ideas presented in the revelation were new, startling, and contrary to long-standing traditions such as "till death do us part," to remain as angels unto God. The new revelation brought joy and excitement for those who desired that their marital relationship with a cherished spouse endure past death. For others, it caused them to "fly to pieces like glass" and turn against Joseph, Hyrum, and the Restoration.³¹ Other saints added to the revelation, transforming the Truth of God into a lie by making it "a criminality for a man to have a wife on the earth while he has one in heaven."³² The new revelation created stress and anxiety for those saints who had been married more than once due to the death of a spouse as they were confronted with the decision of which spouse to choose.

Joseph and Hyrum understood that teaching Truth enlightened mankind and should inspire repentance. Therefore, they were totally unprepared for the holy, sacred, Eternal marriage covenant to be used by the underground polygamists to promote their plural wife agenda. It is an Eternal Truth that with greater light comes an equal measure of darkness in order that mankind's freedom to choose is always preserved.³³ False spirits come in a variety of ways, most often taking the form of ignorant, incomplete, or incorrect ideas that are easily conveyed from one person to another. It seems that soon after Brigham Young learned about the Eternal marriage covenant, he misapplied the very scripture that had inspired the revelation as he began teaching his understanding of "spiritual wifery" in this way: A man who married again after his wife died, no matter how many wives he outlived and how many times he

³⁰ Ehat, Andrew F. & Cook, Lyndon W. (1980). *The Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 232. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center Brigham Young University.

³¹ Ehat, Andrew F. & Cook, Lyndon W. (1980). *The Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 319. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center Brigham Young University. Joseph and Hyrum were aware that, just like in Kirtland and Far West, their greatest threat came from within the Church. Joseph preached all day on July 16, 1843, "concerning a man's foes being they of his own house, such as having secret enemies in the city, intermingling with the saints." See The Joseph Smith Papers (2015). *Journals, Vol. 3, May 1843-June 1844*, p. 61. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian's Press.

³² Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, p. 254. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature

Books.

³³ For example, after Moses saw the Lord, Satan “came tempting him, saying, Moses, son of man, worship me.” Moses was able to discern between the Lord and Satan by their messages. See Moses 1:1-26 (PofGP) and Genesis 1:1-5 (RE).

remarried, would retain all of them as his wives in Heaven.³⁴ Considering Brigham Young’s teachings, it is not surprising that another false spirit in the form of whispers and rumors that the new revelation sanctioned a plurality of wives spread throughout Nauvoo and the Church.³⁵

³⁴ Brigham Young explained his new ideas on Joseph’s revelation to a non-member using the example of one man having seven wives: the man marrying the next wife after the previous one died and so on until he had married seven times. See *Manuscript History of Brigham Young 1801-1844*: July 9, 1843. Ironically, the example in scripture that inspired Joseph’s revelation on the Eternal marriage covenant refers to one woman married to seven different brothers. Brigham Young’s misinterpretation is somewhat understandable as he was one of those saints who was placed in the position of having to choose between spouses. His first wife, Miriam Works, had died in 1832 and at the time the Eternal marriage covenant was revealed to Joseph, Brigham had married a woman named Mary Ann Angell. It is possible that Brigham felt that he should be able to have all of his spouses as wives in Heaven.³⁵ It is purported that on August 12, 1843, at a meeting of the Nauvoo High Council, Lewis Wilson “made enquiry in relation to the subject of a plurality of wives as there were rumors afloat respecting it.” To clear up the confusion, Hyrum supposedly went home and retrieved a copy of the revelation that he read aloud and explained to the high council, testifying to its truth. The original minutes of this meeting do not mention anything about Hyrum reading this revelation. However, one year later, during a Nauvoo City Council meeting, Hyrum testified that he had read the revelation the previous year to the high council. See Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 240-241, 254-255, 467-468 fn 61. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books. In addition, Jacob Scott’s letter to his daughter, Mary Warnock on January 5, 1844 from Nauvoo lends credence to the idea that there were saints in Nauvoo who had misunderstood Joseph’s revelation and teachings on the revelation. Jacob, who was “particularly friends” with William and Jane Law, wrote: “Several revelations of good utility and uncommon interest have been lately communicated to Joseph and the Church...one is that all marriage contracts or covenants are to be ‘Everlasting,’ that is; the parties (if they belong to the Church and will obey the will of God in this relationship to each other) are to be married for both Time and Eternity and as respects those whose partners were dead before this Revelation was given to the Church, they have the privilege to be married to their deceased husbands or wives (as the case may be) for eternity; and if it is a man who desires to be married to his deceased wife, a Sister in the Church stands as proxy or as a representative of the deceased in attending to the marriage ceremony, and so in the case of a widow who desires to be joined in an everlasting covenant to her dead husband and if they are not thus married for Eternity they must remain in a state of celibacy and be as the angels, ministering spirits, or servants to the married to all eternity and can never rise to any greater degree of glory. Many members of the Church have already availed themselves of this privilege and have been married to their deceased partners, and in some cases where a man has been married to two or three wives, and they are dead, he has been married to them all; in the order in which he was married to them while living, and also widows have been married to their dead husbands but only to one husband. I intend to be married to the wife of my youth before I go to Ireland. I would be respectably glad to have you all here to witness our second nuptials. The work of Generation is not to cease forever with the Saints in this present life. There are many things connected with this subject which I am not at liberty to communicate to you where you are living which would make the matter plainer to your minds and more satisfactory. Therefore, beware how you treat this subject for no doubt it is of God.” Considering that Jacob Scott was close friends with William and Jane Law, one must consider that the idea that men were being sealed to multiple deceased wives originated with William Law who printed such in the *Nauvoo Expositor* a few months after the writing of this letter. One must also take into consideration that Jacob Scott’s son, John Scott followed Brigham Young and the Twelve and became a polygamist, marrying his first polygamist wife in Nauvoo in 1845. It is possible that misunderstanding of the doctrine of eternal marriage such as Jacob Scott’s understanding was what prompted Hyrum to explain his sealing to Jerusha at the special meeting for the elder’s in April of 1844. An observation: the ideas conveyed in Jacob Scott’s letter continued in the LDS Church temple sealings. Until recently, men could be

sealed to more than one wife while women were limited to being sealed to only one husband. A little around two years ago the Church changed their policy. Today, according to the LDS Church Temple Policy: “28.2.3 Sealing to Spouse and Sealing Children to Parents In the temple, deceased persons may be sealed to spouses to whom they were married in life (see 38.4.1.3 if either spouse is still living and 38.4.1.7 if both spouses are deceased). August 12, 1843, Hyrum read the revelation about eternal marriage to the Nauvoo high council. According to Hyrum the revelation had to do with former times and not current ones.³⁶ Interestingly, the Nauvoo High Council minutes for the day in question do not record anything regarding Hyrum reading the letter. The only source that this took place is found in the proceedings of the Nauvoo City Council in June 1844 as they dealt with the Nauvoo Expositor. The Nauvoo Neighbor reported at length on the City Council’s meeting.³⁷ It is interesting that the majority of what the paper reported had to do with the widespread counterfeiting going on in Nauvoo, only briefly touching upon the subject of the revelation Hyrum read. The paper does not mention anything about the revelation being about polygamy or plural marriage.

38.4.1.3: “Sealing of Living Members after a Spouse’s Death

Women. If a husband and wife have been sealed and the husband dies, the woman may not be sealed to another man unless she receives a cancellation of the first sealing (see 38.4.1.4). A living woman who is not currently married or sealed to another man may be sealed to a deceased husband. If the marriage ended in divorce, see 38.4.1.2. A living woman who is currently married may not be sealed to a deceased husband without First Presidency approval. See chapter 28 for information about performing ordinances for a deceased spouse. *Men.* If a husband and wife have been sealed and the wife dies, the man may be sealed to another woman if she is not already sealed to another man. In this circumstance, the man does not need a sealing clearance from the First Presidency unless he was divorced from his previous wife before she died (see 38.4.1.2). A living man may be sealed to a deceased wife. If the marriage ended in divorce, see 38.4.1.2. Before being sealed to a deceased wife, a man must receive written consent from his current wife if he is married. See chapter 28 for information about performing ordinances for a deceased spouse.

38.4.1.7 Sealing of Deceased Persons

This section applies to deceased persons being sealed to spouses who are also deceased. If one of the spouses is still living, see 38.4.1.3. *Deceased Women.* A deceased woman may be sealed to all men to whom she was legally married during her life. The following table shows when these sealings may take place. *She was not sealed to a husband in life* She may be sealed to all living or deceased men to whom she was married in life. If the man is living, his wife (if he is married) must give written consent. If the man is deceased, his widow (if any) must give written consent. *She was sealed to a husband in life* All her husbands must be deceased before she is sealed to other men to whom she was married. This includes former husbands from whom she may have been divorced. Each of the men’s widows (if any) must give written consent.

Deceased Men. A deceased man may be sealed to all women to whom he was legally married during his life if (1) they are deceased or (2) they are living and are not sealed to another man. Before a deceased man may be sealed to a deceased woman to whom he was married in life, the woman’s widower (if there is one) must give written consent. *Deceased Couples Who Were Divorced.* Deceased couples who were divorced may be sealed by proxy so their children can be sealed to them. See 28.3.5 if either the husband or wife had Church membership withdrawn or had resigned membership and had not been rebaptized at the time of death. First Presidency approval is required before sealing a deceased couple who obtained a cancellation of their sealing in life.”³⁶ See Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 467-468 (see Hyrum’s statement regarding this

event to the City Council on pp. 241, 254-256 and 258). Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books.

³⁷ See *Nauvoo Neighbor*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (June 19, 1844), pp. 2-3, and "Extra," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 17, 1844.

In February 1844, Joseph and Hyrum publicly exposed and cut off from the Church elder Hiram Brown for "preaching polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines, in the county of Lapeer, state of Michigan."³⁸

In February 1844, Hyrum's name was publicly connected to polygamy when Orsamus F. Bostwick accused him of having several spiritual wives.³⁹ Bostwick was charged with, and found guilty of, slander against Hyrum and fined \$50 plus legal costs.⁴⁰

Because of Bostwick's outrageous claims (he also bragged that for a bushel of meal he could get any woman in Nauvoo to sleep with him), Joseph and Emma had the *Voice of Innocence* pamphlet written. Read to thousands of church members who all accepted it by saying Amen. Read to 4 meetings of the relief society who all said amen unanimously.

In March 1844, Hyrum was visited by Richard Hewitt of China Creek, Illinois who came to Nauvoo expressly to see Hyrum in order to ascertain his views "concerning some doctrines that are preached in [Nauvoo]." Hewitt explained to Hyrum that "some of your elders say that a man having a certain priesthood may have as many wives as he pleases, and that doctrine is taught here [in Nauvoo]." Hyrum decided to write a reply for Hewitt to take back to the brethren in China Creek. Hewitt's discussion with Hyrum and the letter written to answer the inquiry made such a deep impression on Hewitt that years later, when confronted with splinter groups of the Restoration who were claiming that Joseph had practiced polygamy, Hewitt denounced them and stated emphatically that he knew neither Hyrum nor Joseph had taught, sanctioned, or practiced polygamy and cited the letter to the brethren of China Creek as support of his belief.

March 15, 1844, letter written by president Hyrum Smith and published in the *Times and Seasons* to the brethren of the Church living on China Creek, in Hancock County, Illinois:

Greeting,

Whereas brother Richard Hewitt has called on me today to know my views concerning some doctrines that are preached in your place, and states to me that some of your elders say that a man having a certain priesthood may have as many wives as he pleases,

³⁸ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (February 1, 1844), p. 423.

³⁹ Witness John Scott testified that Bostwick had told him that he "could take half a bushel of meal, and get what accommodation he wanted with almost any woman in the city." Scott also testified that Bostwick had accused Hyrum of having several "spiritual wives." See "Deposition, 26 February 1844 [City of Nauvoo v. Bostwick]," p. [1], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed on July 20, 2022, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/deposition-26-february-1844-city-of-nauvoo-v-bostwick/1>.

⁴⁰The Joseph Smith Papers (2015). *Journals, Vol. 3, May 1843-June 1844*, pp. 183-184. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian's Press.

and that doctrine is taught here: I say unto you that that man teaches false doctrine, for there is no such doctrine taught here, neither is there any such thing practiced here. And any man that is found teaching privately or publicly any such doctrine is culpable, and will stand a chance to be brought before the high council, and lose his license and membership also. Therefore, he had better beware what he is about.

And again, I say unto you, an elder has no business to undertake to preach mysteries in any part of the world, for God has commanded us all to preach nothing but the first principles unto the world. Neither has any elder any authority to preach any mysterious thing to any branch of the church unless he has a direct commandment from God to do so. Let the matter of the grand councils of Heaven, and the making of gods, worlds, and devils entirely alone, for you are not called to teach any such doctrine — for neither you nor the people are capacitated to understand any such principles — less so to teach them. For when God commands men to teach such principles, the saints will receive them. Therefore, beware what you teach! For the mysteries of God are not given to all men; and unto those to whom they are given they are placed under restrictions to impart only such as God will command them, and the residue is to be kept in a faithful breast, otherwise he will be brought under condemnation. By this God will prove his faithful servants, who will be called and numbered with the chosen.

And as to the Celestial glory, all will enter in and possess that kingdom that obey the gospel and continue in faith in the Lord unto the end of his days. Now, therefore, I say unto you, you must cease preaching your miraculous things and let the mysteries alone until by and by. Preach faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, the laying on of the hands for the gift of the holy ghost — teaching the necessity of strict obedience unto these principles, reasoning out of the scriptures, proving them unto the people. Cease your schisms, and divisions, and your contentions. Humble yourselves as in dust and ashes, lest God should make you an example of his wrath unto the surrounding world. Amen.

In the bonds of the everlasting covenant, I am your obedient servant, Hyrum Smith.⁴¹

Hyrum's response to Hewitt's concerns recognized that the men were also speculating on other "mysteries." Hyrum knew these were distracting the men from the first principles of the Gospel — the only ones with the power to redeem them. Hyrum did not mean that "spiritual wife-ism" was one of the "mysteries" best left alone; rather, his response was all-encompassing of many issues relevant to us in our day.

One of the "mysteries" that the saints were spending a great deal of time speculating upon was "the matter of the grand councils of Heaven, and the making of gods, worlds, and devils."

⁴¹ *Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, No. 6, (March 15, 1844), p. 474.

While on his mission to England in 1841, Heber C. Kimball wrote a letter to his wife Vilate stating that his convert, Dr. William Copeland had taught him how “gods” were made: through the “principle of the celestial world,” i.e. the taking of multiple wives. Brigham Young had been speculating that Abraham became a god because he had multiple wives. Furthermore, the very scripture that Joseph had been pondering upon, if a woman marry 7 men whose is she in the resurrection, Brigham turned into his own doctrine, teaching that if a man marry 7 women in succession with each one dying before he remarried that he would have all 7 in heaven. Joseph Fielding recorded in his journal that the “making of gods” was not understood by the saints, but was of great interest to those in his circle. After Joseph and Hyrum’s death, Joseph Fielding recorded that he believed he had the answer to how a man became a “god” –through the taking of multiple wives.

Today, apologetics who support the narrative that Joseph and Hyrum practiced polygamy, interpret Hyrum’s reference to “the making of gods” in the letter to the brethren in China Creek to the idea that the practice of polygamy was a secret taught only to those saints who were “worthy” and “special.”

Joseph and Hyrum decided on a drastic measure, to call all of the elders home from all over the world to attend a special meeting of the elders to be held on April 8, 1844. Hyrum spoke at length at that meeting. Joseph’s journal recorded:

A large collection of Elders assembled at the stand addressed by patriarch Hyrum Smith on Spiritual wife system. The first one we hear reporting such stories we will report him in the times & seasons to come & give up his License. **He was decided against it in every form and spoke at length.**⁴²

Hyrum addressed the men in clear, strong, and direct language in order that no man could mistake where he stood on this matter. He explained that one reason he called all the men home to address them upon the subject was in consequence of 10,000 reports from abroad, stating “almost every man runs to me to enquire if things are true, how many spiritual wives a man may have.” He called plural marriage the “damned foolish doctrine of polygamy.” He stated that God has never commanded any man to take more than one wife at a time, but that if a man’s wife dies, he may be at liberty to marry again. Hyrum explained the situation of his own two marriages in an attempt to lay to rest rumors that had begun circulating that he had “spiritual wives.”⁴³

⁴² The Joseph Smith Papers (2015). *Journals, Vol. 3, May 1843-June 1844*, p. 224. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian’s Press.

⁴³ At the time Hyrum addressed the elders on this topic, the trial with Bostwick was still fresh on his mind. Unfortunately, Bostwick was not the only person who was accusing Hyrum of having several “spiritual wives.” Other men were spreading rumors that Hyrum was sealed to both Jerusha and Mary and would therefore be a polygamist in Heaven. These men had turned Hyrum’s private, sacred marriage covenant with Jerusha into an excuse and June 1, 1844: Despite his clear message to the men of the Church, his letter to the brethren living at China Creek, and his firm, consistent denials of any involvement with polygamy, a constant influx of letters from around the world continued to stream in asking if it was true that polygamy was practiced in Nauvoo. In that day, postage was paid by the recipient of a letter. Therefore, Hyrum was responsible to pay the postage on each of these letters. Out of sheer frustration, he took out an advertisement in the *Times and Seasons*: “NOTICE To the brethren and friends writing to me on church business, I wish they would pay the postage, for no others will meet my attention, for I am not able to pay the enormous sums of postage that I have heretofore paid to answer foolish interrogations. HYRUM SMITH.”⁴⁴

William Law, counselor in the First Presidency, was upset that Joseph refused to seal him to his wife, Jane, because he had committed adultery.⁴⁵ Even though Hyrum’s marriage to Mary Fielding would end when either he or Mary died, William felt that Hyrum’s sealing to his first wife, Jerusha, while he had a living wife (Mary) on earth made him an adulterer and a hypocrite. After William turned dissident, he began teaching that if a man is sealed to a deceased spouse and remarries, he is an adulterer. On June 7, William Law, along with his brother, Wilson, and friends Charles and Robert Foster, and Francis and Chauncey Higbee published the first installment of their paper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*, wherein the publishers were critical of Joseph, Hyrum, and other Church leaders. They claimed that Joseph and Hyrum were teaching doctrines such as plural marriage, exaltation, and the plurality of gods and took issue with these teachings. They published personal affidavits stating that the revelation Joseph had received the previous year sanctioned polygamy.⁴⁶

Concerned that the *Nauvoo Expositor*’s publication would incite riots and bring mobs against the saints, the Nauvoo City Council discussed the issue in two separate meetings. Because the theme of the *Expositor* related to the revelation Joseph had received the previous summer, “which [had] caused so much talk about a multiplicity of wives,” he and Hyrum testified before

justification for themselves to have more than one wife. See Hyrum Smith, April 8, 1844, conference address. See “Minutes and Discourses, 6–9 April 1844, as Reported by Thomas Bullock,” pp. 30-32, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed on July 20, 2022, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-and-discourses-6-9-april-1844-as-reported-by-thomas-bullock/>.

⁴⁴ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, No. 11, (June 1, 1844), p. 559.

⁴⁵ Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 241-242. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books.

⁴⁶ William Law based his accusations that Joseph and Hyrum were polygamists partly on his misunderstanding

regarding the Eternal marriage covenant. Besides the Laws, Fosters, and Higbees, former high councilor Austin Cowles, testified in the *Expositor* that he had also been taught those things privately by Joseph. Retrieved from https://ia802907.us.archive.org/18/items/NauvooExpositor1844Replica/Nauvoo_Expositor_1844_replica.pdf. the city council regarding it.⁴⁷ Joseph explained that “he had never had any private conversation with Austin Cowles on these subjects [plural marriage, exaltation, and the plurality of gods], that he preached on the stand from the bible showing the order in ancient days, having nothing to do with the present time.”⁴⁸ Hyrum testified that the “revelation was in answer to a question concerning things which transpired in former days, [and] had no reference to the present time.”⁴⁹ Joseph spoke again and testified that he “had never preached the revelation in private as he had in public—had not taught it to the anointed in the Church in private which many confirmed.”⁵⁰ He further explained, “On enquiring [of God regarding] the passage in [the Bible that in] the resurrection they neither marry etc, I received for an answer, Men in this life must be married in view of Eternity, [and that] was the full amount of the revelation, otherwise they must remain as angels in heaven.”⁵¹

The city council heard many testimonies and consulted the preeminent guide for government at that time, Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, before voting to declare the *Expositor* a public nuisance and order it destroyed.⁵² The Nauvoo town marshal carried out the council’s order on the evening of June 10. This action set off a chain of events that culminated in Joseph and Hyrum’s arrest for treason. Their arrest resulted in their murders on June 27, 1844, while awaiting trial in Carthage, Illinois. The envies, jealousies, pride, and aspirations of former friends and Church members led to actions that were ultimately responsible for their deaths.⁵³

⁴⁷ “Extra,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 17, 1844.

⁴⁸ Hyrum had given a similar testimony to the city council two days earlier, on June 8, 1844. Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, p. 254. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books. ⁴⁹ “Extra,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 17, 1844 and Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 241 and 255. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books.

⁵⁰ Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, p. 255. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books. If Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and others were “anointed” by Joseph, as they claimed, then this means that they were *never* taught by Joseph in private that polygamy was right, as they later claimed. ⁵¹ Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 255-256. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books. Joseph spoke to the city council at considerable length in explanation of these principles. ⁵² “Extra,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 17, 1844 and Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, p. 258. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books. It was within Nauvoo’s political rights to protect its citizens by removing anything deemed a nuisance that had a potential of inciting riots.

⁵³ Considering their heavy involvement in local and national politics, as well as Joseph’s abolitionist ideals (Joseph believed that slaves should be set free, educated, and given equal rights), it is possible that Joseph and Hyrum were murdered as a result of political stratagem. In 1860, Emma explained that her husband was killed at the hands of an angry mob because of his candidacy for the Presidency of the United States, a political assassination. See *Nauvoo Neighbor*, Vol. 2, No. 7, (June 12, 1844), p. 2, The Joseph Smith Papers (2011). *Journals*, Vol. 2, December 1841-April

1843, pp. 197 and 268. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian's Press, and Scherer, Mark A. (2013). *The Journey of a People, The Era of Reorganization, 1844-1946*, pp. 100-102. Independence, MO: Community of Christ Seminary Press.

After Joseph and Hyrum died, the Restoration movement splintered into dozens of offshoots. Some of the men who took leadership over various branches did end up practicing polygamy.⁵⁴ One of the largest and most well-known branches was led by Brigham Young. The saints who followed him migrated to the Rocky Mountains where they called themselves The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Settled in a desolate land in the wilderness, their leaders turned their doctrine and practice of plural marriage into a religious sacrament necessary for exaltation.⁵⁵ To this day, the LDS Church claims that Joseph and Hyrum introduced and practiced plural marriage while in Nauvoo.

From what I can deduce, Hyrum's name was only brought into the polygamy rumors during the Nauvoo years (1839-1844): by those practicing polygamy who claimed that the "heads of the church" sanctioned it, yet no woman's name was directly linked to Hyrum during his lifetime. Publicly, Hyrum's name was linked to polygamy by Bostwick and other unknown men who claimed that Hyrum was sealed to both Jerusha and Mary, essentially claiming that Jerusha was a "spiritual wife" since she was deceased and he was a polygamist being sealed to both Jerusha and Mary.

In Hyrum's own words during the April 8, 1844 conference for Elder's, he refuted this claim. He explained that Mary had stood as proxy for Jerusha and that he was sealed only to Jerusha. Many of Mary Fielding Smith's family believe that she was never sealed as a wife to Hyrum

⁵⁴ Two other well-known LDS offshoots that practiced polygamy were James Strang and Lyman Wight's churches. James Strang identified as an atheist until 1844 when he traveled to Nauvoo and joined the Latter Day Saint Church. After Joseph and Hyrum's deaths, he produced a revelation he claimed was from Joseph naming him as his successor. A large group of saints were persuaded of its validity and followed after Strang to Wisconsin. At first, he denounced polygamy, but after he relocated his church to Beaver Island in Lake Michigan, it is purported that he claimed to have received a revelation instructing him to embrace the practice of taking multiple wives. He promptly married his 19-year-old assistant, after which his wife, Mary, left him and returned to Wisconsin. Strang was eventually married to five women (although Mary had left him, they remained legally married). John C. Bennett contacted Strang and became a member of his church for a short time. Strang was an industrious and aspiring man. He was elected representative of the state of Michigan, started the first newspaper in northern Michigan, declared himself a king, and became more despotic by the year. He almost started a military battle with federal troops over the right to be sovereign of the United States government. In June of 1856, he was shot in daylight by two men who were never apprehended, and he died on July 9, 1856. Some historians claim he was shot by two of his own supporters as his followers had become increasingly disenchanted with him. However, others claim that he was killed by the U.S. government. See Doug Gordon. (2020, October 24). Wisconsin Public Radio. *The Most Audacious Con Man You've Never Heard Of*. Retrieved from <https://www.wpr.org/most-audacious-con-man-youve-never-heard>. See Sarah Hulett. (2015, November 4). Michigan Radio. *How a Mormon king shaped a sleepy island in Lake Michigan*. Retrieved from <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/how-mormon-king-shaped-sleepy-island-lake-michigan>. See Anne Morrissy. (2017, February 25). At The Lake Geneva Lakes Area Magazine. *James Jesse Strang: Prophet Of The Wisconsin Frontier*. Retrieved from <https://atthelakemagazine.com/james-jesse-strang/>. Lyman Wight, who had been a member of the Twelve while Joseph was alive, took a group of saints to Texas after Joseph

and Hyrum's deaths. His church practiced monogamous marriage at first, but eventually embraced the practice of polygamy. His church dissolved upon his death in 1858.

⁵⁵ See T&C 156:6.

during his lifetime. Mary was sealed to Hyrum in January 1845 with Heber C. Kimball standing as proxy for the deceased Hyrum. At that time, Heber had Mary sealed to him for "time." Heber never treated her like a wife and never took care of her. In her own words, she was the poorest of church members. The LDS Church has altered the date on which Heber and Mary were "married" to that of September 1845, a few weeks after Hyrum's death. A careful examination of Heber and Brigham Young's journal leans toward this being a false claim. There are records of the sealing taking place in January 1845 in the Nauvoo temple that seem legitimate.

After Hyrum's death, his name was linked to plural marriage and the "revelation on celestial marriage":

1. **June 19, 1869: Hyrum's sister-in-law, Mercy Fielding Thompson**, swore out an affidavit that she was married or sealed for time to Hyrum on August 11, 1843 with her sister, Mary, standing as a witness.⁵⁶

This affidavit was sworn out during the time that Joseph F. Smith was gathering affidavits to repudiate the RLDS church and Joseph Smith III. Mercy had never mentioned a sealing to Hyrum before this date. A reading of her brother's, Joseph Fielding, journal as well as letters between Mercy and Mary also cast doubt upon this claim. Joseph Fielding mentioned in his journal that Mercy lived alone in Nauvoo as a widow. A deed made out December 25, 1841 in Nauvoo was for a plot of land that Hyrum and Mary gave to Mercy and her "heirs" to live upon.

In her temple lot testimony, Mercy testified that she was the only plural wife of Hyrum Smith. She also stated that she did not have any children with Hyrum.⁵⁷

In letters between Mary and Mercy, Mercy's marriage and divorce from John Taylor and her subsequent marriage to James Lawson is mentioned. Mary was also displeased with her brother, Joseph Fielding's polygamous marriage, calling his wives "his women" rather than "wives."⁵⁸

October 10, 1869 David Fullmer, Thomas Grover, and Aaron Johnson swore out an affidavit stating that on August 12, 1843 Hyrum Smith presented to the High Council in Nauvoo the revelation on Celestial Marriage. They said, "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

⁵⁶ See Cook, Lyndon W. (2004) *Nauvoo Marriages Proxy Sealings 1843-1846*, p. 10. Provo, UT: Grandin Book Company. In 1869 Joseph F. Smith, son of Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith, gathered numerous affidavits in an attempt to prove that Joseph and Hyrum had practiced plural marriage. Joseph F. had been called into the

Apostleship on July 1, 1866.

⁵⁷ The Temple Lot Case, 345, 346, 351.

⁵⁸ See letters between Mary Fielding Smith and Mercy Fielding Thompson, 1848.

at Nauvoo Assembled, the Revelation on Celestial Marriage, given to Joseph, and written on the 12th day of July 1843. And that the teaching of Hyrum Smith referred to in the minutes of the Council on Said 12th of August, 1843, was on the subject of said Revelation, endorsing the same, and enjoining it upon the Council. In testimony whereof, we hereunto affix our names, this 10th day of Oct. 1869.”

This affidavit was sworn out during the 1869 collection of affidavits by Joseph F. Smith. Notice that in this affidavit, the men certify that Hyrum read a “Revelation on Celestial Marriage” the men never expound on whether or not that revelation was about polygamy. According to this affidavit, the men are in agreement with Hyrum and Joseph’s own words when they testified to the Nauvoo City Council on June 8 and 10, 1844. On June 8, 1844, Hyrum “referred to the revelation he read to the Nauvoo Stake High Council, that it was in answer to a question concerning things which transpired in former days & had no reference to the present time.- that William Law, when sick, confessed and said he had been guilty of adultery & he was not fit to live or die, had sinned against his own soul.” Joseph and Hyrum on June 10, 1844 stated that the revelation was about “ancient days, having nothing to do with the present time.” Joseph stated that he had taught the revelation from the stand, that he had not preached the revelation in private as he had in public, had not taught it to the “highest anointed” in the church in private (which many of those present confirmed) and explained that “on enquiring of God regarding the passage in the Bible that in the resurrection they neither marry [or are given in marriage]: I received for an answer, Men in this life must be married in view of Eternity, [and that] was the [full] amount of the [content of the] revelation, otherwise in the resurrection they must remain as angels only in heaven [Joseph spoke at considerable length in explanation of these principles].”⁵⁹

The reason Hyrum Smith brought up Williams Law’s adultery is because once Joseph found out that William Law had committed adultery, he refused to seal William to his wife, Jane.⁶⁰ This

⁵⁹ See Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 254-255, 467-468 fn 61. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books and *Nauvoo Neighbor*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (June 19, 1844), pp. 2-3. ⁶⁰ Joseph Smith stated that Jane Law had “thrown her arms around his neck” and requested to be sealed to Smith if she could not be sealed to William Law. Smith turned down the request. See Neibaur, Journal, May 24, 1844; Council of Fifty, “Record,” [290], in JSP (<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/transcript/council-of-fifty-minutes-march-1844-january-1846-volume-1-10-march-1844-1-march-1845?print=true>), CFM:192; see also 192, note 596; and Cook, William Law, 25–27, note 84. In their 6 May 1844 meeting, council members discussed unsuccessful efforts to reclaim William Law and approved a resolution that he be given “over to the buffetings of Satan.” Nevertheless, Sidney Rigdon made another effort in mid-May to “negotiate” with Law. Law’s diary entry for 13 May notes that Rigdon visited him “and said that he came fully authorized to negotiate terms of peace.” Law, however, stated that he would reconcile with church leaders only if JS renounced the doctrine and practice of plural marriage. If JS refused, Law and his associates “would publish all to the world.” Soon after, JS explained his version of the cause of the troubles with Law to church member Alexander Neibaur: “Wm. Law— wisht to be Married to his Wife for Eternity Mr Smith said would Inquire of the Lord, Answered no because Law was a Adulterous person.

Mrs Law wandt [wanted] to know why she could not be Married to Mr Law Mr. S [JS] said would not wound her feeling by telling her, some days after Mr Smith going towards his Office Mrs Law stood in the door beckoned to him smore [some more] the once did not know whet[h]er she bekoned to him went across to Inquire yes please to **angered William and he began claiming that Hyrum was a hypocrite because Hyrum was “sealed” to the deceased Jerusha but married to the living Mary, Hyrum was, in Williams’ mind, also an adulterer. William Law began teaching this, which is why on June 10, 1844 Joseph stated to the City Council, “They make it a criminality for a man to have a wife on earth while he has one in heaven – according to the keys of the holy priesthood, and read the statement of William Law in the Expositor, where the truth of God was transformed into a lie.”⁶¹**

December 20, 1880—Mercy Fielding Thompson reminiscence/autobiography (she was born 1807, therefore, she was writing this autobiography at the age of 73 or 74). She wrote this in celebration of the jubilee anniversary of the Church’s founding. It should also be noted that Joseph F. Smith was her nephew. On page 4 she stated, “On the 11 of August 1833 (a 4 was later written over the first 3 turning the date into 1843) I was called by direct revelation from Heaven through Brother Joseph the Prophet to enter into a state of Plural Marriage with Hyrum Smith the Patriarch This subject when first communicated to me tried me to the very core all my former traditions and every natural feeling of my Heart rose in opposition to this Principle but I was convinced that it was appointed by him who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind. Soon after Marriage I became an inmate with my sister in the house of Hyrum Smith where I remained until his Death sharing with my sister the care of his numerous family I had from the time I moved to his house acted as scribe Recording Patriarchal blessings.” Mercy then claimed she was the one who founded the Penny Fund for the Temple. Then, suddenly, as if she knows she should have written about Hyrum’s murder, she claimed she saw the “mangled bleeding corpse.”

In her autobiographical sketch, Mercy never mentioned her marriage to Apostle John Taylor as a plural wife soon after Hyrum’s murder, nor did she mention her subsequent divorce from John Taylor, nor her marriage to James Lawson by 1848. Nor did she mention that she divorced James Lawson when he took a plural wife.

In her 1848 letter to her sister, Mary, Mercy never mentioned her “marriage” to Hyrum. In her brother, Joseph Fielding’s journal he never mentioned that Mercy was a wife to Hyrum. In fact, he stated that Mercy lived as a widow in her own home in Nauvoo, which refutes her later claim that she lived as an “inmate” in Hyrum’s home with her sister Mary.

walk in no one but herself in the house, she drawing her Arms around him if you want [won’t] seal me to my husband Seal myself unto you, he Said stand away & pusshing her Gently aside giving her a denial & going out, when Mr. Law came home he Inquiret who had been in his Absence, she said no one but Br Joseph, he then demandet what had pass Mrs L[aw] then told Joseph wandet [wanted] her to be Married to him.” The allegation that William Law had committed adultery was reiterated at a Nauvoo City Council meeting by Hyrum Smith, who stated that Law had admitted when he was sick that he had “been guilty of adultery & he was not fit to live or die. had sinnd again[s]t his own soul.” In his much later statements regarding his dissension from the church, Law never

mentioned a proposal by JS to his wife and emphasized his opposition to “spiritual wives and polygamy” as the root cause of his opposition to JS.

⁶¹ See Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 241-242, and 254. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books

As for the Penny Temple Fund, which Mary and Mercy had instituted at the end of 1843, on December 5, 1844, Brigham Young wrote to the sisters:

“Mrs. Mary Smith & Mercy R. Thompson, Dr. Sisters; We are under the necessity of raising a considerable sum of money for the use of the Church within a few days. We have councilled together on the subject and have considered it wisdom to call upon you for the money in your hands donated by the sisters as penny subscriptions. You will therefore please deliver the same to Bishop Whitney when he presents this order.

Done by order of the Quorum of the Twelve for and in behalf of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Nauvoo Brigham Young Dec 5th 1844 Pres of the Quorum of the Twelve
Wm Clayton Clerk

Dec 26th 1844 Recd on the above order five hundred and twenty six dollars N

K Whitney

George Miller

Trustees of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints

March 6th 1845 Recd on the above order Eighty five dollars

N K Whitney

George Miller

Trustees of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints

[Written on back] Nauvoo Receipt for Temple⁶²

What is interesting to me, is that in her autobiographical sketch, Mercy claimed that her penny subscription fund helped to complete the Nauvoo temple. The Nauvoo Temple was never completed, which she knew, therefore, her sketch has another lie which calls into question her entire sketch. But what was her motivation in 1880 to lie? Was it to help bolster the testimonies of her descendants and Mary’s descendants in the succession of Brigham Young? Was it to help in the war against polygamy being waged by Joseph III with the US Congress? Was it to bolster her nephew, Joseph F. Smith, in his rise through the ranks toward President? He was called as second counselor in the First Presidency in October 1880. Bolstering faith in Joseph F. Smith and the institution of plural marriage seem the most plausible reasons. Additionally, the US Congress, with the help of Joseph III, passed the Edmunds Act in 1882 which was a much stronger stand against plural marriage.

⁶² Letter from Brigham Young to Mary Smith and Mercy Thompson, December 5, 1844.

Undated Reminiscence of Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson:

In 1843, I could not tell the Month I was sleeping with my Sister Mary Smith Brother Hyrum being absent on business when I dreamed that I was in a garden and my late dear husband Robert B. Thompson (who died August 24th 1841) came to me and the Marriage vow was repeated by someone I cannot tell who and were Husband and Wife I awoke in the Morning deeply impressed by this Dream which I could not interpret.

Brother Hyrum came home in the Evening being somewhat in rather a meditative mood he said he had had a very remarkable Dream. He said his late Wife Jerusha Barton [Barden] and her two Children, viz. Mary and Hyrum [all three deceased] were brought and presented to him on his arrival at home he found a Message had been sent from his Brother Joseph requesting him to come to his house immediately he went and to his amazement found that a Revelation had been given stating that Marriage contracted for time only lasted for time and were no more one until a new contract was made, for All Eternity and for those who had been sepperated by Death a Proxy would have to be obtained to Act for them of course no time was lost by those who had an opportunity to securing their Companions and the first presidency and as many of the Twelve as were [available] and the Presiding Bishop of the Church were all invited to meet in an Upper Room in the Prophets House each Man bringing his Wife of course Such a Wedding I am quite sure never witnessed before in this generation. Of course my case was a singular one and had to be considered but the Prophet soon concluded that his Brother Hyrum had the best right to act for Robert B. Thompson. My Sister Mary Smith of course standing with Hyrum for Jerusha Barden perhaps some may think I could envy Queen Victoria in some of her glory. Not while my name stands first on the list in this Dispensation of women seald to a Dead Husband through devine Revelation.⁶³

If this reminiscence is a true and accurate one, then it directly contradicts later stories, and a later affidavit and autobiography that Mercy told wherein the dream lead her to be sealed or married as a plural wife to Hyrum. This reminiscence is in line with Joseph Smith's journal entry on Mary 29, 1843 which reads, "'9 A.M. — met pursua[n]t to adjurmnt. Hyrum [Smith]. Brigham [Young]. Willard [Richards], & sis [Mercy Fielding] Thompson. — w-r m-r-r-d [were married]."⁶⁴

November 14 1883 Leonard Soby: swore out an affidavit in New Jersey that "on or about the 12th day of Aug: 1843 in the city of Nauvoo in the State of Illinois in the County of Hancock, before the High Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, of which body and

⁶³ Madsen, Carol Cornwall (1994). *In Their Own Words Women and the Story of Nauvoo*, pp. 194-195. Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company. *A photocopy of the original manuscript is in possession of the author, courtesy of Carling Malouf.

⁶⁴ The Joseph Smith Papers (2015). *Journals, Vol. 3, May 1843-June 1844*, p. 25. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian's Press.

Council aforesaid he was a member personally appeared one Hyrum Smith of the First Presidency of said Church, and brother to Joseph Smith the President and prophet of the same, and presented to said Council the Revelation on Polygamy enjoining its observance and declaring it came from God: unto which a large majority of the Council agreed and assented, believing it to be of a celestial order though no vote was taken upon it, for the reason that the voice of the prophet on such matters was understood by us to be the voice of God to the church and that said revelation was presented to said Council as before stated, as coming from Joseph Smith the prophet of the Lord, and was received by us as other revelations had been.

The said Leonard Soby further saith that Elder Austin A Cowles a member of the High Council aforesaid did subsequent to the 12 day of Aug 1843, openly declare against the said revelation on polygamy and the doctrines therein contained."

Leonard Soby was involved with the *Nauvoo Expositor* as an investor.⁶⁵ He seemed to have turned on Joseph and the Church while in Nauvoo and before Joseph and Hyrum were killed.

Witnesses claimed in 1869 and later, that Leonard Soby was one of the high councilmen who objected to the revelation which Hyrum read on August 12, 1843 and that after he objected, he became more of an "enemy" toward the other members of the council. After Joseph and Hyrum's deaths, Soby was for Sidney Rigdon taking over leadership.

In Brigham Young's journal on September 5, 1844 he recorded "Br. Alonzo W. Whitney stated to Br. H. C. Kimball that he and myself was in a meeting last week at Lenard Sobes there he heard some say say that the 12 was in the Bogus business and there was rits out for them at Carthage. They Sidney Rigdon and his party must send cirten men to the Branches to turn the saints to him & then he could hand them to S. R. said he should go to Pittsburgh and publish all the wickedness & history of Nauvoo, let it rest on the Living or the dead insinuating that Joseph & Hyrum was rong [difficult to decipher] Sameul James read a chapter made the aplecation that Joseph was decived and left to have falce revelations. Some said this was no use to pay any thing more on the temple (namely Grover Hunter Twist & Richards) Rigden assented to a talk and gave them some indication

⁶⁵ On October 12, the council approved the hiring of Almon W. Babbitt to assist the city attorney "in the law suits which were pending in Carthage against the City Council." Settlement amounts totaling \$725.00 were also approved, to be disbursed as follows: one promissory note for \$100 to Leonard Soby (an Expositor investor), two

other notes of \$30 and \$81.25 to Charles Ivins individually, and the largest note of \$513.75 to Charles Ivins & Co. The large note was dated October 5, 1844, and had seven signers: Daniel Spencer (who had replaced Joseph Smith as Nauvoo mayor on August 10), Edward Hunter (a bishop in Nauvoo), Hiram Kimball, Orson Spencer, John Taylor, Joseph W. Coolidge, and Alpheus Cutler. The note was made due and payable on June 15, 1845. City Council Proceedings, October 12, 1844, 220. All signers of the large note were either members of the city council that authorized suppression of the *Expositor* or active participants in carrying out that order. Leonard Soby (1806–92) was being repaid for his investment in the *Expositor*. He had been a member of the Nauvoo high council but supported the *Expositor*. He was disfellowshipped on September 7, 1844, for his failure to sustain Brigham Young and became a follower of Sidney Rigdon.

Twist or soby said we must not come out against Joseph at once or pull on that string to hard you know the feelings of the People and the man of sin spoken of in the twelve.

[September] 7 [1844] I sealed B. John P[ortineus] Green my sister Rhoda Young and to Mary Eliza Nelson, as he was dying."⁶⁶

In the Nauvoo High Council minutes on September 7, 1844, William Huntington made an objection to "Soby's sitting as councillor in consequence of his saying that Rigdon was president." Soby became very upset and asked the men present if they could show where he had committed an immoral act? The men present stated, emphatically, that "the authority is in the 12" and that their actions toward Soby were to help "save him" from Rigdon and to get him to turn and follow the 12. Soby replied, "I don't want to injure this place, the twelve or any man — I have not had a bad heart — I prayed and got the highest degree of evidence I could — Bro Hyrum [Smith] told me I was not to blame. Bro Joseph did not curse me as has been supposed. Why not give me another week to give me a chance to act my feelings out — I have not expressed my feelings until within a day or two." Discussion continued against Soby as one who believed Rigdon should lead. Soby responded, "I can answer his objections — but I have no one to defend me. Has there been no defence in other cases This thing has been concocted by the Twelve — therefore my doom is fixed my die is cast. Who could make a speech without there being some objections You do not expect me to be infallible . . . If I err it is in doctrine — I have not made bogus or committed adultery, but because I err in doctrine I must be given to the buffetings of Satan. I am in your hands — do with me as you please. The quorum of the Twelve have made a decision against me." Elder [Alpheus] Cutler responded, "This council is resolved not to sit in council to try our fellow men one of us following one and another following another. We have decreed never to turn our back upon the Twelve and when a man does it I will not fellowship with him." Soby was disfellowshipped by the High Council for following Rigdon rather than the Twelve.⁶⁷

Leonard Sobey was obviously one who believed the rumors regarding Joseph and Hyrum being involved in polygamy and was one who believed that Joseph was a fallen prophet. I find it very interesting that he felt he needed to swear out this affidavit, especially when by that time he was involved in the RLDS Church. This affidavit reads as one from a man who was an enemy to Joseph and Hyrum rather than one who was a friend, and one who was an enemy to the idea of prophets and their role in restoring lost truth. The only thoughts I have regarding Sobey is that he was a man who was disgusted by polygamy and always believed that Joseph and Hyrum

⁶⁶ Journal of Brigham Young, July 27, 1837 to April 1, 1845, pp. 59-61. Rhoda Young and John P. Greene had married February 11, 1813 and had 4 children together. Rhoda had died January 18, 1840. John had remarried, after Rhoda's death, to Mary Eliza Nelson on December 5 or 9, 1841. John died on September 10, 1844, 3 days after Brigham sealed him to both his deceased wife and his living wife. Mary Eliza Nelson Greene married Brigham Young on January 31, 1846 and immigrated to the Salt Lake Valley in 1849.

⁶⁷ See Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 500-504 and 504 fn 54. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books.

were involved with the practice. Swearing out an affidavit in 1883 may have been motivated by his hatred for the practice of polygamy, and thereby the Utah saints.

September 5, 1885 letter from Mercy Thompson to Joseph Smith III reprinted May 8, 1886 in *The Saints' Advocate*: Mercy claimed that she was sealed to Hyrum as a plural wife.

Mercy was 78 or 79 at the writing of the letter. She is merely maintaining the same story she began with her 1869 affidavit at the request of her nephew, Joseph F. Smith.

May 6, 1893, Katharine Smith Salisbury (Joseph and Hyrum's sister) from *The Saints' Herald* newspaper Vol. 40, p. 275, dated 6 May 1893: "At the request of many of the brethren and sisters who attended the late session of conference, Sr. Katharine Salisbury, the only surviving sister of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, who was present at conference, gives her testimony on one of the things of the past as follows:

Lamoni, Iowa, April 13, 1893. Dear Readers of the Herald:—I have been requested to give my testimony of what I know about my brother, Joseph Smith, having spiritual wives. I was at his house in Nauvoo a great many times, and I conversed with him about many subjects, but I never heard him at any time mention such a thing as the plural-wife system or order. And I hear nothing of such a doctrine existing until a year after his death. At that time, on coming to Nauvoo, I was informed that Brigham Young and others were practicing that system. And I certify that I know my brother had no wife except his lawful wife, Emma. He neither had any other wives nor did he advocate such a doctrine. This is my testimony. Katharine Salisbury.

2. November 7, 1902: Catharine Phillips swore out an affidavit claiming that she was sealed to Hyrum as a plural wife in August 1843 (no exact date given) and lived with him as a wife, but "in consequence of the strong feeling manifested at the time against plural marriage...moved to St. Louis near the close of the year, where [she] was living when the Prophet Joseph and [her] husband were massacred. The purpose of this affidavit is that my testimony to the truthfulness and divinity of plural marriage may live after I shall have passed away; and in this spirit I commend it to all to whom it may

come." Witnessed by her mother, Sister [first name is blank] Stone and her daughter, Hettie.⁶⁸

January 28, 1902/1903: same affidavit as above only this one has one of the witnesses' names handwritten in as Robert and Julia Stone (it appears that the type written date was January

⁶⁸ <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/b412996b-112a-463f-b222-6004ab061793/0/0?lang=eng>. LDS Church History Library Catalog, Call Number MS 2150

28, 1902 and 1903 is written over it). It appears that Catharine Phillips never married (other than her purported plural marriage to Hyrum of which no children were born even though they were married for 10 months). The witnesses to the purported sealing were all deceased by the time of this affidavit. Catharine was born 1819 and would have been around 83 years old at the time of this affidavit. Mercy Fielding Thompson was deceased September 15, 1893.⁶⁹

I do not know what to make of two affidavits, type-written, on two different dates and witnessed by two different judges but with the same wording. It does not make sense to me. None of the witnesses to the purported sealing or marriage were still alive by the time this affidavit was sworn out. The one piece of information that I do believe in these affidavits is that she was taken to St. Louis. Other plural wives of men who were secretly practicing polygamy in Nauvoo were sent to St. Louis to live to keep them out of the Nauvoo rumor mill. However, I do not believe that Catharine Phillips was married to Hyrum as a plural wife. The purported witnesses to the ceremony were all deceased by the time she swore out the affidavits. The "daughter of Sister Stone" she mentions was a witness, by the name of Hettie (Hetta Amanda Stone) would have only been 9 years old and was deceased before this affidavit was made (Hetta died in Hoytsville, Utah in 1899). Perhaps this is the reason this affidavit was not sworn out until 1902. It is also strange to me that of all of Robert and Julia Stone's children, Hetta was the "witness" at 9 years old when there were 2 older daughters in the home (Julia and Frances). The oldest, Julia was still alive at the time this affidavit was taken out (Julia and her husband George Daniels were monogamists living in Utah). Catharine used the Smith name, but cannot find out when she began using it, at least as early as 1880 (in the 1880 federal census she is listed as Catherine P. Smith). I have searched Catharine's history and cannot find much of anything on her. It appears that she never married and was approximately 83 years old when she swore out this affidavit. Her death certificate lists her name as Catherine P. Smith but does not list a spouse's name, simply stating that she was a widow. She died in 1905. Joseph F. Smith owned the burial plot she was buried in.⁷⁰ Furthermore, she is not listed in the book *Nauvoo Marriages and Proxy Sealings 1843-1846*, which is odd because Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball had apparently been either sealing for the first time, or purportedly re-sealing any women who claimed to have been sealed to Joseph or Hyrum, or sealing for the first time any women who wanted to be sealed to Joseph and/or Hyrum.

3. According to *Nauvoo Marriages Proxy Sealings 1843-1846* by Lindon W. Cook, on p. 137 it states that Louisa Sanger (born March 26, 1812 in Lincoln, Grafton, New Hampshire) was sealed for time and all eternity to the deceased Hyrum Smith before being sealed to

⁶⁹ <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/b3718dc4-9815-4680-be15-9fda16165570/0/0?lang=eng>. LDS Church History Library Catalog, Call Number MS 3423.

⁷⁰ Joseph F. Smith was called as 6th President of the LDS Church in 1901, a year before Catherine swore out the two affidavits. See also <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9CT>

X66C?i=180&cc=2094273&personaUrl=%2Fark%3A%2F61903%2F1%3A1%3AZDCT-S4T2.

Reuben Miller on January 27, 1846. Performed by Amasa Lyman in presence of Newel K. Whitney and John Scott.

Louisa Sangers, when she “married” Reuben Miller on January 27, 1846, became his third living wife. It appears from census records, death and burial records, and letters to her cousin, Eliza Rich (plural wife to Charles C. Rich), that Louisa divorced Reuben and settled in or nearby Ottawa, Illinois.⁷¹ She died in Will, Illinois in 1877.

It is curious to me, that with this entry in the Nauvoo Temple records, that the LDS Church does not cite this woman as one of Hyrum’s wives. Might it be because she had left the Church and was therefore, not worthy? Or because she had left the Church before the collection of 1869 affidavits?

Additionally, there is no mention of Louisa being sealed or married to Hyrum while he was living. Therefore, it seems probable that this is the reason the LDS Church does not count her as a living plural wife.

4. According to *Nauvoo Marriages Proxy Sealings 1843-1846* by Lindon W. Cook, on pp. 158-159 it states that on January 29, 1846 Susan Ivers was sealed to the deceased Hyrum Smith with Edward Tuttle standing as proxy.⁷² She was then sealed to Edward Tuttle, becoming his second living wife.

Susan Ivers first married Artemas Jordon in 1809. It is not known if she was a widow when she came to Nauvoo. Her daughter, Caroline Jordan married Joel Bullard in 1842 in Nauvoo. Joel was declared insane in 1843 and Hyrum was appointed as his conservator. Caroline must have divorced Joel, and Susan must have divorced Edward Tuttle because they were living together in the 1850, 1860, and 1870 St. Louis, Missouri federal census records. Susan was listed by her first married name, Jordan. Susan died in St. Louis, MO in 1872 and was buried as Susan Ivers Jordan.⁷³

Susan is another woman who left the LDS Church. Additionally, Susan was sealed or married to

Hyrum only after his death.

⁷¹ She is living with her niece, Mary Sanger Crane and family in LaSalle, Illinois in the 1860 census. ⁷² Susan Ivers was born April 14, 1789 in Boston, Massachusetts (alternative birth date is 1794 Chelsea, Massachusetts). Edward Tuttle was born July 1 1792 in Chelsea, Massachusetts. After Susan Ivers Jordan divorced him, Edward remains a monogamist. He and his first wife follow the Twelve to Utah.

⁷³ See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/104848900/susan-ivers-jordan>.

5. According to *Nauvoo Marriages Proxy Sealings 1843-1846* by Lindon W. Cook, on pp. 162-163 on January 30, 1846 Polly Miller was sealed to the deceased Hyrum with Samuel Bent acting as proxy. Polly was then sealed to Samuel Bent.⁷⁴

Polly Miller was only sealed or married to Hyrum after his death. When she was sealed to Samuel C. Bent she became his 9th and last plural wife. Samuel's first wife and second wife were both deceased when he married 7 women in the month of January, 1846. Samuel died August 16, 1846 in Pisgah, Iowa on the way to Utah.⁷⁵ Polly became lost to records after 1846.

Polly is another woman who appears to have been sealed to Hyrum after his death.

6. According to *Nauvoo Marriages Proxy Sealings 1843-1846* by Lindon W. Cook, on p. 164 it states that Lydia Dibble Granger, widow of Oliver Granger who died in 1841, was sealed to the deceased Hyrum Smith on January 30, 1846 with John Taylor acting as proxy for Hyrum. Lydia was then sealed to John Taylor.⁷⁶ In the footnote, Cook states the following regarding Lydia:

“Lydia Dibble Granger...sealed for time and eternity to Hyrum Smith 1843 Nauvoo, Hancock, IL. Repeat sealing for time and eternity to Hyrum Smith deceased (John Taylor proxy) 30 Jan 1846 Nauvoo Temple. Sealed for time to John Taylor 30 Jan 1846 Nauvoo Temple (seperated). Sealed for time and eternity to Joseph Smith Jr. 8 June 1851 Salt Lake City, UT. (See “Salt Lake City Record of the Dead,” Book B, entry No. 1366 for death date and place. This source identifies her as “Lydia Granger, wife of Oliver.”

Lydia became the 9th wife of John Taylor, but according to Cook they later separated. She traveled west with the LDS Saints, being sealed as a wife to Joseph Smith in 1851. She died in Utah in 1862.

The LDS Church does not list her as one of Hyrum's wives, on any of their websites that I could

find. This seems strange to me since in Cook's book states that she was sealed to Hyrum in 1843. There is no source for the 1843 sealing.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Polly Miller was born October 18, 1795 in Bedford, Westchester, New York.

⁷⁵ Family search lists 11 wives for Samuel, but two of the women seem like dubious connections and not reliable. ⁷⁶ Lydia Dibble was born April 5, 1790 in Granby, Hartford, Connecticut. John Taylor became the 3rd president of the LDS Church (2nd President of Utah church after Brigham Young). In the footnotes of Cook's book, it states that Lydia Dibble had been sealed to Hyrum in August 1843, but no source or actual date is given.

⁷⁷ See The LDS Church's official list of the wives of Hyrum Smith is: Jerusha Barden, Mary Fielding, Mercy Fielding, and Catherine Phillips. They do not list Louisa Sanger, Susan Ivers, Polly Miller, or Lydia Dibble.

The sealings BY and HCK performed soon after Joseph and Hyrum's deaths in Nauvoo and then later in the Nauvoo Temple are interesting to contemplate. Were they making up their own sealing ceremonies? They definitely were sealing women to the deceased Joseph and Hyrum, even in the temples in Utah as seen in Lydia Granger's example. Were women practicing a form of marriage like that of Catholic nuns who are married to Christ in a type of initiate ceremony, believe they will be His wives in the afterlife?⁷⁸ It also appears that Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball were performing a type of Levirate marriage (sealing a woman to a deceased man for time and eternity then to a living man for time). Why seal for time? Joseph clearly taught that a man must be married in view of eternity. What benefit did it do anyone to be "sealed" for time only? That does not fit anything Joseph taught. What benefit did a Levirate marriage do for a woman, or even for a man in Joseph and Hyrum's day?

Franklin D. Richards' journal is the only source that claims Hyrum taught the Nauvoo High Council about Levirate marriage when he read the eternal marriage revelation to them in August 1843, even though Richards was not in attendance, and only recorded what others told him.⁷⁹ Levirate marriage was a practice in the ancient days wherein a man whose brother died leaving his wife a widow without a male heir was obligated to marry his sister-in-law and give her a son. After an heir was born, who would then inherit his father's land and possession and presumably care for his mother until her death, the brother was free to divorce the woman. It is very possible that Hyrum was teaching the high council about this ancient practice in order to set up the circumstances under which the Sadducees questioned Jesus, which scripture Joseph was pondering when he received the revelation.

On June 8 and 10, 1844, both Joseph and Hyrum testified before the Nauvoo City Council that the revelation Hyrum had read to the high council was about former times and had nothing to do with the present day. Joseph testified that he had been pondering on the scripture,

"The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven

brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left

⁷⁸ It is interesting that catholic nuns are divided on whether or not they marry Christ. Some say they do not, they only commit their lives to serving God, however, a video created by Oprah Winfrey demonstrates that some nuns do believe they are marrying the Lord and some even wear thin gold bands as wedding rings after the ceremony. See <https://www.oprah.com/own-oprahshow/marrying-christ-video>. Up until the 1960s, every nun in the Catholic church would take part in a wedding ceremony to signify their complete renunciation of the world and adoption of a nun's life. She would dress in bridal white with wreath and veil, and receive a wedding ring as a "Bride of Christ." Nuns believe they are married to Jesus Christ, and some wear wedding rings to symbolize their devotion. Their traditional clothing is called a habit, which consists of a white cap, veil and long tunic. Nuns consider this their wedding dress. See <https://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/lisa-ling-goes-inside-a-convent#:~:text=Nuns%20believe%20they%20are%20married,consider%20this%20their%20wedding%20dress.> ⁷⁹ See https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V49N03_120.pdf, Franklin D. Richards, "Scriptural Items" Notebook, LDS CHL, Aug. 12, 1843.

his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. *For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.*"⁸⁰

And received for an answer that a man must be married in view of eternity, that all covenants, contracts, and bonds made in this life end with this life, and that was the full amount of the revelation.

If Joseph and Hyrum's testimonies before the City Council are to be believed, then it is likely that Hyrum did teach the high council about Levirate marriage before he read the revelation because the example the Sadducees presented to Jesus was a Levirate marriage situation. Furthermore, both Joseph and Hyrum testified that the "revelation was in answer to a question concerning things which transpired in former days, [and] had no reference to the present time."⁸¹ Hyrum was simply expounding upon scripture, not teaching the men a polygamy justification or loophole.

⁸⁰ See Matthew 22:23-30 (KJV) and New Covenants, New Testament Matthew 10:21-22 (RE); emphasis added.

⁸¹“Extra,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 17, 1844 and See Dinger, John S., editor. (2011). *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 240-242, 254-256. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books.