

*“Live It All Up and Follow Your Lord”:
Mormon Female Religiosity, 1831–1843*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History
Brigham Young University
June 2001

by
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Dissertations in Latter-day Saint History

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ISBN 978-0-8425-2711-8

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Dissertations in LDS History

Over the years, graduate students have written many important dissertations on LDS topics. Unfortunately, they have typically been unavailable or unknown to lay readers. All too often, good copies of dissertations reside only at the institution at which they were written or on a few researchers' book shelves. BYU Studies and the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History hope to fill this gap by producing and distributing selected dissertations of interest to Latter-day Saints, making them available to a larger audience.

The works in this series have been reformatted from the originals. Nevertheless, these dissertations have undergone only minimal editing. For example, some typographical errors have been corrected. Original page numbers are referenced by superscripted italicized numerals in brackets (e.g., ^[3]). Occasionally, the author has included additional information to update old material. Those additions have been placed in brackets and italicized to distinguish them from the original text.

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Acknowledgements

In working on my thesis I have become indebted to several members of the academic community. I am particularly grateful to my thesis committee: David J. Whittaker for his initial suggestions which led to this project and his consistent flow of knowledge and bibliographic suggestions; Alexander L. Baugh for his unending positivism and incomparable knowledge of Missouri Church history; and Carol Cornwall Madsen for her example as an exceptional LDS scholar, her patience, and her constant push for me to do my best. Throughout the process their well-rounded contributions excited, encouraged, and enabled me to create a better work.

Numerous people, too many to name, in both the history and religion departments at Brigham Young University have had an essential role in encouraging me and inspiring me. Julie Radle consistently pushed me along and made me smile. Susan Sessions Rugh and Stephen E. Robinson have graciously mentored me and helped me to begin to find my path. Kathy Knudsen very generously gave of her time to proffer helpful suggestions as one looking in. Steve Sorensen, Ron Barney, and the rest of the staff at the Church History Library continually supported me with whatever requests I made of them.

Since my birth my family has provided an environment which incited a desire to learn. My parents' example has given me a foundation of faith, and they are a constant source of encouragement and support. Although the length of this work demonstrates severe verbosity on my part, lastly I acknowledge the women themselves. They amaze me. Their words stand alone.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In accordance with the laws of New York State, the Church of Christ was organized in April of 1830 by Joseph Smith Jr. and five others. From thence grew what became The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which the *New York Morning Courier and Enquirer* called a “singularly new religious sect” that was uniquely American.¹ The Church introduced a message of the heavens reopened, a new word from God, a new American prophet—Smith; Christ’s primitive church restored—with the authority and organization that Christ established in the first century; and a newly published scriptural record of ancient people in the Americas and their dealings with God—the Book of Mormon.

Today the membership of the Church stands at over eleven million with meetinghouses and temples around the world.² The LDS Church today is a very distinct ^[1] entity compared with that of its first decade. In the first ten years of the Church the numbers were few. There were no local meetinghouses.³ The organization of the Church was not extensive: there were no multiple books of new canonized scripture or a multiplicity of church periodicals and publications.⁴ Much of the doctrine that is considered to define Mormonism today was not yet in place.⁵

Lacking much of the consistent structure common to Mormonism today, the early Church and its members were in a period of transition: the spiritual transformation of individuals from an old lifestyle to a new, theological development, and actual physical movement from one location to another. During the first ten years of the Church, the main body of Saints moved from New York to Ohio and Missouri, and then to Illinois. Essentially the main body of the Saints lived in one location until persecution drove them out, and then gathered to a new location where they thought they could exist in peace.⁶

The theological history of the Church and the history of Church leadership during this first

decade are well chronicled, though the familiar narratives leave out many integral parts of the story. The manner in which the history of The Church of Jesus ^[2] Christ of Latter-day Saints has been written is characteristic of the changing historiography of United States religious history in general. Women have consistently flocked to churches in America since the 1750s. Religious historian Ann Braude maintained that women in church is “one of most consistent features of American religion, and it is one of the least explained.”⁷ Only since the late 1960s have historians made strides to include women and others previously glossed over in the historical tapestry. Some argue that this glossing over is representative of Mormon antipathy towards women, though the documents of the women themselves do not support such assumptions.

Women composed a significant portion of those who were convinced of Joseph Smith’s prophetic role and would follow him over hundreds of miles and through fires of persecution. Recent historical scholarship has flowered, and the study of Mormon women has received much attention, though this attention has been primarily focused on the study of women primarily after Smith established a Church women’s organization in 1842. There remains a chasm encompassing contemporary accounts of women in the first decade of the LDS Church.⁸ Though female biographical works have consistently expanded, no comprehensive attempt has been made to bring light to the lives and contributions of the women residing in this historical hollow.⁹ The intent of this study is ^[3] to illuminate the early Mormon female religious experience as they understood it while they experienced it. For the purposes of this research, the term early Mormon women designates those converted in the first decade of the Church, 1830–1840.

Joseph Smith said that the Church was never perfectly organized until the women were

organized in their own society.¹⁰ If so, then what was there for women in the imperfect Church organization? What was the motivation for women to unite with the Mormons without any specific focus towards them? Why would they associate themselves with an undeveloped and persecuted religion rather than one of the many well-established churches? Were early Mormon women merely followers of their husbands? Did Mormonism follow "the usual female preponderance in religious movements"?¹¹ Or, were men by majority those who were initially attracted to Mormonism? What was the female conversion experience? Was it distinct from their nineteenth-century female counterparts? Were all women repulsed by Mormonism and its return to the Old Testament patriarchs?¹² Or, were women real historical players who had their own conversion experiences and tell of their own spiritual transformation?¹⁴

In order to answer the preceding questions as to the quality of the religious experience of the earliest Mormon women, this project examines a collection of nineteen letters of these women written between 1831 and 1843. Though the limited sample of nineteen letters cannot be considered a statistically verifiable sample, they are nevertheless representative of the letters written by Mormon females during the first decade of the Church collected in various historical repositories around the country. Though the Church in different areas experienced different problems and difficulties in growth, personally the women demonstrate a similarity in experience despite distinct geographical bases.

These letters capture insights into the lives of very distinct women. The letters demonstrate they were not extremists. They were satisfied with their circumstances as were many other women of their times and did not move to radically alter their female experience.¹³ But once they had felt of God's love and the power of the restored gospel as preached by Mormon missionaries, they rejoiced and felt compelled to share it with others.¹⁴ The letters demonstrate they believed in modern-day revelation, Smith's ^[5] authority to teach them the direct word of God, and their own ability to receive personal revelation to teach them the "truth of all things."¹⁵ Their attraction to this authority introduced by Smith compelled them to join the Church of Christ and then to

impart their experience to others.¹⁶ They were not slavish followers of their husbands but often led out in the conversion process.

Some American historians have used the perceived absence of information to indicate that the earliest Mormon women were short on number and influence or that LDS leaders were misogynists or any number of incorrect assumptions about Mormons. They suggest that women were generally dragged into Mormonism by their husbands because they would not unite with the Mormons of their own volition. In addition to the gap in women's historical studies, which characterizes the research of early Mormon women, similar assumptions demand a more comprehensive examination of the existing records.

In 1991 Charles Sellers, a prominent Jacksonian historian, argued that unlike other religious movements of the time, males outnumbered women in Mormonism because of a "widespread female reluctance" to accept the faith.¹⁷ According to Sellers, this in fact, "revers[ed] the usual female preponderance in religious movements." Sellers's analysis of Mormonism is not positive nor is it well informed. For him Joseph ^[6] Smith was a "resourceful trickster" who utilized the Church he established for his needs. Sellers employed the example of Lucy Harris to demonstrate that women fought vigorously against Smith and his Church and erroneously averred that women could not be baptized unless related to a male Saint.¹⁸ He asserted, "The writings of the most loyal [Mormon women] convey an undertone of resentment." His sole cited source for this analysis of Mormon women was an unpublished paper written by Carol McKibben, which incorrectly cited quotes from Elizabeth B. Tanner and Eliza M. Partridge in *Our Pioneer Heritage* written by Mormon community historian Kate B. Carter.¹⁹ Neither Tanner nor Partridge was included in that ten-volume set, and a cursory reading of other writings of both Tanner and Partridge do not appear to relay a tone of resentment.²⁰ Unlike Seller's characterization, many Mormon women were the first in their families to join with Smith and endured harassment for their belief. Patty Bartlett Sessions was one such woman. In 1833 she first had contact with the missionaries; she desired to be baptized but waited for her husband to join with her. When he did not, Patty decided to join on her own. For more

than a year she was taunted and tormented by family members and neighbors until other family members were baptized.²¹ [7]

Similarly to Sellers's analysis, Susan Juster, a historian at the University of Michigan, equated Joseph Smith with the Prophet Matthias, the alias of Robert Matthews, who preached that "woman is the capsheaf of the abomination of desolation—full of all deviltry."²² Similar to many analyses, referring to the "intense misogyny displayed by many of these 'Old Testament Patriarchs,'" Juster assumed that because an organization was patriarchal it was also misogynistic.²³ Through their writings Mormon women did not demonstrate that they felt like the object of male derision, nor is it found in Joseph Smith's writings.²⁴ In contrast, Mormon women largely reveal an understanding of and a willing deference to men and their position in the Church. In addition, the teachings of Mormon leaders demonstrate a reverence toward women. There is not adequate analysis or sufficient evidence to support such negative assumptions. [8]

Although the number of males attracted to Mormonism was disproportionate to the number of males in other New England religions, the number of males who claimed Church membership was not disproportionate to the number of females.²⁵ According to Susan Easton Black's record of early Church membership, 45.8 percent of converts were women and 54.2 percent were men.²⁶ To supplement this data, Bruce Lott utilized Black's records to create a sample of American-born couples who joined with the Mormons after marriage and before the Saints' move to Utah.²⁷ Of the ninety-two couples included in his sample, in 27 percent of the cases the wife was the first to accept baptism.²⁸ The husband was baptized first in 37 percent of the cases. In 36 percent of the cases both were baptized on the same day. While this sample shows that there were more male than female members during the period, out of the sixteen women examined in this study, one half came into the Church on their own or with women in their families. Four (25 percent) were led by their sons, husbands, or brothers and another four were baptized the same day as their husbands.²⁹ Although both [9] samples are extremely limited, neither sample indicates a preponderance of male Church membership.

The incompleteness of the documentation of these early women is due to several problems. In general, women's nineteenth-century personal writings flourished; a high percentage of New England women were literate and utilized this expression through diary keeping and letters to family and friends. Though most Mormon women were from New England and New York, their case is unique. Their continual transitory mode made writing more difficult, and they often lacked the time and resources to commit their experiences to paper. As Hepzibah Richards, an 1838 Mormon convert, penned to a family member, "I must be brief for I expect both time and paper will fail me before I have said one half I wish."³⁰ Pen, ink, and paper were precious. In letter writing every last centimeter of space was utilized. At times this meant writing both horizontally and vertically to maximize writing space. Dependent on both distance and size, postage was costly. Often letters would be scribbled with a moment's notice to be delivered by a traveling missionary or worked on for weeks while waiting for a carrier to leave.³¹ [10]

In addition, women's Church organizations in the first half of the nineteenth century lacked both the tenure and continuity necessary to insure that the significant role women performed was not overlooked. And, it is only in the last decades that historical repositories have made an aggressive effort to acquire the documentation for women's history. Letters must not only be written but, years later, collected. If the identity of the letter's recipients is known, tracing them to retrieve the letters is often impossible, though through occasional serendipity correspondence can be retrieved. Letters are easily lost and destroyed, so their existence is particularly valuable.

While the Church History Library and other repositories with LDS collections throughout the country collectively possess hundreds of Mormon female reminiscences, there are remarkably few contemporary female accounts of the first decade of the Church.³² While women's reminiscences are helpful in recreating life experiences, they often slight the candor and spontaneity encountered in letters. Through extensive research, I have located no more than forty letters written during the first decade of the Church by females; many of which detail little more than family news.³³

All of these letters indicate the immense value of contemporary documentation. And with so few ^[11] resources not influenced by the passage of time, the value of these letters in particular is immeasurable for studying early Mormonism.

Letter writing has been an important mode of communication since the advent of the written word. Correspondence flowered in the eighteenth century bringing what literary scholar Elizabeth Cook entitled an "emblem of the private" into the public sphere.³⁴ While the second half of the seventeenth century brought a "feminization" of letter writing, female letter writing exploded in the nineteenth century.³⁵ With the expansion of transoceanic shipping, which transported mail more quickly, and the creation of a middle class through industrialization, which allowed some women more time to write and the education to do so, the correspondence of women particularly expanded.

Letters are considered "windows into the soul of an author."³⁶ Though letters do not retrieve the author wholly, they supply an intimate glimpse of the writer. Letters were long maligned because of the obscurity of the author's identity combined with obtuse intent, but the advent of social history legitimized vernacular literature, which included the letters of the ordinary person.³⁷

As of late, letters have become not only legitimate but a significant historical source. The glimpses afforded the reader through correspondence show a distinctive depth of self-expression. In the early twentieth century letters were often utilized in ^[12] historical research, though heavily edited. The heavy editing often obfuscated any possibility to glimpse authentic self and intent. Historians in the latter part of the twentieth century justified authors speaking for themselves. The role of historians developed into providing a framework and background to understand the author with a light editorial hand.³⁸ Such an atmosphere allows the inherent value of such an intimate source as correspondence to shine and provide significant historical information.

These letters significantly and uniquely add to the body of women's history as an important examination of contemporary sources to understand the religious experience of early Mormon women. From the eloquence of Lucy Mack Smith to the unpolished though poetic articulation of Melissa Morgan Dodge, besides providing important examples of women's writings, these

women convey insight into their religious experience as the focal point of their lives. They portray their everyday routine, such as requests for nutmeg and bonnet material and span the spectrum of sentiment as they include their most heartfelt emotions. While economics surely had a significant impact on their time, their hope for financial progress did not control their sentiments. As Melissa Dodge made clear, "We take the spoiling of our goods joyfully."³⁹ Though some spent time making palm leaf hats to economically subsist, the hats did not imbue their lives with meaning.⁴⁰ The women consistently waded through waters of sacrifice to ^[13] reach their goal of salvation. As Hepzibah Richards penned in verse, these women believed that though they might have to pass through hell in this life, they would be richly rewarded in the life to come:

There is a rest in heaven for weary saints,
O, let this thought your spirits ever cheer;
May this fond hope a peaceful calm create,
And ever dry affliction's parting tear.⁴¹

Rather than being merely followers of someone else's conviction, through their writings these women demonstrate that they believed on their own—at times initiating their husbands and families to Mormonism.

Despite all being members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the women examined in this study are a heterogeneous group. These letters introduce a wide sampling of women at different states and ages in life. Some are well-known members of the Church; others are little more than the "outline of a shadow."⁴² These women do not illustrate perfection. They were not without complaints nor were they Pollyannaish. They experienced supreme hardships and the frustration of momentary loss of faith. But their overriding message remains. They were stalwart in their conviction and were all dedicated to the Latter-day Saint course during ordeals as refugees in exile and many other struggles throughout their lifetimes.⁴³ Despite the separation from loved ones, danger, and difficulties they would face as Church members, religion was the guiding ^[14] factor of their lives. These women testified of the value of their experiences and exhorted others to come to the fold regardless of the trials that were required of them.

Descriptions of the letters are found with the letters in chapter three. The originals of many of the letters still exist, while for others all that

remains is a photocopy or a typescript. Most of the originals are in remarkably good condition. Along with a brief individual biographical sketch for each woman is the letter, lightly edited and annotated to enhance comprehension. These letters allow the women to recreate their world in their own words. As religious historian Marilyn Westerkamp explained, "The important question is . . . how women and the surrounding society judged the validity of their experiences and discovered the meanings of providence, visions, and voices that they knew to be the breath of God."⁴⁴ Though the extant number of letters during this early time period is small, the letters provide an abundant glimpse into the faith of these women and a great aid to demonstrate the focus of their lives and actions. The letters have been minimally punctuated and paragraphed to augment readability while maintaining their spelling and style. Carets < > indicate insertions into the text by the authors themselves. Their strikeouts are shown by ~~strikeouts~~. Brackets [] indicate textual clarifications. Vertical lines | | demonstrate indiscernible words. Not all individuals mentioned in the letters have been identified. Those who can be identified have been noted in footnotes.

The letters presented here augment the recent historical trend to acknowledge the value of women's voices. They provide a glimpse into the central features of the religious experience of early Mormon women: testimony and belief. The women ^[15] considered here readily demonstrate their faith and conviction. They believed the Book of Mormon and the new revelations given through Joseph Smith to be the word of God. They felt similar to Lehi, a Book of Mormon prophet, who, after tasting the sweetness of God's love, intensely desired to share it with others. They believed in their autonomous right to receive personal revelation and over and over again testified of their experience and had faith that their human testimony would awaken that same yearning in their friends and family. ^[16]

Notes

1. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois, 1984), 111. The name of the Church of Christ was changed to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1838. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed., B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. rev., (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 3:24. The terms *Latter-day*

Saints, *Saints*, and *Mormons* are utilized interchangeably throughout this work as are The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The LDS Church, the Mormon Church, and the Church. Members called themselves Saints, as did the followers of Christ in the first century.

2. LDS meetinghouses are generally referred to as chapels where a ward or branch—a local congregation—meets. Church services are held at chapels each Sunday. Temples are fewer in number and greater in level of sacredness to LDS Church members. Only adult members in good standing may enter the temples.

3. The exception to this was the first meetinghouse built in Kaw Township, Jackson County, Missouri (the present-day outskirts of Kansas City), in 1832. Shortly after the building was completed, the Saints were expelled from Jackson County by the Missouri natives.

4. Latter-day Saints used the Bible and the Book of Mormon. In addition, today the Latter-day Saint canon includes the Doctrine and Covenants—a collection of revelations from God received by Smith and the Pearl of Great Price—a translation of the writings of Abraham and Moses and a brief history of Joseph Smith.

5. LDS doctrines as to "the nature of the Holy Ghost, the primacy of free will, new perspectives on the fall and destiny of man, the blending of spiritual and temporal, baptism for the dead, the higher ranges of the priesthood, the erection of the temple in its full-blown ceremonial patterns, the establishment of celestial and plural marriage, and finally the doctrine of eternal progression" were not introduced until the Nauvoo period beginning in 1839. T. Edgar Lyon, "Doctrinal Development of the Church During the Nauvoo Sojourn, 1839–1846," *BYU Studies* 15, no. 4 (1975): 435. See also Larry C. Porter and Milton V. Backman, "Doctrine and the Temple in Nauvoo," *BYU Studies* 32 no. 1 and 2 (1991 and 1992): 41–55.

6. See chapter 2 for a more specific treatment of the timeline and development of doctrine.

7. Ann Braude, "Forum: Female Experience in Religion," *Religion and American Culture* 5, no.1 (Winter 1995): 6.

8. The Relief Society is the women's organization within the LDS Church. The women of the Church organized themselves into a benevolent society in 1842, the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, which was later reorganized by Joseph Smith.

9. In Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of the Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), Mormon women before 1842 receive but brief treatment in the prologue. Similarly, Valeen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell provide only a cursory introduction to the women of Kirtland in their 1980 article, "Sweet Counsel in Seas of Tribulation," *BYU Studies*, 20 no. 2 (1980): 151–162. Martha Sonntag Bradley's "'Seizing Sacred Space': Women's Engagement in Early Mormonism" most specifically explores the religious commitment of the women of the first two decades of the Church through an examination of over two hundred female conversion narratives. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (Summer 1994): 57–70. For an expansive bibliography of published material concerning Mormon women, see James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, *Studies in Mormon History, 1830–1997: An Indexed Bibliography* (Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 1018–1038.

10. Quoted in Sarah Kimball, "Auto-biography," *Woman's Exponent* 12 (September 1, 1883): 51. For a comprehensive analysis of women's roles in early Church organization, see Ileen Ann Waspe [LeCheminant] "The Status of Woman in the Philosophy of Mormonism from 1830 to 1845" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1942).

11. Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 224.

12. See Susan Juster, "The Spirit and the Flesh: Gender, Language, and Sexuality in American Protestantism," in Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart, eds., *New Directions in American Religious History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), and Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Mathias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). This return to the Old Testament patriarchs refers to Joseph Smith's teaching of a family order with the father as the head as the ultimate organization in eternity. Smith's teaching of the patriarchal order need not be confused with the patriarchal order of marriage, which during the nineteenth century was synonymous with the practice of plural marriage or polygamy. While both require the priesthood—the authority of God—to function, they are not identical. The practice of plural marriage was not publicly announced until 1852. Though Smith and some of his closest associates began the practice of plural marriage prior to the exodus to Utah, it was rarely a part of the religious experience for women during the first decade of the Church and was not a factor in these letters.

13. Catherine Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims in America: Female Preaching: 1740–1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 6.

14. Jeremy Mumford maintains that the Mormon attitude regarding gender was no different than that of other Americans but involved a different, more informal, concept of evangelism for women. Several of these letters are a prime example of informal warning. Though not called as official representatives of the Church, women consistently shared their beliefs with others, warning them of the exigency of truth and authority to be saved. See Mumford, "The Sexual Dynamics of 'Warning': Women, Men and The Mormon World Mission, 1830–1860," Senior Essay in History, Yale College, 13 May 1992, Church History Library.

15. Moroni 10:5.

16. For example, in his thesis Mark Grandstaff demonstrated that 75.9 percent of the Kirtland Saints converted to Smith's Church because of the Book of Mormon and the authority they believed Smith possessed. Mark R. Grandstaff, "The Impact of the Mormon Migration on the Community of Kirtland, Ohio, 1830–1839" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1984), 110.

17. Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 218–225. While Sellers's analysis is not a source likely utilized to learn about early Mormon women, given the absence of substantial research on the earliest Mormon women, the weight of the erroneous analysis is far greater.

18. Lucy Harris is an ineffectual example and stands in stark contrast to the scores of women who were attracted to Smith's message. Although her husband, Martin, was one of the Three Witnesses called to attest to the divinity of the Book of Mormon and also financed the printing of the book, Lucy never believed Smith and was a consistent antagonist to his work. Lucy Mack Smith—Joseph's mother and

one of the women included in this study—described Lucy Harris as a "dark spirit." Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: Published for Orson Pratt by S.W. Richards, 1853), 156. In addition, women were baptized without family members.

19. Kate B. Carter, comp., *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 10 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1958–1977).

20. Elizabeth B. Tanner, Autobiography, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections; "Eliza M. Partridge" in Kate B. Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1952–57), 2:219.

21. Donna Toland Smart, "Patty Bartlett Sessions: Pioneer Midwife" in Colleen Whitely, ed., *Worth Their Salt: Notable but Often Unnoted Women of Utah* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1996), 3.

22. Juster, "The Spirit and the Flesh," 334–361. Juster is not the only one to link Matthias and Smith. See Johnson and Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Mathias*. Johnson and Wilentz do not equate patriarchy with oppression as does Juster. Though Mathias and Smith do share similarities and did meet in Kirtland, in opposition to Matthews, Smith taught of the exalted position of women.

23. In addition, in her book *Disorderly Women: Sexual Politics and Evangelism in Revolutionary New England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 132–134, Juster maintains that "overt misogyny" of Mormon patriarchs relegated Mormon women to secondary positions at Church and in the home.

24. For example, Caroline Crosby and Elizabeth Ann Whitney described their deference to the priesthood as they remembered their early Church experience in Ohio. Caroline said, "I well recollect the sensations with which my mind was actuated when I learned the fact that my husband had been called and ordained to the Melchisedek priesthood and would undoubtedly be required to travel and preach the gospel to the nations of the earth. I realized in some degree the immense responsibility of the office, and besought the Lord for grace and wisdom to be given him that he might be able to magnify his high and holy calling." Elizabeth stated, "During all these absences and separations from my husband I never felt to murmur or complain in the least . . . yet I was more than satisfied to have him give all, time, talents, and ability into the service of the Kingdom of God; and the change in our circumstances and associations which were consequent upon our embracing the Gospel, never caused me a moment's sorrow. I looked upon it as a real pleasure to give all for the sake of my faith in the religion of Jesus, considering all as nought in comparison with the example of our blessed Savior." As cited in Karl Ricks Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland: Eyewitness Accounts* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 151–152. Though it is difficult to suppose that all early Mormon women demonstrated such constant exuberance in the face of adversity, such a respect for the patriarchal order is shared.

25. In his master's thesis, Bruce Lott cited several historians who have claimed that Mormonism was the sole exception to the nineteenth-century feminization of American religion. Marvin S. Hill, "The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District," *New York History* 61 (October 1980): 411–430; Johnson and Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Mathias*, 7–10; Karen V. Hansen, *A Very Social Time: Crafting Com-*

munity in *Antebellum New England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 231. None of these sources provide thorough evidence to demonstrate this assumption according to Bruce R. Lott, "Becoming Mormon Men: Male Rites of Passage and the Rise of Mormonism in Nineteenth-Century America" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2000), 75.

26. Black's research located records that included 11,160 members who were baptized members of The Church of Jesus Christ between 1830 and 1848. *Membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1830–1848*, 50 vols. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1984–1988). Taking into account inaccuracies and the limited nature of nineteenth-century records, the accuracy of these statistics is questionable, though their existence is more helpful than nothing.

27. Lott, "Becoming Mormon Men," 76. His sample of 92 is less than 1 percent of Black's Church population. As such, it cannot be considered conclusive.

28. "Before" entails anywhere from one day to several years before.

29. The purpose of this study is not to proffer a comprehensive comparative analysis of early Mormon women and their religious experience in comparison to males, but to present a unique glimpse of these women through their correspondence. The letters themselves and the devotion they introduce identify the need for a comprehensive gender study of early LDS history. Rather than examining why one gender was more attracted to Mormonism than another, more elucidation will come through a full analysis of how Smith introduced a theology that attracted both men and women in contrast to other nineteenth-century religions.

30. Hepzibah Richards (1795–1838) to William Richards, Kirtland, Ohio, 22 January 1838, typescript, Church History Library. Mary Fielding Smith (1801–1852) is an excellent example: one of her letters included in this collection and her collection in the Church History Library includes several letters written both horizontally and vertically.

31. See Carol Madsen, *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake: Deseret Book, 1994).

32. The Church History Library possess a larger early women's collection than any other LDS repository. Christy Lee Best, *Guide to Sources for Studies of Mormon Women in the Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Historical Department, 1976). A substantial amount of material has been added to the collection since this guide was published. Fifteen of the letters are from their collection. In addition, the originals of three of the letters are in the Michigan Historical Collections at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, though the Church History Library, BYU L. Tom Perry Special Collections, and the Library/Archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [Community of Christ] all have either typescripts, microfilm copies, or color copies of those letters. One letter is in private possession.

33. Those letters written after 1840 included in this study all focus on their recent past—the experience of the first decade, more contemporary than reminiscences. It was not possible to include all letters found in this study, though an attempt has been made to cite significant portions of all of the letters.

34. Philosopher Jürgen Habermas introduced the concept of writing as a means of breaking into the public sphere.

For both Cook and Habermas see Carolyn Steedman, "A Woman Writing a Letter," in Rebecca Earle, ed., *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-writers, 1600–1945* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1999), 116.

35. Earle, "Introduction: Letters, Writers, and the Historian," in Earle, ed., *Epistolary Selves*, 6.

36. Earle, "Introduction," in Earle, ed. *Epistolary Selves*, 5.

37. See Earle, *Epistolary Selves*, and Margaret Daley, *Women of Letter: A Study of Self and Genre in the Personal Writing of Caroline Schlegel-Schelling, Rahel Levin Varnhagen, and Bettina von Arnim* (Columbia, South Carolina: Camden House, 1998), 1–13.

38. A first-rate example of the differences of editing style is Carolyn De Swarte Gifford. In 1995 she focused on allowing the author to speak for herself in *Writing Out My Heart: Selections from the Journal of Frances E. Willard, 1855–1896* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995). A previous editor of Willard's journal downplayed Willard's religious piety in contrast to Gifford's collection through which the religious devotion shined.

39. Melissa Morgan Dodge to William T. Morgan, 23 June 1839, William T. Morgan Correspondence, Church History Library.

40. Caroline Barnes Crosby (1814–?) and Rhoda Richards (1784–1879) mention weaving palm leaf hats as discussed in Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780–1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 181–190. Clark examines the economic motives of the people of rural America during this time period.

41. Hepzibah Richards, "Farewell," Richards Family Correspondence, typescript, Church History Library.

42. Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 604.

43. Though the letters of female dissenters may differ in themes, were they available, the themes portrayed by this somewhat limited sample of letters can be considered representative of the earliest faithful Mormon women.

44. Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Women and Religion in Early America, 1600–1850: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 8.

Chapter 2

Thus Far

I did not know when I left that I should be called to come thus far.

—Phebe Crosby Peck

Mormonism proffered its converts a unique religious experience in comparison with the other accepted religions of the nineteenth century. Though Mormonism grew from the religious environment of the first half of the nineteenth century it was far from typical in its message and movement. When Phebe Peck converted to Mormonism in 1830, she did not expect the consequences of this decision would so drastically change her life. “Thus far” describes the many unexpected changes in her life: the physical movement of The Church of Jesus Christ from New York to Ohio to Missouri and eventually on to Illinois in a short number of years and the doctrinal evolution and progression introduced by Joseph Smith that Phebe would be asked to accept. These elements defined a religion distinctive in the American religious landscape that only those with a deep commitment and abiding faith could accept.

The American Revolution was the impetus for a major democratization of Christianity in America.¹ This democratization permeated all aspects of political and social life and expanded the sphere of those who believed they could think and act ^[17] for themselves. The revolution incited a passion for equality never before thought possible. The centrality of equality gave man hope in the potential of common individuals to perfect themselves and society.² In the realm of religion, it was no longer only those with a theological degree who could offer religion to the populace; the common man inspired by the Spirit could gain ascendancy. By 1820 evangelicals no longer promoted “patient Passivity” but a proactive seeking of God.³ This Christian populism offered to all visions of both individual and collective self-respect and confidence and in turn permanently changed the religious landscape.

The religious cosmology that materialized linked the sacred and the profane and provided a sacred structure of meaning for the whole of society.⁴ Though not all believed in organized religion, this sacred structure motivated Americans to change their society for the better. Politics, society, and the economy were all sacred, as was the human potential to create a perfect society. As a belief in God ruled, many sought out religion undefiled. Many believed in a return to the purity of the church as Christ established. Scores of people formed informal groups and labeled themselves as seekers. Seekers sought out the authority, ordinances, and organization of the church established in New Testament times.⁵ Though initially for many this was an ideal, many believed that their own sect had accomplished the return. Joseph Smith was a product of this atmosphere ^[18] and played a unique role in the expansion of democratic religious thought in America during the nineteenth century.

For women in the nineteenth century, religion was a central part of their life experience. It was not merely a decorative addition to their lives but the encompassing motivation. As American Historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese explained, “Religion has afforded American women their most important source of strength, purpose, and identity.”⁶ Continuing earlier trends of high percentages of female church membership, in the nineteenth century women made up a majority of churchgoers.⁷ While the religious cosmology of the time affected all in a different manner, women went to church.⁸ Though there was a select group of women preaching throughout the country, in general the role of most women was that of “backbone” of the church.⁹ They were the integral support of the church but invisible in matters of church leadership. Women’s role in leadership was extremely disproportionate to membership in the first half of the nineteenth century. ^[19]

Susan Juster argued that religion provides the context for the transformation of the role of women in nineteenth-century America.¹⁰ The beginnings of a market economy and the dissolution of the apprentice systems fractured the traditional corporate family economy and created major changes in the lives of women. As they began to be separated from their domestic duties, their focus and roles changed.¹¹ Mary Ryan maintained that as the market created the middle class, the primary focus of the family transitioned from that of an authoritative father to a loving mother. Subsequently, the mother's role gradually transitioned from a focus on household production to the socialization of children.¹² As their household responsibilities changed, they were afforded greater time to focus on things other than temporal subsistence. These changes in the economic and social order caused many to question their identity and purpose as women. Through the development of a market economy, some women and their families reached a higher level of material comfort with greater opportunities, but also a narrower set of roles.¹³ Others became industrial workers and experienced a degree of autonomy never before experienced. Religion, in particular, afforded women an opportunity to establish their identity despite changes in familial, social, and economic relations.^[20]

The purpose of religion was to instill true faith and provide the path to salvation. Women felt the need for themselves and for their families. Their role as loving mother was to lead their families to church, which would in turn lead them to truth and salvation as they integrated religion into their lives. Women's historian Nancy Cott points to frequent encounters with death through childbirth and socialization as to the expected female role as the most oft cited reasons behind the centrality of religion in women's lives.¹⁴ Religious historian Barbara Welter adds to this analysis by identifying a feminization of not only church membership, but theology in the 1800s.¹⁵ Because of the increasing female influence ministers exchanged their Calvinistic god of hellfire and damnation with a more appealing meek and forgiving Christ. The heart prevailed over the head. Cott demonstrates that women were repeatedly taught that Christianity theologically provided them with opportunities to assert themselves and find a community in which they belonged.¹⁶

While men usually found such assertions in profession, women found their own assertion of self in religion. This assertion allowed them to define themselves, find their community, and order their lives and their priorities. No other institution spoke as directly to women and encouraged their allegiance as the church during the first half of the nineteenth century.^[21]

The women who embraced Mormonism in its first decade sprang from this environment. Martha Bradley's pioneering research analyzed over two hundred Mormon female conversion narratives to situate Mormon women in this context.¹⁷ She discovered early Mormon women did not come from "the ranks of the unchurched." Most had been previously converted to Christianity. Closely resembling the writers of the forthcoming letters, the women Bradley examined demonstrated a "preoccupation with matter of the spirit." She maintained that in these conversion narratives the "language of the heart" mimicked the Protestant move from the intellect to the heart. Moreover, the "stylized and formulaic" language of Mormon conversion narratives followed the same predictable shape as most nineteenth-century conversion narratives. Just as other women, Mormon women found the autonomy of the conversion process empowering. They rejoiced that God would directly reveal personal truth to them.

In the spring of 1820 amidst the excitement of revolutionary religious revival, a fourteen-year-old boy in upstate New York had a transcending theophany in response to a simple prayer of faith. Joseph Smith Jr. later told of this visit of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. In the visit they told him that none of the existing churches held the proper authority of Christ and later it was revealed to Smith that he would restore the church that Christ established during his lifetime. Later when Smith made public his calling, the women introduced in this study believed him because God likewise revealed to them personally that Smith told the truth. They believed that he was called to be a modern-day prophet with authority from God to restore a fullness of the gospel of Christ as revealed anciently.^[22]

Historians have long debated the appeal of Joseph Smith and Mormonism. As author William Mulder articulated, "It expressed prominent traits and tendencies that were already

shaping American society. It was not simply a colorful reflection of the times; it was a dynamic reworking of the diverse elements of American culture.¹⁸ Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton identify and develop seven distinctive elements of Mormonism that promulgate its allure: restoration of the true church, biblicalism, The Book of Mormon, modern revelation, eschatology, mythic potency, and religious authoritarianism.¹⁹ The Church of Jesus Christ proffered a return of the primitive Christian church, supported its doctrines by biblical texts, introduced a newly translated, ancient American scripture that functioned as tangible evidence that Smith was not a reincarnation of prior restorationist attempts, and new directions from God for his people to further elucidate doctrines previously anciently introduced through scripture and introduce new divine understandings. Mormons were likewise steeped in ardent millennialism and other-worldly pursuits while providing a plausible description of man's relationship to God from the beginning of time. In addition to the importance of these former elements, Mario DePillis grounded the perceived necessity of the last element of divine authority and certainty. American historian, Nathan Hatch, described this attraction:

The fact that there were so many religious voices was very bewildering, I think, for the common people. And so there was this deep questioning, what could one believe? And I think that's where the voice of Joseph Smith did become a very certain trumpet. What he said is that he had a new word from the Lord, a new kind of revelation. Which was certain and ^[23] sure. It was the miraculous intervention in modern times, just as Christ had come in the time of the New Testament. And that made great sense to a lot of people, that amidst this cacophony of voices you had a certain trumpet that offered the reality of the supernatural today.²⁰

Similarly, religious historian Richard Hughes noted:

We find many people in the United States in the early nineteenth century looking for something that went far beyond human reason. They're looking for spiritual power. And that's exactly what Joseph Smith brought. . . . He had the word from God. The word from on high. No one else could make that kind of claim.²¹

DePillis asserted, for Mormons "only the restored Priesthood could save a torn and divided Christianity."²² Smith's "certain trumpet" initially attracted scores of converts and then, through the

work of missionaries sent out by him, converts by the thousands.

Trusting in Smith's "more sure word of prophecy" meant more than church attendance and membership in church aid societies. It meant giving all to follow God's chosen, Smith, whether he introduced new doctrine or announced a new place of gathering.²³ Though all could not accept all doctrine, those who remained faithful were drawn to Smith and his Church by the idea of his divinely appointed authority and his divine mission to introduce a fullness of God's doctrine.²⁴ Conversely the majority of ^[24] those who persecuted Smith, whether nonbelievers or one-time believers, often persecuted him because of the doctrines he introduced.²⁵

Those who gathered in a New York farmhouse in April 1830 to organize the Church of Christ believed that Smith was a prophet, that the Book of Mormon was a historic record of the ancient inhabitants of the Americas, and the Church was the same church that Christ originally established. They did not believe that Joseph had already received the complete word of God, but as a prophet he would continue to learn as revelation taught "line upon line and precept upon precept."²⁶ The next ten years would bring a whirlwind of transitions for the small group of believers.

Missionaries would proclaim Smith's message throughout New York, New England, and the frontier.²⁷ Soon the members on the frontier in Ohio outnumbered those in New York.²⁸ Within six months the persecution in Palmyra, Colesville, and Fayette, ^[25] New York, reached an apex, and Joseph received a revelation from God directing them to remove from New York to a new Church headquarters in Kirtland, Ohio.

Amidst a population surge in Kirtland, the Church began to flourish. Smith taught the people that once they believed, they should then gather together with the other Saints. Kirtland became the first place of gathering and the number of Saints eventually surpassed the number of other residents in the town and the vicinity.²⁹ Even those who were not able to gather wished to be with the main body of the Saints to profit from the brother and sisterhood there. Nancy Richards Pierson, a married sister of several church members, lamented to her sister, "Were I a single person, as you are, [I] think I should have seen

Kirtland before now."³⁰ Nancy's sister Rhoda likewise revealed to her brother Levi, "I long to be numbered one among you. Is there not a spot of earthe a little spot near you that I can have? When I see the shanties around Sister N., house I think how desirable one would be in Zion to a palace here."³¹ Once in Kirtland, the Saints enjoyed solidarity. Shortly after her move to Kirtland, Sally Parker penned to those left behind, "I long to see you all fer [for I] cant discribe my felings altho I am contented. I niver have wish my self back. for I think it is the will of the lord wee should com to this place."³²

In Kirtland the church population expanded as did new doctrine. Sixty-five canonized revelations elaborated and enlarged the principles and policies of the new ^[26] Church.³³ The Word of Wisdom—a health code—the creation of a first presidency, a cooperative economic program known as the law of consecration, and many other important doctrines were revealed during the Saints' time in Ohio.³⁴ The Saints were consistently tutored through revelation to increase their knowledge. Through Smith the Saints learned that "the glory of God is intelligence" and to put the principle into practice.³⁵ Schools of various types were established by the Saints in Kirtland. The School of Prophets and the School of the Elders initially prepared missionaries to teach doctrine and then expanded to include theological subjects. Despite the poverty of the Saints, a variety of other classes taught a wide spectrum of subjects to educate the Saints in their pursuit of intelligence: a "select school" for young ladies was taught by Eliza R. Snow, several schools teaching elementary subjects, the Kirtland School (similar to the first high school in the United States), a Hebrew course, and several other specialized classes.³⁶ ^[27]

With the great influx of members and doctrines, all would not remain devout. Some were quickly disillusioned because Smith or the Church did not meet their preconceived idea of what a prophet or a church should be. Some left the Church because Smith played with children after receiving revelations, because of a misspelled name in a revelation, or because someone's horse died on a trip to Missouri. One left because he walked all the way to Missouri as a missionary, and he did not receive the gift of tongues after his arrival. Some of these who left the Saints began

to cause difficulties for the Church through the print media and word of mouth.³⁷ Their efforts and those detractors outside the Church combined to cause rumors and the threat of violence.³⁸

While the majority of the persecution in Ohio was verbal or in print, rumors caused action more than once. On an early Saturday morning in March 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were dragged from their beds by an irate mob and then beaten, tarred, and feathered. The principal cause of the mobbing was the introduction of doctrines included in the vision recorded in section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants.³⁹ ^[28] Another was a rumor that several families of the mobbers were to follow Smith to Missouri, and in several cases women planned to permanently leave their husbands.⁴⁰

Earlier in 1831 a small group of Saints who had originally removed from persecutions in Colesville, New York, to Thompson, Ohio, moved on to Jackson County, Missouri. Jackson County was declared through revelation to be the center place of Zion. Joseph Smith declared that there the Lord would establish his people.⁴¹ Although new converts among the Missourians were few, the Saints were joined by missionaries, members, and other new converts from Ohio. By 1833 the Saints made up one-third of the county's population.

The Saints did not meld into Jackson County society. The Mormons were mostly from New England, and they were quite distinct in their appearance and actions. Almira Mack Scobey Covey, an 1830 convert and author of two letters included in this study, provides a description:

When I speak of the Missourians I mean the old Inhabitants which are mostly southern people, and their living is mostly bacon and dodgers; perhaps you may be as ignorant about the dodgers as I was, but I will tell you what they are. They are a sort of Johnny cake made of corn meal, this They eat in prefferance to wheat which makes it much better for our eastern people which like wheat best.⁴² ^[29]

The differences extended further than eating preferences. The Mormons believed through revelation that Jackson County was Zion and that the Lord would grant them those lands. They were not particularly diplomatic in their relations with the non-Mormons and kept to themselves both politically and economically. They were a burgeoning political power, and the long-time citizens of Jackson County grew restless.⁴³

Some of the leading citizens united against the Mormons and in July 1833 called for their removal from the county. When the Mormons would not accept their threats, a mob formed and moved to the Saints' print shop in Independence. They thrashed the press, spread type across the streets, scattered and burned the revelations that were in the process of being printed, and tarred and feathered Bishop Edward Partridge and member Charles Allen in the public square.⁴⁴ Skirmishes between the Saints and the settlers continued over the next several months, and by the first of November the attacks reached a nadir, and the beleaguered Saints could no longer struggle. They deserted their homes and sought refuge across the river in Clay County.⁴⁵

Once expelled, the Mormons worked to rectify the situation through the courts. The governor, Daniel Dunklin, responded that he could restore them to their properties, but once restored he could not promise protection. The Saints did not believe that they ^[30] could maintain themselves and their lands without additional help. Although a contingent of over two hundred from Kirtland led by Joseph Smith came to "redeem Zion," at the end of their nine-hundred-mile trek, Smith received a revelation which prohibited them from fighting to win back the lands of the Saints. Most of the expedition, called Zion's Camp, returned to Kirtland to continue the work of the Saints there.

In late 1832 and early 1833, even as troubles persisted in Missouri, Smith received a revelation commanding the Saints to build a temple "unto the Lord" in Kirtland.⁴⁶ Though their numbers were few and they were impoverished, they expected to move ahead. Polly Johnson Angell, an 1833 convert, remembered Smith teaching the women as they aided the completion of the Kirtland Temple, "Well, sisters, you are always on hand. The sisters are always first and foremost in all good works. Mary was first at the resurrection; and the sisters are now the first to work on the inside of the temple."⁴⁷ By March of 1836 the temple was prepared for dedication. In total, the impoverished Saints contributed between forty and sixty thousand dollars and innumerable hours to finish the structure.

Prior to the Saints' removal to Kirtland the Lord promised them through revelation that they would be "endowed with power from on high."⁴⁸

The Saints overextended themselves building the temple and believed that in return they would ^[31] receive a surge of blessings and knowledge from God. The months preceding and immediately following the Kirtland Temple was known as a "season of Pentecost" to the Latter-day Saints. Visions, the presence of angels, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophesying were all common. Lorenzo Snow, a later Church president and brother to Eliza R. Snow—one of the women of this study—noted that the Spirit was poured out in "copious effusion."⁴⁹ Lovina Fairchild Wilson, an 1836 convert and included in this project, wrote, on 5 April 1836:

I had feast to the Lord and it was a blessed meeting—we had prophesying, speaking with tongues, interpretation of tongues to the astonishment of many present. I can only hint at [the] grandure and sublimity of the scene. Suffice it to say the blessings of the Lord was there in very deed.⁵⁰

Despite the spiritual outpouring after the temple dedication, within a year Kirtland was a very different place. In the summer of 1837, several of Smith's closest associates met to declare him a fallen prophet. The group included David Whitmer, John Whitmer, and Warren Parish. These members had many philosophical disagreements with Smith and decided that they must preserve the Church as it was originally introduced. Though many problems made themselves manifest, two in particular promulgated the most unrest. Generally the failure of the Kirtland Safety Society and Anti-banking Company (a joint-stock company that Smith and Rigdon began in order to release some of the Church's assets and promote a cash flow essential to continued growth) in conjunction with the national economic panic of 1837 and extreme inflation in Kirtland were cited as ^[32] primary reasons for the problems.⁵¹ While the bank did fail, the leading apostates were not among the greatest investors in the Society, disallowing a purely economic motive for their apostasy. A more comprehensive explanation yields its own irony. The same democratic impulse that prepared Joseph Smith to be accepted and even sought after as a prophet remained with many of the Protestant converts. However, his opponents believed that the Church was becoming too rigid in its hierarchical organization. In contrast, they believed that the Church establishment should remain open and democratic.⁵²

In the next year, 10 to 15 percent of Church membership left.⁵³ Kirtland was soon a place of sadness for the faithful followers of Smith. Sally Parker demonstrated her shock in the betrayal of many of the leaders. In reference to John Boynton, one of the leading apostate apostles, she explained, "He appeared to be a man of God and now he is turned like a Dog to his vomit."⁵⁴ As Hepzibah Richards bemoaned to her brother William, "At present people are more composed; but the voice to this people, or to the honest in heart is, 'Get ye out of this place'—and multitudes are preparing to flee. Some ^[33] are going almost without any preparation."⁵⁵ In another letter just after leaving Kirtland, Hepzibah described her comfort in leaving the "dismal den":⁵⁶

I care not how soon I am away from this place. I have been wading in a sea of tribulation ever since I came here. For the last three months we people have been tempest tost; and at times the waves have well nigh overwhelmed us; but we believe there will yet be a way of escape. . . . A dreadful spirit reigns in the breasts of those who are opposed to this Church. They are above law and beneath whatever is laudable. Their leading object seems to be to get all the property of the Church for little or nothing, and drive them out of the place. The house of our nearest neighbor has been entered by a mob and ransacked from top to bottom under pretence of finding goods which it is thought they had stolen themselves. An attempt has since been made to set the same house on fire while the family was sleeping in bed. We suffer from fear but we hope these days of suffering will not always last. For myself I have been less unhappy through all these disquieting scenes than I was last summer. Then I carried a steady burden which seemed almost too heavy to be borne.⁵⁷

Amidst a fog of persecution, in January 1839 Smith and Rigdon hurriedly left Kirtland for Missouri.⁵⁸ The main body of Saints left with a group they called Kirtland Camp, but Missouri would not be the respite Smith envisioned. Many of the dissenters also removed themselves from Kirtland and followed the Saints to Far West, Missouri. Meanwhile there were problems in Missouri prior to Smith's arrival. The members of the Missouri presidency of the Church were rejected for misuse of Church funds and selling ^[34] off the lands in Jackson County when the Lord had dictated otherwise.⁵⁹ Other prominent leaders also became disillusioned, including Oliver Cowdery. It was not enough for the dissenters to leave the Church; they wanted to disillusion the rest along with them. Desdemona Wadsworth Fullmer

described her continued commitment and the mocking of it by some of those who had left,

Oliver Cowdery <Cowdery> with others would say to me are you such a fool as still to go to here Joseph the fallen prophit. I said the Lord convinced me that he was a true prophit. and he has not toled me that he is fallon yet.⁶⁰

In December of 1836, Alexander Doniphan, the state representative from Clay County, proposed the creation of a large northern county for the Mormons. Many Mormons had already begun to settle in Ray County, and through Doniphan's proposal the legislature created Caldwell and Daviess counties primarily for the settlement of the Mormons. There were two major Mormon settlements in northern Missouri, Far West and Adam-On-di-Ahman, surrounded by a number of other settlements.⁶¹ Far West was the headquarters, and it quickly flourished.

Though the Saints felt confident in their new settlements, the same incendiary issues that caused the expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County again incited the Missourians against the Mormons. In the late summer and fall of 1838 the fires of open hostility ignited. On 27 October 1838 Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued an ^[35] order calling that Mormons be "exterminated or driven from the state."⁶² In the record of their Missouri experience the Saints described being hunted, mobbed, beaten, jailed, women raped, and their possessions stolen.⁶³

Several of the letters included in this study tell of women's experiences as they lived in Missouri. On the whole it was a very dark period for the Mormons. Just after the Saints were expelled from Missouri, Smith admonished them to gather "up a knowledge of all the facts, and sufferings and abuses put upon them" and to utilize the record to seek redress through the courts.⁶⁴ The Saints complied with this mandate and appealed to Congress several times. Because of this, the record of the persecutions of the Saints in Missouri is compellingly recorded.⁶⁵

None of the women included here filed specific redress petitions themselves, though several were included in the general scroll petition. But their descriptions of their Missouri experience augment the story of the multitude of Saints who did not file petitions. In total between eight and ten thousand Mormons fled from Missouri in the ^[36] middle of the winter of 1838–1839. Elizabeth

Haven Barlow, an 1838 convert, lamented the Missouri experience in a letter to her sister-in-law:

O how Zion mourns, her sons have fallen in the streets by the cruel hand of the enemy and her daughters weep in silence. It is impossible for my pen to tell you of our situation, only those who feel it, know. Between five and seven thousands men, women and children driven from the places of gathering out of the state from houses and lands in poverty to seek for habitation where they can find them. we weep when we remember Zion.⁶⁶

Quincy, Adams County, Illinois, was eager to accept the fleeing Mormons, and many settled in Quincy and the surrounding areas secure from their persecutors in Missouri. Apart from altruistic considerations on the part of the citizens of the county, the Saints helped Adams County both politically and economically. After a brief respite, the Saints were patiently regrouped in Adams County, and then the majority moved on to Commerce, Hancock County, Illinois, under the direction of Joseph Smith. Because of the warm reception in Adams County, for many of the Saints this was not only a time to recuperate economically, but emotionally and mentally. Eight of the letters integrated into this study were written by women during this time detailing their experiences during the Missouri troubles and, more important, their own analysis of their beliefs and devotion after experiencing such horrendous ordeals. The last letter incorporated into this project was written in Commerce (Nauvoo) in 1843 by Ann Marsh Abbott as she reflected upon her Missouri experience. The preceding narrative presents the events that shaped the experience of each of the women included here.

In the years following their move to Illinois they again began to build their own stronghold where they could be in peace. But once again the peace was short lived. The Saints moved to swampy Commerce, renamed it Nauvoo, and transformed the marsh alongside the ^[37] Mississippi to the largest city in Illinois. Nauvoo meant "beautiful place" in Hebrew, and the Saints had great hopes for their new settlement. The onslaught against the Saints in Nauvoo was again incited by those who had been the closest of Joseph's associates. This assault was magnified by a mob element from the citizens of the county, members of the militia, and a governor willing to wash his hands of any action taken. As the aggression exploded, Joseph

Smith and his brother Hyrum were martyred in June of 1844.

The loss of Smith and his brother Hyrum was a terrible shock to the Saints. Their grief was inexpressible. Eliza R. Snow attempted to pen her feelings through verse:

Had nature's self a heart, her heart would bleed
At the recital of so foul deed
For never, since the Son of God was slain
Has blood so noble flow'd from human vein.⁶⁷

The death of Smith would not end his work. Though several claimed authority to lead after his death, the majority of the Saints believed that the keys had been passed to Brigham Young as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.⁶⁸ The women included here all supported Brigham Young, and those who lived through the trek across the plains finished their lives in comparative peace in the Salt Lake Valley, the new Zion.^{69 [38]}

Notes

1. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 3–16.
2. Sidney Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1963), 90–102.
3. Westerkamp, *Women and Religion*, 109.
4. Robert Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 11–29.
5. Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630–1875* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), xiii.
6. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Forum: Female Experience in Religion," *Religion and American Culture* 5 no. 1 (Winter 1995): 16.
7. Nancy Cott maintained that women made up three-fifths of church attendance during the first part of the nineteenth century in New England. *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780–1835*, 2d ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 32. Sean Wilentz found that 70 percent of the First Presbyterian Church converts in New York City were women. *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 146 n. Mary P. Ryan demonstrates the dependency of churches on women. In Utica, New York, in the 1810s, 90 percent of church-going families were led by women. *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 75–80.
8. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1977). Though the feminization of religion predates Douglas's assessment of nineteenth-century America, she importantly identifies some of the maternalis-

tic appeal of religion in mode of recruitment and changes in theological presentation.

9. Westerkamp, *Women and Religion*, 109–111 and Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims*. "Women are the backbone of the Church" is an old African-American saying applicable to most United States religious groups. Ann Braude, *Women and American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7.

10. Juster, "The Spirit and the Flesh," 334–361.

11. Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750–1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), xiii–xv.

12. Mary P. Ryan, "A Women's Awakening: Evangelical Religion and the Families of Utica, New York, 1800–1840," *American Quarterly* 30 (1978): 602–623 and *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 60–104.

13. Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981).

14. Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, 34.

15. Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion, 1800–1860," in Barbara Welter, ed. *Dimnity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1976). It is interesting to note that Welter utilized the LDS Church as an example of the feminization of religion during the nineteenth century because of the Mormon teaching of a Mother in Heaven. With the two notable exceptions of the Shakers and Christian Scientists, this stood in contrast to most nineteenth-century American religions, though the teaching was not introduced until 1845 after the time period relevant to this study. For a summary of the doctrine of a Mother in Heaven, see Linda P. Wilcox, "The Mormon Concept of a Mother in Heaven," in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds., *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 64–77.

16. Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, 144.

17. Bradley, "Seizing Sacred Space," 57–70.

18. William Mulder, "The Mormons in American History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 37 (January 1959): 60, as cited in Marvin S. Hill and James B. Allen, eds., *Mormonism and American Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 2.

19. Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 20–43.

20. As cited in Heidi S. Swinton, *American Prophet: The Story of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 1999), 52.

21. As cited in Swinton, *American Prophet*, 61.

22. Mario DePillis "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1966): 68–88.

23. 2 Peter 1:19.

24. While the claim of authority and revelation attracted converts to Mormonism, the introduction of new precepts also drove members away. Sarah Hall Scott left the Mormons after Smith introduced several new doctrines in Nauvoo. She commented, "Any one needs a throat like an open sepulcher to swallow down all that is taught here." Richard N. Holzapfel and Jeni Broberg Holzapfel, *Women of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992), 49.

25. Doctrine can be seen as a principle cause of persecution. The mobbing of Smith in 1832 in Hiram, Ohio was directly linked to Smith's teachings of Zion, the Saints as a chosen people, and the doctrines introduced in the vision recorded in Hiram in section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants. See Mark Staker, "Joseph Smith in Hiram, Ohio," unpublished manuscript, LDS Museum of Church History and Art Manuscripts, Church History Library. This is not to marginalize the complexity of persecution; there is not a succinct answer. But how Smith and the Saints approached teaching others doctrine and the doctrines themselves were often at the root of the persecution. Joseph Smith Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (Kirtland, Ohio: F.G. Williams & Co., 1835), and Joseph Smith Jr., *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981). All Doctrine and Covenants citations from the revelations are from the 1981 edition. The citations from the Lectures on Faith are from the 1835 first edition.

26. Though a few had difficulties in accepting new doctrines and principles that were introduced through Smith and left after disagreements with new doctrine, many saw this as the differentiating element from other religions. Smith had a direct connection with God and would relay God's word directly to his followers as they were prepared to receive it. Doctrine and Covenants 98:12.

27. Once the Church was organized, missionaries were officially called on missions. There was no set length of missions and often missionaries traveled throughout the country as they saw fit.

28. By the summer of 1831, there were one thousand members in the vicinity of Kirtland. James Allen and Glen Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 64.

29. For some historians the central focus of Joseph Smith's appeal was his ability to pull people together and create a community. Though today Latter-day Saints are taught to build up the Church where they live, Saints continually gathered to Zion throughout the nineteenth century, whatever location they considered Zion, whether it was Missouri, Illinois, or Utah.

30. Nancy Richards Pierson to Hepzibah Richards, 15 July 1837, Richards Family Correspondence, Church History Library.

31. Rhoda Richards to Levi Richards, 21 October 1835, Richards Family Correspondence, Church History Library.

32. Sally Parker to Francis Tufts, 11 November 1838, Delaware County Historical Society, Ohio.

33. Sixty-five revelations equals 47 percent of those revelations included in the Doctrine and Covenants.

34. On 27 February 1833, Joseph Smith received the revelation known as the Word of Wisdom that grew out of member dissensions regarding contemporary ideas about temperance. The revelation explained it was a "principle with a promise." See Doctrine and Covenants 89. If the Saints would abstain from strong drink, hot drinks (later specified as coffee and tea), and tobacco they would receive spiritual and temporal blessings. It also teaches the Saints to focus on herbs, fruits, flesh, and grain, and they would be blessed both spiritually and temporally. The First Presidency was a triumvirate of men, a president and two counselors, who led the Church. See Doctrine and Covenants 81 and 90. The law of consecration was essentially a com-

munitarian system between Church members administered by Church leaders under the assumption that all material goods belonged to the Lord. The goal was to place all on the same basic economic level, discouraging disparities in wealth and excessive competition. Members would consecrate or sign over all of their temporal goods and then receive back according to their wants and needs "inasmuch as [their] wants [were] just" (D&C 82:17). The excess would be placed in a central location to care for the poor. See Doctrine and Covenants 42:33; 51:3.

35. Doctrine and Covenants 93:36.

36. See Milton V. Backman, *The Heavens Resound*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983) 262–275.

37. Possibly the most damaging was the work of Ezra Booth. See Rebecca Swain Williams's letter.

38. Max A. Parkin, "The Nature and Cause of Internal and External Conflict of the Mormons in Ohio Between 1830 and 1838" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1966).

39. Section 76, known simply as "The Vision" for years, was given to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in February 1832. Joseph himself described the record as "a transcript from the records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action. . . are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: 'It came from God.'" *History of the Church*, 1:252–253. Brigham Young represented the reception of Section 76 by many recounting: "When God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that there was a place prepared for all, according to the light they had received and their rejection of evil and practice of good it was a great trial to many, and some apostatized because God was not going to send to everlasting punishment heathens and infants, but had a place of salvation in due time for all, and would bless the honest and virtuous and truthful, whether they belonged to any church or not. It was a new doctrine to this generation, and many stumbled at it." *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1854–1886), 16:44.

40. For an analysis of the causes of the mobbing, see Staker, "Joseph Smith in Hiram, Ohio."

41. David spoke of the city of Zion in his Psalms: "When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord" (Psalm 102:22). Isaiah described the return of the "ransomed of the Lord" to Zion. See Isaiah 35:10. Smith taught that Zion's setting would be American and that its formation should be the central goal of God's people. He declared, "We ought to have the building up of Zion as our greatest object." *History of the Church*, 3:390.

42. Almira Mack Scobey Covey to Harriet Whittemore, 9 June 1835, microfilm, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

43. Warren Abner Jennings, "The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County," *Missouri Historical Review* 64 (October 1969): 41–63.

44. See B. H. Roberts, *The Missouri Persecutions* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 73–74; Alexander Baugh, "A Call to Arms: The 1838 Defense of Northern Missouri" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1996; BYU Studies, 2000), 14; and Ronald Romig and John Siebert, "First Impressions: The Independence, Missouri, Printing Operation, 1832–1833" *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 10 (1990): 51–66. The destroyed press was the first press owned by the Church. It regularly printed the periodical *The Evening and the Morn-*

ing Star and was in the process of printing the first published collection of revelations, *The Book of Commandments*.

45. Though Clay County was initially very accepting of the Mormons, the same hostilities became apparent although at a slower rate. By June of 1836, the Missourians in Clay County were also desirous that the Mormons relocate.

46. See Doctrine and Covenants 88.

47. Polly Johnson Angell (1813–1876). As quoted in Edward Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1877), 76. This is particularly significant for Latter-day Saints because of the extreme level of sacredness with which they consider the temple. In Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, temple building was a momentous primary goal for the Saints. They dedicated the land to build five temples during this time period though only two were completed (in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois).

48. Doctrine and Covenants 38:32.

49. Eliza R. Snow, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Company, 1884) 12.

50. Lovina Fairchild Wilson to Edmund Waite, 5 April 1836, typescript, Church History Library.

51. While the bank never received a charter from the state of Ohio, there were many like organizations in the area. In 1836 only one out of sixteen proposed bank charters was accepted by the state of Ohio. One historian noted, "All laws against unauthorized banks and bank paper seem to have been in vain." Larry T. Wimmer, Marvin Hill, and Keith Rooker, *The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1977), 40.

52. For a complete analysis of the Kirtland Safety Society and Anti-banking Company, see Hill, Rooker, and Wimmer, *The Kirtland Economy Revisited*. A follow-up article to their analysis peruses the possible alternate causes to the dissolution. Marvin Hill, "A Cultural Crisis in the Mormon Kingdom: A Reconsideration of the Causes of Kirtland Dissent," *Church History* 49 (September 1980): 286–297.

53. Backman, *Heavens Resound*, 328.

54. Sally Parker to Brother and Sister, 26 August 1838, Delaware County Historical Collection. John Boynton was the brother of Olive Boynton Hale, author of one of the letters included in this collection.

55. Hepzibah Richards to William Richards, 22 January 1838, Richards Family Correspondence, Church History Library.

56. Hepzibah Richards to Mary Ann Young, 1838, Church History Library.

57. Hepzibah Richards to Friends, 23 March 1838, Richards Family Correspondence, Church History Library. As Hepzibah said, "I have been wading in a sea of tribulation ever since I came here." Coming to Kirtland in 1838, she was too late to experience the effects of the season of Pentecost. Her Kirtland experience was one of misery.

58. Smith was commanded to leave Kirtland in an unpublished revelation received 12 January 1838. Fred C. Collier, comp., *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., 1982), 88.

59. Smith was instructed to remove John Whitmer and William W. Phelps from the Missouri Presidency in an unpublished revelation 4 September 1837 (Part 40) and fur-

ther established the preeminence of the First Presidency and their preeminence over any stake presidency on 12 January 1838 (Part 44). Collier, *Unpublished Revelations*, 85–88.

60. Desdemona Wadsworth Fullmer, *Reminiscence*, Church History Library.

61. Though most Latter-day Saints were centered in Caldwell and Daviess counties, there were many in Carroll primarily a settlement at DeWitt and Ray counties.

62. This became known as the "Extermination Order." It is important to recognize that a Webster's 1828 dictionary defines extermination as "a rooting out, destruction or ruin" or "to drive from the borders thereof" rather than "to destroy utterly."

63. Clark V. Johnson collected the petitions in his 830-page *Mormon Redress Petitions* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center Brigham Young University, 1992). Seven hundred and seventy-three petitions were written by 678 Mormons. This was less than 5 percent of the Mormons driven from Missouri.

64. See Doctrine and Covenants 123.

65. In addition, Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, and John Taylor published histories of the Missouri persecutions. Several of the women refer to published histories in their letters and are most probably referring to these histories. Parley P. Pratt, *History of the late persecution inflicted by the state of Missouri upon the Mormons: in which ten thousand American citizens were robbed, plundered, and driven from the state, and many others imprisoned, martyred, &c., for their religion, and all this by military force, by order of the executive. Written during eight months imprisonment in that state*. (Detroit: Dawson Bates, printers, 1839); Sidney Rigdon, *An appeal to the American people: being an account of the persecutions of the Church of Latter-day Saints; and of the barbarities inflicted on them by the inhabitants of the state of Missouri / by authority of said church*. (Cincinnati: Glezen and Shepard, stereotypers and printer, 1840), L. Tom Perry Special Collections; and John Taylor, *A short account of the murders, robberies, burnings, thefts, and other outrages committed by the mob and militia of the state of Missouri, upon the Latter-day Saints: The persecutions they have endured for their religion, and their banishment from that state by the authorities thereof*, reprint of 1858 pamphlet (Provo, Utah: David Martin, 1974), L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

66. Elizabeth Haven Barlow, 24 February 1839, Barlow Correspondence, Church History Library, underlining in original.

67. *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 July 1844): 575.

68. Throughout Joseph's lifetime several splinter groups began, but his death caused a proliferation. Amongst many, today three major groups continue: The Church of Christ (Temple Lot), The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (The Community of Christ), and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

69. Many of the women in this study never made it to the Salt Lake Valley, but died along the way. Lucy Mack Smith was the only one that we have a knowledge of staying in Nauvoo after the Saints left. At the time of the deaths of her sons, she was fully supportive of Brigham Young and the Twelve and planned to go to the West. In the intervening time before the Saints actually left, her resolve to go West and her support of the Twelve faded. In the end she opted to remain in Nauvoo with her daughter-in-law Emma. She died in Nauvoo.

Chapter 3

The Letters

Lucy Mack Smith

Lucy Mack Smith experienced the full spectrum of life's challenges and pleasures in her lifetime. The woman who became the mother of Joseph Smith had the personality and the mental acuity that would mold her individuality as a female member of the Church of Christ. Born in July 1775 in Gilsom, New Hampshire, Lucy Mack matured, because of the influence of her mother, in a deeply religious home where the Bible and education were central. This emphasis and their familial tradition produced children who tended to focus their lives spiritually. The Macks were believers in visions, healings, and miracles. The example of Lucy's mother and her own near miss with death generated her firm desire to provide a comparable spiritual environment in her home to teach her family to serve God.¹

Lucy Mack met Joseph Smith Sr. in Tunbridge, Vermont, where she was visiting her brother. They were married in 1796. Joseph Smith was an inwardly religious man but, from his familial tradition, was suspicious of organized religion. However, he supported Lucy and thus spirituality and religion occupied a premier position in Lucy's ^[39] life despite her own adherence to no particular church.² She was introduced to the Restoration through her third son, Joseph, and although older than most of the other women included here, her testimony is strikingly similar. Despite whatever initial response she may have had to Joseph and his experiences, she adapted her stores of spiritual experience to encompass the new realities she discovered daily through the articulations of her son and became a zealously devoted follower. She was officially united with the Church at her baptism in 1830 at the age of fifty-four.

Lucy was unfailingly strong-willed, knowledgeable, and willing to admonish and share her beliefs with those around her. She was also cou-



Lucy Mack Smith. Courtesy Community of Christ Archives.

rageous. As a protective mother and an ardent believer in her son, Lucy once professed to a Presbyterian deacon, "If you should stick my flesh full of faggots, and even burn me at the stake, I would declare, as long as God should give me breath, that Joseph has got that Record [The Book of Mormon], and that I know it to be true."³ A few months later, Lucy Smith led a group of Saints from upstate New York to Kirtland, Ohio, under extreme circumstances. She had her company board the boat in Buffalo as they watched the ice separate on Lake Erie to allow their passage. When the other groups of Saints did not

Waterloo January 6th 1831

Dear Brother & Sister

Although we are at a great distance from each other and have not had the pleasure of seeing each other for many years, yet I feel a great anxiety in your welfare, and especially for the welfare of your souls; and you yourselves must know that it is a thing of the greatest importance to be prepared to meet our God in peace, for it is not long before he is to make his appearance on the earth with all the hosts of Heaven for to take vengeance on the wicked & they that know not God. By searching the prophecies contained in the old testament we find it there prophesied that God will at his hand the second time to recover his people the house of Israel. He has now commenced this work: he hath sent forth a revelation in these last days, & this revelation is called the book of Mormon, it contains the fullness of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and is sent forth to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things God hath done for their fathers; that they may know of the covenants of the Lord & that they are not cast off forever, ^{and also} of the coming of both Jew and Gentile that ~~Jesus~~ ^{Jesus} is the ^{True} Eternal God and manifests himself unto all nations; it also contains the history of a people which were led out of Jerusalem six hundred years before the coming of Christ in the flesh. God seeing the wickedness of the inhabitants of Jerusalem he sent out a prophet named Lehi and commanded him to ~~go~~ ^{bring} to the people that unless they repented of their sins that the City would be destroyed but they would not hear him but sought to take away his life, therefore the Lord commanded him to take his family together with another man named Ishmael and his family and flee out of the City and they were led by the hand of the Lord on to this continent, and they become very numerous and were a people highly favoured of the Lord, but there arose contentions among them and the more wicked part of them being led by one of the sons of Lehi named Laman, arose up in rebellion against their brethren and would not keep the commandments of God therefore he sent a curse upon them and caused a dark skin to come over them and from Laman our Indians here descended the more righteous part of them were led by another of the sons of Lehi named Nephi he being a prophet of the Lord I can not give you much of an insight into these things, but I write this that when you have an opportunity of receiving one of the books that you may not reject for God has pronounced a curse upon all they who have a chance to receive it and will not for by it they will be judged at the last day. There are many in these parts who profess to know God and to be his humble followers that when this thing is offered them they say we have

little enough and want no more but such are in the goubes little
earnest and in the lands of iniquity and understand not the bible
which they love, for all the holy prophets speak plainly of the
gathering of the house of Israel and of the coming forth of this
ever, and God says he will give us line upon line precept upon
precept here a little and there a little. There are more notions than
one and if God would not reveal himself alike unto all nations
he would be a partial; we need not suppose that we have all his
words in our bible neither need we think that because he has spe-
ken once that he can not speak again. Perhaps you will enquire
how this revelation came forth, it has been hid up in the earth four
teen hundred years, it was placed there by Moses, one of the
Nephites, it was engraven upon plates which bore the appearance of
gold. He being a prophet of the Lord, and seeing the wickedness of
the people and knowing that they must be destroyed, and also
knowing that if the plates fell into the hands of the Lamanites that
they would destroy them, for they sought to destroy all sacred
writings therefore he hid them up in the earth, having obtained
a promise of the Lord that they should come forth in his own due
time unto the world, and I feel to thank my God that he hath
spared my life to see this day. Joseph after repenting of his sins
and humbling himself before God was visited by an holy angel
whose countenance was as lightning and whose garments were
white above all whiteness and gave unto him ~~some~~ ^{many} words
which inspired him from on high. and gave unto him
by the means of which was before prepared that he should
translate this this book, and by this ^{reading} this our eyes are opened
that we can see the situation in which the world now stands
that the eyes of the whole world are blinded, that the churches have
all become corrupted, yea every church upon the face of the earth
that the Gospel of Christ is nowhere preached, this is the situation
which the world is now in, and you can judge for yourselves if
we did not need something more than the wisdom of men
far to show us the right way. God seeing our situation had
compassion upon us and has sent us this revelation that the
stumbling block might be removed, that ambassador would
might enter. He has now established his church upon the earth
as it was in the days of the Apostles. He has now made a new
and everlasting covenant with ~~and~~ ^{and} all that will hear his
voice and enter he says they shall be gathered together into
a land of promise and he himself will come and reign on
earth with them a thousand years he is now sending forth
his servants far to prune his vineyard for the last time and we be

sents them that will not hear them. there are many who think hard when
we tell them that the churches here all become corrupted, but the Lord God
hath spoken it and who can deny his word; they are all lifted up in
the pride of their hearts and think more of adorning their fine settlements
than they do of the poor and needy: the priests are going about preaching
for money, and teaching false doctrines and leading men down to destruc-
tion by crying peace peace when the Lord himself hath not spoken it
often our Saviour was upon the earth he sent forth his disciples and
commanded them to preach his Gospel and these signs he said should
follow them that believed, in my name the shall do many wonderful
works they shall cast out devils, they shall take up serpents and if they
drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands
on the sick and they shall recover: now where can we find these
signs following they that call themselves preachers of the Gospel and
why do they not follow: it surely must be because they do not
believe and do not teach the true doctrine of Christ, for God is the
same yesterday today and forever and changeth not. We read that
at the day of Pentecost people being pricked in their hearts began
to say saying men and brethren what shall we do and Peter
being filled with the Holy Ghost stood up and said repenting
one of you and be baptized in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
for a remission of your sins and you shall receive the Holy Ghost
when this promise was not to them alone for he goes on to say this
whosoever is to you or to your children and to all that are afar off
which as many as the Lord our God shall call: therefore the promise
extends unto us if we will obey his commands; Peter did not
tell them to go away and sin on over their sins withal and
months and receive remission of them and then come and be bap-
tized but he told them first to repent and be baptized and the prom-
ise was they should receive a remission of their sins and the gift
of the Holy Ghost, and this is the Gospel of Christ, and his church
is established in this place and also in the Ohio, there has been
three hundred added to the church in the Ohio within a few weeks
and there are some added to this church almost daily, the work
is spreading every fast. I must now close my letter by entreating you
as one that feels for your souls to seek an interest in Christ and
when you have an opportunity to receive this mark do not reject
it but read it and examine for yourselves I will now bid you fare
well and I want you to come here or write immediately
for we expect to go away to the Ohio early in the spring if you write this
winter you may direct your letters to Waterloo Seneca County
I want you to think seriously of these things for they are the truths of the
living God. Please to accept this from your sister Lily Smith

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Seneca Falls
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follow, Lucy chided the leaders and their groups' lack of faith.

As the mother of the Prophet, Lucy was not immune to the privations suffered by the Saints throughout their experience. She was subjected to the trials of Kirtland, Missouri, and Nauvoo. In Nauvoo she lost her husband of fifty-four years, and within ^[40] four years she also witnessed the passing of four of her five sons, two of whom were violently taken. Although she expressed her support of Brigham Young and the Apostles who went west, she stayed in Nauvoo after the Saints left. She died in Nauvoo, under the care of her daughter-in-law Emma in 1856, still consistent in her testimony of her son.⁴

Lucy's 1831 letter to her brother, Solomon Mack, portrays her knowledge and zeal regarding the work of her son, Joseph. The letter itself is a buff-colored folded sheet written on three sides in black ink which has faded to sienna brown. The letter measures 31.8 by 38.4 centimeters and is included in the collection of the Church History Library.⁵ Lucy's handwriting is petite and precise. Abounding in Book of Mormon vernacular, she testified of her beliefs and admonished her brother and his family to come to the light of the restored gospel. Her writing sets a theme for several of the letters: taste the love of God and share it.

Waterloo⁶ January 6th 1831

Dear Brother & Sister⁷

Although we are at a great distance from each other and have not had the pleasure of seeing each other for many years,⁸ yet I feel a great anxiety in your welfare, and especially ^[41] for the welfare of your souls. and you yourselves must know that it is a thing of the greatest importance to be prepared to meet our God in peace. for it is not long before he is to make his appearance on the earth with all the hosts of heaven for to take vengeance on the wicked & they that know not God. By searching the prophecies contained in the old testament we find it there prophesied that God will set his hand the second time to recover his people the house of Israel.

He has now commenced this work. he hath sent forth a revelation in these last days, & this revelation is called the book of Mormon. it contains the fullness of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and is sent forth to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things God hath done for their fathers that they may know of the covenants of the Lord & that they are not cast off forever, and also of the convincing of both Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the <Christ the> Eternal God and manifests himself unto all nations.⁹ it also contains the history

of a people which were led out of Jerusalem o six hundred years before the coming of Christ in the flesh.¹⁰ God seeing the wickedness of the inhabitants of Jerusalem he sent out a prophet named Lehi and commanded him to declare [un]to the people that unless they repented of their sins that the City would be destroyed but they would not hear him but sought to take away his life. therefore the Lord commanded him to take his family together with another man o named Ishmael and his family and flee out of the City and they were led by the hand of the Lord on to this continent. and they became very numerous and were a people highly favoured of the Lord, but there arose contentions among them and the more wicked part of them being led by one of the sons of Lehi named Laman arose up in rebellion against their bretheren and would not keep the commandments of God. therefore he sent a curse upon them and caused a dark skin to come over them. and from Laman our Indians have descended. the more righteous part of them were led by another of the sons of Lehi named Nephi he being a prophet of the Lord.¹¹ I can not give you much of an insight into these things, but I write this that when you have an opportunity of receiving one of the books that you may not reject. for God has pronounced a curse upon all they who have ~~an~~ a chance to receive it and will not for by it they will be judged at the last day.¹²

There are many in these parts who profess to know God and to be his humble followers that when this thing is offered them they say we have bible enough and want no more but such are in the gaul of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity and understand not the bible which they have.¹³ for all the holy prophets speak plainly of the gathering of the house of Israel and the coming forth of this work, and God says he will give us line upon line ^[42] precept upon precept here a little and there a little.¹⁴ there are more nations than one and if God would not reveal himself alike unto all nations he would be a partial. we need not suppose that we have all his words in our bible neither need we think that because he has spoken once that he can not speak again.¹⁵

Perhaps you will enquire how this revelation came forth. it has been hid up in the earth fourteen hundred years. it was placed there by Moro[ni,] one of the Nephites. it was engraven upon plates which have the appearance of gold, he being a prophet of the Lord and seeing the wickedness of the people and knowing that they must be destroyed, and also knowing that if the plates fell into the hands of the Lamanites that they would destroy them. for they sought to destroy all sacred writings therefore he hid them up in the earth, having obtained a promise of the Lord that they should come forth in his own due time unto the world.¹⁶ and I feel to thank my God that he hath spared my life to see this day. Joseph after repenting of his sins and humbling himself before God was visited by an holy Angel whose countenance was as lightening and whose garments were white above all whiteness and gave unto him com[m]andme[n]ts which inspired him

from on high. and gave unto him [power] by the means of which was before prepared that he should translate this this book.¹⁷ and by <reading> this this our eyes are opened that we can see the situation in which the world now stands. that the eyes of the whole world are blinded, that the churches have all become corrupted, yea every church upon the face of the earth that the Gospel of Christ is no where preached.¹⁸

this is the situation which the world is now in, and you can judge for yourselves if we did not need something more than the wisdom of men for to show us the right way. God seeing our situation had compassion upon us and has sent us this revelation that the stumbling block might be removed, that whosoever would might enter. He has now established his church upon the earth as it was in the days of the Apostles. He has now mad[e] a new and everlasting covenant ~~with~~ and all that will hear his voice and enter he says they shall be gathered together into a land of promise and he himself will come and reign on earth with them a thousand years. he is now sending forth his servants for to prune his viniard for the last time and wo be unto to them that will not hear them.¹⁹ there are many who think hard when we tell them that the churches have all become corrupted, ^[43] but the Lord God hath spoken it and who can deny his word. they are all lifted up in the pride of their hearts and think more of adorning their fine sanctuaries than they do of the poor and needy. the priests are going about preaching for money, and teaching false doctrines and leading men down to destruscction by crying peace peace when the Lord himself hath not spoken it.²⁰

When our Saviour was upon the earth he sent forth his disciples and commanded them to preach his Gospel and these signs he said should follow them that believed, in my name the[y] shall do many wonderful works; they shall cast out devils; they shall take up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.²¹ now where can we find these signs following they that call themselves preachers of the Gospel and why they do not follow? it surely must be because they do not believe and do not teach the true doctrine of Christ.²² for God is the same yesterday today and forever and changeth not.²³

We read that at the day of Pentacost people being pricked in their hearts began to cry, saying men and brethren what shall we do. and Peter being filled with the Holy Ghost stood up and said repent every one of you and be baptised in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for a remission of your sins and you shall receive the Holy Ghost.²⁴ [The prom]ise was not to them alone for he goes on to say this [promise] is to you and to your children and to all. [All] are afar off [and] as many as the Lord our God shall call: therefor the promise extends unto us if we will obey his commands. Peter did not tell them to go away and mourn over their sins we<e>ks and months and receive a remission of them and then come and

be baptised, but he told them first to repent and be baptised and the promice was they should receive a remission of their sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. and this is the Gospel of Christ, and his church is established in this place and also in the Ohio. there has been three hundred added to the church in the Ohio within a few weeks and ther are some added to this church almost daily.²⁵ the work is spreading very fast.

I must now close my letter by entreating you as one that feels for your souls to seek an interets in Christ and when you have an opportunity to receive this work do not reje<c>t it but read it and examine for yourselves. I will now bid you farewell and I want you to some of you come here or write immediately for we expect to go away to the Ohio early ^[44] in the spring.²⁶ If you write this winter you may direct your letters to Waterloo Seneca County. I want you to think seriously of these things for they are the truths of the Living God. Please to accept this from your Sister Lucy Smith.

Advertised
July 1
To be left at Keen[e]²⁷
post office

Seneca Falls²⁸
N.Y. 8 Janry

Capt. Solomon Mack²⁹
Gilsun
New Hampshire³⁰ ^[45]

Phebe Crosby Peck

In June 1830, amidst harassment, a young widow was baptized a member of the newly formed Church of Christ in a dammed river in Colesville, New York.³¹ Phebe Crosby was born in March 1800 to Elisha Crosby and Susan Lowell at Unadilla, Otsego County, New York.³² Phebe married Benjamin Peck about 1819 and had five children before his death in 1829.³³ They lived in Bainbridge, New York, and after her husband was gone she remained close to his extended family living nearby.³⁴ Benjamin's family comprised a good portion of those baptized with Phebe and who became known as the Colesville Saints. They were persecuted from the time of their baptisms until the oppression reached an apex and they left New York the following April.

Phebe left Colesville with the other Saints for Thompson, Ohio, in search of a reprieve from the persecution. Thompson held just a brief recess for them from troubles and tribulations. The original good will of Leman Copley, inviting the

worn-down group to his farm to live, was short lived. After Copley's disenchantment with the Church and ^[46] the personal difficulties of the Colesville Saints, they were on the move again within a couple of months. With hopes of Zion fresh in their minds, they were some of the first Saints to settle in Jackson County, Missouri.

The Colesville group was an integral part of the first migration to Zion. Phebe and her family were active members of the Kaw Township congregation in Missouri where she taught her children the principles of the gospel and supported her family as a tailoress.³⁵ Then, after fourteen years of providing for her family alone, Phebe married Joseph Knight Sr., following the death of his first wife, Polly Peck Knight, Phebe's sister-in-law.³⁶ They had two children together for a total of sixteen, though most of Joseph and Polly's children were already living outside the home at the time of their marriage. Joseph was twenty-eight years Phebe's senior.³⁷

Phebe experienced the expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County, the later difficulties in northern Missouri, the move to Nauvoo and life there, and the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Joseph Knight Sr. died in 1847. After his death Phebe ^[47] married Cornelius P. Lott in another custodial relationship.³⁸ Thereafter, Phebe spent her time with her children and their families until her death in 1849.³⁹

The historical record does not supply us with many specific details of Phebe's life, but her 1832 letter provides a detailed account of her experience and fervor for the restored gospel during a time of reflection and relative peace in Zion. She was candid as she shared her beliefs and plainspoken in her censure and admonition to her non-Mormon family members who had not accepted the message of the Restoration. The location of the original letter is unknown, although the Church History Library possess a fine photocopy of it.⁴⁰ The photocopy suggests that the original document was one folded sheet, 27.5 x 38 centimeters, written on three sides in meticulous penmanship in dark ink.

Independence⁴¹ ~~May~~ August the 10 1832

Affectionate Sister⁴² ^[48]

I received your letter Jan. 22 which gave me great pleasure.⁴³ I esteemed it as a blessing to have the priveledge of hearing from you. once more you must forgive my negligence in not writing before as I

have been busily engaged in business, but I shall now attempt to writte you the sentiments of my heart in the fear of my God. I can realize that I am seperated a great distance from you, but yet my mind will often tra[v]el back to the place of your abode. but Anna, it is not because I wish myself back, but it is because of the feelings I have for <you> and the rest of my relatives in that part of <the> world.⁴⁴ yes, we are seperated by roling bellows of water but the Lord's protecting hand has been over us through all of our travels and has brought us safely to this land where I shall spend the remainder of my days and if I ever see you again it will be upon this land and I will assure you it would be a joyful meeting to us all.⁴⁵

I welll remember the last time I saw you when I took my leave of you the sensations of my Heart at that time I think will never be forgotten by me. although I did not know when I left that I should be called to come thus far and I presume it has bee[n] that which has caused you to <almost> wonder, but did you know as I know—concerning our leaving Ohio⁴⁶—you would not but you do not. neither can I tell you but this much I can say, that did you know of the things of God and <could you> receive the blessings I have from the hand of the Lord you would not think it a hardship to come here.

for the Lord is revealing the misteries of the heavenly Kingdom unto his Children.⁴⁷ and these blessings in your state of unbelief you can not enjoy but you may yet have the priveledge if you have not entirely heartened your heart against these things. and I would exhort you not to repect annother call you have been called to repent of your sins and obey the gospel. you have been convicted from time to time but you could not give ^[49] up all for christ and now I feel to say that if you do not give up all and follow your Lord and and Master you will not be made worthy to partake of the Celestial glories in the kingdom of our God.⁴⁸ I hope you will think of <these> things and ponder them in your Heart for they are of great worth unto the Children of Men.

I must tell you the joyful news of the workings of the <Lord> among the Children. we have had the pleasing view of beholding eleven Chldren from 8 years old to 14 go down into the water in obedience to the commands of God, among whom was my three oldest.⁴⁹ can we not rejoice in seeing the rising generation growing up in the knowledge of the Lord. and I think by giving them good instructions they will grow up and be strong in faith. they will arise and testify what the Lord has done for them in the pre<s>ance of a congregation of people.⁵⁰ Hezekiah says he enjoys himself well. he will take up his cross and pray in the family when asked.⁵¹ My Children are all con[t]ented and I am very thankful for it.⁵² Henrietta and Sarah express a great desire to see you.

I have not gone to kepping house as yet but I expect to next fall. My h<e>alth is tolerable good and also the health of all our friends. I must draw to a close by requesting you to give my love to your Husband and Miss Pollard⁵³ and all enquireing friends. Phebe Peck

write as soon as you receive this

Anna Pratt

A few lines to Sister Patty⁵⁴ [50]

it is with a thankful Heart for the preservation of my life and <for> the priveledge of writing to you that I desire to improve these moments. I often think of you while in my lonely meditation and sometimes it will cause a deep sigh to burst forth from my bosom thinking that perhaps I never shall see you again while in this world. and again <when> I think I have forsaken all for Christ, it bri<n>gs consolation that surpasses the grief. on the other hand, you must realize, my sister, that nothing but the mercies of God and his consoling spirit that has upheld me while passing through the trials of parting with my near and dear friends;⁵⁵ and could you but see and believe as I do the way would be opened and you wold come to this land and we should behold each other and rejoice in the things of God for this is A day of rejoicing and also a day of mourning.⁵⁶

We rejoice when we realize the wonderful works of our Heavenly Father and his dealings towards his children. yes, I rejoice in the commands and revelations⁵⁷ that has be<e>n given in these last days. and again I feel to mourn many times because of the unbelief of the children of men. I feel to rejoice with those that rejoice and to weep with those that weep.

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon made us A visit last spring and we had many joyful meetings while they were here and we had many misteries unfolded to our view which gave me great consolation.⁵⁸ we could view the condesendson of God <in preparing> masions of peace for his children and whoso will not receive the fullness of the gospel and stand as valient soldiers in the cause of christ cannot dwell in the preasence of un<intelligible> the Father and <the> Son. but there is a place prepared for all who do not receive, but it is a place of <much> lesser glory then to dwell in the Celestial kingdom.⁵⁹ I shall not attempt to say anny farther concerning these things as they are now in print and ar[e] going forth to the world and you perhaps will have an opportunity [51] of reading for your self and if you do I hope you will read with a careful and a prayerful heart for these things are worthy of notice. and I desire that you may search into them for it is <that> which lends to our happiness in this world and in the world to come.

You perhaps would like to know something about my situation—I can tell you I have plenty to eat, drink, and to wear and enjoy as good health as I did in Bainbridge. we have good water and this is a delightful country. we can raise <our> own cotton and flax and all things that the heart can wish. Hezekiah is now at work with one of the Brothers in the church and has earned seven dollars in five weeks. the rest of the Children live with me. they often speak of their cousins in that place and wish me to send their best love to you and your children. I must finish my letter but I would warmly request you to

write for my anxiety is great to hear from you. please to give my respects to my Brothers and tell them not to forget that they have A sister in Missouri.⁶⁰ I add no more. P Peck

Independence Mo.

Aug. 11th

Mr. Stephen B Pratt

South Bainbridge, Chenengo County, NY [52]

Almira Mack Scobey Covey

Almira Mack was born in April 1805 in Tunbridge, Vermont, eight months before the birth of her cousin Joseph Smith Jr.⁶¹ She was the youngest child of twelve children born to Temperance Bond and Major Stephen Mack.⁶² As a young girl she was educated in New England private schools. Then in 1822, Almira moved with her family to the frontier of Michigan.⁶³ Her father founded Pontiac, Michigan.

In 1831, Almira went to visit her aunt Lucy Mack Smith. She quickly accepted the message of her cousin and was baptized as the thirty-sixth member of the Church. In Kirtland, Almira married William Scobey in 1831. William returned with Almira and Lucy Mack to Michigan. They had one child together, Stephen Henry, who died after two months. Then just a few months later, her new husband, William, died.

Three years later, the young widow married Benjamin Covey in October 1835. They had four boys together, though the third, Andrew Almon, died after less than a year.⁶⁴ In Nauvoo, Almira cared for several people in addition to her own family.⁶⁵ She frequently took in children and older women. The martyrdom of her cousins, Joseph and [53] Hyrum Smith, in 1844 devastated Almira. She lamented to her sister Harriet as she described the deaths, "Your trouble you think is a[s] much as you can bear, but it is not like Aunt Lucy's. . . . There two of the noblest men on earth were slain and for what? Was it for crimes that they had committed? I answer no: but it was because they professed the religion of Jesus Christ."⁶⁶ After their deaths, Almira remained dedicated to their cause.

In Winter Quarters, Nebraska, Benjamin was accused of attempting to seduce two young girls and, as a result, was excommunicated from the Church. Although he quickly cleared himself and was reinstated, the charges surely had great effect



Almira Mack Scobey Covey. Courtesy Church History Library.

on Almira.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, they were both also coping with difficult health problems. After a year at Winter Quarters, they crossed the plains in the Lorenzo Snow company, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley in 1848. In Utah Almira continued to have difficulties with her health. She had some sort of nervous disorder, but she maintained her grip on life for several more years. She held the distinction of being the longest member of the Church for a considerable number of years. She finally died in Salt Lake City in 1886 at the age of eighty-one.

The location of the original letter is in the University of Michigan Archives at Ann Arbor.⁶⁸ In her letter, Almira shares her experience of life in Missouri. She demonstrates some of the initial differences with the Latter-day Saints and the Missourians—differences that provided a basis for the forthcoming problems in ^[54]Missouri. She also shares with Harriett her conviction of the “old story” of Mormonism. Almira demonstrates an assurance in her decision to leave her family in Michigan and follow the Mormons despite her present disheartening circumstances.

Liberty [Missouri]⁶⁹
June 9, 1835

Dear Sister,⁷⁰

I received you letter together with Johns and Mrs Coopers with much satisfaction being very glad to hear from you all.⁷¹ I have also received one from Almon and Mr. Dorts family;⁷² when I wrote to you last my health was poor but I think that it is gaining slowly. I feel well satisfied with this country and am well contented but still I should like it much better if my relatives were all here and I hope that we shall see the day when we shall meet again.

I think you would be pleased with this country, it is pleasant, and it is a good place to get a living there is plenty of grain of all kinds a plenty of meat, milk, and butter, etc. and we have a plenty of Hackberries, blackberries, strawberries, gooseberries, mulberries, blue grape, little wine grape and frost grape, priscimons, black and red haws, paupaus, raspberries, wild plums, hickory nuts, walnuts, chinkipins, pickans, and some apples and sweet potatoes: but I must say that the society of the Missourians is not so agreeable as I have seen. When I speak of the Missourians I mean the old Inhabitants which are mostly southern people, and their living is mostly bacon and dodgers; perhaps you may be as ignorant about the dodgers as I was, but I will tell you what they are. They are a sort of Johnny cake made of corn meal, this They eat in prefferance to wheat which makes it much better for our eastern people which like wheat best.

Our people that came from Michigan are all well except some of Bro. Fosdick's family which have the ague. Mary is with them and I am with L. Curtis.⁷³ I saw a man a few days since that saw N[oss] W Mack a short time ago at Boonsville about 100 miles from this place, he mentioned our family to him he said he was well acquainted with us and Father was his own uncle, and he told him that he should write to me soon.⁷⁴ and when I ^[55] get the letter I will send you the news. He said Mr. Mack was trading in that place and doing well.⁷⁵ Bro. O'Houghton started last week for Michigan and he promised me that he would call and see you all.

Remember me to Richard and tell him his Aunt Almira often thinks of him and was much surprised to hear that he was again married so soon.⁷⁶ If you have heard from Stephen I wish you would let me know where he is for I have heard nothing from him and do not know where he is so that I can write to him.⁷⁷ Tell Mr. Whittemore that I should like when you write to have a line from him if he can afford it and also from the children: tell James I want to know how his leg gets along and if he can walk without his crutches, and ask George if he wants to see somebody.⁷⁸ Tell Mother that I should like another letter from her, and tell her I hope to see her on this land if the Lord spares our lives.⁷⁹ I have learnt by the papers that Michigan has declared war against Ohio but I do not know as this information is correct, if it is so you will probably know and I wish you to write me about it.⁸⁰ Charlotte wishes to be remembered to you and enquiring friends and I presume that Mary would if she knew I was writing.⁸¹ Charlotte says if you know anything about Delia she wished you to write it when you write to me. Give my respects to

Mr. Stanley's and Mr. Buckland's familys—and also to Mrs Comstock, Mrs. Newcome, and all who take the trouble to enquire for me.⁸²

Now Harriet I do not know what else to write about unless it is about Mormonism (as many call it) and perhaps you will think this to be an old story, but if it is with you it is not with me, my faith is as strong as ever in this thing, and I rejoice that the Lord has suffered me to live in this day when this word has come forth to the children of men. for ^[56] it ever has been my desire since my remembrance to be prepared to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but how to attain to this blessing I did not know until I heard the ways of salvation proclaimed by this people who are reproached freely called Mormons. and if I hold out faithful unto the end I shall have reason in Eternity to praise the Lord for sparing my life to this day. but I am liable to go astray and I may yet prove unfaithful and be numbered with the foolish Virgins and be cast out of the kingdom; but if I am, I alone shall be to blame for I have had great privileges, and the Lord has given me much light and bestowed many spiritual blessing upon me.

therefore it depends upon my faithfulness if I obtain a crown of Celestial Glory.⁸³ Perhaps some may think me deluded and feel to pity me, but will soon know the truth of these things, for great things await this generation; and it is for this reason that I feel so anxious for you and the rest of my friends, for behold the coming of our Saviour is nigh at hand, and this generation will not pass away until he will appear in his glory and we ought to be prepared for that day, although we may not either of us live to see that day; yet if we wish to be happy we must be prepared for it whether in life or death we may abide the day. for when he comes his Saints who have slept in death will arise and come with him and live on earth a thousand years, while the wicked have to remain in their graves until the thousand years are expired. then they will have to appear before the judgement seat of Christ.

Harriet, I want you to write me ~~about~~ what you think about these things, for I do ~~no~~ think it is time that you were preparing for death, judgement and Eternity, for we do not know how soon we may be called to leave this world.

Remember me to Mrs Bent if there, tell her Mary is well.⁸⁴ Tell Sister Kellogg that I am looking for a letter from her every mail, she requested Mary to write about little Bathia Fordham tell her she is with me and is well and a good girl and often speaks of her and little Mormon.⁸⁵ I should like very well to have you here to eat strawberries and mulberries with us for they are very are now ripe and a plenty of them. the mulberries grow on very large trees and look and taste like blackberries. I wish you to write me often and accept this from your sister.

Harriet Whittemore

Almira Scobey

P.S. The Church in this land live in peace at this time. The inhabitants of this and the surrounding

countries are friendly except the people in Jackson. They are now selling their slaves thinking that this will soon become a free state.

Almira

[Postmark] 13 June Liberty, MO ^[57]

Rebecca Swain Williams Kimball

Rebecca Swain was the youngest of the nine children of Isaac Fisher and Elizabeth Hall Swain, born in Loyalsock, Pennsylvania, in 1798.⁸⁶ Her mother died while she was young, and the family moved around the Northeast until they settled in Niagara County, New York, where her father remarried. When Rebecca was seventeen, as she crossed Lake Ontario to visit her sister Sally Clark in Detroit, she met the tall, dark-eyed pilot of the ship, Frederick Granger Williams. Frederick called often at the Clark home, and he and Rebecca were married in late 1815.⁸⁷ Frederick and Rebecca, who had four children, moved around the great Western Reserve of Ohio before finally settling in Kirtland Mills, Ohio, in 1828 or 1829. There, Frederick took up the practice of medicine.⁸⁸ As Frederick worked, Rebecca aided him with his patients and learned medical terms and treatments.

On their journey west in the fall of 1830, Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer Jr. stopped in Kirtland. Rebecca and Frederick were members of Sidney Rigdon's Campellite congregation in the community. Like many other followers of Rigdon, they listened with interest to the missionaries. Rebecca attended all of their private meetings with her four children, accompanied by her husband when his work schedule would permit. She was convinced of the truthfulness of ^[58] Mormonism and was soon baptized. Frederick needed more convincing. He decided for a time to leave it alone but could not and was eventually baptized after Rebecca.⁸⁹

Frederick was very enthusiastic about his new religion, and the day after his baptism, he left on a mission to Missouri with Oliver Cowdery. Though he planned to return after three weeks, Rebecca did not see him for ten months. Between her husband's calling in Joseph Smith's First Presidency and his missionary efforts, for Rebecca, like many early Mormon women, this would be the beginning of many long months of caring

we got an is ^{your} journey, I have been reading over your letter
of May the 23 which I have read over again and again
it gives me pain to hear that your mind is so much
disturbed about the Book of Mormon and the Star of
David said my Father is in some degree getting into the
same spirit you charge the Editor with, as it regards the
origin of the Book of Mormon there ~~is~~ is no disagree-
ment in the Book between the Author and the witnesses the Book
saying show for it self Ps 45 and 48 and unto three shall
be ~~shown~~ shown by the power of God there is no con-
viction the plait was found in the same manner that the
Author says they was in the town of Maricheston Ontario
County I have heard the same story from several of the fa-
mily and from the three witnesses them selves I heard them
declair in publick meeting that they saw an Holy Angel
come down from heaven and brought the plait and laid them
before their eyes and told them that those was the plait that
Joseph Smith was translation the Book of Mormon from
they are men of good character and their word is belived where
they are acquainted in any thing except when they declair to this
unbelieving Generation that they have seen an angel ap-
peared and conversed with. Whine my Father I hardly know what to say to
you did you and Mother know the Circumstances as we do
in relation to this work I am persuaded you would ~~believe~~ believe
it, my heart mourns for my relation according to the flesh but
all that I can do is to commend them to God praying that he
would enlighten your minds in the way of truth, there is one of our
Brethren who expects to go to Canada soon I have talked with him
about going to see you if he does ~~hope~~ hope you will have a plea-
sant visit with him as he is a man of information capable of
teaching the Gospel as it is in Jesus my Dear Father do you believe
that all the Churches are of the Lord the Lord has said by the mouth
of his servant Joseph that this is the only Church upon the face of
the whole earth with which the Lord was well pleased with speaking
unto the Churches collectively and not individually for I the Lord
can not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance never the-
less he that repenteth and doeth the commandments of the Lord shall be
forgiven and he that repenteth not from him shall be taken never the

$$\begin{array}{r} 24 \quad 20 \\ 178 \overline{) 160} \\ \underline{138} \\ 22 \end{array}$$

F. G. W. H. S.

And Rubra

Christiana Mills
Jan 4

New York. N. Y.

Heinsden

*Ms A 9.2 v. 10 p. 18
June 19. 1836*

26
4/1

do write to us soon, I hope your mind will be comforted concerning this work, be assured that we feel keen in the cause knowing that the Lord was the helm and will turn and over turn till all things shall be brought to pass and eternal shall again rejoice in the Lord

for her family without the aid of her husband. Rebecca's youngest son, Ezra, was her support during his father's absence and throughout the rest of Rebecca's life.

With the missionary zeal of a new convert, after her baptism Rebecca eagerly wrote to her father to inform him of her new-found faith. She was devastated when only a thin letter of response came back to her. Her news infuriated her father, and he insisted that she leave the Church. When she would not, she was disowned and her father vowed to cut off all communication with her.⁹⁰ Evidenced by the remnant of this 1834 letter to her half-brothers and her father, the threat was not carried out. In her 1835 patriarchal blessing Rebecca was promised, "in consequence of thy prayers and tears, thou shalt yet prevail, and the Lord will give thee thy father's family who are far from the way of ^[59] Salvation. But the Lord will bare his arm and show mercy unto them in making thy husband a Savior unto them."⁹¹ She held hope for this throughout her life.

Frederick and Rebecca gave liberally of their time and means to the building up and protecting of the Church in Kirtland. Before Joseph and Emma Smith's own home was finished in Kirtland, they lived across the street with the Williamses. One day, as a mob came and surrounded the home, Rebecca astutely dressed Smith in her bonnet and cloak, and he was able to leave the house and pass through the crowd to safety. In March 1832 Rebecca and Frederick spent the night removing the tar from Smith's body after he was mobbed in Hiram, Ohio, allowing him to be ready to preach before a large congregation the next morning.

According to historian Andrew Jenson, during the difficulties in Kirtland in 1837 Frederick succumbed to "improper influences."⁹² As a result he was rejected as a counselor in the First Presidency at Far West, Missouri, in November 1837, and subsequently excommunicated. Although there is no record of Rebecca and Frederick's relationship or Rebecca's feelings during this time of strain, Rebecca remained stalwart in her defense of Joseph Smith and the Restored Church. Rumors of Frederick's dissent reached her father in Niagara, and he promptly wrote her a letter to welcome Rebecca back into the family. When Rebecca's reply arrived, Isaac took the letter, sat in a corner,

and after reading her response slowly shook his head and said, "Not a word of repentance!"⁹³ ^[60]

Frederick was eventually rebaptized and died in full fellowship in 1842 at Quincy, Illinois. Rebecca lived the rest of her life as a faithful member of the Church. She received temple ordinances alongside her son Ezra and was sealed by proxy to Frederick 7 February 1846 in the Nauvoo Temple. Shortly before the journey to Utah, she married Heber C. Kimball as a plural wife, though she was considered a wife in name only.⁹⁴ She initially lived in Salt Lake City, helping her son Ezra with his medical practice before moving to Mill Creek. She later helped colonize Utah's Cache Valley with her children and grandchildren. Her life ended there when she died of consumption at Smithfield, Utah, on 25 September 1861.

Rebecca's 1834 letter to her father and step-brothers, only a fragment of which survives, portrays a woman who feels and knows what she is witnessing. She greatly desired to see her patriarchal prophecy come to fruition, provoking her to do whatever was in her power to aid it. In the face of adversity she did not cower. Her strength and conviction are unambiguous. The original letter is one buff-colored sheet, 19.4 x 31.1 centimeters, written with chestnut ink, presumably the last page of the letter. Her elegant script flows with small flourishes. The original is housed in the Church History Library.⁹⁵

. . . he got on [h]is jo<ur>ney, I have been reading over your letter of May the 23 which I have read over again and again.⁹⁶ it gives me pain to here that your mind is so much ^[61] disturbed about the Book of Mormon and the Star.⁹⁷ I feal <a>fraid my Father is in some degree gitting into the same Spirit you charge the Editor with, as it regards to the origen of the Book of Mormon. their ~~their~~ is no disagreement in the Book betwin the Author and the witnesses.⁹⁸ the Book pla[i]n[l]y shoes for it self Pa 547 and 548 and unto three shall [*page torn*] be ~~shone~~ shown by the power of God.⁹⁹ there is no con[tra]diction. the plaits was found in the same manner that the Auther sayes they was in the town of Manchester, Ontario County. I have heard the same storry from several of the family and from the three witnesses them Selves.¹⁰⁰ I heard them declair in publick meeting that they saw an Holly Angel come down from heaven and brought the plaits and laid them before their eyes and told them that those was the plaits that Joseph Smith was translation the Book of Mormon from. they are men of good character and their word is belived ware they are acquainted in eny thing excep[t] when they declair to this unbeliveng

Generation that they have seen an angel of God and conversed with him.

my Father, I hardly know what to say to you. did you and Mother know the Circumstances as we do in relation to this work, I am persuaded you would ~~be~~ believe it. my heart mourns for my relation according to the flesh, but all I can do is to commend them to God praying that he would enliten your minds in the way of truth. ^[62]

there is one of our Brethern who expe[c]ts to go to Canada soon.¹⁰¹ I have talked with him about going to see you, if he does I hope you will have aplesant visit with him as he is a man of information capable of teaching the Gosple as it is in Jesus.

my Dear Father do you belive that all the Churches are of the Lord? the Lord has said by the mouth of [h]is Serva<n>t Joseph that this is the only Church upon the face of the whole earth with which the Lord was well pleased with, speaking unto the Churches collectively and not individually. for I the Lord can not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. nevertheless he that repenteth and doeth the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven and he that repenteth not from him shall be taken even the light which ~~h~~ he hath received. for my Spirit shall not always strive with man saith the Lord of hosts.¹⁰² ~~as~~ <so> than we see all that are pure in heart the Lord will bless.

I want my Brothers to write to me.¹⁰³ I pray the Lord to comfort you in your last day wittth his holy Spirit and may they be your best days.¹⁰⁴ my Children join me in love to you. I must close my letter to ever remember the instruction ~~matter~~ <that> I have received from my beloved Father. yours <in love>, R. Williams

do write to us soon, I hope your mind will be composed concerning this work. be asureard that we feal firm in the cause knowing that the Lord is at the helm and will ~~th~~ turn and over turn tell all things shall be brought <to> pass and Iseral shall again rejoice in the Lord.

Kirtland Mills¹⁰⁵

Jun 4

Rec'd June 12. 1834

Mr Isaac Swain, Youn[g]stown, New York Ni[agara] Co¹⁰⁶ ^[63] [Editor's note: page 64 is blank in the original thesis.]

Lovina Fairchild Wilson

Lovina Fairchild was born to Eunice and Stephen Fairchild on 10 February 1773 in Arlington, Vermont.¹⁰⁷ She married Deliverance Wilson Jr. in 1789 when she was sixteen. They had twelve children together, yet only four reached adulthood. Her husband was a prosperous farmer. They pro-

vided an ample education for their children, and several became teachers.

As a young man of twenty-seven, George, Lovina's fifth child and second son, became seriously ill with consumption. He heard of Joseph Smith and sought him out. Upon introduction, Smith gave him a Book of Mormon. George read the book, believed what it taught, and decided to unite with the small group of Saints. At the time of his baptism, he was in the final stages of consumption; his clothes hung on his body. After his baptism he recovered from the consumption. He and his family considered it a miracle directly related to his baptism.

After George's conversion to the Church of Christ, he returned to his family and taught them of his new religion. Lovina and her family then moved with George to Kirtland. In February and March 1836 Lovina, Deliverance, and Paul were also baptized. Lovina was sixty-three. The Wilsons journeyed with the Saints through the difficulties of Missouri and then escaped to Nauvoo. She died of a fever in August 1843 in Nauvoo at the age of seventy.¹⁰⁸ ^[65]

The location of the original letter is unknown. The Church History Library has a typescript collection of the Wilson's letters.¹⁰⁹ This particular letter is written by Lovina, though probably penned by Paul, her youngest son, and is included in the collection with notes from her husband and Paul. She writes to Edmund Waite, a relative in Vermont. In the letter, she characterizes her conversion experience after the return of George. She focuses on gifts of the Spirit such as prophesying, speaking in tongues, and healing that she believed existed in the Church of Christ because Joseph Smith possessed the authority of God to restore such gifts.

To Edmund Waite¹¹⁰

Kirtland Nov. 10, 1835

To you whom I have left in St. Albans—much beloved and desired may this meet in the bonds of the same friendship as they left the author of them. I remember the engagement to you whom I have left in Vt. I still feel an ardor of a Mother's love growing in my heart. It is not the distance of miles, no, nor, the distance of time that can ever extinguish that warmth of feeling, that anxiety for your welfare which seems to be inherent in my heart. I am in better health now than when I left Highgate, having found faith and sustainence by the numerous trials and applications that have attended me all my past

life, which I doubt not are so many "blessings in disguise" to bring me to obey the Gospel commands and call is well, which may the burning Love assist me to do before I go hence and am numbered among the dead.¹¹¹ The "times of prophesying" has truly come from the Lord. May we all pass into it and be really acquainted with the freedom of truth that we may go on our way rejoicing.

March 19, 1836 this day I have taken upon me the Baptismal—now having been baptized for the remission of my sins. And I verily trust "tis ratified in heaven". I have had a very tryin winter; have been graciously protected by the Father of Mercies in ^[66] which I do and will rejoice. We expect to move to the village Kirt 2-1/2 miles in a few weeks.¹¹² I have no need of gifts and blessing from God, for such gifts could come no other way. I heard a man speak in tongues soon after I moved here. He was an elder in the Church—was convinced pretty much that it was the work of God. I contemplated on it with my heart lifted up in prayer to know these things, saying in my heart "how is it, Lord?" As I was musing and seeking with my while heart on Saturday eve Dec. 13, it was said to my mind "you can speak in tongues if you do but believe". I reflected and said in my heart, "I do believe". I tried and was filled with words I understand not—language in many tongues I know not. I cannot understand much of it myself.

April 5 I had feast to the Lord and it was a blessed meeting—we had prophesying, speaking with tongues, interpretation of tongues to the astonishment of many present.¹¹³ I can only hint at grandure and sublimity of the scene. Suffice it to say the blessings of the Lord was there in very deed (It was in our neighborhood).¹¹⁴

Many things were prophecyed among other it was told that your whole family would come into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, in which I do rejoice.¹¹⁵ May the Lord bless you all and may you all bless the Lord and obey him. "To obey my voice and live" says the good word of God.¹¹⁶ We have had many witnesses of healing (the gift of healing). Have a man who has been crazy for years, kept chained, was continually raving, crying, &c &c, was recently restored to his right mind by faith &c of th Church (he lived in town).

A young man in our house was taken violently ill with extreme headache, stomach sickness, dizziness attended with high fever, cold chills, loss of appetite. Soon after was seized with dreadful pain all over, but kept courage and strength to set up and walk some | _____ | till from Friday till Sunday, when growing worse sent for the elders who came in the evening (April 30, prayed and laid hands on him when his pain left him instantly his (just before morning) fever left him in a profuse sweat, got up off his bed immediately and has not suffered any from pain since & is able to work. May the Lord open your hearts to understand the truth.

April 19. I now continue my letter. We are all well as usual. Pa and Paul make sugar.¹¹⁷ George has gone

to Toldeo, way Lake Erie 100 mo.¹¹⁸ Marcia is very well.¹¹⁹ We have ^[67] left the use use of Tobacco and Tea agreeable to the "Word of Wisdom", which is a revelation with promise &c.¹²⁰ I could write much concerning worldly affairs, likewise concerning relation which are all well for aught I know. 'Tis hard times in this place, so many moving in.¹²¹ We have been mercifully preserved through the winter which is said to be the hardest known to the oldest settlers (yet robins and blue birds have been about in every month through the winter, so warm and spring like—Paul) We have had great concern for your welfare, expecting the winter to be much harder with you than it ever has been according to newspaper accounts | _____ |.¹²² But I must close for present. With regard to our journey here, we had every blessing we could hope for or expect. We still hope that He blessed you as we are blessed | _____ | farewell, do not grieve for me | _____ | I am happy in[?]c.

Lovina Wilson ^[68]

Mary Ann Angell Young

On 8 June 1808, Phebe Ann Morton and James William Angell had their third child and their first daughter, Mary Ann Angell, in Providence, Rhode Island.¹²³ As a youth Mary Ann worked in a factory in Providence and taught Sunday school at a Free-Will and a Baptist Church. In her mid-twenties she listened to Thomas B. Marsh, a Mormon missionary and obtained a Book of Mormon.¹²⁴ Although her interest was initially casual, she said that even before she read the book, she felt a deep imprint on her soul that told her the book was true. She said this feeling was so powerful that she never doubted the truth of the Book of Mormon after that point.

She circulated the Book of Mormon among her family and friends and was baptized by John P. Greene in 1832. Her parents also joined with the Mormons, as did several of her relations. While her parents were content in their familiar surroundings, Mary wanted to continue her search for more truth, and she believed that for this she must gather with the body of the Saints in Kirtland.

When Mary Ann arrived in Kirtland she worked in the homes of some of the wealthier Saints. She first met recent convert Brigham Young at a particular fast and testimony meeting in Kirtland.¹²⁵ By all accounts, through some spiritual experience at this meeting, they both left knowing that they were to be married. Brigham was widowed ^[69] two

Monday August 31 1835

Most affectionate husband

I set down to address a few lines to you this morning to let you know we are all in good health and that I received your letter dated August the 1 I much rejoiced to receive news from you that ^{you had} even arrived to the place where I have spent the scenes of my child hood and that you were in good health and spirits you wrote that home looked sweet to you I need not tell you that your society ~~is~~ ^{will} make home much more pleasant to me But I well ^{know} the Lord has called you to go far away to proclaim his everlasting gospel & through his assisting ^{grace} do not feel to repine at my lot. I heard of your long journey you had to travel on foot from Canada I think you have been ~~lost~~ ^{lost} with ranging the country with great speed. We was all very thankful to hear from Valentine folks & to hear that you had the privilege of warning the people in that vicinity I hope there will be many that will come in to the kingdom of our Lord & his Christ in that place I hope I'll remember to tell me all about the people there Give my best love to all that enquire after me you wrote to me if there was any thing I wanted to let you know I'd like to have you buy me ~~one~~ ^{one} of Kittredges or any thing else that would be useful if you see any silk that you would like for a winter ^{Bonnet} for me you may get it if you please but do just as you think best about getting any thing I don't want you to have any trouble about any such things while you are abroad proclaiming this great work to the world I was much rejoiced last Thursday evening by receiving two letters from you and from Bradford the other written in Boston I have not seen Brother Caraco or Sister Ramand but I have heard she is coming this week to pay me a visit you wanted I should write some news from Kittland I have not time ^{to write} much for little Joseph is very ^{wor}some as he is cutting teeth he comes to me while I am writing and hangs half of my cloaths and begs me to take him so you must excuse all that is not agreeable to your mind there are many things I want to say to you but cannot write them now I trust time will

4 Come when we shall meet face to face and converse together
before long Mr Bump has risen in open rebellion against
President Joseph Smith but there was ^{not} many that had
much confidence in what he said. There has been
laboured with and have confessed their faults
The house is improving by the work there is doing on it
there was a man that joined the church not long since
since one thousand Dollars for the house he proved a
Wolf in Sheep's clothing he had no money to give
Brother Joseph & P Young is expected to be in Miss about
this time. Br Hyde Bishop has moved here from Lima he brought
a letter from Truman my Brother in Wheeland they were
all in good health; Sister Angelina Works has come to
this place and is teaching School to the Printing office she
and her Mother and Sister Bonney have all been
Baptized into this church

Br John Young has gone to assist his children in moving
on here I saw your father yesterday he and Mother
was in good health and spirits he sends his best love ^{you}
and wants to see you very much. My father has
calculated keeping for the cow he bought hay and
and cut it I payed two Dollars & a half of the
Money you sent I could not have hay put by
my self for father is altering Barn you ^{wanted} me
to tell you about my affairs I am comfortable for this
two months or more to come I am spinning a piece
of cloth to cloath my children for winter
your two Daughters send their best love to you
and little son talks about his ~~and~~ every day more or
less although you complained of my letter
being so short before when I wrote I must close
with saying I have not marvelled because you have
written to me at any time But I am very thankful
to you for improving the opportunity of sending
few lines when you could if you do not return soon
to this place do not neglect to write to me Fartherwell
I am yours affectionately Mary A Young
To Brigham Young

Mother wants you should tell Valentine & Merna
that she is very to hear they are in good health and
well off tell them our folks all send their best
respects to them & want they should be shure and
write often I hope you will excuse my letter and
recieve it from yours Mary A Young to
Brigham Young

Holland Aug 31. 1835

Mary A. Young

William W. Phelps

Brigham Young

North Providence

St. Fruit Hill

to the care of Valentine Young & Co

25



Mary Ann Angell Young. Courtesy Church History Library.

years previously and had two little girls.¹²⁶ After a short courtship, they were married 18 February 1834. Mary Ann faithfully cared for the girls. Brigham later said of Mary Ann, she “took charge of my children, kept my house, and labored faithfully for the interest of my family and the kingdom.”¹²⁷

Six days after their marriage, Brigham left Mary Ann to go with Zion’s Camp to Jackson County, Missouri. In the weeks before leaving, he hurried to provide for Mary Ann and the two girls. Mary Ann spent her first years of marriage essentially without a husband. Throughout that time, she consistently took in others in need.¹²⁸ She had her first child, Joseph Angell Young, shortly after Brigham returned from Missouri.¹²⁹

Brigham was called to the Quorum of the Twelve apostles in 1835 after Zion’s Camp. He then left on a mission to the eastern states for five months. Similarly, the next year he was gone for six months. His earliest extant letter was written to Mary Ann, “My whife my Companion in tribulation and in the Kingdom,” in June 1836. He wrote:

What shal I say to you to comfert your hart. I Pray for you and I feele that the Lord will bles you and keep you from danger and bare you upon the arms of faith. Tell the Children that I remember them in my Prares. I Pray the Lord to giv you streng[t]h and wis-

dom in all things. Let me say to Elizibeth be a good girl and mind your mother and be good to Vilate and letle Joseph and I [k]now you will be. Vilate be a good girl and mind your Mother and studdy your book. . . . Mary Kiss that lettle son of ours and tell him to make hast[e] and groe so he can goe with me. . . . When I shall see you is unknown to me. If enney [of] the Brethern inquire about me tell them I am doing as well as I can. So Fair Well. The Lord bless you.¹³⁰ [70]

Brigham’s love and concern for Mary Ann and the family is plainly manifest, though constancy of this love does not erase the constant strain on Mary Ann of life without a husband physically at her side. Amazingly, Brigham was there for the births of their children amidst a constant pattern of missions and traveling for the Church. Then in 1837, as a result of the apostasy and anxiety in Kirtland, Brigham fled without his family. Mary Ann had to provide for herself and the children and they hovered close to starvation. A mob blitzed the home, tore it apart, and terrified the children. Mary Ann was also worried about Brigham and searched for him. This all deeply afflicted her—emotionally and physically. She called it the “severest trial of [her] life.”¹³¹

Again, during the extermination from Missouri, Mary Ann was left to fend for herself and her children. Brigham was responsible for an orderly exodus from Missouri and alone Mary Ann acquired her own wagon and hired a brother in the Church to help her prepare for the move. She sat in the front of the wagon holding one baby in each arm, Brigham Young Jr. and Mary. They were the youngest of five at the time. During the trip, the wagon hit a rut causing Mary Ann to lose her hold on Mary. She flew and landed on the ground and the wagon wheel rolled over her head. The driver picked up the baby and decided she could not live. Mary Ann responded, “Don’t prophesy evil, brother, take the other child.” While she prayed she pressed the little head back into shape. The baby Mary lived and healed quickly.¹³² [71]

Mary Ann had six children, five who lived to adulthood. While Brigham would marry a total of thirty-seven other women, Mary Ann always maintained a chosen position. In a letter to Mary Ann, Brigham expressed, “I think that the Lord has blessed me with one of the best famelyes [families] that eney [any] man ever had on the Earth.”¹³³ Her three sons were ordained as apostles

as teenagers to maintain the primacy of Brigham's first family and ensure that his posterity would be in the upper echelons of church leadership.¹³⁴ She died in Salt Lake City in 1882, five years after Brigham's death, at the age of seventy-four.

Mary Ann wrote this letter during one of Brigham's many absences. In May of 1835 the Twelve Apostles, of which Brigham was head, traveled on a mission to the eastern states. The original letter is found in the Church History Library and is in excellent condition. The letter measures 38.8 x 31.3 centimeters and is written in charcoal ink in lightly scripted petite penmanship. Mary was consistently positive despite her material hardships and the absence of Brigham. She continually worked to provide an optimal situation for her family and to support Brigham in his duties despite the suffering that surrounded them.

Monday August th 31 1835¹³⁵

Most affectionate husband ^[72]

I set down a few lines to you this morning to let you know we are all in good health and that I received your letter Dated August the 1. I much rejoiced to receive news from you that <you had> even arrived to the place where I have spent the scenes of my child hood and that you Were in Good health and Spirits.¹³⁶ you wrote that home looked sweet to you. I need not tell you that your society is would make home much more pleasant to me. But I well <know> the Lord has called you to go far away to proclaim his everlasting gospel so through his assisting <grace> I do not feel to repine att my lot. I herd of your long jorney you had to travel on foot from Canady.¹³⁷ I think you have been ble<s>t with ranging the country with great speed.

We was all very thankful to hear from Valentine folks & to hear that you had the priviledge of warning the people in that vicinity.¹³⁸ I hope there will be many that will come in to the kingdom of our Lord & his Christ in that place. I hope [you] [w]ill remember to tell me all about the people there. give my best love to all that enquire after me. you wrote to me if there was any thing I wanted to let you know—Id like to have you buy one ounce of Nutmeggs or any thing else that would be useful. if you see any Silk that you would like for a winter <Bonnet> for me you may get it if you please. but do just as you think best about getting any thing. I dont want you to have any trouble about any such things while you are abroad proclaiming this great work to the World. I was much rejoiced last thursday evening by receiving two letters from you—one from Bradford and the other wirtten in Boston.¹³⁹

I have not seen Brother Caraco or Sister Ramand but I have heard she is coming back this week to pay me a visit. You wanted I should write some news

from kirtland. I have not time <to rite> much for little Joseph is very woresome as he is cutting teeth.¹⁴⁰ he comes to me while I am writ<ing> and hangs hold of my cloaths and begs me to take him, so you must excuse all that is not agreeable to your mind. there are many things I wanted to say to you but cannot write them now. I trust a time will Come when we shall meet face to face and convers to gether before long.

Mr Bump has risen up in open rebellion against President Joseph Smith, but there was <not> many that had much confidence in what he said.¹⁴¹ there has some been labored ^[73] with and have confessed their faults.¹⁴² The house is improving by the work there is doing on it.¹⁴³ there was a man that joined the church not long since since one thousands Dollars for the house, he proved a wolf in sheeps cloathing. he had no money to give.

Brother Joseph P. Young is expected to be in Mass[achusetts], about this time.¹⁴⁴ Br Hyde Bishop has moved here from Lima he brought a letter from Truman, my Brother in wheetland.¹⁴⁵ they were all in good health. Sister Angelina Works has come to this place and is teaching school to the Printing office.¹⁴⁶ She and her Mother and Sister Bonney have all been Baptzed into this church.¹⁴⁷ Br John Young has gone to assist his children in moving on here.¹⁴⁸ I saw your father yesterday, he and Mother was in good health and Spirits.¹⁴⁹ he Sends his best love to <you> and wants to see you very much. My father has calculated keeping for the cow. he bought hay and cut it. I payed two Dollars & a half of the Monney you sent. I could not have hay put by my Self for father is altering Barn.

You <wanted> me to tell you about my afares—I am comfortable for this two months or more to come. I am Spining a peace of cloath to cloathe my children for winter.¹⁵⁰ your ^[74] two Daughters send their best love to you.¹⁵¹ Your litle son talks about his dady evry day more or less.¹⁵² although you complained of my letter being so short before when I wrote I must close with saying I have not Ma[r]veled because you have writen to me at any time. But I am very thankful to you for improving the opertunity of Senting few lines when you could. if you do not return soon to this place do not neglect to write to me. Faretheewell. I am yours affectionately.

Mary A Young

To Brigham Young

Mother wants you should tell Valentine & Mama that she is very [happy] to hear they are in good health and well off.¹⁵³ tell them our folks all send their best respects to them & want they should be shure and write often. I hope you will excuse my letter and receive it from yours.

Mary A Young to
Brigham Young

Kirtland Mills 25
Sept 2
Brigham Young
North Providence



Mary Fielding Smith. Courtesy Church History Library.

Fruit Hill
To the care of Valentine Young R I
Kirtland Aug 31, 1835
Mary A. Young ^[75]

Mary Fielding Smith

Mary Fielding was born on 21 July 1801 in Honidon, Bedfordshire, England.¹⁵⁴ She was the sixth of ten children born to John Fielding and Rachel Ibbotson. Her parents demonstrated great religious devotion and taught her faith in God as prominent members of Wesleyan Methodist church. Her father prayed often. Mary's sister Mercy commented that sometimes he prayed when he should have been working. Her mother led prayers at the local rectory. This religious atmosphere shaped the Fielding family. Mary lived in Honidon in this faithful environment with her family until she was thirty-three. She

then journeyed to Toronto, Canada, to join Joseph and Mercy, her brother and sister.¹⁵⁵

In Toronto, the Fielding siblings met a well-educated Methodist preacher, John Taylor. They joined his congregation and began to search for revelation and the authority of Christ. In the spring of 1836 the three Fieldings, along with many of Taylor's congregation, met Parley P. Pratt, a Mormon missionary with a new word from God. After an initial negative reaction to Pratt and his message, the Fieldings believed and were then baptized that May.¹⁵⁶

Mary, Joseph, and Mercy moved to gather with the Saints in Kirtland in 1837. Shortly after their arrival, Mercy married Robert Thompson, and they were called on a ^[76]mission to Canada. Then Joseph was called on a mission to England. The rest of the Fielding family still lived in Bedfordshire, England, and their older brother James was a minister. This was a perfect opportunity for the Mormon missionaries. James was willing to allow them to preach to his congregation, although the welcome was shortlived. After an overwhelmingly positive response from his congregation and the desire of some to be baptized, James retracted his support. From this point the Church membership of Mary, Mercy, and Joseph constantly put a great strain on their relationship with the rest of the family and at times harsh sentiments were exchanged. The three Fieldings continued to attempt to share their faith for years with their brothers and sisters, but were consistently unsuccessful. It was a difficult disappointment.

Although her sister and brother were far away and Mary was lonely in Kirtland, she enjoyed the benefits of being near church leadership. She was able to meet and become friends with the Smith family, in particular Joseph and Hyrum. She was grateful for what she considered spiritual blessings despite her difficulties in providing for herself temporally. Work was not consistent for Mary. She worked as a live-in governess and teacher, trusting that when one job finished another would come, so she could provide for herself.

When Hyrum became a widower in October of 1837, his brother Joseph counseled him to marry Mary Fielding.¹⁵⁷ Though under some criticism, Hyrum married Mary just two months after the death of his first wife, Jerusha. With great difficulty, at the age of thirty-six Mary became a

wife and the stepmother of five the day before Christmas.^[77]

As Mary finally realized her goal of marrying and settled into the role of mother, the peace began to unravel around her and her young family. Joseph Smith called it "the bitterness of the spirit of apostate mobocracy."¹⁵⁸ During the problems in Kirtland, Mary wrote to her brother Joseph, "The Lord will support us and give us grace and strength for the day if we continue to put our trust in Him & devote ourselves unreservedly to His service." Mary continued to live by this maxim throughout her life. She trusted that if she did what the Lord desired, he would protect, sustain, and strengthen her.

Under great duress Mary and her family left Kirtland in March of 1838. The eight-hundred and seventy mile trek to Missouri took two and a half months. Finally they arrived in Far West in the middle of June. Though a significant contrast to the spirit they left in Kirtland, the peace in Missouri did not endure. Amidst great trauma, Hyrum was taken from Mary and led off to jail at the capture of Far West.¹⁵⁹

Thirteen days after Hyrum was taken, Mary's first son, Joseph Fielding Smith, was born. Her health was delicate and without the help of her sister Mercy, she could not have taken care of all of the children and little Joseph.¹⁶⁰ At one point, the house was broken into by a mob, and as Mary lay bedridden and helpless, a mattress was thrown over the baby. Mary considered it miraculous that the mattress did not smother him and he was saved. Shortly thereafter, they were able to go to visit Hyrum in Liberty, enabling him to meet his new son.^{161 [78]}

Mary slowly regained her health as the family settled in Nauvoo. Mary and Mercy organized women of the Church to raise funds for the Nauvoo Temple and worked in the temple after they received their endowment.¹⁶² In June 1844 came the terrible shock of the death of her husband with Joseph Smith at Carthage. Mary was the most composed of the Smith women as they viewed the bodies. Although this was a terrible ordeal for many, she maintained strength through her faith.

Mary gave the temple six hundred dollars that Hyrum was saving to build her a brick home. Mary continued a practice of giving what she could to help the Church and others throughout

her life. Mary prepared herself and her children to leave Nauvoo. They left in the fall of 1846 and had to live in temporary cabins in Winter Quarters at present-day Florence, Nebraska, through two winters. She did all she could to prepare for the trip westward and just as the preparation time drew to a close, Cornelius Peter Lott, the captain of their company, following the instructions given by Brigham Young, told her that she was not prepared and would be a burden to the rest of the company and should wait until the following year. Mary's defiant response was that she would not burden the company and she would beat him to the Great Salt Lake. She took much risk in so doing.

Mary relied on the help of her sons and the other men in the company much along the way. The depth of Mary's faith was made evident several times during the trek. She prayed for lost oxen and found them and had enough faith that her oxen would be healed when administered to. Mary's son Joseph later described the continuation of the very ^[79]strained and harsh relationship with Lott throughout the travel, but in the end they did make it to the valley a day before Lott.

Mary and her contingent of children, relatives, and friends settled at Mill Creek near her brother Joseph. Though at times Mary felt forgotten by the leadership of the Church, she enjoyed her home, aided those that she could and taught her children of faith in God by her example. Providing for those in her home was difficult, but she trusted that God would provide. At one point a church leader told Mary that she need not worry about paying tithing to the Church since she had enough to worry about. Mary responded that he would not deny her the blessings that she needed. She knew that she would be blessed because she paid her tithing.¹⁶³

Although Mary died at the young age of fifty, her son Joseph remembered the example of his mother throughout his life. A few years after Mary's death, fifteen-year-old Joseph was called on a mission to the Sandwich Islands. During this mission he said that he was sorely tempted. He remembered that among other things it was the example of his mother that gave him the strength not to succumb to the powerful temptations. He became the sixth president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[Ch. Aug - SEPT 1837]

Sister Thimble desires her love to you

My dear Sister

I have this day received a very short note from you and am glad to learn by Brother Rabbit that you are well and comfortably situated. he tells me he is expecting soon to return to Canada so that it is unnecessary for me to say much as he can inform you of the state of things here verbally better than I can by writing. but still I can hardly refrain from sending a few lines. I am now in School which I took for one month the time expires tomorrow when I expect again to be at liberty or without employment. but I feel my mind partly much at rest on that subject I have called upon the Lord for direction and trust he will open my eyes. I hope you will not fail to remember me at a throne of grace. I have no doubt but you have many trials but I am inclined to think you have not quite so much to endure as I have, be this as it may, the Lord knows what our afflictions are and he will support us and give us grace and strength for the day if we continue to put our trust in him and devote ourselves unreservedly to his service. I do thank my heavenly Father for the comfort and peace of mind I now enjoy in the midst of all the confusion and perplexity, and raging of the devil against the work of God in this place. for altho here is a great number of faithful precious souls, yea the salt of the earth here, yet it may be truly called a place where Satan has his seat he is frequently stirring up some of the people to strife & contention and dissension with things they do not understand I often have of late ^{been} to look back ^{at the} circumstance of Joseph and his company when they rose up against Moses and Aaron. if you turn to and read the 16th Chap of Numbers you will there find the feelings and conduct of many of the people and even the Elders of Israel in these days exactly described. whether the Lord will convert a sinner or not I cannot tell I sometimes think it may be so. but I pray God to have mercy upon us all and preserve us from the power of the great enemy who knows he has but a short time to work in we have had a terrible stir with M.^r Parish the particulars of which I cannot here give you at length we are not yet able to tell when it will end. I have been made to tremble and quake before the Lord and to call upon him with all my heart almost day and night as many others have done of late I believe the voice of prayer has

Dorcas Folsom has received a letter from Mary

sounded in the House of the Lord some days from morning till
night and it has been by these means that we have hitherto
prevailed and ^{and} by this means only that I for one expect to prevail.
I feel more & more convinced that it is through offering that we
are to be made perfect and I have already found it have effect
of driving me nearer to the Lord and so has become a great bless-
ing to me. I have sometimes of late been so filled with the love
of God and felt such a sense of ^{his} favour as has made me rejoice
abundantly indeed my Heavenly Father has been very gracious unto
me both temporally and spiritually. Since I commenced this Letter
a kind Sister has proposed my going to stay for a while with her
to take charge of 2 or 3 Children who have been in my School
they propose giving something besides my board & I think this will
suit me better than a publick School if it is but little
I expect to go there in a day or two and hope to be quite comfortable
as I know the family to be on the Lords side the Mother is
a Cousin of Brother Josephs and took care of him when a Child
their name is Dorr. I felt much pleased to see Sisters Walton
and Snider who arrived here on Saturday about noon. Having
left Brother Joseph S. and Rigdon about 20 miles from Free
port to evade the Mobbers they were to come home in Dr.
Arbards Carriage and expected to arrive about 10 O'clock at night
but to their great disappointment they were prevented in a most
greivous manner. They had got ~~about~~ within 4 miles of home after
very fatiguing ^{journal} ^{the pleasure} ^{anticipating} with their visit to Canada greatly
of seeing their homes and families when they were
surrounded with a Mob and taken back to Painesville and
secured as was supposed in a Tavern where they intended to hold
a mock trial but to the disappointment of the wretches the
Housekeeper was a Member of the Church who assisted our be-
loved Brethren in making their escape. but as Bro J. S. ^{says} not
by a Basket let down through a Window but by the Kitchen
Door no doubt the hand of the Lord was in it or it could not
have been effected. the day had been extremely wet and ^{the} night
was unusually dark and you may try if you can conceive what their
situation was they hardly knew which way to steer as it had by
that time got to be about 10 O'clock the first step they
took was to find the Woods as quick as possible where they
thought they should be safe. but in order thereto they had to

to lay down in a swamp or by an old log just were they
happened to be so determinately were they pursued by their
mad enemies in every direction sometimes so closely that Dr
I was obliged to entreat of Bro Bigdon after his exertion in
running while lying by a log to breathe more softly if he
went to escape when they could run or walk they took each
other by the hand and covenanted to live and die together. owing to
the darkness of the night their pursuers had to carry lighted
torches which was one means of the escape of our beloved as they
could see them in every direction while they were climbing
over fences or tearing through bush or corn fields. untill
about 12 O'clock. when after traveling as they suppose in this
manner 5 or 6 miles they found the road which led homeward
and saw no more of their pursuers. after traveling on foot along
the muddy slippery roads till near 5 in the morning they arrived safe
at home almost fainting with fatigue. he Bro told us that
he decreed in his heart when first taken that he would
see home before sun rise and thank God so it was and not
withstanding all he had to endure he appeared in the House of the
Lord throughout the Sabbath in excellent spirits and spoke in
a very powerful manner and blessed the Congregation in the name
of the Father and I do assure you the Saints felt the blessing
and left the House rejoicing abundantly returning their blessing
upon him. Brother Bigdon though his great weariness and a small
wound received from a fall did not attend the House but is now well
I suppose all these things will only add another year to their crown
I did not think of making up so much room in relating these
circumstances but I have been as brief as possible. I must now
give you an account of a very affecting event which took place
in Scotland Sunday before last. you will of course remember a
Mr. Clarke a Miller who has been a greater opposer of our Church
as he and his Wife with some of their children and other Friends
were returning from the Presbyteran Meeting House in a very
nice Carriage. about one minute after they passed the House of the
Lord their Horses took fright and started off the side of the hill
overthrew the Carriage and hurt Mr. C. and one Child considerably
But Mr. C. so seriously as to prove fatal she was hurried on
the Wednesday following she has left 6 weeping children and a
mourning Husband indeed. on the day preceding the accident she
was heard to speak very unfavorably of the Church but is now gone

to prove whether ^{it} is the Church of Christ or not I greatly desire
 that ^{the} visitation may be sanctified to the Family I believe it
 is not quite a year since Bro. J. told Mr. C. that the ^{curse} of
 God would be upon him for his conduct towards him and the
 Church you may remember that our People wished to purchase
 his place, but he would not sell it on any reasonable terms
 and therefore left it, and has been a trouble in the place
 but has prospered in business so much as to say he never pro-
 pered, and told a Person some time ago that he was ready for
 another of Joseph Smiths Curses. I feel inclined to think he
 will never be heard to utter such words again may the Lord for-
 give and save him and all others who raise their hand against the
 Lords Anointed for I see more clearly than ever that this is
 no trifling sin in the sight of God. no it is as great as

I thank Brother Thompson for
 his last kind letter & should be
 pleased with another I remain
 your very affec
 Anne Smith
 etc.

Wm. C. Thompson
 Wm. Jones
 J. H. Andrews

ever it was in any age of the world I sincerely wish that
 all the members of the Church had a proper sense of their
 duty and diligence in this respect. I expect to hear from
 you soon and also from England I hope I shall not be disap-
 pointed if you and Brother Thompson have any idea of coming
 to England this fall. If the field of labour remains open
 there unless a change should take place in the state of aff-
 airs here for the better I should not advise it however much I
 might to see you here are some of them out of employ even
 in the summer and how it will be in the winter I cannot tell
 but I fear for England. O that we as a people may be faithful this

Mary's first letter included in this collection is written to her sister Mercy shortly after her arrival in Kirtland. The original of the letter is found in the Church History Library in the Mary Fielding Smith Collection.¹⁶⁴ It measures 40 x 31.3 centimeters and is on wheat colored parchment in russet ink with several water spots. It is one sheet ^[80] folded in half written on both sides. Mary described the surety of her course despite a local cloud cover that obscured her immediate path. She exemplified this surety—"comfort and peace of mind"—to enjoy "in the midst of all the confusion and perplexity" throughout her life.

[Aug-Sept 1837]

My dear sister

I have this day received a very short note from you and am glad to learn by Brother Babbit that you are well and comfortably situated.¹⁶⁵ he tells me he is expecting soon to return to Canada so that it is unnecessary for me to say much as he can inform you of the state of things here verbally better than I can by writing. but still I can hardly refrain from sending a few lines, I am now in <a> School which I took for one month the time expires tomorrow when I expect again to be at Liberty or without employment. but I feel my mind perty much at rest on that subject. I have called upon the Lord for direction and trust he will open my way. I hope you will not fail to remember me at a throan of grace.

I have no doubt but you have many trials, but I am inclined to think you have not quite so much to endure as I have. be this as it may, the Lord knows what our situations are and he will support us and give us grace and strength for the day if we continue to put our thrust in him and de[v]oute ourselves unreservedly to his service. I do thank my heavenly father for the comfort and peace of mind I now enjoy in the midst of all the confusion and perplexity. and rageing of the devil against the work of God in this place. for although here is a great number of faithful precious souls. yea the Salt of the Earth here. Yet it may truly be called a place where Satan has his seat he is frequently sterling up some of the People to strife and contention and dissatisfaction with things they do not understand.

I often have of late <been led> to look back <for the> circumstances of Korah and his company when they roase up against Moses and Aaron. if you will turn to and read 16th Chapter of Numbers you will there find the [feelings] and conduct of many of the People and even the Elders of Israel in these days exactly described.¹⁶⁶ wheather the Lord will comeout <in> a similar way or not I cannot tell. I sometimes think it may be so, but I pray God to have mercy upon us all and preserve us from the power of the great ^[81] enemy who knows he has but a short time to work in. we have had a terrible stir with Wⁿ. Parrish

the particulars of which I cannot here give you at length.¹⁶⁷ we are not yet able to tell where it will end. I have been made to tremble and quake before the Lord and to call upon him with all my heart almost day and night. As many others have done of late I believe the voice of prayer has sounded in the House of the Lord some days from morning till night and it has been by these means that we have hitherto prevailed and <it is> by this means only that I for one expect to prevail.

I feel more & more convinced that it is through s<u>ffering that we are to be made perfected and I have already found it have <the> effect of driving one nearer to the Lord and so has become a great blessing to me. I have sometimes of late been so filled with the love of God and felt suchasence [such a sense] of <his> favour as has made me rejoice abundantly. indeed my heavenly Father has been very gracious unto me both temporally and spiritually. Since I commenced this letter a kind Sister has proposed my going to stay for a while with her to take charge of 2 or 3 Children who have been in my school. they propose giving something besides my board & I think this will suit me better than a publick school if it is but little. I expect to go there in a day or too and hope to be quite comfortable as I know the family to be on the Lords side. the Mother is a Cousin of Brother Joseph and took care of him when a Child, their name is Dort.¹⁶⁸

I felt much pleased to see Sisters Walton and Snider who arrived here on Saturday about noon.¹⁶⁹ having left Brother Joseph S. and Rigdon about 20 miles from Fareport to evade the Mobbers they were to come home in D' Avards Carrage and expected to arrive about 10 Oclock at night, but to their great disappointment they were prevented in a most greavous manner.¹⁷⁰ they had got about within 4 miles of home after <a> very fatueging <journey> which pleased with their visit to Canada & greatly anti-sapating <the pleasure> of seeing their homes and familys. when they where surrounded with a Mob and taken back to Painesville and secured as was supposed in a Tavern where they intended to hold a mock trial but to the disappointment of the wretches the Housekeeper was a Member of the Church who assisted our beloved Brethren in making their escape. but as Br. JL <says> not by a basket let down through a Window but by the Kitchen Door no doubt the hand of the Lord was in it or it could not have been effected.

the day had been extremely whet and <the> night was unusually dark and you may try if you can conceive what their situation was they hardly knew which way to the store as it had by that time got to he[re] about 10 Oclock. the first step they took was to find the Woods as quick as possible where they thought they should be safe. but in order ^[82] there to they had to¹⁷¹ laydown in a swamp or by an old log just were they happened to be. so deteriminately were they pursued by their mad enemys in every direction sometimes as closely that Br J was obliged to entreat Br. Rigdon after his exertion in running

while lying by a log to breath more softly if he ment to escape when they could run or walk they took each other by the hand and covenanted to live and die together. owing to the darkness of the night their persuers have to carry lighted torches which was one means of the escape of our beloved suffers as they could see them in every direction while they were climbing over fences or traveling through bush or corn fields—until about 12 Oclock.. when after traveling as they suppose in this manner 5 or 6 miles they found the road which led homeward and saw no more of their persuers. after traveling on foot along muddy slippery roads til near 1 am <in> the morning they arrived safe at home almost finting [fainting] with fatuage [fatigue]. he Bro. J told us that he decaed in his heart when first taken that he would see home before Sun rise and thank God so it was.

And not withstanding all he had to endure he appeared in the House of the Lord throughout the Sabath in excellent Spirits and spoak in very powerful manner and blessed the congregation in the name of the Lord. and I so assure you the Saints felt the blessing and left the House rejoicing abundantly returning their blessing upon him. Brother Rigdon through his great weariness and a sma<ll> <hurt> received from a fall did not attend the House but is now well. I suppose all these things will only add another gem to their Crown. I did not think of taking up so much room in relating these circumstances but I have been as brief as possible.

I must now give you an account of [a ve]ry affecting event which took place in Kirtland Sunday before last. you will of course remember a Mr. Clarke a Miller who has been a greater opposer of our Church.¹⁷² as he and his wife with some of their Children and other Friends where returning from the Prespetearan Meeting House in a very nice carrage. About one minuit after they passed the House of the Lord their Horses took fright and started off the side of the hill overthrew the Carrage and hurt Mr. C. and one Child considerably. But Mrs. C so seriously as to prove fatal. she was burryd on the Wednesday following she has left 6 weeping Children and a mourning Husband. indeed on the day preceeding the accedent She was heard to speak very unfavourably of <our> Church but is now gone to prove whether <it> is the Church of Christ or not. I greatly desire that <the> visitation may be sanctified to the Family. I believe it is not quite a year since Bro. JS told Mr. C that the <curse> of God would be upon him for his conduct towards him and the Church. you may remember that our People wished to purches his place, but he would not see it on any reasonable terms and therefore kept it. and has been a trouble in the place but has prospered in business so much as to say he never prospered <better>, and old a Person some time ago [said] that he was ready for another of Joseph Smith's curses. I feel inclined to think he will never be heard to utter such words again may the Lord for give and save him. and all others who raise their hand against the Lords

anointed for I see more clearly than ever that this is No trifling sin in the sight of God. no ^[83] it is as great as ever it was in any age of the world. I sincerely wish that all the members of the Church had a proper sence of their duty and privelege in this respect.

I expect to hear from you soon and also from England I hope I shall not be disappo[int]<ed> tell if you and Brother Thomson have any idea of coming to Kirtland this fall. (if the Field of labour remains open there unless a change should take place in the state of affai<rs> here for the better I should not advise it. however much I might [want] to see you. here are course of Men out of employ even in the summer and how it will be in the winter I cannot tell, but I fear for Kirtland. O that we as a people may be faithful this¹⁷³ is our only hope and all we have to depend upon. Give my love to Brother Thompson and all other Friends particularly Brother & Sis Laws though this for there kindness to you.¹⁷⁴

I thank Brother Thompson for his last kind letter. I should be pleased with [a]nother I remain your very affectionate Sister M.F.

Mrs. R. Thompson
Mr. Laws
Churchville

Sister Kimball desires her love to you Both.¹⁷⁵
Dadeus Perkins has married a Widdower 5 children
. . .¹⁷⁶ [ellipsis in original] ^[84]

Jennetta Richards

Jennetta Richards was the youngest of seven children born to John Richards and Ellen Charnock.¹⁷⁷ She was born on 21 August 1817 in Walkerfold, Lancashire, England. John Richards was a minister in Walkerfold, and he and Ellen taught Jennetta a strong belief and trust in God. Her family was financially well off, and Jennetta was very well educated through private schools.

Jennetta first met the Mormon missionaries in August 1837 at the house of Thomas Walmsley, an acquaintance, when she was twenty years old. She there met Mormon missionary Heber C. Kimball, who began to speak about religion.¹⁷⁸ Heber described her as "very intelligent." He told her of an engagement to preach on the following evening, and she attended both that night and the following. According to Heber, after those two evenings, she was "fully convinced of the truth," and she was baptized in the River Ribble. She was the first to be confirmed with the gift of the Holy Ghost in Great Britain, and in her confirmation Heber promised her that "the Lord will soften the heart of your father."¹⁷⁹ Though not

supportive of Jennetta's decision, her parents continued to allow her to live in their house and tirelessly attempted to dissuade her from her beliefs.^[85]

Unknown to Jennetta, the day of her baptism Heber wrote to his fellow missionary Willard Richards, "I baptized your wife today."¹⁸⁰ Willard was not yet married. For months each would hear of the other without meeting. When they finally met the following March, they walked together and Willard mentioned, "Richards is quite a good name; I never want to change it; do you, Jennetta?" Jennetta responded, "No, I do not." Willard wrote in his journal, "I think that she never will."¹⁸¹

Willard and Jennetta were thirteen years apart. Jennetta's parents did not only object to her baptism, but also to Willard. However, after several months of courtship Jennetta and Willard were married just after her twenty-first birthday on 24 September 1838, without the consent of her family. Although newly married and his wife was with him, Willard was still a missionary and had duties to fulfill while in England. Jennetta stayed with a member family much of the time.

Married life was very lonely for Jennetta. Health problems plagued her throughout her life. Members of the Church were critical in their judgment of Jennetta and her fine clothing and accused her of misusing Church funds to fund her fine attire, when in reality she owned the clothing prior to her marriage. The Church members held a public meeting to ensure that Jennetta did not use their funds for new clothes. Her family was all but absent in her life. Her first son, John Heber Richards, died after five months. Only one of Jennetta's brothers attended the funeral. One year later, her second son was born without the presence of Willard and without any aid from her family.^[86]

Willard was a missionary in England for five years. As the apostles arrived for their second mission in Great Britain, he was ordained an apostle, filling one of the vacancies left after apostasy in Kirtland and Missouri. When Willard finished as a missionary in England, he, Jennetta, and their young son left Britain for the United States. Upon arrival, Jennetta and John moved in with Willard's family in Massachusetts. Willard immediately left on another mission, and Jennetta had a difficult time fending for herself amongst Willard's unfamiliar family for the following year.



Heber John (*left*), Willard Richards (*center*), and Jennetta Richards (*right*). Courtesy Church History Library.

She continued frequent communication with her family despite their objections to her path and continued to admonish them to believe and be gathered with the Saints. She assured them, "My beloved friends, do come you will never repent if you do come."¹⁸² Nauvoo was a welcome change for Jennetta, though she was still disturbed by the absence of her husband. In June of 1842, she penned a feisty letter to Joseph Smith explaining that Willard had been gone for too long and she needed him at home. Smith tactfully responded to her, acknowledging her needs and the essential assistance of her husband, promising that she would soon have him home. She had her second daughter Rhoda Ann Jennetta Richards on 15 September 1843 at great risk to her health.

Jennetta had particular difficulty accepting the principle of plural marriage, but she maintained her belief in Joseph Smith as a prophet. After his martyrdom she praised Joseph and Hyrum Smith: "They never taught me anything but what was the most virtuous principles." Willard was in the jail with Joseph and Hyrum when they were murdered. She was grateful he was not murdered with them: "I think I can never praise my

Heavenly Father sufficiently for his mercies to me in preserving Mr. Richards safe and sound again." She died just a year later on 9 July 1845 in Nauvoo of "general ^[87] debilitation" and per her request she was buried in her garden. She was twenty-eight years old. Her husband said of her, "She dies as she lived, an heir of heaven. She was one of whom the world was not worthy, and our Heavenly Father has taken her to himself."⁸³

The location of the originals of the letters here utilized is unknown. The Church History Library acquired photocopies of the original letters.¹⁸⁴ As noted in the document's catalogue entry, it appears as though the letters were reduced in size as the copies were made. Both letters were written during Willard and Jennetta's courtship as her family attempted to persuade her to leave Willard for a variety of interesting reasons. During this personally difficult time Jennetta demonstrates her determination and her faith that would last throughout her lifetime.

Walkerford¹⁸⁵ August 11th 1838
Saturday 9 O Clock P M
My Dearest Willard,¹⁸⁶

Saw Brother Kay this evening and feel very sorry to hear that you my dearest love are so poorly that you are obliged to stay at Clitheroe.¹⁸⁷ O that I could come to see you though it is so wet I should not think it wise for me to walk this evening. if I could leave home but you know my Dear I cannot have. when I would therefore I will endeavor to be content and pray My heavenly father to give you health and strength so that you may be able to go to Preston ~~this~~ ^[88] next week.¹⁸⁸ if the child continues as ^[88] she is at present. I shall take her to preston on the 18th this month and expect to remain there one week. and if her Mother is not able to keep her nor does not get her a wet nurse I shall be obliged to bring her back to Walkerfold and stay with her until Mother gets a servant for it. I leave home she cannot do without one and I do not like to name it until I come of age lest it should cause us some trouble.

I anticipated the pleasure of seeing you my Dear. Yesterday or today but am dissatisfied I got ready to go to Bro Parkers yesterday, but being so wet I did not go because I thought you would not come.¹⁸⁹ I began to fear this afternoon when I made enquiry and found you was not come this morning (because it was quite fair and dry until one). that you were poorly and could not come. I fear my Dear you begin to labour to soon after your sickness. <I think> it is too far for you to walk from Ribchester to Waddington on one day when it is so very wet. I felt quite uneasy on Monday when I heard you were gone in the wet. I enquired if you had your cloak they said no and they thought you had only one umbrella

between you. you must know My Dearest Willard that I feel as much for you as I do for myself and why not when I believe you to be part of myself and a very Dear part I assure you. I was with you most of last night in my dream I thought you were yet quite well and stout <I thought> I never saw you look so well before. I thought we were quite comfortable and happy in each other's company. I believe we shall be when that time comes Sunday 9 A M I hope my dear enjoys a comfortable degree of good health this morning for I can truly say that I feel quite well and have done so for some time. I feel that I could like to take a walk to Clitheroe this morning to see you my Dear love, but you know I must not. therefore I will try to be content and ~~m~~^ay my heavenly father be with you this day and bless you and give you a good and comfortable degree of health is the earnest prayer of your Jennetta.

Saw Bro. Kay this morning and he told me that Bro Fielding ~~which~~ wished Bro Smiths and him to go [to] Warrington this evening.¹⁹⁰ I told him I should like him to go to Chitheroe to see you but it will be too far for them to go to Chitheroe and there to Dading Warrington before evening Service unless they could go this afternoon. but are engaged at Bro Parker's this afternoon and will go to Washington this evening. I will seal this and endeavour to see Bro Kay on his return and give it to him hoping that he may have an opportunity to send it unto my Dearest love by a safe hand. so that you may receive it this evening and know that your Jennetta is still the same hoping to see you before long. if you think it will be wisdom for you to call at Walkerford, I shall be happy to see you. but I think if you should call it will prevent us from having any favorable conversation and I should like very much to see you if you be able to come to morrow I shall have to go with tracks so that I may get the opportunity of seeing you at Bro Parkers. I should go to-day but will not go until to-morrow hoping to meet ^[89] you. My Dearest, My Father has been informed this morning that you were left in Chiltroe by Bro Fielding poorly. on Friday night I wish it had not been named by Bro Fielding for it makes my parents more uneasy. My Mother says this morning you are gone far in a consumption and that will make them more against you than ever knowing that I have always been very delicate. they think we are two very unfit persons to go together but let them say what they will. they cannot make me unneedy about it for I believe this of Willard—that if he thought he was consumptive he would never think of being married to a young person like me whom he knows will have no support from any of his friends or relatives if he should soon have her which undoubtly if he has consumptive he soon will.

11 A M My parents are just gone to meeting so I will with pleasure assume my pen to write a few lines more to My Dearest Willard hoping that he will not think that I have written the above believing that he is trying to cheat me. so my Dear love you must ask for once think any such thing for I do not feel the

least fear of that, but I should like you to take more care of your self. Bro Kay informed me this morning that you were without umbrella on Monday when you were talking with him. I hope my Dear Love you will be more careful and of getting wet if not for your own sake do it because it is the earnest request of your Jennetta who loves you most dearly and who wishes to have the same tender care of over you as herself, and why not when she loves you as tenderly as she does herself?

In the letter I received from Bro Kay on Friday night you say if I be desirous of staying at home ~~a few~~ longer I may please myself. I have only a day or two in Preston and return home, and he requested at Clithere if I ~~bring~~ <take> the Child to Preston on Saturday I shall stay a week there, and if her mother is not able to take her I shall be obliged to bring her here again if she is poorly and cannot go on Saturday. I do not know how. I must go to Preston on s[unday]. if I go, it will be against my parents will. I should like to know about it, you may wishe before you leave Chitheroe and give it to Bro Kay as you come for hear you do not see me, for if you do not come to-morrow I fear I shall not see you as to be requested up & I shall not like it, for it is made public there to every one who goes to the office in it is as a book [in a] Stationers Shop and is put in a glass case oposite the door so that all may see it as they pass. Father has been telling me you are at Clitheroe. Mother said I had better go see you. I have no objections. I said the sam[e] and she did not think I had the thought. I would rather go there than any where else. I said have you any objections so if he should ask your consent? she said yes she had. I assure you my Dear, there will be a great deal of uneasiness such as had not hear lately in this country, therefore I had better beat Preston if it be delayed a few weeks longer. I hope you will not be weary and think the time long, we had better be a little longer and do it justly then cause a great deal of uneasiness as it would do—I assure you if ~~it~~ we be [together] at Chitheroe—I must close it is school-time. pray for Jennetta.

I have had no time to look over it must erase all mistakes. pray for Jennetta.
If from home please forward it as soon as possible.
Forwarded by Bro Ray
From Preston
August 11 ^[90]
Mr Willard Richards
Mrs. Dawson B^o 21
Pole Street
Preston
Lancashire
Carriage paid from Langston
To Preston
With Speed of importance

Kirkham September 7th 1838
My Dearest Willard,

I fear you will accuse me of very great ~~resem~~ remissness in not wirting sooner according to promise, but I assure you my Dear this is the first opportunity and I do not know that I can finish this to send today. I have had much more to contend with since I came to Kirkham than ever I had before. My Brother is uncomonly kind and affectionate and will reason, but Sister has no more reason than a stone.¹⁹¹ Sister and I were at the Ministers house at Elowich on Mondays. I never was so insulted in my life than I was then by no one. Sister and Mr. Edwards were at me as soon as I got there just like two lions.

After I left you on Saturday Mother told me Mr. Foster said he would take an oath that you told his mother when first you came that you were a widower and Sister heard so too by some one she sayes not through Foster but moon saw you told him that you were now my Dearest Willard, you know that do not believe that you are and either Moon or Lowe one must be soiling question but am satisfied from your own mouth that you are not.¹⁹²

I can as soon believe that the gospel you preach is fake as believe that you have a wife and a family in America or that you are a widower, for if you will deceive in one thing you will in another. My Brother wishes me to wait a little longer and he will try to enquire and know of a truth whether the report be true or not. I told him I was satisfied, he loves me as a Sister and wishes to be satisfied also, and if the report be false he will ~~have no objections~~ say nothing against us being Married.

I have not told him that we are rejestred neither shall I do until I leave.¹⁹³ I do not know when I shall be in Preston whether next week or the week following, hoping to ^[91] hear from you <this> ~~next~~ week if convenient, hoping your health is improving I should like to write much more but Sister is upstairs and I expect her down every moment I must conclude, and hope you will believe me the same. even
Yours Affectionately,

Jennetta Richards

Give my love to Sister Dawson.¹⁹⁴ I feel in good health at present. I took cold on Saturday was ill wet but am quite well today. burn this as soon as you have read it.¹⁹⁵ ^[92]

Temperance Bond Mack

The early life of Temperance Bond is somewhat enigmatic.¹⁹⁶ Although the date is unclear, she was born in Marlow, Cheshire County, New Hampshire to Mary Yemmons and Stephen Bond.¹⁹⁷ She married Stephen Mack in Gilsom, New Hampshire in 1783. They moved to Tunbridge, Vermont, after the wedding. He was

a large-framed Revolutionary War soldier who had enlisted three separate times and explored at sea with his father and brother for a number of years.¹⁹⁸ They had twelve children together.¹⁹⁹ In 1807, Stephen left Temperance and his children for the frontier of Michigan. There he excelled in business ventures—with a brief respite for the War of 1812. He founded Pontiac, Oakland County, Michigan, and was instrumental in many significant developments including the first turnpike between Detroit and Pontiac.²⁰⁰

Because Stephen was consistently successful in Michigan, Temperance and the children were well cared for financially, despite his absence. For years, Temperance cared for her family alone, and Stephen visited every year or eighteen months. Temperance chose to educate her children in private New England schools and raised ^[93] them near their extended family. Then in 1822, after the birth of her youngest child, Temperance moved the family to Michigan. They moved initially to Detroit and then on to Pontiac when a home was prepared. The twelve children of Temperance included three sets of twins. All of her children lived to maturity—an anomaly in the nineteenth century.

Stephen suddenly died after a stomach illness of a few days, widowing Temperance in late 1826. He left a significant estate of \$50,000 “without encumbrance.” However, the estate became involved in the collapse of the Bank of Michigan, and a majority of the wealth went to settle debts. Temperance was left with a small amount of property that provided for her throughout the rest of her life.

In 1831 Temperance’s youngest daughter, Almira, went to stay with her aunt Lucy Mack Smith in Manchester, New York. In New York Almira learned of the religious experiences of her cousin Joseph and the founding of the new Church. As explained previously, Almira quickly believed and was baptized. In 1832 she returned to Michigan accompanied by William Scobey, her newly acquired husband, her aunt, and the first missionaries to Michigan. It was then that Temperance heard firsthand of the Book of Mormon and the calling of Lucy’s son to be a prophet.

In accordance with Lucy’s personality, it is sure that she utilized every opportunity to boldly testify to Temperance and her family. Lucy pounded the topic until Temperance grew weary and asked

for a reprieve because the subject agitated her. Later in the evening, after a hiatus, she instigated a return to the topic. Lucy recorded that it was that conversation which drew Temperance to her conversion. She then decided to be baptized. ^[94]

Lucy Smith stayed for a month and continued her enthusiastic stream of testimonials including one to Reverend Isaac W. Ruggles, the minister of the Congregational Church.²⁰¹ In their exchange she shook her finger at him and prophesied that within three years her son’s church would have a third of the reverend’s church including the deacon. The deacon’s name was Samuel Bent.²⁰² In early 1833, Bent was baptized and became a successful Mormon missionary.

Temperance remained in Pontiac for a number of years, but by May of 1838 Temperance had traveled to Kirtland with her son-in-law David Dort. Temperance lived with Almira and her husband of two years, Benjamin Covey, and their new baby, Enoch. They moved with the Saints to Missouri and there experienced the many difficulties of mob action and eventual expulsion including the imprisonment of Benjamin for three weeks. They eventually left Missouri, moving east to Illinois. Throughout this time, both Temperance and Almira consistently communicated with their family, admonishing them to believe and gather with the Saints. Temperance penned, “O how much more pleasing would it be to me to see all those who are flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone to be gathered with me here; for this I shall not cease to pray.”²⁰³ She was steadfast in her hope that all of her children would be converted.

New doctrine had a significant effect on all early women, and Temperance was not alone in her joy in hearing the new doctrines introduced by Smith. She described her excitement at the introduction of baptisms for the dead in a letter to her daughter Harriet ^[95] Whittemore, the same daughter to whom this letter is directed. Temperance explained that she was baptized for her father, her mother, and her husband, “thus releasing them from Prison. . . . I think how much you would have rejoiced to have done it yourself, could you see the order instituted by heaven.”²⁰⁴

In Nauvoo, Temperance alternated living with Lucy in Joseph Smith’s home, and with Almira and Benjamin. After the martyrdom of the Smith brothers, Temperance traveled to Michigan, staying with Harriet for a year and missing

the turbulence which followed their martyrdoms. Temperance often spoke of going to the West to California despite the injunctions of her children.²⁰⁵ In her first letter after she returned to Nauvoo, she detailed the Saints' plans to leave the United States the next spring: "We know not where but we intend going until we can find a country where we can have the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of our own conscience and agreeable to the Commandments of Heaven, where there may be none to molest us or endeavor to make us afraid." In contrast to her sister-in-law, Lucy, who was unable to make the trip west, and against the wishes of her children in Michigan, Temperance risked her health and cheerfully followed Brigham Young and his company to Utah in 1848. She was resolute in her decision, "My dear children I have no wish to return. My course is onward." She died in Utah on 8 September 1850.^[96]

Shortly after arriving in Far West, Missouri, Temperance wrote the letter included here to Harriet. She expresses resolve in her decision to gather with the Saints, a resolve that she exemplified throughout her life. She knew her course was correct and she was prepared to endure to the end. The original letter is located in the collection of the University of Michigan Archives.

Far West, [Missouri] December 30, 1838

Dear Daughter,²⁰⁶

I am well and in good spirits. David and his family are well.²⁰⁷ I received your letter which is all the news we have had from any of you since I left there. Almira and her child are out of health in some measure.²⁰⁸

Knowing your anxiety for me I will endeavor to in form you of an item of the scenery that has past around us. Brother Joseph and Hyrum and Sidney Rigdon and a number of them are now in jail and have been in irons.²⁰⁹ They will have their trial in March if they don't call a special court. They are prisoners of war. They are an offering from the church to save the lives of others. They suffer themselves.²¹⁰ The church have agreed to leave here in the spring but where to go they know not.

We don't know but we must flee from the haunts of men to the caves and dens in the rocks like that saints of old, but none of these things move me. Neither do I regret that I have left the eastern states for where the Lord says go. I must obey although my heart is with my children and they are near and dear to me, yet I am no better than the martyrs—they had to suffer the loss of all things to be an incorruptible crown and so must I, and I do it cheerful know-

ing I shall reap in due time. if I faint now fearing the truth will yet reach there and will be published in the papers and you will do well to search them.^[97]

I wish you would show this letter to Sister Williams and daughters. and I would just say my mind is the same and if the scriptures are fulfilled the saints must suffer persecution and although we have suffered much and it looks dark ahead of us yet none of these things move me neither in my life dear if so be I can obtain a crown of glory. I am very anxious to hear from all my children and friends and I wish you would all write me and let me know all the doings there.

Father and Mother Smith are well.²¹¹ their family is well but you may well suppose their minds are troubled. There has been many slain of our friends and some whipped and some can't obtain anything but threats for their labours. Carlross Buckland was sent there with a company of troops against the Mormons.²¹² He made us a visit. Almira and I spoke very plain to him respecting his coming to drive us out of our habitations. He did not stay long and we don't know but he was offended with our plain dealing. I want you should tell Olin if he could send me some money it would delight me very much.²¹³

I don't write because I am in a suffering condition for I am amongst friends that will assist me all in their power as long as they have anything to do with. I wish you would tell Harriet I wish her much joy in her new situation in life and I wish she and her companion would become good mormons and be willing to suffer the loss of all things for an incorruptible crown that fadeth not away.²¹⁴ I want to know some thing respecting the wars and lamentations in the east as well as in the west. The sword is unleashed and war desolation will cover the land. The Mormons are not the only people that will see trouble. Judgement must and will begin at the house of God. but if they hardly escape where will the wicked flee for safety? for the scriptures truly say there shall be wars and rumors of wars and we know by experience that perilous times have some and we see the prophecies both ancient and modern fulfilling daily.²¹⁵

and we are rejoicing that we are found worthy to suffer persecution for the name of Christ. although the chaff is a scattering off to the four winds yet their remains some wheat in the granary we have been sifted and if we should be [faithful] what remains will ^[98] be so much the better and it would be what we are daily looking for.²¹⁶ We see the things that many have desired to see and have not seen them and what if the sup is bitter. The Saviour partook of the same and shall we refuse to taste of it. Be assured it is enough for the servant to be as his master.

Brother Bent was here yesterday He and his family are well. Mary Bent is married.²¹⁷ Lest I tax your patience I will close my letter. I desire your prayers that I may be patient in tribulation and that I may be found with my lamp trimmed and burning when the Saviour comes to make up his jewels that I may enter into his heart rest. I wish to be remembered to



Eliza Roxcy Snow. Courtesy Church History Library.

all my acquaintances accept of my love yourself and I wish to be remembered in love to all my children and grandchildren even to Mary Louisa.²¹⁸

N.B. Almira says her boy will whip all your boys and girls too.

Temperance Mack

Dec. 30, 1838

G.O. Whittemore, Esq.
Pontiac, Oakland Co.
Michigan^[99]

Eliza Roxcy Snow

Eliza Roxcy Snow was a poetess, prophetess, priestess, and presidentess during her lifetime. She maintains her own unique position among the women gathered in this study. Her collection of personal writings is abundant, and many have studied and written about her life. She held a position in Mormon society that was unequalled by any other woman during her lifetime. Early on in her life, she gained a voice uncommon among women of her time through her poetry. Yet in

spite of all the prose that sprang from her and about her, she consistently remained a very private person. She does not allow one to gain much insight into her feelings, other than what she felt for Joseph Smith and the Restoration. In that, her feelings and beliefs are well exhibited.

Eliza was the second daughter born to Rosetta and Oliver Snow on 21 January 1804, in Becket, Berkshire County, Massachusetts.²¹⁹ Sometime before 1806 the Snows moved to the wilds of Mantua, Portage County, Ohio. There they had five more children amidst the difficulties of life on the edge of the frontier.²²⁰ The Snow children were strictly disciplined and educated. Eliza and her younger brother Lorenzo were particularly close throughout their lifetimes. The two shared an incomparable closeness and an insatiable appetite to learn.^[100]

The Snows were Baptists, although closely associated with a wide range of religious inclinations. In particular, Alexander Campbell, leader of the "Disciples" Church and theologian, and his associates Walter Scott and Sidney Rigdon frequented their home providing a candid atmosphere of religious discussion. Sidney Rigdon was probably responsible for a visit that Joseph Smith made to the Snow home in 1831.²²¹

After some consideration, Eliza decided that Smith had an honest face. She later described:

The most impressive testimonies I ever heard were the witnesses of the Book of Mormon. To hear men testify that they had seen an angel—that they had listened to his voice bearing testimony of the work that was ushering in a new dispensation, thrilled my utmost soul.²²²

Later in the year, Eliza's mother and sister were baptized. Worried that it was too good and could not last, Eliza herself was hesitant with the ordinance of baptism. She was determined to wait to see if Mormonism was just a "flash in the pan."²²³ She did not decide to be baptized for another three years, but when she did her path was cemented, and she did not doubt her choice. By April 1835, she said her "heart was fixed" and she decided to be baptized. Eliza was single until she was thirty-eight: she believed that she^[101] did not marry early—despite offers—to enable her to accept and exercise freely "the religion which has been, and is now dearer to me than my life."²²⁴

Eliza was known for her uncommon intellect. As a girl in her school studies, she would often

write her assignments in verse to escape criticism of the information included. She could craft the poetry intricately to avoid the corrections of lesser poets, her professors. Eliza started a literary career early. Under a variety of pseudonyms—Narcissa, Tullia, Cornelia, and Pocahontas—she utilized poetry as an opportunity for free public expression not readily afforded to most women in the first half of the nineteenth century.²²⁵

In the fall of 1835, Eliza moved to Kirtland to gather with the Saints. She moved into the home of Joseph and Emma Smith and taught their children in a school. She then moved with her family to Adam-ondi-Ahman, then to Caldwell, and after four months they were driven to Illinois in the middle of the winter. As Eliza walked over the frozen ground, a Missouri militia member taunted her that this walk “would cure her of her faith.” She responded, “No, Sir, it will take more than this to cure me of my faith.”²²⁶

Once in Nauvoo, Eliza began to publish on the Missouri experience of the Saints and became very active in Nauvoo life. She was the secretary of the Female Society of Nauvoo and continued roles in women’s Church organizations. In 1842 she was sealed ^[102] to Joseph Smith as a plural wife though sworn to secrecy.²²⁷ She later referred to Smith as “my beloved husband, the choice of my heart and the crown of my life.”²²⁸ It was difficult for Eliza to transition from the advantages of a single life to a plural marriage relationship and was able to maintain much independence as she developed a need for relationships. She consistently attempted to be submissive to what she felt was the will of God. Throughout her lifetime, she held a central role in teaching the women of the Church of their exalted position in the eternities. She penned the hymn “O My Father” in Nauvoo and through the hymn was the first to publicly teach the doctrine of a mother in heaven in 1845.²²⁹ The doctrine made such a deep impression on a young Bathsheba Smith that years later she could still remember the room they were in and the moment when she learned it as she read a draft of “O My Father.”²³⁰ Eliza was best known for her essential function in expounding upon the role of women and “enlarging Mormon women’s abilities and influence.”²³¹

She was sealed to Brigham Young for time after Smith’s death and had deep feelings for him. In Utah in 1866 she became the General President

of the Relief Society and tirelessly worked to improve the experience of women in the Church. Her no-nonsense way at times was less than tactful when reminding the sisters of the Church of ^[103] their duties, though many considered her as “the Mother of these people.”²³² She actively supported and expanded home manufacture, grain storage, silk production, medical training, and political activism for women through Relief Society economic programs. She ardently defended plural marriage and fervently opposed anti-polygamy legislation and thoroughly taught women of their chosen role in the kingdom of the Saints. She died 7 December 1887 and was then respectfully honored in her funeral service. She directed that her funeral be without tears. She did not want sympathy or sadness at her passing. She believed her life lived was enough.

Eliza’s letter included in this collection is distinct from many of her writings. It is written to Isaac Streator, who appears to be an acquaintance of the family. Streator lived in Portage County, Ohio, the last residence of the Snows before the move to Kirtland. Her father had previously corresponded with him concerning their situation in Missouri. Rather than utilizing the poetic flourishes she cherished, this letter is an example of polite, spartan eloquence. The starkness of the letter only augments the severe reality of the Missouri experience of the Saints. In 1973 the Western Reserve Historical Association held rights to the original letter. The Church History Library holds an enlarged negative photocopy of the original.²³³ Eliza’s lettering is minute and meticulous, mirroring her strict and precise nature.

Feb 22 1839 Caldwell County Mo²³⁴ ^[104]

Esqr. Streator,²³⁵

You have so long been reliev’d from my preaching, as you sometimes call’s it; I think you may well afford to endure a little interruption. You need not anticipate another intrusion very soon, for as yet we have no continuing city or sure abiding place, and one week more will probably find us on our journey from this State. We wish to give you some few items of the movement here before we leave, for we find from the reports, which go, and come, thro the Newspaper medium that you get nothing correct: and as you are a Politician and fond of Politics, perhaps you will take some pleasure in contrasting those of Missouri with your own. Father is so busy preparing for our next move, that he has not a moment to spend in writing; this is my apology for addressing you. Probably, before you receive this, you will have

seen a letter which father wrote judge Atwater two or three weeks since in which he gave some few of the particulars, respecting which has transpir'd since our arrival; but it would require a volume to give a full account.

Things have mov'd with such rapidity, and of such a nature as might well allay doubts, are yet remaining in the mind of any, that these are indeed the last days, and that the inhabitants of the earth are, in some of them at least, beginning to be in haste to fill up their measure, before the Lord shall come forth from his hiding place.²³⁶ The nations of the world can never fill the cup of their iniquity without shedding innocent blood, and the blood of the "Latter Day Saints" will <that of> many of them be required of the present generation. The Lord has commenc'd a work that is destin'd to try the sincerety and the strength, yes, and the legality too, of every Creed and Profession, both political & religious, upon the face of the whole earth. The religionists of the day who have been crying "do as you would be done by," will have ample opportunity to see if they will put their own excellent precept in practice; and those who sit in the halls of justice, as the dispensers of rights between man and man, will be put to the test, whether they judge righteously, for righteousness' sake. It is comparatively an easy matter <to act> uprightly, when public opinion and the weight of influence favor the act; but it requires some courage when a man is obliged to bid defiance to popular feeling, in order to do right—when a man must place his life in jeopardy in order to decide with impartiality between man & his fellow man.

This has been fully proven in the State of Missouri. There are those who, actuated by the spirit of republicanism and without any partiality to the religious views of our society; have risked their reputation, and endangered their lives by pleading the cause of the innocent, while judges and lawyers have dispersed with high dignity of their profession and while Preachers, and Deacons have laid aside the Sacred insignia of their office to wield the word against a people whose only crime was in believing in "the times ^[105] of restitution" (not destruction) "of all things," and proving their faith by their works. In perpetuating[?] up & driving us from city to city & from state to state, no doubt, like Saul of Tarsus, they think they are doing God service. And so they are, for as a Pharaoh was necessary to the establishment of Israel in the land of Canaan, so are the persecutors of the Saints in the last days necessary in bringing about the great purposes of God. They mean it for evil but the Lord means it for good. "Offences must needs come."

We have a copy of Gen. Clark's concluding speech, which was delivered to our brethren at Far-West a few days after the surrender, which will give some idea of the spirit of the times. Our brethren have not taken up arms except in self-defiance. Expecting you have seen father's letter refer'd to above I shall not say anything about what transpir'd previous to the last of Oct. When an army of 35 hun-

dred encamp'd about Far-West threatened immediate massacre.²³⁷ Soon as our people ascertained that they were authorized militia they surrender'd, the leaders of the church delivered themselves up, and went to the camp of the Militia with the promise that they should return to their families in the morning. Gen Lucas was first in command;—the prisoners, 7 in number,²³⁸ instead of returning home the next day were tried by a Court Martial & 13 generals out of 17, condemned them to be shot, a company was chosen to execute the sentence—the hour was appointed and the place chosen which was to be the center of the City, in sight of their families, Those who were chosen refused to perform, and a second company chosen when Gen. Doniphan told them that they were acting illegally and if they proceeded he would expose them.²³⁹ Then they concluded to take them to Jackson County thinking that the mob spirit there would furnish executioners without ceremony, but they were mistaken. Our people found warm friends in that Co. who even invited Joseph Smith and S. Rigdon to bring their families and settle there. They were then taken back to Richmond and put in chains where they were kept four weeks when prejudice was so strong it was thought wisdom to remove them to Liberty where they were considered more safe.²⁴⁰

They were tried about the last of Jan.²⁴¹ The excitement was great, about 250 mob collected and seeing that nothing could be brought against the prisoners, threatened to shoot both judge and jury if the verdict was given, and the prisoners were hurried back to prison. One of our neighbors was there on the day of trial, who said he should judge no less than 1000 people gathered in, and when he was returning home, met 300 arm'd men, who swore that if the prisoners were releas'd, they would kill every "Mormon" in ^[106] the State. But to return to the surrender at F. West. After the 7 were taken, the City was kept with a strong guard, the men called together to lay down their arms and were compell'd at the point of the sword to Deed away all their property both real and personal estate to a committee chosen for the purpose, all of which was done so cheerfully that the Militia were quite angry. Three or four days after this, General Clark came with several hundred who ratified the treaty made by Gen. Lucas, I will send a copy of his address to you in his own words, the "list of names" refer'd to in the speech are those of between 60 and 70,²⁴² who were driven to prison soon after like sheep to a market most of whom were released after confinement of a month, the rest are in prison now,²⁴³ unless they have been privately set at liberty for the Mob law is the law of this State and but few dare act except in accordance with it. A copy of the General's Speech: . . . The General's assertion that our people had been the "aggressors" is too false to pass without some comment; for we have been driven from Jackson, Clay, De-Witt, and Daviess; yet as a people have always been in "subjection to the powers that be"; not that there has been no wrong done by those that are call'd "mormons" for we profess

the "ancient order", of course our greatest perils are those we have to encounter among false brethren, for we have those among us who have not only tasted the "good word of God" but also the "powers of the world to come", who, concerning the faith have become reprobates.²⁴⁴ These constitute the post powerful earthly ally, which Satan has to boast. But be assured these are not the followers of Joseph Smith, for so long as they conform'd to his teaching, they were righteous men.

I now anticipate your question, Do you believe that Joseph Smith is a prophet? I have not seen or heard anything which caused me to doubt it even for a moment: If possible I have better testimony that J. Smith is a prophet, then Jeremiah was one, altho' he has not been kept in prison quite as long. S. Rigdon is liberated,²⁴⁵ I do not know whether he is let down the wall in a basket, but his keepers thrust him out privately for fear of the people, and then circulated the report that he was bail'd out in two thousand dollar bonds, but this is only to appease the wrath of the multitude. He has gone clear, and the others are only kept for our safety, for it is suppos'd the mob will either revenge on us or on those who hold them in confinement, if they are liberated before most of us get out of the State.

The Gov. of Illinois says our people may come there—they have been going all winter, and move very fast—A man just arrived from Ill. Who said he counted 220 wagons between this and the Mississippi. It has been judged there were eight thousand of our people in this county but the season has been a stormless one = the most favorable for ^[107] moving we could wish, and the word impossible has become obsolete with us, therefore I think we shall get out in pretty prompt compliance with the orders of government. Those who will deny the faith have the privilege of staying. Some will accept the terms.

Lorenzo left us in the forepart of Oct. we received a letter from him which commenc'd in Ill; it was mail'd in Kentucky where I suppose he is now,—had but partially recover'd from an attack of the fever and ague when he started.²⁴⁶ I will transcribe as much of his letter as my paper will admit, which is as follows, . . . I have no room to transcribe all of his letter. I wrote him & directed to Washington Co. Kentucky, have receiv'd no reply as yet. Letter-conveyance is very uncertain here for which reason I intend mailing this, in Illinois. Please let cousin Pease and wife see this. I propose writing to Uncle Granger's family after we get located, for now I could not tell them where to write to us.

Confiding in the Lord's protecting care, We go, as Abra'n did, "not knowing where". I have not written half that I want to say to you, but my paper is full, and it would be superfluous to tell you I have written in too much haste to keep my pen in order—we have so much to do, to prepare for the journey.

Respectfully,
Eliza R. Snow

To Esqr. Streator, Mrs. Streator, Charity and all the rest.

I find upon folding my letter a little more room—The Missourians had commenc'd mobilizing in Daviess Co. previous to our arrival; but were very friendly at the time and were very anxious to sell to us. Our people purchas'd their farms—they remov'd their families away, and rais'd a mob—painted their faces like Indians, and came directly back to drive us from the lands we had purchas'd of them, calculating to chase us away & repossess the country. This, we suppose, because when we did leave by order of the Militia, we were hardly out of our houses before the former owners occupied them. When the Militia came, the mob volunteerd and join'd them. You will understand from this the character of the Militia. I will transcribe a pass which every man was required to carry for his own protection, and that of his property. "I permit Oliver Snow and sons to remove from Daviess to Caldwell County, there to remain during the winter or to pass out of the State". (Signed R. Wilson, Brig. Gen.)²⁴⁷

Nov. 9th 1838

It astonishes our enemies that our people suffer no more while passing thro' these scenes of suffering. They say the Mormons have always rejoic'd in tribulation, but they will do something now that they will not rejoice in. I fear them not, but know not what new torture they may invent. They have not burnt any of us at the stake, yet,—they have ^[108] imprison'd, whip'd, ston'd, and shot some but death does not terrify us enough to suit them, for they say that the Mormons are so d—d sure of going to heaven, they had as lief die as not. The Lord maketh the wrath of man to praise him. Let his name be magnified.

E.R.S.

Isaac Streator, Esqr.
Streetsborough, Portage County, Ohio
[postmark] Quincy Mar 21 ^[109]

Mary Fielding Smith, letter 2

Mary Fielding Smith was thirty-seven at the time of this letter. (See her previous letter for complete biographical information.) The original letter is owned by the Church History Library, and it measures 31.3 x 38.4 centimeters folded in half and written on both sides in russet ink. She and Hyrum were married a year and a half previously, and Hyrum was currently in Liberty Jail. Between her own health problems, those of her children, misunderstandings with Hyrum that were exacerbated by his absence, and the privations of the Saints in general, this was an exceptionally difficult time for Mary. Despite all of

April 11th 1839

My dear Husband

I received yesterday a large packet of Letters &c from you which took nearly all my leisure time to read through the day. Which I did with mingled feelings of pleasure and grief. I assure you I had thought it very long before I heard from you your first Letter only came to hand a little more than a week ago. and this was while Brother Branson was as I supposed on his way to Liberty with a fixed determination never to return without you. as I knew this to be the case and had sent a message by him. I thought it would be useful for me to write as my Letter might be going whilst you were coming homeward. but I was not a little disappointed ^{a few days ago} to find him returned without having seen you and bringing no intelligence respecting you that was any way satisfactory. I now begin to feel dissatisfied with myself and especially since I read all your Letters I cannot but reproach myself ^{with} a degree of neglect notwithstanding the hindrances that stood in my way, and the flattering prospects that have from time to time been held out to me respecting your being at home, which I hope you will consider as a sufficient apology for such neglect. I am sure if I could have known that you would be in confinement so long I should by no means have omitted to write to you often altho I might have to do it while ather slept as I am now doing not knowing that it ^{will} ever come to to you. but as you request ^{me} to write on the receipt of yours I feel disposed to do so even if you should come home before I can finish ~~it~~ a Letter. The report is now here that you are out of prison but as so many false reports have been circulated on that subject I know not what to believe. if you are now according to your expectation in Davise County you are indeed in the midst of a host of ferocious enemies who like greedy Wolves are thirsting for your blood. if indeed there was no God I should never expect to ^{see} you again in this world. but in him is all my trust and I hope and believe that you will be delivered out of their cruel hands and be restored to the society and bosom of your family who greatly desire to see you ~~live~~ more in the flesh.

I must here my beloved Companion advert to some remarks
you make in your last relative to my having forsaken you to
which gave me feelings not to be described. I cannot bear the
thought of your having any such suspicion, surely you had not to
if so you are yet unacquainted with the principles of my heart
what I should I forsake a Friend and a bosom Friend in the time
of adversity and affliction when all the sympathy and affection
I am capable of feeling is called for to soothe and comfort
as far as possible under such circumstances as you are placed
in. No reason religion and honor and every feeling of my heart
forbids such a thought to enter there. How I cannot help asking
can things have been represented to you so as to indicate any
such thing, surely an enemy must have done this for I
you had known the truth. And the endeavours and intentions of
my heart towards your family from the time you left me to
the present moment. you would I do assure you have had no
cause for anxious thoughts. or sleepless nights on there, ac-
count it has been my desire and aim to do in your absence
better by these and for them as in your presence or even more
knowing your great carefulness and concern for our general well-
fare. How could Brother Rogers say he call'd no me and receive
no answer & this is the first word I ever heard of his having
call'd upon me. I sent repeatedly for him to come before he
left here and was greatly disappointed when I heard that he was gone
without my having seen him. I think I am obliged to stop
here and take a view of the paper so many things crowd upon
my mind which I should like to tell you but cannot in this way
that I long to see you that I may explain all things to you as I
wish to do. As Elder Rigdon told me some time ago that he
had given you an account of our situation as I shall pass over many
things and leave them to be explained when I have the pleasure of seeing
you. I will now endeavour to give you some information respecting our
present situation and circumstances. I am now through the greatest inter-
of God towards me enjoying good health and fast recovering my
strength which is greatly needed after 4 or 5 months sickness in
which I have been intirely unable to take care of household affairs
all the rest of the family are in excellent health except little Sarah
she has a severe cold and cough she has gone down for ^{the} last month and
begins to talk she calls the baby Jacob she and all the children seem
very fond of him he grows fast and is very strong he had 2 teeth when
a little more than 3 months old you may not think him handsome but

to me intelligence seems to burn forth in his eye and countenance
as he begins to shew signs of a good mind which in my estimation is
of much greater importance than beauty. I think you will be anxious
to see her she has grown very strange and stout but she says she
will sit on Father's knee when he comes. John & Mary also
are growing very fast they often talk of doing great things to the north
for keeping Father away so long. Lattina often expresses a great desire
to see you. Sister Breckinridge & Maria also she seems much affec-
tioned when I read what you addressed to them. Eliza has behaved
at herself much better than common ever since. Brother & Sister T
are still with us. we all live in a small house in Quincy
for which we pay 8 dollars per month. Brother T is in a good situa-
tion waiting in the Court house. I suppose his pay will be good. my
means are not yet quite run out & hope I shall see you before this
is the case I often think of your advice respecting going into the
country to take a farm but it appears to me quite impracticable
before I received your letter. James Standring had left this place
for Springfield without one dollar to take him there he had
laboured amongst us until he had become entirely destitute. & and
I know Brother T is no farmer and we could not hire a man
in and keep him under so little per month another thing is in the
way we have no Wagon horse as Mr. Brother says he shall call on
a Wagon hire till you come as he received it. he also borrowed the
hair which we had left and Brother William had taken and
sold her. Brother Miller has settled about 100 miles from here
so that we should not know how to go about getting either
money or money with these things considered I feel discouraged
about trying to get into business before you come. I have
mentioned the subject to several of the Brethren but they all
seem to think that you will not be able to attend to farming your-
self and if you could not remain constant yet when you will be at
home as that upon the whole I think we had better resign it.
Now my dear Elizabeth I must close to a more interesting
to some thing continue in your. I have on paper a good long letter
me you might write and let me know in a few days. I have a
familiar nature I thought if I could not prove to you in the course of
the 4 or 10 months I will write you. I have also your own and the
millions of family I would in future endeavor to do so. I am not with-
standing you speak away on it in some parts of your letter I discern a
spirit running through the whole which seems to strengthen my attachment
to you. and if I should again be permitted to enjoy your society I hope
to prove to you that I am a never failing friend I now feel to have to say

Mr. Thomas Smith

My dear Harriet - I have finished my letter and sent it off by a messenger but
of us and have you would be if you could write to me and I would be glad
more than ever that they received a letter from you. I think I should like to
to make a few remarks in answer to it, in the first place I would say, that
your judgment is able to form what your father says which will not mean
one left forward the brother told me I might bring them and we so in words
they expected he had as soon as now will in the end be disappointed, as the next
I have I must beg of you to say no more about my leaving for ever you or
the possibility of going on so much from or around that I can make that out of myself after
I am then either a strength or a weakness in my heart, I tell you that he means to go on
of the Harriet, with the possibility of her to me and have it for my heart and I will be glad to

these things, she remained steadfast in her belief in the restoration, her trust in God, her love for Hyrum, and her willingness to sacrifice all things. She explained to her brother two months later, "I have, to be sure, been called to drink of the bitter cup; but you know my beloved brother, this makes the sweet sweeter."²⁴⁸

April 11th 1839
My dear Husband²⁴⁹

I received yesterday a large packet of Letters be from you which took nearly all my leasure time to read through the day.²⁵⁰ which I did with mingled feelings of pleasure and grief. I assure you I had thought it very long before I heard from you. ^[110] your first letter only came to hand a little more than a week ago. and this was while Brother Brunson was as I supposed on his way to Liberty with a fixt determination never to return without you.²⁵¹ as I knew this to be the case and had sent a message by him I thought it would be useless for me to write as my Letter might be going whilst you were coming homeward. but I was not a little disappointed to <a few days ago> find him returned without having seen you and bringing us intelligence respecting you that was any way satisfactory.

I know begin to feel dissatisfie<d> with myself and especially since I read all your Letters. I cannot but repro<a>ch myself <with> a degree of neglect, notwithsan<d>ing the hindrances that stood in my way. and the flattering prospects that have from time to time been held out to me respecting your being at home. which I hope you will consider as a sufficient apology for such neglect. I am sure if I could have known that you would be in confinement so long I should by no means have omitted to write you often.²⁵² altho I might have to do it while others slept as I am now doing not knowing that it <will> ever come to you. but as you request ~~fr~~me to write on the receipt of yours I feel disposed to do so even if you should come home before I can finish it a Letter.

the report is now here that you are out of prison, but as so many false reports have been circulated on that subject I know not what to believe. if you are done according to your expectation in davise County²⁵³—you are indeed in the midst of a haste of ferocious enemys who like greedy Wolves are thirsting for your blood. if indeed there was no God I should never expect to <see> you again in this world. but in him is all my trust and I hope and believe that you will be delivered out of their cruel hands and be restored to society and bosom of your Family, who greatly desire to see you, once more in the flesh.

I must here my beloved Companion advert to some remarks You make in your last [letter] relative to my having forsaken you, which gave me feelings not to be described.²⁵⁴ I cannot bear the thought of your having any such suspision. surely you had ^[111] not, if so you are yet unacquainted with the principles of my heart. what should I forsake a Friend and a bosom Friend in the time of adversity and

affliction when all the sympathy and affection I am capable of feeling is called for to sooth and comfort as far as possibel under such circumstances. as you are placed in? No. reason, religion, and honor and every feeling of my heart forbids such a thought to enter there. How? I cannot help asking can things have been represented to you so as to indicate any such thing, surely an enemy must have done this, for if you had known the truth and the endeavors and intentions of my heart towards your family from the time you left me to the present moment, you would I do assure you have had no cause for anxious thoughts or sleepless nights on there account.²⁵⁵ it has been my desire to aim to do in your absence both by them and for them as in your presence or even more knowing your great carefulness and concern for our general well fare.

How could Brother Rogers say he call[e]d no [on] me and receiv<ed> no answer & this is the first word I ever heard of his having called upon me. I sent repeatedly for him to come before he left here and was greatly disappointed when I heard that he was gone without my having seen him.²⁵⁶ O Hyrum, I am obliged to stop here and take a view of the passt. so many things crowd upon my mind which I should like to tell you but cannot in this way. that I long to see you that I may explain all things to you as I wish to do. As Elder Rigdon told me some time ago thet he <had> given you an account of our situation so I shall pass over many things and leave them to be explained when I have the pleasure of seeing you.²⁵⁷ I will now endeavour to give you some information respecting our present situation and circumstances. I am now through the great mer<cy> of God towards me enjoying good health. [I] am fast recovering my strength which is greatly needed after near 5 months sickness in which I have been intirely unable to take care of household affairs.²⁵⁸

all the rest of the family are in excelent health except little Sarah. she has a severe cold and cough. she has gone alone for <the> last month and begins to talk. she calls the baby Joedo. she and all the Children seem very fond of him he grows fast and is very strong. he had 2 teath when a little more than 3 months old. you may no think him ^[112] handsom but to me intelligence seems to beum forth in his age and countinence. he begins to shew signs of a good mind which in my estmation is of much greater importance than beauty. I think you will be supris<ed> to see Jerushe. she has gown very strong and stout but she says she shall sit on Fathers knees when he comes. John & Hyrum also grow very fast. they often talk of doing great things to the mob for keeping Father away so long. Lavina often exprees a gret desire to see you. Sister Greenald, Clarinda & she seemed much affected when I read what you addressed to them. Clar has behaved herself much better than common ever since.

Brother and Sister T[hompson] are still with us.²⁵⁹ we all live in a small House in Quincy for which we pay 8 Dollars per month. Brother T[hompson] is in a good situation waiting in the Courthouse. I suppose

his pay will be good. my means can not yet quite run out. I hope I shall see you before this is the case. I often think of your advice respecting going into the Country to take a farm, but this appears to me is quite impracticable before I received yours.

James Standrug had left this place for Springfield without one dollar to take him there he had laboured amorst us until he had become entirely destitute. and <you> know Brother T is no farmer and we could not hire a Man and keep him under 30 Dollar per month. another thing is in the way we have no Waggon Horse or Ox. Father says he shall call the Waggon his till you come as he redeemed it.²⁶⁰ he also borrowed the Mair which we had left and Brother Williams has taken and sold her.²⁶¹ Brother Miller has settled about 100 miles from here so that we should not know how to go about getting either Oxen or money all these things considered.²⁶² I feel discouraged about trying to get into business before you come. I have mentioned the subject to several of the Bretheren but they all seem to think that you will not be able to attend to farming your self and if you could it seems uncertain yet when you will be at home so that upon the whole I think we had better decline it.

Now my dear Husband I must draw to a close once more adverting to some thing contained in yours. Where you say if you have forsaken me—you might write and let me know it be this [that] produced feelings of a peculiar nature. I thought if I had not proved to you in the course of the 9 or 10 months <I had> lived with you that I cared for your own and the welfare of family I would in future endeavour to do so. and notwith standing you speak way or do in some parts of your Letters. I desern a Spirit running through the whole which seems to strengthen my attachment to you. and if I should again be permitted to enjoy your society I hope to prove to you that I am a never failing Friend. I now feel to long to see you.^[113]

My dear Husband, I had finished my letter and sent it off by a Brother but as no one knew where you would be it was sent back to me. I was sorry but am now glad and have this day received a Letter from you dated April 6th and I wish to make a few remarks in answer to it. In the first place I would say that your Wrapper is safe at home also your saddle bags which were sent home before we left farwest. the Brethern told me I might bring him with me as you would they expected be here as soon as we were but in this I was disappointed. in the next place I must beg of you to say no more about my having forsaken you or the Family it gives me so much pain of mind that I can hardly bear it. I again [assure] you that such a thought never entered my heart. Dont my dear be uneasy about any of the Children. Little Joseph F. lies too near my heart to be neglected but I will take the finest [care].

And I promise you if <this> is necessary—that [thy] mind may be easy respecting the Family that they should continue to receive all the care and attention I am capable of showing them untill your return

and afterward it shall not be lessened. We are all quite well in health at this <time> excepting Brother Thompson who has been so closely confined to writing during the sitting of the Court that he is now quite laid up. he desired <me> to give you his particular love to you and to say that if he had not been so much engaged he would have written. My Sister also with all the family send their sincere love to you²⁶³ and I subscribe myself your most affectionate & faithful Friend and companion in tribulation. Mary Smith

[pg 3 overwriting]

Father told me last week that he went to buy us a cow and since that I have heard that he had bought one but he has not sent her to us. yet they did not tell me that you had sent money to pay for one. I think it would have been as well, if you had sent the money here as Brother Thompson had previously bought a cow for which he gives 18 dollars and we have one with a calf which came from Farwest. We have seen the Epistol to the Church and read them several times they seem like food to the hungry.²⁶⁴ we have taken great pleasure in perusing them. I believe all our afflictions will work together for our good altho they are not joyous while passing through them. Yours in affection in the fullest sence of the word. Mary Smith^[114]

Melissa Morgan Dodge

Similar to that of many of these women, little documentary evidence survives to detail the story of Melissa's life.²⁶⁵ This letter to her brother, William T. Morgan, is the only writing of Melissa Dodge known to exist. The shadowy outline of her life story is found in genealogical information and the records of her sons. Melissa Morgan was born to Nathaniel Morgan and Mary Wheeler in Jefferson County, New York, on 28 October 1798. She was the oldest of four children and blind.²⁶⁶ When she was twenty she married Erastus Dodge in nearby Henderson. Melissa and Erastus were baptized after meeting Mormon missionaries in 1832. Melissa's oldest son, Augustus, described the healing of his mother's eyes by David W. Patten and Warren Parrish at the time of her baptism. She was immediately able to work and experience the sights of the world around her. Augustus also explained that his crippled left elbow was healed instantaneously as well.

Melissa bore fifteen children in her lifetime, ten before she had sight. Only seven of her children matured to adulthood. The other eight all

June the 23 1839

Dear Brother and Sister With thankfulness
to the Lord we are yet alive and have
this opportunity of letting you no that
we are in the land of the living we have
been drove from our home and we are now in Athens
in Adams County where we rented land Seth
Works out he has 14 dollars a month Sally works
out this summer and is doing well the rest of the
children are at home all though we have been
by a cruel mob we can say like David we take the
spoiling of our goods joyfully seeing there is a god in
heaven which will ^{bring} them to judgment in his own due
time and the day soon a coming when his Saints shall
not be driven and harried about by a cruel mob but
thanks be to my god the day is night and the sun is new
when he will take vengeance on all the ungodly and give
his children a reward a crown of righteousness while
the wicked must perish under his wrath for they
have done some from their homes and some they
have killed in a shocking manner some they whipped
and some they put in prison but all this is to
show that the Scripture shall be fulfilled and
the time may nigh when the son of man will come
to reign with his Saints for the time is come that
judgment must begin at the house of god and
if it first begin at us what shall the end be of
them that obey not the gospel of god if
righteous scarcely be saved where shall the
ungodly and sinners appear though wicked
men and Devils strive to keep us from
that land and from their homes the Saints
they drive to try the Lords command
we are still determined maintain the
faith which once was delivered to the
Saints

and not fall away like some have and
Deny the Gospel of Christ they are thought
that feel on stony ground who when they
have heard the word immediately receive it with
gladness and no root in them selves and so
endure but for a time afterward when
affliction or persecutions ariseth for the word
sake immediately they are offended
but we are determined by the grace of
god our lord and savior Jesus Christ to
in faith to say that we may receive
the crown that is prepared for his saints
I praise my maker while I breath
if I am drove from place to place and
severe the lord for this I do feel to rejoice
no other Church Below I do feel to rejoice
that it is as well with us as it is for
god has bin our shield & buckler he has
bin our covert in the storme when we
were drove from Missouri in february
across the prairies you must realize
your self how you would have felt to have
bin drove from your home for nothing but
for the religion of Jesus Christ in the land of
the winter ones but thanks be to the
your little ones he has preserved us and
Admity god he has preserved us and
has kept us from the hand of our cruel enemies
who was threatening our lives day & night
if could see you and talk with you to see
tell you all about it we want to see
you all and hear from you may god grant
to give you his Spirit & Jesus that we may
thru in the Celestial Kingdom of god
meet in the prairies is no more there we
When parting I pray through
shall sing our praises for ever
out reims of endless days

June the 23 1839

Dear Brother and Sister With thankfull^{ness}
to the Lord We are yet alive and have
this opportunity of letting you no that
We are in the land of the living We have
been drove from our home, and we are now in Illinois
in Adams County Wheat We rented land Seth
Works out he has 14 dollars a month Sally Works
out this Sonner and is a doing well the rest of the
Children ~~are~~ at home all though we have been
by a cruel mob we can say like David we take the
spoiling of our goods joyfully noing there is a god in
Heaven which will ^{bring} them to judgment in his own due
time and the day soon a coming when his Saints shall
not be driven and harried about by a cruel mob but
thanks be to my god the day is night and the air is new
when he will take vengeance on all the ungodly and give
his Children a reward a crown of righteousness while
the wicked must perish under his wrath for they
have drove some from their homes and some they
have killed in a shocking manner some they whipped
and some they put in prison but all this is to
show that the Scripture shall be fulfilled and
the time draw nigh when the Son of man will come
to reive with his Saints for the time is come that
judgment must begin at the house of god and
if it first begin at us what shall the end be of
them that obey not the gospel of god if
Righteous scarcely be saved whereas shall the
ungodly and sinners appear though wicked
men and Devils strive to keep us from
that land and from their homes the Saints
they drive to try the Lords Command
we are still Determined maintain the
faith which once was delivered to the
Saints

Payson Allen

To. *Wm*
William D Morgan
of Henderson, County
of Jefferson, State of New
York

Payable to the order of
Payson Allen

Handy Hill Pay 7 1/2
Payson Allen
Handy Hill Payson

died before they reached their first birthday, several dying on or before the day they were born.

Melissa and her family moved to Kirtland in spring of 1834. Erastus and Augustus worked on the Kirtland Temple. Undoubtedly, Melissa also expended her time in aiding those working on the temple and in the completion of the temple itself. They arrived in Missouri during the initial troubles in Clay County, then settled in Caldwell ^[115] County on Shoal Creek near Far West. At the surrender of Far West in October of 1838, Erastus and Augustus were both held prisoner for eight or ten days. Once reunited, the Dodges were driven out of Missouri in the dead of winter and suffered much. They crossed the Mississippi River to Adams County, Illinois, where the family lived until they moved to Nauvoo. There they lived four blocks from the Prophet. Melissa's son Seth was a mason on the Nauvoo Temple while the rest of the family also assisted in the construction of the temple and the Masonic Hall. Because of Melissa's work to perform proxy baptisms for her ancestors while in Nauvoo, her descendants have a very complete record of their genealogical line. Erastus died in August of 1843, and after two years of widowhood, Melissa died in 1845.²⁶⁷

Though the view of Melissa's life is limited, the best glimpse we have of her true motivation in life shines through this one personal record. Flourishes of poeticism demonstrate her appreciation of her environment. Meanwhile her lack of formal education is shown in her rough articulation. Likewise, she demonstrates her knowledge of the scriptures and Joseph Smith's revelations. Melissa's life was an intense struggle. She stood with those who were willing to sacrifice all for their belief. The original of Melissa's letter is in excellent condition residing in the Church History Library.²⁶⁸ It is one tan sheet, 12 x 15 3/4 inches, written on three folded sides. Her script is almost scrawled in bold and broad strokes in russet ink. ^[116]

June <the> 23 1839

Dear Brother and Sister,²⁶⁹

With thankfull<ness> to the Lord We are yet alive and have this opportunity of leting you no that We are in the land of the living. We have bin drove from our home and we are now in Illinois in Adams County, Whear we rented land.²⁷⁰ Seth Works out.²⁷¹ he has 14 dollars a month. Sally Works out this Somer and is a doing well.²⁷² the rest of the Children are at home.²⁷³

all though We have bin <driven> by a Cruel mob We can say—like paul—We take the Spoiling of our goods Joyfully, noing thear is a god in heaven Which Will <bring> them to Judgement in his one due time.²⁷⁴ and the day [is] soon a coming when his Saints shall not be driven and harrist about by a Cruel mob. but thanks be to my god. the day is night and the our is neer When he Will take vengenc[e] on all the ungodly and give his Children a reward, a crown of righteousness, While the Wicked must perish under his Wrath, for they have dreve some from thear homes, and Some they have kiled in a Shocking maner. Some they Whiped, and Some they put in prison. but all this is to show that the Scripture Shall be fullfilled and the time dray nigh When the Son of man will Come to reine With his Saints.²⁷⁵ for the time is Come that Judgement must begin at the house of God.²⁷⁶ and if it first begin at us, What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God if Righ[te]ous Scarcely be Saved. Whear Shall the ungodly and Sinner appear though Wicked men and divels Strive to keep us from that land and from thear homes the Saints they drive to try the Lord's comand.

We are Still determind [to] maintain the faith wich once Was deliverd to the Saints and not fall away like Some have and deni <the> gospel of Christ. they are thoughts ^[117] that fel on Stonny ground—Who When they have h[e]ard the Word immediatly receive it with gladness and no root in them Selves and So endure but for a time afterward.²⁷⁷ When affliction or persecutions ariseth for the Words Sake immediatly they are offended. but We are determind by the grace of God our lord and Savor Jesus Christ to <endure> in faith to and that we may receive the crone that is prepared for his Saints.²⁷⁸

I prais my maker While I breath. if I am drove from place to place and serve the Lord for this I no he has no other Church Below. I do feel to rejoyce that it is as well with us as it is for God has bin our sheald and buckler.²⁷⁹ he has bin our Cove[r]t in the Storme. When We Weare drove from Missouri in february aCrost the prearas [praries] you must realise your Self how you Wold have felt to have bin drove from your home for nothing but for the religion of Jesus Christ in <the> dead of the Winter on the open preras [praries] With your littles ones. but thanks be to the Almigty God, he has prepreveve [preserved] us and has <kep> us from <the> hand of our Cruel enemies Who Was threatning our lives daly & if Could See you and talk With you I could tell you all about it. We Want to See you all or hear from you. may god grant to give you his Spirit to enable you to See the thruth as it is in Christ Jesus that We may meet in the Celestel Kindom of God Whear parting is no more. thear we Shall sing our makers prais through ~~out~~ out relms of endlis days.²⁸⁰

<We> Weant you Should Write and let us no Whear our Brothers and Sisters all are So we can Write to them to let them no that We are a live.²⁸¹ and writ as so[o]n as you Get this letter that I may hear from you once more for I cant express how I Want to see you all and talk With you and then I cold tell

you this. from your Brother and Sister Erastus and
Melissa Dodge

give our love all enquiring frends.
Derect your <letters to> Adams County
Pa[y]son post office Illinois
I heard last summer that father was dead.²⁸² thear
fore I shant Said <not> much about him. blesed are
the dead that die in the Lord.²⁸³ [118]

Dont for git to let me no Whear you all are and
writ[e] immeatly that I may no whear you all are
and then I Will Write more particulars.

I See the little birds with Eas[e] fly ove[r] the hils and
lofty trees. Could I but fly as well as theay I quicly
Com and talk with the[e.]

Melissa Dodge

To Mr William T Morgan
Of Henderson; County
Of Jefferson; State of New York

Payson, Ill²⁸⁴
July 6

over

Sandy Hill
Payson Illinois [119]

Vilate Murray Kimball

On 1 June 1806, the youngest daughter of Boswell and Susannah Murray was born in Florida, Montgomery County, New York.²⁸⁵ They named her Vilate. She was the youngest of five. The family lived in New York as Vilate grew up. She was known as the "village belle" as a teenager. One day when the Murrys lived in Victor, Ontario County, New York, a young stranger passed by their house on horseback and stopped to ask for a drink of water. Vilate's father proceeded to draw water from the well and asked her to get a glass from inside the house. The stranger drank and returned again and again for water until he began to call on Vilate—though initially he didn't know her name.

The stranger's name was Heber Chase Kimball, and after a few months' courtship, later in the year they married.²⁸⁶ Vilate was sixteen and Heber was twenty-one. She and Heber moved to nearby Mendon, Monroe County, and lived there for several years. In Mendon, Vilate had her first child, Judith Narvin Kimball, at the age of seventeen.²⁸⁷ Judith died after less than a year, and Vilate had to wait for another child. Two years later Vilate gave birth to William Henry Kimball,



Vilate Murray Kimball. Courtesy Church History Library.

and then in another two years, her second daughter, Helen Mar Kimball, was born.²⁸⁸

About this time, the Kimballs began to get caught up in the many ideas about religion then circulating. After a period of investigation, they initially decided to join a Baptist church in 1831. Three weeks later, they met Mormon missionaries. Their good [120] friends Brigham and Miriam Young and John and Rhoda Greene lived nearby, and all became interested in the message of the missionaries.²⁸⁹ To obtain more information about Joseph Smith, the couples went to visit a Mormon meeting in Columbia, Bradford County, Pennsylvania. They stayed a week in Pennsylvania, and soon after Heber decided on baptism. Vilate was baptized the following week. The Youngs and Greenes were also baptized.

The following fall Miriam Young died. With the death of Miriam, what remained of the Youngs and Kimballs united. Vilate cared for Miriam and Brigham's two little girls, Elizabeth and Vilate. Brigham and the girls moved in with the Kimballs, and they all lived together for the next year until they moved to Kirtland in the fall of 1833. There they initially rented a home together and then built their own home. In Ohio, Heber began a long missionary career, and then he joined Brigham to go with Zion's Camp to redeem the Saints in Jackson County. Heber would leave Vilate alone as he left on missions

Copy made Sept 11, 1889 by S. F. Lusk

1839

September 21 Friday eve

My very Dear Husband

with a weak and trembling hand I attempt to write a few lines, agreeable to your request to let you know how we do; which is very poorly I can assure you. as to my feelings, I don't know but I am perfectly reconciled to my going. but I must say I have got a trial of my faith, as I never had before. the day you left home, was as sick a one as I ever experienced, the pain in my back and head was almost intolerable. no doubt the pain in my head was worse on the account of my much weeping. but I did not weep any after you left, for my distress was so great I could think a not much else. William moaned and cried about all day, and had a chill in the evening, sister Beatty staid with me through the day, she was sick, but she did all she could for me. Fanny Doct came over and stayed all night with me. I was a lone a little while before she came & then cralled out of bed and bowed before the Lord and pled with him to give us a good night's rest. and he did so. and he assured I did not forget to pray for you. the next morning I felt free from pain, headed that I could not walk without staggering. William and Helen was not able to do any thing so I was obliged to walk round the house and wash a little for the babe; no one to help me but little Heber P. R soon got over some and brought on my chill and fever, so that I had a very sick afternoon, and did not rest but little last night to day. I haven't been able to do any thing, I was taken early this morning with a shake, and shook about an hour and a half as hard as I ever saw any body in my life. and then weltered under a fever and extreme pain until almost night. William has just had the hardest chill that he has had in a number of days

Bro Rogers has been here and left more pills for him, and he has taken
them up, but they don't seem to do him any good. he offered to leave
some for me, but I told him I would try what virtue there was
in home set first. but it has not done me any good. and what to do I don't know
I have no one to get any thing for me, or to do any thing for my comfort
Bro Bently has moved in here but, but sister Anne is very feeble
hardly able to do her own work, she is very kind and would be glad to
doctor us if she was able. Helen is complaining all the time, but is
able to do some chores to say. now I have given you a statement
of our situation. not to make you feel bad, but because you requested
it of me. thus you see I have got a trial of my weak faith as I said
before. but all that I can ask of you is to pray that I may have
patience to endure to the end whether it be long or short. I feel
as though if you ever see your family all alive again it will be
through your faith. Saturday morning, dear Elsie - we are
all alive and tolerable comfortable this morning, with to God we
could remain so through the day. we will hope for the best.
Mother Remond stayed with me last night. she said I
tell you she had slept with your little Prophet. I must
draw to a close for Bro George is waiting. unless my health
should improve I shall not be able to write next week as
you requested. for I'm growing weak every day. you had better
enquire for a letter at New York, perhaps I shall dine
there. So fare you well my dear Elsie, I pray that it
may be well with you.

Sister Ann sends love
to you.
the children all send love to you

and other Church business for a good portion of their married life.²⁹⁰

Heber was gone from Kirtland for four months with Zion's Camp. During Heber's absence, Vilate cared for her children and worked to weave fabric to make clothing for the temple workers. A few months after returning from the march of Zion's Camp, Heber was called as an apostle and then left again on a mission to the eastern states. He had been gone for one month when their fourth child Heber Parley Kimball was born.²⁹¹ He returned to Kirtland and was able to attend the Kirtland Temple ^[121] dedication with Vilate, though again he left on a mission to the East. This time Vilate was not left without companionship. She visited her parents in New York. When Heber finished this mission, he joined her in New York, and they returned to Kirtland together.

Kirtland was a different place when they returned. A mob spirit ruled. Amidst severe internal dissention, Joseph Smith sent Heber on the first mission abroad. He left for Great Britain in 1837. Although Vilate was used to Heber being gone, she said that being apart this time was her most severe trial. Heber also felt the severity of the separation. He laid his hands on the heads of Vilate and the children to give them a father's blessing before he left. At times during the blessings he was unable to continue for sobbing. Despite the obvious sadness before leaving, both felt that they were doing that which God wanted.

After the move to Missouri with Heber absent again, Vilate struggled to provide for her small children, and then just three weeks later the mobbing began in Far West. At one point after his return from England, Heber was taken as a prisoner. Vilate was frightened and exhausted, so she went to stay the night with her friend, Mary Fielding Smith. During her time in Far West, her husband and children were threatened. Finally in the middle of February 1839, Vilate left with Brigham Young's family. Heber was asked to stay behind to help others evacuate.

The winter ground was so frozen that young William's feet froze on the way to Illinois. The feet were saved by Dr. Levi Richards at the last moment before amputation ^[122] was necessary.²⁹² Upon their arrival in Illinois, Brigham arranged for Vilate to stay with a Mrs. Ross for seven weeks until a room was ready to be rented in Quincy.

There Vilate was reunited with Heber. He worked to make her and the children comfortable in Quincy and then went to Commerce to prepare a place for them.

In July, Vilate and her children moved to swampy Commerce to a log shack that Heber built from the remains of an old stable. Although Heber purchased land and built a fourteen-by-sixteen cabin, it was not done in time for the birth of their fifth child, David Patten. David was born in the middle of a rainstorm in ankle-deep water. About a week later, Vilate and the children moved into the cabin. Helen was without shoes, and then Heber left again on a second British Mission. When he left, Vilate had nine dollars, which settled a debt the following day.

Vilate was known among the Saints for her crackers that were sent to the sick.

The Saints all worked together to get through the fever and sickness. Many helped Vilate throughout Heber's absence. The second winter passed without serious problems, and then Heber returned in July 1841. Heber Jr. ran out to greet him at the landing and Joseph Smith and the other brethren were already there. As they all came up the path to the Kimball's home, Vilate "hid herself behind the door, where her husband soon found her in tears and confusion." The group of men intruding on a moment that Vilate considered sacred was almost too much for her.

"I dream about you most every night, but always feel disappointed for when I awake, behold it is a dream and I could cry if it would do any good."²⁹³ Heber and Vilate ^[123] had ten children together. Heber was consistent in demonstration of his love for Vilate. When in Washington, D.C., in June 1844, he longed for Vilate. He reflected, "When I see men and thare wives walking out two by two [from the Capitol] O that I had my dear Vilate with me, bless hur heart soul and body."²⁹⁴ Though Heber eventually had forty-five wives before his death, almost without fail when he mentions his wife in his diaries, he speaks of Vilate.²⁹⁵

Vilate was known for her "intense sympathy," "generous emotions," and charity as her predominating attribute.²⁹⁶ On 22 October 1867, Vilate passed away leaving her husband of forty-five years. He was visibly distraught and over her casket spoke of being "not long after her."²⁹⁷

Vilate's letter, which follows, details one of the more difficult times of her life. Heber had just left on his second mission to Great Britain. They lived in a small cabin, she had recently given birth, had four children to care for, and all were ill. She does not want Heber's pity, but communicates her wish to be strong and faithful in a difficult time. The original of the letter is in private possession; the Church History Library possess a photocopy of the letter in good condition that was made in 1957.²⁹⁸ [124]

September 21 friday eve²⁹⁹

My very Dear Husband

with a weak and trembling hand I attempt to write you a few lines, agreeable to your request to let you know how we do; which is very poorly I can assure you. as to my feelings I dont know but I am perfectly reconciled to your going. But I must say I have got a trial of my faith, as I never had before. the day you left home was as sick a one as I ever experienced, the pain in my back and head was almost intolerable. no doubt the pain in my head was worse on the account of my much weeping. but I did not weep any after you left, for my distress was so great I could not think of much els[e].

William moaned and cried about all day, and had a chill in the evening.³⁰⁰ Sister Bently [s]taid with me through the day, she was sick, but she did all she could do for me.³⁰¹ Fanny Dort came over and stayed all night with me.³⁰² I was a lone a little while before the[y] came. I then cralled out of bead and bowed before the Lord and pled with him to give us a good nights rest. and he did so. and be assured I did not forget to pray for you. the next morning I felt free from pain; [though I felt so light] headed that I couldnot walk without staggering. William and Helen was not able to do any thing so I was obliged to crall round and doing chores.³⁰³ And wash a little for the babe; no one to help me but a little Heber P.³⁰⁴ I soon got overdone and brought on my chill and fever, so that I had a very sick afternoon, and did not rest but little last night.

to day I havenot ben able to do any thing. I was taken early this morning with a shake and shook about an hour and a half as hard as I ever saw anybody in my life and then weltered under a fever and extream pain until almost night. William has just had the harvest chill that he has had in a number of days.³⁰⁵ Br Rogers has been here and left more pills for him, and he has taken them up, but they dont seem to do him any good.³⁰⁶ [125] he offered to leave some for me, but I told him I would try what virtue there was in bone set first. But it has not done me any good. and what to dont now I have no care <to> get any thing for me, or to do any thing for my comfort. Br Bentley has moved in here but, but sister Ann is very feble hardly able to do her own work, she is very kind and would be glad to doctor us if she was able.

Helen is complaining all the time, but is [ab]le to do some chores today.

Now I have given you a statement of our situation. not to make you feel bad, but because you requested it of me. thus you see that I have got a trial of my weak faith as I said before. but all that I can ask of you is to pray that I may have patience to endure to the end whether it be long or short. I feel as though if you ever see your famaly all alive again it will be through your faith.³⁰⁷ Saterday morning, dear Heber we are all alive and tolerable comfortable this morning, would to God we could remain so throughout the day. we will hope for the best. Mother Remon stayed with me last night. She said I [might] tell you she had slept with your little Prophet.

I must draw to a close for Br. George is waiting.³⁰⁸ unless my health should improve I shall not be able to write next week as you requested for if [']m growing weak every day. You had better enquire for a letter at Newyork, perhaps I shall send there. To fare you well my dear Heber, I pray that it may be well with you.

[Vilate³⁰⁹]

Sister Ann sends love to you.
the children all send love to you. [126]

Laura Clark Phelps

Laura Clark was born in New Fairfield, Connecticut, in 1807 to Polly Keeler and Timothy Clark.³¹⁰ She was the third daughter of their twelve children. The family lived in Connecticut for several years and then moved west, first to Indiana and then on to Illinois. On the frontier, she and her siblings received little education.³¹¹

When she was about eighteen, she met nineteen-year old Morris Charles Phelps, who was visiting relatives in Illinois. They were married.³¹² Morris later said of Laura, "There never was a woman on earth that I thought more of and affection never was diminished." They continued to live in Illinois for five years, and Laura had two daughters, Paulina Eliza and Mary Ann.³¹³ Although it is not known specifically how, in 1831, Laura first heard of the Book of Mormon, she was captivated by the book which caused her to quickly write Morris who was away on business. He shared the information with his friend Charles C. Rich and others.³¹⁴ After several weeks, Laura and Morris were baptized in the Dupage River.

Two months later, they moved to gather with the Saints in Jackson County, Missouri. Laura had her third daughter in a tent soon after they

Lee Co. January Territory

Dear Brothers and Sisters It is with feelings that I can not describe to you that I sit down at this time to pen to you a few lines We Arrived here June the 4 we have bought a claim of one Section of Land 6 Miles from the Mississippi & from the Dismin River It lies on what is called the Half Breed of Land & cost us 400 and 50 Dollars Another half Section that had 5 acres of Corn and a Cabin on We Bought for 115 Dollars We Left ~~bad~~ ^{back} April the 26 We came with 5 waggon 12 horses and Fifty head of young cattle & 8 Colts Flax is worth 8 Dollars 50 here ^{back} Provisions is plenty Corn 37 1/2 per bushel We Moved Lorry Phelps She is living now 1 mile from us The inhabitants here are very friendly The Brothers in very kindly received & very well treated Brethren here and in the United States They have bought one hundred and 20 Acres of Land on that side of the River lying in the town of Commerce and a Ferry across the Mississippi joining it There is many of this Church settling on both sides of the River The Work of the Most High God is spreading know it seems faster than ever before For when the profane Sons of America see such a Multitude of People Driven from their Homes and Lands in the Season of the year that the Church was it causes them to inquire what it is for and what this People believe in Therefore instead of spitting around to the work by driving the Church It is like a Mustard stalk when the seed is fully ripe in a mans garden that he dur not want them And instead of letting it alone he kicks it about all over the garden Therefore it spreads faster as this work is spreading at the present — The People in Missouri seems to be getting worse & worse Tho they seemed to be bad enough when we left Then it was dangerous for any one man to travel the Publick Road For to accomplish their evil Designs they would not unley lie but take False Oaths And by so doing they took our Father & put him in jail 8 Days in Richmond with Morris Then Wm and Lorry attended & went And by the help of God & assistance of the Lawyers they got him out We understand since they have drove every man from there that had ever bin with the Church Wm Phelps & the Whitmers & many others & talk of Driveing the man that you sold to Cooper Doriters Sons war in that Section of Country They ware well & talked of Selling

Father is well Pleased with this Land here & wants you
to arrange your Buisness so that you can come here & you can
By Congress land near here or get Preemptions If you Boath
cannot come this season Father sees one of you must be Shure
and come & look This summer it is not far ball over now
see us if you Pleas Father is verrey anxious for you to come he ses
he now you wote like it I want to Remember me
Sister Lucrecia Church is living with us She moved
with us has bin living with us ever since Before our Mother
Died She is the young Lady that was living at Morris
when you was up Kolor I have not time to write Much
So Peace be with you all Look upon this & think
upon me my Prayr is that you Do the will of the
Father
John W Mark

Dear Friends I will Stop & try to pen a line to you we are all in good
health that is better I got a letter from Morris to say he is at Boone County
Columby Jail & is Sick he was only able to write a few lines I under Stand
they had to swim the waters as they came to Boone by his writing his heart
was full tho he says I cannot ask you to come and see me you all redly how went
through with so much visiting me in Prison I nedent try to express my feelings
to you at this time my heart is full from Day to Day tho I know there is a God
that can deliver all his servants I expect to start in a few Days to find Morris
if possible I tender the boat at richman April 22 this was a serious time I assure
you to have a companion in the Dungeon with half enough to eat that morn-
ing I was there there was 8 in Jail to Breakfast & there was only enough brought
for 3 to eat a little before noon Morris sent a half dollar to buy bread for us
but none came till about 2 o'clock then I had to take parting hand I
went home 30 miles and eat my week fast I was there 4 Days & spent
the most of my time with Morris all they brought against him was work too
I started tho at he heard him say he went part way to the Bottle I talked
with the lawyers & Grand Jury they sed that they had no doubt but he was ^{innocent}

1834
Mr. John Cooper or
D. H. Clark
Will do. Please
JH

arrived in Zion.³¹⁵ They ^[127] also cared for the son of fellow member John Murdock.³¹⁶ His wife had died during child birth early in 1832. Joseph and Emma Smith took the newly born twins, and the Phelps cared for John Murdock Jr.³¹⁷ Laura and her family endured suffering as they were driven from their homes to Clay County.

In 1834, Morris was called on a mission to Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Laura was left alone to care for her three girls. She taught school and acted as a midwife to support her family. As a missionary, Morris and his companion Charles C. Rich baptized Laura's parents and other members of her family. The Clarks then joined Laura in Missouri and helped her with her family until Morris returned.

The Phelps bought a farm outside of Far West in 1837, and there Laura bore their first son, Joseph Morris. There were already problems in Missouri, and Laura personally had several run-ins with the Missourians. One day Joseph and Hyrum Smith rushed into Laura's house to hide from the mob that was pursuing them. Laura hid them and then when the mob rushed in and asked where they were, she responded that she had not seen them, but if they desired they could look around. They quickly searched and left. When Smith emerged from his hiding place, he counseled Laura, "There are black lies and there are white lies and that certainly was a white one that came from your lips."³¹⁸

At another instance, a mob came into Laura's yard to try to shoot their animals. Young Harriet, Laura's youngest daughter, ran out of the house to protect her pet pig and they threatened to shoot her. Laura rushed out of the house and told them they could ^[128] shoot all the animals they wanted but demanded that they leave her little girl alone. In her patriarchal blessing, given in 1839 by Joseph Smith Sr. at Far West, it said "notwithstanding the many afflictions she has gone through, she holds her integrity and has not turned away from thee."³¹⁹

At the siege of Far West, Morris was taken with Parley P. Pratt and others to prison in Richmond. As Pratt described, they were in the "cold, dark dungeon" where they were "frequently insulted and abused by our dastardly guards, who often threatened to shoot us on the spot, and who made murder, robbery, and whoredoms with Negro slaves their daily boast."³²⁰ After a few months,

they were moved to Columbia jail, one hundred thirty-nine miles away from Far West. Laura visited Morris every two weeks throughout the spring and brought the children once.

After several months, Laura grew weary of her frequent visits and decided that she was the one who could help the prisoners escape. Joseph Smith Jr. blessed Laura prior to traveling to the jail. He prophesied, "Sister Phelps, perhaps you can accomplish more than we can, we have done our best to get those prisoners liberated, but all our plans have failed."³²¹ After eight months of confinement, the future appeared bleak to the prisoners. They were ill and distraught. Parley later said that just prior to Laura's arrival, he had seen a plan of escape in a dream. Laura arrived with the same design.

Here was her plan to free them: She would secret three horses in some brush a short distance from the jail. As an excuse to get the jailer to unlock the prison door, she would suggest to the jailer that he open the ^[129] door and pass the coffee pot to the prisoners through the open door. . . . Should the jailer unlock the door, it would be the signal to get busy, pull the door wide open, grab the jailer, throw him to the floor and flee for their lives. . . . The scheme worked but not without difficulties. The second door was unlocked and King Follet pulled the door open and Parley P. Pratt was to follow and grandfather [Morris] Phelps, being an athlete and wrestler, was to throw the jailer down and he would follow. It proved to be an exciting event. . . . it was the fourth of July and nearly hundreds were celebrating.³²²

The men made their way to Orson Pratt and John Clark who were waiting with the horses. Although King Follet was quickly captured riding side saddle on Laura's horse, the others eventually made their way back to Illinois, though Laura would not know of their success for several more weeks.

When the men left the jail, Laura was left with the jailer and his wife, who turned her outside to the group gathering around the jail. The group was very abusive to Laura, particularly upon the recapture of Follet. A young boy saw what was happening and ran to tell his mother, a Mrs. Richardson. She sent her husband to rescue Laura, saying she did not care who this woman's husband was, she did not deserve to be treated in such a manner. They took Laura into their home, where she spent the next ten days. Mr. Richardson recovered her saddle and horse, and they helped her prepare to leave. She gave them a Book of Mormon, sang hymns with them, and left with a promise that if she learned of any great

destruction to come upon the state of Missouri, she would warn them. She was finally reunited with Morris after three weeks.

After their reunion, Morris and Laura left the children with friends and traveled to Kirtland to recuperate with his parents. Laura's youngest son was born on their return as ^[130] they stopped at the home of her sister in Indiana. They then moved to Macedonia, Iowa, after their ten-month trip and there built a home.³²³ In 1841, Laura believed she saw a vision that taught her she would not live much longer. She died of pneumonia on 2 February 1841. She was thirty-four years old with five young children. Joseph Smith Jr. and Heber C. Kimball preached at her funeral. Smith said that her exaltation was sure. In her obituary, Heber called her a "highly esteemed and worthy sister" and described how, in the midst of difficulties in Missouri, "she endeared herself to many of her friends by her acts of kindness and in many instances was truly heroic."³²⁴

Laura Clark Phelps demonstrated her devotion to her beliefs and her family through her actions. Her letter is housed in the Church History Library.³²⁵ Laura wrote the letter with her brothers John and William from Lee County, Iowa. The letter is written on off-white paper with dark ink. It measures 19.1 x 30.6 centimeters, is folded in half and written on four sides. Her letter is not particularly verbose or eloquent, but she reveals her willingness to endure affliction because she knows that she is pursuing the course that God would desire.

1839 early summer

Dear Friend.³²⁶ I will stop & try to pen a line to you we are all in good health this is hear. I got a letter from Morris today he is at Boon County Columby Jail & is Sick. he was only able to write a few lines. I understand they had to swim the waters as they came to ^[131] Boon. by his writing his heart was full. this he says I cannot ask you to come and se me. you allreddy have went through with so much visiting me in Prison.

I nedent try to express my feelings to you at this time. my heart is full from day to day tho I know theare is a God that Can deliver all his Servants. I expect to start in a few dayes to find Morris if possible.³²⁷ I tended the Cort at richman April 22. this was a Serious Time I asure you to leav a Companion in the Dungeon with half enough to eat. that morning i was thear, thear was 8 in Jail to Breakfast & thear was only anough brought for 3 to eat.³²⁸ a little before noon Morris Sent a half a dollar to by bread for us but none Coume till about 2 o'clock. then I had to

take parting hand. I went holm 30 miles and eat my breckfast. I was thear 9 dayes & Spent the most of my time with Morris.³²⁹

all they brought against him was walters Stated that he heard him Say he went part way to the Battle.³³⁰ I talked with the Lawyers & Grand Jury they sed that they had no dout but he was <inisent> [innocent]. I have no doubt but Morris would hav Got Clear but they jest heard that Br Joseph & all the others Getting at liberty.³³¹ it raised thear fury.³³²

I left our holm on the 26. I drove my waggon all the way, turned over once with my Children under my load but hurt them but little I think. I Can Safely Say I know what is trouble is to have my husban torn from the bosom of his family & then ~~the~~ having to part with our dear Mother.³³³ & had it not ben for the power of God I never Could hav born this Sean. hur words often rowls through my heart, O Sorry Be of Good Chear remember while you are pasing through trouble I your Mother is at rest for my work is don. whi Can you Say Stay any longer on earth.

I can Safely Say this day I am not sorry I ever joined this Church For is I recollect the Company that John Saw Came up through great tribulation.³³⁴ we have to be tried like ^[132] Gold Seven times tried. I will write again when I get back from Columby. write as Soon as you Can. Laury Phelps

Mr
John Cooper or
DK Cooper
Will Co Dupage
Ill ^[133]

Almira Mack Scobey Covey, letter 2

For biographical information, see her earlier letter. This original is held in the archives at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. The Church History Library possess a color copy of the letter. The parchment appears yellow and measures 24.1 x 19.4 centimeters written with charcoal-colored ink. Like to Almira's first letter included in this collection, this letter is also written to her sister Harriet Mack Whittemore. Almira had been away from her extended family for a number of years. One year previously her mother, Temperance, made the journey from Michigan to Commerce (Nauvoo) to join Almira. Along with family news, Almira describes the challenging Missouri persecutions of the Saints.

Commerce, [Illinois,] January 19, 1840

Affectionate Sister,³³⁵

After a long silence I once more take my pen to write a few lines to my absent friends, and it was not

because I had forgotten you that I did not write, but it was partly through negligence, and also I had more cares involving upon my me than what I formerly had when I wrote you so often. Mother wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of twenty dollars which she received in you letter dated November 15th.

Your letter gave us much satisfaction as is always does to hear from our absent <friends> and to hear that they are well. As for our healths, they are all gaining. We have all of us been very sick through the summer.³³⁶ Mother has had several attacks of the chills and fever this winter but they did not last her long and now I think she is about as well as usual. My children have the ague every little while.³³⁷ Brother Dorts family are all well.³³⁸ He has a young daughter 5 weeks old. Fanny has lived with me most of the time ^[134] since they came here.³³⁹ She is now at home and is to be married a week from today to Matthew Casto.³⁴⁰ I am not acquainted with him but it is thought that she will do very well.

We have been requested in several letters to give a history of the proceedings of the mob in Missouri but this is more than I can do. It is more than I can do to point to you our feelings when surrounded by a wicked mob. Not allowed even to go out of town to our friends without leave from that wicked crew. You can better judge what my feelings were when seeing my husband taken away to prison with about 50 others and for what? Nothing but our religion. He was kept there three weeks and then released as they could find nothing against him.

Mother bore her trials very well. She said she never wishes herself back to Michigan. And I can say for one that I never as yet repented of uniting myself to this persecuted people but feel willing to suffer for Christ's sake. But Harriet, it is no small trial to see your houses surrounded by a wicked mob threatening your lives and even killing some, and we not knowing when we laid ourselves down at night but we should all be massacred before morning for this was the orders of the Governor of Missouri.

I could not begin on one sheet of paper to give you an account of ~~our~~ ^{our} sufferings of this people, but there is a correct history from the beginning to be printed and then you can learn the right of the story for I presume you hear many things that are not correct.³⁴¹ I have not heard anything from Henry and have not had time that I could write to him but should like to have him come and make a visit. Carlos Buckland has been to see us twice.³⁴² The last time he came as a commander of a company belonging to the mob. I talked very plain to him about coming to drive his Grandmother, Uncle and Aunt from their home. He did not like it much. He has been in the place since but did not call to see us.

I want you should remember me to all of my Brothers and Sisters as one for I think of them all and want to see them, but I do not know what to say about going there next summer for we have so many disappointments that I do not know what calculations to make.³⁴³ By your writing I see that you feel

uneasy about us for fear that we suffer for the ~~war~~ necessities of life. Give yourself no trouble about us that way for we have enough to eat, ~~dr~~ drink, and to wear. Mother says remember her to Mrs Williams and Harriet and all enquiring friends. Remember me to all your Children. Tell brother John ^[135] that I feel and sympathise with him in his loss.³⁴⁴ You must excuse me for not writing more for it gives me the sick head ache to write and this is one great reason of my not writing oftner. Eno<ch> says he wants to see Aunt Harriet.³⁴⁵ He very often gets the team and starts for Michigan to see the boys. I want you should write us soon as you receive this and accept this from your sister,

Almira Covey

To Mrs. Harriet Whittmore
Pontiac, Oakland County, Michigan ^[136]

Lucy Thompson Lisk

Lucy Thompson Lisk was born to Nancy and Andrew Lisk on 23 September 1820.³⁴⁶ Lucy is an example of the myriad, almost nameless early female members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Other than the following letter, the record of her life consists of a few genealogical dates. Although this record is brief in comparison with her entire life experience, it allows us to view her conversion—a very significant event in her life. The 1840 letter tells of her conversion along with her mother and sister amidst a healing that Lucy considered miraculous. She was nineteen when she wrote the letter.

After the women of her family joined with the LDS Church in 1840, Lucy moved to Nauvoo with her sister Olive.³⁴⁷ In 1843 both girls married. Lucy married James McFate of Mahoning, Pennsylvania. In Nauvoo, they had three children.³⁴⁸ Her fourth child, Ardilla, was born in Winter Quarters—present-day Florence, Nebraska—but died four days later.³⁴⁹ Three months later, Lucy also died, leaving her three small children and her husband on their way west. ^[137]

The original letter is in private possession. The Church History Library holds a photocopy which makes the letter appear 24.1 x 18.8 centimeters.³⁵⁰ It is two sheets written on four sides in dark ink. Lucy describes a powerful healing event and what she feels “true enjoyment is” as she details her conversion experience. Through the testimony of her cousin and then her mother, she began her faith

in Joseph Smith's restoration. She likewise believed that her testimony could have the same effect.

Hounsfield, New York April 28, 1840³⁵¹

My Dear Aunt³⁵²

We have waited rather impatiently some time for an answer to our letter written in February but have gotten none as yet. I believe I promised to write again as soon as we should get another letter from you, but I want to tell you what we have all been about since we wrote and I guess I will not wait any longer for a letter from you. When we sent you our last letter Olivia I believe was very sick but she got some better so that she walked about the house and did some light chores. but the doctor said her complaint was on her nerves and that she would not be able to do any work this summer. and we finally got discouraged as well as she for the medicine appeared to take no effect. and she appeared to be failing rather than gaining and she said if I must die I must and dont make me take any more medicine for it does me no good. so she left it off and appeared to do as well without it. I had not got able to do anything more than to set the table or help Mother wash the dishes and she had all the work to do and us to wait on besides.³⁵³

But about the last of February, Elijah and Elvira came to see us and wanted me to go home with them and mother said we heard that our cousin Briggs Alden was coming to our house the next day in that character of a Mormon Elder.³⁵⁴ you may guess our astonishment and curiosity at such news. it is true. we had heard that Uncle Alden's folks had joined the Mormons about three years before, but we had heard again that they has left them. but we could get no certain information concerning them so you may ^[138] imagine that we felt some desire to know something about them as well as their doctrine. But as I had promised to go [to] Elvira, we departed telling Mother if the morman wanted to see us before we come back he must come where we were.

but the snow went off next day and I had to stay a fortnight during which we heard nothing from home or the Mormon. and when there came a little snow Elijah brought me home and our folks said that B[riggs] A[lden] had preached here twice and that he had then gone out to uncle Bradfords but that he was coming back and would preach at our school house that evening.

They said he preached nothing but truth. but I told them I should not take their word for it but go and hear for myself. and would you believe that when I came to hear him I was just fool enough to believe what he said because it was in the Bible. when we got home Mother asked me how I liked Mormonism? I replied, I have no fault to find with what I have heard. she then said Lucy you may depend upon it they preach the truth. I told her I had not heard enough to judge whether it was all truth or not. Briggs came home with us and preached at our house the next evening. but I was taken more unwell than

usual and could not sit up so I laid down and got to sleep and left my part of the meeting. but he staid with us the next day and I had some opportunity of conversing with him and the more I heard the more fully was I convinced of the truth of the doctrine.

Mother had by this time concluded to obey the gospel and be baptized. but as Olivia and I were somewhat fearful and unbelieving, she concluded that she would wait until we would go with her as Elder Alden had got to leave us for a few days. He went away on Thursday and on Monday mother was taken sick with the canker rash and Olivia and I were scarcely able to take care of her.³⁵⁵ and we couldnt get anyone to help us as there were many sick around us. so we did the best we could and she got better in a few days, but as she got better Olivia grew worse. but we found a good smart girl to come and help us.

Olivia was taken with the canker rash on Sunday night and Maria came to work on Monday and worked two days and then she was taken sick. she complained of her throat being sore and filled up but was in hopes she should be better and would not let her folks know that she was sick. so mother gave her some pills, three of which were a dose but she took twenty and they had no effect. and she grew worse all the time and we thought she would die so we sent for the doctor Wednesday night about midnight.

when he came he said she had got the canker rash. her throat was so sore she could scarcely swallow any thing. and he told us to give her 3 more pills which would in all probability help her. Olivia had taken some which operated but she would not take anything more. their throats were very sore so he put on some liniment which blistered Olivia's in less than ten ^[139] minutes but Maria tore hers off. the doctor said if they did not get along then we must let him know it so he went away.

Well Olivia did not get any better and Maria grew worse. her medicine had taken no effect and her throat grew worse and she grew sick at her stomach and on Friday we sent for the doctor again. he came in the evening but she was then so sick she could not stir without puking and her heart beat very violently. He said he would give her something to turn her from her sickness but it did not have any effect and he said her phisick must operate before she would get any better.³⁵⁶ her throat had got so full she could not take more pills. so he gave Mother some croton oil and told her to rub it on her and she did. and he said it would probably operate in less than ten minutes.³⁵⁷ but he waited an hour and then gave her one drop to take and left something to check its operation. if it should prove too powerful and then went home saying if she does not get better let me know it.

Well I sat up with her that night and Mother slept with Olivia and took care of her. and I gave Maria her medicine as the Dr directed but to my astonishment and alarm it had no more effect than so much water. and she grew sicker and weaker and was still worse in the morning. we still did all we could but could not help her and after noon Orra went after

the doctor again and he came and Briggs came back while Orra was gone after him.

The doctor gave M[aria] about twelve more drops of croton oil besides rubbing more on her then left her something for her mouth and throat and told us what to give her when. the oil operated for nourishment for then she had not taken as much as half a teacupful of any thing in four days and puked all the time most every thing she did take.

Olivia's throat was a little better only the blister, but she grew weaker all the time. the doctor told her she must keep as still and quiet as possible but did not give us any Encouragement to think she would ever get well. but she said she might be better so he left her some medicine and went away saying let me know if they dont get along. After he was gone Briggs said to Olivia, it is your priveledge to be heald if you desire it. and she replied that it was her desire but medicine could not do it and she would take no more. He said the gifts of prophecy healing and tongues were in the church of Latter Day Sints the same that they were in former times. and that if she would lay his hands upon her and pray with and for her which he did and it was about nine o clock in the evening.

she had sat up most all day in the rocking chair with pillows abourd her but was not able to walk about the room till about ten o'clock. she arose and undressed herself alone which she had not done for a more than a week. and went to bed saying with a smile, I shall get up and get breakfast for you tomorrow morning. but we could not believe it ^[140] possible. And would you believe that when I awoke the next morning she was running up the cellar stairs with a panfull of potatoes in her hand, but thank god it was so. But I found poor Maria no better. she had not had anything pass her bowels in almost a fortnight. and we could not get any medicine to operate at all and it seemed as though she must die. but she said, I believe I may be healed as well as Olivia and he co[m]plied with her request. But still to our surprise her medicine took no efect & the canker in her throat had spread even to her stomach. she would not take any medicine so we threw hers and Olivias out the window. In the afternoon she was better and Monday she sat up most all day. in the two days she went to work well and smart and has worked ever since. but she did not have anything to pass her bowels till the next week which rather puzzles the doctors. she was with us two weeks and then went home.

While Maria was sitting up Monday, Mother and Olivia and myself went and were baptized having been fully convinced of the truth of the doctrine which we have embraced and are determined to prove faithful to the end.

The next Saturday Olivia went out and took cold which brought on a swelling in her throat that by Sunday noon threatened every moment to choke her to death so rapid was its progress. She could not even swallow a teaspoonful of water though she was very

hungry. there was preaching here in the afternoon and we were to be confirmed but the elders did not get here till the congregation had collected so they waited till after the service was over. and we were confirmed members of the church of Latter day Saints.

they then prayed with Olivia for the restoration of her health and their prayer was granted and she is now a well hearty girl and has been ever since.

Since then Olivia has been baptized and confirmed a member of the church and we believe others will yet do the same. Father does not appear in the least inclined to oppose us but we meet with opposition enough from other qurters I will assure you. but may the Lord have mercy on them and open their eyes. Fathers health is not good this spring as usual but he rather gains as the weather grows warmer. Mother says tell them I am well in soul and body and if there comes any of these poor despised Mormons there receive them in the name of the Lord and God will bless you for it. Olivia says tell Aunt Harriet if she will answer this letter I will write her one by myself.

(It was just night that they prayed with Olivia and in a little while she called to me to bring her some porridge which I did. and she dranked it and soon got up and ate a hearty supper and sat up all the evening. but she had not been able to raise her head from the pillow or speak aloud in all the afternoon.)

But I dont believe you will <want> another as long as this very soon or at least till you have read this. Well the way to take revenge is to write one three times as long just as quick as you can. Elvira and Angelina are well and their families. I must now bid you good bye as I have filled my paper. Father Mother and all send their love to you and to GrandFather and Mother and Uncle Randolph and Aunt Octavia.³⁵⁸ ^[141]

Give my love to them all. I have not written half I wanted to and perhaps you will think I have been more particular than interesting—but I feel as though I wanted you to know all that I know. and if you wish to know what true enjoyment is—become a Mormon. Yes, come out and be separated from sinners and sin. take the path the Saviour trod, though it may be a thorny one.

I believe you will find many sweet flowers. also search the scriptures carefully and prayerfully and see if these things are not so. and that God may bless you and lead you into all truth is the prayer of you affectionate niece.

Lucy T Lisk

To Miss Harriet Metcalf
Constantine St. Joseph Co.
Michigan³⁵⁹

You must not give credit to the silly and rediculous stories you hear. but look to God and he will not deceive you. if you put your trust in him he will hold you up and never forsake you. Lucy T Lisk ^[142]

Letter from Olive Boynton Hale,
(wife of Jonathan H. Hale) to
Martha Harriman Hale (Jonathan's
Mother). Written from New Liberty,
near Quincy, Ill., the latter part of
March, 1841, and sent to Bradford,
Mass.

New Liberty Adams County Ill.

1841

Ms

3196

Dearby beloved and affectionate Mother

As I sat musing
this morning ^{upon} the many scenes that had transpired for the
five or six last years, and among the multitude was one that took
place on my own native land on the day of my departure the
separation of a beloved Mother from her son and daughter and three
little ones is one that ~~and~~ cannot never be forgotten by me
neither the promise I made respecting writing to her therefore Dear
Mother I continue to address you by writing notwithstanding I have
not received so much as one letter since Jonathan returned from the
Islands although we have both wait several times and feel very
anxious to have you or some of our beloved brother or sisters write
to us immediately after the reception of this as all we have heard
from you was from J. Holmes to mother stating that you had
a bad sore on ^{one} your hands and was unable to keep house and that
you was living with Rachel I assure you we felt so mourn your
loss and wished that you could be with us, not that I think
that we could do any better for you than sister R has done, but
would like to be in your company once more, and at another
time that Sarah had lost two of her children which I was very
sorry to hear as death has once before visited her family I would
that you should write where you are and where your children
all live, the names of your grand children and the deaths of our
relatives as that country If you have received letters from Brother
Nelson and Sister Catherine or if ~~they~~ have visited you as they expected
to when Jonathan was there last winter if her health would permit
which which was from them if you have seen her I think you could
but advise her pleasant disposition a visitor worthy of all our love

Love for your self I give with respect D. D. H.
(and) and also and each of these friends
respect. If you have not heard anything from them do write to
them soon for he told of that he had wrote a number of letters and
had no answer from them and if you thought much of him you
would write or if return from Indiana he called on Mr. J. Hardy found
his whole family (with the exception of Caroline) in that part of the country
handsomely situated and in good health excepting Betsy he had a bad
cough please write if brother Osgood is in Threshill and if he and his family
are well we have no letters from him nor heard from him since John wife
returned from her visit from Iowa main she called on them when on her
journey to Davenport Iowa Territory where Father and Mother are very
pleasantly settled 150 miles from where we now live 100 from Nauvoo
where I have bought land and is there now building and fencing
and will probably be there ~~two~~ ⁱⁿ three weeks longer he wished me
to write before he returned and give his love to you and all brothers
and sisters and all enquiring friends, I expect we shall move next
month as our 2 years is out here I wish you to direct your letters
Nauvoo Hancock County Illinois. Jonathan visited father one year ago
last September found them all well and in good spirits, John wife
and little boy in company with her brother arrived there on
day he left Davenport Henry and Mary are well and wish to be
remembered to you his connection they visited Father's folks last June
found Mother sick with the fever and ague she was sick several
weeks but when she recovered from the ague her health was better
than in the Eastern country for the sick headache twinges have
left her entirely I expect Jonathan will visit them with all the
family next summer which is ~~the~~ six in number If you have received
our last letter you have heard that we have a fine great
boy whose name is Solomon he will be two years old the 30th
of April next he is solid and in blooming health his mouth

(H. Robinson desires to be remembered to all those
you love him and expect along)

is nearly filled with teeth he talks very plain with great
simplicity and sobriety. ~~That is well~~ he is a smart little fellow he
often wishes that he could see his Dear Grand Mother he says
~~give my love to her~~ help her and fetch in wood for her as he does
for his mother he says give my love to her. Rachel is healthy and
persevering but rather small Jonathan often says that she is
the very image of ~~me~~ when I was her age she frequently says ^{that} if
you could live with us she would like to wait upon you she says
do give my best wishes and love to her best engous good health
he is large of his age steady and industrious he can do more
than half the labor of his father he has attend school one
quarter in company with Rachel and took care of the creature
~~and done the chore, catching three traps.~~

he has caught rabbits so fat that the kidneys
were covered, prairie hens & quails more than
we could eat in our family, he has sold six
dozen of the latter for 50 cents pr doz. he desires
to be remembered to you, and says that if he has
his health that not more than a dozen years will
roll away before he will visit that part of the
country. I have wrote about all the family but
myself. My health is rather poor this winter, which
is occasioned by a bad cold My spirits are good
we have a plenty of everything to make us comfortable
we have three good cows and calves, a plenty of milk
so that we churn twice a week and make about
ten lbs of butter a week (to sell) more than we can
use we have had a shilling and twenty cts for all

We have sold. we have 5 hogs and shoats,
pork and lard. Same hen, a plenty. egg in abundance
we have sold a great many, 14 cts pr doz. a plenty of corn
oats & beans to sell, all kinds of garden. saved a plenty
we have a good wagon and two horses, and many farming
tools. in short we have ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} to buy but our wheat
that can be raised on a farm and that I expect
we shall raise next year if we all have our health
as we have over thirty acres of good land. that is
not cultivated and if it can be ploughed this summer
we can put in good fall wheat, perhaps you may
think I am too particular but I don't wish you to think
we are suffering for anything amidst a plenty, Jonathan
has sent sister Rachel several papers, a history of the
Missouria trouble which if you have received has
informed you of some of the trouble that we have
had to pass through. ~~though~~ ^{though} I think that my being called
to pass through so many trials and afflictions might
cause me to doubt the truth of the great work
that is rolling through the earth with mighty power, which
thousands are embracing, & rejoicing that they have been
enabled to receive in these the last days, and I feel
to rejoice with those that do rejoice in the latter day kingdom
which I do know is the work of the Lord, and it will
continue to roll on untill Christ Jesus our Lord
will descend in the clouds of heaven, with power and great
glory, when the saints shall be caught up to meet him in the
air, I pray this may be our happy lot.

Yours in love Olive B. Hale
to Martha Hale

^{omit} Rachel J. S. Hale was born August 27th 1829 ^{our}
in Bradford Mass. died in California May 6th 1854

Olive Boynton Hale

Olive Boynton was born in July 1805 in Bradford, Essex County, Massachusetts.³⁶⁰ She lived there until she married Jonathan Harriman Hale in 1825. For the next several years they moved back and forth between Bradford and Dover, New Hampshire. In early 1834 the Hales met Mormon missionaries and were baptized on 13 June in Dover. In August, Jonathan was ordained to preside over the local congregation. Nine months later, Jonathan left Dover to go to Kirtland, leaving pregnant Olive with two small children. For the next several years, he was often gone away on missions and church business before finally moving Olive and several members of her extended family to Kirtland.

While Jonathan served a mission to the Fox Islands, Maine, with Wilford Woodruff, Olive and Pheobe Carter Woodruff lived in the Hale's home and cared for their families together. Olive's son Aroet recalled their example:

Two more devoted woman never lived on the face of this Earth. I well remember the Earnest Pruiers that they used to offer for their Dear Companions while they ware on their mishon & the Teachings that I received from them. . . . Being baptized in ice water froze me into the Church & I am still with it thank God. Sister Pheba Woodruff & mother used to talk to us Cheldren & tell us about an Angle apering to the Prophet Joseph Smith when he was a young man. That we must be good cheldren that Angles would not apear to bad Cheldren. The first time that I remember of seeing the Prophet Joseph & his Brother Hyrum was in the Kirtland Temple they was poynted out to me by mother.³⁶¹

Olive was a stable example to her children and taught them to remain steadfast to the Church through their trials. In Kirtland her brother, the apostle John Farnham Boynton,^[143] apostatized and turned to persecute the Saints.³⁶² This undoubtedly took its toll on Olive and the rest of the family. And this was only the beginning of her persistent trials. Before Olive reached Missouri, her husband was arrested and she gave birth to a child.³⁶³

Shortly after she arrived in Missouri, the extermination order given by the Missouri governor was issued. After leaving their home under duress, the Hales camped at Adam-ondi-Ahman. There, Missourians searched their tents and wagons. Olive somehow managed to hide two rifles under her clothing on either side of her bosom. Her son described what followed: "My dear mother was lying sick in a wagon box in the tent. Four of the

mob came into the tent to the back side of the bed. They took a hold of the bed and threw her from one side to the other against the wagon box until she was nearly exhausted."³⁶⁴ Although the rifles were protected, the Hales lost nearly everything else.

They soon picked up and moved again, this time to a friendlier location—Quincy, Illinois. In Quincy the rifles were pawned for food for the children and they prepared to move on to Nauvoo. In Nauvoo, Olive was able to experience somewhat of a respite from the afflictions of the Saints only to be tormented with her own physical suffering. The reprieve was too short as the tensions exploded resulting in the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Then as the Saints prepared to cross the Mississippi River in the evacuation of Nauvoo, Olive's Jonathan became ill and died just after the birth of their youngest child. Olive followed him four days later leaving her children as orphans.^[144]

Despite the intense afflictions of Missouri and their precarious circumstances in Illinois, Olive's letter echoed the same feeling of rejoicing as did the letters other women here included. The afflictions only confirmed to her the truth of that which she believed. She would willingly accept the challenges that came her way. The original letter is comprised of two 31.3 x 19.4 centimeter off-white sheets written in charcoal-colored ink. It is in the collection of the Church History Library.³⁶⁵ There is a change of handwriting mid-way through Olive's letter.³⁶⁶

New Libe[r]t[y] Adams County ILL[inois]³⁶⁷
1841

Dearley beloved and affectionate Mother³⁶⁸

As I sat museng this morning ~~am~~ <upon> the many scenes that had transpird for the five or six last years,³⁶⁹ and among the multitude was one that took place on my own ^[145] native land on the day of my departuer.³⁷⁰ the seperation of a beloved mother from her son and daughter and their littel ones is one that ~~comot~~ cannot never be forgoton by me. nether the promis I made respecting writting to her. therefor Dear mother I continue to adress you by writting.³⁷¹ notwithstanding, I have not recived so much as one letter since Jonathan returned from the Islands although we hav both wrot several times and feel very anixious to have you or som[e of] our beloved brothers or sisters write to us immeditely after the reception of this.³⁷² as all we have heard from you was from J Holmes³⁷³ to written stating that you had a bad sore on <one> of your hands and was unabel

to keep house and that you was living with Rachel.³⁷⁴ I assure you we felt to mourn your loss and wished that you could be with us. not that I think that we could do any better for you than sister R has done,³⁷⁵ but would like to be in your company once more. and at another time that Sarah had lost two of her children which I was very sorry to hear as death has once before visited her family.³⁷⁶

I want that you should write whare your are are and whare your children all live, the names of your grand Children, and the deaths of our relation in that county.³⁷⁷ If you have recived letters from Brother Wicom and Sister Cathrine,³⁷⁸ or if you <they> have viseted you as they expected to when Jo[n]athan was there last winter if her health would ^[146] permit ~~which~~ which was poor then,³⁷⁹ if you have seen her, I think you could but admire her pleasant dispoition, a sister worthey of all our love a[nd] respect. If you have not heard anything from them, do write to them soon for he told J[onathan] that he had wrote a number of letters and had no answer from them and If you thought much of him you would write.

on J retern from Indania³⁸⁰ he called on mr J Hardey found his whole famely (with the excepton of caroline) in that part of the Country handsomely situatide and in good health excepting Baley.³⁸¹ he had a bad coudh. pleas write if brother oSgood is in Haverhill and if he and his famely are well.³⁸² we have no letters from him nor heard from him since John's wife returned from her visit from Soco maine.³⁸³ she called on them when on her gourney to Deveport [Davenport] Iowa Territoray, when Father and Mother are very pleasently settled³⁸⁴—170 miles frome where we now live 100 from Nauvoo³⁸⁵—whare J has bought land and is there now building and fencing and will probeley be there two <or> three weeks longer.³⁸⁶ he wished me to write before he returned and give his love to you and all brothers and sisters and all enquiring friends.³⁸⁷ I expect we shall move next month as our 2 years is out here.³⁸⁸ I wish you to direct your letters Nauvoo, Handcock County, Illinois. ^[147]

Jonathan visited father one year ago last september. found them all well and in good spirits.³⁸⁹ Johns wife and little boy in company with her brother arrived there [the] day he left Devenport.³⁹⁰ Henry and Clari<s>ey are well and wish to be rememberd to you his connection.³⁹¹ they visited Fathers folks last June [and] found Mother sick with the fever and ague. she was sick sevrsl weeks but when she recoverd from the ague her health was btter than in the Easttrin Country for the sick headache turns have left her entirely. I expect Johnathan will visit them with all the famaly next summer, wich is ~~sex~~ six in number.³⁹²

If you have recived our last letter,³⁹³ you have heard that we have a fine great boy whose name is Solomon.³⁹⁴ he will be two years old the 30th of April next.³⁹⁵ he is solid and in blooming health. his mouth is nearly fillied with teeth. he talks very pla[i]n with great earnistness and sobriety. Alm[a]

is well.³⁹⁶ he is a smart little fellow. he often wishes that he could see his Dear grand mother ~~he says give my love to her~~ help her and and fetch in wood for her as he does for his mother. he says give my love to her. Rachel is healthey and persevering but rather small.³⁹⁷ Jonathan often says that she is the very image of me when I was her age. she frequntley says <that> if you could live with us she would like to wait upon you. she says do give my best wishes and love to her. Aroet enjous good health.³⁹⁸ he is large of his age, steady, and induistrious. he can do more than half the labor of his father. he has attend school one quarter in company with Rachel and took care of the creaturs and done³⁹⁹ the chores. setti[ng] thre[e] traps he has caught rabbits so fat that the kidneys were covered, prarie hens & quails, more than we could eat in our family. he has sold six dozen of the latter for 50 cents pr doz. ^[148] he desiere to be remembered to you, and says that if he has his health that not more than a dozen years will roll away before he will visit that part of the country.⁴⁰⁰ I have wrote about all the family but myself. my health is rather poor this winter, which is occaioned by a bad cold. My spirits are good.

we have a plenty of everything to make us comfortable. we have three good cows and calves, a plenty of milk, so that we churn twice a week and make about ten lbs of butter a week (to sell) more than we can use. we have had a shiling and twenty cts for all we have sold. we have 8 hogs and shoats, pork and lard, Game hens a plenty, egg in abundance. we have sold a great many—14 cts pr doz—a plenty of corn, oats, & beans to sell, all kinds of garden sauce a plenty. we have a good wagon and two horses, and many farming tools. in short we have nothing to buy but our wheat that can be raised on a farm and that I expect we shall raise next year if we all have our health, as we have over thirty acers of good land that is not cultivated and if it can be ploughed this summer we can put in good fall wheat.⁴⁰¹ perhaps you may think I am too particular, but I dont wish you to think we are suffering for anything amidts a plenty.

Jonathan has sent sister Rachel several papers, a history of the missouria trouble—which if you have received has informed you of some of the trouble that we have had to pass through.⁴⁰² [you] think that my being called to pass through so many trials and afflictions might cause me to dought the truth of the great work that is rolling through the earth with mighty power, which thousands are embracing & rejoicing that they have been enabled to receive in these the last days. and I feel to rejoice with those that do rejoice in the latter day kingdom which I do know is the work of the Lord. and it will continue to roll on untill Christ Jesus our Lord will descend in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, when the saints shall be caught up to meet him in the air.⁴⁰³ I pray this may be our happy lot.

yours in love
to Martha Hale

Olive B. Hale

Rachel J.S. Hale was born August 27th 1829
in Bradford Mass. died in California May 6th 1854 ^[149]

the Children desire to be remembered to all their
Uncles and Aunts and each of their little Cousins.
give my love to them all and except a large share for
your self Yours with respect O.B.H. ^[150]

Ann Marsh Abbott

Ann Marsh was born 19 June 1797 to Molly Law and James Marsh in Acton, Massachusetts.⁴⁰⁴ She was the ninth of ten children who spent their early lives farming. Her mother died when she was just nine years old. Ann married Lewis Abbott in 1829. Her younger brother Thomas hunted down Martin Harris, who gave him one of the first galley sheets of the Book of Mormon off E. B. Grandin's press in Palmyra in 1830.⁴⁰⁵ Martin Harris took him directly to the Smith home and he was quickly an integral part of the organization of the Church of Christ, having been called as physician to the church. He shared his findings with his family, and Ann and Lewis were baptized that same year in New York. They moved with the Saints to Ohio and then to Missouri. As Ann explains in her letter, Lewis was attacked twice by a mob in Missouri. Though little is known of the intermittent time, Lewis and Ann moved into a new home in Nauvoo in the fall of 1843.

When news of the martyrdom came to Ann the following summer, she was milking a cow. Feeling the devastation of the Saints, she got up and began to wring her hands repeating, "This cannot be possible." In 1845, Ann and Lewis prepared to move west. They built their wagons by day and worked on the Nauvoo Temple at night. Ann and Lewis were sealed in the Nauvoo Temple 20 January 1846. They tried to help those ^[151] Saints in need as they began the trip from Nauvoo. Lewis crossed the river again to help others after being told that if he did, he would be killed. On his second trip back, he was savagely ridden over and beaten. Although he made it back to Ann and across the plains, family tradition holds that the effects of the beating ended his life prematurely.

Three of Ann's children—Abigail, Thomas, and Joseph—crossed the plains with them.⁴⁰⁶ Ammon and Eliza Ann died earlier in Quincy, Illinois, of exposure when the mob forced them from their home.⁴⁰⁷ Ammon was one and a half

years old, and Eliza Ann was six months old. Ann arrived in Utah with her family in 1847 with one yoke of cattle, one cow, and enough flour to allow three-quarter pounds per day per person in order to last through the winter. In February and March they were forced to eat thistle roots. Ann's youngest, Joseph, was born in Utah. She died in 1849.

Ann was forty-six years old when she wrote this letter to her older brother Nathan. *[This draft of the letter is in the possession of Ann's descendants. The three-page letter is written on both sides of pale green paper with coffee-colored ink. It measures 31 by 19 centimeters at the top and 19.3 centimeters at the bottom. It has a few light yellow stains and is partially torn. Ann's somewhat cumbersome script and spelling reflect her acknowledged difficulty writing. The letter includes doodling and the beginning of another letter, indicating this was a copy retained by Ann.]* In this 1843 letter, Ann demonstrated the surety of her course and her desire for her family to join with her. Though she had seen apostasy up close and had been through many persecutions, she believed that these experiences would strengthen her and she remained faithful to the end.

[The transcription published in the original thesis was updated silently here using the original letter.] Dear brother many years have past a way since I have wrote to you or you to me.⁴⁰⁸ I so seldom write to eny of you I cannot write with that ease that I could if <I> improved the time and wrote often. When I sit down to write to my brothers I am some what pssed because our correspondance is so seldom. therefore I cannot write t[hat] would be so interesting. However I will improve this opportunity and try to write some thing. that you may know we are yet in the land of the living. ^[152]

and are in p<r>et<t>y good health considering wha[t w]e ha[ve] had to encounter since we came to this Country. being drive[n by a] Mob from time to time which has caused infermites to come [upon,] us, especialy my Husband his health is poor, too differance times he has had his blood spilt by Missouri mod. However through the me[r]cy of the Lord he is able to do a good deal of work thou<gh> he is troubled very much with the Rheumatism.⁴⁰⁹

Now I can say that through all our trials and afflictions our faith is not lesond but strengthend in Mormonism. And can safely say we have past through all this for Christ sake. Neather do we exspect that we have pased through all yet we have got to be tried and proved in all things so that we may stand or fall.

Many have fallen out by the way side all ready. Brother Thomas for one and his family. They live in

Missouri what county or place I cannot tell you I have written to them but cannot git an answer. however I hope he is not lost so but what he can be found again.⁴¹⁰

When I reflect a moment & see what a scard sheep we are I to feel a great desire. that we might <all> be gathered even with the body of the latter day saints They are flocking from all parts of the Earth to Zion. They are almost continually coming from England by hundrreds. when I look at this great work I often think is it possible <all> my relation are ignorant of watt what the Lord is doing in these last days, every one can know for themselves the truth of this work. I understand there is a small branch of the church of Mormons in your neighbourhood if so it will be your priviledg to know mormonism. I say this because <I> exspect there has not been many mormons that way.

We have had a letter From James and Emerson last April⁴¹¹ they thought something of coming to this county this spring but I think they have given it up for this season. for they are full of Millerism they are preparing to see the world come to an end in 1843–4.⁴¹² Poor Children will find themselves [mis] taken. I say mistaken because according to the word of the Lord [i]t cannot take place yet.

I wish my brothers would come into the true light of the Gospel then they would know light from darkness. Why is [thi]s Generation so prejudiced against that, that is for there [own sa]lvation. I understand there is a small branch of the Church of Mormons in your ^[153] Neighborhood then why not here them, and understand the true principles of the gospel. I have understood that you have not had much mormon preaching near you untill lately. so I am in hopes that you will here and know for yourself and likewise your Children.

A Mormon brother a particular friend of ours by the name of Eric Willis called at one of your Neighbor's last fall⁴¹³ said he saw one of your sons. this is the way I found out where to write. I have understood by Brother Thomas as long ago as when he was at your house you had buried your wife and <I> have <not> heard of your marrying again. I want very much to here from you and your Children I want to here how you git allong as your have become aged I might say by this time I hope your have Children that can see and supply your wants whatever they may be. write or have some one of your children to write for you. please to write your Children names.⁴¹⁴

I have three Children, Abigail & Thomas & Joseph⁴¹⁵ I have buried two Ammon & Elizaann.⁴¹⁶ I here nothing from Kiziah nor Titus.⁴¹⁷ I do not here from my brothers> a half so often sence we became mormons as before, but I can tell you this is the greatest blessing the Lord ever bestowed upon me, that I and my family should have the priviledg of imbracing the true and everlasting Gospel as it is en in Christ Jesus. before this we knew nothing about blessings nor cursing.

My Husband would write if he <could> sit with eny ease on account of this Rheumatism it is with difficulty that he can sit but a little while at a time. I will now to give you a little history of our situation we live within a half mile of the Mississippi river in Iowa Territory Just opposit of Nauvoo we are now building in Nauvoo exspect to move the next fall we have the comforts of life and peace.

when you write direct your letter to Nauvoo Illinois Hancock Co if a mormon brother you know com[es] is-coming to Nauvoo write by him or Mail a letter I have not <wrote> much of the history of our lives since we have been in | _____ | Not neare so much as my Husband would have wrote if he had been able he would have given you the a plane history and plan of salvation the plan of salvation you can know for your self if you will read the Book of Mormon without prejudice. and here the Mormon preachers with the same mind. I want you to write and tell us what you beleive about the mormons. I am shure you can have the privlidg of knowing for they are preaching on every side and to ^[154] every people kindred toung and langague. the work of the Lord rapidly roleing on and will until all is fulfilled.

And it is my fervent prayer that my brothers & sisters <would> with imbrace the true and everlasting Gospel as it is in Jesus Christ. likewise all our relatives and friends. is the desire of your Sister Ann. Amen. A few more lines and I will close I want to have your Children write so that I can write to them in particular.

Direct your letter <to> Lewis Abbott
Nauvoo
Hancock Co
Illinois

I will just tell you where Emerson & James were when they wrote in Waterford, Washington County state of Ohio⁴¹⁸

Affectionately Yours
Lewis & Ann Abbott

June 20, 1843 ^[155] [Editor's note: there is no page 156 in the original thesis.]

Notes

1. Biographical information about Lucy Mack Smith comes from Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001); Bushman, *Joseph Smith*; and Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*.

2. Although she convinced the Presbyterian minister in Palmyra to baptize her and three of her children, she specified she did not want to be baptized a member of that church. Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 53, see endnote 32.

3. Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 135.

4. For a time she seemed to follow after James J. Strang, possibly through the association of her son William with Strang. See Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 790–797.

5. Church History Library, MS 3468. If the letter is catalogued by itself, no collection is listed.

6. Waterloo, New York, is ten miles north of Fayette. This letter coincided with the third conference of the Church in Fayette. *History of the Church*, 1:140.

7. Solomon Mack (1773–1851) and Ester Hayward (1773–1844) had nine children. At this time the oldest was thirty-three and the youngest twelve. Solomon is the youngest Mack brother and Lucy, the youngest sister. Two years separate the two. Lucy was hesitant to include any details of his life in her history reasoning that he was yet alive and could write his own history. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 28.

8. Solomon Mack lived in Gilsun, New Hampshire, for most of his adult life. Gilsun is 286 miles east of Waterloo. It seems that the Mack children did not have much interaction with their sibling Solomon. In her history, Lucy published an 1835 letter from her brother Jason to Solomon that also referred to the many years passed since they had seen each other. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 48–49.

9. See the Book of Mormon title page and 2 Nephi 25:18; 26:12.

10. 1 Nephi 10:4; 19:8; 2 Nephi 25:19.

11. Lucy Mack's summary of the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi through Jacob.

12. See Nephi's closing words, 2 Nephi 33.

13. 2 Nephi 29.

14. 2 Nephi 28:30; Isaiah 28:10.

15. 2 Nephi 29.

16. Moroni 1.

17. Doctrine and Covenants 20:6–8; *History of the Church*, 1:10–12.

18. In Joseph's 1832, 1838, and 1842 accounts of the First Vision, he focused on the corruption of all churches on the earth at that time. *History of the Church* 1:5–6; and Milton V. Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision: Confirming Evidences and Contemporary Accounts*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 155–169.

19. Jacob 5.

20. 2 Nephi 28:13–16.

21. Mark 16:17–18.

22. Mormon 9:22–25.

23. 1 Nephi 10:18; 2 Nephi 29:9; Moroni 10:7, 19.

24. Acts 2.

25. Parley P. Pratt noted that "the churches in Ohio had increased to more than a thousand members, and those in New York to several hundred." Parley P. Pratt, *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1961), 61.

26. Lucy led a group of eighty to Kirtland in February or March of the same year. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 195.

27. Keene, New Hampshire, is nine miles south of Gilsun.

28. Seneca Falls is five miles east of Waterloo.

29. In her 1833 history, Lucy mentions that Solomon was known as Captain for twenty years. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 28.

30. Gilsun, New Hampshire, is located approximately sixty miles west of Manchester, New Hampshire, and 111 miles northwest of Boston.

31. Mobs tore down the dam built by the Colesville Saints for baptisms. The baptisms had to be postponed until the following day when the dam could be rebuilt. The confirmations planned for that same evening also had to be postponed until later. The majority of information

about Phebe comes from William G. Hartley, *"These Are My Friends": A History of the Joseph Knight Family, 1825–1850* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1986), 51–53; Larry C. Porter, "A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831," (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1971), 202–301; and The International Society of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, *Pioneer Women of Faith and Fortitude*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Publishers Press, 1998), 3:2549 (hereinafter referred to as *DUP*). South Bainbridge is approximately fifteen miles northeast of Colesville (present-day Ninevah, New York).

32. Phebe Crosby Peck Knight Lott (1800–abt. 1849).

33. Hezekiah (1820–1859), Samantha (1821–1839), Henry (1823–died young), Henrietta (1823–1896), and Sarah Jane (1825–1893) were their children. Henry and Henrietta were twins.

34. Benjamin Peck's two brothers, Hezekiah Peck (1782–1850) and Ezekial Peck (1785–1850), and their families also joined with the Saints at Colesville. They were all baptized on 29 June 1830. Benjamin's sister Polly Peck Knight (1774–1831) had married Joseph Knight Sr. (1772–1847), and the Pecks had become acquainted with Joseph Smith through Joseph Knight whom Joseph Smith called "a faithful old man." "Records of Early Church Families," *Utah Genealogical Quarterly* 26 (1935): 108–109.

35. *DUP*, *Pioneer Women*, 3:2549.

36. Polly Peck Knight (1774–1831); see Doctrine and Covenants 59.

37. In his journal Newel Knight described their union in this way, "My Father had married again after my Mother's death a widow Peck my mother's brothers widow with four small children he was now getting old & it seemed a hard struggle for him to get along." In 1845 in Nauvoo Phebe was to be sealed to Joseph Knight Sr. but she initially refused. She said that she cared for him but "did not love him and honor him as her head and bosom companion." They were separated for a season, but after some discussion with a Church leader, Phebe showed up at the temple the day of the scheduled sealing. Though there seemed to be no major difficulties between Phebe and her husband, tension seemed consistently present between Phebe and Joseph's older children. Newel Knight, *Autobiography*, 51, Church History Library.

38. They were married at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, on 30 March 1847. There is no record of their living together. *Utah Genealogical Quarterly*, 109.

39. We do not know the exact date of Phebe's death. On 6 May 1849 from Andrew County, Missouri, Martha Long Peck, Phebe's sister-in-law, wrote a letter to her son Reed in Corlandville, New York, telling him of Aunt Phebe's death. She also mentions the deaths of Joseph Knight Sr. and Newel Knight, both of whom died two years previously. Martha Long Peck to Reed Peck, Church History Library. To further complicate the matter Newel's widow, Lydia Knight, wrote to Brigham Young from Pottawatomie County, Iowa, on 28 May 1849 explaining that she would not be heading west that season as "Mother Knight" claimed the wagons and cattle that were rightly Lydia's and were given to the Riches (two of Phebe's daughters married Rich brothers, Charles and Thomas). After Lydia's inquiry into the matter, the property was given to her but not in time for her to go west that season. Brigham Young

Papers, Incoming Correspondence, Church History Library. Though Lydia's letter was written after Martha's she may have been writing about a past event, which would lead one to believe that Phebe must have died sometime around May of 1849 since she is absent from any records farther west than Winter Quarters.

40. Church History Library, MS 12434.

41. Phebe was most likely living in nearby Kaw Township at the time, though return letters would have to be directed to Independence. Hartley, *"These Are My Friends,"* 77 and *History of the Church*, 1:196–206.

42. Anna Pratt (abt. 1813–?), wife of Stephen B. Pratt (abt. 1810–?), was a relative of the Pecks. Larry C. Porter, "Ye Shall Go to the Ohio": Exodus of the New York Saints to Ohio, 1831," in Milton V. Backman, ed., *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint History: Ohio* (Provo, Utah: Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1990), 8. It is plausible that she is Phebe's sister, but because of a lack of information about the family of Elisha Crosby, the familial question remains in doubt. Anna and Stephen B. Pratt are found in the 1840 and 1850 New York Census in Bainbridge. Phebe's language depicts a very intimate relationship. Despite not knowing if they are sisters, as relatives living in the same town, Anna most likely had much interaction with Phebe. Phebe was baptized on 28 June 1830 by Oliver Cowdery. There is no record of Anna being baptized, though she knew Joseph Smith in Bainbridge, New York, and originally planned to leave with the Colesville members. She ran off to get married with Stephen and did not go with the Saints. Harriet E. Shay signed affidavit, Jacob Morris Papers #1656, Olin Research Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, cited in Porter, "Ye Shall Go to the Ohio," 8.

43. The location of the 22 January letter is unknown.

44. Census records show there were Pratts and Pecks in Chenango County, New York, throughout most of the nineteenth century.

45. The Saints never imagined their expulsion from Zion.

46. At the January 1831 conference in Fayette, New York, attended by Newel Knight and possibly others from Colesville, Joseph introduced the concept of gathering. Sections 37 and 38 of the Doctrine and Covenants given coincident with the conference include the command to gather. After the conference the Colesville Saints began to pack and attempted to sell their property in order to gather to Missouri. The Colesville Saints left Thompson on 28 June and arrived in Jackson County on 26 July.

47. This closely relates to the revelation included in Doctrine and Covenants 6:7 and 42:61.

48. For information on Section 76 and the Mormon concept of heaven, see chapter 2, fn. 38. [Editor's note: The title of this publication was drawn from a sentence in this paragraph. An early typescript read "give it all up and follow your Lord." A verified typescript later omitted the "it" and transposed the "all" and the "up."]

49. Hezekiah, Samantha, and Henrietta Peck were twelve, ten, and nine years old respectively. Two of Phebe's children had died previously: her first daughter named Samanthea died as a toddler as did Henrietta's twin Henry. Sarah Jane, her youngest, was six years old at the time of the letter.

50. There is little available information on the experience of young people in the early Church.

51. Hezekiah was named after his uncle Hezekiah Peck. Though the commandment to "take up your cross, in the which you must pray vocally" (Doctrine and Covenants 23:6) was specifically directed at Joseph Knight Sr., Phebe demonstrates that its relevance to all Saints was established early on. See also Doctrine and Covenants 1:2, "The voice of the Lord is unto all men."

52. As Phebe seems concerned that her children are growing up in truth and light, it is interesting that just prior to this letter the Lord specifically mentioned in revelation that the children of Zion were growing up in wickedness. See Doctrine and Covenants 68.

53. Minerva Pollard (abt. 1797–?) is listed as living with the Pratts in the 1850 census. Her relationship to them, if any, is not known.

54. The Patty mentioned here may be Martha Long Peck, wife of Hezekiah Peck, who was known as Patty. However, she was in Independence with Phebe at the time of the letter's creation. As with Anna, Phebe demonstrates a very intimate relationship with Patty. It would not be surprising if they were sisters.

55. Phebe had lived in Chenango County most of her life. Though the assurance she needed to leave consoled her, it did not eliminate difficulty to part with friends and family when she left in 1831 not knowing when she would again see them.

56. Alma 28:12.

57. Before 1833 when the Church first attempted to print the revelations, Church members learned of the revelations as they were written down and passed around. Certain revelations were more popular and circulated more widely than others. Phebe refers to a number of the early revelations in her letter. This demonstrates both her closeness to Church leadership and her determined desire to learn every new thing that had been revealed by the Lord.

58. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon visited Jackson County, Missouri, in April of 1832. Present-day sections 82 and 83 of the Doctrine and Covenants were received during their stay. The decision to print the revelations in the original Book of Commandments was made during the April conference after the Lord commanded as recorded in Section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

59. See fn. 48.

60. Though there are no sisters listed, Foster and Archibald Crosby were the brothers of Phebe according to "Records of Early Church Families," 108. There is a Foster Crosby in the New York 1830 census living in southeast Putnam County, New York (close to New York City). Archibald is not listed in that census.

61. Biographical information comes from Ethel Grace Papworth Call Papers, Church History Library; Hilda Faulkner Browne, *The Michigan Mormons: Their History from 1831 to 1952 and a Little Beyond*—(n.p.: Hilda Faulkner Brown, 1985), 1–18; and John and Audrey Cumming, *The Pilgrimage of Temperance Mack* (Mt. Pleasant, Mich.: John and Audrey Cumming, 1967).

62. Almira Mack Scobey Covey (1805–1886). Stephen Mack (1766–1826) and Temperance Bond (1791–1850). For additional information on Temperance, see her letter.

63. Stephen moved to Detroit in 1800 and began to establish himself in profitable business ventures. He visited the family every year or eighteen months. He was very successful in Michigan, and shortly after Almira's birth he

moved his family to join him. He died a few months later. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 22.

64. Enoch (1837–1902), Joseph (1839–1916), Andrew Almon (1841–1842), and Hyrum (1843–1921).

65. In the postscript of a letter written by her mother, Temperance Mack, Almira lists that in addition to her husband and three boys, her mother, a ten-year-old boy, a twelve-year-old girl, and "an old maid from Vermont" were all living in their household. Later in 1844, she had a ten-year-old girl, a fifteen-year-old girl, and two twelve-year-old boys.

66. Almira Covey to Harriet Whittemore, 18 July 1844, microfilm, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, original in Whittemore Family Papers, Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

67. He was then appointed as a captain of ten wagons on their way west. On their arrival in Salt Lake, he was ordained a bishop.

68. Both the Church History Library and the RLDS (Community of Christ) Archives possess typescripts of the letter; only L. Tom Perry Special Collections has a copy of the original letter on microfilm. The LDS copy includes notes that aid in the identification of individuals mentioned in the letter.

69. Liberty, Missouri, is in Clay County, twelve miles north of Independence.

70. Harriet Mack Whittemore (1800 or 1805–1886).

71. John M. Mack (1802–?) and Lovicy Mack Cooper.

72. Almon Mack (1805–1883) and David Dort or Darte (1793–1861).

73. L. Curtis possibly refers to Lyman Curtis (1812–1897 or 1898).

74. This could possibly be Amos Mack (1807–?), Almira's cousin. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 38. The specific location of Boonsville is unknown.

75. According to a note in the typescript in the Church History Library, this is Stephen Mack. It is probably not Almira's brother Stephen because he is mentioned in the following paragraph.

76. Richard Whittemore (abt. 1835–?).

77. This would more readily seem to be Stephen Mack, the brother of Almira and Harriet.

78. James Olin Whittemore is not mentioned in the 1850 census. He is older than George. George Whittemore (abt. 1842–?).

79. Temperance was in Kirtland by May of 1838, three years later.

80. In a rather humorous historical incident in April 1835, Michigan and Ohio began the conflict that became known as the "Toledo War," resulting from a disagreement as to the application of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. For fifteen years, Ohio and the Michigan Territory argued over the strip of land where the city of Toledo is now located. Fighting never broke out because their militias got lost in the swamps and never met up. The only casualty of the war came in a minor altercation: the son of Ohio's major stabbed a Michigan sheriff in the thigh. The dispute was solved the following year when Congress required Michigan to give up the land in order to become a state.

81. Mary Kilburn Bent (1809–?) was the daughter of Mary and Samuel Bent. See fns. 202 and 217.

82. Ruth Mack Stanley (abt. 1782–abt. 1859) and Rhoda Mack Buckland (abt. 1791–?) are sisters of Almira.

83. For a further description of the Mormon concept of celestial glory, see chapter 2, fn. 39.

84. See fn. 81.

85. Naomi Harris Kellogg (1800–1884) and Bathia Fordham Wells (1825–1920).

86. Issac Swain (1759–1838) and Elizabeth Hall Swain. Most biographical information about Rebecca Swain comes from Lucy Ellen Williams Godfrey, *Biographical Information on Rebecca S. Williams*, ca. 1930 and 1935, Church History Library and Nancy Clement Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams . . . and His Wife Rebecca Swain Williams . . . Read Their True Story in the First Introduction—After 100 Years* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1951).

87. They were married in Wyandotte, Wayne County, Michigan. Frederick G. Williams, "Frederick Granger Williams of the First Presidency of the Church," *BYU Studies* 12, no. 3 (1972): 244.

88. Their children were Lovina Susan (1816–1847); Joseph Swain (1819–1838), an invalid and a major source of concern for Rebecca; Lucy Eliza (1821–?); and Ezra Granger (1823–1905). In the young country, Fredrick's medical services were a needed service, and he became very successful through much study. He was soon visited by doctors from other parts of the country who wanted to learn from him.

89. There is some discrepancy as to their baptismal dates. There was either one day or several weeks between their baptisms.

90. Even her letters to her brother John to whom Rebecca was particularly close were returned unopened. On the back of one of the returned letters John wrote, "Father forbids me reading your letter or to write to you. Goodbye and Bless you always, your brother, John." Williams, *After 100 Years*, 257. Despite her father's actions Rebecca's eldest sister, Sarah Swain Clark, joined the Church in Michigan in 1832. All of Sarah's daughters joined the Church and remained faithful throughout their lives.

91. Williams, *After 100 Years*, 89.

92. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company and Deseret News, 1901–1936), 1:602.

93. Williams, *After 100 Years*, 197. Rebecca was not aware of this event. One hundred years later, the descendants of the Swains recovered an unsent letter to Rebecca written by her half-brother George relaying the episode.

94. Kimball did not provide food or shelter for Rebecca. She remained with her son Ezra's family until her death.

95. MS 7741.

96. The location of the 23 May letter is unknown, though its existence demonstrates that Issac's threat to cut off Rebecca completely was not fully carried out.

97. It is probable that this is a reference to the nine letters of Ezra Booth that were published in the *Ohio Star* in 1832 and later in E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unveiled* in November of 1834. Although it is unknown how Rebecca's father and brothers obtained the letters, several New York newspapers had reprinted the articles. E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio: printed and published by the author, 1834; reprint, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1975), 175–221. Walter A. Norton, "Joseph Smith as a Jacksonian Man of Letters: His Literary Development

as Evidenced in His Newspaper Writings" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976), 27–35.

98. In Booth's third letter he refutes the testimony of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon Oliver Cowdery (1806–1850), David Whitmer (1805–1888), and Martin Harris (1783–1875). The three testified that they heard the voice of God as the angel presented the gold plates to them. Though all three separated themselves from Joseph Smith and the Church during their lifetimes, none of them would renounce their testimonies. All would continue to bear witness of what happened until the end of their lives. In Booth's testimony he tells of a commandment (revelation) that he read while on a mission in Missouri which told the witnesses to "see and hear those things by faith, and then they should testify to the world as though they had seen and heard, as I see a man, and hear his voice." The argument became whether the witnesses saw and heard what they testified to or if it was their imagination. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 186–187.

99. Moroni prophesied of the three witnesses in Ether 2.

100. Joseph Smith, his family, and the three witnesses testified to the veracity of Smith's account throughout their lives. Richard Bushman tells of one incident concerning the testimony of the Smith family. The Western Presbyterian Congregation sent deacon George Beckwith and two others to visit the Smiths to dissuade them from speaking out about the Book of Mormon. Lucy Mack's response is quoted in the introduction to her letter (see page 40). Hyrum and Samuel were equally supportive of Joseph. Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 109. The three witnesses did not recant their testimonies throughout their lives despite disassociation from Joseph and the Church.

101. As early as 1830 members were teaching their family members and friends in Upper Canada (Ontario). The Canadian mission opened in 1832. Since the Swains lived on the southern side of Lake Ontario, it would be uncomplicated for a missionary heading to Canada to stop off in Youngstown. Richard E. Bennett, "The Church in Canada," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:251; and Richard E. Bennett, "A Study of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Upper Canada, 1830–1850" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1975).

102. Doctrine and Covenants 1:30–31, 33. There exists a note associated with the revelation that Frederick was present when it was received, which demonstrates the particular access that Rebecca had to the revelation.

103. William and George Swain, to whom the letter is addressed, were stepbrothers to Rebecca. Their mother was Patience Dune, her father's second wife. Her older brother John was particularly close to Rebecca as a child.

104. Issac Swain lived another four years.

105. Kirtland was also called Kirtland Mills prior to and throughout the stay of the Saints.

106. Youngstown is thirteen miles north of Niagara Falls and thirty-one miles north of Buffalo, New York. Niagara County, New York, is bordered on the north by Lake Ontario.

107. Biographical information comes from Effel H. B. Riggs, ed. and comp., *History of Hatch, Utah and Associated Towns Asay and Hillsdale* (Beaver, Utah: Beaver Printing Co.), 351 and 357; and Kate B. Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 11:347.

108. Lovina died between the 21st and the 28th of August according to the *Nauvoo Neighbor* and Nauvoo Sexton's Record. Lyndon W. Cook, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839–1845* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1967), 84.

109. MS 16117.

110. Edmund Waite.

111. She lived for eight more years.

112. The letter is addressed from Kirtland. The Wilsons probably lived outside the town of Kirtland in the thirty-six square mile township of Kirtland and were planning to move into the town itself.

113. For a summary of this time period and many manifestations of gifts of the Spirit, see chapter 2.

114. According to a note on the typescript, Paul probably acted as scribe for Lovina adding the comments in parentheses.

115. There is no evidence that the Waites ever joined with the Latter-day Saints.

116. Jeremiah 38:20.

117. Deliverance Wilson Jr. (1769–1838) and Wellington Paul Wilson (1814–1896). Wellington was known as Paul. He was twenty-two at the time of the letter and the tenth of twelve children.

118. George Deliverance Wilson (1807–1887) was twenty-eight.

119. Marcia Eliza Wilson (1811–1845) was twenty-four.

120. See chapter 2, fn. 34 for an explanation of the Word of Wisdom.

121. See chapter 2, fn. 29.

122. One week before the winter solstice in December 1835, a "most remarkable Arctic Blast" swept through New England causing the "coldest daylight period since thermometers came into use" in the Northeast. Meteorological historians christened it "the stand out winter of the first half of the nineteenth century." David M. Ludlum, *Early American Winters II, 1821–1870* (Boston: American Meteorological Society, 1968), 21–25.

123. Mary Ann Angell Young (1808–1882). Biographical information comes from Emmeline B. Wells, "Heroines of the Church: Biography of Mary Ann Angell Young," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (1 January 1891): 16; Kate B. Carter, *Women of Deseret* (Salt Lake City: DUP, 1940), 125–126; Tullidge, *Women of Mormondom*, 359–366; DUP, *Pioneer Women*, 4:3513; Dean C. Jessee, "Brigham Young's Family Part I, 1824–1845," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 3 (1978): 311–327; and S. Dilworth Young, "Here is Brigham": *Brigham Young . . . the Years to 1844* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964).

124. Thomas Baldwin Marsh (1800–1866) became an apostle and was the brother of Ann Marsh Abbott. Her letter is the last included in the collection.

125. Brigham Young (1801–1877).

126. Miriam Works Young (1806–1832) was Brigham's first wife.

127. "History of Brigham Young," *Deseret News*, 10 February 1858, as cited in Jessee, "Brigham Young's Family Part I," 314.

128. During Zion's Camp she took in the families of her brother Solomon and his friend Lorenzo Booth so they could join the trek to redeem Zion.

129. Joseph Angell Young (1834–1875).

130. Brigham Young to Mary Ann Angell Young, 3 June 1836, Philip Blair Collection, Special Collections

Department, University of Utah Library, as cited in Jessee, "Brigham Young's Family Part I," 314.

131. DUP, *Pioneer Women*, 4:3513.

132. Carter, *Women of Deseret*, 125–126.

133. Brigham Young to Mary Ann Angell Young, 20 April 1847, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library.

134. While only Brigham Young Jr. was ordained to the Quorum of the Twelve as an adult, he and his two brothers Joseph Angell Young and John Willard Young were all ordained as teenagers. John Willard Young Collection, Church History Library.

135. Mary Ann Angell Young to Brigham Young, 31 August 1835, Luna Eunice Caroline Young Thatcher Collection, 1835–1876, Church History Library. Mary Ann is in Kirtland, Ohio.

136. Brigham is in Rhode Island.

137. In 1832, just after Brigham's baptism, he was ordained as a missionary and went on a mission to Canada with his brother Joseph. Throughout the next several years he went to Canada several times.

138. Because of the address where the letter was sent, evidently this is Valentine Young, though their connection to Brigham and Mary Ann is unknown.

139. The location of these letters is unknown.

140. Joseph Angell Young (1834–1875) is ten months old.

141. Jacob Bump (abt. 1788–?) was a pugilist who plastered the interior of the Kirtland Temple. During the unrest in Kirtland, Bump was one of the leading apostates calling Joseph Smith a fallen prophet. Brigham Young and Bump had a specific run-in at a meeting in the Kirtland Temple in the summer of 1837. The dissenters were calling upon David Whitmer to be the new leader of the Church and Young defended Smith. Young, *Here is Brigham*, 175.

142. Not only in Kirtland, but throughout the early history of the Mormons, there were those who would declare Joseph Smith fallen and leave, only to return. To be accepted back, one had to confess his faults and demonstrate repentance.

143. We can assume that Mary Ann is referencing the temple. During 1835 the work on the temple progressed rapidly, and by November the outside was ready to be plastered. The following year Brigham would take charge of the finishing touches on the temple.

144. Joseph Young (1797–1881).

145. Truman Osborn Angell (1810–1887).

146. Angelina Works (1814–1880). Angelina was a sister to Miriam, Brigham's first wife. The printing house was the location of several of the schools the Saints established in Kirtland and was situated in back of the Kirtland Temple.

147. Angelina's mother, Abigail Marks Works (1781–1846).

148. John M. Young (1791–1870).

149. Hannah Dennis and John Young (1763–1839).

150. At this time, some American women had moved away from most home production, but the home production of linen remained a normal practice for a period of time. Keith Melder, *The Beginnings of Sisterhood: The Women's Rights Movement, 1800–1850* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 2. Though the other women's letters included here do not give similar examples of linen production, other early Mormon women demonstrate home production like weaving palm leaf hats, which aligns with earlier patterns of home production.

151. Elizabeth (1825–1903) and Vilate (1830–1902) Young were Brigham's daughters from his first wife, Miriam. Young Vilate was named after Vilate Murray Kimball, a good friend of Miriam's; see her letter. Vilate helped care for the girls after Miriam's death.

152. Joseph Angell Young, see fn. 129.

153. Valentine Young, see fn. 138.

154. Mary Fielding (1801–1852). Biographical information comes from Don. C. Corbett, *Mary Fielding Smith: Daughter of Britain* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1966); Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938); Andrew F. Ehat, "'They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet' The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 2 (1979): 133–166; and Jenson, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*.

155. Joseph Fielding (1797–1863) and Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson (1807–1893). The two had emigrated to Canada in March of 1832.

156. As Pratt and Taylor called on the Fieldings, Mercy and Mary ran from the house to a neighbor's to protect them from a religion with a name of "such a contemptible sound." Corbett, *Mary Fielding Smith*, 18.

157. Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 120. Hyrum's first wife, Jerusha, died giving birth to their fifth child.

158. *History of the Church*, 3:1.

159. After taking Hyrum and the others initially to Richmond, Missouri, officials moved them to Liberty Jail in Clay County.

160. Mercy had her own child soon after Mary and was able to nurse both babies in addition to all else she did to help Mary's family to survive.

161. For more detail on the trauma of the visit to Liberty, refer to the second Mary Fielding Smith letter.

162. The sacred rites that are performed in temples are called endowments. A temple endowment is considered a priceless gift of knowledge and blessings from God.

163. Latter-day Saints practiced and continue to practice the payment of tithing, one-tenth of their increase, as introduced in the Old Testament. They believed as the Old Testament prophet Malachi wrote that if they returned to the Lord one-tenth of what he had blessed them with that he would "open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." See Malachi 3:8–10 and Doctrine and Covenants 119:4.

164. MS 2779, folder 1. The letter was previously published in Godfrey et al., *Women's Voices*, 62–67.

165. Almon Whiting Babbitt (1812–1855) went on several missions to Canada between 1836 and 1838.

166. The Latter-day Saints continued to share this feeling that they were like the Children of Israel.

167. Warren Parrish (abt. 1792–?) was one of the harshest dissenters against Smith in Kirtland.

168. Mary Mack (abt. 1793–?) and David Dort. See fn. 72.

169. This is possibly Eliza Walton (1823–1878) and either Mary (1803–?) or Julia Snider. For a complete account of the incident, see Richard Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 196–197.

170. Sampson Avard (1800–?).

171. The word "to" was repeated in the original.

172. This is possibly Wycom Clarke.
173. At this point Mary begins to crisscross and write vertically to make the most of each centimeter of paper.
174. This is most likely Jane Silverthorn and William Law (1809–1892). They were taught by Almon W. Babbitt and John Taylor in Canada.
175. This is most likely Vilate Murray Kimball (1806–1867); see her letter.
176. Ironically, Mary would be in the same situation shortly.
177. Jennetta Richards (1817–1845). Biographical information comes from Jennetta Richards Biographical Information, Church History Library; Allen et al., *Men with a Mission*; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 3:126–144; Holzapfel, *Women of Nauvoo*; and Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball, An Apostle: A Father and Founder of the British Mission* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945).
178. Heber Chase Kimball (1801–1868). This was Heber's first mission to Great Britain, 1837–1838. The missionaries enjoyed much success. Heber noted that Jennetta had an important part in that success.
179. There are two parts to baptism in The Church of Jesus Christ, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:68–69.
180. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 143.
181. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 143; and Allen et al., *Men with a Mission*, 61–62.
182. Jennetta Richards to John Richards, 26 October 1841, in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 3:126.
183. Willard Richards to family, 18 July 1845, in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 3:142.
184. MS 5379.
185. Jennetta lived in Walkerfold until she was married later that year.
186. Willard was thirty-four at this time.
187. William Kay (1778–1848).
188. Willard's health was poor throughout his time in Great Britain. Allen et al., *Men with a Mission*, 61.
189. John Parker.
190. Joseph Fielding (1797–1863) and George A. Smith (1817–1875).
191. Jennetta was closer to her brother John than her other siblings. John Richards (1811–1851). Jennetta had one sister, Elizabeth Ann Richards (1814–1870).
192. The Moon mentioned could be either Francis, John, or Thomas Moon.
193. Willard and Jennetta had to be registered before they could be married. They were married on the twenty-fourth of the same month, just two weeks later.
194. Ann Dawson.
195. Fortunately Willard did not comply with Jennetta's instructions.
196. Biographical sources include Cumming, *The Pilgrimage of Temperance Mack*; Browne, *The Michigan Mormons; History of the Church*, 1:20–21; Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*; and Harriet Whittemore Collection, microfilm, BYU Special Collections.
197. Mary Yemmons (1731–1819) and Stephen Andrew Bond (1798–1815). Records demonstrate that Temperance (?–1850) was born on 8 September 1791, but given that her husband was born in 1766 and her youngest of twelve children was born in 1805, she probably was born before 1791.
198. Solomon Mack, *A Narrative of the Life of Solomon Mack* (Windsor, Vt.: 1810), reprinted in Richard L. Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971).
199. An available list of the children of Temperance and Stephen Mack includes: Achsah Mack; Ruth Mack Stanley (abt. 1782–abt. 1859); Fanny Mack Dort (1789–1825); Mary (Polly) Mack Dort (1793–1827); Rhoda Mack Buckland (abt. 1791–?); Lavina Mack (1795–1823); Stephen Mack Jr. (1798–1850); John M. Mack (1802–?); Lovicy Mack Cooper; Harriet Mack Whittemore (1800–1872); Almon Mack (1805–1883); and Almira Mack Scobey Covey (1805–1886).
200. Pontiac is twenty-six miles north of Detroit.
201. Cummings, *Pilgrimage of Temperance Mack*, 11.
202. Samuel Bent (1778–1846).
203. Temperance Mack to Harriett Whittemore, 30 December 1838, Brigham Young University.
204. Joseph Smith explained the puzzling mention of baptism for the dead in 1 Corinthians 15:29: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" At a funeral in August 1840, Smith introduced the doctrine that the living could be baptized in proxy for those who did not receive the necessary ordinance of baptism during life. Temperance Mack to Harriett Whittemore, 16 September 1841, Brigham Young University.
205. Smith began to speak of moving the Saints to the West as early as 1830. Temperance's proximity to Smith coupled with her own experience with the persecutions of the Saints likely fueled her desire to go west. See Hyrum L. Andrus, "Joseph Smith and the West," *BYU Studies* 2, no. 2 (1960): 129–148 and Lewis Clark Christian, "A Study of Mormon Knowledge of the American Far West Prior to the Exodus (1830–February 1846)," (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972).
206. Harriett Mack Whittemore (1805–1886). It seems that Harriet was one of Temperance's older daughters. She was living with her husband and family in Pontiac, Michigan.
207. David Dort. See fn. 72.
208. See the first Almira Mack Scobey Covey letter. Her first son was Enoch. See fn. 64.
209. Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and the others held in Liberty Jail had been there a month.
210. The men in Liberty Jail appeared before the court on 25 January 1839. Sidney Rigdon represented himself and was then freed. The others returned to Liberty and their imprisonment continued until 6 April 1839. See Mary Fielding Smith's second letter.
211. Lucy Mack and Joseph Smith Sr.
212. Carlos Buckland is Temperance's grandson, the son of her daughter Rhoda Mack Buckland. Later, Carlos was reported to have said that he was obliged to serve as a colonel because the governor learned he had cousins among the Mormons. It seems that he was less worried about his grandmother than about his financial situation. He claimed that the Mormons owed him ten thousand dollars, for which he seized grain and stock and sold them.
213. This is Harriet's husband, Gideon O. Whittemore. There is not a record of his full name, but if he named his son James Olin after him, his middle name would be Olin.

Almira Mack Scobey Covey to Harriet Whittemore, 9 June 1835, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

214. 1 Corinthians 9:25. The identity of this Harriet is unknown. She could possibly be Harriet's daughter and Temperance's granddaughter.

215. See Doctrine and Covenants 87.

216. Matthew 3:39; Luke 3:24; Jeremiah 23:28.

217. Samuel and Mary Kilburn Bent. See fn. 202.

218. The identity of Mary Louisa is not known.

219. Eliza Roxcy Snow (1804–1887) and Leonora Abigail Snow (1801–1872). Her biographical information comes from Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "The Eliza Enigma," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 30–43; Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2000); Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 306–341; Jill Mulvey Derr, "Form and Feeling in a Carefully Crafted Life: Eliza R. Snow's 'Poem of Poems,'" *Journal of Mormon History* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 1–39; Eliza R. S. Smith, *Biography and Family Record*; and Tullidge, *Women of Mormonism*.

220. Amanda Percy Snow (1808–1848), Melissa Snow (1810–1835), Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901), Lucius Augustus Snow (1819–1898), and Samuel Pearce Snow (1821–?).

221. In late 1830, Smith sent missionaries to the edge of the frontier. While on their way to preach to several Native American tribes, the missionaries made a detour to Kirtland, Ohio. Here Parley P. Pratt and Oliver Cowdery met with Sidney Rigdon, a preacher in Alexander Campbell's church. The "Disciples of Christ Church" was founded by Campbell. Rigdon was a close associate of Campbell until he broke off and formed his own group of seekers, searching for a return to New Testament Christianity. Rigdon allowed the missionaries to preach, and quickly he and many of his followers believed and were baptized as members of Smith's new church.

222. As quoted in Tullidge, *Women of Mormonism*, 64.

223. Beecher, *Personal Writings*, 8.

224. As quoted in Beecher, *Personal Writings*, 16.

225. Through poetry and later through her Church assignments, Eliza had a preeminent voice among Mormon women comparable to the small group of female preachers that Catherine Brekus examines in *Strangers and Pilgrims*. See chapter 1, fn. 13. Similar to these preacher women, Eliza demonstrated an assurance that God had called her to a specific work in her life that ratified her desire to have a public voice.

226. As quoted in Beecher, *Personal Writings*, 12.

227. Eliza said although initially the thought of plural marriage was "very repugnant" to her feelings, she was gradually converted to it and later called it "a precious, sacred," "pure and holy principle." Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 312–313. Most, if not all, men and women alike, reacted in the same manner when initially taught the principle of plural marriage, though quite consistently those who would accept the possibility would later testify of the truthfulness and the necessity of the principle.

228. As cited in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 313.

229. Smith possibly taught the doctrine of a Mother in Heaven as early as 1839 as he comforted Zina Huntington Jacobs, a 1835 convert, after the death of her mother.

230. Holzapfel, *Women of Nauvoo*, 93–94.

231. Derr, "Form and Feeling in a Carefully Crafted Life," 22.

232. *The Life and Labors of Eliza R. Snow with a Full Account of Her Funeral Services* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888), 33.

233. MS 9108.

234. The text of this letter was previously published without accompanying commentary or documentation in "Eliza R. Snow Letter From Missouri," *BYU Studies* 13, no. 4 (1973): 544–552.

235. Issac Streater.

236. Doctrine and Covenants 101:89 and 121:4.

237. There were twenty-five hundred men in the army.

238. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Parley P. Pratt, George W. Robinson, Hyrum Smith, and Amasa Lyman.

239. Alexander Doniphan (1808–1887).

240. For a complete account of the Liberty Jail experience, see Dean Jessee, "Walls, Grates and Screaking Iron Doors: The Prison Experience of Mormon Leaders in Missouri, 1838–1839," in Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, eds., *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 19–42.

241. See Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 254–255.

242. There were exactly sixty-four.

243. Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and others were jailed at Liberty. See the second Mary Fielding letter. Morris Phelps, Parley P. Pratt, and others were jailed at Columbia. See the Laura Clark Phelps letter.

244. Hebrews 6:5 and Jacob 6:7.

245. See Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 254.

246. Lorenzo was serving a mission with Abel Butterfield. Snow, *Biography and Family Record*, 42.

247. Robert Wilson, Brigadier General, was appointed by Major General John Clark to oversee six hundred men during the Mormon War.

248. Mary Fielding Smith to Joseph Fielding, June 1839, in Corbett, *Mary Fielding Smith*, 99.

249. Hyrum Smith (1800–1844). Mary Fielding was his second wife. Hyrum married her just a little more than two months after Jerusha Barden's (1805–1837) death. Hyrum was incarcerated in Liberty Jail in Liberty, Missouri, from 1 December 1838 to 6 April 1839. Mary visited Hyrum in February and December with their baby boy, Joseph Fielding (1838–1918). At the time Mary wrote this letter, Hyrum had left Liberty with the other prisoners for Gallatin to await a hearing. They were allowed to escape on the 16th, but did not return to his wife in Quincy, Illinois, for another eleven days. Alexander L. Baugh, "We Took Our Change of Venue for the State of Illinois: The Gallatin Hearing and the Escape of Joseph Smith and the Mormon Prisoners from Missouri, April 1839," in Susan E. Black and Richard E. Bennett, eds., *A City of Refuge: Quincy, Illinois* (Salt Lake City: Millennial Press, 2000), 31–65.

250. Of her visit to the jail, Mary's sister Mercy said it was a night of "fearful foreboding" that she found difficult to describe. Because of sickness, Mary had traveled to the jail in a bed set in the wagon. She had risked her health to visit her husband and, though she was able to see him, the circumstances were dangerous and disturbing. Mary was unable to speak of it for some time. She later said of the visit, "I was left in a way that called for the exercise of all

the courage and grace I possessed." Mary Fielding Smith to Joseph Fielding, June 1839, in Corbett, *Mary Fielding Smith*, 98–100.

251. Seymour Brunson (1798–1840) was probably one of the many visitors to Liberty who planned an escape for the prisoners.

252. It seems that Hyrum and Mary had several misunderstandings during their separation as a result of the distance between them, lack of communication, and miscommunication. Both were in likewise difficult and stressful situations that would try the strongest relationships. Mary's response to such accusations after just a year and a half of marriage demonstrates her dedication to Hyrum and their union. Liberty Jail put strain on the relationship of Joseph and Emma Smith also, in spite of their having been married for thirteen years.

253. This is in reference to the hearing at Gallatin.

254. From Liberty Jail, Joseph similarly pleaded Emma to not forsake him. 4 November 1838, The Archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, as cited in Jessee, "Walls, Grates and Screeching Iron Doors," 22.

255. Mary had her own five-month-old baby and five of Hyrum and Jerusha's children to care for: Lovina (1827–1876) was eleven; John (1832–1911), six; Hyrum Jr. (1834–1841), four; Jerusha (1836–1912), three; and Sarah (1836–1876) was a year and a half old.

256. This is possibly Daniel W. Rogers. He was involved with the a committee formed to remove the Saints and had interaction with Isaac Galland to sell the Saints land in Iowa. He also went to Jackson County to sell lands there. With so many Church duties, he probably communicated much with Smith in exile. *History of the Church*, 3:284.

257. Sidney Rigdon was released after their initial hearing after reportedly testifying that "the sufferings of Jesus Christ were a fool to [his]." As cited in Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 254.

258. The best description of Mary Fielding's sickness was a "severe cold" with chills and fevers. During her convalescence, she was unable to attend to her family and relied on her sister, Mercy. Mercy also had a newborn son and was able to nurse both babies. "Aunty" Hannah Woodstock Grinnels (1793–?) also stayed with Mary and helped her care for the baby.

259. Mercy and Robert Thompson.

260. This is Hyrum's father, Joseph Smith Sr.

261. This could be Frederick G. Williams. Although Frederick was excommunicated twice, he was rebaptized by this time and living in Quincy.

262. George Miller.

263. Mercy had Mary Jane Thompson (1838–?) six months before Mary had Joseph.

264. After months in Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith sent letters, which he described as inspired revelations to the Saints. Extracts from those letters are found in present-day sections 121, 122, and 123 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In the revelations he details how priesthood functions, the full spectrum of persecutions Christ endured, and the duties of the Saints to record the injustices of Missouri. The full two-part letters are in *History of the Church*, 3:289–305. They were first published in *Times and Seasons*.

265. Sources of Melissa's biographical information include: Augustus Erastus Dodge, Mormon Biographical Sketches Collection, Church History Library; and Jensen, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:742.

266. The record of Nathaniel and Mary's family is incomplete. The Ancestral File in the Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, identifies a daughter, Margaret (1799–?) and another of unknown name (1801–?). It does not include William as a son. We do not know how to define Melissa's blindness. It is probable that today she would be considered legally blind, though she had partial sight.

267. Cook, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages*, 21.

268. MS 11863, William T. Morgan Correspondence.

269. William T. Morgan is Melissa Morgan Dodge's brother. He is listed as living in Henderson, New York, in the 1830 and 1840 census.

270. The Dodges lived near Far West from the spring of 1835 until late 1838. Adams County, Illinois, just south of Hancock County, was a place of refuge for many of the Saints after the expulsion from Missouri. Many used Adams County as a place of preparation before moving on to Nauvoo. See Black and Bennett, eds., *A City of Refuge*. With a branch of the Church at nearby Freedom, the Dodges were in the company of many fellow Saints. Stanley B. Kimball, "Nauvoo West: The Mormons of the Iowa Shore," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (1978): 132–142.

271. Seth George Dodge (1821–1882) was eighteen at the time the letter was written.

272. Sally Morgan Dodge (1826–1877) was thirteen at this time.

273. Since Sally and Seth worked away from home, Melissa had five children to care for at home. By 1839 she had buried six children.

274. Hebrews 10:34.

275. Doctrine and Covenants 43:29.

276. Doctrine and Covenants 112:25.

277. Mark 4:16.

278. Doctrine and Covenants 78:15.

279. Doctrine and Covenants 35:14.

280. Though Melissa's handwriting and spelling are particularly crude in comparison to the other letters introduced in the article, she is the most poetic.

281. There were at least three generations of Morgans who lived in Jefferson County. There is little information available on the Dodge family.

282. Nathaniel Morgan (1772–?) died sometime in the 1830s. He was in Henderson in 1830 for the New York state census.

283. Revelation 14:13. See also Doctrine and Covenants 29:13.

284. Payson is located thirteen miles southeast of Quincy, Illinois.

285. For biographical information, see Kate B. Carter, *Heber C. Kimball: His Wives and Family* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Co, 1967); Emmeline B. Wells, "Heroines of the Church: Vilate Murray Kimball," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (15 July–15 November 1891): 447–450, 506–508, 540–542, 561–563, 682–685; Tullidge, *Women of Mormondom*; Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*.

286. Heber Chase Kimball. See fn. 178. They were married 7 November 1822.

287. Judith Narvin Kimball (1823–1824).

288. William Henry Kimball (1826–1907) and Helen Mar Kimball (1828–1896).
289. Miriam and Brigham Young and Brigham's sister Rhoda (1789–1840) and her husband John P. Greene (1793–1844).
290. Biographer Stanley B. Kimball noted that in Nauvoo, Heber was gone 55 percent of the time, "Heber C. Kimball and Family," *BYU Studies* 15, no. 4 (1975): 447–479.
291. Heber Parley Kimball (1835–1885).
292. Levi Richards (1799–1876).
293. Heber C. Kimball Papers, Church History Library and Ronald K. Esplin, "Life in Nauvoo, June 1844: Vilate Kimball's Martyrdom Letters," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 2 (1979): 231–240.
294. Heber C. Kimball Papers, Church History Library.
295. Stanley B. Kimball, ed., *On the Potter's Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books and Smith Research Associates, 1987).
296. Tullidge, *Women of Mormonism*, 447.
297. He died the following June.
298. MS 3279, folder 1, Heber C. Kimball Correspondence. The letter was previously published in Allen et al., *Men with a Mission*, 356–357.
299. Heber left on 18 September 1839 with Brigham Young. Vilate could scarcely leave her bed when they left. As she made it to the door with Mary Ann Young, she heard a desperate demonstration of enthusiasm as the two apostles shouted, "Hurrah for Israel!" This letter was written three days later.
300. William Henry Kimball (1826–1896). He was thirteen years old.
301. This is possibly Rhoda Ann Bentley, wife of Benjamin R. Bentley. Later in the letter, Brother Bentley is mentioned in connection with Sister Ann, who was also ill. The Bentleys are listed in Johnson's *Missouri Redress Petitions*, 577.
302. Fanny Dort (1823–?).
303. Helen was eleven years old.
304. David Patten Kimball (1839–1883). Heber was four and the babe, David, was not yet a month old.
305. A definition of a harvest chill is unexplainable, unless it is no more than a chill which frequently comes during the harvest time.
306. Chandler Rogers (1795–1846) practiced medicine. Hosea Stout mentions being treated by him in his journal, *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, 2 vols., ed. Juanita Brooks (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:161.
307. The Kimballs were reunited on the first of July 1841 after more than twenty months of separation.
308. George A. Smith (1817–1875) left on horseback on 21 July to meet the Twelve in New York.
309. The signature is cut out.
310. Laura Clark Phelps (1807–1842), Timothy Baldwin Clark (1778–1848), and Mary or Polly Keeler Clark (1786–1839). Laura's biographical information is found in Morris Phelps, *Biography of Laura Clark Phelps*, Church History Library; Morris Phelps *Reminiscences*, Church History Library; Mary A. Phelps Rich, "The Life of Mary A. Rich," typescript, BYU Special Collections; and F. Ross Peterson et al., eds., *History of the Bear Lake Pioneers* (Salt Lake City: DUP, 1968).
311. Their lack of education is demonstrated in a severe lack of spelling ability in their letters.
312. This date is debatable—Morris was supposedly nineteen when they married, but dates range from 12 April 1825 to 28 March 1826 to 28 March 1828.
313. Paulina Eliza (1827–1912) and Mary Ann (1829–1912).
314. Charles Coulson Rich (1809–1883).
315. Harriet Wight Clark (1832–1893).
316. John Murdock (1792–1871).
317. John Murdock Jr. (1826–1913).
318. Morris Phelps, *Biography*.
319. Morris Phelps, *Biography*. Patriarchal blessings are similar to specific scripture for each individual member of the Church. In early Church organization, there was one patriarch as mentioned in Genesis 29 for the entire Church.
320. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, 215.
321. Mary Rich, "The Life of Mary A. Rich." Mary is Laura's daughter.
322. Will R. Holmes, grandson, account found in Irene H. Budge and Beatrice H. Burgoyne, "Morris Phelps," in Peterson, *History of the Bear Lake Pioneers*, 600–603.
323. Macedonia (present-day Webster) was twenty miles east of Nauvoo. Saints gathered there in the Ramus branch.
324. *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 March 1842): 713.
325. MS 9605, folder 1, Zula Rich Cole Collection.
326. It is addressed to John Cooper, the husband of her sister Rhoda and to D. K. Clark, her brother in Dupage, Illinois.
327. The jailbreak occurred on 4 July 1839.
328. Several accounts mention that eight to ten men were taken with Morris and Parley. Included in those are Olive Boynton Hale's husband, Jonathan Harriman Hale, and her son, Aroet Hale; Laura's father, Timothy Clark; and King Follet (1788–1844).
329. Morris mentions that the sheriff allowed Laura to visit when she wished and even live in the jail if she desired. He said, "This was of great satisfaction to me, as I was deprived of all liberty in conversing and unfolding the feelings of my bosom." Morris Phelps *Reminiscences*, Church History Library.
330. The Battle of Crooked River, 24–25 October 1838.
331. They had escaped.
332. Each day when they would go to trial, there were no witnesses against them and the trial would be continued. The jailer was heard to say that they would die of old age because their case would be continued forever.
333. Polly Clark died at the end of February 1839.
334. Revelation 9:14.
335. Harriet Mack Whittemore is Almira's older sister.
336. Commerce was a mosquito-infested swamp with rampant sickness.
337. At this time Almira had two young sons, Enoch (1837–1902) and Joseph (1839–1916) Covey.
338. David Dort was first married to Almira's oldest sister, Fanny. After her death, he married Almira's sister Mary.
339. Fanny Dort (1823–?) was David's oldest daughter, named after his first wife.
340. Matthew Casto (1822–1899). The two were married on 30 January 1840.
341. See chapter 2 for published accounts of the Missouri persecutions.

342. Carlos Buckland is Almira's nephew. See Temperance Mack's letter.

343. Almira would not make the trip until June of 1845 to retrieve her mother.

344. John Mack.

345. Enoch was three at the time of this letter.

346. Lucy Thompson Lisk (1820–1847) was one of several children born to Andrew (1794–?) and Nancy (1798–?). Nancy's maiden name was either Phelps or Thompson. Lucy's middle name suggests that the Phelps listed in the Ancestral File may be incorrect.

347. Olivia F. (or E.) Lisk. Although very little is known about Olivia, she is mentioned in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* and the Nauvoo Marriage Record in 1843 when she married Samuel Whitley. Cook, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages*, 95.

348. Joseph Smith McFate (1845–1930), Aurilla (1846–1918), and Orilla (1846–1920) were all born in Nauvoo. The record indicates that Aurilla and Orilla were born four days apart. They could be twins or the same daughter using an alternate spelling with incorrect birth and death dates.

349. Ardilla McFate (1846). Again, this could possibly be the same child.

350. MS 13834.

351. Andrew Lisk is listed in the 1830 census living in Haunsfield, Jefferson County, New York.

352. Harriet Metcalf. She is either a sister of Nancy or Andrew.

353. Nancy Lisk; see fn. 346.

354. Briggs Alden (abt. 1791–?).

355. A canker is "any ulcerous or gangrenous sore" usually caused by some irritant. Though usually called sores and found around the mouth, it can be a single sore or multiple sores in rash form found anywhere on the body. C. V. Brownlow, ed., *Gould's Medical Dictionary*, 5th ed. (Philadelphia: The Blackston Company, 1941), 263.

356. Any information as to the identity of the doctor is unavailable.

357. Croton oil is a "powerful cathartic" for the stomach causing a "copious watery evacuator" to expunge any poison or irritant. Though a common treatment in the nineteenth century it is now rarely used. Robert Hooper, MD, *Medical Dictionary*, 2 vols. (New York: Collins and Hannay, 1832), 1:272; and William A. R. Thompson, MD, *Black's Medical Dictionary*, 27th ed. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 228.

358. Further information about Lucy's relatives is unavailable.

359. Constantine, Michigan, is 180 miles southwest of Detroit.

360. Most of the biographical information about Olive was taken from Jonathan Harriman Hale's Journal, Church History Library; Aroet Lucious Hale, Reminiscences, Church History Library; Aroet Lucious Hale, Journal 1828–1856, in Milton V. Backman Jr., comp., *Writings of Early Latter-day Saints* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center and Brigham Young University, 1966); and "Alma Helaman Hale," in Jensen, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:602.

361. Aroet Lucious Hale, Reminiscences.

362. John Farnham Boynton (1811–1890) was one of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Sally Parker noted that John had "turned like a dog to his vomit."

363. Jonathan was arrested and quickly released in connection with the Kirtland Safety Society difficulties in

Ohio. Aroet Lucious Hale, Reminiscences, Church History Library.

364. Aroet Lucious Hale, Reminiscences, Church History Library.

365. MS 3196.

366. Though someone could have finished the letter for Olive, a note at the end of the letter giving Olive's daughter Rachel's death date in 1854 demonstrates that the letter is most likely a copy written sometime after her death.

367. New Liberty, Illinois, is located sixty-five miles southeast of Nauvoo and twenty-two miles east of Quincy. Like the Dodges, with a branch of the Church at New Liberty and nearby Freedom, the Hales were amidst many Saints in the same position. The Hales moved to Quincy in the spring of 1838. After working for a few days in Quincy, Jonathan met Robert Stilson, who agreed to allow Jonathan and his family to live on his farm, have all they could grow, and he would pay him for the repairs made for three years. Aroet mentions that the family stayed in Quincy for five weeks. It was long enough for Olive to have her fifth child, Solomon Henry Hale (1839–1925). Tradition held that the farm was haunted by someone who had been murdered there years previously. Over the years, several tenants living there had been frightened off. Aroet's reminiscences tell of several attacks by evil spirits eventually expelled by Jonathan. Many Saints from the surrounding area joined the Hales on the farm for church meetings. They lived on the farm until the spring of 1841.

368. The letter is addressed to Martha Harriman Hale (1773–1852). She was Olive's mother-in-law, at the time living in Bradford, Essex County, Massachusetts. Martha Hale was not a member of the Church, nor were any of Jonathan's immediate family. It seems that Olive and Jonathan lost many of their possessions when they left Bradford, though it is not clear if this was due to problems with Jonathan's family.

369. The apostasy of her apostle brother, John F. Boynton, the arrest of her husband, the move from Missouri, and the events leading to the extermination of the Saints all combined to have made the last five or six years quite traumatic for Olive.

370. Olive left Bradford, Massachusetts, in 1836.

371. Having made a promise to her mother-in-law to write, Olive continued to keep contact though she had not heard from Martha for at least three years.

372. Jonathan Harriman Hale served as a missionary to the Fox Islands, Maine, with Wilford Woodruff in May of 1837. It is possible that Jonathan suggested the location to Woodruff as Hale had previously been there to purchase sheep in September of 1834. During this mission, he also accompanied Elder Woodruff to Connecticut to preach to Woodruff's family. This may have directly influenced the Hales in their efforts to convert their own family members to Mormonism. Seward E. Beacom, *Silent Finers of Faith: A History of the Churches of North Haven, Maine, 1784–1981* (North Haven, Maine: North Haven Historical Society, 1981), 63–68; and Donald Q. Cannon, "Wilford Woodruff's Mission to the Fox Islands," in Donald Q. Cannon, ed., *Regional Studies in Church History: New England* (Provo, Utah: BYU Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1988), 85–99.

373. Jonathan Harriman Holmes (1806–1880) was a cousin to Jonathan, the son of his aunt Sarah Harriman.

Henry Harriman and Jonathan Holmes accompanied him as he visited Bradford, Massachusetts in 1835.

374. Rachel Johnson Hale Savory (1798–1880) was an older sister of Jonathan. Olive and Jonathan named their second daughter Rachel Johnson Savory Hale after her.

375. This is most likely another reference to Rachel.

376. Sarah Hale Palmer (or Plummer, 1795–1875) was Jonathan's oldest sister. Olive and Jonathan named their oldest daughter Sarah G. Hale after her.

377. Bradford is thirty-six miles north of Boston. At the time, Martha Hale had approximately twenty-seven living grandchildren from her seven children. The Hale, Harriman, and Boynton families had all been in Essex County for several generations.

378. Wicome Johnson Hale (1793–1847) was Jonathan's oldest brother, Martha's oldest child. Catherine Ann Moore (1793–?) was Wicome's wife.

379. Jonathan visited them on his missionary trip to Indiana in 1840.

380. Jonathan's 1834 mission to Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

381. This is most likely a reference to Joseph Hardy who became a member of the Fourteenth Quorum of the Seventies in Nauvoo. He had a daughter, Caroline, who died in 1840 at the age of five. There is no record of a child in the Hardy family named Baley.

382. Osgood George Boynton (1802–1868) of Bradford was Olive's oldest brother and married to Rebecca Wallingford. Haverhill, Essex County, Massachusetts, is located across the river from Bradford one half mile. It is thirty-six miles north of Boston. The Boyntons had seven living children, two having died in infancy.

383. Olive's brother John's wife was Susannah Lowell (1816–1859). Her family lived in Saco, York County, Maine, as did her oldest daughter, Tululah Josephine Boynton Brewster. John and Susannah lived in Saco for several years. Three of their children were born there.

384. Eliphlet Boynton (1779–1859) and Susannah Nichols (1780–1867) were Olive's parents.

385. It was actually 151 miles from New Liberty to Davenport and 109 from Davenport to Nauvoo.

386. The Hales owned land both within the city limits of Nauvoo a couple blocks from the temple and a farm just outside city limits. This is most likely a reference to the farm, Town 7 Range 8 Section 32.

387. All of Jonathan's brothers and sisters were in Essex County, Massachusetts.

388. The Hales apparently lived on the haunted Stilson farm longer than two years, from the spring of 1838 to the spring of 1841. This verifies the dating of the letter as the latter part of March 1841, as the Hales were in Nauvoo after the spring of 1841. In addition, Olive had her seventh child in December of 1841 in Nauvoo and does not mention her pregnancy in the letter.

389. Jonathan took a trip to Iowa in September 1840.

390. Susannah Lowell (see fn. 383). John Lowell Boynton was born 6 April 1837 in Kirtland, Ohio. There is no information on Susannah's brother.

391. Henry Harriman (1804–1891) and Clarissa Boynton (1807–1885). Clarissa was Olive's younger sister.

392. Olive's children ranged in age from thirteen (Aroet) to two (Solomon). There is a fifth child included in the

Ancestral File, Hyrum Joseph Hale, but he is not mentioned in either his father's, brother's, or uncle's histories.

393. The location of other letters between Olive and Martha is not known.

394. Solomon Hale was born in Quincy, Adams County, Illinois.

395. Since Solomon turned two in 1841, this adds to the supposition that rather than the latter part of 1841, the letter was written in the early part of 1841 prior to April.

396. Alma Helaman Hale (1836–1908) was five at the time the letter was written.

397. Rachel Hale was twelve at the time the letter was written. She was infirm throughout her life. She died at the age of twenty-five in San Bernardino, California.

398. Aroet Lucius Little Hale (1828–1911) was thirteen at the time the letter was written.

399. At this point in the letter, the handwriting changes, though it is not known why.

400. Essex County, Massachusetts.

401. Since the Hales were planning to leave New Liberty and the haunted farm, it is likely that she is referring to the farm that Jonathan was preparing just outside Nauvoo.

402. The location of any such correspondence or history is unknown. Specifics of the Hales Missouri troubles are found in the journals and reminiscences of Jonathan H. Hale, Aroet L. Hale, and Alma H. Hale. Olive in all probability refers to the published histories of Pratt, Rigdon, and Taylor.

403. See Daniel 2:44 and Doctrine and Covenants 65:2. At Christ's Second Coming the faithful alive on the earth will be "caught up" to meet him. See 1 Thessalonians 3:17; 4:17. The LDS interpretation of the doctrine includes the return of Christ and his Saints to the newly cleansed earth to reign. This identifies some of the millennialist tendencies of the early Saints. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:96; 101:31; 109:75; 133.

404. Ann Marsh Abbott (1797–1849). Her biographical information comes from family records in private possession, Thomas Marsh Abbott Biographical Sketch, Margaret Steed Hess Biography Collection, BYU Special Collections, and Walter C. Lichfield, "Thomas B. Marsh, Physician to the Church" (MS thesis, Brigham Young University, 1956). Molly or Mary Law (1759–1808) and James Marsh (1750–1822).

405. Ann and Thomas are the only Marshes known to join the Latter-day Saints. Thomas became the first president of the Quorum of the Twelve and then later apostatized. Ronald K. Esplin, "Thomas B. Marsh As President of the First Quorum of the Twelve, 1835–1838," in *Hearken O Ye People: Discourses on the Doctrine and Covenants, 1984 Sperry Symposium* (Sandy, Utah: Randall Book, 1984), 167–190.

406. Abigail Abbott Tyler (1830–1854), Thomas Marsh Abbott (1832–1920), and Joseph Abbott (1840–1859).

407. Ammon (1834–1835) and Eliza Ann (1835–1835).

408. Letter to Nathan Marsh (1781–?). Nathan is Ann's oldest brother.

409. Lewis Abbott (1795–1861).

410. Examples of apostasy were close for many of the earliest Mormons. Thomas apostatized in 1839. In 1857 he returned to the Church and was rebaptized in Florence, Nebraska, and went to Utah. Esplin, "Thomas B. Marsh," 167–190.

411. James Marsh (1787–?) and Oliver Emerson Marsh (1785–?).

412. In 1831, William Miller (1782–1849) began to teach that the advent of Christ was imminent. His followers were called Millerites. Christ was to come and originally the world was to end in 1843. With the passage of 1843 the date was changed to 22 October 1844. Wendy Doniger, ed., *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of World Religions* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1999), 738.

413. Eric Willis.

414. There is no information available as to Nathan's own family.

415. Abigail was thirteen, Thomas eleven, and Joseph three.

416. Both Ammon and Eliza Ann died in 1835 in Quincy as a result of exposure due to mob action, as the Abbotts were expelled from their home in Missouri.

417. Kezia Marsh (1783–?) was a sister of Ann and Titus Vestrpasean Marsh (1790–?), a brother.

418. Waterford, Ohio, is 110 miles southeast from Columbus and 169 miles south of Kirtland near the West Virginia border.

Chapter 4

The Ways of Salvation

For it ever has been my desire since my remembrance to be prepared to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but how to attain to this blessing I did not know until I heard the ways of salvation proclaimed by this people who are reproached freely [reproachfully], called Mormons.

—Almira Covey¹

As Martha Bradley suggested, Mormon female converts in the first decade of the Church were akin to their female counterparts in other religions. They sought out truth and salvation, and these women found it in The Church of Jesus Christ. The letters proffer a glimpse of the motivation of these women to join with the Mormons rather than to stay with the myriad of other more acceptable religious groups of the time in addition to establishing the general characteristics of their religious experience.²

Similarly to what Bradley found in her study of conversion narratives, this collection of letters places the religious experience of these earliest women above all else. As Elizabeth Ann Whitney explained, she gave her “whole heart” to her religion without ^[157] thought for herself.³ Amidst changes in the social order, religion was the primary mode through which women stabilized their identity as daughters of God. In contrast to conversion narratives, however, the motive of writing these letters is not always specifically to relate their conversion. Most of the letters do not include a focus on their own process of conversion, though they readily demonstrate their conviction. They relate many of the same themes that Bradley noted: a submission to the will of God, the realization of a new personal understanding of their relationship with God, troubles that begin with baptism, and a boldness of character. The letters also add further insight into these themes.

Faith is the consistent focus of their letters and a particular set of early Mormon teachings—compiled in the Lectures on Faith—provides a framework to understand the themes introduced

by Bradley and further elucidated through the letters.⁴ In Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835 Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith prepared a series of theological lectures on the topic of faith. These were prepared for the School of the Elders, which taught missionaries to preach as representatives of the Church. Though only men attended the School for Elders, the lectures were circulated and undoubtedly preached and several of the ideas presented became an essential part of the lives of early Mormon women.⁵ Three ^[158] general themes introduced in the lectures pervade the correspondence of these women: spiritual knowledge, bearing witness, and sacrifice.

Spiritual Knowledge

We rejoice when we realize the wonderful works of our Heavenly Father and his dealings toward his children. Yes, I rejoice in the commands and revelations that has been given in these last days.

—Almira Covey⁶

In the introduction to the published version of the Lectures on Faith, Joseph Smith declared that the purpose of the lectures was to “unfold to the understanding the doctrine of Jesus Christ.”⁷ They defined, outlined, and explained the purpose of true faith; described why it is necessary; and elucidated the results of the possession of true faith in God. Latter-day Saints believed that Smith—as a prophet of God—could teach them the correct character of God. The third lecture teaches that three things are necessary for faith:

First, the idea that [God] actually exists. Secondly, a *correct* idea of his character, perfections, and attributes. Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which [one] is pursuing is according to [God’s] will.⁸

Though purportedly Smith himself at one time questioned the existence of God, these women did not illustrate a lack of faith in the existence of God. Additionally, they ^[159] demonstrate belief

that as a prophet, Smith taught them the correct idea of God.⁹ They consistently testified to a belief in God as a loving Father, Christ as Savior, Smith as Prophet, the Church as Christ's, and revelations as the word of God. The heavens were opened, and they anxiously awaited additional knowledge and guidance from God. They felt deeply blessed by God for such knowledge, and they repeatedly make evident that they believed they were living the life that God wanted them to lead. Many had searched extensively and celebrated finding truth.

Lucy Smith declared, "The Lord is revealing the misteries of the heavenly Kingdom unto his Children."¹⁰ Eliza R. Snow boldly bore witness to the calling of Smith:

I now anticipate your question, Do you believe that Joseph Smith is a prophet? I have not seen or heard anything which caused me to doubt it even for a moment: If possible I have better testimony that J. Smith is a prophet, then Jeremiah was one, altho' he has not been kept in prison quite as long.¹¹

Phebe Peck described "many joyful meetings" with Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon and the "many misteries unfolded to our view which gave me great consolation."¹² Rebecca Williams boldly testified of the Three Witnesses of the gold plates, "I heard them declair in publick meeting that they saw an Holly Angel come down from heaven and brought the plaits and laid them before their eyes and told them that those was the plaits that Joseph Smith was translation the Book of Mormon from."¹³ [160]

Lucy Lisk initially seemed surprised when her cousin, a Mormon missionary, taught her truths from the Bible. After learning in greater detail, she was "more fully convinced of the truth of the doctrine." She, her mother, and sister then decided to be baptized together, "having been fully convinced of the truth of the doctrine which we have embraced and are determined to prove faithful to the end."¹⁴ Olive Hale articulated her joy: "I feel to rejoice with those that do rejoice in the latter day kingdom which I do know is the work of the Lord. and it will continue to roll on untill Christ Jesus our Lord will descend in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, when the saints shall be caught up to meet him in the air. I pray this may be our happy lot."¹⁵

While the letters do relate an initial emotional reaction to the message over an intellectual response, they reflect one of the principles of personal revelation revealed through Smith—"I will

tell you in your mind and in your heart."¹⁶ Though their initial conversion was based on a feeling of the Spirit, many also received the intellectual confirmation of their conversion through their study of scripture—old and new.¹⁷ Rebecca Swain cited the Book of Mormon pages that backed up her belief in the Three Witnesses. Mary Fielding Smith found that the apostasy in Kirtland was reminiscent of [161] Korah in the Old Testament. The women repeatedly quote scripture in personal application.

Lydia Knight, an 1833 convert, remembered her first interaction with Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. Sidney Rigdon taught her, "God is no respector of persons, but will give all that ask of Him a knowledge of the things Joseph Smith has declared unto you, whether they are true or false, of God or of Man."¹⁸ Lydia believed that she and all others could discover such certainty for themselves, and once they felt the Lord's illumination, they moved to empower others with the same opportunity. This process of individual autonomous seeking of truth and finding certitude empowered them. They were convicted.

Bearing Witness

May the Lord open your hearts to understand the truth.

—Lovina Wilson¹⁹

The second lecture introduces the concept that it is only human testimony that incites any inquiry or knowledge of God in the world. As recorded in Genesis, Adam knew of God because he conversed with him in the Garden of Eden and God continued to be manifest to him.²⁰ Those of the human family who followed after Adam who knew of God believed because the testimony of others incited an initial desire in them to know of God. The lecture taught that "the inquiry" incited by human testimony "frequently [162] terminated, indeed always terminated when rightly pursued, in the most glorious discoveries and eternal certainty."²¹

These women repeatedly exhort the subjects of their letters to know of the truth personally. Resembling many of the female preachers that Catherine Brekus examined, they felt that God had called them to share His message. It was their duty. Phebe Peck describes her trepidation

at this responsibility: "I shall now attempt to write you the sentiments of my heart in the fear of my God."²² Though most Mormon women did not preach formally, this informal mode of warning most prevalent in their communication demonstrates similar intensity to those who publicly exhorted others. In contrast to most Mormon women, Sarah Layton distributed missionary tracts in villages close by. Though this endeavor was only sometimes successful, she felt it her obligation and privilege.²³ Sarah Studevant Leavitt—one of the few on record who publicly preached—yearned, "I wanted very much to get the good will of my neighbors, for I knew that I could have no success in preaching Mormonism unless I did and was so full of the spirit it was hard to hold my peace."²⁴

A significant portion of that joy came as a result of what the women understood as the manifestations of the power of God. As Lucy Mack explained:

When our Saviour was upon the earth he sent forth his disciples and commanded them to preach his Gospel and these signs he said should follow them that believed, in my name the[y] shall do many wonderful ^[163] works; they shall cast out devils; they shall take up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. now where can we find these signs following they that call themselves preachers of the Gospel and why they do not follow? it surely must be because they do not believe and do not teach the true doctrine of Christ. for God is the same yesterday today and forever and changeth not.²⁵

Many witnessed the gift of healing, speaking in tongues, prophesying, and multiple other manifestations of the Spirit.²⁶ They considered these manifestations as assurances that Smith was indeed called of God. Melissa Dodge's sight was restored after she received a blessing from an apostle prior to her baptism. Her letter resonates with gratitude to God. The sister of Lucy Lisk was healed before her baptism causing her to believe in the laying on of hands. Lovina Wilson exulted, "The 'times of prophesying' has truly come from the Lord. May we all pass into it and be really acquainted with the freedom of truth that we may go on our way rejoicing."²⁷

The nineteenth century was a period of ardent millennial expectations for the Saints and for Christians in general. Most believed the Second Coming of Christ was imminent or had already

occurred. Surely the common usage of different variations of the phrase "I come quickly" throughout the new revelations added to these millennial expectations of the Saints.²⁸ Lucy Smith affirmed the gravity of the condition of the world: "For it is not long before he is to make his appearance on the earth with all the hosts of heaven for to take vengeance on the wicked & they that know not God."²⁹ ^[164]

The usage of scriptural descriptions such as "the coming of the Savior is nigh and at hand," "this generation will not pass away until he will appear in his glory," and the images of the fulfillment of prophecy were commonly utilized.³⁰ Eliza R. Snow assured, "These are indeed the last days, and that the inhabitants of the earth are, in some of them at least, beginning to be in haste to fill up their measure, before the Lord shall come forth from his hiding place."³¹

Their message of exhortation is consistently plain and at times abrasive, disclosing the perceived urgency of the message. As Bradley also noted, whether or not such boldness was characteristic of their personality, it is consistent. Old Testament-flavored warnings of curses and harsh judgments waiting to fall upon the unrighteous and those who chose not to know God were prevalent. Lucy Smith closed her letter imploring her brother:

I must now close my letter by entreating you as one that feels for your souls to seek an interest in Christ and when you have an opportunity to receive this work do not reject it but read it and examine for yourselves. . . . I want you to think seriously of these things for they are the truths of the Living God.³²

Likewise Phebe Peck does not mince words as she contemplates the blessings that await her sister if she will finally turn her heart to God:

these blessings in your state of unbelief you can not enjoy but you may yet have the privilege if you have not entirely hardened your heart against these things. and I would exhort you not to regret another call you have been called to repent of your sins and obey the gospel. you have been ^[165] convicted from time to time but you could not give up all for christ and now I feel to say that if you do not give up all and follow your Lord and and Master you will not be made worthy to partake of the Celestial glories in the kingdom of our God. I hope you will think of <these> things and ponder them in your Heart for they are of great worth unto the Children of Men.³³

Though Rebecca Swain appeared somewhat flustered at how to convince her father to examine Mormonism, she remains persuaded that if he

would just take the time he would know for himself. She pleaded with him:

my Father, I hardly know what to say to you. did you and Mother know the Circumstances as we do in relation to this work, I am persuaded you would ~~bel~~ believe it. my heart morns for my relation according to the flesh, but all I can do is to commend them to God praying that he would enliten your minds in the way of truth.³⁴

Almira Covey echoes Rebecca's apprehension but in like manner admonishes her sister:

Perhaps some may think me deluded and feel to pity me, but will soon know the truth of these things, for great things await this generation; and it is for this reason that I feel so anxious for you and the rest of my friends, for behold the coming of our Saviour is nigh at hand, and this generation will not pass away until he will appear in his glory and we ought to be prepared for that day, although we may not either of us live to see that day; yet if we wish to be happy we must be prepared for it whether in life or death we may abide the day.³⁵

Almira also introduces another motive for the need for prompt action. Though many were sure of the immediacy of the advent of the Second Coming of Christ, even ^[186] without it, the need remained sure. The simple uncertainty of life and the future also played a significant role in the urgency of their message. Later in her correspondence to her sister, Almira reiterates, "Harriet, I want you to write me ~~about~~ what you think about these things, for I do ~~no~~ think it is time that you were preparing for death, judgement and Eternity, for we do not know how soon we may be called to leave this world."³⁶

Congruent to these cautions of the awaiting destruction, the women likewise continually proclaim the blessings awaiting them upon acceptance of their message. Phebe Peck urged her sister, "Could you but see and believe as I do the way would be opened and you wold come to this land and we should behold each other and rejoice in the things of God." She adds, "Perhaps will have an opportunity of reading for your self and if you do I hope you will read with a careful and a prayerful heart for these things are worthy of notice. and I desire that you may search into them for it is <that> which lends to our happiness in this world and in the world to come."³⁷ Notwithstanding fear of tiresome repetition, Almira Covey advised her sister:

Now Harriet I do not know what else to write about unless it is about Mormonism (as many call it) and perhaps you will think this to be an old story, but if it is with you it is not with me, my faith is as strong as ever in this thing, and I rejoice that the Lord has suffered me to live in this day when this word has come forth to the children of men.³⁸

Despite the immediate need for action, the women maintain a belief that conversion was an intensely personal process and most attempt to judiciously avoid compulsion. They saw that those who did not have a personal conviction would not last as faithful members. As the wife of Edwin Whiting admonished: ^[187]

I have only to say search the Scriptures for yourself prayerfully and carefully and see whether these things are so. be careful not to pin you[r] faith on any ones sleeve for we must each live and die for ourselves.³⁹

Lucy Lisk epitomized the shared yearning for their relations:

I have not written half I wanted to and perhaps you will think I have been more particular than interesting—but I feel as though I wanted you to know all that I know. and if you wish to know what true enjoyment is—become a Mormon. Yes, come out and be separated from sinners and sin. take the path the Saviour trod, though it may be a thorny one. I believe you will find many sweet flowers. also search the scriptures carfully and prayerfully and see if these things are not so. . . . You must not give credit to the silly and rediculous stories you hear. but look to God and he will not deceive you. if you put your trust in him he will hold you up and never forsake you.⁴⁰

Sacrifice

When I think that I have forsaken all for Christ it brings a consolation that surpasses the grief.

—Phebe Peck

Offences must need come.

—Eliza R. Snow

In the Sixth Lecture on Faith, the principle of sacrifice is introduced. It teaches that "the knowledge that men have that they are accepted in the sight of God is obtained by offering sacrifice."⁴¹ Only those who were willing to lay down all they possessed could hope to stand in the eternities alongside those who had sacrificed their lives in God's cause. The lectures taught that both a willingness to sacrifice and a knowledge that the course they were pursuing was correct were

integrally connected. Both were ^[168] requisite for the assurance of exaltation. One could only truly be willing to sacrifice all if he or she knew that his or her actions were in accordance with God's will, and such knowledge only came alongside such willingness. These women integrated these principles into their lives. They knew their lives held the approbation of God. Though they may have questioned their strength to endure, they would sacrifice that which they felt God required of them, knowing that there was purpose in suffering.

They were willing to survive the "spoiling of their goods" and lives because they believed that Smith possessed the authority of God. He was the chosen of God to introduce doctrine to them, and he taught that God would continue to reveal knowledge to them "line upon line and precept upon precept."⁴² As they learned, the Lord would try them accordingly. Though after the experiences of New York, Ohio, and Missouri, most expected upheaval as a constant in their lives, initially they had no comprehension what membership in The Church of Jesus Christ would entail. As previously discussed, Phebe Peck penned, "I did not know when I left that I should be called to come thus far." The double entendre of her statement signifies both the physical movement and the doctrinal evolution that centered their lives as Saints.

Problems in multifarious forms came to these early Mormon women because of their membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They experienced difficulties with their health because of inadequate shelter and travel during harsh times of year. Often family members opposed them, and even without direct opposition from family, many went for months and years attempting to communicate with their families without response. If they were fortunate enough to be without confrontational relatives, ^[169] most had "enough opposition from other quarters."⁴³ Each time they attempted to settle and establish a home, they lived with the knowledge that their stay could be short and the upheaval could very well continue. With husbands often gone on missions, sometimes imprisoned, and some injured or even killed, out of necessity many learned to care for children and household affairs alone. Though they learned to be independent and care for their families on their own, one cannot marginalize

the effect on a woman living day to day without the physical presence and support of her husband. Mary Ann Young expressed the difficulty of writing to her husband on a mission amidst sickness and caring for their home and children:

I have not time <to rite> much for little Joseph is very woresome as he is cutting teeth. he comes to me while I am writ<ing> and hangs hold of my cloaths and begs me to take him, so you must excuse all that is not agreeable to your mind. there are many things I wanted to say to you but cannot write them now. I trust a time will Come when we shall meet face to face and convers to gether before long.⁴⁴

She continued demonstrating her desire to live without pitying herself. She wrote:

I need not tell you that your society is would make home much more pleasant to me. But I well <know> the Lord has called you to go far away to proclaim his everlasting gospel so through his assisting <grace> I do not feel to repine att my lot.

Despite the "trial of [her] weak faith," Vilate Kimball as well assured her missionary husband, "I am perfectly reconciled to your going."⁴⁵

The greatest number of letters were written during and after the tumult of the Missouri period. Between sixty and one hundred fifty men were imprisoned after the ^[170] siege at Far West beginning the expulsion from Missouri. Mary Fielding Smith, Olive Hale, Almira Covey, and Laura Phelps all had husbands and sons imprisoned. When Mary Fielding Smith received a packet of letters from her husband imprisoned in Liberty Jail she described "mingled feelings of pleasure and grief."⁴⁶ The relief of hearing from him could not supersede the torment of knowing what he had passed through. Almira Covey questioned her sister's ability to understand what she had passed through as she affirmed:

We have been requested in several letters to give a history of the proceedings of the mob in Missouri but this is more than I can do. It is more than I can do to point to you our feelings when surrounded by a wicked mob. Not allowed even to go out of town to our friends without leave from that wicked crew. You can better judge what my feelings were when seeing my husband taken away to prison with about 50 others and for what? Nothing but our religion.⁴⁷

Moreover Eliza R. Snow described the uncertainty of possible future outcomes, as she declared:

I fear them not, but know what new torture they may invent. They have not burnt any of us at the stake, yet,—they have imprison'd, whip'd, ston'd, and shot some by death does not terrify us enough

to suit them, for they say that the Mormons are so d—d sure of going to heaven, they had as lief die as not. The Lord maketh the wrath of man to praise him. Let his name be magnified.⁴⁸

They believed that the Lord would give them comfort despite the trying experiences they would continue to encounter.

Many of the women not only mourn for their own situation but “mourn many times because of the unbelief of the children of men.”⁴⁹ This mourning was both for the ^[171] general state of incredulity in the world and for those former believers. After the Ohio period, apostasy was a continuing characteristic of their Church experience that they had to endure. Two of the women included in this study had brothers who were ordained as apostles in the first Quorum of the Twelve who apostatized and afterwards persecuted Church membership. The consistent apostasy had a significant effect on all. Mary Fielding Smith described the unhopeful state of Kirtland apostasy to her sister. She lamented, “We are not yet able to tell where it will end. I have been made to tremble and quake before the Lord and to call upon him with all my heart almost day and night.”⁵⁰ While upsetting and frightening, many of the women looked to scripture to give them purpose.

Surrounded by failing hearts so often, these early Mormon women would at times question their own strength and resolve to remain faithful. Almira Covey articulated:

I am liable to go astray and I may yet prove unfaithful and be numbered with the foolish Virgins and be cast out of the kingdom; but if I am, I alone shall be to blame for I have had great privileges, and the Lord has given me much light and bestowed many spiritual blessing upon me.⁵¹

Almira’s mother, Temperance Mack, saw purpose in the adversity saying, “Although the chaff is a scattering off to the four winds yet their remains some wheat in the granary. we have been sifted and if we should be [faithful] what remains will be so much the better.”⁵² If they could endure, they would be stronger because of it. Despite the declension of others, Melissa Dodge demonstrated her determination: ^[172]

We are Still determind [to] maintain the faith wich once Was deliverd to the Saints and not fall away like Some have and deni <the> gospel of Christ. When affliction or persecutions ariseth for the Words Sake immediately they are offended.⁵³

Mary Fielding expressed belief in purposeful suffering as she declared, “I feel more & more convinced that it is through s<u>ffering that we are to be made perfected and I have already found it have <the> effect of driving one nearer to the Lord.”⁵⁴ The end result was worth the process. Temperance Mack assured her daughter of her desire to endure:

I would just say my mind is the same and if the scriptures are fulfilled the saints must suffer persecution and although we have suffered much and it looks dark ahead of us yet none of these things move me neither in my life dear if so be I can obtain a crown of glory.⁵⁵

I niver have wish my self back.

—Sally Parker⁵⁶

That which God required of them was not easy, and momentary loss of faith was not uncommon. Moments of questioning, however, did not override an overall peaceful assurance and a determination to remain faithful to the end of life demonstrated though their correspondence. Regret did not muddle their determination. As Temperance Mack articulated:

Neither do I regret that I have left the eastern states for where the Lord says go. I must obey although my heart is with my children and they are near and dear to me, yet I am no better than the martyrs—they had to ^[173] suffer the loss of all things to be an incorruptible crown and so must I, and I do it cheerful knowing I shall reap in due time.⁵⁷

They sought out truth and felt that God imparted truth to them. Truth empowered them and once in the fold, these women desired their familial intimates to join them despite the trials they would surely encounter in hopes of happiness in this life and an ultimate eternal reward of returning to their God. Similar to other American women in the first half of the nineteenth century, religion and salvation were their overriding concerns. In religion they found a degree of autonomy to define themselves not readily available in other areas of their lives. Their conviction was sure to enable their adherence to a persecuted prophet and his people rather than fulfilling their religious desires through the mainstream religions of the day. ^[174]

Notes

1. Almira Mack Scobey Covey to Harriet Mack Whittemore, 9 June 1835, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.
2. Bradley, "Seizing Sacred Space."
3. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "A Leaf from an Autobiography," *Women's Exponent* 7 (1 September 1878): 551.
4. The lectures were a series of theological discussions taught in Kirtland in 1834–1835. Though now published separately, originally the Lectures were included in the Doctrine and Covenants. Doctrine and Covenants (1835), 2–74. The Lectures on Faith were included in every edition of the Doctrine and Covenants until the 1920 edition. For a complete historical treatment of the lectures, see Larry H. Dahl and Charles D. Tate Jr., *The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990). For considerations of authorship, see Noel B. Reynolds, "The Authorship Debate Concerning *Lectures on Faith*: Exhumation and Reburial," in Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges, eds., *The Disciple As Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000), 355–382. Whether or not Smith or Rigdon authored the lectures, the principles discussed here are readily taught throughout the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and other teachings of Smith.
5. In her journal, Caroline Barnes Crosby comments that she would have her husband teach her the things that he had learned in his classes in Kirtland. Autobiography, Church History Library.
6. Covey, 9 June 1835.
7. Doctrine and Covenants (1835), 35.
8. Italics in original. Doctrine and Covenants (1835), 36.
9. Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 55. Though this doctrine as others was not revealed in one burst of light but "line upon line" Smith taught his followers of a corporeal omniscient God.
10. Lucy Mack Smith to Solomon Mack, 6 January 1831, Church History Library.
11. Eliza R. Snow to Isaac Streater, 22 February 1839, Church History Library.
12. Phebe Peck to Anna Pratt, 10 August 1832, Church History Library.
13. Rebecca Williams to Isaac Swain, 4 June 1834, Church History Library.
14. Lucy Lisk to Harriet Metcalf, 28 April 1840, Church History Library.
15. Olive Hale to Martha Hale, 1841, Church History Library.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 8:2.
17. For a complete analysis of nineteenth-century America Bible distribution, see Paul C. Gutjahr, *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777–1880* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999). He maintains that the King James English of the Book of Mormon supplied the appearance of an "uncorrupted biblical text" in addition to similar binding to Bibles circulated by the American Bible Society for a visual reinforcement of the complementariness of the Book of Mormon to the Bible (153).
18. Lydia Goldthwaite Knight (1812–1884). Susa Young Gates (psued. Homespun), *Lydia Knight's History* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor's Office, 1883), 19.
19. Gates, *Lydia Knight's History*, 19.
20. Doctrine and Covenants (1835), 12–25.
21. Doctrine and Covenants (1835), 25.
22. Phebe Peck to Anna Pratt, 10 August 1832, Church History Library.
23. "Autobiography of Sarah B. Layton," *Woman's Exponent*, 29 (15 August and 1 September 1900): 26.
24. Juanita L. Pulsipher [Brooks], ed., *History of Sarah Studevant Leavitt*, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, 8.
25. Lucy Mack Smith to Solomon Mack, 6 January 1831, Church History Library.
26. For further discussion of Mormon women and gifts of the spirit, see Linda King Newell, "Gifts of the Spirit: Women's Share," in *Sisters in Spirit*, 111–150.
27. Lovina Wilson to Edmund Waite, 10 November 1835, Church History Library.
28. See Doctrine and Covenants 33:18; 34:12; 35:27; 36:8.
29. Lucy Mack Smith to Solomon Mack, 6 January 1831, Church History Library.
30. Almira Covey to Harriett Whittemore, 9 June 1835, BYU Special Collections.
31. Eliza R. Snow to Isaac Streater, 22 February 1839, Church History Library (underlining in original).
32. Lucy Mack Smith to Solomon Mack, 6 January 1831, Church History Library.
33. Phebe Peck to Anna Pratt, 10 August 1832, Church History Library.
34. Rebecca Williams to Isaac Swain, 4 June 1834, Church History Library.
35. Almira Covey to Harriet Whittemore, 9 June 1835, Church History Library.
36. Almira Covey to Harriet Whittemore, 9 June 1835, Church History Library.
37. Phebe Peck to Anna Pratt, 10 August 1832, Church History Library.
38. Almira Covey to Harriet Whittemore, 9 June 1835, Church History Library.
39. Edwin Whiting, Correspondence 1838–1889, Church History Library.
40. Lucy Lisk to Harriet Metcalf, 28 April 1840, Church History Library.
41. Doctrine and Covenants (1835), 61.
42. Doctrine and Covenants 98:12.
43. Lucy Lisk to Harriet Metcalf, 28 April 1840, Church History Library.
44. Mary Ann Young to Brigham Young, 31 August 1835, Church History Library.
45. Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, 21 September 1839, Church History Library.
46. Mary Fielding Smith to Hyrum Smith, 11 April 1839, Church History Library.
47. Almira Covey to Harriet Whittemore, 19 January 1840, BYU Special Collections.
48. Eliza R. Snow to Isaac Streater, 22 February 1839, Church History Library.
49. Phebe Peck to Anna Pratt, 10 August 1832, Church History Library.

50. Mary Fielding Smith to Mercy Thompson, 1837, Church History Library.

51. Almira Covey to Harriett Whittemore, 9 June 1835, Church History Library.

52. Temperance Mack to Harriet Whittemore, 30 December 1838, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

53. Melissa Dodge to William T. Morgan, 23 June 1839, Church History Library.

54. Mary Fielding Smith to Mercy Thompson, 1837, Church History Library.

55. Temperance Mack to Harriet Whittemore, 30 December 1838, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

56. Sally Parker to Mr. Francis Tufts, 11 November 1838, Delaware County Historical Society Library.

57. Temperance Mack to Harriet Whittemore, 30 December 1838, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

These letters hold special significance because of the great exertions taken to write them, the scarcity of similar sources, and the intimate glimpse that they afford the reader of these earliest female converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. From the mother of Joseph Smith to the wife of a doctor to the recipient of faith healings and the sister of an apostle of the Church, the dedication and testimony of the earliest Latter-day Saint women is demonstrated through their personal writings.

Two monographs written by sociologist Rodney Stark, *A Theory of Religion* with William Bainbridge and *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* with Roger Finke, explore the theoretical purposes of religion for humanity and offer theory to understand these women and their dedication.¹ Religion exists to proffer answers to humanity's questions about life and eternity. If humans seek out rewards and avoid costs, as Stark and Bainbridge theorize, then why would the women examined here unite themselves with a religion with demonstrably high costs? Stark and Finke maintain that costs must be high enough to root out the undedicated, yet not so high that the rewards of membership do not outweigh the costs. When a religion requires much and provides either present rewards or promises of supernatural compensators, dedication to said religion will be high.^[175]

The women studied here came from the established churches of the early nineteenth century and linked themselves to the stabilizing force of religion. It centered them. It offered them both immediate rewards and eternal compensators. Unlike the majority of nineteenth-century religions, Mormonism did not mimic the “usual female preponderance” of nineteenth-century religions, but it did not reverse it. Individuals and families, males and females were led through the witness of others to these promises.

As theorized by Starke and Finke, interpersonal attachments are often the primary factor in any sort of religious conversion or reaffiliation. This is demonstrated by many of the women; they were often led by family members and close friends. Stark and Finke continue that though the social factor is initially very important, the social factor does not retain converts. Doctrines provide a rationale for continued commitment and dedication. The initial feelings that drew women to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provided a basis that would be reinforced by doctrinal knowledge.

Once they experienced immediate rewards of community, they gained a sense of “female self-hood” and empowerment. They felt a duty and a desire to warn their relations of the essential and immediate need to know truth. They felt assured that if the unknowing would ponder upon the truths of Smith's message they would likewise know for themselves of God and His new message from the heavens and partake of the ultimate compensator—truth. The sure word from God would provide them conviction and strength to bravely confront agonizing transitions, both emotional and physical, throughout their life experience and remain steadfast in their beliefs. An empirical witness of this eternal compensator was not necessary. For these Mormon women the uncertainty of the immediate future did not merit disbelief. A belief that the heavens had^[176] opened and God called Joseph Smith to mediate truth to them attracted them, and the continuing assurance they felt through the Spirit impelled them to stay.

The sure word of prophecy was the unique claim of Joseph Smith. These women did not believe they could find such authority and assurance anywhere else. God spoke to them directly through Joseph Smith, and they each had their own personal assurance of that line of communication. Though

some would question amidst difficulty, in the end they would find the strength and remember why they believed initially. The word of the Lord was sure. They readily sacrificed as Abraham, giving up that which was dearest to them because of belief in an eternal compensator—knowledge that in the eternities they would stand on the right hand of God. Only in The Church of Jesus Christ would they eventually find all truth. They cared for their families and others temporally as they attempted to establish Zion. They supported their husbands emotionally and economically and endured long periods of family governing alone. They endured submersion in an atmosphere of apostasy and held tight to the personal revelation they had received. The faithful believed that both the immediate rewards and eternal compensators outweighed any perceived cost of dedication.

This conviction in a sure compensator led them from the established churches of the early nineteenth century and across thousands of miles to build up the Kingdom of God. Collections of existing records of women in America are growing, and as research continues to elucidate more shadows and complexities in American religious history, we will gain greater insight into the motivations and desires of those who embraced Mormonism and understand the importance of religion in American history generally.^[177]

Notes

1. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) and Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Janiece Lyn Johnson in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements and (2) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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Abstract

“Give It All Up and Follow Your Lord”: Mormon Female Religiosity, 1831–1843

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Since the 1750s American women have flocked to churches. Women have consistently been the majority in church populations. Religion was the central motivation of the female life experience. Likewise, women comprised a significant portion of the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in its first decade. There exists little historical analysis of the contribution and experience of these women as a whole. As a result of this lack of research, some historians have made erroneous assumptions of patriarchal oppression and a lack of commitment on the part of early Mormon women. This project closely examines the religious experience of these earliest Mormon women through the documentary editing of nineteen letters written between 1831 and 1843.

The women come from a variety of life experiences notwithstanding consistent membership in The Church of Jesus Christ. They come from a distinct geographical base, a wide span of education, are married and single, and vary in age from twenty to sixty-four years old. Despite these differences, they demonstrate a continuity of religious commitment and dedication.

Three themes dominate their correspondence: spiritual knowledge, bearing witness, and sacrifice. They exhibit knowledge of the existence of God as a Heavenly Father, His Son Jesus Christ as Savior of the world, and Joseph Smith Jr. as God’s direct mouthpiece. They repeatedly and unabashedly testify of these truths to their relations not yet acquainted with Joseph Smith and his message and admonish them to know truth for themselves. To husbands and soon-to-be husbands who were already believers in Smith’s message, the women demonstrate the application of these beliefs in their lives and a consistent faith. This knowledge and devotion creates a high level of commitment, which leads them to follow Smith over thousands of miles and through fires of persecution. They willingly sacrificed whatever they felt God required of them. Conviction was explicitly demonstrated through their personal writings, proferring an intimate glimpse of a unique religion and belief as the motivation of these women. In religion they found a degree of autonomy to define themselves not readily available in other areas of their lives. They knew Joseph Smith to be a modern prophet with the sure word of the Lord to them. The claim to direct revelation from God was singular. Their conviction to it was sure enough to enable their adherence to this persecuted prophet, belief in new doctrine, and the church which Smith established rather than fulfilling their religious desires through the mainstream religions of the day.

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