

The World of Joseph Fielding: Chapter 13

James Fielding Writes Hostile Letters to Joseph Fielding

On August 3rd, 1838, Joseph Fielding referred to an American preacher named Richard Livesey, who “had come from the United States has brought some old tales, etc. with him against the Church.”¹ James Fielding used these new attacks in his attempts to persecute the Mormons, and he also wrote Joseph early in August.²

Joseph described his missionary efforts in August of that year, and it’s possible he wasn’t in Preston to see or respond to the letter from James. On August 15th James wrote a second letter where he questioned tenets of the LDS Church.³

James laid out his reasons for using letters to discuss his arguments against Mormonism. “In writing there is something tangible and permanent and while thus engaged the thinking powers are more cool and regular and the faculty itself is expounded and improved.” He then accused Joseph of not replying to his letter because Joseph’s own principles would no longer allow him to preach Mormon doctrines.

James then wrote:

How strange it is that you and I would have been brought up in the same school as it were who have been in the habit of thinking and speaking the same, should differ so widely upon the subject of Mormonism. You appear to be convinced of its divine authority. I on the other hand am fully persuaded that it is a device of Satan.

James mocked the Book of Mormon, stating that it was “mass of incoherency and absurdity.” His next comments ridiculed the practice of not showing the Doctrine and Covenants to those who had not yet joined the LDS Church, as though there should be no harm in this.

James had more “candid observations” but felt it unnecessary to write them until Joseph had responded to his “queries.” Evidence that there was quite a rift between these two brothers, James wrote, “I hope for conscience sake you will not represent me as ‘turning my back upon my brother’ or being ‘unwilling to have anything to do with’ you.” He also asked that Joseph would no longer “assert that I am ‘rejecting the truth.’”

James then suggested a formal debate upon the subject of Mormonism, stating that there “is a far greater body of evidence” against the Book of Mormon which he wanted to share from Mr. Livesey’s recent pamphlet.

James concluded the letter with the words, “I remain your affectionate brother.”

On Wednesday, August 23rd, Joseph met James in the Temperance Hall for a public debate. During that meeting, Joseph burned Mr. Livesey’s pamphlet in front of their audience.⁴

James' sent a third letter on the 27th of August, 1838.⁵ James was incredulous that Joseph had burned the pamphlet. James testified to Joseph that:

Mr. Livesey is a man of deep piety and devotedness to God. He has with him the most satisfactory credentials as to his moral and religious character. . . and the facts and circumstances to which he adverted were in my humble opinion (not to use your dogmatic way of speaking) such as no sensible man would ever attempt to refute or contradict.

In part, Richard Livesey claimed that Parley P. Pratt had maligned the character of Joseph Smith. Two years later, in 1840, Elder Pratt would in fact choose to refute his words. At that future time he wrote:

Mr. Livesey's work contains a letter, purporting to come from me against Messrs. Joseph Smith, Jun., and Sidney Rigdon. . . . I take this opportunity to say that for ten years I have esteemed Messrs. Smith and Rigdon as men of God, and men who have suffered more for the testimony of Jesus, than any other men now living. I have been a minister in connexion with them for more than ten years—I have been with them in dungeons and in chains—I have stood with them as lambs among wolves, when we were sentenced to death without trial by judge or jury—and the deadly rifle aimed at our heads, and the dagger, already stained with the blood of the Saints, pointed at our breasts, while we were helpless prisoners and uncondemned—and now I bear witness, that they are servants of the Most High God, for whom I would lay down my life if necessary. These letters from apostates and dissenters, are wicked lies and misrepresentations.⁶

In his late August 1838 letter, James told Joseph that his arguments were too forceful, and that this was not how proper debates were conducted. From an LDS point of view today, James was not allowing any possibility for the Holy Ghost to confirm truth. According to James, the validity of the argument depended solely on tactics, not the Spirit, in contrast with earlier letters James had written where he was waiting for a restoration of spiritual gifts. At this time he wrote:

Your business was not to tell me 'in plain terms that the Book of Mormon was the word of God.' This was assuming the thing. I want something to convince my judgment.

It appears that Joseph agreed to James's request for a second public debate, but in this letter, James declined to meet, telling Joseph that the challenge had come "at a time when it was impossible for your opponents to furnish themselves with facts and arguments against Mormonism."

James then continued his letter to Joseph with a discussion of what he saw as the actual root of the problem:

With regard to your robbing me of my flock I abide what I said before – we must proceed upon an acknowledged principle or date. Now I do not believe at all that you were sent of God to rend my little church to pieces. . . . Now, if God sent you as you say to preach

these new covenant doctrines and without respect of persons, I cannot see on what grounds you can possibly justify yourselves in passing by Liverpool and coming hither first, besides had you opened your mission at Liverpool you might have avoided the charge of working with a poor brother's materials. It would have seemed less of human and more like a work depending alone on the power of God for its success.

James then counseled Joseph to awaken to the concept that he has been deceived:

If your declarations should prove to have been grounded upon imagination, you are not the first who has been taken in. Thousands perhaps with more piety than yourself have been entangled in the silken net of error. . . .No one but God knows what I experienced during my affliction on your account – the idea of the loss of your immortal soul seemed to exceed all my other afflictions, and altho' you may see no danger at present I assure you I see it and feel it most painfully. Sometimes I imagine after all that were it possible that your eternal welfare should rest with one of your Elders, or with your long-tried friend and brother, you would in such extremity rather hazard your soul in my hands than theirs.

It appears that Joseph had requested that they meet at the home of his brother-in-law Peter Watson, where James lived with his sister Martha and her husband:

Mr. Watson seems so averse to the subject of Mormonism being talked of that our meeting here I am afraid would cause uneasiness and as we are all of one mind upon the subject it would be a pity to endanger our quiet. It would certainly wound my feelings to meet you at the house of any of those who have deserted me, but if you will name any other house and the time, etc, I will meet you.

Willard Richards Marries Jennetta Richards

That fall in Preston, more than a year after arriving in England as a missionary, Willard Richards married Jennetta Richards at the Preston registry office, with Joseph and Hannah Fielding as witnesses.⁷ Joseph wrote:

Brother Richards has got Sister Jennet Richards from her Parents to Preston. Her Father is much displeas'd & will make the most he can of it. I fear it will make us some trouble, but believe it is right. Brother Kimball approved of the Match before he left.

In mentioning Willard and Jennetta's marriage, Joseph reflected on his own marriage and said:

I feel very thankful for my union. I believed the Lord has ordered all about it; he has given



Willard and Jennetta Richards married at Preston's registry office on the 22nd of September, 1838, with Joseph and Hannah Fielding present.

me a kind and loving Wife; I fear lest we should think too much of each other. The Lord is very good to us.⁸

Office								
1832. Marriage solemnized at the Register in the District of Preston Union in the County of Lancaster								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
	24 th 122 September 1838	Willard Richards of full age		Bachelor	Dissecting Minister	21 Pole Street Preston	Joseph Richards	Farmer
		Jennetta Richards of full age		Spinster		21 Pole Street Preston	John Richards	Minister
Married in the Register Office according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		Willard Richards			Jennetta Richards		in the Presence of us,	
		Joseph Fielding			Hannah Fielding		Registrar Sub-Reg.	

This copy of Willard and Jennetta Richards' marriage register shows that Joseph and Hannah Fielding were witnesses to the marriage. For a time the two couples shared Ann Dawson's home at 21 Pole Street in Preston.

Joseph and Hyrum Smith are Arrested in Missouri

In Far West, after the difficulties of the Battle of Crooked River, Hyrum and Joseph Smith, along with Sidney Rigdon and many others, were arrested. Unable to secure a trial, they were forced to wait five months for a circuit judge. As a result they were imprisoned in Liberty Jail in Independence, Missouri.



Joseph and Hyrum Smith and other men spent 4 months in Liberty Jail in 1838-1839.

Parley P. Pratt described being among the men dragged off as they were being threatened with their lives, all while their families were left in extreme circumstances. Before being separated from Joseph Smith, Elder Pratt heard him prophesy:

Be of good cheer, brethren, the word of the Lord came to me last night that our lives should be given us, and that whatever we may suffer during this captivity, not one of our lives should be taken.⁹

In the midst of what historians admit, even today, was a terrifying and merciless time for the Mormons, Mary Fielding Smith gave birth to her first child, named after Joseph Smith and Joseph Fielding, the baby's uncles.¹⁰

There is no record that Mary ever had an inkling that this tiny infant would one day become the sixth president of the LDS Church, or that his son, also bearing her brother's name, would become the tenth president.¹¹

Not long after Joseph and Hyrum's imprisonment, a mob entered Mary's home. They broke open

a trunk containing her personal items and stole the contents. In the midst of this search, one of the men lifted a fabric pallet for sleeping which had been on the floor and tossed it onto a bed so he could look for possible valuables underneath. Unfortunately, Mary's infant son had been asleep on the bed. There he lay until his mother men left. She and Mercy searched until they found him under the mattress, and although he appeared to be dead, the two sisters were able to revive him.¹²

Of this time Mercy, who with her husband Robert Thompson shared a home with Mary, wrote:

To describe the sufferings and privations we endured while there would be past my skill. My Husband with many of the Brethren being threatened and pursued by a Mob fled into the Wilderness in November, leaving me with an Infant not 5 months old. Three Months distressing suspense Endured before I could get any intelligence from which time I staid with my sister who having given Birth to a son . . . took a severe cold and was unable to attend to her domestic duties for four Months.

This caused much of the care of her family, which was very large, to rest on me. Mobs were continually threatening to massacre the Inhabitants of the City. At times I feared to lay my Babe down lest they should slay me and leave it to suffer worse than immediate Death.¹³

Mary Fielding Smith would later write:

My husband was taken from me by an armed force, at a time when I needed, in a particular manner, the kindest care and attention of such a friend, instead of which, the care of a large family was suddenly and unexpectedly left upon myself, and, in a few days after, my dear little Joseph F. was added to the number.

Shortly after his birth I took a severe cold, which brought on chills and fever; this, together with the anxiety of mind I had to endure, threatened to bring me to the gates of death. I was at least four months entirely unable to take any care either of myself or child; but the Lord was merciful in so ordering things that my dear sister could be with me. Her child was five months old when mine was born; so she had strength given her to nurse them both.¹⁴

Mary's strong faith sustained her. Five years earlier she had demonstrated her trust in the Lord when she wrote to Mercy:

I believe both you and I shall have many more [trials] to encounter but blessed be God, he has promised that his grace shall be sufficient for us and we have hitherto found it, so oh,



Joseph Fielding Smith was born while his father Hyrum was in jail in Missouri.

that his past goodness to us may encourage us still to trust in him and rely upon his promises. . . .¹⁵

Thomas Marsh would later write about this period, although he was out of the Church for almost two decades before being rebaptized in Utah. “About this time I . . . could discover a mote in Joseph’s eye, though it was nothing but a beam in my eye. I was so completely darkened. . . .”¹⁶

Joseph Fielding Deals with Apostasy in England

As the members of the Church in Missouri were struggling with apostasy, the Church in England was also suffering. Joseph Fielding wrote of new converts leaving the Church and aligning with those who preached against the brethren. He spoke of having to excommunicate members but then wrote:

My faith stands it much better than I could have expected. I intend to stand fast amidst all the Storms that may blow; I have to live by faith and trust in the Lord for my daily bread.¹⁷

In November Joseph visited Alston, explaining he uncovered some mysterious instructions given by Isaac Russell before his departure:

[The] Branch of the Church built up by Brother I. Russel, and it was at a time when they needed help, partly owing to some Misunderstanding or misinformation. They had almost prepared for sending two of the Church off to Zion to purchase Land, etc. This was contrary to the Orders of directions given by Elders Kimball and Hyde, and was the instruction given to them by Bro. Russel perhaps for want of counseling with his Brethren.

I have given them all the Instruction and Assistance I could, have had great Liberty in preaching etc. to them. The Lord has showed me almost every thing before hand which I have had to engage in; in Dreams more so than I ever experienced before. Ordained three Priests and one Teacher; confirmed 10, blessed a number of Children. There are some true Latter-day Saints among them. I left them in good Spirits.¹⁸

Joseph Fielding and Willard Richards are Forced to Find a New Home

As winter approached in Preston, so did dark times for Willard and Joseph and their wives. The home of Ann Dawson was no longer available, perhaps due to what seems to have been the poor health of Willard and Jennetta, and Sister Dawson did not want to care for them. Joseph’s wife Hannah had been working in a local factory, but the work was difficult and her health could no longer abide the strain.

By this time Hannah and Jennetta were both pregnant. Finances were tight. Elder Richards was embarrassed to be seen in his only coat. Joseph was being fed by members in the outlying branches as he traveled, but he was still concerned about Willard, Jennetta and Hannah. However, within a week they had found a new residence at 8 Kirkham Street where Hannah said

she “felt quite at home.”¹⁹

News of Missouri Trials Reach England

Just before Christmas of 1838 the missionaries learned through a London newspaper, in great detail, of the tragedy at Haun’s Mill. Fortunately the article was written with indignation against the assailants upon the helpless Mormon families who had lived there. Joseph and Willard waited anxiously to hear from their brethren in America, now aware of the dire straits of the situation there.²⁰

1839: Joseph Fielding Hears from Church Leaders in Missouri

On January 1st, 1839, Joseph wrote:

Great and manifold have been the Blessings of God bestowed on me during the past year: good Health, a great increase of the Spirit and Faith, and Knowledge. I have wanted for nothing. The Lord has given me a truly kind and loving wife.²¹

He then wrote, “We have just received a Letter from Elder Kimball in Far West. It informs us of the great Afflictions of the Saints there. . . .” Joseph learned who had left the Church and that the First Presidency was in chains in Liberty Jail.

Mercy Fielding’s Husband Works to Free Joseph and Hyrum Smith

Joseph Fielding then wrote, “Elder R. B. Thompson, who married my Sister Mercy, is one leaving his Wife with a child 5 months old with my Sister Mary, whose Husband, Hyrum Smith is in Chains, and she with a Child five days old.”

Robert Thompson worked relentlessly with others in trying to free Joseph and Hyrum. Mercy remained in Far West to care for Mary, who was too ill to travel or to take care of her child.

Robert was in Quincy, Illinois by December where he worked as a clerk in the



During the winter of 1838-39, Joseph and Hyrum Smith and others were jailed in Liberty to await trial. Parley P. Pratt was imprisoned in Richmond. Mary Smith, Mercy Thompson and a large body of Saints were struggling in Far West and ultimately would flee 170 miles to Quincy, where they would find a safe haven.

court house there making attempts to free the Church leaders.²² Joseph also learned that John Goodson had apostatized and had burned the books he had taken back with him.²³

That winter, thousands of Saints in Missouri were forced from their homes. In late January, two hundred Mormon men signed a document stating they would work together to evacuate everyone from Far West and the surrounding areas, leaving no one behind.

Among the signatories were men whose descendants would later intermarry with Joseph Fielding's posterity, such as Benjamin Freeman Bird, a convert from New York who had arrived in Kirtland in time to move through it on his way to Far West. Another was Stephen Markham, who had joined the Church in Ohio in 1837 and then sold all his belongings in order to provide the means for sixty others to emigrate with him to Far West.

Many leaders who might have signed this document were unable to. Being specifically targeted by the mobs, they had been forced to flee in order to save their lives and not put their families and others in danger.

Brigham Young, now the president of the Quorum of the Twelve, was in this category. Thomas Grover, a member of the high council, gathered up his family and left within twenty-four hours after being threatened. Edward Partridge, the presiding bishop, and Amasa Lyman, who had initially been jailed in Richmond with Joseph Smith and Elder Pratt, but had been released when Joseph Smith was transferred to Liberty Jail, were among those whose lives were in critical danger.²⁴

Apostle Parley P. Pratt would remain jailed in Richmond until the summer.²⁵ However, David Rogers, the new convert from New York City, made a donation to assist his cause and to help others who had not yet been able to leave Missouri.²⁶ Sidney Rigdon was released from Liberty Jail after pleading with the judge that his health was so poor he would likely die.²⁷

Isaac Russell Falls Away

During this difficult time, Isaac Russell and Jacob Scott stayed in Far West. Unbeknownst to Church leaders in Missouri, Isaac had sent a letter to his cousin Jacob Peart and the branch in Alston, indicating that the Lord had chosen him and others to remain in Far West to await a visitation by the Three Nephites mentioned in the Book of Mormon. According to Isaac's instructions, the members in Alston were to emigrate to Far West and meet his group, and to ignore any information they might hear about Isaac apostatizing.²⁸

Joseph Fielding began hearing rumors from the British members that Orson Hyde had fallen, and then just a few days later, on February 3rd, he received a letter from the members in Alston who forwarded a letter from Isaac Russell who had written from Missouri. Joseph wrote:

He states that the Presidency are all in prison, that Elder O. Hyde has apostatized as well as John Goodson. He himself was taken Prisoner but escaped. He gives the Church in

Alston certain advice or counsel and says the rest shall be set in Order when they come. He says nothing to them of asking counsel of the Presiding Elders here.²⁹

About this time, Heber C. Kimball had a quiet revelation through the Spirit that Isaac Russell was trying to lead away his converts in Alston. Elder Kimball wrote Joseph Fielding in Preston and asked him “to see to it.” Although the letter was not received for several months, Joseph was already aware of the disruption Isaac was causing. However, Elder Kimball’s letter would prove to be providential.³⁰

Faithful Members of the Church Flee Missouri

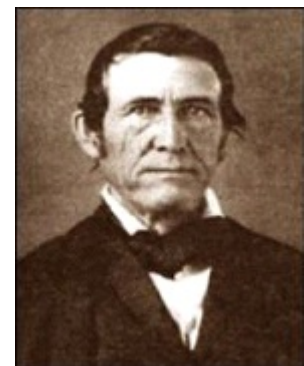
During the first few months of 1839, the majority of the faithful Saints in Missouri moved one hundred and seventy miles east, across the Mississippi River and out of Missouri, where many of them found refuge in Illinois. In particular, the residents of Quincy were horrified at the brutality of the Missourians and offered work to the men and opened their doors to the Mormon families. Thomas’s Grover’s wife Caroline was close to delivering her sixth child. A farmer and his wife welcomed their large family into their home in March. The only payment they requested was that the farmer’s wife be allowed to name the new baby, which she did, giving her the name of Eliza Ann.³¹

However, that winter Mary Fielding Smith and her household remained in Far West, as did Robert and Mercy Thompson, until the time drew near when they had to leave Missouri. In February of 1839 arrangements were made for Mary to visit Hyrum, as he had never seen his newborn son Joseph. Mercy wrote of their visit to Liberty Jail:

About the first of Febr 1839, by the request of her Husband, my Sister was placed on a bed in a Wagon and taken a journey of about 40 Miles to visit him in the Prison. Her infant Son Joseph F. then being about 11 Weeks old. I had to Accompany her, taking my own Babe along then Eight months old. The weather being extremely cold we suffered much on the journey.

We arrived at the Prison in the Evening. We were admitted and the Doors closed upon us. A Sight never to be forgotten. A sleepless night. I nursed the darling Babes, and in the Morning prepared to start for home with my afflicted Sister, and as long as memory lasts will remain my recollection of the Creaking Hinges of that door which closed upon the noblest Men on Earth. Who can imagine our feelings as we travailed homewards? But would I sell the honor bestowed upon me of being Locked up in jail with such characters for gold? No. No.³²

After visiting the prison, Mary Smith, with her household, and accompanied by the Thompson family, left Missouri and found living arrangements in Quincy. There a branch of the Church was established,



William Marks served as the branch president in Quincy, with Robert Thompson as a clerk.

with William Marks as branch president and Robert Thompson as clerk.³³ Brother Marks had joined the Church in 1835 and had served on the high council in Kirtland.

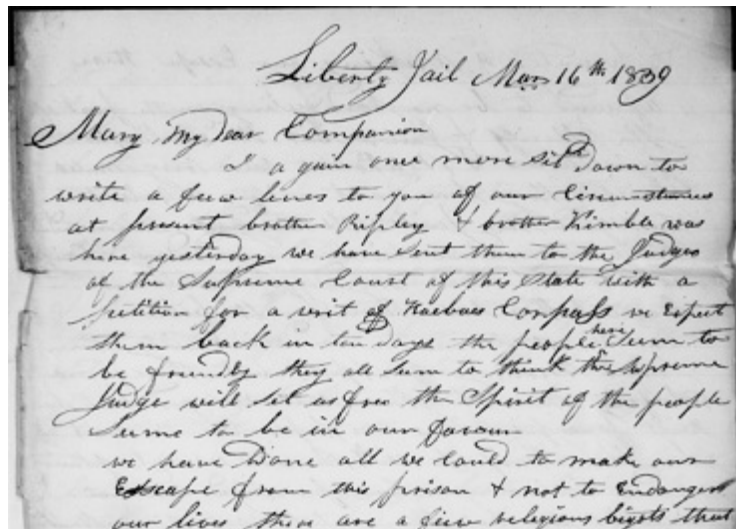
From Liberty Jail, Hyrum Smith Writes to His Wife Mary Fielding Smith in Quincy

After the last of the members of the Church left Far West, Hyrum longed to hear how his family was doing. On March 16th he wrote his wife Mary in Quincy and sent the letter with one of the brethren who was heading there. In part, he wrote of a plan they had created for their escape:

We have Done all we could to make our escape from this prison & not to Endanger our lives. There are a few religious bigots that are Kept to guard us & Such are willing to Shoot us if they could. Yet a Chance, we have to be very careful what we do. The last Exertion we made some friend put some augers in the window & an iron bar. We made a hole through the logs in the lower room & through the stony wall, all but the out side stone which was sufficiently large to pass out when it was pushed out, but we were hindered for want of handles to the augers. The logs were so hard that the handles would split & we had to make new ones with our fire wood. We had to bore the hole for the shank with my penknife which delayed time. In spite of all we could do the Day of Examination came on in the afternoon. That Evening we were ready to make our Escape & we were Discovered & prevented of making our Escape. There appeared to be no hard feelings on the part of the Sheriff and Jailor, but the old Baptists & Presbyterians & Methodists have become very much excited. They turned out in tens as volunteers to guard the Jail till it was mended. Since then there has been a guard Day & night. It has not made any Difference in our treatment otherwise than for the better.

Hyrum continued this letter giving Mary advice about the wisdom of moving to a farm. He told her who had his joiner tools and was sure this man would make Mary a bed. He then concluded with a prayer for her:

When I think of your trouble my heart is weighed down with Sorrow. To think that I cannot render you any assistance it still adds Sorrow upon Sorrow, but what can I do or what can I say – O God, how long shall we suffer these things? Will not Thou Deliver us & make us free? Still, thy will be Done, O Lord. May the Lord bless you & give you strength to Endure all these things.



Hyrum wrote his wife Mary several letters from Liberty Jail. She, being continually told he would be soon freed and would not receive her letters, did not respond, leading Hyrum to believe the worst.

O Lord God will Thou hear the prayer of your Servant. Wilt Thou O God in the name of thy Son preserve the Life & health of my bosom Companion & may she be precious in thy sight & all the little Children & that is pertaining to my family & hasten the time when we shall meet in Each others Embrace is the prayer of your husband & friend.³⁴

David White Rogers Locates Property for Nauvoo

In the meantime, many worked to find a solution for the refugees. David Rogers, with authorization from Joseph Smith, worked with a land agent. They located thousands of acres for sale just fifty miles north near Commerce, Illinois. This property was across the Mississippi River from empty army barracks in Iowa Territory still standing from the Sioux and Black Hawk War in 1832.³⁵ These barracks wouldn't house all of the displaced, but it was a good place to start.



Isaac Galland, a land agent assisting the Mormons after the Missouri tragedy, would later join the Mormon Church.

Brother Rogers had received a letter from the land agent in February which in part read:

I have conversed with a friend of mine, who has also conversed with Governor Lucas, of Iowa territory, in relation to your Church and people. Governor Lucas says that the people called Mormons were good citizens in the state of Ohio, and that he respects them now as good and virtuous citizens, and feels disposed to treat them as such.

I wish also to say, through you to your people, that. . . the attorney-general of Iowa territory. . . [has] the utmost endeavors to protect you from insult or violence.³⁶

The agent, Isaac Galland, went on to write that the Church would be better protected in a territory rather than “under a state government . . . where the greatest villains often reach the highest offices.” Mr. Galland offered any help he could give the Mormons, and urged them not to delay. With spring approaching, the time for renting farms was almost upon them:



Deserted army barracks from the Sioux and Black Hawk War in 1832 still stood in Montrose, Iowa. Isaac Galland arranged the sale of land in Commerce, across the Mississippi River, 47 miles north of Quincy.

I feel that I am assuming a very great responsibility in this undertaking. . . . Accept, dear sir, for yourself and in behalf of the Church and people, assurance of my sincere sympathy in your sufferings and wrongs, and deep solicitude for your immediate relief from present distress, and future triumphant conquest over every enemy.

Many members of the Church assembled at a meeting held in Quincy in February and discussed the property. According to the History of the Church, it was:

Twenty thousand acres . . . at two dollars per acre, to be paid in twenty annual installments without interest. A committee had examined the land and reported very favorably respecting it. Brother Rogers then made some statements, and gave information respecting the land.

However, due to the extreme poverty of the people, the vote to purchase the property did not carry at that time. These men were unaware that a recommendation from Joseph Smith would arrive in the next few days requesting them to make the purchase.³⁷

The next week, Bishop Partridge gave a letter to David Rogers who was traveling from Quincy back to Liberty Jail. In this letter Bishop Partridge sent news to the prisoners of their families:

The people here receive us kindly; they have contributed near \$100 cash, besides other property, for the relief of the suffering among our people. Brother Joseph's wife lives at Judge Cleveland's. . . . Brother Hyrum's wife lives not far from me. I had been to see her a number of times; her health was very poor when she arrived, but she has been getting better. . . . This place is full of our people . . . Some of the leading men [of the area] have given us an invitation to settle in and about this place.³⁸

Don Carlos Smith, brother to Hyrum and Joseph, also sent a letter with Brother Rogers which apprised the men of their families:

Emma and the children are well; they live three miles from here and have a tolerably good place. Hyrum's children and mother Grinnell are living at present with Father; they are all well. Mary has not got her health yet, but I think it increases slowly. She lives in the house with old Father Dixon; likewise Brother Robert B. Thompson and family; they are probably a half mile from father's. . . . Dear brethren, we just heard that the governor says that he is going to set you all at liberty. I hope it is true.³⁹

Mary Fielding Smith was hearing this same information. Believing Hyrum was soon to be freed, she did not write him.

Hyrum Smith Again Writes His Wife Mary Fielding Smith

During this period Hyrum Smith wrote several letters to Mary. Unaware of the rumors she was hearing of his escape, he had not heard from her since she left Missouri. He became very worried, not just about her health, but about her love for him. He sent a second letter:

I was some what Disappointed that I did not hear from you & the family by your own pen. . . . I am confined & feel very anxious to hear from you. I have been informed that you are separated from the family, the family on this side of the river & you on the other.

Since I have heard that the family has crossed over & yet you are separated my feelings & anxiety is such that my sleep has departed from me. My faith understanding & Judgement is not sufficient to overcome these feelings of Sorrow. A word from you might possibly be satisfactory [in relieving] my feelings of anxiety that sleep may return & perhaps some kind angel or brooding spirit may manifest all things to me by Dream or Vision.

God has said that he would Deliver us from the power of our Enemies in his own Due time. We try to be as patient as possible. I Desire to hear from you by your own pen if it is possible or your health will admit of it. Give me the pertiments of your Journey & health & the Circumstances of all the family. . . You must excuse my poor writing, my nerves are somewhat affected & my hands are this Evening quite swollen & fingers are still & painful with the rheumatism. We have appealed to the supreme Judges of the state for a visit of habeas corpus. We think they will set us free. Pray for us. Pray for me, my prayer for your is incessant, yours in the bonds of true friendship & love till Death.⁴⁰

When still no letter arrived from Mary, Hyrum wrote a third letter:

The reason that I have not written more particulars is because we have thought that we should have been at liberty before this time & I would have been with you before this time. Our guards are very strict & have been ever since Elder Rigdon went away from here. The people have been suspicious that he would send a strong force to set us at liberty, so they have been more strict & kept a guard Day & Night, but our freedom is close at hand. God is with us and we Know the will of God. The People, our Enemies, must be left without Excuse. Those that Seek our hurt will see their folly sooner or later.

I thought it strange that you did not send one word to me when I thought you knew I was so anxious to hear from you. If you have no feelings for me as a husband you can send or caused to be sent some information concerning the little babe or those little children that lie near my heart. Although my heart feels wounded today whilst I write yet my heart is tender like that of a child's, notwithstanding my Experience, Manhood & age, the tears do obstruct my writing. Pardon my weakness. My desire has been to make you as comfortable as possible but you know I have been prevented be assured you have my warmest affections & Even will till Death & my prize I am an never fading friend & all this will be attested when God sits to Judge both quick & Dead and my works shalt prove it in time to all that shall become acquainted with me. This brother . . . learned by others that your health was improving, this fact was good news. Time will bring about all things & we must be patient in tribulation & wait. The will of God be Done. I have no fears of my salvation. God is my Judge.

Committee Visits Illinois to See Land for the Saints

After Joseph Smith's letter arrived authorizing the land purchase, a committee comprised of David White Rogers, Sidney Rigdon and others traveled forty-seven miles north to Commerce, Illinois, to look at the property in question.⁴¹

In the meantime, Heber C. Kimball and Theodore Turley, one of Isaac Russell's Canadian converts, although a native Englishman, visited the judge in Missouri who had the power to dismiss the charges against their brethren. There they learned that a large group of men had vowed to kill Joseph Smith. Brother Turley was threatened and in that context they reminded him of the prophecy Joseph Smith had made the previous July about the apostles leaving in April from Far West for their mission to England. The Missourians insisted Theodore recant his belief that Joseph Smith was a prophet, since the Mormons had fled Missouri and it was not possible for the apostles to assemble in Far West. John Whitmer, standing with the Missourians, hung his head and said, "If the Twelve come, they will get murdered."⁴²

In late March, 1839, Bishop Partridge received a letter from Joseph Smith, written from Liberty Jail. The letter contained revelations received over the course of a five-day period.

D&C Sections 121, 122, 123 were recorded on March 20th, 1839, from Liberty Jail. These sections, received under the most dire circumstances, are still, one hundred and seventy-five years later, often quoted in Sunday School classes and general conferences. Joseph's pleadings to the Lord are evident after months in confinement, "O God, where art thou?"

The Lord's response began with the words, "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment." Verses in the rest of the lengthy passages are used not just by priesthood leaders, to whom they were directed, but to everyone, "No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned. . . ."

Mary Fielding Smith Replies to Hyrum Smith

In April, after receiving several letters from Hyrum Smith at one time, Mary felt compelled to respond to him:

My dear Husband,

I received yesterday a large packet of Letters &c from you which took nearly all my pleasure 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 Brunson was as I supposed on his way to Liberty with a fixt determination never to return without you. As I know 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 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 be 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 others slept as I am now doing, not knowing that if it will ever come to you. But as you requested me to write on the receipt of yours I feel disposed to do so even if you should come home before I can finish 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 Davies 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 once 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 which gave me feelings not to be described. I cannot bear the thought of your having any such suspicions. Surely you had 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 possible under such circumstances as you were 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 endeavours and intentions of my heart towards your family from the time you left me - to the present moment you would I do agree you have had no cause for anxious thoughts, or sleepless nights on this account. It has been my desire and 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 welfare. . . .

O Hyrum, I am obliged to stop here and take a view of the past. 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, 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 great mercy of God towards me enjoying good health, am fast recovering my strength which is greatly needed after near 5 months sickness in which I have been entirely 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 alone for the last month and begins to talk and she walks. The baby Joseph, 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 come forth in his eyes and countenance. He begins to show signs of

a good mind which in my estimation is of much greater importance than beauty. I think you will be surprised to see Jerusha. She has grown very strong and stout but she says she shall sit on Father's knee when he comes. John & Hyrum also grow very fast. They often talk of doing great things to the men for keeping Father away so long. Lovina often expresses a great desire to see you. . . .⁴³

Joseph Fielding Continues to Lead Missionaries in England

In March of 1839 Joseph Fielding recorded that a Mormon missionary employed by the railroad, James Lea, had successfully preached in Exton and Bath in the southwestern parts of England, and was soon heading to Scotland. He then wrote about William Clayton's missionary work in Manchester, "a large and populous Town where a large door is opened. . . Spent three Sabbaths there very happily." Among their converts were several from the congregation of Robert Aitken.⁴⁴

At this time, Joseph wrote very frankly in his diary about Willard Richards:

He is, I think, well qualified to keep the Church in order, far more so than myself, but he is too severe (I think) and rather unaccommodating in his Manners and his treatment of others – he does not make sufficient allowance for their Weakness, but attributes their defects to an evil Spirit, which he cannot bear.

In this same context, Joseph described the situation:

Some of the Saints in Preston are taking a great dislike to Brother Richards. This troubles me much. I desire to be one with him, and with them. It is not the first time that I have had to stand between 2 contending Parties. I have a great love of Peace. I think I see faults, as is commonly the case, on both sides.

Joseph then described part of the problem, being that Willard's wife Jennetta owned some nice pieces of clothing, a veil for her face, and a hand muff which she wore in the winter. Feeling poorly because of her pregnancy, she had tried to take "longish" walks, but was not well enough to sit through Church meetings. The members were critical of her, and also critical of Willard for spending too much time caring for his ailing wife.⁴⁵

Joseph then described personal problems of his own. With Hannah six months pregnant, she wept before he left to take care of Church business in Manchester. Elder Richards had not approved of Hannah's behavior and suggested that Joseph should leave without saying good-bye. Joseph wrote:

I feel very anxious to establish Peace. I cannot live in the Midst of Confusion. . . . My Mind is very weak, and these things trouble me much and weaken my Faith, yet my heart is set to do the Will of God in all things.

Joseph wrote in his journal that his brother James was also weighing on his mind, who had left his congregation in Preston after its decline in membership:

My Dream is now fulfilled which I had on the ocean. His was the first Church that heard the Gospel and it is the first to be demolished by it. Others are on the way to the same end.

Joseph concluded the day's entry by writing, "There is much concern about Elder Hyde,"⁴⁶ indicating he had received letters from Missouri describing Orson's behavior against Church leaders.

Chapter 14 Endnotes, Pages 198-214:

1. This man, who Joseph later names Livesey, was Richard Livesey, a Methodist minister from Massachusetts, who brought testimony from apostates who maligned the character of Joseph Smith. Joseph refers to Livesey several times in his journal in August, 1838, pages 24-25. On August 9th Joseph "spoke of Livesey's Pamphlet in the Evening to a large Number of People and shewed them the Frontispiece in the Book called Mormonism unveiled; the effect was good."

2. The letter of August 15th refers to this earlier letter, but I do not have a copy.

3. This letter, dated August 15, 1838, is part of the Joseph Fielding Correspondence at BYU Special Collections, MSS 670.

4. James referred to this incident in his August 27th letter.

5. 1838, 27th August, James Fielding to Joseph Fielding. Letter housed in LDS Family History Library, MS 749 f0001.

6. This excerpt is from "A Reply to Mr. Thomas Taylor's 'Complete Failure,' &c., and Mr. Richard Livesey's 'Mormonism Exposed.'" This was printed in Manchester in 1840 when Elder Pratt served as the British Mission President.

7. My British friend Bryan Skelton gave me the information on this marriage, which was the 22nd of September, 1838. He has advised me on marriage issues in England, which are handled differently than in America. The 1836 marriage act allowed for non-conformist marriages to occur in their local buildings if the building was licensed and if a registrar was present, but that was not the case here. Bryan, a resident of Hull, England, had the Richards' marriage record in hand, which he has since shared with me. In *Truth Will Prevail*, page 91, Willard Richards is quoted in his journal of September 24th as saying, "Most truly do I praise my Heavenly Father for his great kindness in providing me a partner according to his promise. I received her from the Lord and hold her at his disposal. I pray my Heavenly Father he will bless us forever, amen." This record from Willard's journal has been the accepted date of their marriage for more than a century, but it is now clear that he wrote this two days after the wedding.

8. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 26-27. Joseph clearly states that Willard and Jennetta were married on the 22nd of September.

9. Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, pages 162-165. Elder Pratt's description of the actions of the Missouri militia is graphic and tragic.

10. Pioneer Magazine, published by the Sons of the Utah Pioneers, November 2014, page 37. After the premature birth of her baby, her father-in-law sent word to Hyrum Smith, who was in jail, informing him of Mary's delivery. "The word came back . . . his name would be Joseph to honor his younger brother and Mary's older brother, Joseph Fielding. At eight days of age, the baby was carefully dressed by Phoebe Morton Angell, Mary's midwife, and placed in the arms of his grandfather to receive a name and a blessing."

11. To avoid confusion, these two prophets today are known as Joseph F. Smith and Joseph Fielding Smith. Joseph F. Smith had children by five plural wives, with Joseph Fielding Smith, born in 1879, being his sixth son. Two other sons were named Joseph Richards Smith and Alvin Fielding Smith.

12. Our Pioneer Heritage, by Kate Carter, Volume 14, pages 214-222. Reminisces by Minerva Smith Miller, daughter of Joseph F. Smith.

13. Autobiographical Sketch of Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson.

14. Letter from Mary Fielding Smith to Joseph Fielding, 1839, June, Commerce. This letter is part of the Joseph Fielding Letters Collection at Brigham Young University, MSS 670.

15. 18 March 1833, Letter from Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding.

16. Millennial Star, No. 24, Vol. XXVI, Saturday June 11, 1864. This quote is on page 406, but the biography of Thomas Marsh seems to be spread across several issues.

17. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 27.

18. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 29. Joseph is clearly unaware that a letter will soon be on its way from Isaac Russell telling these Saints in Alston that he is going to remain behind in Far West, or Zion, and wait for them to meet him there. It sounds like Isaac laid the groundwork for his actions before he left England.

19. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 29-30. On December 15th, 1838, Joseph wrote, "Things look very dark. . . . We have been stopping at Sister Ann Dawson's in Preston chiefly since we came here, but . . . she is thinking of taking a less (smaller) House, we suppose to get rid of us, perhaps because of the Affliction of Bro. Richards and his Wife; and sister R. is not able to leave the House at present. We know not which way the Lord will direct us, but we trust in him."

20. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 30, dated in December, "21 Friday."

21. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 30.

22. Mercy Fielding wrote that her husband Robert "arrived in Quincy, I believe, in December, where he engaged as clerk in the court house, and remained there until the liberation of Joseph and Hyrum from prison." This detail came from Robert's obituary, which Mercy wrote, and which is included in the History of the Church, Volume IV, page 411.

23. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 31.

24. History of the Church, Volume III, pages 210-254. I was amazed as I read through these lists of names, names of men and women who I recognized as mine or my husband's ancestors, but also names of ancestors who friends have mentioned or whose names I recognize as being their ancestors. The steadfastness of these early members of the Church has carried down through many generations. Just reading their names on the pages was a powerful testimony to me.

25. The Extraordinary Life of Parley P. Pratt, Ensign, April 2007. While imprisoned, “Parley had a dream in which his first wife, Thankful, comforted him and promised his eventual release. His brother Orson helped him escape, fittingly, on Independence Day, July 4, 1839. . . .” This was quite an exciting event, where the prisoners planned and then executed each detail, overcoming their jailer and fleeing into the woods where Orson waited with horses. Separated from all of his associates, Parley traveled by night on foot for days, until he finally reached Illinois and with the help of members of the Church was delivered to Quincy and to safety.

26. History of the Church, Volume III, pages 323. “Elder David W. Rogers made a donation of money to remove the poor from Missouri.”

27. “Within the Walls of Liberty Jail,” by Justin R. Bray, found online at:
<https://history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-liberty-jail?lang=eng>

28. History of the Church, Volume III, pages 343-344. Isaac’s letter, later retrieved by Willard Richards, is quoted verbatim. While the History of the Church does not indicate that Joseph Fielding knew any of this, Joseph’s journal is quite clear that he did know.

29. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 32.

30. History of the Church, Volume III, page 342-343. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 36- 37. Dated June of 1839, Joseph received a letter from Heber C. Kimball directing a member of the presidency to visit the Alston Branch. Willard Richards followed up on this and learned that Isaac had sent three letters. The first was already in the possession of the mission presidency, but two more letters were written, the third being sent in January of 1839, about the time Heber had a revelation that Isaac was causing trouble.

31. This tender bit of information was remembered by Emeline Grover, an older sister to Eliza Ann, and later a plural wife of Apostle Charles C. Rich.

32. Autobiographical Sketch of Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson.

33. History of the Church, Volume III, page 260.

34. 16 March 1839 Hyrum Smith to Mary Fielding Smith. This letter is the first in the Hyrum Smith and Mary Fielding Smith Collection MS 2779.

35. David White Rogers is one of my ancestors. David’s role in acquiring the land is covered in History of the Church, Volume III, pages 260 and then through the next hundred pages or so. The connection of Father Rogers and Joseph Fielding is quite distant, although my pedigree goes through both men. David’s granddaughter Martha Telle married George Q. Cannon. Martha and George’s daughter-in-law was Ida May Burton, my grandmother. She was a great-granddaughter of Joseph Fielding.

36. History of the Church, Volume III, pages 265-267.

37. History of the Church, Volume III, pages 260, 273. Edward Partridge wrote to Joseph Smith, “Your letter respecting the trade with Galland was not received here until after our return from his residence. . . If Brother Rigdon were not here, we might, after receiving your letter, come to a different conclusion respecting that trade. There are some here that are sanguine [optimistic] that we ought to trade with the Doctor [Galland].”

38. History of the Church, Volume III, page 273.

39. History of the Church, Volume III, pages 273-274.

40.19 March 1839 Hyrum Smith to Mary Fielding Smith. It is clear that Hyrum was anticipating a letter from Mary, not just a response to his letter on the 16th.

41. History of the Church, Volume III, page 275. In the minutes of a meeting held March 9th, "It was then proposed that a committee be appointed to visit the lands, and confer with the gentlemen who had so written, and declared themselves interested for our welfare."

42. History of the Church, Volume III, pages 306-307.

43.11 April 1839 Mary Fielding Smith to Hyrum Smith, fifth letter in the Hyrum Smith and Mary Fielding Smith letters Collection, MS 2779.

44. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 32.

45. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 33.

46. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 33-34.