

The World of Joseph Fielding: Chapter 2

Rachel Cared for Those Around Her

As the wife of a minister, Rachel took it upon herself to care for the poor. Ann wrote:

Her compassion was always ready to yearn over the sons and daughters of affliction and distress. Her hand and heart were ever open to relieve their wants, which she often did, to human appearance, beyond her means: but it was a maxim with her, that whatever is given to relieve the necessities of the poor, is, if given in a right spirit, lent to the lord. . . She considered it to be her duty to God. . . to frequent the chambers of the sick and dying, pouring in the balm of consolation to the wounded spirit [and] pointing those who were seeking mercy to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

Rachel, especially after losing both parents at such a young age, knew of suffering. Not quite six years after her marriage, her stepson Marmaduke died at the age of eleven. Of his mother's seven children, only sixteen-year-old Sarah remained. By the spring of 1796, Rachel had three sons, John, age five; James, almost three, who most surely was named after John's uncle and landlord, and Thomas, who was nine months old and had been born in Honeydon the previous summer. Rachel and John both had brothers named Thomas.

Ann recalled that her mother "took a large share of the care of her family upon herself, and by so doing left her husband more at liberty for his religious and pulpit engagements." John often



The Bedford Infirmary and Fever or Quarantine Hospital were two structures which would have brought villagers from the outlying areas to the county capital. Drawing from History of Bedfordshire 1066-1888.

traveled twenty miles away to preach, but Rachel was determined to be "a helpmeet for her husband." Ann added, "His temporal comfort and spiritual prosperity lay near her heart."

Rachel was described as a "splendid business woman, looked up to by her neighbors." John was studious and easy going, concerned about his sermons and studying the scriptures.¹

Ann remembered that her mother was “kind and tenderly affectionate,” but Rachel strived to bring her children up in a manner which would keep them from succumbing to the temptations associated with pride. Ann wrote:

Her conduct towards her children was. . .seldom manifested by caresses or ill-judged commendations. . . Her love was shown by her precepts, and her firmness in opposing the gratification of every desire which she knew to be prejudicial to their best interests. But, above, all, it was manifested in her fervent prayers and supplications at the throne of grace. There she never failed to pour out her heart before God in behalf of those who were ‘bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh.’

Rachel, although living in a humble thatched cottage in the tiny village of Honeydon, was literate, highly contemplative and well-read. Even as a child she had been fond of reading, although much of the available literature was religious in nature. The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, which published her memoirs in 1830, was a constant source of edification to Rachel.



Ann wrote that her mother valued the scriptures “far beyond all other books,” Ann wrote:

They were to her as daily food. From them she drew consolation under the various afflictions and distresses through which she was called to pass.

Joseph, Mary and Mercy Fielding were born in this wattle and daub home. Joseph returned to the home during his mission. In 1872 Joseph’s sister Mercy would visit and take cuttings from the vines growing on the tile roof. Mary’s descendants would visit the home in the 20th century, but more recent visitors to Honeydon do not believe it still stands.

Ann remembered her mother speaking fondly of Psalms and saying, “Whatever state I am in, I always find something suited to it there.” She taught her children from the accounts in the Bible, saying (in particular reference to the kings in the Old Testament), “My dears, you have nothing to fear but sin. Sin, you see, always brings misery.”

Joseph Fielding was Born in 1797

On Sunday, the 26th of March, 1797, Joseph Fielding was born into the family, the fourth son of Rachel but the eleventh child of John. Joseph was christened five weeks and two days later, a Tuesday, at the Methodist chapel in Saint Neots, where his brother Thomas had been christened.²

Although Joseph’s older brothers were named after relatives, Joseph does not seem to have been a family name. Perhaps Rachel named him after the Reverend Joseph Entwistle, the preacher who had such a great influence in her early life.

Mary and Mercy were Born in 1801 and 1807

Two years later, Rachel’s first daughter Ann was born, followed in two more years by Mary, a daughter who would become the mother and grandmother of two prophets of the Restoration.

A third daughter was born in 1803, Martha, who was given her mother's maiden name of Ibbotson as her middle name and who used it throughout her life. A fifth son, Benjamin, was born in 1805 but died just before his second birthday.

Daughter Mercy was ten years younger than Joseph, born in 1807. Rachel's tenth and last child, Josiah, was born in 1809 but died that same year.

Mary was the last of the Fielding children to be baptized as an infant. The Wesley brothers had questioned the doctrine of infant baptism and stated that conversion as adults was essential, with baptism being the means of entering God's church. While John and Charles Wesley considered Methodism to be a means of strengthening Christianity within the Anglican Church, they still believed it important for sacraments to be administered by ordained Anglican clergy.

Lack of christening records indicates that by 1803, John and Rachel Fielding had decided that infant baptism was not necessary, and Martha Ibbotson Fielding and her three younger siblings were not christened as infants.³ Mercy Rachel Fielding was the sole child of John and Rachel Ibbotson Fielding whose only baptism occurred when she joined the LDS Church. Interestingly,

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <u>Colmworth</u> in the County of <u>Bedford</u> in the Year 1822						
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
June 16 th No. 167.	Martha Ibbotson of Ibbotson	John	Fielding	Colmworth	Farmer	Timothy Richards Matthews

This christening record shows that Martha Ibbotson, the daughter of John and Rachel Fielding, was christened as an adult. Her brother-in-law Timothy Richards Matthews officiated. If Martha had been baptized as a child, this baptism would not have taken place. By 1822, Martha's father John would have been 66 and was apparently retired from the ministry. However, this record shows that he still farmed.

Anglican church records show that Martha was christened in 1822 at the age of eighteen in the Colmworth Chapel, with her sister Ann's husband, the ordained Anglican minister Timothy Richards Matthews, officiating.

Fifteen years later, in 1837, Joseph Fielding, by then having returned to England as an LDS missionary, wrote his sisters Mary and Mercy in Kirtland, Ohio.⁴ He mentioned in passing that his brother-in-law Timothy Matthews no longer baptized infants. In 1822, christening was a foundational rite of the Anglican Church, and perhaps he had convinced Martha of its necessity. By 1837, after the Reverend Matthews had left the national church and then returned, it seems he had carried with him some of his non-conformist beliefs.

Rachel Ibbotson Fielding was a Respected Member of Her Community

By the 19th century, Rachel was settled in her community and well-respected. Other mothers would seek her help with their sick children, and she inoculated the babies in the village against small pox, a relatively new practice, and at that time, extremely controversial. Rachel would open cowpox lesions on a milkmaid's hand and scratch the substance into a vein of an infant, significantly reducing the risk that the child would be stricken with small pox and either die or be terribly scarred later in life.

This was a brave endeavor and shows that Rachel was educated enough to understand the revolutionary work of Edward Jenner of the previous century. She was also persuasive enough to convince the other mothers that this was necessary.⁵

John's four surviving sons, the oldest children in the family, would most certainly have assisted their father with work on the farm. The four daughters would have been closely supervised and taught by Rachel, learning to sew, cook, and master the skills typical of young British girls.

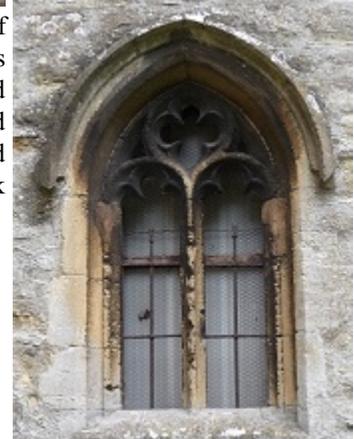
St. Denys

About two miles west of Honeydon stands an ancient chapel which was originally built in the 12th century by the conquering French Normans. The chapel was dedicated to the patron Saint Dennis, the bishop of Paris. He is said to have lost his head while martyred in 250 A.D., but then walked six miles while carrying his head, preaching the entire time until finally succumbing to death.

The chapel was rebuilt in 1429 A.D. and still stands, although the building received major repairs in the 20th century. The church was Catholic until the reign of King Henry VIII when it became Anglican. The chapel fell into disuse after the Puritans took control of Parliament in the 17th century.⁶



Keith Foulger, a descendant of Joseph Fielding through his granddaughter Isabella, visited St. Denys in 2009 while he and his wife served in the England Manchester Mission. He took these pictures at that time.



Timothy Matthews

In 1818 a new minister moved to Colmworth. Twenty-three years old, the Reverend Timothy Richards Matthews trained for the Anglican ministry at Kings College in Cambridge. He was born in Long Sutton of Lincolnshire, about sixty miles north of Bedford, not far from where the River Ouse flows into a large estuary called The Wash, which feeds into the North Sea. After receiving his diploma, Mr. Matthews was appointed to serve the congregations in Colmworth, near Honeydon, and Bolnhurst, about eight miles west of Bedford.⁷ With Methodists in conflict over who could legitimately perform ordinances, Reverend Matthews served Anglicans and non-conformists.

During this period of work and service to two Anglican congregations, Timothy had a spiritual conversion during a church meeting and devoted the rest of his life to the search for God's will. He wrote that "there fell as it were from [my] eyes scales of darkness and doubt." He determined to not just minister to the faithful, but to "sinners perishing in the neglected parishes around him." Joseph Fielding would later state that Reverend Matthews "has no Desire but to know and do the Will of God."⁸ Mary Fielding said of him, "Our dear Brother M. is evidently growing in grace and in the knowledge and love of God and his Holy word which he is very deeply studying & from which he finds how very far we have been living beneath what is our duty as well our privilege to enjoy."⁹

Reverend Matthews later wrote that Rachel Ibbotson Fielding had a great influence on his life. Under her guidance, and perhaps with her financial support through an inheritance from her uncle,¹⁰ he and his parishioners restored St. Denys so it could be used for prayers and evening class meetings following the Wesleyan practice. Ann wrote that her mother Rachel was gratified to see class and prayer meetings established at St. Denys by her son-in-law. It is likely that Reverend Matthews was able to accomplish this without leaving the Anglican Church.¹¹ However, the Fielding family continued to travel the four miles to St. Neots on Sundays.¹²

In the course of his work in Colmworth, Timothy met Rachel's daughter, the devout Ann Fielding, who was approaching her twentieth birthday. The couple married in the Colmworth chapel early in the summer of 1821. Nine months later Ann gave birth to twin boys. Sadly, one infant, his father's namesake, lived only two weeks. During the next four years, she had two more sons.

Ann commented in her mother's memoirs that Rachel felt her position as the wife of a minister required her to live a circumspect life. Rachel "was ever careful to adorn the Gospel of Christ, and the church to which she belonged, by walking worthy of her high vocation." Ann added that "it gave her much uneasiness whenever she saw any of the professed followers of Christ walking disorderly."

Rachel often spoke on religious topics, even in settings outside of formal worship. Ann wrote that her mother "had a peculiar method of introducing religious subjects in whatever company she joined, seldom, if ever, suffering an opportunity of doing good to pass by unimproved." She added, "Many times have persons who were hardened in iniquity been brought to tears while listening to her affectionate expostulations, and several who were in heaviness through manifold

temptations [were] comforted and encouraged by her tender sympathy.”

Surviving letters written by her children clearly show that Rachel’s home was filled with gospel instruction from the scriptures. Surely Rachel was part of this instruction, but their father John, well-versed in both the New and Old Testament, would have also been a strong resource for the children. Mercy recalled that in the summers her father sat “ in the corner by the cellar door . . . to read the Bible and meditate on the deep things written therein.”¹³

An 1837 letter from John to his brother Joseph, and an 1839 letter from James to Joseph, and Joseph’s letters and diary entries during this period, are all filled with references to the scriptures, both the Old and New Testament, used with ease and correct in context. Each of these men knew and understood the scriptures well, not from casual attendance at Sunday meetings, but from thorough instruction and study at home. Mary and Mercy’s writings also showed their deep faith. In just one instance, an 1833 letter by Mary Fielding referenced fifteen separate passages from the New Testament and showed her deep faith in God.¹⁴

In an 1837 letter, Mary, in Kirtland, Ohio, reminded Mercy, who was serving an LDS mission with her husband Robert Thompson in Canada, of their rich, spiritual upbringing:

I know not that I can convey to you, (but I wish I could,) the sense of obligation and gratitude which flows through my Soul very frequently when meditating upon our superior privileges as a Family: where shall we go to find Parents whose hearts are so diligently engaged in laying up in store, not of this World’s Treasures, but that which is of infinitely more worth to their Children, even Volumes of prayers, like those laid up for us by our beloved Parents, which I believe are now answering upon our heads. O let us praise the God of our Father and press forward and live so that we may realize all the blessings that have been asked for us and claim all the promises made to the faithful by our Heavenly Father. . . .¹⁵

The Fielding Siblings in 1821

By the time of Ann’s marriage in 1821, her oldest brother John was married and the father of three children, although one had died. Thomas would marry in 1823. Both Thomas and John settled twelve miles away in the county of Cambridgeshire where John was a successful farmer.¹⁶ As the oldest son, he apparently inherited land which had belonged to his grandfather, Marmaduke Fielding.¹⁷

A granddaughter later recalled that thirty hams were smoked in his chimney at one time, “women were hired to cook, and there was enough to last for weeks.”¹⁸ Thomas was a shoemaker, not yet married. James appears to have been in business for himself and would not marry for more than twenty years.¹⁹

In 1824, Ann’s third son was born whom she named after her brother Joseph. Ultimately, four of Joseph’s siblings would name sons after him. Thomas named a son Joseph in 1834. John named a son after his brother in 1836. With Joseph approaching his fortieth year in 1837 and still unmarried, perhaps they did not want his name to be lost. In 1838 Mary named her only son

Joseph Fielding Smith,²⁰ resulting in Joseph's name being well-known throughout the world into the succeeding generations, although Joseph himself had no sons who survived long enough to marry.

In 1825 Joseph's forty-five-year-old half-sister Sarah passed away. The last of her mother's seven children, Sarah died without ever marrying.

John Fielding's enormous posterity descends from the eight surviving children he had with Rachel and included thirty-two grandchildren. John's American descendants are through the lineage of nine granddaughters and one grandson, who are:

- Rachel Fielding, Sarah Fielding and Ellen Fielding, daughters of Joseph Fielding and Hannah Greenwood, each becoming a wife of William Walton Burton;
- Mary Ann Fielding and Josephine Fielding, daughters of Joseph Fielding's plural wife Mary Ann Peake;
- Mary Fielding Smith's two children, Joseph Fielding Smith and Martha Ann Smith;
- Mercy Fielding Thompson's daughter, Mary Jane Thompson;
- Mary Fielding Lupton, the daughter of John Fielding, who emigrated to Utah with the assistance of her Utah cousins, accompanied by daughter Ann Jane Lupton. Both of these women joined the LDS Church in 1878 and Ann had a large posterity.

None of these American descendants carry Fielding as their surname, and it is possible few of their posterity know of their Fielding heritage.

However, members of the LDS Church are certainly familiar with the name of John Fielding's grandson, Joseph Fielding Smith, who served as president of the LDS Church from 1901 to 1918, and with Joseph Fielding Smith's son and namesake serving as president of the Church from 1970 to 1972.

John's British descendants are from:

- Three surviving children of John Fielding.
- Three surviving children of James Fielding, including Sarah Maria Fielding Wright.
- The descendants of Ann Fielding Matthews, who bore six children and had twenty-nine grandchildren.

In the late nineteenth century, the Utah descendants opened correspondence with Sarah Maria Fielding Wright, the oldest daughter of James Fielding, after visits by Joseph F. Smith and Mercy Fielding Thompson to England and possibly with information given to them by Mary Fielding Lupton who emigrated to Utah. Sarah shared genealogy data with her cousins, often sending original copies across the ocean with the request that they be copied and returned to her.

This correspondence continued into the twentieth century between Sarah Maria's daughter Millicent and Pearl Burton, Rachel Fielding Burton's daughter. After Pearl's death, Millicent corresponded into the 1960s with Josephine Burton Bagley, Sarah Ann Fielding Burton's daughter.

Rachel Ibbotson Fielding Dies

Rachel had been deeply touched by words from the pen of John Wesley, which had become a favorite hymn among the Methodists:

Shrinking from the cold hand of death,
I too shall gather up my feet,
Shall soon resign this fleeting breath,
And die, my fathers' God to meet.

Numbered among thy people, I
Expect with joy thy face to see;
Because thou didst for sinners die,
Jesus, in death remember me!

O that without a lingering groan
I may the welcome word receive!
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live.

In particular, the last verse became important to Rachel as she advanced in age. Her daughter Ann wrote that “It had for some years been her desire, if it were the will of God, to have a speedy exit out of time into eternity.” Early in October of 1828, in Rachel’s sixtieth year, she:

was seized with a painful sensation at the heart, while walking. . . . Notwithstanding this, she attended all the means of grace as usual, frequently walking upwards of a mile to our prayer meetings and class meetings at Colmworth.



This photo of the interior of the Colmworth chapel was taken by The Reverend Canon Annette Reed.

On Friday, October 10th, Rachel attended her class meeting, speaking, praying and encouraging those present. Sunday evening, Rachel attended the evening prayer meeting, and although invited to stay in the rectory with her daughter Ann, she chose to return to her own home. However, on Monday morning she returned to the rectory to receive the dying memorials from Reverend Matthews. It appears that Rachel spent the day with Ann and another daughter, probably Mary,²¹ and Ann’s three children at the rectory.

That evening²² Rachel desired to attend prayer meeting, but on the way she “was seized with pain at her heart, with so much violence that she was unable to proceed.” She returned to the rectory and spent two hours with her daughters. They talked about spiritual matters, with Ann and her sister describing their “backwardness in introducing religious subject [into conversations with friends].” Rachel said, “You must live in the spirit and walk in the spirit, if you would be useful, and have a word in season for all. She reached home [that night] without much difficulty.”

Throughout Tuesday Rachel was able to keep to her daily routine, including evening prayers and singing at a neighbor's home, although she was bothered with chest pains. The next morning, on Wednesday October 15th, Rachel awoke just after midnight in "excruciating pain."

Ann wrote:

[Her family members] were immediately alarmed, and a medical man sent for. [Rachel] seemed confident that death was very near, and during this severe paroxysm called on all around to pray for her. She also requested to have the psalms for the evening read, and when Mercy, who read, came to Psalms 26:73, my mother stopped her and with firmness and strong confidence, repeated it herself: My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

Ann Matthews, her husband Timothy and her sister Mary, after receiving word that Rachel was near death, arrived at 2 a.m. Ann wrote that Rachel, upon seeing them,

tenderly expressed herself as much concerned lest we should suffer from being exposed to the air at that hour²³. . . .When asked, 'Mother, how do you feel in your mind?' she answered, 'O my dear, I feel very comfortable! Jesus cannot leave me, no he cannot leave me after I have served him so long. I know he is my Savior,' and then added, 'I had a glorious manifestation of the love of God, in the afternoon, while praying for my children.'

After about two hours the pain abated, and we began to hope the bitterness of death was past. But, alas! It was far otherwise. Death had fixed his arrow in the vital part.

During the early morning hours, Rachel talked with her children while praising God. Her husband John asked "if she still felt Christ to be precious, she replied, 'Yes! I feel he is my Savior,' and again repeated her firm and unwavering faith."

At about 9 o'clock on the morning of the 15th of October, 1828, Rachel spoke her last words before quietly passing away:

I have felt of late an unusual deadness to the world. Whenever I have seen anything that has for the moment given me pleasure, I have turned from it and said, 'O this will not do! My God, and my all, my God, and my all.'²⁴



Rachel Ibbotson was interred in 1828 in the cemetery of the St. Denys Chapel in Colmworth. John Fielding's 1836 gravestone is in the center. His daughter Sarah's grave is on the right. Timothy and Ann Matthew's tomb is on the left. Photo courtesy of Keith Foulger.

Rachel was buried three days later on the grounds of St. Denys, next to her step-daughter Sarah.

Timothy Richards Matthews Starts His Own Church

In 1830, the Reverend Matthews left his congregations in Colmworth and Bolnhurst to take a prominent position as the chaplain of Bedfordshire's House of Industry. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, many counties established these workhouses, or almshouses. Typically



The Reverend Timothy Matthews held the position as chaplain of Bedfordshire's House of Industry between 1830-1832.

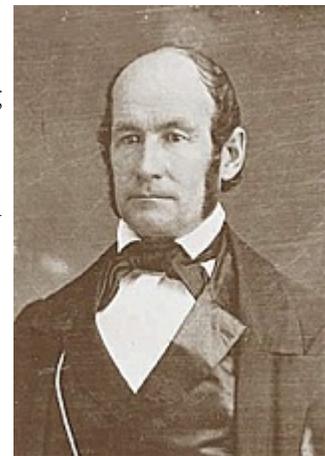
hundreds of the poor from the county, including unmarried mothers or the aged, lived in the workhouse, and Reverend Matthews would have seen to their religious instruction.

However, during this period Mr. Matthews altered his copy of the Common Book of Prayer, removing the Anglican Articles of Faith which had been in place for two hundred years, since the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Although Reverend Matthews defended his position before the board of directors, they resolved, by a margin of just one vote, to remove him as chaplain.²⁵

In 1832 the Reverend Matthews organized his own church in Bedford,²⁶ which he believed was in line with the organization established by the Savior during his time on the earth. This new congregation was called The Primitive Episcopal Church.²⁷

The Reverend Matthews often preached wearing a black robe. Interestingly, symbolically imitating imagery in the scriptures,²⁸ he would blow a copper bugle or a silver trumpet while standing on a stool at the head of his congregation. He was large in stature and had a strong voice, perhaps much like the Reverend George Whitefield.²⁹

A description of Timothy Matthews comes from the pen of Elder Heber C. Kimball: "Mr. Matthews who is a gentleman of considerable learning and talents, had been a minister in the established church of England. Seeing a great many things in that church contrary to truth and righteousness, and moreover believing that an overturn was at hand, and that the church was destitute of the gifts of the spirit, and [it] was not expecting the Savior to come to reign upon the earth, as had been spoken by the prophets, felt led to withdraw from that body and consequently gave up his prospects in that establishment and began to preach the things which he verily believed and was instrumental in raising up quite a church in [Bedford]."³⁰



Apostle Heber C. Kimball met the Reverend Timothy Matthews and described him as a man searching for the truth.

The Reverend Matthews was very interested in the second coming of the Savior and felt that this great event was imminent. Preaching on this topic brought many to his congregation.³¹

The congregation grew rapidly, and in just one year Reverend Matthews's church moved to a new chapel which could hold twice the number of people.³² The building, constructed by his

supporters, was on Bromham Road in Bedford. At this time the chapel was called Christ Church.³³

John Fielding Loses the Honeydon Farm

At some point in this time period, perhaps not long after Rachel's death, John Fielding lost the farm which supported his family. In 1833, in a letter to Joseph and Mercy in Toronto, Mary alludes to the family's difficult situation while professing her faith in God:

The dealings of the Almighty towards us as a family have indeed been very mysterious. I have at times been led to doubt whether his hand can have been in all the changes that have taken place. But be that as it may, we cannot now alter things, nor do we know that it would be for the best if we could, although things of a temporal nature were so dark an aspect I cannot help feeling a hope, yes, and a good degree of confidence that the Lord has gracious designs toward us still.

I look upon our present situation as being something like that of the Children of Israel in the Wilderness & that we may wisely take warning by their conduct & never yield to a murmuring or complaining disposition, we should perhaps by so doing lengthen our time of trial. Let us therefore endeavor to submit with meekness & patience to our present circumstances and trials and trust that he who has hither brought us will not now forsake us but in his own good and best time deliver us out of them all."³⁴

William Bennet occupied the family home for a time, but within a few years Shadrach Brightman, a young farmer from St. Neots, took possession of the family home and might also have been the tenant farmer for a distant landlord in Yorkshire.³⁵

1832: Joseph and Mercy Fielding Emigrate; James and Martha Move to Preston

After the loss of the Honeydon farm, Joseph lived with his brother John's family in Graveley, working on his farm and for his household. Brother Thomas and his new family lived nearby. Joseph loved John's family and felt love from them in return.³⁶ Joseph also served as a Methodist class leader in nearby St. Neots.

However, four years after his mother's death, an opportunity arose in Toronto where Joseph could have a farm of his own, and Joseph pursued this. In 1832, Joseph, age thirty-five, with his sister Mercy, age twenty-four, chose to emigrate to Canada. Mary's faith, demonstrated by her words in her letter the following year, was about to be strengthened as the Lord's hand worked in the lives of the members of her family.

It appears that as Joseph and Mercy left England, James desired to leave the Methodists in order to build up a church of his own, which was later called the Fieldingites.³⁷ So as to not interfere with his brother-in-law's prospects, he settled in Preston, one hundred and eighty-five miles northwest.

Elder Kimball would later write, “Mr. J. Fielding had been a minister in the Methodist Church, but . . . had withdrawn from that society, and had collected a considerable church in Preston.”³⁸

It appears that James had been able to make this move on his own, away from the Methodist Church, only through the support of his brother-in-law.³⁹ In 1833 James’s church was doing so well that it was said of him, “If the Honeydon Farm were offered to him as a gift. . . he should decline accepting it so much is his heart engaged in his work.”⁴⁰

At the time of Joseph’s and Mercy’s emigration, their father John was seventy-three and lived in the priory in Bedford with Ann and her husband Timothy Matthews. Mary lived with them,⁴¹ the only members of the family remaining in Bedfordshire.⁴²

As Joseph left his father’s embrace for the last time, John, recognizing his age, told him that if he should die before Joseph returned from America, “he would, if the Lord permit, visit [him] in the Spirit.”⁴³ Joseph and Mercy then traveled to Liverpool where they sailed to North America. Other travelers at this time disembarked in New York and reached Canada via the Hudson River, the Erie Canal and Lake Ontario, and Joseph and Mercy likely followed that same route.⁴⁴

Martha Fielding Accompanies James Fielding to Preston

Martha chose to move to Preston to assist James, where she supported him in his efforts and became involved in a temperance society.⁴⁵ In 1833 Mary wrote that Martha “could not leave [Preston] for anywhere else. She leads a Class which has become so large as to require dividing.” The implication was that Joseph and Mercy had asked that Martha join them in Canada, and while Martha wanted the family to be together, she did not want to leave England.⁴⁶

At this time, five of the Fielding siblings were unmarried. In America, James, Joseph, Mary, Martha and even possibly Mercy would have stood out being single at their ages, but in England it was very typical for persons to not marry until they were in their thirties,⁴⁷ and ultimately, each of these siblings did marry.

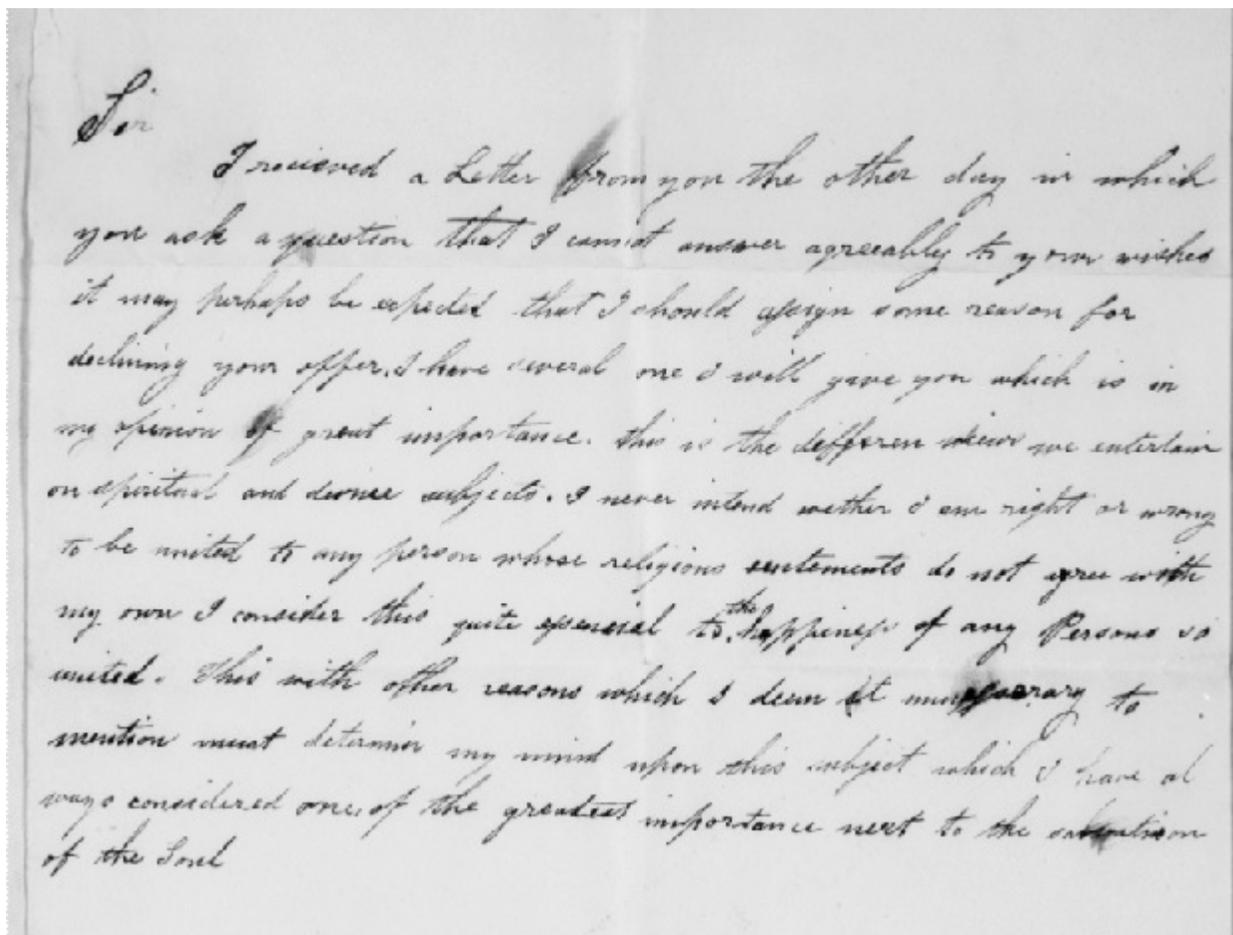
Interestingly, Mary, age thirty-two, had received two marriage proposals before departing for America in 1834. Copies of letters she wrote declining these invitations to marry still exist.⁴⁸ In the first letter, Mary refused marriage on the grounds that her suitor was not aligned with her spiritually.

In the second, Mary rejected the offer of marriage because she did not want to take on the role of step-mother. The second letter was written on March 17th, 1832, less than two weeks before



About the same time Mercy and Joseph Fielding emigrated to Canada, their brother James left Bedford and started his own church in Preston.

Joseph and Mercy emigrated to Upper Canada. As late as 1837, two months before Mary would marry the widower Hyrum Smith, she wrote to Mercy and mentioned a woman raising several stepchildren, "a situation I desire as little as ever."⁴⁹



Sir
I received a Letter from you the other day in which you ask a question that I cannot answer agreeably to your wish it may perhaps be expected that I should assign some reason for declining your offer, I have several one I will give you which is in my opinion of great importance. this is the differance we entertain on spiritual and choice subjects. I never intend neither I am right or wrong to be united to any person whose religious sentiments do not agree with my own I consider this quite essential to ^{the} happiness of any Persons so united. This with other reasons which I deem fit unnecessary to mention must determine my mind upon this subject which I have always considered one of the greatest importance next to the salvation of the Soul

This is a copy of a letter Mary wrote to a suitor in declining his marriage proposal. She "assigns some reason" for her refusal, that they entertained differing views on spiritual and choice subjects, and that she felt it essential to the happiness of any couple that their religious sentiments agree. Copying personal letters was a typical practice, with the sender often maintaining a small correspondence book of sent letters, often referred to as a "letter book."

In late 1832, Mary wrote Joseph and Mercy after their arrival in Toronto, where they apparently were waiting for her to join them. In this letter she explained that she had not yet acquired the means to emigrate. Upon hearing from them in early 1833, Mary quickly wrote another letter:

I much wish that I knew certainly that you had received my last Letter as you would then have ceased to expect to see me at present. I fear if you have not, you will be disappointed at receiving this instead of the writer: but I must tell you that nothing would cause me to feel the least desire to come to America but the pleasure of seeing my dear Brother & Sister, even if I were possessed with the means, which if you received my last you will see I am not. No, I am left quite destitute, all is sold and we are left considerably in debt so that we have now nothing to depend upon but the unseen hand of our Heavenly Father.⁵⁰

Mary Fielding Relocates to Preston, Then Emigrates to Canada

It appears that Mercy had found an opportunity for Mary to teach school in Toronto. Mary replied:

It seems useless for me to say anything respecting your School, as the distance which separates us renders it necessary to take such steps as appear best to our own judgment before we can communicate our ideas to each other on any particular subject: & I hope and pray that the Lord may direct you in every step you take and that you will entreat the All Wise disposer of events, if it is his will that I should ever come to you, to open the way and make plain before me. If this route be the case I shall not stand out against it.⁵¹

Later in 1833 Mary left Bedford for Preston where she lived for some time with Martha and James. The following year, Ann traveled to Preston to help Mary prepare to emigrate to Toronto. In an 1837 letter, Ann reminisced on this time by saying, "I often think, Dear Mary, of the wretched picture of misery our dear Sister Martha presented when you and I took leave of her for Liverpool prior to your embarkment for America."⁵²



Mary Fielding, emigrating in 1834, would likely have followed the same route Joseph and Mercy took in 1832, leaving Liverpool for the New York harbor. A steamship would have taken immigrants to Albany, and then a series of barges would have carried passengers along the Erie Canal. An overland route from Buffalo to Toronto was possible, but the probability is that Canadian immigrants crossed Lake Ontario by steamship.

It is possible that the invitation and probably the means to emigrate was extended to both Mary and Martha. Perhaps Martha's decision to remain in Preston was made out of loyalty to James, or perhaps made out of love toward the members of his congregation with whom she closely worked.

Mary Fielding had earlier written that she looked to the "Children of Israel in the Wilderness," who were led by the Lord. Mary's destiny was in America, and she trusted in her "Heavenly Father" enough to "live by faith" and follow.⁵³

Mary's voyage across the Atlantic from Liverpool would have taken between four weeks to two months, depending on the time of year and the weather. Perhaps she accompanied others heading to Canada. They likely arrived in New York City and traveled via steamboat north on the Hudson River. Her group would have then headed west along the Erie Canal, most likely traveling across Lake Ontario to Toronto.

In the fall of 1835, more than a year after Mary's emigration to America, Martha wrote to her Canadian siblings from Preston. This letter gives evidence of the love and respect which had been

shown Mary while she associated with James's congregation in Preston:

And now I shall say a little to Sister Mary about Preston. People, many of them, inquire kindly after you. Mr. Crain in particular. . . . I was much pleased with Robert Eaton's prayer tonight. He sued God, 'Bless our dear minister [James] and all his family, both old & young, but most especially his Sister Mary.

Martha continued, "The Provident Society is going on well. I collected nearly 5 pounds last month for it." She and James had taken the "Abstinence on Tea Total Pledge, thus I do voluntarily promise that I will abstain from Ale, Port, Wine, Spirits and all intoxicating liquors and will not give or even offer them to others except as medicines [or partake] as ordinance."⁵⁴

In 1833, Ann Fielding Matthews wrote to Joseph and mentioned the marriage of their common friends, Adam Douglas and Louisa Foot. The context could indicate that Joseph might have at one time been romantically involved with Louisa. It is easy to read between the lines to see Ann's implication that Adam was one who had proposed marriage to their sister Mary. "I think it is very likely that Mary was providentially removed that he might be the more at liberty to give himself up to the work of the Lord." Ann explained, "He works at his trade just so much time as to enable him to supply himself with food & common raiment & then goes off into the Villages to seek for the lost sheep & bring them into the fold of Christ."⁵⁵

Joseph and Mercy's departure in the spring of 1832, followed by Mary's emigration in 1834, would ultimately lay the groundwork for the dissolution of the harmony which existed between the eight Fielding siblings. Within five years, Joseph would bring a new religion from America back to England and decimate both James and his brother-in-law's congregations. John and Thomas would openly condemn Joseph, and little pity would be shown to Mercy and later Mary when they were widowed with the Mormon cause.

Before leaving for America, Mary wrote to Mercy, saying:

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, that his past goodness to us may encourage us still to trust in him and rely upon his promises which are all Yea and Amen to them that believe. One is that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, so that our principle concern ought to be to get our hearts filled with this love, it is then and only then that we can lay claim to that promise.⁵⁶

Chapter 2 Endnotes Pages 23-37:

1.I was delighted to find these descriptions of John and Rachel Fielding in a letter from their granddaughter, Sarah Marie Fielding Wright, born in 1844 and the oldest daughter of James. The letter was undated but in context was written about 1914, most likely to Pearl Burton, who was the daughter of Rachel Fielding Burton. While Sarah was born after the deaths of her grandparents, she had surely heard about them from her father, aunts and uncles.

2.A christening record exists for Joseph Fielding, but the records at St. Neots do not exist earlier than 1797. However, John and James were both christened in Halifax, so it is logical to assume that Thomas was indeed

christened. Ann and Mary, the fifth and sixth children, were also christened. There are no childhood christening records for Martha, born in 1803, and her three younger siblings, including Mercy.

3. I was surprised to find Martha's baptism, which clearly occurred when she was an adult. Her brother-in-law Timothy Richards Matthews was named as the officiator. Her father was named in this record as a farmer, not as a minister, although the word Labourer was written first and then crossed out, with farmer written above. Martha's name is shown as Martha Ibbotson Fielding, and her actual birth date was given, added to the record to indicate she was an adult. I have looked for the records of her younger siblings, and they do not seem to exist, although other records for St. Neots Church exist for that time period. In my experience as a researcher, Martha would not have been christened as an adult if she had been christened as an infant. Not baptizing their four youngest children was likely because John and Rachel had changed their beliefs on infant baptism. Ann and her husband Timothy Richards Matthews christened all of their children as infants.

4. This letter, now in the Church History Library as MS 7617 Folder 2, has been referred to earlier as "Joseph Fielding to Miss Fielding." In this letter Joseph writes of some of the trials he was facing as he began his mission.

5. In a 1915 letter from Sarah Marie Fielding Wright to Pearl Burton, Sarah casually mentioned, "I was very pleased to hear that my Cousin J. F. Smith was so deeply interested in the Life sketch of Grandmother Fielding. She was a fine woman. Grandfather was easy going & she was business like & capable, used to inoculate the babies of the village & was looked up to, it was said of her that she had always a good reason for what she did, she died very suddenly."

6. Information about the Colmworth chapel came from a blog kept by a vicar in St. Neots, Annette Reed. Her blog is found at Paxtonvic.wordpress.com and this post was made by her on 18 September 2009.

7. Mormons in Early Victorian Britain, page 52.

8. Joseph Fielding Letter to Miss Fielding. The actual context included the comment, "I fully thot it is Wife (sic) that has kept him out of the Kingdom." This letter is in the Church History Library as MS 7617 Folder 2. The only context which makes sense is that Joseph wrote this letter early in his mission, and sent it back to America with John Goodson, who apparently promised to deliver as a favor to Joseph. It wasn't too long after this that Timothy Matthews became a great persecutor of the LDS Church.

9. 18 March 1833 Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding.

10. In a 1966 letter from Don Cecil Corbitt, a biographer of Mary Fielding Smith, to Josephine Burton Bagley, my grandmother's aunt, Don wrote, "Rachel Ibbotson Fielding apparently inherited some money and was well fixed in her own right." The context of the letter was determining the location of one of Mercy Fielding Thompson's journals, which was apparently found, as he references it in his book. The journal is now in the LDS Church History Library as MS 7616-F0001.

11. History of Bedfordshire 1066-1888, by Joyce Godber, Bedfordshire County Council: 1969, pages 502-505. In 1830 Reverend Matthews accepted the position as chaplain of the Bedford House of Industry. This was likely a position which could only be held by an Anglican minister. In 1832 he lost that position because he removed the Anglican Articles of Faith from the Book of Common Prayer, further indication that it was at this time he left the national church.

12. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 88. I have mentioned this earlier. Joseph Fielding wrote that the Methodist Chapel in St. Neots was "the Place in which my Father & Family used to worship God, to which we walked 4 Miles every Sabbath for many years, often in bad Weather, up to the time I went to America." He added, "This was our place of Worship."

13. This bit of information came from a short journal kept by Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson about 1875 when she visited her family's home in Honeydon with her brother Thomas. The document is filed as MS7618 F0003

00009 in the Church History Library.

14. I am referring to letters which I will also address later. John Fielding's 1837 letter to Joseph is filled with scriptural denunciations against Mormonism, in which among other verses he quoted a barely-known passage from Isaiah. James' letter in 1841 to Joseph, informing him of John's death, also has scriptural references. Mary's 1833 letter has fifteen references to scriptural passages mingled among the words of her letter. I have had quite a bit of experience in teaching LDS youth and have learned to distinguish between youth who access gospel instruction on Sundays versus youth who study the scriptures at home on their own or with their families. Having also had experience teaching adults, I will remain silent on that topic except to say that there is quite a difference in learning by personal study versus learning by listening to the results of the studies of others. In transcribing the letters written between family members, it became abundantly clear to me that the Fielding siblings were fed the milk of the Gospel from the Old and New Testaments in their childhood home, and they embraced it.

15.7 October 1837, Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson.

16. By 1841 John Fielding had died after a sudden and accidental death with a new reaper on his farm. His widow Ann was enumerated in Graveley as a farmer, taking over the family farm her husband left to her. Thomas was enumerated on that census in nearby Papworth St. Agnes as a shoemaker, although in Joseph's diary, page 88, dated 23 August 1840, Joseph states that Thomas was a school teacher.

17. I cannot explain how Marmaduke Fielding of Halifax owned land so far from Yorkshire. In a 1915 letter from Sarah Fielding Wight to Pearl Burton, she wrote "I don't know if it would be possible to trace the Fieldings by enquiring about the Title Deeds of the farm at Colmworth, which belonged to Marmaduke Fielding." Rachel Ibbotson directly said this land was owned by John's uncle, and Don Corbett traced it to John Dyson, Marmaduke's wife Sarah's brother. I tried to verify this information through land records, but failed. Marmaduke Fielding died in 1787, and it's possible the land was bestowed to his grandson John Fielding after passing through the hands of other relatives until their deaths. I cannot otherwise explain the large property owned by this thirty-year-old son of an itinerant preacher.

18. Annie Jane Fielding Lupton Heward was the daughter of Mary Fielding who was born in 1817. In 1878 Annie and her widowed mother, with the help of their Mormon cousins, fled a difficult situation created by Annie's cruel husband and emigrated to Utah where they joined the LDS Church. I will address this later.

19. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 88. Joseph wrote that soon after he left for America, his brother James "left Busyness to go to Preston as a Preacher, but not in the [Methodist] Society, and one or two of my Sisters with him. . . ." The date of this writing was 23 August, 1840, during a visit to St. Neots. Heber C. Kimball later wrote, "Mr. J. Fielding had been a minister in the Methodist Church, but . . . had withdrawn from that society, and had collected a considerable church in Preston." I have had to guess that James had been in business, then became a Methodist minister, and then left that church to head a church of his own in Preston about 1832. By 1835 family letters make it clear that James was leading a congregation in Preston, Martha lived with him before her marriage, and that Mary had lived in Preston before emigrating in 1834.

20. *Pioneer Magazine*, Volume 61, Number 4, 2014, page 37 states that Joseph Fielding Smith, Mary's son, was named after Mary's and Hyrum's brothers, both named Joseph.

21. Later context indicates Mercy, the youngest surviving child, lived at home. It is most probable that Martha also lived at home and Mary lived in the rectory with Ann and her husband. The seventh letter in the Fielding Family Letter Collection is from Ann, written in 1837. While she addressed the letter to her brother and sisters, she speaks directly to Mary by name several times. These sisters were just two years apart, and it appears they were very close.

22. Ann's memoir of her mother, and Rachel's burial record clearly state that Rachel died on the 15th of October, 1828. However, in recounting the details of the last days of Rachel's life, Ann has somehow added an extra day between Sunday and Wednesday. I have compressed two days to leave Rachel dying Wednesday morning the 15th,

not Thursday morning the 16th.

23. From the time of the Romans the folk belief was that night air was filled with miasma, a poisonous vapor which caused illness. This belief was so prevalent that it was culturally unacceptable in England and America at that time to sleep with open windows.

24. In revisiting this issue, Rachel's burial record states she died in Eaton Socon, but this account clearly implies that she died in her cottage in Honeydon. Fortunately, a letter written by Martha Fielding about 1834 from Preston gives the name of a new resident of the cottage, Shadrach Brightman. He was enumerated in the 1841 Eaton Socon Parish living in Honeydon. This letter, referred to later, is the fourth in the Fielding Family Letters collection.

25. An interesting footnote appears on page 52 of *Mormons in Early Victorian Britain*. The footnote quotes another source which I cannot locate, "A Bedfordshire Clergyman of the Reform Era and his Bishop," by Joan Varley. That source indicates that "that Matthews was replaced as curate for Bolnhurst and Colnworth in 1830, at which time he became chaplain to the House of Industry. It was not until 1832 that he founded the Primitive Episcopal Church."

26. Two letters indicate Reverend Matthews and his wife Ann Fielding Matthews lived in a priory in Bedford. The first is an 1833 letter, dated March 22nd, from Ann to Joseph Fielding in Toronto. Ann's heading was, "Priory Bedford." Ann's father John was living with Ann and Timothy at this time, and he also wrote to Joseph. His letter was dated March 23rd, 1833, with the return address shown as Bedford, in care of the Reverend Matthews. John Fielding's 1836 burial record states that while he was buried in the Colmworth cemetery, he died in Bedford.

27. A discussion of the ministry of the Reverend Matthews comes from Chapter Four in *Mormons in Early Victorian Britain*, pages 49-66. This chapter was written by Malcolm R. Thorp and includes sources to which I don't have access, but he also includes references to letters which I do have. On March 24th of 1833, Ann Fielding Matthews wrote her brother and sister in Toronto and said, "It is twelve months today since my dear husband preached his last sermon at the House of Industry & the same time since you & our dear Mercy set sail for America." In this letter Ann described how fast the new congregation was growing and that they had built a new chapel "capable of containing nearly twice the number of people. . . ." Mr. Thorpe believes that there was a strong connection between the Reverend Matthews' congregation in Bedfordshire and the congregation of his brother-in-law James Fielding in Preston, which we know began thriving about this time.

28. Matthew 24:31 "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Another reference is from Joel, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." There are several passages in the Book of Revelation which also refer to an angel with a trumpet. These passages are consistent with scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants, and even in The Book of Mormon, where in Alma 29:1 we can read, "O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!"

29. *Mormons in Early Victorian Britain*, pages 49-50.

30. *Journal of Heber C. Kimball*, by Robert B. Thompson, Published in Nauvoo, Illinois: 1840. Pages 24-25.

31. 18 March 1833, Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding. "Mr. M was talking a few days since with an enlightened Jew who told him that he had been searching their records & an excellent Hebrew Bible and he found by their dates that there was every reason to believe that the Messiah will appear within 7 years as we are now in the 5993 year since the creation of the World & he said that the next 1000 was to be the Sabbatical year when he was to reign as their King. The subject indeed tho not generally entered into is yet becoming a very prominent one and the good effects of preaching this doctrine has been very considerable."

32.1833, March 22, Ann Fielding Matthews to Joseph Fielding, “We have now a beautiful Church capable of containing nearly twice the number of people.” This letter is labeled MS 7618 f0002 00011 in the LDS Church History Library.

33.History of Bedfordshire 1066-1888, Joyce Godber, pages 503-504. “[A] most unconventional figure of the time, Timothy Matthews. Originally an Anglican curate at Colmworth and Bolnhurst, he was a law to himself. He made a name in Bedford, where he was chaplain to the House of Industry till 1832, and finally his supporters built a special church for him, called Christ Church (not the present Anglican Church). [A footnote here states ‘A building in Bromham Rd., subsequently converted to lay purposes.’] He would summon his congregation with a bugle or trumpet, and he had such a stentorian voice that people outside the church would stand listening.”

34.18 March 1833, Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding. Later in this letter Mary spoke of James’s success as a minister, quoting him as saying if the family farm were offered to him he would refuse it, clearly indicating that the farm had been lost. In another part of the letter, Mary implies that the loss of the farm was due to treachery on the part of someone. “With the respect to the treatment & trials you have met with from the Persons who [next word unclear] the moving cause of almost all our changes, especially that of removing my dear Sister & Brother from their native land into a Land of strangers, I would advise you to remember that God who is the Judge of all the Earth will do right and render a recompense to both sides. . . .”

35.This delightful tidbit of information came from a letter written by Martha to Joseph, Mary and Mercy in Toronto, presumably in 1834, but the date is missing, as is part of the letter. Martha wrote a very newsy letter filled with information. She begins by sharing news of Honeydon. “First, Wm Bennet has left Honeydon and gone to a far. . .” but the rest of the sentence is missing with part of that page. The sentence picks up with “and Shadrach Brightman has taken our old home.” In studying these words, I believe that William Bennet lived in the home for a short time, but left, leaving it available for Shadrach Brightman, whose family and that of his wife’s had lived in the Bedford area for quite some time. As mentioned earlier, it was particular helpful for me to find Shadrach’s family on the 1841 census. The enumerator clearly marked the family as living in Honeydon, (interestingly, not Honidon, as the Fielding family members spelled it,) but they are shown to be in the Eaton Socon parish. This explains how Rachel Ibbotson Fielding could die in Eaton Socon but still be in her thatched cottage in Honeydon; these locations were one and the same. This letter, referred to several times later, is the fourth in the Fielding Family Letters Collection, preserved in the LDS Church History Library as MS D 2779, folder 6. Joseph wrote on page 90 of his diary that “The Farm is improved, though the House is not....” My impression was that Mr. Brightman was now not only the resident of the Fielding family home, but was also the tenant farmer for the land Joseph had grown up working.

36.Joseph Fielding Diary, page 87. “Here I had lived as a Servant to my Brother several years before I went to America, and labored hard. . . I found his Family in good Health, busy in the World, just in their Harvest, but though they seem high and have got rich, they were pleased to see me; said they wished I could come and be with them again, etc.”

37.Mormons in Early Victorian Britain, page 50, “Fielding’s church, called ‘the Fieldingites,’ was an independent church that allegedly broke away from the Methodists.”

38.Journal of Heber C. Kimball, by Robert B. Thompson, Published in Nauvoo, Illinois: 1840. Pages 24-25.

39.In an 1835 letter, dated October 23rd, James wrote from London to Joseph Fielding in Toronto. In context, he was informing Joseph of their brother-in-law’s decision to leave his reformed church and return to the Anglicans. As a consequence of this, Reverend Matthews was on probation for a period of several years. However, James wrote: “I assure you it has been a heavy trial to me. I am now left alone, not a single brother minister to communicate with. It seems strange that I should have been almost forced into the work then deserted. Whatever happens I have not a single individual to assist me besides those of my own society. However I do still indulge a hope that Bro. M. will be reunited with us; In his last letter he made great complaints of his people etc etc. may God deliver him and the family.” James’s comments indicate that he himself had broken away from the Methodists only at the urging and support of Timothy Matthews, and was directed to Joseph, with whom he had

obviously been sharing conversations about doctrine, as Joseph had recently been removed from his position as a class leader because of his new doctrinal beliefs.

40.18 March 1833, Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding.

41.18 March 1833, Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding. Mary's brother-in-law Timothy Matthews penned a note at the top of this letter. The implication is that Mary was living with her sister Ann and Reverend Matthews in Bedford. This letter is the first in the Mary Fielding Smith to Mercy F. Thompson Letters Collection, 1838 - 1848, MSS 2779.

42. John's burial record states that he died in Colmworth, not Eaton Socon. However, as mentioned earlier, two 1833 letters indicate he was living in the Bedford priory, and on page 85 of his diary, Joseph specifically mentions visiting the room where his father died at the home of his sister Ann in Bedford.

43. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 85. The context of this quote came from Joseph's 1840 visit to the priory in Colmworth where John died, and Joseph remembered these words.

44. This was the route Leonora Cannon and John Taylor independently took at about this same time. I will deal with their emigrations later.

45. An 1835 letter from Martha and James was clearly sent from Preston, and Martha spoke as though Mary had only recently left there. It appears that by 1834, and possibly earlier, James had a thriving congregation in Preston, with Martha living with him and assisting in the operation of his household. For example, in discussing the laundry, she mentions shirts.

46. 18 March 1833, Letter from Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding. "She said in her last that she had began a Letter to you but her feelings would not let her proceed. She most ardently longs for the time when we shall all meet again which time we are all anticipating with much pleasure but if the Lord has something for us all to do in our present station let us endeavor to wait patiently & do the work assigned us faithfully."

47. I have studied hundreds, possibly thousands of British marriage records. Not only did women at this time period marry later than their American counterparts, but they were very typically older than the groom, often by five years or more. Many still managed to have large families, bearing children well into their forties.

48. I have referred to one of these letters, but there were two and are labeled MS D 2779 folder 9 in the Church History Library. Presumably the original letters were given to her suitors and she made copies, a very typical practice. A letter from Martha written in the fall of 1835 gives evidence that Mary was loved and respected in Preston. "And now I shall say a little to Sister Mary about Preston. People, many of them, inquire kindly after you. Mr. Crain in particular. . . . November 2nd, I was much pleased with Robert Eaton's prayer tonight. He sued God, 'Bless our dear minister and all his family, both old & young, but most especially his Sister Mary.'" This letter is the fourth in the Fielding Family Letters Collection.

49. 7 October 1837, Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson. This letter is preserved in the LDS Church History Library and is part of the Mary Fielding Collection, MSS 2779.

50. 18 March 1833, Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding. Mary wrote, "I received your Letter dated Janry 17th on the 24th of Febry. . . . I much wish that I knew certainly that you had received my last Letter. . . ."

51. 18 March 1833, Letter from Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding.

52. This excerpt is from the seventh letter in the Fielding Family Letters Collection. The context was amid the news that Martha had married and was now very content.

53.18 March 1833, Letter from Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding. In discussing her poverty, Mary wrote: “No, I am left quite destitute, all is sold and we are left considerably in debt so that we have now nothing to depend upon but the unseen hand of our Heavenly Father. I look upon our present situation as being something like that of the Children of Israel in the Wilderness & that we may wisely take warning by their conduct & never yield to a murmuring or complaining disposition, we should perhaps by so doing lengthen our time of trial. Let us therefore endeavor to submit with meekness & patience to our present circumstances and trials and trust that he who has hither brought us will not now forsake us but in his own good and best time deliver us out of them all.”

54. In an interesting letter James wrote to Joseph, Mary and Mercy in Toronto in October 1835, he spoke of his congregation in Preston and how well it was doing. He said, “I am not certain whether Sister Mary knew Joseph Peacock. I believe he joined us about the time she left.” The clear implication is that Mary was not in Bedford, but in Preston where James had a long-standing congregation. This letter is preserved in the LDS Church History Library as part of the Fielding Family Letters Collection, 1833-1845. A second letter, written by Martha from Preston late in 1835, was written from Preston and James added a few paragraphs. Mary was mentioned often. It was clear that their friends missed Mary and prayed for her. There was no mention of the same affection for Joseph and Mercy, indicating they had not lived in Preston. This letter is the fourth in the Fielding Family Letters Collection, preserved in the LDS Church History Library as MS D 2779 Folder 6.

55. This letter, which will be mentioned later in this document, was written in March of 1833. A transcript of this letter is preserved in the LDS Church History Library as MS 7618 F0003 00011, and was included in the folder with Aunt Mercy Rachel Thompson’s Little Journal.

56. 18 March 1833 Letter from Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding. Mary refers to two scriptures, one being 2 Corinthians 1:20, “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” The second reference is to Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” It is evident that Mary’s faith and trust in God allowed her to be led to America, where she would embrace the Restored Gospel.