

The World of Joseph Fielding: Chapter 23

Mercy Fielding Thompson Becomes the Plural Wife of Hyrum Smith



With direction from Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith took the widowed Mercy Fielding Thompson as a plural wife. Contemporary painting by Sutcliffe Maudsley.

In August of 1843, Mary approached her sister Mercy about a very delicate subject, the topic being if Mercy would consent to becoming a plural wife of Mary's husband, Hyrum Smith. Mercy later wrote that the deceased personage of Robert B. Thompson appeared to Joseph Smith "several times, telling him that he did not wish me to live such a lonely life, and wished him to request . . . Hyrum to have me sealed to him for time."¹

When Mercy learned of this, she struggled. She took the original papers containing Section 132 home, where she kept them for several days. Finally she gave her consent.²

Seven years before her death in 1893, Mercy recorded a public account of this experience to Joseph Smith III, who had denied that his father had never embraced the doctrine of polygamy. In being approached about becoming a plural wife of Hyrum Smith, Mercy wrote:

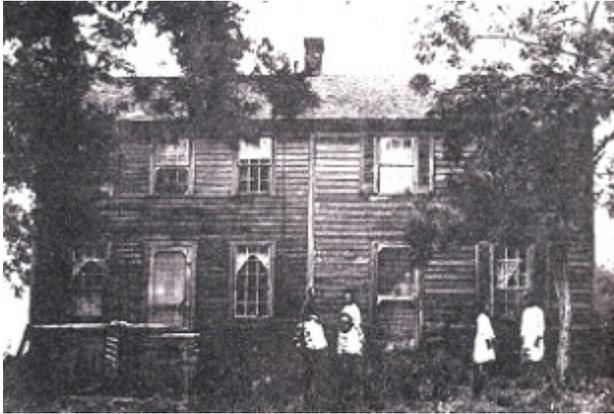
Hyrum communicated this to his wife (my sister) who, by request, opened the subject to me, when everything within me rose in opposition to such a step, but when [Joseph] called and explained the subject to me, I dared not refuse to obey the counsel, lest peradventure I should be found fighting against God; and especially when he [Joseph] told me the last time my husband appeared to him he came with such power that it made him tremble. He then enquired of the Lord what he should do; the answer was, 'Go and do as my servant hath required.' He then took an opportunity of communicating this to . . . Hyrum who told me that the Holy Spirit rested upon him from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. The time was appointed, with the consent of all parties, and your father sealed me to your uncle Hyrum for time, in my sister's room, with a covenant to deliver me up in the morning of the resurrection to Robert Blashel Thompson, with whatever offspring should be the result of that union, at the same time counseling your uncle to build a room for me and move me over as soon as convenient, which he did, and I remained there as a wife the same as my sister to the day of his death. All this I am ready to testify to in the presence of God, angels and men.

Mercy also wrote:

Soon after my marriage I became the inmate with my sister in the house of Hyrum Smith



Descendants of Martha Ann Smith Harris, Mary's daughter, currently hold this painting of Mary by Sutcliffe Maudsley.



Mercy and Mary lived as plural wives to Hyrum Smith in his home on the banks of the Mississippi River in Nauvoo. This undated photograph is from “Martha Ann, daughter of Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith” by Ruth Mae Harris.

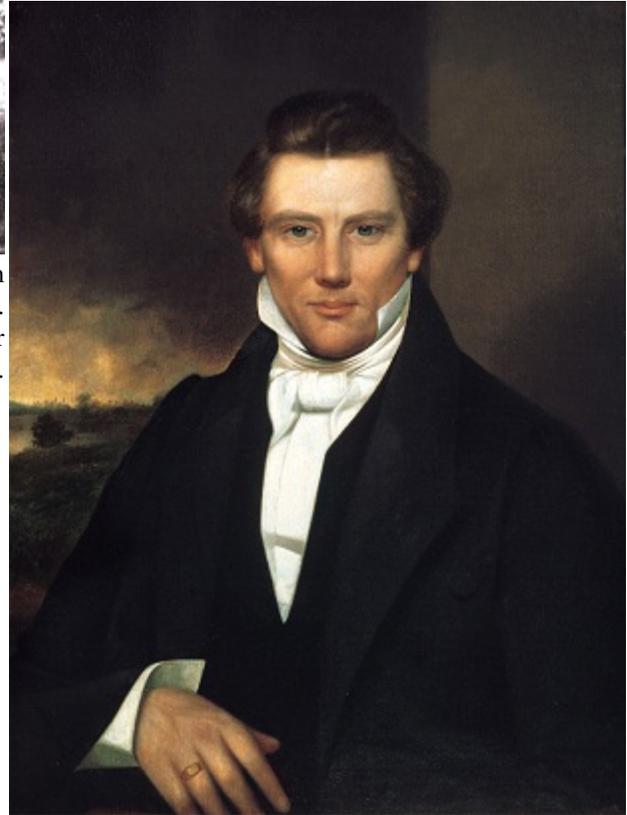
About this time Joseph Fielding wrote about apostates who had objected to the “Doctrine of a plurality of Wives and of Gods.” Joseph stated that he had been present when some of these men had been cut off. He wrote:

Their Principal Charge against Joseph is that he has, and seeks to obtain other Women, or Wives, and has taught the same to others who have done the same. As to me, I have evidence enough that Joseph is not fallen. I have seen him after giving, as I before said, the origin of Masonry, organize the Kingdom of God on the Earth, and am, myself, a Member of it. In this I feel myself highly honored, but I feel grieved at this time. . . that Men of so much Knowledge and Understanding should cut themselves off.⁴

Perhaps this was written with the knowledge that his two sisters were now living in a polygamous marriage. Mercy, in this situation, associated closely with Joseph Smith. She later wrote:

I have seen the Prophet under a great variety of circumstances, in public, in domestic and social life and in sacred places. I have seen him as if carried away by the power of God beyond all mortal conception, when speaking to the Saints in their public gatherings; and in less public places I have heard him explaining to the brethren and sisters the glorious principles of the gospel, as no man could, except by prophetic power. I have seen him in the lyceum and heard him reprove the brethren for giving way to too much excitement and warmth in debate, and have listened to his clear and masterly explanations of deep and difficult questions. To him all things seemed simple and easy to be understood, and thus he could make them plain to others as no other man could that I ever heard.⁵

where I remained until his death, sharing with my sister the care of his numerous family. I had from the time I moved to his house acted as scribe recording Patriarchal blessings.³

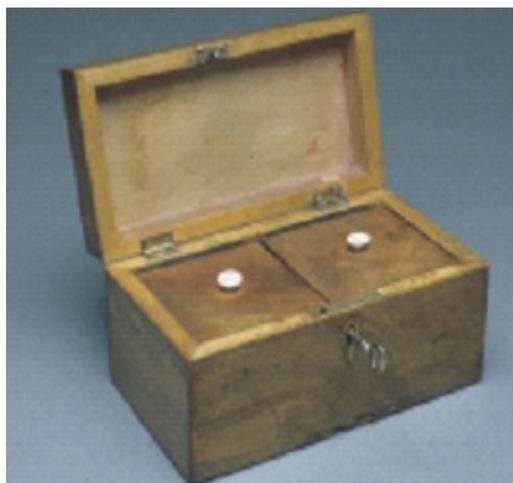


Painted in 1842, this portrait of Joseph Smith is owned by the Community of Christ.

The Origin of the Penny Fund

In the fall of 1843, Hyrum Smith was appointed to be a member of the temple committee.⁶ Mary and Mercy, living together in Hyrum's home, knew of his concerns about raising money in order to complete the temple. Mercy felt that she received inspiration on how to help. She wrote:

At one time after seeking earnestly to know from the Lord if there was anything that I could do for the building up of the Kingdom of God, a most pleasant sensation came over me with the following words. Try to get the Sisters to subscribe one cent per week for the purpose of buying glass and nails for the Temple. I went immediately to Brother Joseph and told him what seemed to be the whispering of the still small voice in me. He told me to go ahead and the Lord would bless me. I then mentioned to Brother Hyrum who was much pleased and did all in his power to encourage and help by speaking to the Sisters on the subject in private and public, promising them that they should receive their blessings in that Temple.⁷



This box, now held by the Church History Museum, was used by Mercy and Mary for their Penny Fund.

Mercy and Mary immediately began raising subscriptions to this fund, known as the Penny Fund. Within several weeks a thousand sisters had committed to contribute on a regular basis. In December, Mary and Mercy sent a letter to the sisters in England, inviting them to participate.⁸ Mary and Mercy collected the funds with returning missionaries bringing the coins.

One year later, they had fifty-thousand British and American pennies equaling five hundred dollars. They kept the money themselves, hidden in their home. Later, when mobs began threatening Nauvoo, they buried the coins within a pile of bricks which Hyrum had collected to add on to their home. Ultimately, the collected pennies weighed over three hundred pounds.⁹

Joseph and Hannah Fielding's Family Enjoyed a Comfortable Winter of 1843

During December of 1843, Joseph Fielding wrote that they had moved into their new home before he had completed the doors or windows, but "We soon found it far more comfortable than the old Log House, and we [are spending] the Winter comfortably."¹⁰

Joseph described progress in the city which was now his home, "2 Steam Mills built, and many large Houses." He then made a veiled reference to the temple endowment:

Many have joined the Masonic Institution. This seems to have been a Stepping stone or Preparation for something else, the true Origin of Masonry. This I have also seen and rejoice in it. This Winter there was much Preaching through the City, much said on the Subject of the Coming or Spirit of Elijah. There has been great Light poured out upon the Saints of Late, and a great Spirit of hearing. I have been called to preach several times,

and felt much of the Spirit in general. I have felt well, increasing in Light and Knowledge, and also in Joy in having the Good Will and Confidence of my Brethren, and feeling myself to be one with them in these things. I feel myself blessed and honored.

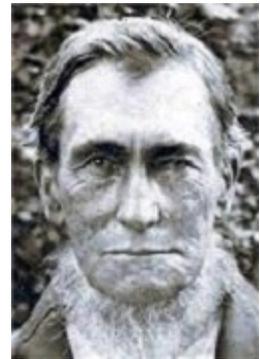
Later he would write:

Some also beside the 12 had received their Endowment, which was expected at the completion of the Temple. I, myself, and my Wife had had this Privilege granted us in part.¹¹

Mercy also wrote that she had received her endowment “by the directions of the Prophet Joseph, his wife Emma officiating in my case, and in his instructions to me at that time he said: ‘This will bring you out of darkness into marvelous light.’”¹²

William McMillan is Adopted by Mercy Fielding Thompson

In the last month of 1843, Hyrum Smith gave William McClellin a patriarchal blessing. In this blessing, he “effected an adoption of William to Robert Blashel and Mercy Rachel Thompson, ‘to be their own son.’ William. . . changed his name to Thompson, [and was] known thereafter as William M. Thompson.” His wife Sarah also took the name of Thompson. From that point, when William named his parents, he named Robert Blashel and Mercy Fielding Thompson.¹³



William McClellin was adopted by Mercy Fielding Thompson.

George Cannon Marries a Widow

In February of 1844, the widower George Cannon married a young widow, Mary Edwards White. She and her husband Joseph White had sailed from England on the *Sidney*, but Joseph had died not long after their arrival in Nauvoo.¹⁴

Joseph Fielding Called to the Council of Fifty

A few weeks prior to the conference of 1844, on March 11th, Joseph Smith organized the Council of Fifty to deal with some of the local problems of apostates. They had another task, also. Joseph Smith wrote:

to secure a resting place in the mountains, or some uninhabited region, where we can enjoy the liberty of conscience guaranteed to us by the Constitution of our country, rendered doubly sacred by the precious blood of our fathers, and denied to us by the present authorities, who have smuggled themselves into power in the States and Nation.¹⁵

Joseph Fielding was among the faithful men who were called at this time, just three months before the Martyrdom. He would faithfully serve in this council, assisting the membership of the Church as they left Nauvoo, camped in Winter Quarters and crossed the plains to Utah. Joseph continued to serve in this council as its core members transitioned to service in the Utah Territorial Legislature in 1850.¹⁶

On April 6th, 1844, Joseph Fielding wrote about the Church's annual conference which "began and continued 4 Days." He said:

Joseph's Discourse on the Origin of Man, the Nature of God and the Resurrection was the most interesting Matter of this time. . . Elder Rigdon also spoke of [the] Persecution he and Joseph passed through at the Commencement of the Work.¹⁷

During this conference, Hyrum spoke, and in his discourse he supported the Women's Penny Fund:

We want 200,000 shingles, as we shall resume the work on the temple immediately. All who have not paid their tithing, come and do it. We want provisions, money, boards, planks, and anything that is good; we don't want any more old guns or watches. I thought some time ago I would get up a small subscription, so that the sisters might do something. In consequence of some misunderstanding, it has not gone on as at first. It is a matter of my own; I do not ask it as a tithing. I give a privilege to any one to pay a cent a week, or fifty cents a year. I want it by next fall to buy nails and glass. It is difficult to get money. I know that a small subscription will bring more than a large one. The poor can help in this way. I take the responsibility upon myself, and call again upon the sisters. I call again until I get about \$1,000. It only requires two thousand subscribers. I have sent this subscription plan to England and the branches. I am not to be dictated to by any one except the Prophet and God. I want you to pay in your subscriptions to me, and it shall always be said boldly by me, the sisters bought the glass in that house, and their names shall be written in the Book of the Law of the Lord. . .No member of the Relief Society got it up. I am the man that did it. They ought not to infringe upon it. I am not a member of the Female Relief Society! I am one of the committee of the Lord's House. I wish to accomplish something. I wish all the Saints to have an opportunity to do something. I want the poor with the purse of five dollars to have a chance. The widow's two mites were more in the eyes of the Lord than the purse of the rich; and the poor woman shall have a seat in the house of God – she who pays her two mites as well as the rich, because it is all she has.¹⁸

Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith Plan to Visit England

It was about this time that Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith planned to visit England. It appears that Hyrum intended to take care of Church business, possibly traveling with Willard Richards. Mary and Jennetta Richards would have accompanied their husbands to visit their families.¹⁹ However, forthcoming events would prevent the trip from ever happening.

William Law and Robert Foster are Excommunicated

Later in April, a grand council was held, comprising thirty-three leading men in the city, including some from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the city council, the Nauvoo high council, and men of good standing in the community. Joseph Fielding was included in this council, which was held for the purpose of excommunicating three men who had fallen into apostasy.²⁰

Joseph Fielding wrote that the men had “been visited in all kindness by 2 of the Brethren” before this action was taken. One of the excommunicated men was William Law, who had joined the Church in Canada seven years earlier after hearing John Taylor preach and where he had been a close associate of Theodore Turley and Robert and Mercy Thompson. He had, since 1841, been a counselor in the First Presidency. William’s wife was also excommunicated at this time. A third person excommunicated that day in the council was Robert Foster, a land speculator. Both men had been reprov’d by Joseph Smith in 1842 for immorality.²¹

On Sunday, May 13th, Joseph and Hannah Fielding heard the prophet Joseph Smith speak:

[He] spoke on the Gospel of the Kingdom and shewd that when God set up his Kingdom on the Earth, Satan always sets up his in Opposition, alluding to the Apostasy at this time working in this Place. I never felt more delighted with his Discourse than at this time. . . He also spoke some on the Resurrection.²²

During the second week of June 1844, Joseph was unaware of what was about to transpire. He had mentioned in May that the men who had been excommunicated had threatened Joseph Smith. But then he wrote of his own accomplishments. “I am employed in cultivating my little Farm for the Support of myself and Family.” The season had been wet, and some of his first planting of corn had not grown well and he’d replanted. However, maize was generally a hardy crop, and while Joseph had a small farm, many Nauvoo residents planted corn in their gardens. “I have labored hard to keep the Land dry.”²³

Spring had come to Nauvoo and all worked in the endeavor to build up the city and take care of their families. Two weeks earlier Jacob Peart and John Sanders met with Willard Richards at his home to discuss mining coal. Joseph Smith was present and “suggested it would be profitable to employ the *Maid of Iowa* in the business of carrying the coal, &c, and all approved of this plan.”²⁴

During this period Joseph Fielding wrote: “Now and then I go to lay my hands on the Sick, in which I take Pleasure, and I mostly get a Blessing.” Joseph then mentioned that Hannah was struggling with the difficulties in the environment in Nauvoo. “I often preach to my Wife, and endeavor to inspire her with Faith. Her Mind has been troubled at some things in the Church.” Joseph specifically mentioned “the Subject of Spiritual Wives.”

However, Joseph defended Hannah in his journal concerning what she had considered to be an insult by Apostle Lyman Wight. Joseph wrote that Elder Wight had said, “that if a Woman complained of being insulted by any Man, she ought to be set down as a Strumpet, on the ground that no Man would do it unless she gave him some liberty.”

Joseph felt strongly enough about the event to devote quite a bit of space to this. He wrote:

This she knew to be a false Notion, from her own Experience. In this she was correct. The Expression of Bro. Wight was spoken publicly in our hearing, and she thinks it hard if a Female is to be insulted as she has been, and to have no redress. I take it as an instance of a Man’s Weakness to hold forth such a Sentiment.

Joseph returned to the topic of polygamy. He wrote:

I see nothing in all that is going on that troubles me at all, but the Way in which Subjects for the celestial Kingdom are selected is not understood, or not considered. I do not boast, but I am thankful for the Ideas which God has given me on this Subject. . . .I believe that all things shall work together for Good to them that Love God, and all is well. I tell my wife I mean to hold on to the Truth at any Cost, and the greatest Cost would be to lose her, but her unbelief shall not stop us.

Joseph determined to strengthen her, and he wrote:

I feel as though I can in spite of this bear her along. Our Children are healthy, and in every Way promising, and we hope they will be in Glory in a future Day.²⁵

First Issue of the Nauvoo Expositor is Printed

Joseph then wrote about the men who had been recently excommunicated:

The Subject of the Apostasy [of the three men excommunicated earlier] has caused some little Excitement. They lately purchased a Press, etc., and printed the first Number of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, which was designed to publish all they could find against Joseph & others, but the first Number was of such a kind that the City Council on mature deliberation according to the Law of the Land, condemned the Press and Paper, and ordered the Whole to be burned, which was accordingly done on the 10th of this Month, June, but the Party made no Resistance.²⁶

While historians today have revisited the incidents which led to the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, through the eyes of Joseph Fielding, the excommunication of the three apostates and the subsequent burning of their press were the two causes he took the time to record in what was otherwise a sparse time of writing.

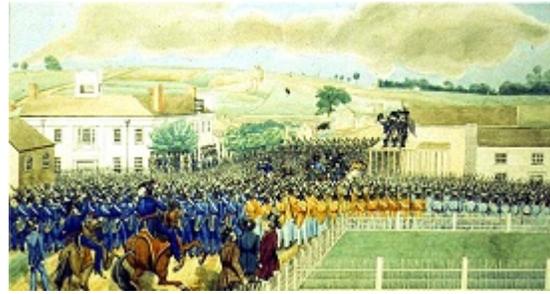
The city council had defended the action of burning the press, stating that the “press threatened their lives and liberties by inciting mob violence,”²⁷ and had been acquitted. However, the matter could not be left alone.

Mercy would later write of Joseph Smith at this time:

In a social gathering of the Saints at the Bowery near the site of the temple, I saw him rejoicing with the people, perfectly sociable and without reserve, occasionally uttering jokes for their amusement and moving upon the same plane with the humblest and poorest of his friends; to him there were no strangers and by all he was known as the Prophet and a friend of humanity. Still he had enemies, and they were always bitter, who wolf-like toward the lamb, hated him not so much as they thirsted for his blood, because their deeds were evil and their natures and their appetites had fallen to crave for violence and delight in vengeance.

Referring to a specific but unnamed event, Mercy wrote:

At another time--a time never to be forgotten--I was present at a meeting when Joseph knelt down with the small congregation surrounding him, when every sentence he uttered seemed to convey to my mind, and to the minds of others present, the impression that this was our last meeting together--and so it was.²⁸



New immigrant Robert Campbell sketched this scene on the site of Joseph Smith raising his sword in the air while speaking to the Nauvoo Legion.



Sutcliffe Maudsley painted Joseph Smith in his full military uniform, a general in the Nauvoo Legion.

As the month of June moved forward, threats of mob violence increased. On June 18th Joseph Smith, as the mayor of Nauvoo, declared martial law. At that time the prophet donned his full military uniform. Unsheathing his sword, he raised it in the air and said:

I call God and angels to witness that I have unsheathed my sword with a firm and unalterable determination that this people shall have their legal rights, and be protected from mob violence, or my blood shall be spilt upon the ground like water, and my body consigned to the silent tomb. While I live, I will never tamely submit to the dominion of cursed mobocracy. I would welcome death rather than submit to this oppression.²⁹

The following day the legion marched in parade formation down Main Street. Many of the men of Nauvoo, including ten of the apostles, were out of the city on missions, but the military formation was still quite large. Joseph Smith then ordered that Stephen Markham post guards on all the roads leading out of the city to prevent mobs or apostates from entering.³⁰

By the end of the week, tensions were so high that Joseph Smith felt it important for the Twelve to gather in Nauvoo:

I wrote to those of the Twelve Apostles who are absent on missions to come home immediately, namely, Brigham Young, Boston; Heber C. Kimball, Washington; Orson Hyde, Philadelphia; Parley P. Pratt, New York; Orson Pratt, Washington; Wilford Woodruff, Portage, New York; William Smith, Philadelphia; George A. Smith, Peterboro; John E. Page, Pittsburg; and Lyman Wight, Baltimore.³¹

A few days later Joseph Smith asked Hyrum to take his family out of the city, which included Mary Fielding and her son and daughter, Mercy Fielding Thompson and her daughter Josephine, and Hyrum's children by Jerusha, which included four surviving children. Hyrum replied, "Joseph, I can't leave you."³²

Governor Thomas Ford Orders Joseph and Hyrum Smith to Carthage

On Saturday, June 22nd, Joseph Fielding wrote:

An Order came from the Governor at Carthage for Joseph, Hyrum and the rest of the City council to appear at Carthage, or rather, they were informed of this by Letter by 2 or 3 who went there to see him.

Carthage was the county seat of Hancock County, of which Nauvoo was a part, and is about twenty miles from Nauvoo. Despite having a courthouse and being in the center of the county, it was a small town with only a few hundred residents. In comparison, Nauvoo had over ten thousand inhabitants.³³

John Taylor was one of the men who had visited with the Illinois Governor, Thomas Ford, in Carthage, and he returned with the governor's letter, which asked Joseph Smith to travel to Carthage. The governor said:

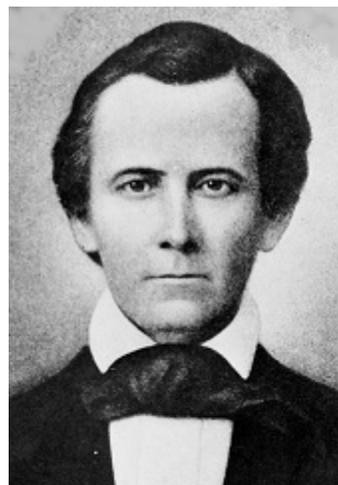
I am anxious to preserve the peace. A small indiscretion may bring on a war. The whole country is now up in arms, and a vast number of people are ready to take the matter into their own hands. Such a state of things might force me to call out the militia to prevent a civil war. And such is the excitement of the country that I fear the militia, when assembled, would be beyond legal control.³⁴

Elder Taylor had advised the governor that "it would be extremely unsafe for Joseph to [travel] to Carthage. . . ." In reply, Governor Ford "pledge his faith as governor, and the faith of the state, that we should be protected, and that he would guarantee our perfect safety."³⁵

Elder Taylor told Joseph Smith that during their meeting, Governor Ford had been accompanied by several LDS apostates, two being William Law and Robert Foster who had recently been excommunicated.³⁶

Joseph and Hyrum Cross the Mississippi River to Montrose, Iowa, Early Sunday Morning

After sundown on Saturday, June 22nd, Joseph Smith and Stephen Markham counseled together on the bank of the Mississippi River. At that time Stephen reported that Joseph said to him, "If Hyrum and I were ever taken again, we should be massacred, or I was not a prophet of God."³⁷ Joseph asked Stephen to call Hyrum in addition to the two apostles in Nauvoo, John Taylor and Willard Richards, also W. W. Phelps, and William Marks, president of the Nauvoo stake,³⁸ and a few others, to meet with him that evening. At that point armed militia arrived from Carthage with warrants for seventeen men who had participated in the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* press. Stephen Markham spoke with the militia, and under Joseph Smith's direction told the soldiers that Joseph Smith would meet with them Sunday morning at 10 a.m.



Members of the Church at the time of the Martyrdom believed Governor Ford was involved with Joseph Smith's murder.

The council met until 4 in the morning. Joseph Smith had determined that the warrants were only an excuse to arrest himself and Hyrum. He felt if he and Hyrum left the city, peace would return. Joseph finally concluded, “We will cross the river . . . and go away to the west.” Joseph Smith left the meeting and privately directed two men to take his and Hyrum’s families on the *Maid of Iowa*, south on the Mississippi and then north on the Ohio, heading east, to Portsmouth, where he would contact them.

Joseph Fielding wrote, “The Prospect now looking very dark and threatening, and they were much perplexed, and after holding Council together most of the Night, Joseph and Hyrum, and one or two more, left the City before Day.”³⁹

Before crossing the river, Joseph Smith put Stephen Markham in charge of the Nauvoo Legion and asked him to dismiss the legion before daybreak so those with the warrants would not see an armed militia in the city. Joseph then promised Stephen, “I tell you in the name of Israel’s God that they shall not have power to hurt you.” Elder Richards, William Clayton, William Marks, and several others then crossed the Mississippi River, ahead of Joseph and Hyrum, in a skiff.⁴⁰



Early in the morning on Sunday, June 23rd, Joseph and Hyrum Smith crossed the Mississippi River into Iowa.

Hyrum spoke to his wife Mary before his early morning departure. Mercy recorded that he said, “Sister Mary, don’t feel bad, the Lord will take care of you, and He will deliver us, but I do not know how.”⁴¹ The prophet left his home with “tears flowing fast. He held a handkerchief to his face.”⁴²

Mercy wrote, “The two brothers then started to cross the river, not knowing whether they would ever see their homes again or not.”⁴³ Their immediate intention was to cross the Mississippi River into Iowa, where they hoped they could not be extradited back to Illinois until further plans could be made.

On Sunday morning, John Taylor learned from Mercy Thompson that the prophet and Hyrum were in Montrose. She told him that Willard Richards had accompanied them. Fearing mobs would attempt to burn the Church’s printing office when they couldn’t find the prophet, he “called to his assistance a few brethren in whom he had confidence and removed the type, the stereotyped plates of the Book of Mormon, and the fixtures that were the most valuable.”⁴⁴

Joseph and Hyrum Make the Decision on Sunday, June 23rd, to Leave for Carthage

Joseph Fielding continued in his journal:

Early in the Day a Company of Men arrived with an Order from the Governor, but as [Joseph and Hyrum] could not be found, all but one of them returned, leaving one to see if they could be found and would go. They were found by the Brethren, but they refused to go. The prospect, however, was so dark, and seemed to threaten entire Destruction to our City; the Governor saying if they refused to go, our City stood upon Kegs of Gun-Powder, and a small Spark would blow it up, and the Officers saying that we should be put under Martial Law till they should be delivered up, if it took 3 years. These things,

together with a recollection of the horrid Scenes of Missouri, and also a firm trust that God would deliver them, induced many of the Saints, and of Joseph's Friends, to wish them to go [to Carthage], yet it was some time before they consented, which they finally did.⁴⁵

One factor in their decision to leave Iowa and be taken to Carthage was that Emma Smith had asked Joseph to surrender.⁴⁶ She sent a message with several men who visited Joseph and Hyrum Sunday afternoon in Montrose.⁴⁷ The men said that the charge wasailable, and they promised to provide the bail money if the two brothers would surrender.⁴⁸ Joseph asked Hyrum his opinion, and he said, "Let us go back and put our trust in God."⁴⁹

In the meantime, Stephen Markham and others, who had been indicted for destroying the press of the apostates, told the soldiers that they would surrender themselves in Carthage by 5 o'clock Sunday afternoon. The soldiers then departed.⁵⁰

John Taylor received word that Joseph Smith wished John to accompany him to Carthage. Elder Taylor had felt strongly that Joseph should flee to save his life. "I must confess that I felt a good deal disappointed at the news, but I immediately made preparations to go."⁵¹ A message was sent to Governor Ford that Joseph and Hyrum would be in Carthage Monday evening, the 25th of June.

Of this period, Mercy wrote:

But on account of the feelings expressed by some of the brethren, who should have been their truest friends, and by their urgent request, sent after them, the brothers returned to Nauvoo [about 4 p.m. Sunday]. Watching from a chamber window I saw them being rowed in a skiff across the river, until they landed, and walked up the riverbank to Hyrum's house, where they both entered, Joseph seating himself, while Hyrum made some changes in his clothing, when they both went on to the mansion. Although I did not know that the brothers had returned home to be taken as 'lambs to the slaughter,' my feelings were indescribable, and the very air seemed burdened with sorrowful forebodings.⁵²

That evening, Stephen Markham and his associates surrendered in Carthage. However, "there was considerable excitement because Joseph and Hyrum were not along, and a good many threats by the people that they would have them or they would go and destroy Nauvoo." The men gave up their arms, but Governor Ford said he wasn't ready to begin a trial. Their entire group was allowed to spend the night in the upper room of the jail where Joseph and Hyrum would be incarcerated a few days later. Late that night, a soldier visited Stephen and told him that he and his men were in grave danger and they needed to take care of themselves. The brethren chose to leave their horses at the jail and then headed toward Nauvoo on foot, although they stayed off the roads.⁵³

Hyrum Smith's Daughter Lovina Marries Lorin Walker

In the midst of the fears Joseph and Hyrum had for their lives, Hyrum's sixteen-year-old daughter Lovina chose to marry Lorin Walker, a twenty-one-year-old close friend of the family who often did chores for Joseph.⁵⁴ Upon learning that Hyrum and Joseph were going to pass through

Nauvoo to surrender in Carthage, this wedding was likely planned in haste Sunday evening so Hyrum could attend. Surely Mary Fielding Smith, Lovina's step-mother, who had raised her since she was ten, along with Emma Smith and Mercy Fielding Thompson, Lovina's aunts living in Nauvoo, would have worked to make this a pleasing event.



Lorin Walker



Lovina Smith, Hyrum's oldest daughter, married the day before he left for Carthage.

Lovina had one younger brother, John, and two younger sisters, Jerusha and Sarah. Mary's children, Joseph Fielding and Martha Ann, were half-siblings.

Hyrum Smith Reads from The Book of Mormon Before Leaving Nauvoo Monday June 24th

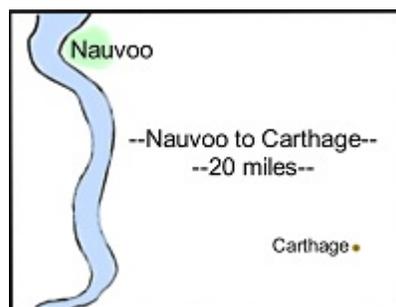
Before leaving his home early Monday morning, Hyrum pulled a British copy of the Book of Mormon off the bookshelf. Indicating that he suspected the fate which awaited him, Hyrum turned to a passage in Ether 12:

And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity. And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.

After reading this passage, Hyrum marked the verse by folding down the corner of the page. He then placed the book back on the shelf.⁵⁵

Joseph and Hyrum Return to Nauvoo Before Heading Back to Carthage

Eighteen men besides Joseph and Hyrum Smith had been indicted by the governor. Many of these men had surrendered the night before in Carthage. The rest, plus several others, traveled with Joseph and Hyrum Smith.⁵⁶ William Richards, who had not been indicted, also accompanied the group.



Hyrum's son, five-year-old Joseph F., recalled that his uncle and father looked "grand" as they rode off to Carthage:

The 20-mile distance between Carthage and Nauvoo was well-traveled in June of 1844.

When they went to Carthage, Joseph Smith rode one of the best horses in the State of Illinois, and my father rode another. I remember very well his attempt to get on him with his military cap. . .and the sword by his side. The horse would not let him get on; he was simply obstreperous and would not permit him to get on while he wore his military cap and sword, and he was obliged to take off the sword and the cap and then the horse was docile enough to let him

get on, and then they stole his cap and sword up to him the best they could without the horse seeing it. . . . and then old Sam took to his heels and ran up the road pretty quick. I thought it was grand; I thought, 'Oh, when I get to be a man, would I like to have a horse like old Sam.' We called him 'old Sam' later; he was young Sam that day; but we kept him until we got to Winter Quarters and he gave up the ghost and we buried him there.⁵⁷

Chapter 23 Endnotes Pages 360-372:

1. Mercy's first-hand account of this marriage can be read online at:

<http://udn.lib.utah.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/deseretnews4/id/2185/rec/7>. The article is on page 72 of the February 17th 1886 issue of The Deseret News, which is page 7 of the digitized version. Joseph Smith III, the leader of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, insisted that his father, Joseph Smith the Prophet, had not instituted or sanctioned plural marriage. Mercy's letter to Joseph Smith III was written on September 5th, 1883, with a copy given by Amos M. Musser to the Deseret News for publication in 1886, directly contradicting his claims. Her letter followed a letter by Thomas Grover, which was written on January 10th of 1886 and published in The Deseret News on January 11th. Brother Grover, my mother's great-grandfather, was the last surviving member of the original Nauvoo High Council. In this letter Thomas testified that he had been present when Hyrum Smith had read a letter to the council written by Joseph Smith about plural marriage. I deal with Mercy's letter to Joseph Smith III when I discuss the persecution of polygamists in the mid-1880s.

2. Mercy Thompson and the Revelation on Marriage, by Jed Woodworth. "Mercy called for the manuscript copy of the revelation written on foolscap paper and kept it in her home for four or five days, studying over the contents in her mind. Only after much prayer and pondering did she give her consent. On August 11, 1843, Joseph Smith married Hyrum and Mercy at Mary and Hyrum's house on the corner of Water and Main Streets in Nauvoo."

3. Daughter of Britain, pages 152-153. This excerpt is from a different source than the 1886 Deseret News article. Author Don Corbett referred to a letter by Mercy to her posterity, and in the footnote he called it the "Thompson Centennial Letter." I cannot locate this letter. Preceding the quote above Mercy wrote: "On the 11th of August 1843, I was called by direct revelation from heaven through Brother Joseph the Prophet to enter into a state of plural marriage with Hyrum Smith the Patriarch. This subject, when communicated to me, tried me to the very core. All my former traditions and every natural feeling of my heart rose in opposition to this principle, but I was convinced that it was appointed by Him who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind."

4. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 131-132.

5. Mercy Thompson's "Recollections."

6. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 53.

7. Thompson Centennial Letter, excerpt from Daughter of Britain, pages 155-156.

8. "To the sisters of the Church of Jesus Christ in England, greetings: Dear Sisters: – This is to inform you that we have here entered into a small weekly subscription for the benefit of the Temple Funds. One thousand have already joined it, while many more are expected, by which we trust to help forward the great work very much. The amount is only one cent or halfpenny per week. As brother Amos Fielding is waiting for this, I cannot enlarge more than say, that myself and sister Thompson are engaged in collecting the same. We remain, Your affectionate sisters in Christ, Mary Smith, M. R. Thompson." A copy of this letter was transcribed in Daughter of Britain, page 156. An article by Heidi Bennett describing the penny fund is found at this link:

<https://history.lds.org/article/museum-treasures-the-nauvoo-temple?lang=eng>. In this article, Sister Bennet provided the picture of the Penny Box. She also stated that over \$2,000 was raised.

9. Don C. Corbett in Daughter of Britain, page 157, stated that the pennies weighed 343 pounds.

10. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 130.
11. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 131, 135. February 21, 2015.
12. Mercy Thompson “Recollections,” printed in the *Juvenile Instructor*, Issue 27, 1892, page 398. This entire document is easily found on Mercy’s page at Family Tree. Her ID number is KWV9-HX5.
13. Family History of Charles Edward Knell, page 222.
14. Nauvoo Death Records show that Joseph White, born in 1818, died on 11 November 1842 in Nauvoo. In true British fashion, he was eight years younger than his wife Mary. Ship records do not show Mary Edwards White and her husband Joseph on the *Sidney*. That information comes from the Cannon Family Historical Treasury, page 61.
15. History of the Church, Volume VI, pages 260-261.
16. Joseph Fielding was a member of this council from its inception, which was also called the Council of Fifty. Later, on pages 146-147 of his journal, he wrote, “I still hold a Place in the Council of Fifty, and have done from its first Organisation by Joseph Smith. . . .” He mentioned this council again after he arrived in Utah.
17. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 132.
18. History of the Church, Volume VI, pages 298-299.
19. Letter from Jennetta Richards to Her Parents and Family, Written from Nauvoo, Illinois, July 8, 1844, located in her Family Tree file, KWVQ-GXM. Jennetta informed her parents of the deaths of Hyrum and Joseph Smith and included locks of their hair. She wrote, “Oh how I long to see you and converse with you. I did flatter myself, I should go to England soon; had not this taken place. Hyrum Smith and his family intended going next fall, or Spring, and I think very likely you would have had a visit from us. . . .”
20. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 341. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 132.
21. Church History in the Fulness of Times, Student Manual, 2003, pages 263-271.
22. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 132.
23. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 132. Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, pages 137. “Corn, long a Southern staple, soon rivaled wheat – the favorite of the Yankees and British – for the kitchen table. Corn meal could be baked into a bread, fried as corn pones, boiled as mush, and used in other ways. The wheat-flour Saints who were not accustomed to cooking with cornmeal soon adapted, for it was the most prevalent grain for household use in western Illinois.”
24. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 424.
25. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 132-133.
26. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 133.
27. Martyrdom at Carthage, by Reed Blake, Ensign, June 1994.
28. Mercy Thompson, “Recollections.”
29. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 499.

30. History of the Church, Volume VI, pages 504-505.
31. History of the Church, Volume VI, pages 499-500, 519.
32. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 520.
33. Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, page 179, "The same 1845 census that counted 11,057 Nauvoo residents found only 402 people living in Warsaw and 380 in Carthage. Chicago that year had 12,088 residents, only 1,031 more than Nauvoo."
34. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 536.
35. Life of John Taylor, pages 124-125.
36. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 543.
37. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 546, states that this conversation happened after the meeting in Joseph Smith's chamber. In a letter written by Stephen Markham to Wilford Woodruff, dated 20 June 1856, Stephen made a special note that these particular words were spoken before the meeting. This letter is found in the appendix of the biography of Stephen Markham titled "Stephen Markham: Defender of the Kingdom," by Mark Goodmansen. I used my husband's copy.
38. Glen Leonard stated several times in Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, that William Marks was the president of the Nauvoo high council. He apparently acted in the role of the Nauvoo stake president, and it seems that Brigham Young intended to sustain him to that position in the October 1844 conference, but that never happened. However, in the History of the Church, VII, page 225, William Marks was referred to as the Nauvoo stake president. Setting technicalities aside, I have chosen to refer to William as the Nauvoo stake president throughout.
39. Joseph Fielding Diary, Page 133.
40. Stephen Markham letter.
41. Mercy Thompson, "Recollections."
42. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 547.
43. Mercy Thompson, "Recollections."
44. Life of John Taylor, page 126.
45. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 133.
46. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 552. "It was the strong persuasions of Reynolds Cahoon, Lorenzo D. Wasson and Hiram Kimball, who were carrying out Emma's instructions, that induced Joseph and Hyrum to start back to Nauvoo. When they arrived at the Mansion in Nauvoo, Joseph's family surrounded him, and he tarried there all night, giving up the idea of preaching to the Saints by starlight."
47. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 548.
48. Stephen Markham letter.
49. History of the Church, Volume VI, page 550.
50. Stephen Markham letter.

51. Life of John Taylor, page 128.

52. Mercy Thompson, "Recollections." History of the Church Volume VI, page 551. "About 4 p.m., Joseph, Hyrum, the Doctor and others started back."

53. Stephen Markham letter.

54. *Pioneer*, Sons of the Utah Pioneers Magazine, 2014 Volume 61 Number 4, page 15.

55. Joseph F. Smith wrote on the back flyleaf of the very volume from which Hyrum read from: "On the morning that Joseph and Hyrum Smith started to Carthage two or three days before the martyrdom, Hyrum took this book of Mormon from the Bookcase, and turning to page 610 he read the last paragraph and turned down the corner of the leaf upon it. (See Doctrine and Covenants Sec. 135, pa. 4 & 5.) Ever since that time this book has been in the hands or care of Mary R. Thompson until her death, Sept. 15, 1893, and since then in the possession of her daughter, Mary Jane. This was written by my hand, Jos. F. Smith, Dec. 30, 1898." In the October General Conference of 2009, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland showed this book in his conference address about the Book of Mormon. In a subsequent article in the Deseret News, Richard E. Turley, Jr., the assistant Church historian and recorder, said, "The book is exquisite – leather-bound with gold filigree on its edges and stamped into its cover and sides. The book traveled quite a bit before landing in Hyrum Smith's home in Nauvoo, Ill. It is a first edition from the European printing in 1841. . . . It just so happened that Liverpool was a wonderful place to publish books. Even the more ordinary volumes were done with very high standards. This is a remarkable volume." The article was titled, "A Chain of Testimony: 1841 Copy of Book of Mormon Stays Preserved" and was published October 8th, 2009.

56. History of the Church, Volume VI, pages 553-554, names eighteen men in the party with Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and this list includes Stephen Markham. By Stephen's own account, he and many others surrendered the night before.

57. "The Boyhood Recollections of President Joseph F. Smith As Told By Himself," The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine; Volume VII, April 1916, page 57. This can be found online at:
https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE94537