

The New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage

The Early Practice of Polygamy, the Utah
Experience and the Manifesto

“I fear I have little to offer by of explaining polyandry. It remains a puzzle. All I know is that Joseph Smith was preoccupied with sealing—not just husbands to wives, but children to parents, and one generation to another. He wanted to lock people into relationships—not necessarily sentimental relationships but ones of mutual obligation and cooperation. Our preoccupation with romance blocks us, I think, from understanding what he was getting at. I am sure he had affection for his wives, but marriage as a culmination of a powerful attraction was not is point. He saw marriage as the formation of a relationship that would in some way make people responsible to one another. All of this was connected in turn with raising up a people. Another element is his concern for lineage—that priesthood comes down by lineage. Forming the right kinds of line or being linked to the right lines facilitates that transmission.”

Richard Bushman, *On the Road with Joseph Smith*, p. 97-98.

Joseph Smith-History: 36-37

36 After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the ^athird chapter of Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus:

37 *For behold, the ^aday cometh that shall ^bburn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as ^cstubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.*

History: 38-39

38 And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: *Behold, I will reveal unto you the ^aPriesthood, by the hand of ^bElijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the ^cLord.*

39 He also quoted the next verse differently: *And he shall plant in the hearts of the ^achildren the ^bpromises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.*

Joseph further explained:

“But what is the object of [the coming of Elijah]? or how is it to be fulfilled? The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, the Gospel to be established, the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion

“But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples ... and going forth and receiving all the ordinances ... in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead ... ; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 472-73).

Quoted by Elder Bednar, 2011, Church Website.

“The imagery of a chain of the generations was clear in my mind. The **warning to not become a weak link in the chain of the generations** was powerful in my heart. The admonition to never do anything which would weaken the chain of the generations penetrated my soul.”

Elder Bednar, 2017, Church Website.

“Members today may worry about the future practice of plural marriage. Exalted beings receive a fulness of joy. Because the power to seal is also the power to loosen, vicarious (and living) ordinances prior to the resurrection will assure that all worthy beings are sealed in joyful eternal marriages they have chosen.”

Handout

Possible reasons for requiring plural marriage:

1. Restore all things.
2. Bind families together
3. Raise up a righteous generation

“Latter-day Saints do not understand all of God’s purposes for instituting, through His prophets, the practice of plural marriage during the 19th century. The Book of Mormon identifies one reason for God to command it: to increase the number of children born in the gospel covenant in order to ‘raise up seed unto [the Lord]’” ([Jacob 2:30](#)).

“Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah,” *Gospel Topics Essays* (2016)

D&C: 132: 40 and 45

40 I am the Lord thy God, and I gave unto thee, my servant Joseph, an ^aappointment, and restore all things. Ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto you according to my word.

45 For I have conferred upon you the ^akeys and power of the priesthood, wherein I ^brestore all things, and make known unto you all things in due time.

Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855-1906), Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1929:

“The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold.

Quoted by Elder Bednar in 2014, Church Web Site.

Elder Whitney, continued

“Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father’s heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God.”³

In 1933, President Heber J. Grant and his counselors in the **First Presidency** explained that the term “celestial marriage” does not imply plural marriage: “Celestial marriage—that is, marriage for time and eternity—and polygamous or plural marriage are not synonymous terms. Monogamous marriages for time and eternity, solemnized in our temples in accordance with the word of the Lord and the laws of the Church, are Celestial marriages” (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [1971], 5:329).

How many members lived law of plural marriage?

President Gordon B Hinkley, Interview with Larry King, Deseret News, September 9, 1998.

[President Hinley] also reiterated that polygamy now practiced in Utah is in no way associated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which stopped the practice in 1890.

"When our people came West they permitted it, on a restricted scale. The figure I have is between 2 percent and 5 percent of our people were involved in it. It was a very limited practice, carefully safeguarded."

In 1890, President Wilford Woodruff received revelation and directed the church to cease the practice."

“Latter-day Saints do not understand all of God’s purposes for instituting, through His prophets, the practice of plural marriage during the 19th century. The Book of Mormon identifies one reason for God to command it: to increase the number of children born in the gospel covenant in order to ‘raise up seed unto [the Lord]’” ([Jacob 2:30](#)).

“Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah,” *Gospel Topics Essays* (2016)

“Probably half of those living in Utah Territory in 1857 experienced life in a polygamous family as a husband, wife, or child at some time during their lives.²¹ By 1870, 25 to 30 percent of the population lived in polygamous households, and it appears that the percentage continued to decrease over the next 20 years.”

“Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah,” *Gospel Topics Essays* (2016)

“Although some leaders had large polygamous families, two-thirds of polygamist men had only two wives at a time.¹⁸ Church leaders recognized that plural marriages could be particularly difficult for women. Divorce was therefore available to women who were unhappy in their marriages; remarriage was also readily available.”

“Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah,” *Gospel Topics Essays* (2016)

Parley P. Pratt suggested the profound implications of all this for our relationships to deity and to each other: “Gods, angels, and men are all of one species, one race, one great family, widely diffused among the planetary systems.

Quoted by Terryl Givens, *BYU Studies*, 45. No. 1, p. 13

Joseph emphasized the primacy and durability of personal relationships.

On the eve of his martyrdom, the Prophet turned to Dr. Willard Richards and said: “If we go into the cell, will you go in with us?” The doctor answered, “Brother Joseph you did not ask me to cross the river with you—you did not ask me to come to Carthage—you did not ask me to come to jail with you—and do you think I would forsake you now? But I will tell you what I will do; if you are condemned to be hung for treason, I will be hung in your stead, and you shall go free.” Joseph said, “You cannot.” The doctor replied, “I will.”

Quoted by Terryl Givens, *BYU Studies*, 45. No.1, p. 14.

When he revealed that the “same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there [in the eternal world],”³³ Joseph was affirming the fact that heaven is constructed out of a web of human relationships that extend in every direction. By the time his work was done, he had laid the groundwork for men to be sealed to their wives across the eternities; for parents to be sealed to their children and their children’s children and to their parents and their parents’ parents across infinite generations; and for friends to be bound to friends in a great assembly and Church of the Firstborn.

Terryl Givens, *BYU Studies*, 45, No.1, p. 14

Parley Pratt singled out this dimension to Joseph's teachings as a supreme contribution: It was Joseph Smith who taught me how to prize the endearing relationships of father and mother, husband and wife; of brother and sister, son and daughter. It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love. . . . I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this grovelling sphere and expand it as the ocean.

Quoted by Terryl Givens, *BYU Studies*, 45, No. 1, p14-15.

Brigham Young stated: “When your daughters have grown up, and wish to marry let them have their choice in a husband. ... Take this or that man if you want them my girls, ... you shall have your own agency in the matter even as I want mine.” Brigham Young Sermon, Apr. 16, 1854, Brigham Young Office Files, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

“Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah,” *Gospel Topics Essays* (2016)

“leaders recognized that plural marriages could be particularly difficult for women. Divorce was therefore available to women who were unhappy in their marriages; remarriage was also readily available.¹

Brigham Young to William H. Dame, Aug. 8, 1867, Brigham Young Letterbook, vol. 10, p. 340, Brigham Young Office Files, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; Daynes, *Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System*, 141-70.

“Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah,” *Gospel Topics Essays* (2016)

“

In general, women in Utah Territory could obtain a divorce more easily than in most other places in the United States at the time. One of Brigham Young's clerks explained: "As a rule, the Prest. [Brigham Young] never refuses a bill [of divorcement] on the application of a wife, and NEVER when she INSISTS on it." Quoted in Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families*, 253.

Latter-day Saints believe that monogamy—the marriage of one man and one woman—is the Lord’s standing law of marriage.

* * *

Although the Lord commanded the adoption—and later the cessation—of plural marriage in the latter days, He did not give exact instructions on how to obey the commandment. Significant social and cultural changes often include misunderstandings and difficulties.

[ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo

Joseph told associates that an angel appeared to him three times between 1834 and 1842 and commanded him to proceed with plural marriage when he hesitated to move forward. During the third and final appearance, the angel came with a drawn sword, threatening Joseph with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the commandment fully.⁹

See Brian C. Hales, “Encouraging Joseph Smith to Practice Plural Marriage: The Accounts of the Angel with a Drawn Sword,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 69-70.

ChurchofJesusChrist.org

Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo

Some Saints also saw plural marriage as a redemptive process of sacrifice and spiritual refinement. According to Helen Mar Kimball, Joseph Smith stated that “the practice of this principle would be the hardest trial the Saints would ever have to test their faith.” Though it was one of the “severest” trials of her life, she testified that it had also been “one of the greatest blessings.”⁴⁶ Her father, Heber C. Kimball, agreed. “I never felt more sorrowful,” he said of the moment he learned of plural marriage in 1841. “I wept days. ... I had a good wife. I was satisfied.”⁴⁷

ChurchofJesusChrist.org

Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo

Despite claims that Joseph Smith fathered children within plural marriage, genetic testing has so far been negative, though it is possible he fathered two or three children with plural wives. (See Ugo A. Perego, “Joseph Smith, the Question of Polygamous Offspring, and DNA Analysis,” in Newell G. Bringham and Craig L. Foster, eds., *The Persistence of Polygamy: Joseph Smith and the Origins of Mormon Polygamy* [Independence, MO: John Whitmer Books, 2010], 233-56.)

ChurchofJesusChrist.org

Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo

The consummate author of the Western experience, Wallace Stegner, penned "The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail."

[H]e writes, "That I do not accept the faith that possessed them does not mean I doubt their frequent devotion and heroism in its service. Especially their women. Their women were incredible."

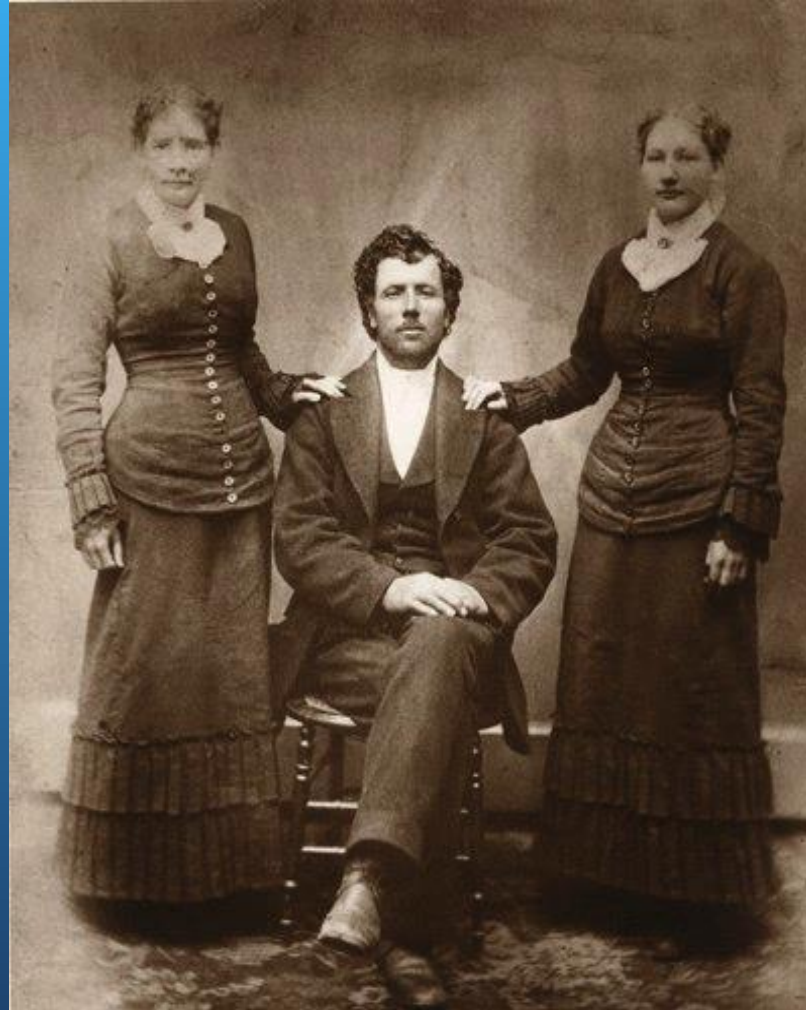
Stegner's words are a powerful reminder of the often quiet yet critical role women played in the Mormon westward crossing. I would even venture to say that the trail experience and, in this instance, the settling of Utah would have been impossible without the contributions of women of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Kristine Frederickson, Columnist Jul 30, 2015, 10:00am MDT Kris /
Kristine Frederickson, For the Deseret News

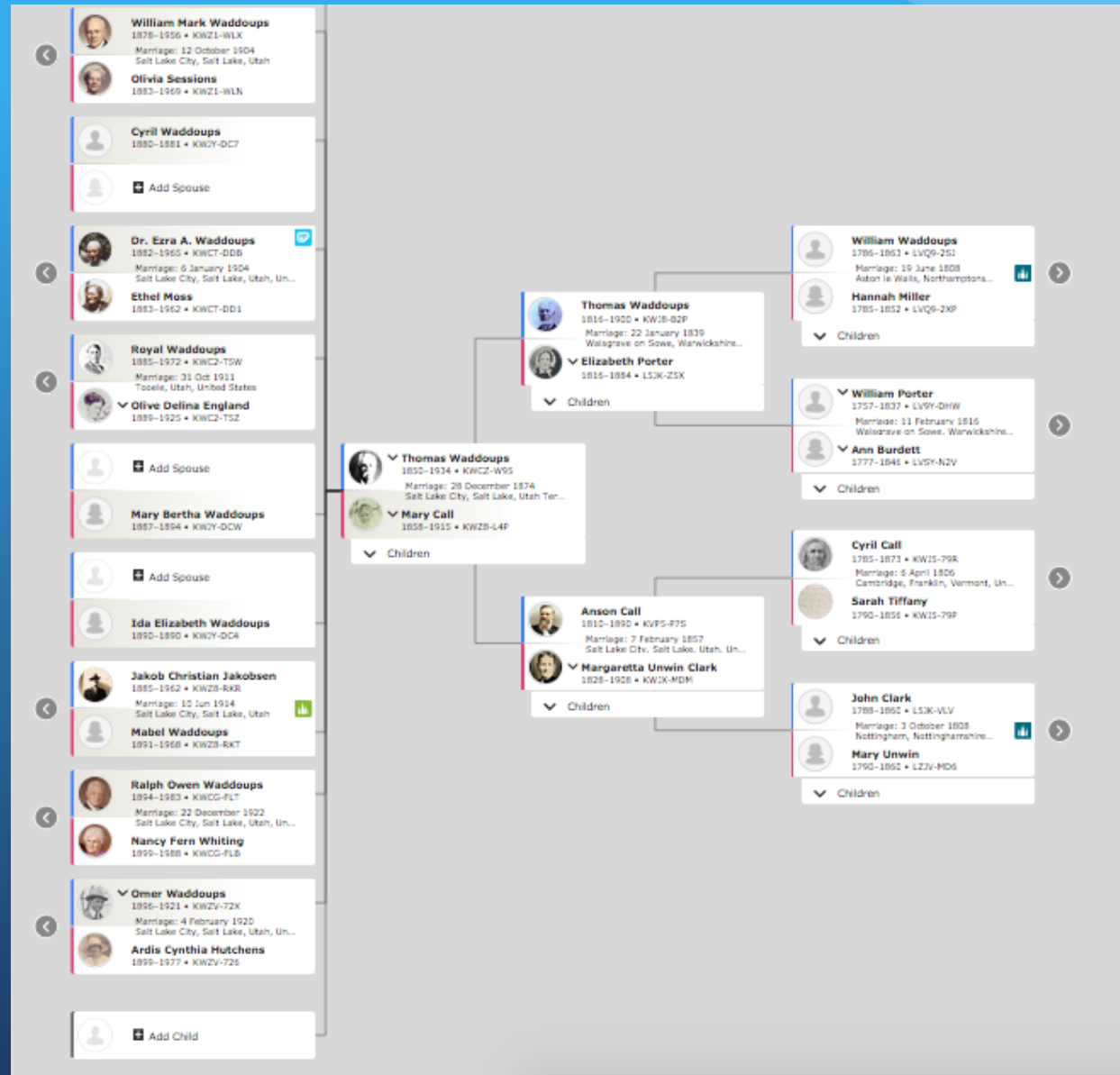
Manifesto: September 1890

- For many the Manifesto was as hard to accept as accepting Plural marriage.
- Wilford Woodruff believe his decision had been confirmed by the Lord and living Plural Marriage was no longer required.
- “No Unhallowed Hand, pp. 602-615.

Thomas Waddoups, Mary and Cynthia Call My Grandfather



Impact of polygamy on my family



**Thara Call Waddoups**
1882-1979 • KWZQ-2WL
Marriage: 1906
Bountiful, Davis Co., Utah

**Josie King**
1885-1960 • KWZ6-3BK

**Aaron Call Waddoups**
1885-1911 • KWVQ-SBM

 Add Spouse

**Moroni Hatch Mann**
1887-1947 • KWZ8-ZDR
Marriage: 19 October 1910
Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah

**Cynthia Elva Waddoups**
1888-1981 • KWZ9-ZDY

 Add Spouse

**Eunice Margaretta Waddoups**
1890-1981 • KWDC-DC4

**Charles Ellis Earl**
1891-1962 • KWZ2-WSM
Marriage: 11 Oct 1920
Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah, Un...

**Irene Waddoups**
1893-1979 • KWZ2-WSL

**Howard Ericksen Bitter**
1899-1941 • KWCS-Y15
Marriage: Oct 1924
of Beaver Dam, Box Elder Co., Utah

**Beatrice Waddoups**
1897-1985 • KWCS-Y1R

**Milton Kenneth Rogerson**
1904-1992 • KWCS-KV5
Marriage: 23 SEP 1929
Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah

**Cleo Waddoups**
1905-1996 • KWCS-KV3

 Add Child

**Thomas Waddoups**
1816-1920 • KW18-82P
Marriage: 22 January 1839
Walsgrave on Soave, Warwickshire...


**Elizabeth Porter**
1816-1884 • L53K-25X

Children

**Thomas Waddoups**
1850-1934 • KWZ2-W95
Marriage: 16 Dec 1880

**Cynthia Call**
1864-1946 • KWZ2-W9R

Children

**Anson Call**
1816-1890 • KW5E-EZS
Marriage: 7 February 1857
Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah, Un...

**Margaretha Margaretta Unwi...**
1828-1928 • KW1X-MDM

Children

**William Waddoups**
1786-1863 • LVQ9-2S2
Marriage: 19 June 1808
Ashton le Walls, Northamptonshire...

**Hannah Miller**
1785-1852 • LVQ9-2XP

Children

**William Porter**
1757-1837 • LV9Y-DHW
Marriage: 11 February 1816
Walsgrave on Soave, Warwickshire...

**Ann Burdett**
1777-1846 • LV5Y-N2V

Children

**Cyril Call**
1785-1873 • KW15-79R
Marriage: 6 April 1806
Cambridge, Franklin, Vermont, Un...

**Sarah Tiffany**
1790-1856 • KW15-79P

Children

**John Clark**
1788-1860 • L53K-VLV
Marriage: 3 October 1808
Nottingham, Nottinghamshire...

**Mary Unwin**
1790-1860 • L23V-MDE

Children

Matilada Pool Western McFarland
Born March 29, 1838, Malaga Spain.



West Weber Novbr 27th 1886

My Dear Husband

Received your kind and well come
letter and was glad to hear that you are
in good health and spirits I have no
doubt but you are very happy on your
play ground with your old play mates
work to do and treated like a lord.

I have often said to me that you
wished you could have the chance to kneel
on and kiss your native sod and lay
under the trees and have one good sleep
without the fear of snakes or lizards.
now you have the chance that you have
not had for years for. so you had better
enjoy your time while you are there.

perhaps when you come home it will
be winter then it ever has been used.

“West Weber, November 2, 1876

“My dear husband,

“I have received your kind and welcome letter and was glad to hear that you are in good health and spirits. I have no doubt but you are very happy in your old playground with your old playmates, no work to do and treated like a Lord. You have often said to me that you wished you could have the chance to kneel down and kiss your native sod and lay under the trees and have one good sleep without the fear of snakes or lizards. So now you have the chance that you have sighed for years for, so you had better improve your time while you are there, and perhaps when you come home it will be sweeter than it has ever been yet. I believe you are fond of your children and that may possibly bring you back to Utah.

* * *

November 1876 Letter continued

“The folks here are very much pleased because you write to Hannah and honor and respect her and her children, and slight me and mine. Now you say that you are not ashamed of me and that you love me, but you are ashamed of me. You don’t want anyone here to know that you care anything for me or my children and especially Grandy and Hannah, it’s just food for their souls. But I don’t care much for myself, but for the children. I don’t like to see them despised, for I know they think much of you and it hurts their feelings.

* * *

“Now I think I have said enough this time. I know you are tired of my nonsense, so no more at present from your wife that loves you.”

Matilda McFarland

No

Jame's Home coming from Scotland, Autum 1877.

Arrived quietly in the middle of the night.

Talked till morning.

Gift of knives and forks of the finest Sheffield steel and a book on the history of England.

James left before dawn towards Hannah's house: "no need to say anything to Hannah."

Blessing given Matilda by patriarch Elisha Groves, Cedar Fort,
February 1854

“Thou are a daughter of Abraham, of the loins of Joseph,
of the blood of Ephraim . . .

“Thou shalt become a mother in Israel. Thy posterity
shall multiply and increase upon the earth. Thy children, and thy
children’s children, arising after thee, shall bless thee and
administer unto thee in thine old age.

“Thy name shall be handed down to the latest posterity
as an honorable mother in Zion. . . . God will crown thee, thy
kingdom, domain, power and glory; and eternal increase shall be
thine. . . . Be thou therefore faithful. Yield to no temptation and
these blessings shall be sure unto thee. I seal them upon thy head
in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. . . .”