

Joseph Smith History 1:27-65



The Joseph and Polly Knight Farm home in Colesville, New York

Joseph Knight, Jr. learned about the plates from Joseph Smith

When Joseph Smith was a young man he needed employment, and took work in a variety of places, including agreeing to dig for treasure for Josiah Stowell. Stowell was convinced there was Spanish Treasure in the area near Harmony, Pennsylvania. The best thing that came of that venture was Joseph's opportunity to meet Emma Hale. Both father and son Joseph Smith boarded with the Hale family while digging for Mr. Stowell in 1825.

After a few weeks of digging, Joseph convinced Mr. Stowell this was a hopeless endeavor and the digging ceased. Young Joseph Smith still needed a job, but he didn't go back home to Palmyra. He chose to stay a little closer to Harmony, Pennsylvania where Emma Hale lived.

Joseph Smith agreed to work for Josiah Stowell on his farm and mills in South Bainbridge, which was only about 20 miles from Harmony, much closer than going 140 miles home to Manchester. Emma Hale had a sister, Elizabeth Hale Wasson, living in Colesville with her husband and children, which gave Joseph Smith even more possibility of seeing Emma, if he worked in that area.

In the fall of 1826, Josiah Stowell no longer needed Joseph Smith, and Smith was hired to work at the Knight farm. Father Knight had 140 acres of land, a grist mill, and a carding machine and his two older sons were married with land of their own to work, so he hired Joseph Smith, Jr.

When Joseph Smith came to work with the Knights, it was just a few weeks after his third trip to Hill Cumorah. The Gold Plates and that experience at Cumorah would have been fresh on his mind, as well as his hope of getting the plates the following year. When Joseph was sitting by the Knight family hearth in the evening, or working beside the men in the fields, it's not surprising that he would want to share this exciting news with someone, especially when he found friends he could trust.

Joseph Knight, Jr. in later years wrote about some of his memories on the events of that season when Joseph Smith lived in the Knight home.

“My father bought three other farms and hired many hands. In 1826 he hired Joseph Smith. Joseph and I worked and slept together.¹ My father said Joseph was the best hand he ever hired. We found him a boy of truth; he was about 21 years of age.

I think it was in November he made known to me and my Father that he had seen a vision, that a personage had appeared to him and told him where there was a gold book of ancient date buried, and if he would follow the directions of the Angel, he could get it.

We were told in secret. I being the youngest son, my two older brothers did not believe in such things. My Father and I believed what he told us, I think we were the first after his father's family. He went to see them [the plates], but did not go as he was told so he could not get them. As my father has given the particulars I will skip over. At last, he got the plates, and rode in my father's wagon and carried them home.²

Diane L. Mangum 2024

¹ The Knight home in Colesville is still standing. The home is about 1300 square feet on two levels. Upstairs were two bedrooms; on the south end was the girl's bedroom and on the north end was the boy's bedroom. Parents slept downstairs. Only the three youngest Knight children were still living at home at the time Joseph Smith came to work on the farm, Joseph, Jr., Polly and Elizabeth.

² William G. Hartley, *They Are My Friends, the History of the Joseph Knight Family 1825 – 1850*, Grandin Book, 1986, pp 213-214.