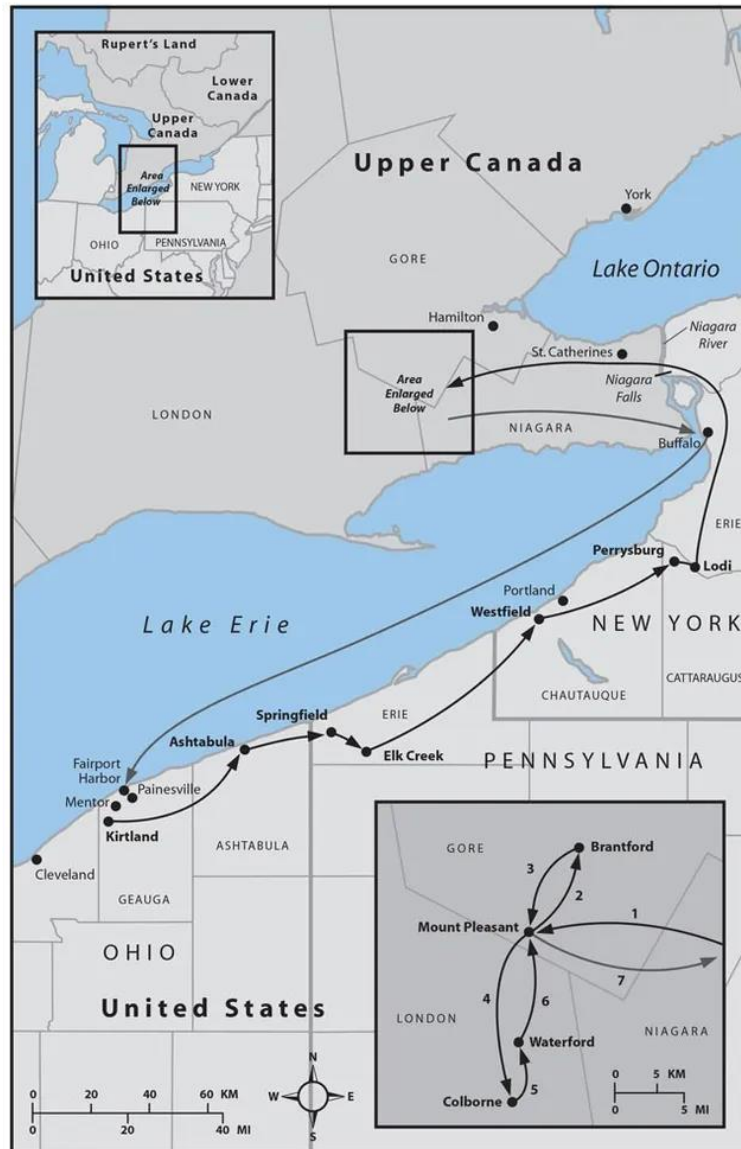


Joseph Knight Family Connections to the 2025 Come Follow Me Lessons

Doctrine and Covenants 100

Joseph Smith's mission to Canada and the baptism of Lydia Goldthwaite, future wife of Newel Knight



Soon after arriving in Kirtland, Freeman and Huldah Nickerson sought out Joseph Smith. They were new converts from Perrysburg, New York. They had a request for the prophet. They asked him to travel with them to Mount Pleasant, Ontario, Canada to teach the gospel to their sons.

Joseph agreed, and decided to make it a more formal missionary journey. He asked Sidney Rigdon to join him as a companion and they made a 500-mile round trip journey with stops in ten different towns.

On October 5, 1833, Joseph, Sidney and Freeman Nickerson left Kirtland, ready to preach in towns along the way to Mount Pleasant. As they traveled, there was much on the prophet's mind. There had been recent trouble in both Missouri and Kirtland where some wanted to harass members of the Church. The safety of Joseph's wife and two small children at home was on his mind.

The Revelation that became D & C 100 was received while the group was at the home of the Nickerson's in Perrysburg, New York. It included the comfort, "Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my friends Sidney & Joseph, your families are well; they are in mine hands, and I will do with them as seemeth me good." (D & C 100:1)

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon traveled with Freeman Nickerson to Mount Pleasant, Upper Canada, to proselytize Nickerson's relatives, preaching in western New York along the way. (Research by Richard L. Jensen and Mark Ashurst-McGee. Design by John Hamer.) Map courtesy of LDS Church. Found in the *Joseph Smith's Revelations: A Doctrine and Covenants Study Companion from the Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/church-historians-press/jsp-revelations/dc-100-1833_10_12_000?lang=eng

The two missionaries must have been encouraged by the words that followed in that revelation:
“Behold and lo, I have much people in this place, in the regions round about; and an effectual door shall be opened in the regions round about this eastern land
Therefore I, the Lord, have suffered you to come unto this place; for thus it was expedient in me for the salvation of souls.
Therefore, verily I say unto you, lift up your voices and speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded of men.
For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea in the very moment, what ye shall say.”
(D & C 100:3-6)

Joseph Smith wrote in his journal history the places they stopped to preach and it appears the doors had been opened for them. The next day they preached at the town of Lodi, New York, and continuing on to Mt. Pleasant, they found a large group ready to hear them preach. They also met with a group in Colburn, Waterford, and Brantford, Ontario.¹

Preaching in Mt. Pleasant

Joseph Smith recorded that after passing through a fine and well cultivated country in Upper Canada, were kindly welcomed at the Eleazer and Eliza Nickerson home in Mt. Pleasant. The two sons of Freeman Nickerson moved to Canada in 1830, and built a store that did very well, and Eleazer married Eliza McAlister not long after that.

When Freeman Nickerson's and the missionaries arrived in Mount Pleasant, they met a house guest who had been with the family for an extended stay, Lydia Goldthwaite Bailey.

Eleazar Nickerson had known Lydia's family in his younger years, and stopped by the Goldthwaite home while traveling for business. As he visited the family he asked mother Sally Goldthwaite why Lydia was so full of sorrow. He learned she had married Calvin Bailey when she was 16 and living away at school. A year later she had a baby Rosanna, and two years later she delivered a baby boy, Edwin, who died the day he was born. Her marriage had not been a good one, and her husband left her. The heartbroken girl moved home to live with her parents with little Rosanna. Sadly, Rosanna died just the month before Eleazar Nickerson's visit.

According to Lydia's history, Mr. Nickerson said to Lydia's mother,
“I will tell you what, Mrs. Goldthwaite, let me take that girl home with me, and I'll warrant that my wife² and I will bring the roses back to her cheeks, if kindness and comfort and do that. Don't you think that a change of scenery and travel with all its distractions will occupy her mind to the exclusion of other things?”³

With Lydia's permission a plan was set.

¹ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1951, p. 421-2.

² Eleazer Freeman Nickerson's wife, Eliza McAlister, was almost exactly Lydia's age and mother of a two year old at that time.

³ Susa Young Gates, *Lydia Knight History*, The Juvenile Instructor, 1883, p.13.

When Eleazer returned to Mt. Pleasant at the end of February, Lydia went with him in his sleigh to his home. She was still in the Nickerson home in October when the older Mr. and Mrs. Nickerson arrived at their door with two missionaries.

According to Lydia, the Elders Smith and Rigdon were treated kindly but very suspiciously received by Eleazer who told his father he would welcome the men because his father invited them, but “I would just about as soon you had brought a nest of vipers and turned them loose upon us.” In the following days, Eleazer grew curious to hear more about the religious views of the missionaries his parent brought, and was reportedly eager to display his knowledge of the scriptures. All the guests were invited one evening after supper into a large parlor where Eleazer invited Sidney and Joseph to speak freely about their beliefs.⁴

Lydia wrote that Joseph Smith proceeded to tell the group about his early life, visits from angels and gold plates, and the translation of the Book of Mormon. Joseph bore a faithful testimony that the priesthood had been restored to the earth, and the time had come when men were to go unto all the world to preach the gospel to every creature.

Joseph Smith wrote in his journal about the gathering that night. He reported that on Sunday, Oct. 26, “Preached at Mount Pleasant; the people were very tender and inquiring.”⁵

Eleazer, his wife Eliza, and brother Moses were soon convinced of the truthfulness of what they heard. The next day a message was sent through the town that there would be an evening of public preaching in the Nickerson brothers’ new store. Lydia reported that “a large and attentive audience was present.”⁶

The next night after preaching to a large group of people at the Nickerson store, twelve requested baptism, including the Nickersons and Lydia Goldthwaite Bailey.

Lydia’s Baptism

When Lydia was baptized by Joseph Smith her biography states, “She was filled with a bright, peaceful influence and was full of gratitude that God had spared her to hear and accept His glorious gospel.” And after her baptism she cried aloud, “Glory to God in the highest! Thanks be to God Thanks be to His holy name that I have lived to see this day and be a partaker of this great blessing.”⁷

Two days later, the Nickerson family and their guests gathered in the parlor to listen to the prophet. Moses Nickerson expressed a desire to hear someone speak in tongues. The prophet said, “If one of you will rise up and open your mouth it shall be filled,” and all eyes turned to Lydia.

Lydia’s biography describes what followed.

⁴ Gates, *Lydia Knight History*, p. 16.

⁵ Joseph Smith Journal history, p. 422.

⁶ Gates, *Lydia Knight History*, p. 19.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20-21.

“And then the glory of the God was manifested to this weak but trusting girl. She was enveloped as with a flame and unable longer to retain her seat, she arose and her mouth was filled with the praises of God and His glory. The spirit of tongues was upon her, and she was clothed in a shining light, so bring that all present saw it with great distinctness above the light of the fire and candles.”⁸

The note in Joseph Smith’s journal simply reports:

“Last evening we ordained F.A, Nickerson an Elder and one of the sisters received the gift of tongues, which made the Saints rejoice exceedingly. May God increase the gifts among them for His Son’s sake.”⁹

As Joseph and Sidney and the Nickerson parents prepared to leave for Kirtland the next day, the Prophet paused to speak to Lydia. He told her that he had pondered why she had gone through so much sorrow in her young life, and how she was separated from her relatives. He said even as Joseph of Old was a slave in a foreign land, Joseph became a savior to his family, and even so it would be with Lydia.

The prophet told Lydia,

“Sister Lydia, great are your blessings. The Lord your Savior, loves you and will overrule all your past sorrows and afflictions for good unto you. Let your heart be comforted. You are of the blood of Israel descended through the loins of Ephraim. You shall yet be a savior to your father’s house. Therefore, be comforted, and let your heart rejoice, for the Lord has a great work for you to do. Be faithful and endure to the end and will be well.”¹⁰

The Rest of the Story and how Lydia became a Knight

The Mt. Pleasant Branch continued to grow, and Lydia stayed with the Nickersons for nine more months. When she did return home, her parents were very unhappy about her baptism into what they considered a strange church. They told her she had been “cheated and deluded by imposters.” Unhappy with the constant friction and derision in her parents’ home, Lydia decided to go to Kirtland in the spring of 1835.

Lydia’s parents wanted their daughter to be safe and respectable and gave her \$50 for travel and lodging when she arrived. She traveled in company with Vinson Knight and his wife. [No relation to the Joseph Knight family.] Immediately upon arriving in Kirtland, Brother Knight happened to learn that the Prophet Joseph was in financial distress, being held for a debt of \$50. Lydia immediately handed the \$50 from her parents to Vinson Knight to take to the prophet, who was then released.¹¹

⁸ Ibid. p. 22

⁹ Joseph Smith journal history, including the footnote at the bottom of the page on p. 422.

¹⁰ Gates, *Lydia Knight History*, p 23.

¹¹ P. 25-26

Lydia, then penniless, stayed with the Vinson Knight family until the fall of 1835, when she moved to the home of Hyrum and Jerusha Smith in Kirtland to assist Jerusha in their boarding house.

Newel Knight also arrived in Kirtland in the spring of 1835 to fulfill his call to go to Kirtland to work on the Kirtland Temple. Newel's wife Sally and their newborn baby died the previous September, and despite his sorrow, he was committed to fulfill his commitment to work on the temple in Kirtland. Before leaving Missouri, he needed to find family members who would care for his small son Samuel while he was gone, and his elderly aunt who had been living in his home.

When he arrived in Kirtland, he naturally went to the boarding house of his friend Hyrum Smith to stay. Four years earlier, Hyrum and Jerusha had lived with Newel and Sally in their home in Colesville for several months.

It was early October in the parlor of the Smith home when Lydia met Newel Knight. They discovered they shared similar experiences in the loss of loved ones, similar convictions about their faith, and a similar temperament and hopes for the future. A fondness grew between them but Lydia was especially reluctant to marry again, afraid that her first husband was still alive and they were not formally divorced. This was a source of great distress to Newel and he fasted for three days and nights while still working on the temple before he talked to Hyrum about it on November 22nd. Hyrum went to Joseph to discuss it. Joseph pondered on it, prayed and enquired of the Lord.

The answer that came back was, "It is all right. She is his, and the sooner they are married the better." Newel went to find Lydia and found her alone at home and shared the news. They rejoiced that they had the endorsement of their marriage, and made covenants with each other to marry, and then shared a meal to end Newel's fast.

Joseph Smith officiated in the ceremony that united Lydia Bailey and Newel Knight at the home of Hyrum and Jerusha Smith on November 24, 1835. It was the first marriage ceremony he had performed.¹²

Newel continued to work on the temple through the winter. Together the couple attended the temple dedication on March 27, 1836. In her history Lydia described the testimonies borne, the Hosanna shout, and wrote, "The services were closed by singing and prayer. The Saints enjoyed a glorious day, and the temple was filled with the glory of God."¹³

After the dedication the couple made plans to return home to Missouri. They had concerns about the expenses they would face to travel home. Newel had donated his time to the temple for the last year, and they had no income. As they were about to leave for Missouri, Joseph Smith approached Newel and asked about their circumstances. Lydia work in her history:

¹² Newel Knight Journal, p 51.

¹³ Lydia Knight History, p 22-23.

[Joseph said] “So, Newel, you are about to depart for your western home. Are you amply provided for? Are you not in rather straightened circumstances? I know how you have worked for nothing for the past year, and I know you will get your reward.”

“Yes, Brother Joseph, we are rather cramped just now for means,” replied Newel.

“Just so. Sister Lydia, I have not forgotten how generously you helped me when I was in trouble.”

“Oh, Brother Joseph, I have never felt for one moment that you were under the slightest obligations to me; I was only too glad to be the humble instrument of your release from our enemies.”

“All right, Sister Lydia. However I will remember you.”

Joseph then left the house and returned again in a little while and placed in the hands of this worthy couple about double the sum Lydia had given him, telling them to fit themselves out, and go comfortably provided for to their new home.¹⁴

It took Newel and Lydia four weeks to return to Clay County to greet little Samuel and set up their home.

In Lydia’s latter years, as a widow living in St. George, Lydia fulfilled Joseph Smith’s words that she would be savior to her father’s family, as was heavily engaged in temple work for the Goldthwaites and Knights.



Lydia Knight in her later years.

Diane Mangum – August 2025

¹⁴ Lydia Knight history, p 34-35.