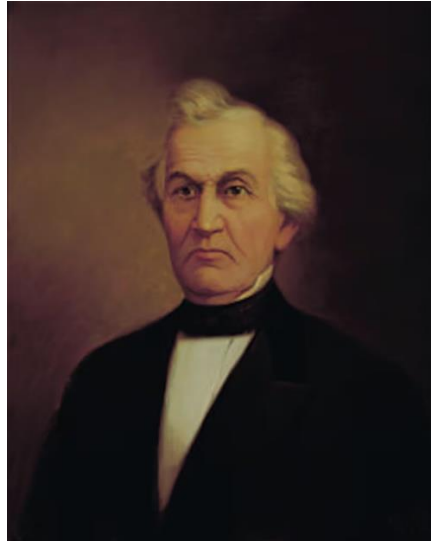


Doctrine and Covenants 102

Knigh family participation in Church councils



*David Whitmer was called as the Stake President
of the second stake in the church in Clay County, July 1834*

The year of 1833 was challenging to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in both Missouri and Kirtland, who faced harassment and opposition at every hand. Nonetheless, the church continued to grow at a rapid pace.

Newel Knight wrote in his journal about the summer of 1834,

“Through all the persecution heaped upon the Saints, the Lord continued to pour out his blessings upon his people and the work of God spread rapidly through the land and the Church increased in power and organization.

On the 3rd of July 1834 a council of High Priests assembled to organize a High Council for the purpose of settling important business that may come before them, when Joseph proceeded to call the following brethren who were all elected and appointed members of said council,

David Whitmer, President and W.W. Phelps and John Whitmer as assistant presidents,
And as Councilors:

Christian Whitmer, Newel Knight, Lyman Wight, Calvin Bebee, Wm E McLellin,
Solomon Hancock, Thomas B. Marsh, Simeon Carter, Parly P. Pratt, Orson Pratt,
John Murdock and Levi Jackman”¹

¹ Newel Knight Journal, Allen typescript, p. 44.

The first stake in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had been organized in Kirtland, Ohio, on February 17, 1834, with Joseph Smith, Jr. was the first stake president. The minutes of the organization of the first high council for that stake make up D & C Section 102.

Organization of the second stake took place in Clay County, Missouri just over four months later, on July 3, 1834, with Joseph Smith there to direct the organization of the High Council and stake.

Joseph Smith left Kirtland on May 5, 1834 as the leader of Zions Camp, a group of men gathered for the purpose of giving assistance to the Saints in Clay County. The men arrived in Clay County on June 23, but decided not to engage in battle or march into Liberty. Cholera hit the camp the next day, and the battalion was dispersed as they recovered. The Prophet remained in Missouri for almost two more weeks to organize a stake in Missouri.

After the meeting on July 3rd, Newel wrote that the High Council was called to the home of Lyman Wight to receive instruction from Joseph Smith relating to their new callings. Newel recorded the statement of Joseph Smith at that meeting that:

“If I am now taken away, I have accomplished the great work the Lord has laid before me, and that which I desired of the Lord. I have done my duty in organizing the High Council, through which council the will of the Lord may be made known on all important occasions, in the building up of Zion and establishing the truth on the earth.”²

At the meeting the council members drew lots to determine in which order they would speak. Newel Knight drew the 8th slot. He reports that some important matters of business were brought up and disposed of, “and it was felt that the power of God was in our midst.”

One of the final matters before the Council at that first meeting was a plan to prepare an appeal to “all other peoples” to describe the injustices they received in Jackson County as well as they commitment to their church and the commandments of their Savior, Jesus Christ. Also mentioned was the new name of the Church of Christ which had been recently renamed as the Church of the Latter-day Saints.

The last order of business was to sustain one another in “our holy office and calling by uplifted hands.”³

The lengthy appeal that was prepared by the Zion Stake High Council was sent out later that month with the signature of Newel Knight and all the members of the Stake Presidency and High Council on it.

In the Spring of 1835 Newel Knight traveled to Kirtland to donate labor for the building of the temple. He stayed until just after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in March 1836, and during the year he spent in Kirtland he was asked to fill a vacancy that had occurred in the High

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Council there. His journal reports that membership on that council “was a source of great instruction to me as the prophet Joseph Smith often met with us, and was ever full of wisdom and instruction.”⁴

Newel would again serve on a High Council in Nauvoo, in January of 1841, as is related in D & C 124: 132.

Diane Mangum - August 2025

⁴ Ibid., p. 49.