

Doctrine and Covenants Section 68

“For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized. And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when they are eight years old, and receive the laying on of hands. And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.”

D & C 68:26-28



*Pheobe Peck's children were baptized in the Blue River near their home in Kaw Township.
Photo from Kansas City Public Library Digital History, Missouri Valley Collections/ Blue River.
Photo on a 1912 postcard.*

Baptizing Children in Zion: Phebe Peck and the children of the extended Knight family

On August 11, 1832, Phebe Peck watched the baptism of her three oldest children in the Blue River near their home in Kaw Township, Missouri. There were eight other children baptized that day from the families of Edward Partridge and William Phelps.¹ Phebe, a widow, and her four children had arrived in Missouri a year earlier with the Colesville Branch.

We know about this event because Phebe wrote her sister-in-law Anna about it. Anna Peck Pratt was the younger sister of Phebe's deceased husband, Benjamin Peck,² and came to live with Phebe and Benjamin when she was just six years old when her father died.

¹ *"Saints, the Standard of Truth, The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1815-1846, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2018, p. 158.*

² Benjamin Peck died in 1829 in Bainbridge. He was a religious man who told his family just before his death that the true church had not been established on the earth, but it soon would be, and that they would all join it,

Members of the Peck family were an important part of the Colesville Branch. Polly Peck Knight had two brothers and a sisters join the Church in 1830, as well as Phebe, the wife of Polly's younger brother, Benjamin. When Phebe and her children were preparing to leave for Kirtland with all the other extended family members, 19-year-old Anna Peck balked. Anna was engaged to Stephan Pratt, and they eloped rather than have Anna move hundreds of miles away to Kirtland with Phebe and her children.³ But Anna and Phebe remained close enough that they exchanged letters with each other.

On that August day in 1832 Phebe wrote what appears to be her first letter home after arriving in Missouri. She told Anna about their experiences since they left New York.

“The Lord’s protective hand has been over us through all of our travels and brought us safely to this land, where I shall spend the remainder of my days, and if I should ever see you again, it shall be upon this land.”

Phebe wrote of the feelings she had upon leaving Anna, “The sensations of my heart, I think will never be forgotten.” She added, “Did you know of the things of God and could you receive the blessings that I have had from the hand of the Lord, you would not think it a hardship to come here.”

The letter went on to tell Anna about the baptisms of Hezekiah, age 12, Samantha, age 10 and Henrietta, age 9. Phebe told her young relative that she rejoiced to see “the rising generation growing up in the knowledge of the Lord.” Little Hezekiah,” will take up his cross and pray in the family when asked. . . My children are all contented and I am thankful for it.”⁴

Phebe also told Anna about the vision of heaven received by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that had recently been printed in the newspaper, *The Evening and Morning Star*. She also wrote about the promise given in the revelation that “those who were baptized and remained valiant in their testimony of Christ would enjoy the highest degree of glory and the fullness of God’s blessings.”⁵

Before Phebe closed her letter to Anna, she added a section to be shared with her sister, Patty, who also lived in Bainbridge, New York. (Phebe’s older sister Marth Peck Hallett, always used the name Patty.)

She wrote to Patty:

“Could you but see and believe the way I do, the way would be opened, and you would come to this land, and we would behold each other, and rejoice in the things of God. . . I hope you will read with a careful and prayerful heart, for these things are worthy of notice and I desire that you may search into them . . .”⁶

according to a biography written by Iris Nielsen, and posted on FamilySearch by Valerie Rich to the page of Benjamin Peck, LT82-TB8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ William G. Hartley, *Stand By My Servant Joseph*, Deseret Book, 2003, p. 146-147.

⁵ *Saints, the Standard of Truth*, p. 159.

⁶ Ibid.

I have plenty to eat, drink and to wear and enjoy as good health as I did in Bainbridge. We have good water and this is a delightful country. We can raise our own cotton and flax and all things that the heart can wish. Hezekiah is now at work with one of the brothers in the church and has earned seven dollars in five weeks. The rest of the children live with me. They often speak of their cousins in that place and wish me to send their best love to you and your children.”⁷

Phebe also asked her sister Patty to give her regards to their brothers, and “tell them not to forget they have a sister in Missouri.”⁸

Phebe was a widow with four children and we can admire Phebe’s determination to see her blessings, not her hardships.

Diane Mangum, April 2025

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Hartley, *Stand By My Servant*, p. 148. There were 13 children in the family of Joseph and Elizabeth Peck. Polly had six brothers and several sisters who did not join the Church.