

**Joseph Knight**

**Polly Peck**

**Joseph Knight  
&  
Polly Peck**

**Joseph:**

**Born:** 26 Nov 1772 to Benjamin Knight and Hannah ..... in Oakham, Worcester, Mass.

**Died:** 1846 Mt. Pisgah, Harrison, Iowa

**Married:** Polly Peck abt. 1794

Had 7 children: Nahaum, Esther, Newell, Anna, Joseph Jr., Polly, Elizabeth

**Married:** Phebe Crosby Peck (she was Polly's brothers wife, he had died and had 4 children from him)

Had 2 children: Ether, Charles C.

**Polly:**

**Born:** 6 Apr 1774 to Joseph Peck and Elizabeth Read in Guildhall, Essex, Vermont

**Died:** 7 Aug 1831 Kaw Township, Independence, Jackson, Missouri

# Family Group Record

<b>Husband Joseph Knight Sr.</b>						
Born	3 Nov 1772	Place	Oakham, Worchester, Massachusetts	LDS ordinance dates	Temple	
Died	3 Feb 1847	Place	Mount Pisgah, Harrison, Iowa	Baptized	28 Jun 1830 LIVE	
Buried	Feb 1847	Place	Mount Pisgah, Harrison, Iowa	Endowed	13 Dec 1845 NAUVO	
				SealPar	16 May 1944 SLAKE	
Married	18 Jan 1795	Place	Windham, Essex, Vermont	SealSp	2 Feb 1846 NAUVO	
Other Spouse Phebe Crosby						
Married	Oct 1833	Place	Liberty, Clay, Missouri	SealSp	2 Feb 1846 NAUVO	
Husband's father Benjamin Knight						
Husband's mother Sarah Crouch						
<b>Wife Polly Peck</b>						
Born	6 Apr 1774	Place	Guilford, Windham, Vermont	LDS ordinance dates	Temple	
Died	6 Aug 1831	Place	Kaw Township, I, Jackson, Missouri	Baptized	28 Jun 1830 LIVE	
Buried	7 Aug 1831	Place	Kaw Township, I, Jackson, Missouri	Endowed	2 Feb 1846 NAUVO	
				SealPar	21 Aug 1958 SLAKE	
Wife's father Captain Joseph Peck						
Wife's mother Elizabeth Read						
<b>Children List each child in order of birth.</b>					LDS ordinance dates	Temple
1	<b>M Nahum Knight</b>					
	Born	2 Jan 1796	Place	Marlborough, Windham, Vermont	Baptized	11 Sep 1877 SGEOR
	Died	21 Aug 1858	Place		Endowed	13 Sep 1877 SGEOR
					SealPar	12 Sep 1877 SGEOR
Spouse Thankful						
	Married	Abt 1817	Place	of, Broom, New York	SealSp	4 May 1994 ARIZO
2	<b>F Esther Knight</b>					
	Born	25 Apr 1798	Place	Marlborough, Windham, Vermont	Baptized	28 Jun 1830 LIVE
	Died	1831	Place	Kaw Township, I, Jackson, Missouri	Endowed	3 May 1912 MANTI
					SealPar	16 May 1944 SLAKE
Spouse William Stringham						
	Married	1816	Place		SealSp	22 Jan 1846 NAUVO
3	<b>M Newel Knight</b>					
	Born	13 Sep 1800	Place	Marlborough, Windham, Vermont	Baptized	May 1830 LIVE
	Died	11 Jan 1847	Place	Fort Niobrara, K, N, (on the plains)	Endowed	13 Dec 1845 NAUVO
	Buried	11 Jan 1847	Place	Fort Niobrara, K, N, (on the plains)	SealPar	19 Jan 1846 NAUVO
Spouse Lydia Goldthwaite						
	Married	24 Nov 1835	Place	Kirtland, Geauga, Ohio	SealSp	19 Jan 1846 NAUVO
Spouse Sarah "Sally" Coburn						
	Married	7 Jun 1825	Place	Colesville, Broome, New York	SealSp	19 Jan 1846 NAUVO
4	<b>F Anna Knight</b>					
	Born	5 Mar 1804	Place	Halifax, Windham, Vermont	Baptized	28 Sep 1830 LIVE
	Died	23 Jul 1878	Place	Manti, Sanpete, Utah	Endowed	20 Dec 1845 NAUVO
	Buried	Jul 1878	Place	Manti, Sanpete, Utah	SealPar	1 Dec 1896 SLAKE
Spouse Freeborn DeMille						
	Married	11 Mar 1819	Place	Colesville, Broome, New York	SealSp	27 Jan 1846 NAUVO



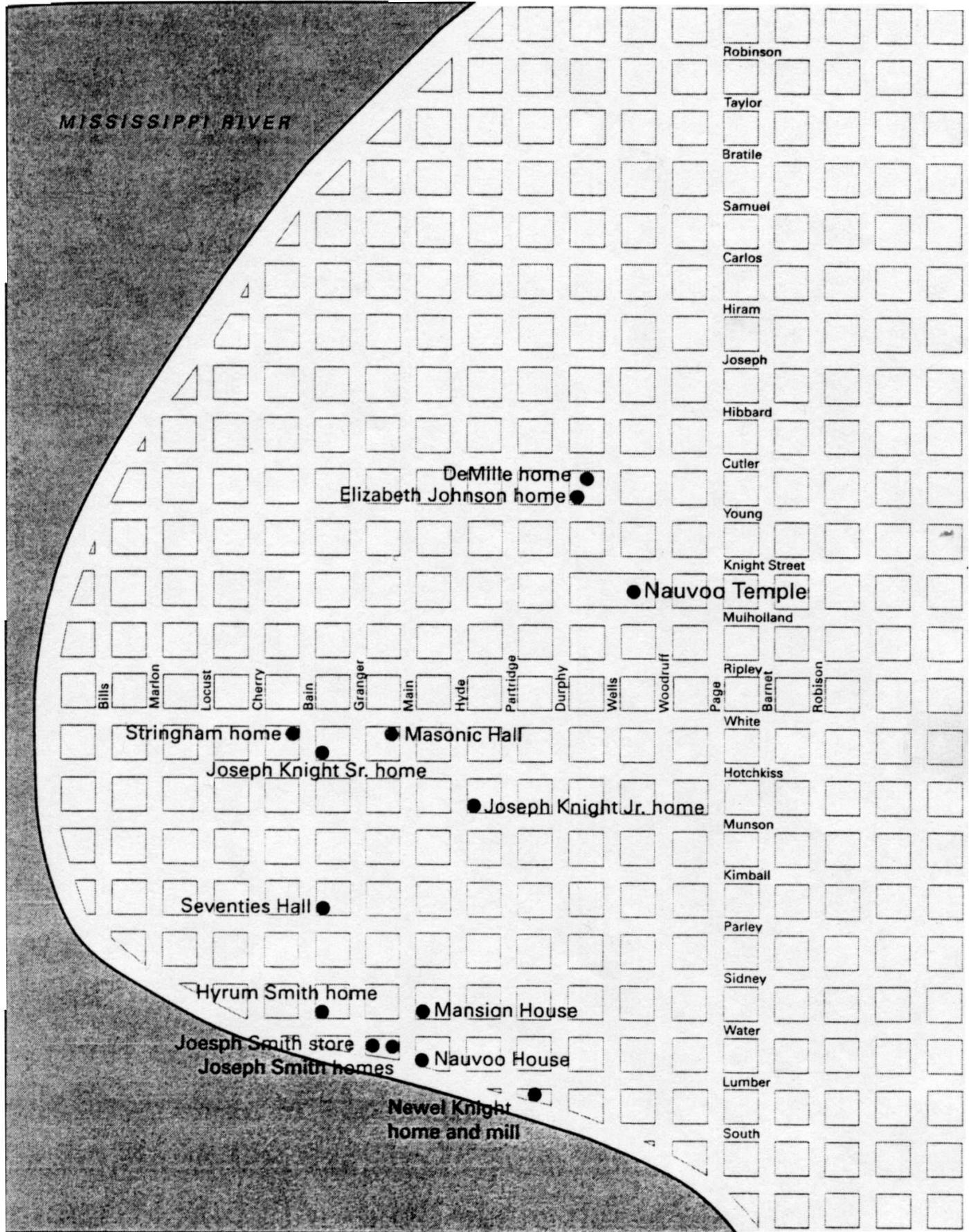
# Family Group Record

<b>Husband</b> Joseph Knight Sr.								
<b>Wife</b> Polly Peck								
<b>Children</b> List each child in order of birth.			LDS ordinance dates	Temple				
5	<b>M</b>	<b>Joseph Knight Jr.</b>						
	Born	21 Jun 1808	Place Halifax, Windham, Vermont	Baptized 28 Jun 1830 LIVE				
	Died	3 Nov 1866	Place Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah	Endowed 17 Jan 1845 NAUVO				
				SealPar 16 May 1944 SLAKE				
	Spouse	Betsy Covert						
	Married	22 Mar 1832	Place Kirtland, Cuyahoga, Ohio	SealSp 4 Feb 1846 NAUVO				
	Spouse	Adeline Johnson						
	Married	19 Nov 1847	Place	SealSp 19 Nov 1847 OTHER				
	Spouse	Abba Welden						
	Married	5 Apr 1852	Place Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah	SealSp 5 Apr 1852 SLAKE				
	Spouse	Mary Woolerton						
	Married	14 Nov 1852	Place Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah	SealSp 14 Nov 1852 EHOUS				
								
6					<b>F</b>	<b>Polly Knight</b>		
					Born	7 Mar 1811	Place Halifax, Windham, Vermont	Baptized 28 Jun 1830 LIVE
					Died	28 Apr 1844	Place Nauvoo, Hancock, Illinois	Endowed 9 May 1912 SGEOR
								SealPar 9 Jun 1882 SGEOR
	Spouse	William Stringham						
	Married	1835	Place , Clay, Missouri	SealSp 22 Jan 1846 NAUVO				
7	<b>F</b>	<b>Elizabeth Knight</b>						
	Born	22 Jul 1817	Place Coleville, Broome, New York	Baptized 9 Nov 1830 LIVE				
	Died	10 Sep 1883	Place Salt Lake City, Utah	Endowed 24 Dec 1845 NAUVO				
				SealPar 16 May 1944 SLAKE				
	Spouse	Joseph Watkins Johnson Jr.						
	Married	3 Feb 1842	Place of Nauvoo, Hancock, Illinois	SealSp 31 Dec 1845 NAUVO				
								

# Family Group Record

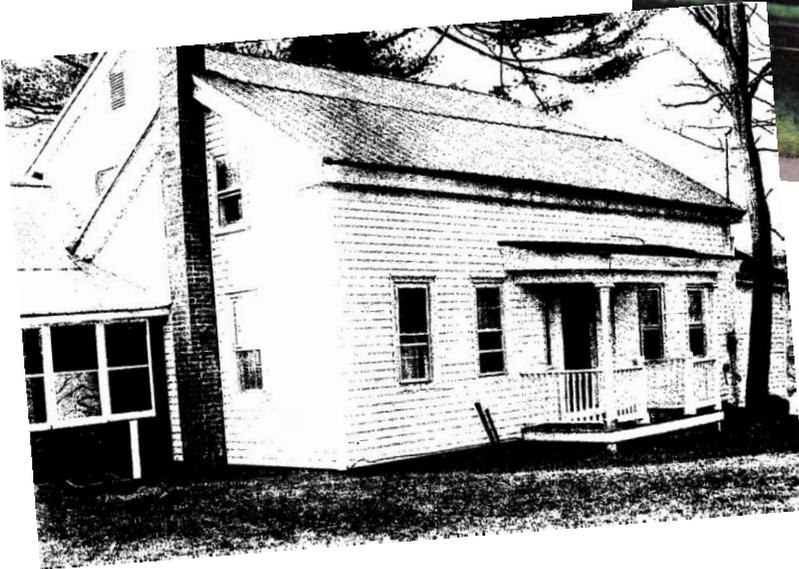
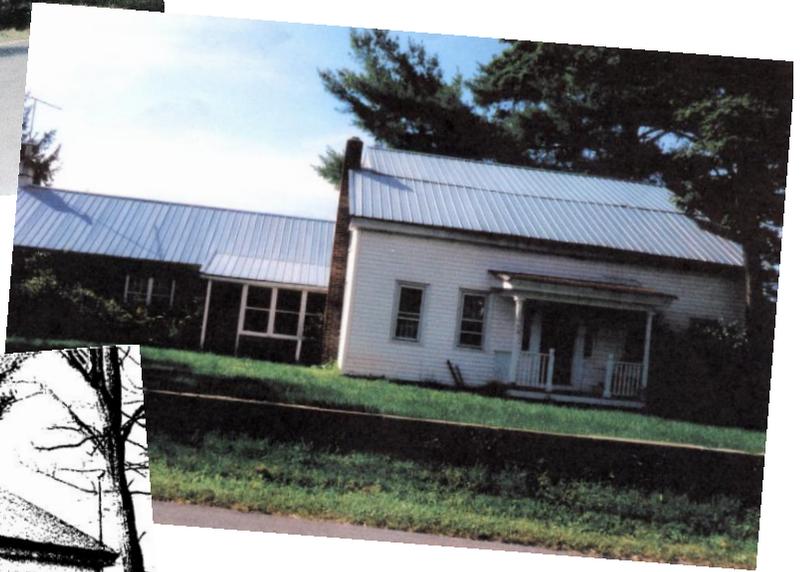
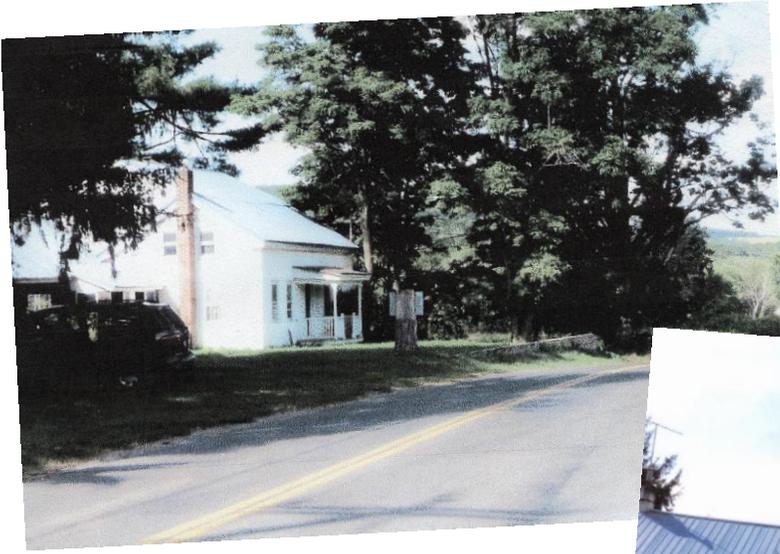
Husband <b>Joseph Knight Sr.</b>				LDS ordinance dates	Temple			
Born	3 Nov 1772	Place	Oakham, Worcester, Massachusetts	Baptized	28 Jun 1830 LIVE			
Died	3 Feb 1847	Place	Mount Pisgah, Harrison, Iowa	Endowed	13 Dec 1845 NAUVO			
Buried	Feb 1847	Place	Mount Pisgah, Harrison, Iowa	SealPar	16 May 1944 SLAKE			
Married	Oct 1833	Place	Liberty, Clay, Missouri	SealSp	2 Feb 1846 NAUVO			
Other Spouse <b>Polly Peck</b>								
Married	18 Jan 1795	Place	Windham, Essex, Vermont	SealSp	2 Feb 1846 NAUVO			
Husband's father <b>Benjamin Knight</b>								
Husband's mother <b>Sarah Crouch</b>								
Wife <b>Phebe Crosby</b>				LDS ordinance dates	Temple			
Born	21 Mar 1800	Place	Unadilla, Otsego, New York	Baptized	28 Jun 1830 LIVE			
Died	Bef 6 May 1849	Place	Nauvoo, Hancock, Illinois	Endowed	13 Dec 1845 NAUVO			
Other Spouse <b>Benjamin Peck</b>								
Married	5 Mar 1817	Place	Bainbridge, Chenango, New York	SealSp	12 Jan 1939 LOGAN			
Other Spouse <b>Cornelius P. Lott</b>								
Married	30 Mar 1847	Place	Winter Quarters, Nebraska	SealSp	9 Feb 1994 OGDEN			
Wife's father								
Wife's mother								
Children List each child in order of birth.				LDS ordinance dates	Temple			
1	<b>M</b>	<b>Ether Knight</b>						
		Born	14 Jun 1834	Place	Liberty, Clay, Missouri	Baptized	1842	
						Endowed	28 Aug 1857	EHOUS
						SealPar	23 Sep 1992	ARIZO
		Spouse <b>Jane Terry</b>						
		Married	28 Aug 1854	Place	Utah	SealSp	28 Aug 1857	EHOUS
2	<b>M</b>	<b>Charles Colson Knight</b>						
		Born	3 Nov 1836	Place	Farwest, Caldwell, Missouri	Baptized	Child	
		Died	13 Aug 1839	Place		Endowed	Child	
						SealPar	23 Jun 1993	ARIZO

# BUILDING THE PROPHET'S CITY



*Knight family homes in Nauvoo*

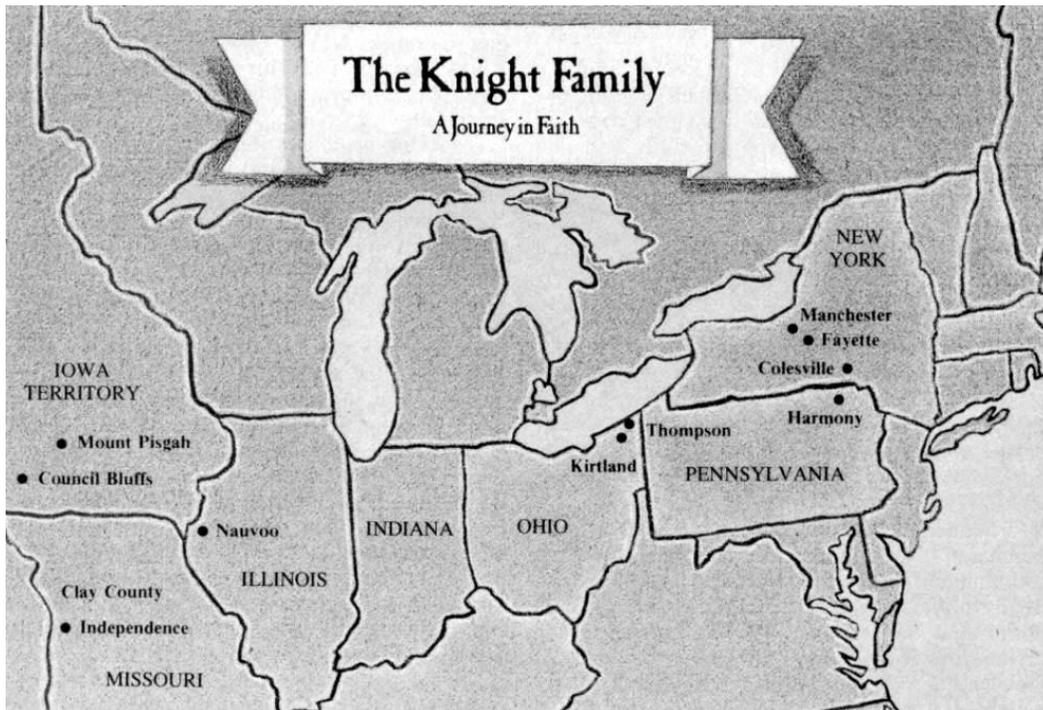
## Views of the Joseph Knight Home



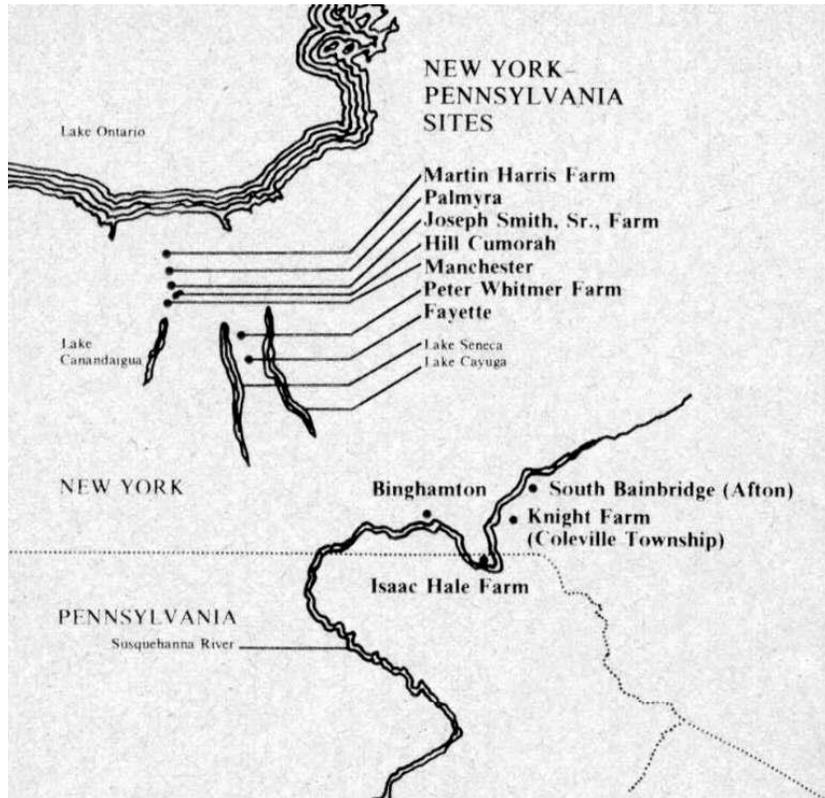
The Joseph Knight Sr. home is located at 1963 E. Winds Road across the Susquehanna River from Nineveh, New York. The 10 acres upon which this home is located was purchased in 2005 by Steve Glenn of Provo, Utah. The original farm had 140 acres of land with two dwelling houses, a good barn, and a fine orchard. The front portion of this house is the original house.



Universalist Church Building where Joseph Knight attended church. Located in Afton, New York. Formerly South Bainbridge, just a block or two from the Chenago County Fairgrounds. It is no longer standing.



Map of the Knight Family Travels



## Church News

### Joseph Knight cane presented to Church

By [R. Scott Lloyd](#)  
Church News staff writer

**Published: Tuesday, July 7, 2009**

A walking cane given as a symbol of friendship from the Prophet Joseph Smith to Joseph Knight Sr. is now in the possession of the Church History Department, a donation from descendants of Brother Knight, a figure in early Church history.



*R. Scott Lloyd*

*Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy, left, accepts Joseph Knight's cane from descendant Jim Knight.*

The donation was made in a May 29 presentation at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, at which Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy, Church Historian and Recorder, received the cane from Jim Knight, a spokesman for the Knight family descendants gathered for the presentation.

"This cane is a memorial of friendship, of mutual faith, that Joseph Smith and the Joseph Knight family share," Brother Knight said.

"Our family often talks about what transpired when Joseph Smith presented the cane to Joseph Knight Sr. Joseph Smith spotted his dear friend, Joseph Knight, hobbling down a Nauvoo street. Father Knight, in his 70s, had been the Prophet's friend for almost 20 years.

"Joseph stepped up to him, put his arm around him, pressed his elderly friend's gnarled fingers onto the top of the cane and said, 'Brother Knight, you need this cane more than I do.'

"The Prophet told Father Knight to keep the cane as long as he lived and to pass it on to Knight descendants with the first name of Joseph."

Brother Knight said the cane passed in turn to five succeeding generations of Joseph Knights. "Now, it's my generation's responsibility to ensure that the cane is safely preserved for the Knight family descendants and the Church members to enjoy," he said.

Elder Jensen, in receiving the cane, said, "This speaks volumes about the history of our Church and is a direct link, if you will, between your Joseph Knight Sr., who I think can be called one of the founding fathers of the Church, and you as descendants of that wonderful man and all of us as members of the Church today. We can feel this connection in a very tangible way because of your generosity in parting with this cane."

[rscott@desnews.com](mailto:rscott@desnews.com)



May 27, 2009 by Jim Knight

I am grateful to be here today to fulfill my father's desire to donate a very special cane which had been passed down from Joseph Knight to Joseph Knight and now to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I am very proud to be a part of fulfilling my father's wish to preserve the Knight family cane. This cane is a memorial of the friendship and mutual faith that Joseph Smith and the Joseph Knight family shared. Our family often talked about what transpired when Joseph Smith presented the cane to Joseph Knight Sr. I never get tired of hearing it nor telling it.

Joseph Smith spotted his dear friend, Father Knight, hobbling down a Nauvoo street. Father Knight, an elderly man, in his seventies, had been the prophet's friend for almost 20 years. Joseph stepped up to him, put his arm around him, pressed his elderly friend's gnarled fingers onto the top of his cane and said, "Brother Knight, you need this cane more than I do."

The prophet told Father Knight to keep the cane as long as he needed it, and then to pass it on to Knight Descendants with the first name of Joseph. In time, the cane passed to Joseph Knight Jr., to Joseph Knight, to Joseph Byron Knight, my grandfather and then to my father, Joseph Adair Knight.

My father knew that his life was coming to an end and he expressed concern for the preservation of the Knight Family Cane. We spoke and my Father felt that he had done his part to preserve and protect the cane since it was entrusted to him by his father. Now, it is my generations' responsibility to ensure that the cane is safe and preserved for all Knight family descendants and church members to enjoy.

My father was afflicted with Parkinson's disease during his latter life. He was still sharp minded, but his body was frail. Sometimes he could hardly speak above a whisper and he was confined to a wheelchair or his hot red electric scooter. He was a kind and lovable person, and he was greatly adored by his family and many dear friends. These friendships gave him great comfort throughout his life. One of his greatest joys was sharing the cane and its history with church members. Because my father could not speak loud enough for any one to hear him, his dear friend took over. This friend wrote an articulate script and spoke at all the firesides while my father listened. My father and I never got tired of hearing the presentation regarding the history of the cane and the friendship between Joseph Knight Sr. and Joseph Smith. I can still picture my father sitting in his wheelchair with his small grin, glowing with pride and honor that he was able to share this special story with others.

I can remember when I first saw the cane while visiting my grandfather during a visit to Salt Lake City. I was residing in California at that time, so this trip was already adventure. To celebrate this trip, a photo was taken and I was confused as to why I was not included in the picture with my father, grandfather, great grandfather and brother. This photo had four generations of Joseph Knights. As I sat dejected, my father explained that this photo was for those with the first name Joseph. I was young and didn't understand the significance of what had just transpired. I do remember asking my Dad to change my first name to Joseph instead of Jim so I could be in the photo too. My father smiled and hugged me....and my name remained Jim.

We cherish the fact that Joseph Knight Sr. chose to accept the gospel. We are grateful for the gift of the gospel and how it has blessed our lives and will bless the lives of those yet to come. It took great courage to become a member of the Church so long ago.

The year 1830 was not a popular time to affiliate with the Mormons, but when the Knights put their names on the records of the Church, they were there as permanently as if they had been carved in granite. Their testimonies carried them through years of persecution and sacrifice. In the first generation of Knights being in the Church, seven died, in some measure, because of their commitment to the restored gospel. But theirs was a willing sacrifice, counted unto them for righteousness.

On 22 August 1842, while reflecting upon the "faithful few" who had stood by him "in every hour of peril," Joseph Smith recorded the following sentiments about Joseph Knight:

Joseph Smith indicated the great respect he had for Joseph Knight and his family in the 1842 entry made in the Book of the Law of the Lord: "My aged and beloved brother, Joseph Knight, Sen. was among the first to administer to my necessities while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord. For fifteen years, he has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind never deviating to the right hand or to the left. Behold he is a righteous man, may God Almighty lengthen out the old man's days; and may his trembling, tortured, and broken body be renewed, and in the vigor of health turn upon him if it be Thy will, consistently, O God; and it shall be said of him, by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them remaining, that this was a faithful man in Israel; therefore his name shall never be forgotten.

As for his sons, Newel and Joseph, Jr., the Prophet added, "I record [their names] in the Book of the Law of the Lord with unspeakable delight, for they are my friends."

We have a great legacy to live up to. Generation after generation has been blessed because of Joseph Knight's decision to become a member of the church.

We have many wonderful memories of family get-togethers where we spoke of our pioneer heritage and held the cane of friendship. We feel strongly that this donation to the church would please Joseph Knight Sr. The journey of the cane, prior to its disposition as a donation to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, has been a rough and trying experience.

I am grateful that this day is here, and for all the work that had gone on to organize this celebration. And I am grateful for all of you taking the time to be here.

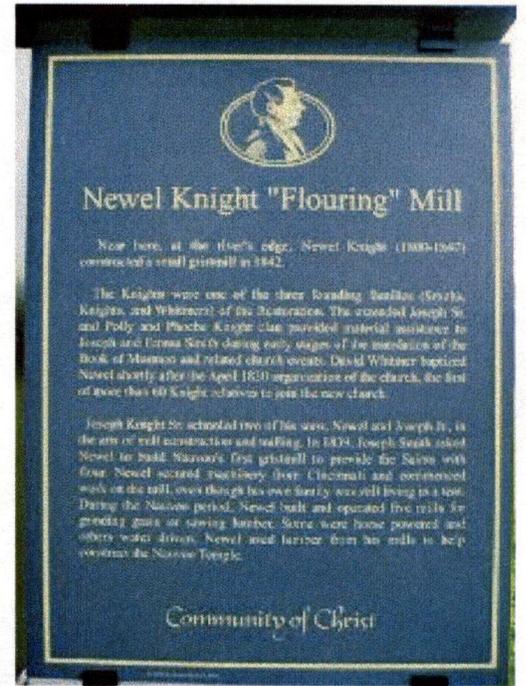
Thank you,

# The Knight Marker Nauvoo, Illinois

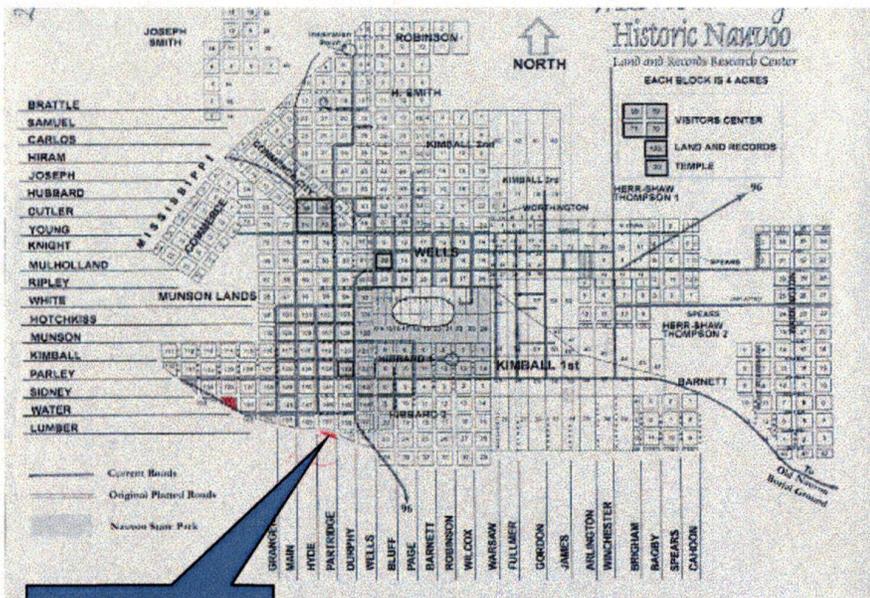
On October 2, 2007, at a spot not far from the edge of the Mississippi River in Nauvoo, the groundbreaking ceremony for the Knight Marker was held. The marker would become the first historic signboard for the Knight family in Nauvoo.

Representing the Knights at the ceremony were Vira Johnson and Dean Collinwood, both 3rd great grandchildren of Newel Knight (through his daughter Sally). Representing the Joseph Smith family were Lachlan McKay and Kim Smith, both 3rd great-grandchildren of Joseph Smith. Some thirty other people were in attendance, including members of the LDS Nauvoo mission presidency, a number of LDS couple missionaries, and a group of LDS tourists from Japan.

Manufacturing of the marker took much longer than expected, but by mid-2009, the marker had been installed directly across the street from the Community of Christ visitors' center on Water Street and just a block or two from Joseph Smith's Nauvoo House.



Without the participation of the Community of Christ and its historian, Lachlan McKay, it would not have been possible to erect a Knight marker in Nauvoo. The LDS Church, receiving requests from scores of LDS members to erect memorials to their ancestors in Nauvoo, turned down the request to support the project. Fortunately, the closest spot to the actual location of the Knight flour mill was found to be on Community of Christ property. Lachlan McKay recognized that the Knight family had been “one of the three founding families of the Restoration,” and that their contributions had not received enough attention. He not only agreed to the marker idea but provided material support for its construction. The photo below shows the marker under construction and its location near the Community of Christ Visitors' Center.



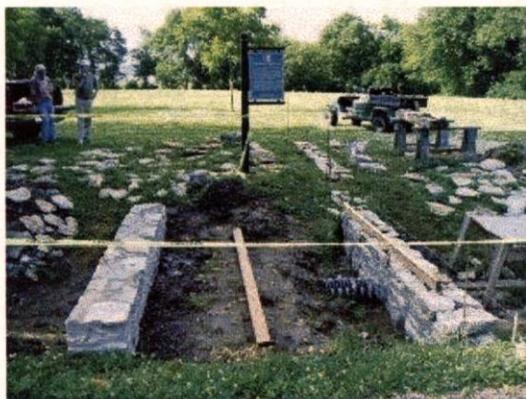
Marker located about 865 Water Street between Hyde Street and Partridge Street

Because the marker was to be located on Community of Christ property, it had to conform to the look and feel of the other historic signposts erected by the Community of Christ. The overall size of the sign, the color of the sign, and the size and number of words on the sign all conform to the other signs in the area. The content of the message was also reviewed and edited by the Community of Christ.



# The Knight Marker Nauvoo, Illinois

Fund-raising for the marker took place over a 2-year period, from 2007 to 2009. Donations came from over 30 individuals, including some representing collections of related families. The most generous donor was David Palmer, 3rd great grandson of Newel Knight (through Newel's daughter Sally) and an LDS Stake President in Mesa, Arizona.



Labor on the project was arranged by the Community of Christ. The City of Nauvoo also was involved in creating the culvert over the ditch in front of the marker. Rather than just installing a corrugated pipe, sandstone was used to create an attractive walkway across the ditch from the road to the marker.



Prepared for the 2010 Knight Reunion,  
Salt Lake City by Dean Collinwood  
ibi@qwest.net



The marker could not be placed on the exact site of the Knight mill (behind the trees in the photo above) because the site is underwater. When the Keokuk Dam was built downstream, the height of the Mississippi River at that spot rose substantially. Road access was also necessary, so the marker was situated a block or more inland from the actual site of the mill.

Text of the marker:

## Newel Knight "Flouring" Mill

Near here, at the river's edge, Newel Knight (1800-1847) constructed a small gristmill in 1842.

The Knights were one of the three founding families (Smiths, Knights, and Whitmers) of the Restoration. The extended Joseph Sr. and Polly and Phoebe Knight clan provided material assistance to Joseph and Emma Smith during early stages of the translation of the Book of Mormon and related church events. David Whitmer baptized Newel shortly after the April 1830 organization of the church, the first of more than 60 Knight relatives to join the new church.

Joseph Knight Sr. schooled two of his sons, Newel and Joseph Jr., in the arts of mill construction and milling. In 1839, Joseph Smith asked Newel to build Nauvoo's first gristmill to provide the Saints with flour. Newel secured machinery from Cincinnati and commenced work on the mill, even though his own family was still living in a tent. During the Nauvoo period, Newel built and operated five mills for grinding grain or sawing lumber. Some were horse powered and others water driven. Newel used lumber from his mills to help construct the Nauvoo Temple.



Monument for the Pioneers at Mt. Pisga  
where Joseph Knight Sr. died.



Crest our Knight family has chosen to represent us.

## **The Knight Name Where Did It Come From?**

Knights of the middle ages first appeared in Europe in France about 800 A.D. but the name was not used as a surname until later. The name means "king's servant", "king's officer", or "soldier of the king". Noblemen who were Barons with titles in England were given lands and castles by the king in exchange for support during wars when all the serfs and land-owners armed themselves to defend the kingdom. They were "Knighted" to designate their office. England had several invasions of Vikings who raided the east coasts; Anglo-Saxons who came to defend the King of Kent (Celts of southern England), but remained to conquer. Then the Normans from France invaded and dominated it for five centuries. Noblemen of these invaders are believed to have taken the name Knight to equate their rank in their own lands.

**What Races Were Involved?** The family name is one of the most notable of the ancient Anglo-Saxon race. This founding race of England, a fair skinned people led by the Saxon Commanders Hengist and Horsa, settled in Kent along the southern coast from about 400 AD. The Angles occupied the eastern coast. By 1066, King Harold came to the throne of England which was enjoying reasonable peace, and many of the vanquished Saxon land owners forfeited their lands to the Duke William (The Conqueror) and his invading Norman (French) nobles. They became oppressed under Norman rule and some moved to the midlands, Lancashire and Yorkshire and even into Scotland. The family name emerged as a prominent name in the county of Suffolk where they were recorded as a family of great antiquity seated with manors and estates. The first on the Peerage of the Earls of Catherlough and the Barons Luxborough were given the name of Knight. Sir William Knight was Ambassador from the court of Henry VIII to Emperor Maximilian. He was later made Bishop of Bath and Wales.

**What Brought Them to America?** For the next two or three centuries, bearers of the name Knight flourished and played a significant role in the political development of England. During the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries England was ravaged by religious and political conflict. Puritanism, Catholicism, Royalist and parliamentary forces shed much blood. Many families immigrated to Ireland and to the "colonies".

Our ancestors were among the "Great Migration" of English Puritans who came in the 1630's for religious freedom. Thousands migrated to Massachusetts and then moved inland with each succeeding generation. The motto of the ancient family was "Virtus Sibi Aureum" or "Valor (and) Unity (with) Integrity".

## Joseph Knight

*LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, Andrew Jenson, Vol. 2, p.772*

Knight, Joseph, one of the earliest members of the Church, was an American by birth, though the exact place and date of birth is not known. He was well advanced in years when the work of the Lord in these last days began to come forth. From the journal of his son, Newel Knight, it is learned that Joseph Knight, Sen., married Polly Peck; that he moved into the State of New York in 1809, and settled on the Susquehanna river, near the Great Bend, in the township of Bainbridge, Chenango county. Two years later he moved to Colesville, Broome county, N. Y., where he remained nineteen years.

"My father," says Newel Knight in his journal, "owned a farm, a grist mill and carding machine. He was not rich, yet he possessed enough of this world's goods to secure to himself and family, not only the necessities, but also the comforts of life. His family, consisting of my mother, three sons, and four daughters, he reared in a genteel and respectable manner and gave his children a good common school education. My father was a sober, honest man, generally respected and beloved by his neighbors and acquaintances. He did not belong to any religious sect, but was a believer in the Universalian doctrine." The business in which Joseph Knight, Sen., engaged made it necessary at times for him to hire men, and the Prophet Joseph was occasionally employed by him.

To the Knight family, who were greatly attached to him, the young Prophet related many of the things God had revealed respecting the Book of Mormon, then as yet to come forth. So far at least was the elder Knight taken into the Prophet's confidence that he purposely so arranged his affairs as to be at the Smith family residence near Manchester, at the time the plates of the Book of Mormon were given into Joseph's possession. Mr. Knight had driven to the Smith residence with a horse and carriage, and in this conveyance, according to the statement of both Lucy Smith, mother of the Prophet (see Lucy Smith's History of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Chapter 23), and Joseph Knight, Sen., Joseph in company with his wife Emma drove away very early—before daylight—on the morning of Sept. 22nd, 1827—it is presumed, of course, the Prophet drove to the hill Cumorah and there received from Moroni the plates of the Book of Mormon, etc. Mr. Knight remained at the Smith residence at Manchester, several days and was there the day Joseph brought home the plates, and in company with Joseph Smith, Sen., and Mr. Stoal—who was also present at the Smith residence in company with Mr. Knight—went in search of those men who had assailed the Prophet while on his way home with the plates, but they did not find them.

Joseph Smith in his history of Aug. 22, 1842, refers to Joseph Knight in the following endearing terms: "I am now recording in the Book of the Law of the Lord, of such as have stood by me every hour of peril, for these fifteen long years past—say, for instance, my aged and beloved brother, Joseph Knight, Sen., who was among the number of the first to administer to my necessities, while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord and of laying the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and even-handed, and exemplary, and virtuous, and kind, never deviating to the right hand or to the left. Behold he is a righteous man; may God Almighty

lengthen out the old man's days; and may his trembling, tortured and broken body be renewed and the vigor of health turn upon him, if it can be Thy will, consistently, O God; and it shall be said of him by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them remaining, that this man was a faithful man in Israel, therefore his name shall never be forgotten. There are his sons, Newel Knight and Joseph Knight, Jun., whose names I record in the Book of the Law of the Lord with unspeakable delight, for they are my friends." ("Mill. Star" 19: 756.)

*History of the Church, Vol.1, Ch.5*

About the same time an old gentleman came to visit us of whose name I wish to make honorable mention--Mr. Joseph Knight, Sen., of Colesville, Broome county, New York, who, having heard of the manner in which we were occupying our time, very kindly and considerately brought us a quantity of provisions, in order that we might not be interrupted in the work of translation by the want of such necessaries of life; and I would just mention here, as in duty bound, that he several times brought us supplies, a distance of at least thirty miles, which enabled us to continue the work when otherwise we must have relinquished it for a season.

Being very anxious to know his duty as to this work, I inquired of the Lord for him, and obtained the following:

Revelation, given to Joseph Knight, Sen., at Harmony, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, May, 1829.

1. A great and marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men.
2. Behold, I am God; give heed to my word, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow; therefore, give heed unto my word.
3. Behold, the field is white already to harvest; therefore, whoso desireth to reap let him thrust in his sickle with his might, and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God.
4. Yea, whosoever will thrust in his sickle and reap, the same is called of God.
5. Therefore, if you will ask of me you shall receive; if you will knock it shall be opened unto you.
6. Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.
7. Behold I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work
8. And no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care.

9. Behold, I am the light and the life of the world, that speak these words, therefore give heed with your might, and then you are called. Amen.

*History of the Church, Vol.1, Ch.8*

*Revelation to Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel H. Smith, Joseph Smith, Sen., and Joseph Knight, Sen. Given at Manchester, New York, April 1830.*

1. Behold, I speak unto you, Oliver, a few words. Behold, thou art blessed, and art under no condemnation. But beware of pride, lest thou shouldst enter into temptation.

2. Make known thy calling unto the church, and also before the world, and thy heart shall be opened to preach the truth from henceforth and forever. Amen.

3. Behold, I speak unto you, Hyrum, a few words; for thou also art under no condemnation, and thy heart is opened, and thy tongue loosed; and thy calling is to exhortation, and to strengthen the church continually. Wherefore thy duty is unto the church forever and this because of thy family. Amen.

4. Behold, I speak a few words unto you, Samuel; for thou also art under no condemnation, and thy calling is to exhortation and to strengthen the church, and thou art not as yet called to preach before the world. Amen.

5. Behold, I speak a few words unto you, Joseph; for thou also art under no condemnation and thy calling also is to exhortation, and to strengthen the church; and this is thy duty from henceforth and forever. Amen.

6. Behold, I manifest unto you, Joseph Knight, by these words, that you must take up your cross, in the which you must pray vocally before the world as well as in secret, and in your family, and among your friends, and in all places.

7. And, behold, it is your duty to unite with the true church, and give your language to exhortation continually, that you may receive the reward of the laborer. Amen.

*History of the Church, Vol.5, ch.6, p.124*

Tuesday, 22.—I find my feelings of the 16th inst. towards my friends revived, while I contemplate the virtues and the good qualities and characteristics of the faithful few, which I am now recording in the Book of the Law of the Lord,—of such as have stood by me in every hour of peril, for these fifteen long years past,—say, for instance, my aged and beloved brother, Joseph Knight, Sen., who was among the number of the first to administer to my necessities, while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord, and of laying the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating to

the right hand or to the left. Behold he is a righteous man, may God Almighty lengthen out the old man's days; and may his trembling, tortured, and broken body be renewed, and in the vigor of health turn upon him, if it be Thy will, consistently, O God; and it shall be said of him, by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them remaining, that this man was a faithful man in Israel; therefore his name shall never be forgotten.

*B. H. Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, Vol.1, Ch.8, p.85*

Joseph Knight, Jun., son of the above, Joseph Knight, Sen., in a Biographical Sketch (Ms) filed in the Historian's Office, Aug. 16, 1862, tells of the removal of his father, Joseph Knight, Sen., from Vermont, and of his purchasing a farm in Broome county, "twenty miles above the Great Bend," having reference to the "great bend" the Susquehanna river makes where it dips down into northern Pennsylvania thence flows back again into New York state. "My father bought three other farms and hired many hands.

In 1827 he hired Joseph Smith. Joseph and I worked and slept together. 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 my father and I 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 it in secret \* \* \* My father and I believed what he told us. I think we were the first [to believe] after his father's family."

Joseph Knight, Jun., confirms Lucy Smith's account of the use of his father's horse and wagon by the Prophet when going for the plates, and of Joseph Knight, Sen., being present at the Smith residence when the Prophet brought the plates home, all detailed in the body of this chapter. He is most probably wrong as to the date, November, 1827, being the time when Joseph Smith worked for Joseph Knight, Sen., as Joseph Smith farmed with his own father at Palmyra that year. Joseph's living at Knight's would doubtless be the previous year, 1826, which would be when he was twenty-one years of age, as stated by Joseph Knight, Jun.

## Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History

(Edited by Dean Jessee, BYU Studies, Vol. 17, No. 1)

[On 22 August 1842, while reflecting upon the “faithful few” who had stood by him “in every hour of peril,” Joseph Smith recorded the following sentiments about Joseph Knight:

[He] was among the number of the first to administer to my necessities, while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord, and of laying the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and evenhanded and exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating to the right hand or to the left. Behold he is a righteous man, may God Almighty lengthen out the old man's days; and may his trembling, tortured, and broken body be renewed, and in the vigor of health turn upon him if it be Thy will, consistently, O God; and it shall be said of him, by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them remaining, that this was a faithful man in Israel; therefore his name shall never be forgotten.

Joseph Knight, Sr., was born 3 November 1772 at Oakham, Worcester, Massachusetts. In 1809 he moved to Bainbridge, Chenango County, New York and two years later to Colesville, Broome County, New York where he remained for nineteen years. He owned a farm, a gristmill and carding machine, and according to his son Newel, “was not rich, yet possessed enough of this world's goods to secure to himself and family the necessaries and comforts of life.” His family consisted of three sons and four daughters.

While Joseph Smith was living in Harmony, Pennsylvania he was occasionally employed by Joseph Knight. Such was the friendship that developed between these two men that the younger Joseph confided in his employer the circumstances of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and the elder sent provisions from time to time for the sustenance of his friend during the translation work. When Joseph Smith obtained the Book of Mormon plates in September 1827, Knight was visiting in the Smith home in Manchester. According to Lucy Smith, her son used Knight's horse and carriage as his means of conveyance on the occasion.

Although not numbered among those present at the organization of the Church in April 1830, Joseph Knight was baptized in June of that year. His family formed the nucleus of a small branch of the Church in Colesville, New York. In 1831 he moved with the Colesville Saints to Kirtland, Ohio, and a few months later continued with them to Independence, Missouri where he helped pioneer the Latter-day Saint settlement of that state. Joseph Knight died on 3 February 1847 at Mt. Pisgah, Iowa during the Mormon Exodus from Illinois.

Joseph Knight's account reproduced below, although undated and unsigned, appears to be a holograph penned sometime between the author's departure from Jackson County, Missouri in 1833 and his death in 1847. Located in the Church Archives, the document is written in ink on both sides of five 8 x 10 inch pages. The manuscript is incomplete, missing at least one beginning page. Although written in pencil from one to the, the page numbers were obviously added by a later writer to designate the sequence of surviving pages. A clerk's filing inscription on the document reads, “22 Sept. 1827. Manuscript of the early History of Joseph Smith finding

of plates, &c. &c.” The words “22 Sept. 1827,” “early,” and “finding of plates, &c. &c.” were inserted by Thomas Bullock, a church clerk from 1843 to 1857. Minimal punctuation has been added here to facilitate reading]

## MANUSCRIPT OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH

From thence he went to the hill where he was informed the Record was and found no trouble for it appeared plain as tho he was acquainted with the place it was so plain in the vision that he had of the place. He went and found the place and opened it and found a plane Box. He oncovered it and found the Book and took it out and laid [it] Down By his side and thot he would Cover the place over again thinking there might be something else here. But he was told to take to Book and go right away. And after he had Covered the place he turned round to take the Book and it was not there and he was astonished that the Book was gone. He thot he would look in the place again and see if it had not got Back again. He had heard people tell of such things. And he opened the Box and Behold the Book was there. He took hold of it to take it out again and Behold he Could not stur the Book any more then he Could the mountin. He exclaimed “why Cant I stur this Book?” And he was answered, ‘you cant have it now.’ Joseph says, “when can I have it?” The answer was the 22nt Day of September next if you Bring the right person with you. Joseph says, “who is the right Person?” The answer was “your oldest Brother.”

But before September Came his oldest Brother Died. Then he was Disapinted and did not [k]now what to do. But when the 22nt Day of September Came he went to the place and the personage appeard and told him he Could not have it now. But the 22nt Day of September nex he mite have the Book if he Brot with him the right person. Joseph says, “who is the right Person?” The answer was you will know. Then he looked in his glass and found it was Emma Hale, Daughter of old Mr Hail of Pensylvany, a girl that he had seen Before, for he had Bin Down there Before with me.

Joseph then went to Mr Stowels [Stowell] whare he had lived sometime Before. But Mr Stowel Could not pay him money for his work very well and he came to me perhaps in November and worked for me until about the time that he was Married, which I think was in February. And I paid him the money and I furnished him with a horse and Cutter to go and see his girl Down to Mr. Hails. And soon after this he was Married and Mr Stowel moved him and his wife to his fathers in Palmyra Ontario County.

Nothing material took place untill toard fall the forepart of September. I went to Rochester on Buisness and returnd By Palmyra to be there about the 22nt of September. I was there several Days. I will say there [was] a man near By the name Samuel Lawrance. He was a Seear [Seer] and he had Bin to the hill and knew about the things in the hill and he was trying to obtain them. He [Joseph Smith] had talked with me and told me the Conversation he had with the personage which told him if he would Do right according to the will of God he mite obtain [the plate] the 22nt Day of SeptemberNext and if not he never would have them. Now Joseph was some afraid of him [Samuel Lawrence] that he mite be a trouble to him. He therefore sint his father up to Sams10 as he Called him near night to see if there was any signs of his going away that night. He told his father to stay till near Dark and if he saw any signs of his going you till if I find him

there I will thrash the stumps with him. So the old man came a way and saw no thing like it. This is to shoe [show] the troubles he had from time to time to obtain the plates.

So that night we all went to Bed and in the morning I got up and my Horse and Carriage was gone. But after a while he Came home and he turned out the Horse. All Come into the house to Brackfirst [breakfast]. But no thing said about where they had Bin. After Brackfirst Joseph Cald me into the other Room and he set his foot on the Bed and leaned his head on his hand and says, "Well I am Dissopinted." "Well," say I, "I am sorrey." "Well," says he, "I am grateley Dissopinted; it is ten times Better then I expected," Then he went on the tell the length and width and thickness of the plates, and said he, "they appear to be Gold." But he seamed to think more of the glasses or the urim and thummem then [than] he Did of the Plates, for, says he, "I can see anything; they are Marvelus. Now they are written in Caracters and I want them translated."

Now he was Commanded not to let no [any] one see those things But a few for witness at a given time. Now it soon got about that Joseph Smith had found the plates and people Come in to see them But he told them that they Could not for he must not shoe [show] them. But many insisted and oferd money and Property to see them. But, for keeping them from the People they persecuted and abused them [him] and they [the Smiths] ware obliged to hide them [the plates], and they hid them under a Brick harth in the west Room. About this time Came this Samuel Lawrance and one Beeman a grate Rodsman [great with divining rods] and wanted to talk with him. And he went into the west Room and they Proposed to go shares with him and tried every way to Bargain with him But Could not. Then Beeman took out his Rods and hild [held] them up and they pointed Dow[n] to the harth whare they ware hid. "There," says Beeman, "it is under that harth." So they had to garde the house until some time in November. Be obtained fifty Dollars in money and hired a man to move him and his wife to Pensylvania to hir Fathers, his wife Being onwell [unwell] and wanted to go to her Fathers. He Bout [bought] a piece of Land of hir Father with a house and Barn on it. Here the People Began to tease him to see the Book and to offer him money and property and they Crouded so harde that he had to hide it in the Mountin.

He now Began to be anxious to git them translated. He therefore with his wife Drew off[f] the Caricters exactly like the ancient and sent Martin Harris to see if he Could git them Translated. He went to Albeny and to Philadelpha and to new york and he found men that Could Translate some of the Carictors in all those places. Mitchel [Samuel L. Mitchill] and Anthony [Charles Anthon] of New York ware the most Larded [learned] But there were some Caricters they could not well understand. Therefore Anthony told him that he thot if he had the original he culd translate it. And he rote a very good piece to Joseph and said if he would send the original he would translate it. But at Last Martin Harris told him that he Could not have the original for it was Commanded not to be shone. And he was mad and said what Does this mean, and he tore the paper that he wrote all to pieces and stampid it under his feet and says Bring me the original or I will not translate it. Mr. Harris, seeing he was in a passion, he said, 'wee I will go home and see, and if they can be had I will wright to you immeditely," So he Came home and told how it was and they went to him no more. Then was fulfilled the 29<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Isiah. Now he [Joseph Smith] Bing [being] an unlearned man did not know what to Do. Then the Lord gave him Power

to Translate himself. Then ware the Larned men Confounded, for he, By the means he found with the plates, he Could translate those Caricters Better than the Larned.

Now the way he translated was he put the urim and thummim into his hat and Darkned his Eyes than he would take a sentence and it would apper in Brite Roman Letters. Then he would tell the writer and he would write it. Then that would go away the next sentence would Come and so on. But if it was not Spelt rite it would not go away till it was rite, so we see it was marvelous. Thus was the hol [whole] translated. Now when he Began to translate he was poor and was put to it for provisions and had no one to write a little for him through the winter. The Next Spring Oliver Cowdry a young man from palmyra Came to see old Mr Smith, Josephs father, about this work and he sent him Down to pensylveny to see Joseph and satisfy him self. So he Came Down and was soon Convinced of the truth of the work. The next Spring Came Martin Harris Down to penssylvania to write for him and he wrote 116 pages of the first part of the Book of Mormon. And about this time Martin wanted to go home a Bout some Buisness and he wanted to take the writings with him But Joseph put him off[f]. But he urged him By fair promises that he would be Careful and he would Return it again. But he Being free with it some person go[t] hold of it and Cept [kept] it so that he never Could obtain it again. There fore Joseph Lost his privilige for a while. But after Repenting he again received the privelage of translating again, as in Book of Covenants page 163. Now he Could not translate But little Being poor and nobody to write for him But his wife and she Could not do much and take Care of her house and he Being poor and no means to live But work. His wifes father and familey ware all against him and would not h[e]lp him. He and his wife Came up to see me the first of the winter 1828 and told me his Case. But I was not in easy Circumstances and I did not know what it mite amount to and my wife and familey all against me about helping him. But I let him have some little provisions and some few things out of the Store a pair of shoes and three Dollars in money to help him a litle. In January his father and Samuel [Smith] came from Manchester to my house when I was Buisey a Drawing Lumber. I told him they had traviled far enough. I would go with my sley and take them down to morrow. I went Down and found them well and the[y] were glad to see us. We conversed about many things. In the morning I gave the old man a half a Dollar and Joseph a little money to Buoy paper to translate. I having But little with me. The old gentlemen told me to Come and se him once in a while as I could I went home followed teaming till the last of March the slaying [sleighting] Being good. I told my wife I must go Dow[n] and see Joseph again. "Why Do you go soon, for," said she, Says I, "Come go and see." And she went with me. Next morning we went Down and found them well and ware gland to see us. Joseph talked with us about his translating and some Revelation he had Received and from that time my wife began to Beleve and Continuwed a full Believer untill she Died and that was the 7 Day of August 1831.

In the spring of 1829 Oliver Cowdry a young man from Palmry went to see old Mr. Smith about the Book that Joseph had found. And he told him about it and advised him to go Down to Pensylvania and see for him self and to write for Joseph. He went Down and Received a Revelation Concerning the work and he was Convinced of the truth of the work and he agreed to write for him till it was Done. How Joseph and Oliver Camp up to see me if I Could help him to some provisions, [they] having no way to Buy any. But I was to Cattskill. But when I came home my folks told me what Joseph wanted. But I had ingaged to go to Catskill again the next Day and I went again and I Bought a Barral of Mackrel and some lined paper for writing. And when I came home I bought some nine or ten Bushels of grain and five or six Bushels taters

[potatoes] and a pound of tea, and I went Down to see him and they ware in want. Joseph and Oliver ware gone to see if they Could find a place to work for provisions, But found none. They returned home and found me there with provisions, and they ware glad for they ware out. Their familey Consisted of four. Joseph and wife, Oliver and his [Joseph's] Brother Samuel. Then they went to work and had provisions enough to Last till the translation was Done. Then he agreed with Martin Harris to print. They therefore agreed with E. Grandin to Print five thousand Coppies which was Printed and Bound at Palmiry in the Spring of 1830.

Now in the Spring of 1830 I went with my Team and took Joseph out to Manchester to his Father. When we was on our way he told me that there must be a Church formed But did not tell when. Now when we got near to his fathers we saw a man some Eighty Rods Before us run acros the street with a Bundle in his hand. "there," says Joseph, "There is Martin going a Cros the road with some thing in his hand." Says I, "how Could you know him so far?" Says he, "I Believe it is him." And when we Came up it was Martin with a Bunch of morman Books. He Came to us and after Compliments he says, "The Books will not sell for no Body wants them." Joseph says, "I think they will sell well." Says he, "I want a Commandment." "Why?" says Joseph, "fullfill what you have got." "But," says he, "I must have a Commandment." Joseph put him off. But he insisted three or four times he must have a Commandment.

We went home to his fathers and Martin with us. Martin stayed at his Fathers and slept in a Bed on the flor with me. Martin awoke me in the nite and asked me if I felt any thing on the Bed. I told him no. Says I, "Did you?" "Yes, I felt some thing as Big as a grat Dog Sprang upon my Brest." Says I, "was you not mistekened." "No," says he. "It was so." I Sprang up and felt, But I Could see nor feal nothing. In the morning he got up and said he must have a Commandment to Joseph and went home. And along in the after part of the Day Joseph and Oliver Received a Commandmant which is in Book of Covenants Page 174.20. I stayd a few Days wating for some Books to Be Bound. Joseph said there must Be a Church Biltup. I had Ben there several Days. Old Mr Smith and Martin Harris Come forrod [forward] to Be Babtise[d] for the first. They found a place in a lot a small Stream ran thro and they ware Babtized in the Evening Because of Persecution. They went forward and was Babtized Being the first I saw Babtized in the new and everlasting Covenant. I had some thots to go forrod. But I had not re[a]d the Book of Mormon and I wanted to oxeman [examine] a little more I being a Restorationar and had not oxamined so much as I wanted to. But I should a felt Better if I had gone forward. But I went home and was Babtised in June with my wife and familey.

There was one thing I will mention that evening that old Brother Smith and Martin Harris was Babtised. Joseph was fild with Spirrit to a grate Degree to see his Father and Mr Harris that he had Bin with so much he Bast [burst?] out with greaf and Joy and seamed as tho the world Could not hold him. He went out into the Lot and appeared to want to git out of side of every Body and would sob and Crie and seamed to Be so full that he could not live. Oliver and I went after him and Came to him and after a while he Came in. But he was the most wrot upon that I ever saw any man. But his joy seemed to Be full. I think he saw the grate work he had Begun and was Desirus to Carry it out. On the sixth Day of April 1830 he Begun the Church with six members and received the following Revelation Book of Covenants page 177. They all kneeld down and prayed and Joseph gave them instructions how to Bild up the Church and exorted them to Be faithfull in all things for this is the work of God.

Now after he had set things in order and got a number of Mormon Books we Returned home. Then in June as I Before said I and my family and a number more ware Babtised, Joseph Being present and Confirmed them. And through that season there ware many Babtised in Many places and the Church grew and multiplied. But soon after the Church Began to gro the People Began to Be angry and to persecute and Cald them fools and said they ware Decived. But along toards fall Joseph and Oliver Cowdray and David Whitmore [Whitmer] and John Whitmore Came from Harmony in Pennsylvany to my house on some Buisness. And some of the Vagabonds found they ware there and they made a Catspaw of a young fellow By the name of Doctor Benton in Chenengo County to sware out a warrant against Joseph for as they said pertending to see under ground. A little Clause they found in the york Laws against such things. The oficer Came to my house near knite [night] and took him. I harnesed my horses and we all went up to the villige But it was so late they Could not try him that nite and it was put of[f] till morning. I asked Joseph if [he] wanted Counsell he said he thot he should. I went that nite and saw Mr James Davison [Davidson] a man I was acquainted with. The next morning the gatherd a multitude of people that ware against him. Mr Davison said it looked like a squaley [squally] Day; he thot we had Better have John Read [Reid] a prety good speaker near by. I told him we would, so I imployed them Both. So after a trial all Day jest at nite he was Dismissed. Then there was another oficer was Ridy [ready] and took him on the same Case Down to Broom County Below forth with. I hired Boath these Lawyers and took them Down home with me that nite. The next Day it Continued all Day till midnite. But they Could find no thing against him therefore he was Dismist. Soon after this Joseph Left the Susquhannah river and went to Manchester to his Fathers. Then about the first thing Sidney Rigdin came from ohio to see Joseph and they Boath Came Down to Broom County and Joseph and Sidney went Down to Harmoney to settle some Buisness. And the Mob found they ware gone and they found when they ware expected Back and we found they had a plan laid to take Joseph and Sidney and me. Now Sidney had Ben at my house several Days and had preached there several times and he was too smart for them therefore they wanted to trouble him. And the Day we expected them I sent my son Down to meat them and told them of their Plan and they turned acrost to Chenango point. And so went to the Lakes. And I Loaded up what I Could Cary and went away that nite for the Lakes. I also took my wife and Daughter for we war[e] calcalating to go soon for we a litle Before had a revelation to go to ohio. So the Mob watched all nite at the Bridge. But Behold we all Came up missing and the poor mob Lost all their truble. Now Joseph and I went rite on to Kirtland ohio But did not stay long there for in March we went to the town of Thompson a bout twenty miles in the spring the Colesvill Church all Came on. But Joseph remaind in Kirtland and Sidney soon Came to Kirtland.

Now this Spring Joseph received anumber of Revelation. One was to purchase a thousand acres of Land which was Claimed by Leman Copley and not paid for. He had a litle Before Come into the Church and apeard to Be Zelaus and faithful. We all went to work and made fence and planted and sowed the fields. About this time we ware Cald upon to Consecrate our properties. But Brother Copley would not Consecrate his property therefore he was Cut of[f] from the Church. Then we was Commanded to take up our Journey to the Regions westward to the Boarders of the Lamanites. And we sold out what we Could But Copley took the advantage of us and we Could not git any thing for what we had done. So we left Copleys in June and moved our things to wellsvill on the ohio river which was about ninety miles. Then we went on Board the Steamer the third Day of July and we landed in uper Misouria the 26<sup>th</sup> of the same Month.

We found our selves among strangers But the people seamed to Be frindley with us. And we found the Country to be Butiful rich and plesent and we made our selves as Comfortable as we Could. And in a few Day Joseph and Sidney and a number of Brotherin came and they looked out and Enterd a Considrible of Land, for the People to Settle on. We found it a new Country with some settlrs on it.

There was one Joshua Lewis that had Come into the Church the winter Before, he and his wife. And they were faithful and good to us and took us in to their house, my wife Being sick as before stated. She Died the Seventh Day of August and Joseph and Sidney attended her funeral on the Eighth. She was Burried in the woods a spot Chosen out By our selves. I was along By where she was Buried a few Days after and I found the hogs had Began to root where she was Buried. I being verry unwell But I took my ax the nex Day and went and Bilt a pen round it. It was the Last I done for her.

Joseph at this time Looked out the Country and found the place for the City and Temple and set Mark, and after giving all other nesenary instructions he Returned Back for Kirtland. But as time Came along we often heard from him and Recevied Revelation. The next year in 1832 he Came again to Missouri and set things in order and Cald the Colesvill Church to gather and seald them up to Eternal Life. And this made some little feeling among others But I think he [k]new Best. So that passed of[f] and he Returned to Kirtland again and I think he Did not Come to Missouri the next year for the Mob Began to sho their Black heads in 1833. But Joseph Sent and Counsled During our troubles in Jackson County and after the worst Came to the worst thot we had Better leve the County.

## Challenge to Greatness

(excerpt from article of same name by Lavina Fielding Anderson  
Associate Editor 'The Ensign' September 1978)

“My father was a sober, honest man,” wrote one of his seven children. “generally beloved and respected by his neighbors and acquaintances.” A typical entry from a nineteenth-century journal?

“I do not know that anything special occurred more than is common to all families during our childhood with our parents... Owing to the business my Father was engaged in he often had hired help. Among the many he from time to time hired was a young man by the name of Joseph Smith, Junior.” Suddenly, this family history becomes electrifyingly interesting.

The father described is Joseph Knight, the man whose hospitality and generosity helped sustain the Prophet during the translation of the Book of Mormon – in fact, the man in whose wagon the plates were carried home from the Hill Cumorah. Joseph Knight’s son, Newell Knight, later lost his health, his possessions, his wife, and ultimately, in 1847, his life as he gave unstinting obedience to Joseph Smith, who was once his father’s hired laborer. Of the young Joseph Smith, Newell Knight wrote: “To him I was particularly attached; his noble deportment, his faithfulness, his kind address could not fail to win the esteem of those who had the pleasure of his acquaintance.”

The fact is that the Knights – and the other Saints in nineteenth-century New York – were *not* typical. They faced unique opportunities and challenges as the first members of the Church and the first citizens of the restored kingdom of God on the earth. But a study of nineteenth century journals and diaries for that period does show us that many of those early Saints were “regular, ordinary people” who were given a challenge to greatness. Some of them, like Newell Knight, met the challenge with the same commitment but are unknown outside their family circle. Others took up the challenge for a moment, but dropped it again and turned away. And still others accepted, rejected, and then came back with increased determination.

The faithful Saints were extraordinarily blessed, but they were also extraordinarily tested, chastised, and refined. Spiritual manifestations were poured out in abundance, but these Saints exercised mighty faith to receive them.

## **Every Member WAS a Missionary**

(Excerpt from article of the same name by William G. Hartley  
from "The Ensign" September 1978)

Joseph was the first missionary, although not in the sense of traveling far and wide to preach. At first only his family and a few friends were trusted with these sacred truths.

The Joseph Knight family, for whom Joseph worked near Colesville, New York, were among the first few he told. Joseph Knight, Jr., recalled that in November 1826 Joseph 'made known to my father and I, 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 followed the directions of the Angel he could get it. We were told it in secret; I being the youngest son, my two elder brothers did not believe in such things; my father and I believed what he told us.'

# The Joseph Knight Family

They left their farms, their fortunes, and the graves  
of their loved ones behind as they followed the gospel's call.

By Larry Porter



*Joseph Knight Jr.*

The year 1830 was not a popular time to affiliate with the Mormons, but when the Knights put their names on the records of the Church, they were there as permanently as if they had been carved in granite. Their testimonies carried them through years of persecution and sacrifice. In the first generation of Knights in the Church, seven died, in some measure because of their commitment to the restored gospel. But theirs was a willing sacrifice, counted unto them for righteousness.

Joseph Knight, Sr., was born in Massachusetts in 1772 and came to Colesville, New York, via Vermont. He and his wife, Polly Peck, both had a namesake child among their seven. The oldest son was Nahum, then came Esther, Newel, Anna, Joseph, Jr., little Polly, and Elizabeth. The previous moves of the family denoted a seeking, not a restlessness, for once

*Author's original spelling has been retained, following standard historical practice. See reasons for spelling variations in "Nine-teenth-Century Spelling," ENSIGN, Aug. 1975- including uncertain spelling conventions and spelling as an expression of personality.*

they found their farm site on the east side of the Susquehanna, opposite the growing village of Nineveh, they stayed for nineteen years - long enough to fill and enjoy their gray frame house, grow an apple orchard to maturity, build a barn, and profit from their thrifty management of both a grist and a carding mill.<sup>1</sup> The carding mill's raceways and dam trenches are still visible under the heavy brush near the outlet to Pickerel Pond.

Newel, the second son, described his father as "not rich yet [he] possessed enough of this worlds goods to secure to himself and family the necessaries and comforts of life." The children were "raised in a genteel and respectable manner," with a good "common school education."<sup>2</sup>

They were believing people, but not churchgoers. Newel called his father "a believer in Universal Doctrine," which means he subscribed, to a belief in universal salvation, that either eventually or immediately after death, everyone would enter a heavenly state, not remain permanently in hell.

More important than his beliefs was his character: he "was a sober, honest man, generally beloved and respected by his neighbors and acquaintances."

It may have been these qualities in Joseph Knight that attracted the friendship of the young Prophet Joseph, who came in October 1825 to work for Josiah Stowell, Knight's partner in the grain business. At that time, Joseph was almost twenty, comparatively close to the age of Joseph Knight, Jr. and, like Father Knight, sober and honest. Convinced that an old Spanish silver mine was hidden in the hills north of the Isaac Hale home in Harmony Township, Pennsylvania, Stowell hired the young prophet to find the mine. Joseph dug away for a month, but realistic about his lack of success, he "prevailed with the old gentleman to cease digging after it."<sup>3</sup> He and his father, who had accompanied him, went back home to Manchester, New York, 125 miles away, but maintained business connections with the Stowell-Knight partnership, contracting their wheat to them. Joseph soon returned to Colesville and hired out to Stowell and then, in November 1826, to the Knights, to help relieve his family's debts.

The Knight children liked Joseph Smith. The

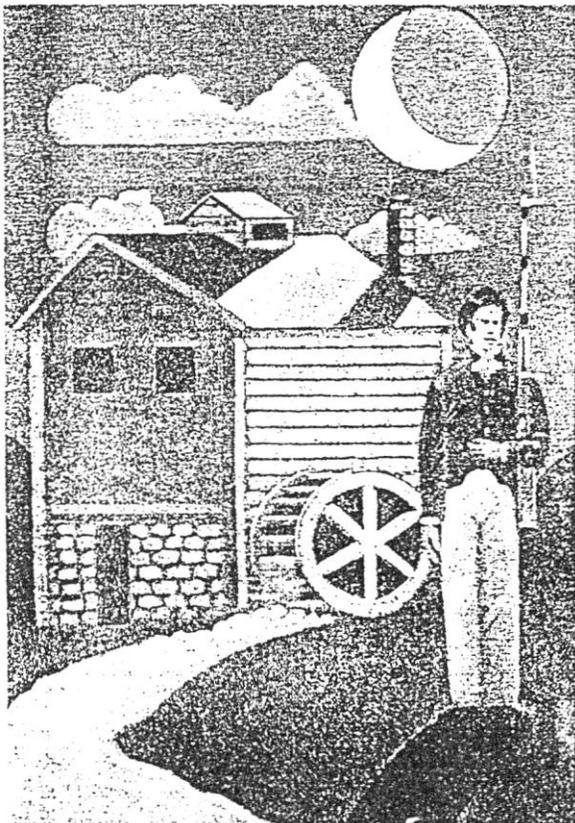
third son, Joseph Knight, Jr., said: "Joseph and I worked and slept together: my Father said Joseph was the best hand he ever hired, we found him a boy of truth, he was about 21 years of age. I think it was in November [1826] he made known to my Father and I, that he had seen a vision, that a personage 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 it in secret; I being the youngest son, my two elder brothers [Nahum and Newel] did not believe in such things; my Father and I believed what he told us."<sup>4</sup>

Newel may not have had the instant faith of his younger brother, but he had the highest praise for Joseph Smith. He describes himself as "particularly attached" to the Prophet, and explains, "His noble deportment, his faithfulness his kind address could not fail to gain the esteem of those who had the pleasure of his acquaintance."<sup>5</sup>

Kindness characterized the family's treatment of the young Prophet as well. Brother Knight thoughtfully provided him "with a horse and cutter to go and see his girl Down to Mr. Hails [Hales]" twenty-six miles away.<sup>6</sup> Joseph Knight's partner, Josiah Stowell, was also helpful. It was while Emma was visiting in the Stowell home that she agreed to marry the Prophet despite her father's opposition.

Both Knight and Stowell "traveled to Manchester, arriving at the Smith home on 20

*In the winter of 1833. Newel Knight was forced to abandon his grist mill which he had guarded night and day against mobbers.*



September 1827. The date was no coincidence—two days later Joseph received the plates from Moroni, for the first time. It was in the Knight carriage that Joseph and Emma drove to the Hill Cumorah early in the morning of September 22. According to Joseph Knight, "In the morning I got up and my Horse and Carriage was gone. But after a while " [Joseph Smith] Came home and he turned out the Horse. All Came into the house to Brackfirst. But no thing said about where they had Bin. After' Brackfirst Joseph Caled me into the other Room and he set his foot on the Bed and leaned his head on his hand and says, 'Well I am Dissopinted.' 'Well,' say I, 'I am sorry.' 'Well,' says he, 'I am grateley Dissopinted; it is ten times 'Better then I expected.' Then he went on to tell the length and width and thickness of the plates, and said he they appear to be Gold ... Now they are written in Caracters and I want them translated."<sup>7</sup>

This simple paragraph, compelling in the sincerity of its awkwardness, tells us two things about their relationship. It's quite clear that Joseph Knight believed in the young Prophet's mission, since he had come to be at Manchester at the appointed time. It's also clear that the young Prophet felt so close to Joseph Knight that, in his happiness at having received the plates, he could prolong his pleasure and increase the delight of Brother Knight, by his little joke of being "Dissopinted."

The venerable Brother Knight was also witness to an intimate occasion three years later when the Prophet baptized his father, Joseph Smith, Sr., on the same day the Church was organized. Brother Knight recounts:

"Old Mr. Smith and Martin Harris Came forrod [forward] to be Babtise[d] for the first. They found a place in a lot of small Stream ran thro and they ware Babtized in the Evening Because of per-secution. They went forward and was Babtized Being the first I saw Babtised in the new and everlasting Covenant. I had some thots to go forrod, But I had not re[a]d the Book of Mormon and I wanted to oxeman [examine] a little more I Being a Resto-rationar and had not oxamined so much as I wanted to. But I should a felt Better," he adds candidly. "if I had a gone forward ... "

Then he describes, "Joseph was fild with the Spirrit to a grate Degree to see his Father and Mr. Harris that he had Bin with so much he Bast [burst?] out with greaf and Joy and seamed as tho the world Could not hold him. He went out into the Lot and appeared to want to git out of site of every Body and would sob and Crie and seamed to be so full that he could not live. Oliver and I went after 'him and Came to him and after a while he Came in. But he was the most wrot upon that I ever saw any man. But his joy seemed to Be full. I think he saw the grate work he had Begun and was Desirus to Carry it out."<sup>6</sup>

What a valuable insight this record gives us of the Prophet's joy, so great that it manifested itself

as weeping! This experience also tells us that Joseph Knight, who had proved himself a friend and a defender many times over, was not the kind of man to let friendship for the Prophet or anger at persecution sway him into a decision until he had fully examined all of the evidence--in this case, the Book of Mormon. This kind of clear headed thinking and carefulness is all the more impressive since he had already had numerous experiences with the Book of Mormon.

For example, only two days after Joseph Smith had received the plates, Joseph Knight and Josiah Stowell had helped search for three ruffians who had attacked the Prophet when he was retrieving the plates from a hiding place in the woods.<sup>9</sup>

On several other occasions, Brother Knight had willingly given so the work of translation could continue uninterrupted. Since the Prophet poured all of his efforts into translation during the summer of 1828, his family, at times, suffered financially. Joseph Knight recorded two of these incidents as follows: "He and his wife Came up to see me the first of the winter 1828 and told me his Case ..... I let him have some little provisions and some few things out of the Store a pair of Shoes and three Dollars in money to help him a little." Some months later, in January 1829, Joseph Knight personally went to Harmony by sleigh to give Joseph Smith some money for translation. In March his wife, Polly, went with him on another relief mission, and this time they received far more than they gave: "Joseph talked with us about his translating and some revelations he had Received and from that time my wife Began to Beleve and Continued a full Believer untill She Died."<sup>10</sup>

In April, the Knights gave Joseph Smith a barrel of mackerel, nine or ten bushels of grain, five or six bushels of potatoes, and some lined paper for writing." The Prophet Joseph gratefully said that their assistance "enabled us to continue the work when otherwise we must have relinquished it for a season."<sup>12</sup>

Joseph Knight's own faith must have been growing, for on a visit, apparently in May 1829, he asked the Prophet Joseph for reassurance. What is now Section 12 of the Doctrine and Covenants was given, promising that "a great and marvelous work is about to come forth," counseling Brother Knight to "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion," and advising him and all who had similar desires to be "humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things." (D&C 12: 1, 6-8)

The sacrifices continued. Joseph Knight, Jr., had purchased a lot and was just starting to build his own home when the Prophet asked Joseph Knight, Sr., for fifty dollars, a sum that the good man could not raise at that moment. Then the Prophet turned to the younger Knight. With a humble restraint that lets us read much between the lines, Joseph Knight, Jr., records simply: "The same day, I sold my house lot."<sup>13</sup>

Interest in the restoration of the gospel was high in the Knights' hometown. According to David Whitmer, "about 20 from Colesville [were] at the Peter Whitmer Sr., home on the day of organization."<sup>14</sup> Therefore, during April 1830 (the same month the Church was organized), Joseph Smith made a special missionary journey to Colesville to preach the gospel.

Newel Knight attended his series of meetings regularly, and on one occasion was attacked by an evil spirit which the Prophet 'commanded to leave. In the aftermath of that experience; Newel was so filled with the Spirit that he saw "the visions of heaven" and was bodily lifted from the floor, a miracle that "contributed much to make believers of those who witnessed it, and finally the greater part of them became members of the Church."<sup>15</sup>

The Prophet performed no baptisms at that time, but young Newel went to the Peter Whitmer farm in Seneca County in May where he was baptized by David' Whitmer, the first in his family and apparently the first of the Colesville Saints to join the Church. Soon after the first Church conference, held 9 June 1830 at the Whitmer farm, the Prophet Joseph, Emma, Oliver Cowdery, and John and David Whitmer returned to Colesville and "found a number in the neighborhood ... anxious to be baptized." Joseph Knight had made his examination of the Book of Mormon and was satisfied. He was one of those "anxious;" to join the Church. On Saturday, June .26, they dammed a stream to make a pond. A mob demolished it in the night, but the brethren repaired it the next day. Early Monday, morning, Oliver Cowdery baptized Joseph Knight, his wife Polly, his son Joseph, and Newel's wife Sally Coburn, along with Emma Smith and several other people.<sup>16</sup>

Mocking neighbors jeered, asking if they "had been washing sheep," and before the Prophet had time to confirm the new converts, he was arrested and taken to South Bainbridge in Chenango County for trial for being a disorderly person. Not satisfied merely with an arrest, the mob returned to the Knights' that evening, and according to Joseph Knight, Jr., "our wagons were turned over and wood piled on them, and some sunk in the water, rails were piled against our doors, and chains sunk in the stream and a great deal of mischief done."<sup>17</sup> Back in the Chenango County, Joseph Knight's lawyers cleared the Prophet. Joseph was released, rearrested, retried in Broome County, and cleared again. Both Josiah Stowell and Newel Knight testified at those trials, and finally, on 29 August, Joseph returned to Colesville and confirmed the patient converts members of the Church. (Newel and Sally had visited Joseph Smith in Harmony early in August, and Sally, along with Emma Smith, had been confirmed at that time.)

The Prophet's return to Colesville involved a miracle. Public feeling had not abated, so when

Joseph and Hyrum Smith and John and David Whitmer began their journey, "they called upon their heavenly Father in mighty prayer ... that he would blind the eyes of their enemies .... Their prayers were not in vain," testifies Newel. "A little distance before reaching my place they encountered a large Company of men at work upon the public road, amongst whom were some of our most bitter enemies, [who] looked earnestly at [the brethren] but not knowing them, [the brethren] passed on unmolested."

The confirmations that followed and the first partaking of the sacrament together was an interlude of quiet joy between troubles. Newel says simply, "[We] had a happy meeting haveing much reason to rejoice in the God of our salvation and sing hosanna to his holy name."<sup>18</sup>

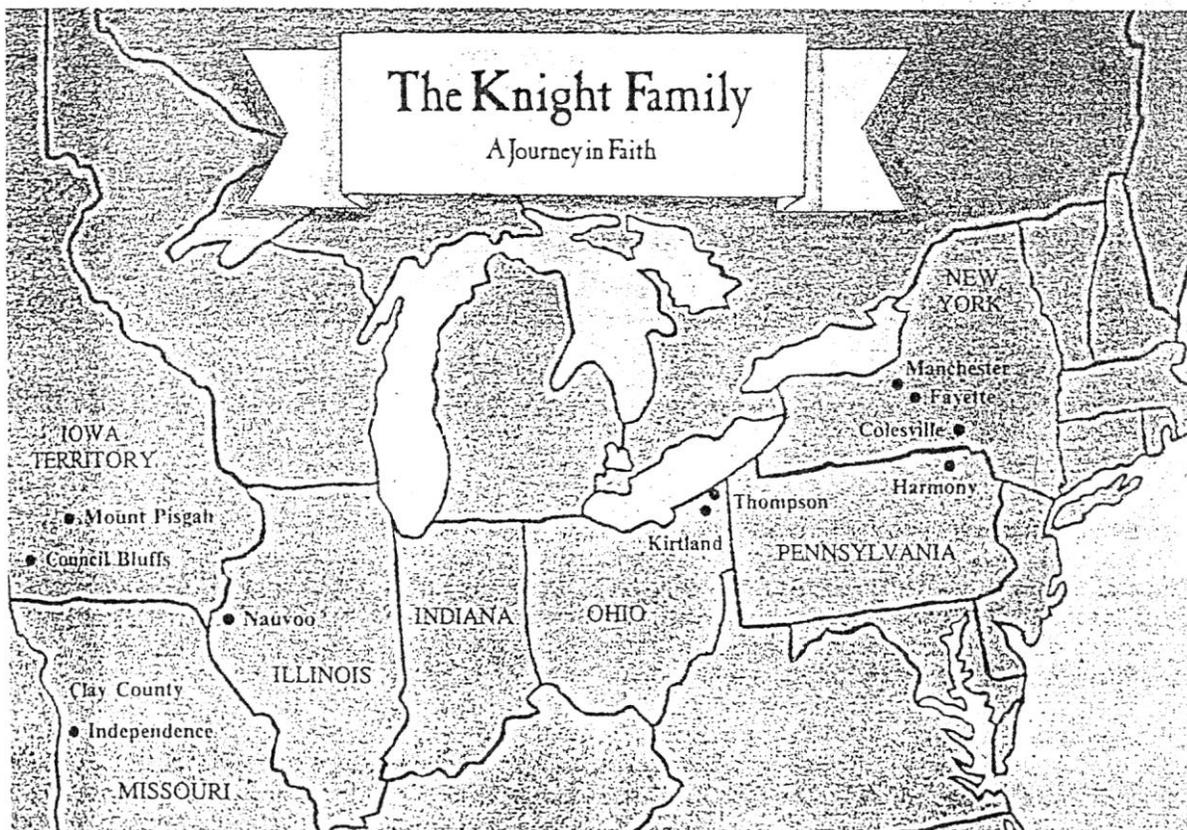
The mob's relentless persecution of the Knight family persisted until Father Knight, his wife, and their daughter Elizabeth fled their home by night and in January-February 1831, accompanied the Prophet Joseph to Kirtland.<sup>19</sup> Newel and his brother Joseph, Jr., remained behind, helping the rest of the Colesville Branch prepare to travel the moment the spring thaw opened the waterways. By mid-April, Colesville Saints had grouped at Ithaca, a port on Cayuga Lake, but on the way, Newel's aunt, Electa Peck, had broken her shoulder "in the most shocking

manner." A doctor observed that if she could travel before "many weeks it will be a miracle." Believing in miracles, Sister Peck sent for her nephew as soon as he arrived in camp. He stepped "up to the bed and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ rebuked the pain with which she was suffering and commanded her to be made whole; and it was done, for the next morning she arose, dressed her self, and pursued the journey with us."<sup>20</sup>

From Ithaca, the Saints could travel by boat all the way to Ohio through a system of lakes and canals which included the Erie Canal. They arrived in Buffalo on 1 May 1831 where they waited impatiently for two weeks, stalled by a cold wind that filled the harbor with ice.<sup>21</sup> Young Joseph Knight and a small group led by Jared Carter walked overland to Dunkirk, New York, and took a steamboat from there to Kirtland.

The rest of the stranded Saints joined them there after the delay, and, being advised to "remain together," went to a location in Thompson, a neighboring township sixteen miles northeast where they organized initially under the law of consecration. They had to abandon that stewardship, however, when their host, Leman Copley, "was turned out of the church for bad conduct," demanded they leave his property, and required them to pay sixty dollars for the "damage" they had caused.

*KIRTLAND: Newell marries Lydia; MANCHESTER: Prophet takes Knights' wagon to Cumorah, 1827; FAYTTE: Knight family baptized, 1830; COLESVILLE: Joseph Smith works for Knights, 1826; Clay county: Newell's wife, Sally, his son, and two aunts die here; THOMPSON: Knights organized under Law of Consecration, 1831; INDEPENDENCE: Uncle. Mother Knight, and daughter die here. MOUNT PISGAH, IOWA: Joseph Knight, Sr., dies, 1847; COUNCILBLUFFS: Newell Knight dies, 1847; NAUVOO: Polly Knight dies here, 1844; HARMONY: Knights give provisions to Prophet. 1828-29*



Joseph Knight, Jr., indicates that the "damage" they had done was, ironically, "fitting up his houses and planting his ground."<sup>22</sup>

This first move westward was prophetic of the next few years. The branch of early believers struggled to stay together for the love and support they gave each other. So did the Knight family. But the circumstances of travel and weight of persecution did not allow them peace and union. Until the arrival in Utah, the history of that little branch, of the Knight family, and particularly of Newel Knight mirrors faithfully the history of the Church.

The next move came almost at once when a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph to Newel Knight sent them "westward, unto the land of Missouri, unto the borders of the Lamanites." (D&C 54:8) They arrived in Independence on 25 July 1831 and helped the Prophet "lay the first log as a foundation for Zion in Kaw township, twelve miles west of Independence," on 2 August 1831. Newel notes that the first log "was carried by twelve men in honor of the twelve tribes of Israel." At least five of those twelve were Colesville Saints and members of the Knight family: Joseph Knight, Sr., Aaron Culver, Hezekiah Peck, Ezekial Peck, and Freeborn DeMili. Newel Knight stood with a small group clustered around the Prophet the next day when he dedicated the temple site in Independence.<sup>23</sup>

Mother Knight had been seriously ill on her journey to Jackson County, but refused to give in to her sickness, even though Newel, deeply concerned, bought lumber to have on hand for her coffin while they travelled. But "her greatest desire," he says, "was to set her feet upon the land of Zion and to have her body interred in that land ... , The Lord gave her the desire of her heart."<sup>24</sup>

She was the first Latter-day Saint to die in Missouri, and the Prophet preached her funeral sermon on August 7. Father Knight's record contains a poignant notation: "She was Buried in the woods a Spot Chosen out By our selves. I was along By where she was Buried a few Days after and I found the hogs had Began to root where She was Buried. I Being verry unwell But I took my ax the next Day and went and Bilt a pen round it. It was the Last I done for her."<sup>25</sup>

She was the first to die but not the last. Her daughter Esther soon followed her, then their uncle Aaron Culver, leaving his wife, Esther, in Newel's care. Newel's record shows no complaint. He simply says that the frontier life was "new and strange ... yet we took hold with cheerful hearts, and a determination to do our best." Conferences with the Prophet Joseph left them feeling "renewed in spirit." As president of the Colesville Branch, Newel observed that "meetings were well attended, the hearts of the Saints were united, and peace and happiness abounded."<sup>26</sup> When persecutions began in Independence, he fearlessly walked through a mob to administer to his friend, Philo Dibble, who had.

Been shot in the abdomen and was not expected to live. As soon as Newel placed his hand on Brother Dibble's head, the wounded man "felt the spirit of the Lord rest upon him and pass gently through his body and before it pass all pain and soreness so that he felt perfectly easy in a few minutes."<sup>27</sup> A surgeon, a veteran of the Mohawk war, told Brother Dibble that he had never known any-one to survive a similar wound.

During the winter of 1833, the Jackson County Saints took refuge in Clay County. Newel was forced to abandon his grist mill that "was doing business for the people generally" but which he had still had to guard night and day to keep the mobbers from burning. Again the Colesville Saints clung together, built some temporary houses on the Missouri bottoms, and settled in grimly for the winter.

The time for optimism was surely past, but Newel, after reporting the suffering and persecution, notes, "the Saints did not forget to return thanks unto Almighty God for deliverance ... and to seek His protecting care for the future." That winter was a bitter one. Many lacked "the necessaries of life, but we were not forgotten by God nor by our co-religionists in Kirtland, and the sympathies of the Saints were like balm to our wounds."<sup>28</sup>

Spring--the chance to put in farms and become self-sufficient--came, but so did seasonal sickness. Newel's new-born son died, and then, crushingly, his wife, Sally, on 15 September 1834. He recorded:

"Truely she died a martyr to the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. She was of a frail constitution, and the hardships and privations she had to endure were more than she could survive."

Ill himself and trying to care for his aged Aunt Esther and one surviving child, a little son named Samuel, Newel heard the Prophet's call for labor on the Kirtland Temple. "Hardly able to walk," he set out with others on the 900 mile journey. By the time he arrived, he was feeling so much better, he was "preaching the gospel to those who would listen."<sup>29</sup>

While working on the temple, he boarded with the Hyrum Smith family and there met and married Lydia Godthwait Bailey, a young convert whose husband had deserted her several years earlier. The Prophet himself officiated at the wedding ceremony in Hyrum's parlor, the first wedding he had performed. After the temple was dedicated, the young couple returned to Clay County, arriving 6 May 1836. The era of peace was over; the Missourians were insisting that all the Mormons leave. But literally impoverished by his illness and his uncompensated labor on the temple, Newel had to remain, bearing the threats and witnessing the persecutions of the Saints. Another personal loss soon followed--the death of his Aunt Esther.

Finally he accumulated enough capital to follow the body of the Saints to Caldwell County where forty acres of government land were purchased near Far West.

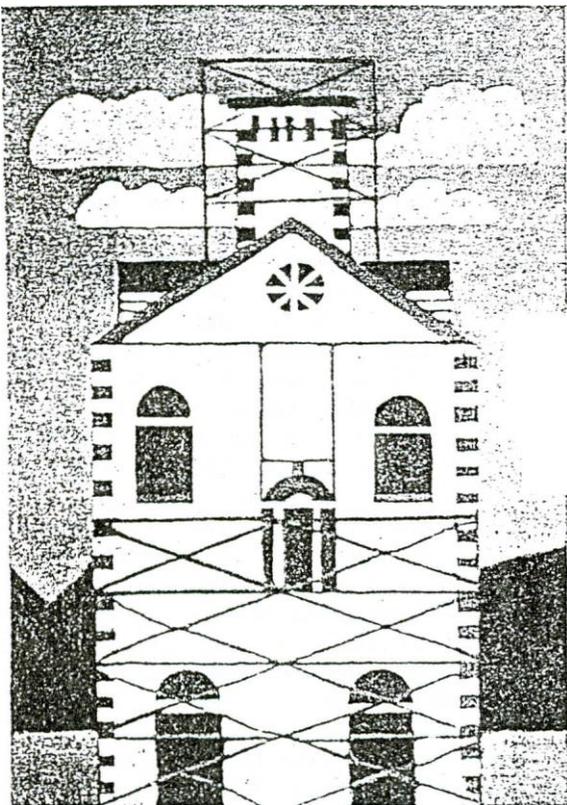
Again mobs assembled. The Prophet was seized and the city sacked. In February 1839 Newel left Missouri for Nauvoo in the wake of Governor Boggs's infamous "extermination order." But again death visited their family and Newel's sister Polly died on 27 April 1844 at the age of 33. Two months later, Joseph and Hyrum Smith were murdered, and soon the Saints were on the move again.

Newel, reflecting later on his Nauvoo experience, remembers that "sometimes I was without the necessities of life, being bereft of the food and clothing which my family needed; sometimes I was surrounded by not only the necessities but also the comforts of life; sometimes I rejoiced in the society of my friends, and sometimes enemies surrounded me, seeking my destruction because of my religion. But in the midst of these varied circumstances I never felt to doubt the truth of the gospel or the divinity of Joseph Smith's mission."<sup>30</sup>

How could he be so sure? What was his protection against doubt and discouragement as sorrow struck at that dwindling little family again and again? How could he continue so steadfastly to make whatever sacrifices were required of him?

At least part of the answer must lie in one experience he had in those early days of his conversion, an experience that must have sunk to bedrock and enable him to hold on through the storms. At the first conference of the Church in June 1830, he describes the inspiring

*Though hardly able to walk, Newel Knight responded to the call of the Prophet, making the 900-mile trek to Kirtland to work on the temple.*



truths of the gospel that were preached and the great gifts of the Spirit that were manifest, then records his own feelings: "I felt my heart filled with love, with glory, and with pleasure unspeakable. I could discern all that was going on in the room and a vision of futurity also suddenly burst upon me, and I saw, represented, the great work, which, through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith, was to be accomplished. I saw the heavens opened, I beheld the Lord Jesus Christ seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High, and it was made plain to my understanding that the time would come when I should be admitted into His presence, to enjoy - His society forever and ever."<sup>31</sup>

Certainly this sure knowledge of the future had something to do with his patience and steadfastness during trial. Another sustaining influence must have been the unstinted love of the Prophet Joseph for that little family. Before his death, the Prophet Joseph had praised the Knight family for standing "by me in every hour of peril, for these fifteen long years past." Of Father Knight, the Prophet wrote:

"[He] was among the number of the first to administer to my necessities .... For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating from the right hand or to the left. Behold, he is a righteous man, may God Almighty lengthen out the old man's days; and may his trembling, tortured, and broken body be renewed, ... and it shall be said of him, by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them remaining, that this man was a faithful man in Israel."

To Father Knight's sons, the Prophet Joseph paid a simple and moving tribute: "There are his sons, Newel Knight and Joseph Knight, Jun., whose names I record in the Book of the Law of the Lord with unspeakable delight, for, they are my friends."<sup>32</sup>

Their faith unshaken by the death of the Prophet, the Knights once more joined the exiled Saints in their exodus from Nauvoo. Like so many times before, they "left mills, house, barn and all their possessions" to be occupied by another. Newel, Lydia, and their seven children pushed on to Council Bluffs, and with an advanced company, built a fort on the Niobrara River in Ponca country, in what would later be known as Nebraska. When a fire threatened the fort, Newel was among those who combated the danger. The exertion was too much, however, and he contracted what was probably pneumonia. As he lay dying, he whispered, "Lydia, it is necessary for me to go. Joseph wants me."<sup>33</sup> On 11 January 1847, he rejoined his beloved friend on the other side of the veil. Less than a month later, his father, Joseph Knight, Sr., died in the Mormon community established at Mount Pisgah, Iowa.

The Knight family repeatedly bore testimony of their faithfulness with their lives. Some laid them

down; others wore them out in the Lord's service. Lydia and her children came west a few years later when they were sufficiently equipped for the journey. One of those children, Jesse Knight, who knew nothing but hardships and privation in his youth, progressed from a condition of wearing coarse homespun cloth and gathering pigweed and sego roots for the family's meager food supply to a prominent position of wealth and stature in the business world.

Purged of his indifference to things of the Spirit by the death of one of his daughters and by the Lord's divine intervention on behalf of another, Jesse determined to become useful to the Lord. He made a liberal estimate of his back tithing and paid it. He successfully built up enterprises-ranches, mining companies, a woolen mill, sugar companies, irrigation, and banks-which contributed to the success of growing communities in the intermountain West and Canada. He loaned substantial sums of money to the Church and to individual members at critical times. And both he and members of his family gave substantial endowments to the struggling Brigham Young University.

Jesse Knight expressed to his children "that any money we should get should be used wisely," for he believed that the Lord was blessing them - financially "for the purpose of doing good and building up the Church." At his death on 14 March 1921, Alice Louise Reynolds, lifelong friend and associate of the Knights, eulogized: "His vision was of big things; and his actions harmonized with his vision."<sup>34</sup>

Newel and Lydia Knight's eldest son, James Philander Knight, and his wife, Elizabeth Jones, have a numerous posterity in the Church. One line of that family, through their eldest daughter, Elizabeth Knight, is an example of the continued faithfulness and service of the Knight family in the present. Ethel, daughter of Elizabeth Knight and Lee Simons, married David Branson Brinton II. The couple had three sons and two daughters:

David Branson Brinton III, Sherman Simons, Marshall Knight, Barbara and Eleanor. Of these five children, the three sons and Barbara served full-time missions. All three sons have served as bishops and two of them have been on high councils. Prior to her death, Barbara served in an MIA presidency. Eleanor has served as a branch, district, and stake Relief Society president. Sixteen members of the next generation have filled full-time missions. (This constitutes one hundred percent of sons except for the two who are waiting to come of age for missionary service.) Similarly, one hundred percent of those married have been married in the temple. All of the grandchildren are being raised in active families and are participating in the Church programs for their respective ages.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the heavy mortality rate which afflicted the early Knight family, the posterity of those ardent forbearers currently numbers in the thousands and faithful in the tradition of their progenitors. The extended family of Joseph Knight, Sr., is one of the exceptional examples of devotion which spans this entire dispensation from 1830 to 1978.

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## Notes

<sup>(1)</sup> Jacob Morris Papers," no. 1656, 16 Aug. 1888 newspaper clipping, Collection of Regional History and University Archives, John M. Olin Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. The raceways and dam trenches were still visible when this writer visited the site on 26 Apr. 1977.

<sup>(2)</sup> Newel Knight. "Newel Knight Autobiography, 1800-1847," Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, fd. I, p. 1.) Hereafter cited as "Newel Knight Autobiography."

<sup>(3)</sup> *History of the Church*, 1:17.

<sup>(4)</sup> Joseph Knight, Jr., "Joseph Knight's [Jr.] Incidents of History from 1827. to 1844," compiled by Thomas Bullock from loose sheets in Joseph Knight's possession. Church Archives, 16 Aug. 1862, p. 1. Hereafter cited as "Joseph Knight's [Jr.] Incidents."

<sup>(5)</sup> Newel Knight Autobiography," pp. 1-2.

<sup>(6)</sup> Joseph Knight, Sr., "22 Sept. 1827. Manuscript of the early History of Joseph Smith finding of plates, &c. &c.,, Church Archives, pp. 2-3. Hereafter cited as Joseph Knight, Sr., "Manuscript."

<sup>(7)</sup> Ibid p. 2-3.

<sup>(8)</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>(9)</sup> Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors for Many Generations*, Liverpool: S. Richards, 1853, p. 105.

<sup>(10)</sup> Joseph Knight, Sr., "Manuscript," p. 5.

<sup>(11)</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>(12)</sup> *History of the Church*. 1:47. \_

<sup>(13)</sup> "Joseph Knight's [Jr.] Incidents," p. 1.

<sup>(14)</sup> Edward Stevenson, *Journal of Edward*

*Stevenson*, Church Archives, 2 Jan. 1887.

<sup>(15)</sup> *History of the Church*, 1:83-84, 86.

<sup>(16)</sup> "Newel Knight's Journal," *Scraps of Biography: Tenth Book of the Faith Promoting Series*, Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor, 1883, pp. 53-55. Hereafter cited as "Newel Knight's Journal." See also *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834. reprinted in Kirtland, Ohio, p. 12.

<sup>(17)</sup> "Joseph Knight's [Jr.] incidents," P. 2.

<sup>(18)</sup> "Newel Knight Autobiography," pp. 20-21.

<sup>(19)</sup> "Joseph Knight, Sr., "Manuscript," pp. 8-9.

<sup>(20)</sup> "Newel Knight Autobiography," p. 29.

<sup>(21)</sup> Journal History, Church Archives, 25 July 1831.

<sup>(22)</sup> "Joseph Knight's [Jr.] Incidents." p.2-3

<sup>(23)</sup> "Newel Knight Autobiography," p. 32.

<sup>(24)</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>(25)</sup> Joseph Knight, Sr., "Manuscript." p. 9.

<sup>(26)</sup> "Newel Knight's Journal." pp. 72-73.

<sup>(27)</sup> "Newel Knight Autobiography," p. 45.

<sup>(28)</sup> ".Newel Knight's Journal," p. 85. 88.

<sup>(29)</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>(30)</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>(31)</sup> Ibid., pp. 52-53.

<sup>(32)</sup> *History of the Church*, 5:124-125.

<sup>(33)</sup> *Lydia Knight's history: The First Book of the Noble Women's Lives Series*, Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office 1883, pp. 64, 69

<sup>(34)</sup> J. William Knight. *The Jesse Knight Family*, Salt Lake City:Deseret News Press, 1940, pp. 39-40, 101.

<sup>(35)</sup> Interview, Ann Christensen Clawson, daughter of Eleanor Brinton Christensen, Salt Lake City: and Annette Vellinga. daughter of Barbara Brinton Wise, Provo. Utah.

**THE KNIGHT FAMILY**  
**Ever Faithful to the Prophet**  
By William G. Hartley  
(Ensign, Jan 1989)

Joseph Smith spied aged Joseph Knight hobbling down a Nauvoo street. He quickly overtook his longtime friend from New York and handed the elderly man his cane, insisting that Brother Knight keep it and pass it on to a descendant named Joseph. Their friendship had lasted nearly twenty years, dating to before the time Joseph Smith had received the Book of Mormon plates.

After the Smiths, the Joseph and Polly Knight family may be the second family of the Restoration. The Knights knew Joseph Smith and accepted his claims before Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, or David Whitmer knew him. The Knights also stood by Joseph Smith more steadfastly than did the Three and the Eight Witnesses and even some of the Smiths. They became a special type of witness, a family witness of Joseph Smith's prophetic work.

Joseph Smith's friendship with the Knights began when he was twenty years old. In late 1826, Joseph Smith became a hired hand for Joseph Knight, Sr., and others in the Colesville, New York, area – 115 miles southeast of Palmyra by dirt road. Young Joseph did farm work and probably helped at the Knights' sawmill. He had experienced the First Vision six years before and had been meeting with Moroni for three years.

While helping the Knights, he bunked with Joseph Knight, Jr., who wrote that in November 1826 Joseph Smith "made known to us 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 that if he would follow the direction of the Angel, he could get it. We were told this in secret."

Another son, Newel Knight, wrote that Joseph Smith visited them often and that they "were very deeply impressed with the truthfulness of his statements concerning the Plates of the Book of Mormon which had been shown him by an Angel of the Lord."

Joseph Smith was then courting Emma Hale, a romance Father Knight assisted: "I paid him the money and I furnished him with a horse and cutter (sled) to go and see his girl." Joseph and Emma married shortly after that, on 18 January 1827, and moved to the Smith home near Palmyra.

When the time came for Joseph Smith to obtain the plates, Father Knight traveled to the Smith home, where the Prophet used his wagon to retrieve the plates. Late that night, after Joseph Smith had returned from his mission, he said to Brother Knight, "It is ten times better than I expected." According to Father Knight, the Prophet described the plates though he "seemed to think more of the glasses or urim and thummim than he did of the plates. 'For' says he, 'I can see any thing. They are marvelous.'"

By early 1828, Joseph and Emma had moved to Emma's father's property, about thirty miles from the Knights. Joseph Smith found it impossible to both earn a living and translate the plates. The Smiths asked Father Knight for help. Although the Knights were "not in easy circumstances," Joseph Knight, Sr., gave the young man some goods: "some few things out of the store, a pair of shoes, and three dollars." A few days later, Father Knight visited the couple

and gave them some money to buy paper for the translation. Joseph Knight, Jr., recalled that, prior to Oliver Cowdery's arrival, "Father and I often went to see him and carry him something to live upon."

Mrs. Knight was not yet a believer, so in March 1828 her husband took her by sled to visit the Smiths. He wrote, "Joseph talked with us about his translating and some revelations he had received. And from that time my wife began to believe."

In early 1828, when Oliver Cowdery became Joseph Smith's scribe, the two visited Father Knight, seeking provisions. Father Knight paid for and delivered a barrel of mackerel, about ten bushels of grain and six of potatoes, a pound of tea, and some lined paper for writing. The two rejoiced at the food and paper, and "then they went to work, and had provisions enough to last till the translation was done."

Years later, Joseph Smith praised Father Knight for these items; they "enabled us to continue the work when otherwise we must have relinquished it for a season." Joseph Knight, Sr., helped the world receive the Book of Mormon sooner. If the Prophet had had to work full-time to support his family, the translation might have taken years to complete.

In May 1829, Joseph Knight, Sr., desired to know what he should do regarding the divine work then unfolding. The Prophet inquired of the Lord and received a revelation instructing Father Knight to "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion" (D&C 12:6) and to give heed with all his might to God's word. This was the first of many revelations in the Doctrine and covenants directed to the Knights.

In early June 1829, Joseph and Oliver finished the work of translation on the Book of Mormon, and the Three Witnesses and then the Eight Witnesses were allowed to see the plates. Sadly, none were Knights, who lived quite a distance away. But on the day the Church was organized, one-third of the sixty people there were Knight relatives from Colesville.

Shortly thereafter, Joseph Smith went to Colesville to preach and hold meetings, probably because he knew that the Knights were ready to receive the gospel. While there, he challenged Newel Knight to pray vocally. In the attempt, Newel was attacked by an evil spirit that lifted him from the floor "and tossed him about most fearfully." Neighbors gathered and then saw the Prophet command the devil in the name of Jesus Christ to depart. Newel felt great relief and gladly accepted baptism. (This exorcism was the first miracle performed in the restored church.) He became the first of more than sixty of the Knight clan to join the Church.

At the Church's first conference on 9 June 1830 at the Whitmer's, those attending experienced spiritual outpourings similar to those on the Day of Pentecost. Newel was one. He beheld a vision much like the one Stephen the Martyr saw: "I saw the heavens opened, I behold the Lord Jesus Christ seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High, and it was made plain to my understanding that the time would come when I would be admitted into His presence, to enjoy His society for ever and ever."

Despite local harassment, many Knight relatives were baptized on 28 June 1830. They included Father and Mother Knight, son Joseph, Newel's wife Sally, daughter Esther and her husband William Stringham, and daughter Polly (named after her mother). Mother Knight was a Peck,

and among the Peck relatives baptized were her brother Hezekiah and his wife Martha and her sister Esther and her husband Aaron Culver.

Angry neighbors prevented the converts from being confirmed, and a constable arrested Joseph Smith. Father Knight, indignant, hired James Davidson and John Reid, neighboring farmers well versed in the law, to defend his friend. They did, and Joseph Smith was acquitted the following midnight.

Joseph Knight, Jr., said that feelings in the neighborhood became heated: “That night our wagons were turned over and wood piled on them, and some sunk in the water, rails were piled against our doors, and chains sunk in the stream and a great deal of mischief done.”

Within hours after his acquittal, Joseph Smith was arrested again and tried in Colesville. Father Knight’s lawyer friends felt too fatigued to help, but his pleadings won them over. Mr. Reid said that Father Knight was “like the old patriarchs that followed the ark of God to the city of David.” Newel, called upon to testify, told the court that no, Joseph Smith had not cast a devil out of him, but that Joseph by God’s power had cast it out. Mr. Davidson and Mr. Reid picked apart the prosecution’s case and Joseph Smith was freed.

In September 1820, Newel Knight and his sister Anna’s husband, Freeborn DeMille, attended the Church’s second conference, held at Fayette, New York. Newel was ordained a priest, and Freeborn was baptized.

At Fayette, Newel Knight became the young prophet’s confidant during a during a crisis caused by Hyrum Page’s claim of receiving revelations for the Church through a peepstone. Newel wrote that Hyrum Page carried “quite a roll of papers full of these revelations,” which led many astray. Joseph Smith “was perplexed and scarcely knew how to meet this new exigency.” Sharing the same room, the two friends spent the greater part of the night in prayer. In response, Joseph received a revelation (see D&C 28) that spelled out the proper channels for revelation to reach the Church. Newel reported, “Brother Page and all ... present renounced the stone, ... much to our joy and satisfaction.”

After the meetings, Hyrum Smith was appointed to preside over the Colesville Branch. He and Jerusha lived with and became good friends with Newel and Sally Knight. Later, Newel replaced Hyrum as branch president.

In December 1830, the Church was commanded to “assemble together at the Ohio.” (D&C 37:3.) Newel Knight said that this entailed the sacrifice of their property. Newel sold 60 acres, Freeborn DeMille 61 acres, Aaron Culver 100 acres, and Father Knight 140 acres, with “two Dwelling Houses, a good barn, and a fine orchard.” Led by Newel, sixty-two Knight kin moved to Ohio as part of the first gathering. Unlike other Church unity, the Colesville Branch remained intact.

The family settled on Lemam Copley’s land near Painesville, Ohio, and became the first people in the Church in this dispensation to try to live an economic cooperative order. (See D&C 48: D&C 51.) But Lemam Copley soon withdrew his land and ordered the Saints off. Father Knight wrote, “We sold out what we Could But Copley took the advantage of us and we Could not git any thing for what we had done.” Newel Knight asked the Prophet for counsel, and in response

Joseph Smith received a revelation directing the Knight clan to move once again, this time to Missouri. (See D&C 54.)

On 25 July 1832, Joseph Smith welcomed his Colesville friends to Missouri and directed them to settle twelve miles west of Independence. “We found the country to be Butiful rich and plesent and we made our selves as Comfortable as we Could,” Father Knight wrote.

The Knights eagerly pitched in to establish the area as a center place for Zion and for a great temple. When twelve men laid the first log as a foundation of Zion, five were Knight relatives. Newel Knight was one of seven who dedicated the Jackson County temple site. For the Knight clan, such ceremonies stirred hope of a great future, despite the tragedies among them. Mother Knight had been so sick on the trip from Ohio that Newel brought along lumber for her coffin. Her “greatest desire,” he wrote, was “to set her feet upon the land of Zion and to have her body interred” there. She became the first Saint buried in Missouri. That year, death claimed two more Knights – one of them Newel’s sister Esther, the other his uncle, Aaron Culver.

This outpost colony of the Church saw a busy year of building, fencing, and establishing homes while consecrating its properties to live cooperatively. When the Church formed a council of high priests to govern the stake in Missouri, Newel Knight became one of the council. He continued to be president of what was still called the Colesville Branch. Six Knight men also made labor pledges as part of plans to build the Independence Temple.

Father Knight remarried, to Phoebe Crosby Peck, his first wife’s widowed sister-in-law. Phoebe had four children of her own, and the couple had two more. Counting Phoebe’s four, they were the parents and stepparents of thirteen children. In the last half of 1833, Missourians drove the Saints, including the Knight clan, from Jackson County. Mobbers shot Philo Dibble, whom Newel Knight saved from death through a remarkable priesthood blessing. Fearing for their lives, the Knights braved the cold weather and rushed to the Missouri River ferries. Joseph Knight, Jr., told of women and children walking with bare feet on frozen ground. The Knights lost all their property, including a gristmill. Of that awful winter, Sally Knight’s sister, Emily Colburn Slade, recalled, “We lived in tents until winter set in, and did our cooking out in the wind and storms.”

Suffering from poor food and shelter, many Saints became victims of fever and what was called ague (probably malaria). Sally was one of them. She gave birth to a son, who died, and then she died herself. “Truly she has fallen a martyr to the gospel,” her husband, Newel, eulogized.

In 1833, Newel traveled to Ohio to help build the temple and to receive temple blessings. At Kirtland, he boarded with his good friends Hyrum and Jerusha Smith. There he met and fell in love with Lydia Goldthwaite Bailey, whose belief in Joseph Smith was equal to his.

A few years previous, Lydia’s husband had deserted her, and both of her children had died, so her family sent her to Canada for a change of scenery. In late 1833, while staying with the Nickerson family, she heard Joseph Smith preach and saw his face “become white and a shining glow seemed to beam from every feature.” This witness of the Spirit converted her. She then moved to Kirtland. On 24 November 1835, Joseph Smith performed Newel and Lydia’s wedding at Hyrum Smith’s home. The ceremony was the first marriage performed by the Prophet.

Newel took Lydia to Missouri—just in time to join the Mormon exodus from Clay County to Far West. When Joseph Smith also moved to Far West in 1838, Newel rejoiced to again hear the Prophet preach: “His words were meat and drink for us.”

Unfortunately, the strife that had beset the Church did not abate. The Knights in Far West were saddened to see several leading elders forsake the Church. The high council Newel Knight served on had to cut off the entire Missouri stake presidency, including David and John Witmer, two Book of Mormon witnesses. Oliver Cowdery also veered away. Missourians were also clashing again with the Saints, and once more in winter 1838-39, Church members surrendered homes and lands and became refugees. The Knight clan struggled across Missouri to Illinois.

Within a few months, the Knight and Peck families had moved to where Nauvoo would rise. They now included at least eleven family units—four headed by members of Father Knight’s generation, seven by Newel’s generation. They had passed the tests of loyalty the troubles at Kirtland and Missouri had thrown at them. Since converting nine years before, they had moved to five settlements, including the present one. (Notably, between 1831 and 1846, the Knights helped to pioneer no less than ten LDS settlements in Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska.) Unlike the Three Witnesses and other prominent leaders of the Church, their knees had not buckled. Despite suffering great losses of property, they did not turn against their religion. The family’s bill of damages for losses in Missouri alone reached \$16,000, or more than \$500,000 today. [1989]

In Illinois, Newel Knight eagerly greeted the Prophet shortly after he arrived from his long incarceration in Missouri prisons. Newel described that meeting thus: “As soon as I could I went to see him, but I can never describe my feelings on meeting with him, and shaking hands with one whom I had so long and so dearly loved, his worth and his sufferings filled my heart with mingled emotions, while I beheld him and reflected upon the past, and yet saw him standing before me, in the full dignity of his holy calling, I could but raise my heart in silent but ardent prayer that he and his family and his aged parents may never be torn apart in like manner again.”

Once more, the Knights went to work building up the Church and a new city—Nauvoo, the “City of Joseph.” Newel served on the high council. He and Joseph Knight, Jr., built several gristmills. About the time the Prophet gave Father Knight the cane, the city council voted to give him a lot and built him a house. Still in use today, Knight Street memorializes Joseph Smith’s esteem for the Knights.

One day in January 1842, the Prophet listed in the Book of the Law of the Lord the names of those “faithful few” who had stood by him since the beginning of his ministry—“pure and holy friends, who are faithful, just, and true, and whose hearts fail not.” He included Father Knight: “My aged and beloved brother, Joseph Knight, Sen., who was among the number of the first to administer to my necessities, while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord. . . . For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating to the right hand or to the left. Behold he is a righteous man, may God Almighty lengthen out the old man’s days. . . . And it shall be said of him, by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them remaining, that this man was a faithful man in Israel; therefore his name shall never be forgotten.”

The Prophet also recalled Father Knight's sons, "Newel Knight and Joseph Knight, Jun., whose names I record ... with unspeakable delight, for they are my friends."

In Nauvoo, the Knight group faced and passed another great test of faith. The Prophet introduced several doctrines relating to the temple including the temple ceremonies and plural marriage, which some could not accept. But the Knights received the teachings. They helped to finish the temple and then performed baptisms for the dead. By early 1846, more than twenty adults in the Knight families had received their temple endowments and sealings. Four of Father and Polly Knight's children entered into plural marriage.

When Joseph and Hyrum Smith died, few mourned their passing more than the Knights. Newel's heart broke, and he vented his sorrow in his journal: "O how I loved those men, and rejoiced under their teachings! it seems as if *all* is gone, and as if my very heart strings will break, and were it not for my beloved wife and dear children I feel as if I have nothing to live for. ... I pray God my Father that I may be reconciled to my lot, and live and die a faithful follower of the teachings of our *Murdered Prophet and Patriarch*."

Following the martyrdom, the Knights passed still another severe test of loyalty. Unlike a number of others, they did not forsake the faith and follow false successors. They chose to follow the Quorum of the Twelve. All the relatives in Nauvoo (except perhaps Nahum, for whom we lack records) left the city to go westward. When ready to depart, Newel Knight "once more had the satisfaction of walking through the streets of the City of Joseph, and beholding the great works, he had so nobly reared before his martyrdom." Once across the Mississippi River, Newel looked back a last time at the city: "My heart swelled, for I beheld at a glance, from the eminences where I stood, the noble works of Joseph the Prophet and Seer, and Hyrum his patriarch, with whom I had been acquainted, even from their boyhood, I knew their worth, and mourned their loss."

While moving west with the exiled Saints, Newel died of exposure in northern Nebraska in January 1847. Father Knight died at Mount Pisgah, Iowa, a month later. The family, from the Church's second year to its fourteenth, sacrificed some of its best blood for the gospel's sake. Of Father Knight's thirteen children and their spouses, six individuals died, one couple remains unaccounted for, and the remaining seventeen reached Utah.

The Knights are not silent witnesses of Joseph Smith and the restored gospel. Lydia wrote her life story. Newel kept an invaluable journal. Father Knight and Joseph, Jr., both penned their recollections. All four authors revered Joseph Smith.

The Knight families knew Joseph Smith in the earliest days, when he was accused of gold digging and using peep stones. If Joseph Smith were a charlatan or disreputable moneygrubber as detractors charged, the large Knight clan would not have felt such deep trust in him. Their loyalty to him was based on firsthand, intimate knowledge, which stands today as a solid witness that the Prophet's character, from when he was twenty to his death at thirty-eight, was righteous and good.

Critics of Joseph Smith have questioned his motives, truthfulness, and divine claims. Defenders have argued that God used him to restore the true church to the earth. The debate and discussion should not ignore the faithful and solid Knight family, who remained loyal to the prophet longer

than any other family. The Knights bear a powerful, persistent testimony that Joseph Smith was what he claimed to be.

The cane that Joseph Smith gave to Father Knight in Nauvoo continues to pass down the generations of Knights from one Joseph to another. It is just one memorial of the friendship and mutual faith Joseph Smith and the Joseph Knight family shared.

**Children of Joseph Knight, Sr., and first wife, Polly Peck:**

Nahum Knight (md. Thankfull)

Esther Knight (md. William Stringham)

Newel Knight (md. Sally Colburn and Lydia Goldthwaite)

Anna Knight (md. Freeborn Demille)

Joseph Knight, Jr. (md. Betsey Covert, Adeline Johnson, Abba Welden, and Mary Woolerton)

Polly Knight (md. William Stringham)

Elizabeth Knight (md. Joseph W. Johnson)

**Children of Joseph Knight, Sr., and second wife, Phoebe Crosby Peck:**

Hezekiah Peck (md. Jemima Smoot)

Samantha Peck (md. Hosea Stout)

Henrietta Peck (md. Thomas R. Rich)

Sarah Jane Peck (md. Charles C. Rich)

Ether Knight (md. Jane Terry)

Charles C. Knight (died as a child)

# Joseph Knight—Friend to the Prophet

By Susan Arrington Madsen

Susan Arrington Madsen, “Joseph Knight—Friend to the Prophet,” *Friend*, Dec. 1983, 42

Joseph Knight arose early the morning of September 22, 1827. As he went outside to check on his animals, he noticed that his horse and wagon were gone. He was a guest in the home of the Joseph Smith family in Manchester, New York, and Joseph and Emma had borrowed his horse and wagon in the predawn to go to the Hill Cumorah.

Brother Knight was a dear friend of the Prophet and was among the first to hear Joseph describe the sacred experience of being visited by the angel Moroni. The angel had appeared to Joseph Smith once a year for the three previous years, and this morning was to be the fourth and last visitation. During this visit the angel Moroni had promised to let the Prophet take the gold plates if Joseph had been faithful.

When Joseph and Emma returned from the Hill Cumorah, the Prophet told Brother Knight something of his glorious experience. He told him of the size of the plates and described the glasses, or Urim and Thummim, which he (Joseph) had been given to help translate the Book of Mormon.

Brother Knight and his wife, Polly, had faith in the young Prophet from the beginning. They helped Joseph while he was translating the plates by giving him shoes, money, writing paper, mackerel, grain, and potatoes. Brother Knight became a good friend of the Smith family, and in June 1830 the Knights were baptized.

Once, when Joseph was arrested while conducting a confirmation service, Brother Knight hired two farmer neighbors versed in the law, who successfully defended the Prophet and gained his release from jail. As a result of Joseph Knight’s kindness to the Prophet, Knight’s anti-Mormon neighbors vandalized his property while he was away. One account states that they sank some of his wagons in water, overturned others, and threw chains into the millstream. Brother Knight’s response was that, even so, the house was filled with the Holy Ghost upon their return, and they were grateful to have the Prophet with them.

The Knights moved their family many times to stay with the Prophet, each time sacrificing home, farm, and belongings that they had worked hard to obtain. They moved to Ohio and then to Missouri. Joseph Knight’s wife, Polly, died just a few days after their arrival in Jackson County, Missouri. It has been reported that Knight and his son Newel slept in a chicken coop there while their home was being built. The Knights later moved to Illinois where they helped build the city of Nauvoo. A few years later they were forced to move again as the Saints began the trek across the plains to the Salt Lake Valley.

Joseph Knight died during that trek at Mt. Pisgah, Iowa, on February 3, 1847, at the age of seventy-four.

Joseph Knight made many sacrifices in his effort to help the Prophet. Joseph Smith wrote that *“my aged and beloved brother, Joseph Knight, Sen., ... was among the ... first to administer to my necessities, while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord. ... For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind ... Behold he is a righteous man, ... [and] his name shall never be forgotten.”* (*History of the Church* 5:124-125.)

[http://www.saintswithouthalos.com/Reprints/swh/c01\\_knight.htm](http://www.saintswithouthalos.com/Reprints/swh/c01_knight.htm)

### **Saints Without Halos: Joseph Knight**

In 1811 thirty-nine-year-old Joseph Knight, his wife Polly, and their seven children moved to Colesville, New York, a small rural community on the east bank of the Susquehanna River. They cleared the land, planted an apple orchard, and erected a gristmill. By 1826 the Knights were operating four farms, the area's principal gristmill, and two mills for carding wool.

In connection with these enterprises, Joseph Knight often employed itinerant workers on a seasonal basis. In 1826 Knight's partner in the grain business, Josiah Stowel, recommended Joseph Smith, Jr., from Manchester in western New York. Stowel had engaged the twenty-year-old youth to dig for an old Spanish mine, rumored to be not far from Stowel's farm. But after a month of fruitless effort, Joseph had suggested that Stowel give up the hunt and Stowel, conceding the point but reluctant to put Joseph out of a job, referred the young man to Knight.

Joseph proved to be a good worker. Knight later said that he was "the best hand he ever hired." Also working on the Knight farm were Joseph Knight's sons Newel and Joseph, Jr., ages twenty-five and eighteen, respectively. Joseph roomed with Newel and Joseph, and they became good friends. So close was the relationship between Joseph Smith and the Knight family, that in November 1826 he told them of a sacred event he had experienced at his father's farm:

One night in 1823, he had prayed earnestly for forgiveness and sought to know the will of the Lord regarding himself. In the midst of his prayer, he was suddenly visited by a heavenly messenger who introduced himself as Moroni. He told Joseph that ancient records were hidden in a nearby hill. If Joseph remained faithful, the angel said, and if he succeeded in expunging every thought of monetary gain, he would be privileged to translate the records and bring them to the attention of the world. Moroni would visit Joseph once a year for four years. Joseph reported that three of these visits had already occurred, and the last visit would take place on the next September 22.

By the time the promised day arrived, Josiah Stowel and Joseph Knight had joined the Smith family in Manchester. Unfortunately, word of the hidden plates had leaked out, and some nearby residents hoped to find them first, or steal them later from Joseph Smith. Arising early on the morning of September 22, Joseph Knight noticed that his horse and wagon were gone. Joseph and Emma, his bride of nine months, had borrowed it to go to the hill because no one would recognize it. Soon the young couple returned. Joseph turned out the horse.

"All Come into the house to Brackfist But no thing said about where they had Bin. After Brackfist Joseph Cald me in to the other Room and he sit his foot on the Bed and leaned his head on his hand and says, well I am Dissopented. Well, say I, I am sorrey. Well, says he, I am grateley Dissopented. It is ten times Better then I expected. Then he went on to tell the length and width and thickness of the plates and, said he, they appear to be gold. But he seamed to think more of the glasses or the urim and thummim than he Did of the plates for says he, I can see anything. They are Marvelous."

During the ensuing months, Joseph Knight followed the translation of the Book of Mormon with keen interest. He offered moral support and provisions, furnishing a pair of shoes, some money, writing paper, a barrel of mackerel, several barrels of grain, "taters," and a pound of tea.

In late March 1830, Joseph Knight drove Joseph to Manchester, New York, to pick up some copies of the Book of Mormon, which had just come off the press. On the way, the Prophet told him that a church must be organized, and a few days later Knight witnessed one of the most moving events of early Mormonism, the baptism of Martin Harris and Joseph Smith, Sr.

"They found a place in a lot a small stream ran thro' and they ware Baptized in the Evening Because of persecution.... Joseph was fild with the spirrit to a grate Degree to see his Father and Mr Harris that he Bin with so much he Bust out with greaf and Joy and seamed as tho the world Could not hold him. He went out into the lot and appeared to want to git out of site of every Body and would sob and Crie and seamed to Be so full that he Could not live. Oliver and I went after him and Came to him and after a while he Came in But he was the most wrot upon that I ever saw any man. But his Joy seemed to be full. I think he saw the grate work he had Begun and was Desirus to Carry it out."

Joseph Knight thought about being baptized at the same time,

"but I had not red the Book of Morman and I wanted to examin a little more I Being a Restorationar and had not examined so much as I wanted to. But I should a felt Better if I had a gone forward."

Five days later, however, Joseph Knight and son Newel, along with eighteen of their Colesville neighbors, attended the meeting in Fayette where the Church of Christ was organized.

Joseph visited the Knights again in June. This time they were ready to be baptized. A dam was constructed across a nearby stream on Saturday afternoon, but during the night hostile neighbors destroyed it. Oliver Cowdery preached the Sunday sermon and, according to the Prophet's history, "others of us bore testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon, the doctrine of repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, and laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost." They repaired the dam and on Monday, Oliver Cowdery baptized thirteen persons, including Joseph's wife Emma, and Joseph and Polly Knight.

Before the baptismal service concluded, a mob began to gather. The Saints withdrew to the Knight home, but the mob followed, surrounding the house. When they went to Newel Knight's house, the mob continued to harass them. "We were obliged to answer them various unprofitable questions," Joseph Smith reported, "and bear with insults and threatenings without number." As evening approached, other Saints began to arrive for a meeting during which the newly baptized members would be confirmed. Before the service could commence, however, a constable entered the house and arrested Joseph Smith "on the charge of being a disorderly person, of setting the country in an uproar by preaching the Book of Mormon, etc."

Joseph Knight employed two lawyers who successfully defended Joseph in the South Bainbridge court the following day. Within an hour of his release, however, Joseph was arrested again – this

time on a warrant from neighboring Broome County. Again the two lawyers succeeded in clearing him, although it was after 2:00 A.M. when the defendant was finally released.

Returning with the prophet, Joseph Knight found that neighbors had vandalized his property. Under cover of darkness, they had overturned wagons and piled wood on them, sunk other wagons in water, propped rails against the doors, and sunk chains in the millstream. Nevertheless, Joseph Knight, Jr. reported that when the prophet arrived, "the house was filled with the Holy Ghost which rested on us It was the greatest time I ever saw."

Colesville became the site of the first branch of the Church. Joseph Knight and his family attended the first Church conferences in June and October 1830. In the fall, Joseph Smith called his brother Hyrum to serve as the Colesville branch president. Hyrum lived for a time with Newel Knight, preaching and baptizing throughout the Susquehanna Valley.

In December Orson Pratt, a newly ordained elder from Canaan, New York, was sent on his first mission to labor with Hyrum and Newel in the Colesville area.

Among those they baptized was Martin Harris's brother Emer. Emer Harris was the great-grandfather of Franklin Harris, president of Brigham Young University (1921-1945) and of Utah State University (1945-1950); he was also the great-great-grandfather of Dallin Oaks, president of Brigham Young University (1971-1980).

At the third conference of the Church, held in Fayette, New York, on 2 January 1831, Joseph Smith announced a revelation which declared that all members of the Church – now numbering nearly two hundred – should move to Kirtland, in northeastern Ohio. Joseph Knight and the other Colesville members decided to move as a group. They sold their homes, loaded their belongings into three baggage wagons, climbed aboard eleven ox-drawn passenger wagons, and set out for Ohio. At Ithaca, New York, they boarded canal boats and traveled through Cayuga Lake into the Erie Canal. Arriving at Buffalo on 1 May 1831, they were detained by a cold wind which blew ice into the harbor. The party was soon joined by eighty more Church members from Fayette and Waterloo, New York, traveling under the direction of Joseph Smith's mother, Lucy Mack Smith. Together they resumed their journey on an excursion boat to Fairport, Ohio, where they were met by the Prophet Joseph and other Church leaders.

The Colesville group settled sixteen miles northeast of Kirtland on a thousand-acre farm donated by Lemman Copley. Joseph Knight and the others consecrated their property, and the bishop assigned stewardships of land, livestock, implements, and other property according to family needs. Those who earned a surplus were asked to consecrate it to the bishop's storehouse to provide for those whose needs exceeded their own resources and to finance community enterprises.

After two months, however, Copley apostatized and sued for the return of his land. The courts, favoring individual property rights, supported Copley's demand, and the Colesville Saints were forced to move.

In twenty-four wagons they traveled to western Missouri, near present-day Independence. As one in the party wrote, "people all along the road stared at us as they would at a circus or a caravan. ... We most truly were a band of pilgrims started out to seek a better country."

Polly Knight's health had been failing for some time, but according to Newel, "she would not consent to stop traveling; her only, or her greatest desire was to set her feet upon the land of Zion, and to have her body interred in that land."

The Colesville branch arrived in Jackson County on 25 July 1831 and began cooperatively to sow grain and build fences and houses. Polly died in just a few days, the first Latter-day Saint to die in Missouri. The Prophet preached her funeral sermon.

Joseph Knight and his son Newel slept in a hen coop while their homes were built, and Newel served as branch president. The Prophet was so impressed with the spirit of unity and service among the Colesville Saints that in 1832 he called them together "and sealed them up to eternal life."

But the same qualities of industry, unity and cooperation which earned them the blessing of the Prophet, aroused the hostility of the "old settler" Missourians. On 1 December 1833 the Mormon settlers were expelled from their homes and farms. Through the winter the Colesville branch huddled together on the Missouri bottom lands of Clay County. Not until 1836, when they were forced farther north to Caldwell County, did the Colesville branch suspend its practice of the Law of Consecration and Order of Stewardships.

Eventually the Knights moved with the rest of the Saints to Illinois, where they helped build Nauvoo, only to leave it a few years later in the great exodus to the Salt Lake Valley. Joseph and Newel Knight died in Winter Quarters during the winter of 1846-1847.

Newel's son Jesse, an important Utah entrepreneur, became one of the Church's most noted benefactors. He employed hundreds of Saints, and his contributions helped save Brigham Young University and the Church itself from financial ruin in the 1890's.

Joseph Smith indicated the great respect he had for Joseph Knight and his family in an 1842 entry made in the Book of the Law of the Lord; "My aged and beloved brother, Joseph Knight, Sen., .... Was among the ... first to administer to my necessities while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord. ....For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind. ....He is a righteous man. ... (As) a faithful man in Israel, ... his name shall never be forgotten." As for his sons, Newel and Joseph, Jr., the Prophet added, "I record (their names) in the Book of the Law of the Lord with unspeakable delight, for they are my friends."

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**The Life Story of  
Polly Peck Knight  
(1774 – 1831)**

*Compiled by – Lila Nielsen Meacham (1997) written in first person*

I am Polly Peck Knight, the sixth child of thirteen children of Joseph and Elizabeth Read Peck, and the wife of Joseph Knight, Sr., who was a loyal friend of the Prophet Joseph Smith and helped the Prophet in so many ways to make it possible for him to translate the Book of Mormon from the Gold Plates in much less time than it would have otherwise been possible.

I am a fifth-generation American. My father was known in the history of Vermont for his militant role as Captain Peck in Vermont's thwarted New York rebellion. In my early years, I heard so much about the trouble between New Hampshire and New York. New Hampshire's issuance of the New Hampshire Grants led to conflict between the two colonies; for the region was claimed by both of them. At that time, Ethan Allen formed the Green Mountain Boys to resist New York authority. This was during the American Revolution when we lived in Guilford, Windham County, Vermont.

In 1777, Vermont declared itself an independent state, but was not admitted to the Union until 1791. New York, nevertheless, continued to claim parts of Vermont. Guilford was the only Vermont town where pro-New Yorkers dominated. In July of 1782 the 'Yorkers' became desperate and asked Governor Clinton for military aid. Therefore, Governor Clinton authorized the town to create six militia companies and appointed Joseph Peck to be captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Guilford Company of the Cumberland County (New York) militia.

In order to stop the New Yorkers' military activity, Vermont sent militia, under Ethan Allen, to suppress the Guilford rebels. In January, 1784, Allen's men raided our home. Five men came to our door; and when my mother told them that my father was not at home and refused to say where he was, they became frustrated and plundered our house, taking with them my father's sword and other weapons, in addition to carrying off whatever else they wanted that was of value.

Later as compensation for the losses the Vermont families suffered during the war between New Hampshire and New York, New York granted them an eight square-mile township in south-central New York, along the Unadilla and Susquehanna Rivers. Captain Peck received 640 acres and moved there around 1787. I did not go with the family when they moved, as I felt I was skilled enough in spinning, weaving and sewing as well as having learned the value of good, hard work in order to succeed in life.

My father and the adult male members of our family were all busy taking care of the necessary work that needed to be done in the fields and at the mill and also saw to hauling and chopping the wood and kindling. Any other work in connection with the house was left for us women to do. We milked the cows and took care of the milk so that we would have good, clean milk to use for making butter and cheese. This involved straining the milk and then putting it in big pans where the cream could be skimmed off when it rose to the top after standing overnight. Hard

physical labor was common for the women of my day, except for the ones whose physical condition was not good. We planted and cared for our gardens and harvested the fruit and vegetables which we produced to fix our meals and also to can, dry and pickle in order to store them for the winter. We also had to learn to pickle, dry, salt and smoke meat in order to preserve it. We baked our wheat or rye bread in the ashes of our large fireplace. We women hauled water, killed chickens and other wild fowl, and were responsible for raising the fowls and barnyard animals.

Washing clothes and ironing them were arduous tasks. Washing the clothes involved carrying the water from the river, stream or well and then heating it in large kettles that were suspended in our large fireplace. The clothes were boiled and scrubbed on the 'scrubbing board', using our hard homemade soap, then rung out by hand, rinsed and wrung out again and hung up or spread out to dry.

Ironing required a lot of time, for the clothes of our day were usually made of heavy material, and were not made of simple patterns. Then the flat irons were heated on the stove for use in ironing. They either had handles which had to be latched onto the iron in some way to pick them up or else the handles were built right on the iron. In this case, some type of heavy material had to be made into a pad to make it possible to pick up the hot handle on the iron.

Taking care of meat was a real job and usually required several family members to do this. When a pig was slaughtered, hams and bacons had to be cured, link or other sausage to be made along with head cheese and pickled pig's feet. It was a matter of pride to be able to use everything but *'the squeal'*.

Spinning, weaving and sewing took up much of our time in the winter. We did get to socialize when we had quilting bees. Candle making and making homemade soap were tasks which required good hard work, but candle making was generally done only once a year. Soap making meant stirring the soap for hours over a hot fire out in the yard. On holidays, while the men could find time to enjoy themselves, we women worked hard preparing, cooking and clearing away.

I became acquainted with a fine young man about my age who was from Marlboro in the same county in which I lived, and in 1795, I was married to him. Little did my parents think when they moved to New York that some day they would be in-laws to Joseph Knight. In 1808 we moved with our young children – Nahum, Esther, Newel and Anna – to Bainbridge, where my parents lived. It was indeed a happy reunion since we lived close to my parents and they enjoyed visiting with their four grandchildren. They were also there when I gave birth to our fifth child in that same year.

After two years we moved six miles down the river to the outskirts of the town of Colesville (now Nineveh). This was a beautiful area. The whole family worked hard to clear the land and build a house and farm buildings. There was also a stream that had the right fall where Joseph could build a mill. Joseph was a very industrious man. He soon had the gristmill built as well as adding two carding machines. The boys were old enough to help their father; so they were kept

busy working at the mill and on the farm. The older girls helped me with the housework. We raised our children in a fine manner and gave both the girls and the boys a good education. Our family followed the Universalian doctrine of religion, believing that everyone gains salvation and that there is no damnation.

In 1824, a fine young man named Joseph Smith was hired to work for us and he also lived with us. Our son Joseph was close to his age and was very impressed with him. When Joseph Smith told us, in confidence, about his experiences with heavenly beings, and that he was eventually to receive sacred records, we felt he was sincere. Our son Joseph and he worked together and slept together and our son wrote: "My father and I believe him, and I think we were the first to do so after his own family... Joseph and I worked together and slept together. My father said Joseph was a man of truth and the best hand he ever hired."

While Joseph was living with us, he began courting a young lady named Emma Hale who lived across the river and down the road twenty miles in Harmony. After he had finished his work for the day, he would borrow our horse and cutter and go to court Emma for the evening. It was a real surprise when on January 18, 1827, Joseph Smith and Emma eloped and were married in a nearby town.

One time my husband came home from Palmyra and told us of being at Joseph Smith's parent's home when Joseph Smith had received the *Gold Plates*. Many times after that event, my husband helped Joseph Smith with money and provisions. I was not so sure that he should continue to do so, but he felt he should help. I felt perhaps our own married children might need some help. However, I became convinced when I went with my husband in March, 1829 and visited Joseph and Emma and listened as Joseph talked with us about his translating and some revelations he had received. From that time on, I began to believe and was a full believer from then on.

I went through many trials and tribulations because of being baptized and becoming a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints after the Prophet Joseph Smith organized it, but it has all been worthwhile. I only hoped and prayed that I might live long enough to make it to Zion; and my prayers were answered. I have finally made it, and I thank God for letting me have the wish of my heart. I can now pass away in peace.

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Polly Peck Knight passed away on August 7, 1831, shortly after arriving in Kaw Township, Jackson County, Missouri, which was then "Zion". The Prophet Joseph Smith preached her funeral sermon. On her journey from Kirtland, Ohio to Missouri, she was very ill, but her greatest desire was to set her feet on the land of Zion and to have her body interred there. Her son, Newel had previously bought some lumber for a coffin, least she should die on the way, but she arrived in "Zion" just a short time before her death.

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## **Polly Peck**

Polly Peck descended from Pilgrims who immigrated to America in 1638 to help settle in the original Plymouth Colony. Her line includes Nicholas and Rebekah Bosworth Peck; Hezekiah and Deborah Cooper Peck; Hezekiah Jr. and Elizabeth Carder; and her parents, Captain Joseph and Elizabeth Read Peck.

## The Peck Family in America

*Taken with permission from the book "Stand by My Servant Joseph" The Story of the Joseph Knight Family and the Restoration by William G. Hartley. Publishers Printing Deseret Book 2003 Pg. 14-18*

When Joseph Knight and Polly Peck married in Vermont in 1795, their union forged a link between two Protestant Yankee families: Puritan Knights who helped settle Massachusetts Bay Colony and Pilgrim Pecks who were Plimouth Colony founders. Joseph Knight's Puritan ancestor was Englishman John Knight Sr., who arrived in Boston Bay in 1635 as part of the Puritan "great migration." In 1780, Joseph Knight's father, Benjamin Knight, moved his family from Ockham, Massachusetts, where Joseph had been born in 1772, to Marlborough, in Vermont's far southeast corner.

Polly's ancestors named Peck came to America as part of the Pilgrim migration. In 1620, on Cape Cod Bay's rocky western shore, the Pilgrims created Plimouth Plantation, one of the first permanent English settlements in America. Expanding out, they created a network of settlements, including Rehoboth, just east of the present Rhode Island border. Among colonists sent there were the Pecks, including Polly's immigrant ancestor, Nicholas Peck. A few generations later, in 1767, Polly's parents, Joseph and Elizabeth Read Peck, moved the family from Massachusetts to Guilford, Vermont, near Brattleboro, where they lived for almost twenty years. Polly was born in Guilford, as were her siblings Anna, Hezekiah, and Ezekiel, who likewise would embrace Mormonism later on.

Polly Peck's parents moved to New York because they were losers—literally so. In 1777, during the Revolutionary War, Vermont declared itself a republic, independent of the British Crown and of the two colonies that claimed her--New York and New Hampshire. New York, however, continued to claim parts of Vermont, causing an armed struggle for ownership. Polly's father, Joseph Peck, became a captain of pro-New York militiamen. When the conflict ended, New York state, to compensate the pro-New York "Vermont Sufferers" for their losses, granted them an eight-square-mile township in south-central New York, along the Unadilla and Susquehanna rivers. Captain Peck received 640 acres, and he moved there shortly after 1788. For some reason, Polly, then age thirteen, did not go with them.

Joseph Knight and Polly Peck's childhood's unfolded during desperate times for their parents and other New Englanders. Joseph Knight was born on November 31, 1772, the year when the first colonial Committees of Correspondence were formed; Polly Peck was born seventeen months later, on April 6, 1774. Joseph was two when Paul Revere made his famous ride and when the battles of Lexington and Concord started the war. He was three when the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, and almost nine when the Battle of Yorktown ended the war in 1781. As children, Joseph Knight and Polly Peck heard much talk about war, independence, Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution. No doubt Joseph heard his father, Benjamin, describe his service in the Revolutionary War. Joseph was sixteen and Polly fourteen when George Washington became the first president of the United States in 1789.

Soon after their marriage in 1795, Joseph and Polly Peck Knight moved from Marlborough, Vermont, to Halifax in Windham County, Vermont. Initially, they lived close to Joseph's Knight relatives. While in Vermont, the couple became parents of seven children. Their birth years match quite closely the birth years of Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith's children.

Unknown to Joseph and Polly, two boys in the age range of their own children were being reared nearby who would become prophets in a church yet to be established. In Whitingham, Vermont, less than ten miles west of the Knights' home in Halifax, Brigham Young was born on June 1, 1801. He was about a year younger than Joseph and Polly's middle son, Newel. Seventy miles north, near Sharon, Vermont, Joseph Smith was born on December 23, 1805. He was five years younger than Newel Knight and two-and-a-half years older than Joseph Knight Jr.

By the time Captain Peck died in 1818, he and many of his children had moved from Vermont to Bainbridge, New York. Before he died, Joseph and Polly Knight moved there to be near her Peck relatives. Meanwhile, the Smiths left Vermont in 1816 and settled near Palmyra, New York. Brigham Young, too, became a New Yorker in 1804, and after he married, he settled down in Mendon, close to Rochester, in 1828.

By the late 1820's, circumstances were conspiring to make good friends of the Smith and Knight families and to link their lives together to help found and foster an unusual new religion. And almost two decades later, five of Joseph and Polly Knight's seven children then still living headed west in 1846 in the Mormon migration led by fellow Vermonter Brigham Young.



SCHEDULE of the whole number of Persons within the Division allotted to

NAMES or HEADS OF FAMILIES.	FREE WHITE PERSONS, (INCLUDING HEADS OF FAMILIES.)											
	MALES.						FEMALES.					
	under 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 30	30 to 40	40 to 50	50 to 60	60 to 70	70 to 80	80 to 90	90 to 100
<i>Colesville</i>	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Horatio &amp; wife</i>												
<i>Sam'l Newton P</i>												
<i>Samuel Worthington</i>												
<i>Charles French</i>												
<i>Joshua Brooks</i>												
<i>William Lough</i>												
<i>Labina Howell</i>												
<i>Sarah Sime</i>												
<i>Isabel Sime</i>												
<i>Andrew Loveton</i>												
<i>Joseph Knight</i>												
<i>Shadrach Baogor</i>												
<i>Alvan Brewer</i>												
<i>William Strongman</i>												
<i>Marcel Knight</i>												
<i>Elisha B. Sparks</i>												
<i>John Sparks</i>												
<i>Isidore Baogor</i>												
<i>Phil Kent</i>												
<i>Suzanna Anniston</i>												
<i>Rowell Putnam</i>												
<i>Nathan Knight</i>												
<i>Henry Henderson</i>												
<i>John Henderson</i>												
<i>Bernardin Van Buren</i>												
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<i>Samuel DeLotto</i>												
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