

Notes on Joseph Knight, Sr., by Darrell Knight

Joseph Knight Sr. was well acquainted with the Joseph Smith family for more than 20 years.

1. Newel Knight wrote in his journal that the Knight sons “knew the Smith sons even in their boyhood.” The Knights and neighbor Josiah Stowell were millers and contracted with area farmers for their grain to mill, sack, and ship down the Susquehanna River for marketing in the east and were acquainted with the Smith family as early as possibly 1823.

2. In 1826 Joseph Smith worked at the Knight farm in Colesville as a farmhand.

Joseph Knight Jr. wrote: “My father and I believed in Joseph Smith, and I think we were the first to do so after his own family. Joseph and I worked together and slept in the same room. He told us about being visited by an angel Moroni and his expectation of obtaining a buried set of golden plates.” Newel Knight, the second son of Father Knight, was particularly attached to the Prophet. I quote: “His noble deportment, his faithfulness and his kind address, could not fail to win the esteem of those who had the pleasure of his acquaintance...this chosen instrument told us of God’s manifestations to him...and many other items of his eventful life.”

3. From this early association came a deep commitment even a **consecration** to help Joseph Smith accomplish his heavenly command.

- a. Who but Joseph Knight secured legal help to free Joseph Smith from bogus charges prior to September 22, 1827, the final day Joseph was to be given the plates or surrender all future opportunities.
- b. It was only natural that Joseph Knight and Josiah Stowell would be at the Smith farmhouse arriving September 20th 1827, prior to Joseph Smith receiving the plates using Father Knight’s horse and wagon to travel to the Hill Cumorah with Emma.

Just as important as the Three or Eight Witnesses, Father Knight and Josiah Stowell became primary eyewitnesses to this momentous occasion.
- c. Who did Joseph and Emma reach out for after desperation with no provisions living

in a small house at Emma's parents home in Harmony, PA? They rode the 25 miles to the Knight's Colesville home and received the first of many provisions including food, money, lined paper for writing. Joseph Knight Jr. gave the Prophet \$50 after selling his house lot he was planning to construct and a single-horse wagon. This all enabled Joseph Smith to continue his translation work without interruption or worry for his family.

4. By March 26, 1830, the Book of Mormon was available to the public. On April 6, 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ was organized. Many Knights attended. In the same month, Joseph Smith came to visit Father Knight and began to teach him and his extended family inside Father Knight's home and barn in Colesville, New York. On June 28, 1830, Oliver Cowdery baptized many Knights along with Emma Smith on the Knight homestead.

- a. This nucleus of believers formed the first organized branch of the Church with Hyrum Smith as its first branch president. Membership totaled nearly 80 with Knights comprising 66 members.
- b. The Colesville Branch became a group witness of the Restoration. They gave the young church needed resources, manpower, missionaries, and support to Joseph Smith, despite resisting severe opposition and disturbances from their neighbors.

5. On January 2, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith advanced a revelation affecting the New York Saints. "Wherefore, I give you the commandment to go to the Ohio, and there I will give you my law, and you shall be endowed with power from on high."

- a. The Colesville Branch was directed by the Lord to abandon their homes and farms at great sacrifice and to unite together in one company. Life was drastically interrupted.
- b. All complied without controversy. Father Knight left his fruitful fields and milling operations in the hands of a local attorney. He never received anything in return.
- c. As a group, the Colesville Branch traveled together in ten western immigrant wagons, drawn by oxen.

d. Upon their arrival in Kirtland, the Colesville Branch was assigned to live the law of Consecration and stewardship in a small town of Thompson, Ohio. Lemon Copley Offered the Saints use of his property. It lasted only months and Copley left the Church and rescinded his agreements with the Colesville Branch.

He persecuted the branch and drove them off his property. He even charged them \$60 For “damages.”

What to do and where to go? The Knights had a choice to make. Return home to New York.

Continue as a branch and maybe things will improve. Or, ask the Lord what He wants!

Again obedient to the Prophet, the Colesville Saints followed the Lord’s directive to

“journey westward unto the land of Missouri and left June 28, 1831 and reached

Independence on July 25, 1831. Settling in Kaw Township, the Branch received their

“Calling and Election Made Sure”.

6. The Colesville Branch remained largely intact through the Missouri and Nauvoo persecutions. The majority of the branch made it out to Utah by 1850.

7. Joseph Smith was not unmindful of the sacrifices of the Knights.

a. He blessed Father Knight: “I find my feelings towards my friends revived, while I contemplate the virtues of the faithful few, who have stood by me in every hour of peril...say my beloved brother Joseph Knight Senior who was among the first to administer to my necessities, while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth the work of the Lord...” He has been true and faithful, even-handed and exemplary, virtuous and kind...it shall be said of him...his name shall never be forgotten.”

Likewise his sons Newel Knight and Joseph Knight Junior...whose names I record in the Book of the Law with unspeakable delight, for they are my friends.”

Read Newel’s personal testimony.

