

Chapter 14

Hyrum Smith Was Not Involved with the Polygamy Revelation nor Was He a Polygamist

William Clayton claimed that Hyrum Smith (along with Joseph) was instrumental in bringing forth and promoting Section 132—the polygamy revelation. The Utah LDS Church accepts this as fact. In addition, they allege that Hyrum Smith was married to his legal wife and three or more plural wives at the time of his death. However, Hyrum was never married to more than one woman at a time. Hyrum’s first wife, Jerusha Barden, bore him six children and died at Kirtland in 1837. He then married Mary Fielding who bore him two children (see Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors for Many Generations*, 35).

Various historians give differing numbers of how many plural wives Hyrum Smith supposedly had. Early historians in Utah asserted that in 1843, while Hyrum was married to Mary Fielding and living at Nauvoo, he married three additional wives. Some present-day authors assert this also, as the following shows:

In 1843 he [Hyrum] married Mary’s sister Mercy Fielding Thompson, Catherine Phillips, and Lydia Dibble Granger.

(Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, *A Book of Mormons*, 283)

As will be shown in this chapter, Hyrum neither promoted a polygamy revelation nor had plural wives.

In 1852 Brigham Young introduced a polygamy revelation to the Utah LDS Church as well as to the world. At that time he told Clayton’s claim of how Hyrum ostensibly introduced this revelation to Emma Smith in 1843. When Brigham did this, he

elevated Hyrum to an equal partner with Joseph in introducing polygamy into the Church. Thus, it is important to establish the truth in Hyrum's case because he was Joseph's main supporter in the fight against polygamy.

Problems with William Clayton's Account of How the Polygamy Revelation Came to Be

As indicated earlier, in 1852 the plural marriage revelation was first made public at an LDS Church conference to members in Salt Lake City. At that time, Brigham Young said that "William Clayton was the man who wrote it from the mouth of the Prophet" (Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy* 2:78; Brigham Young, "Remarks by President Brigham Young," *Deseret News Extra*, September 14, 1852).

However, there was nothing in writing from Clayton¹ about his alleged writing of the document until almost twenty years later when he wrote the following statement in a letter dated November 11, 1871:

*I did write the revelation on celestial marriage given through
the Prophet Joseph Smith, on the 12th of July, 1843.*

1. Before William Clayton's statements are discussed, it is important to note that Clayton had been released from being Joseph's personal, private secretary several months prior to the date that the alleged polygamy revelation was received (July 12, 1843). Thus, he could not have heard or recorded the alleged polygamy revelation as he stated he did.

According to James Whitehead's testimony in the Temple Lot case,

I was the private secretary of Joseph Smith from early in June, 1842, until he was killed in 1844. . . . William Clayton was Joseph Smith's private secretary in some parts of the business. He attended the outside business and did whatever he was directed to do. William Clayton was there in the office before I was, but was not there all the time after I came. He was removed from his position as private secretary, by Joseph Smith and the committee—the temple committee—about the time I was appointed, because there was something took place in connection with Clayton's work that gave dissatisfaction; there was some money disappeared and he was blamed for it, and for that reason he was removed from that office, that occurred in 1843, in the beginning of the year.

After he was removed as private secretary or clerk in the office, he did outside work, looking after the property of the church outside. The church at that time owned considerable property, and would buy in property and sell it out again; and he attended to that kind of business" (*The Temple Lot Case*, 27, 474–475; italics added).

This issue will be discussed in more detail in Volume 4 of *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy*.

When the revelation was written there was no one present except the Prophet Joseph, his brother Hyrum and myself. It was written in the small office upstairs in the rear of the brick store which stood on the banks of the Mississippi river. It took some three hours to write it. Joseph dictated sentence by sentence, and I wrote it as he dictated. After the whole was written Joseph requested me to read it slowly and carefully, which I did, and he then pronounced it correct. The same night a copy was taken by Bishop [Newell K.] Whitney, which copy is now here (in the Historian's office) and which I know and testify is correct. The original was destroyed by Emma Smith. (Joseph F. Smith Jr., *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, 77)

Historian Andrew Jenson published another testimony by William Clayton to prove that Joseph and Hyrum introduced plural marriage into the Church. Jenson published:

WILLIAM CLAYTON'S TESTIMONY.

The following statement was sworn to before John T. Caine, a notary public, in Salt Lake City, Feb. 16, 1874: . . .

“On the morning of the 12th of July, 1843, Joseph and Hyrum Smith came into the office in the upper story of the ‘brick store,’ on the bank of the Mississippi River. They were talking on the subject of plural marriage. Hyrum said to Joseph, ‘If you will write the revelation on celestial marriage, I will take and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its truth, and you will hereafter have peace.’ Joseph smiled and remarked, ‘You do not know Emma as well as I do.’ Hyrum repeated his opinion and further remarked, ‘The doctrine is so plain, I can convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth, purity or heavenly origin,’ or words to their effect. Joseph then said, ‘Well, I will write the revelation and we will see.’ He then requested me to get paper and prepare to write. Hyrum very urgently requested Joseph to write the revelation by means of the Urim and Thummim, but Joseph, in reply, said he did not need to, for he knew the revelation perfectly from beginning to end.

“Joseph and Hyrum then sat down and Joseph commenced to dictate the revelation on celestial marriage, and I wrote it, sentence by sentence, as he dictated. After the whole was written, Joseph asked me to read it through, slowly and carefully, which I did, and he pronounced it correct. He then remarked that there was much more that he could write, on the same subject, but what was written was sufficient for the present.

“Hyrum then took the revelation to read to Emma. Joseph remained with me in the office until Hyrum returned. When he came back, Joseph asked him how he had succeeded. Hyrum replied that he had never received a more severe talking to in his life, that Emma was very bitter and full of resentment and anger.

“Joseph quietly remarked, ‘I told you you did not know Emma as well as I did.’ Joseph then put the revelation in his pocket, and they both left the office.” (Andrew Jenson, *The Historical Record* 6 [May 1887]: 224, 225–226)

When William Clayton wrote his 1871 letter, Joseph and Hyrum had been dead twenty-seven years. When Clayton wrote his 1874 affidavit (cited by Jenson in 1887), Joseph and Hyrum had been dead thirty years. Clayton’s 1871 letter claimed Emma destroyed the original document. Yet, eight years after she supposedly did so (with Joseph and Hyrum long dead), Brigham claimed he possessed a copy of it, which he turned into Section 132!

Summation of William Clayton’s Two Versions of the event.

1. On the morning of Wednesday, July 12, 1843, Joseph and Hyrum came into Joseph’s office, located in his store. The two men were conversing “on the subject of plural marriage.” William Clayton was already in the office.
2. Hyrum told Joseph that if he would write a revelation on “celestial marriage” that he, Hyrum, would take the document to Emma and read it to her. He believed that he could

convince her of its truth.

3. Joseph informed Hyrum, that “You do not know Emma as well as I do.”
4. Hyrum answered that the doctrine was so plain that he could “convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth.”
5. Joseph agreed to write it and requested William Clayton to get paper and prepare to record the document.
6. Hyrum “urgently requested” Joseph to use the Urim and Thummim to dictate the alleged revelation. Joseph replied that he knew the revelation so well that he did not need it.
7. For three hours Joseph dictated and Clayton wrote. When Joseph had finished dictating, Clayton “slowly and carefully” read the words of the document back to Joseph. During this time, there was no one but Joseph, Hyrum, and Clayton present.
8. Joseph pronounced the written document “correct.”
9. Hyrum then took the document to Emma at the Homestead (which was on the same block as the Red Brick Store) and read it to her. Joseph remained at his office with William Clayton.
10. Hyrum returned and Joseph asked him “how he had succeeded.”
11. “Hyrum replied that he had never received a more severe talking to in his life, that Emma was very bitter and full of resentment and anger.”
12. Hyrum gave the written document back to Joseph, who put it in his pocket.
13. A copy was made and given to Bishop Newell K. Whitney.
14. “The original [by Clayton] was destroyed by Emma.”

An analysis of Clayton’s story reveals several inconsistencies and implausible claims which are discussed below.

William Clayton's Account Differs from That of Others.

In Clayton's account, he indicated that he was the only person with Joseph and Hyrum when he wrote (recorded) the polygamy revelation, as well as when he read it back to Joseph "slowly and carefully." Clayton also alleged that it took him only three hours to write it. On the other hand, W. W. Phelps, Joseph's clerk, maintained it did *not* take three hours for Clayton to write the "plural marriage document," but that it took ten to twelve *days*, and that he (Phelps) also helped write it! (See Jason W. Briggs, *The Basis of Brighamite Polygamy: A Criticism upon the (so-called) Revelation of July 12th, 1843*, 8.)

Charles Derry, an RLDS missionary to Salt Lake City, was a former resident of Salt Lake City and a member of the LDS Church under Brigham Young's leadership. Derry, in his *Autobiography of Charles Derry*, wrote:

Joseph F. Smith says the "Revelation on Polygamy" was given at different times. W. W. Phelps says he wrote part of it, also that Brigham and Joseph wrote part, and that Clayton wrote a part. While Clayton swears he wrote it all, Brigham says, "Phelps lies." (*Journal of History* 7 [July 1914]: 340)

In the above accounts, the discrepancies about the fundamental parts of the polygamy revelation story (the length of time to write it and the number of people involved) are so major that it gives strong credence to the belief that the entire story is false.

No Evidence by Joseph of Him Having the Urim and Thummim at Nauvoo. Clayton claimed that Hyrum urged Joseph to use the Urim and Thummim to deliver the revelation that would later be known as Utah LDS Section 132. However, there is no evidence from Joseph's writings that he *ever* had access to the Urim and Thummim at any time during the Church's multi-year sojourn at Nauvoo! (See *Times and Seasons* 3 [May 2, 1842]: 772.)

Clayton Claimed There Was Uninterrupted Solitude at the Busiest Place in Town. Clayton asserted that when Joseph and Hyrum arrived at the store that morning, they decided that

Joseph should dictate the revelation. It took them three hours to do so. Then, more time (possibly up to an hour) would have been needed for Clayton to slowly read it back to Joseph for proofing. If they started at nine o'clock in the morning, they would have been finished about one o'clock. Then, Hyrum supposedly went to Emma's home (the Homestead cabin) to read her the lengthy document. While there, she allegedly gave him a very angry response. This could have taken about another hour, advancing the time to approximately two o'clock. Afterwards, Hyrum reportedly returned to Joseph's store to report on the ill-fated adventure, bringing the time to nearly two-thirty. Clayton insisted that during the time they worked on the revelation (over three hours) he, Hyrum, and Joseph were not interrupted by anyone. Not a single soul other than the three of them were present! Clayton's claim of solitude during this time seems very unlikely, for Joseph's store was the busiest place in town!

The store was built on a foundation measuring only forty by twenty-three feet (or about twice the size of the average two-car garage of the typical suburban home in our day). The downstairs served as a general store offering food and other daily necessities. It also served as a banking outlet where loans and repayments were transacted.

The upstairs consisted of the Assembly Room and Joseph's two tiny adjoining office rooms. These were used as headquarters for conducting Church business—including receiving tithing payments. The space was also occupied by clerks Willard Richards and W. W. Phelps, who were then writing Joseph's history of the Church (see General Editors Ronald K. Esplin and Matthew J. Grow, *The Joseph Smith Papers—Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844* [The Church Historian's Press, Salt Lake City, Utah], 127).

Since Joseph was also mayor of Nauvoo, he conducted city business there too. This included the constant registration of land sales and the recording of deeds in what was one of the fastest growing cities in Illinois. To assist Joseph in these varied duties, his private secretary, High Priest James Whitehead, constantly served him.

Yet, Clayton would have us believe that during the three or more hours that they worked on the revelation, both clerks, Joseph's

private secretary, citizens needing banking and city services, and Church members needing Joseph's counsel and ministry were absent. Not only is Clayton's claim of complete solitude unlikely, but as the following section will show, it can be proven to be untrue.

Clayton Said No One Else Was Present, but the Newspaper Revealed Dozens of School Children Were in the Assembly Room That Day. As previously stated, Clayton claimed that none but the trio of Joseph, Hyrum, and Clayton were present during the time that the plural marriage revelation was written. Clayton even implied that the Assembly Room was empty at that time. As Joseph and Hyrum walked past it toward Joseph's office, they had no concern about being overheard by others. Thus, they felt free to openly discuss the then-banned and illegal subject of plural marriage.

But the Assembly Room that Clayton inferred was empty was in fact *filled* with people that day. It was packed with dozens of boisterous school children! According to public records, on just the previous day an entire grade school of children, plus two teachers, had moved into the very upstairs Assembly Room adjoining Joseph's office that Clayton indicated was unoccupied! (See the *Nauvoo Neighbor* [July 9, 1843], 3; and George W. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo—Life in the City of Joseph*, 240–241.)

Joseph Smith III, who attended that school with his sister and two brothers, identified at least thirty children who were enrolled therein (see Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III (1832–1914)*, 11–13). All of them would have been very excited as they noisily climbed the wooden stairs to attend class that day. One can only imagine the happy tumult and clatter as the children settled in among the wooden benches, chairs and tables of their new schoolroom—in the very Assembly Room Clayton stated was unoccupied.

Later, Clerks Willard Richards and W. W. Phelps, who were tasked with writing Joseph's history of the Church, grew so rattled by the children's disturbances that they complained that their writings were being hindered (see General Editors Ronald K. Esplin and Matthew J. Grow, *The Joseph Smith Papers—Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844* [The Church Historian's Press, Salt Lake City, Utah], 127).

The children's disturbances continued until they eventually had to be relocated. It was reported, "a public school was kept there until it became too noisy for Joseph to work" (see Givens, *In Old Nauvoo—Life in the City of Joseph*, 83).

So when Clayton told the tale of the quiet solitude in Joseph's office during the writing of Section 132, he lied. He overlooked the fact that records show that on that very day, Joseph's office area was neither a place of quiet, nor of solitude. The empty Assembly Room, which Clayton indicated Joseph and Hyrum passed while openly discussing polygamy, was not empty at all. It was filled with dozens of children whose presence proved to be such a constant nuisance in the weeks that followed that they were eventually moved out of the store.

There Was No Mention of Lunch. Clayton made no mention of the time required for any noontime meal, which Emma would have been preparing for Joseph and their four children on school lunch break. Also, Emma would have been preparing lunch for Joseph's mother, Lucy, who had recently become an invalid and moved into the small cabin with Joseph's family (see *LDS History of the Church* 5:271; Lucy Smith, *Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors*, 348).

The lunch question is not a minor factor. If we are to believe Clayton's account, Hyrum chose the busiest and most socially active time of Emma's day—right around lunchtime—to intrude into her domicile. He would have pulled her from her work and away from the persons she was hosting and attending. At this time he would have read to her the lengthy revelation and tried to convince her on how the new plan of salvation and Heaven required her to allow Joseph to cohabit with other women. Further, he would have had to threaten her that if she disagreed, she would likely be killed.

If such a preposterous episode had actually transpired, the people in Emma's home would have certainly witnessed the loud and dramatic exchange between Emma and Hyrum over polygamy and would have noted it. However, no mention has ever been made of this event. This absence of corroborating testimony of such a tumultuous event again questions the credibility of Clayton's statement.

Clayton’s Account Is Utterly Implausible. There is another very bizarre angle to Clayton’s account that renders his entire testimony quite unbelievable. Considering the gravity and ramifications of the subject of the revelation, Clayton’s account of the discussion regarding it between Joseph and Hyrum that day seems greatly contrived and utterly unbecoming. Can anyone really imagine that if two famous brothers were secretly involved with women other than their wives and the high-profile wife of one was protesting their actions, that one brother would challenge the other to dictate a permission slip from Heaven to present to his protesting wife? Can any man imagine that he—on a whim—would challenge his brother to write such a document for him to deliver to his heartsick sister-in-law? Can any person construe being so vain and foolhardy that he would brag that he had such powers of persuasion that he could convince his sister-in-law into accepting such a scheme? Can anyone actually conceive that the brother who was challenged to dictate such a ludicrous script would not only accept the taunt, but add multiple *death threats* in it against his wife—and then quip, “we will see” regarding whether or not his wife would approve of it? Can anyone dare to conjure that the brother who made the challenge would then proceed to his sister-in-law’s home to demand she cease her busy duties so that he could preach the contents of that lewd and threatening message to her? Can anyone imagine Hyrum making his way to Emma’s home on such a fool’s errand—as the once brilliant but now duped Joseph awaited Hyrum’s return with news whether or not the deranged gamble had been a success?

According to Clayton, *that* is why Section 132 was produced that day—*not* as an uplifting revelation to the entire Church and world to redefine that very definition of Christian marriage and alter the criteria for entrance into Heaven. Instead, it was concocted as a venture to prove Hyrum’s salesmanship abilities, and to benefit Joseph so that his heretofore misunderstood polygamy might be found acceptable by Emma! Clayton’s myth of the origination of Utah LDS Section 132 has none of the dignity, power, illumination, nor aura of righteousness that surrounds the coming forth of Joseph Smith’s *actual* revelations, nor does it even bear the hallmarks of a factual testimony. Rather, it reeks with the odiousness of a poorly fabricated perjury!

Section 132 Threatened to “Destroy” Emma

Clayton portrays Hyrum as eager to read the plural marriage document to his sister-in-law Emma. However, that document was supposedly written to frighten and threaten her into accepting polygamy! In the document, the Lord allegedly threatened Emma several times that He would “destroy” her (take her life) if she did not obey the command to give Joseph plural wives.

Verily, I say unto you: A commandment I give unto mine handmaid, Emma Smith, your [Joseph’s] wife, whom I have given unto you, that she stay herself and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her; for I did it, saith the Lord, to prove you all, as I did Abraham, and that I might require an offering at your hand, by covenant and sacrifice.

And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those [plural wives] that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they [the plural wives] were pure, shall be *destroyed*, saith the Lord God. . . .

And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be *destroyed*, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will *destroy* her [take her life] if she abide not in my law. . . .

And again, verily, verily, I say unto you, if any man [this includes Joseph] have a wife [Emma], who holds the keys of this power, and he teaches unto her the law of my priesthood, as pertaining to these things, then shall she believe and administer unto him [give him plural wives], or she shall be *destroyed*, saith the Lord your God; for I will *destroy* her; for I will magnify my name upon all those who receive and abide in my law. (LDS DC 132:51–52, 54, 64; italics added)

After reading this document, it begs the question why Hyrum—Joseph’s and Emma’s most trusted supporter—would ever be eager to read these threats to Emma. As will be discussed later in this chapter, these threats to Emma were never fulfilled, therefore proving it to be a false prophecy.

Section 132 Language Does Not Sound Like Joseph Smith's

As readers ponder the flagrantly evil words of Section 132, let them also ponder that those words do not really *sound* like the writings of Joseph Smith! Even when plenary (word-for-word) prophecy is experienced, the Bible instructs, “the spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets” (1 Corinthians 14:32—King James Version and Inspired Version). Indeed, entire groups of scholars are dedicated to this very subject—the study of differing linguistic styles used by various authors of scripture. Those familiar with Joseph Smith’s prophetic linguistic style have long recognized that Section 132 *just does not sound like him* when compared to other prophecies by him in the Doctrine and Covenants.

In his private writings and letters, Joseph’s style is remarkably erudite, poetic, upbeat, and greathearted. And his verifiable prophetic writings that were published by the Church during his lifetime are known for their marvelous ideation and spiritual majesty.

The above words, however, smack of having originated from an author inspired by lesser powers—as if they were uttered by a prophetic pretender struggling to “talk like God.” The above words do not flow melodically, nor do the ideas build empirically to an uplifting crescendo, as do Joseph’s. Instead, they are delivered haltingly and grate at the listener’s sensibilities. They sound as if they were authored by a man whose writings are known for their desultory and gruff style. They sound like the words of Brigham Young. (In support of this position, see Enid S. DeBarthe, *A Bibliography on Joseph Smith II the Mormon Prophet-Leader* [Appendix, “Who Wrote Section 132”], 289–348, http://restorationbookstore.org/LDS_DC_132_Writing_Style_Analysis_by_Enid_DeBarthe.pdf.)

Section 132 Disclosure Story Makes Joseph Look Like a Cowardly Husband

According to Clayton’s account of the coming forth of Section 132, Joseph allowed Hyrum to inform Emma of it even though he did not believe Hyrum could convince her. If such an ignoble scene had actually happened, it would have been a cowardly act by Joseph to allow Hyrum to be the bearer of such a horrible decree to his wife, the mother of his children.

Can anyone really imagine the bold Joseph Smith of history

hiding in his store while sending his brother on such a cruel errand? Can anyone really believe that any ministers they respect would stoop so low as to contrive such a wicked plot? Can any man imagine either announcing or allowing another to announce such grievous, vexing, and heartbreaking desertions and threats to his wife?

So not only do the *words* of this revelation not sound like Joseph Smith, but neither does the tale of its disclosure to Emma resonate with the manly traits of Joseph's virtue and courage that otherwise decorate his entire career! Clayton's Section 132 disclosure story does, however, sound like what a group of conspirators might concoct who were trying to switch the guilt of their own crimes to Joseph.

Emma Defended Hyrum's Innocence of Polygamy for the Rest of Her life

If Hyrum had read her a document which allegedly gave her the choice of embracing polygamy or being "destroyed" (killed), Emma would have considered Hyrum an apostate and would have shunned and scorned him as she did Brigham Young. But Emma showed the utmost respect for Hyrum and defended him while he lived, and honored him after his death. Emma's lifelong respect for Hyrum is an additional evidence that she did not consider him to be polygamous!

If Hyrum did have plural wives and was trying to secretly bring a plural marriage revelation into the Church while deceptively assuring Church members otherwise, Emma would have labeled him a liar, a deceiver, and a coward as she did all the other polygamists that she discovered. Emma was not afraid to stand for right, or against wrong. Her grandson Frederick Alexander Smith, who lived with her most of the time until he was fourteen, recalled a story that she told that illustrates how strong she was. She told Frederick that prior to Joseph's death, she boldly ordered a patronizing elder to leave their home. The event happened when Emma was suffering from a backache, and an elder in Joseph and Emma's home offered prayer in her behalf. The elder was apparently aware of the talk in polygamy circles of Emma's opposition to polygamy and the apostles advocating it. The elder, evidently a

supporter of plural marriage, prayed about Emma's backache and also made Emma's disobedience to the "powers that be" a part of his prayer. Emma's grandson Frederick noted:

Story about Grm(other's) backache—plaster (was applied) Elder offer(ed)prayer (for) S(iste)r Emma (to be) subservient to powers that be—When they got up (from prayer, she said,)—"There's the door You go out." (Grandmother) appealed to Joseph—He said "What she says goes here"—He went She said "that cured my backache." (Buddy Youngreen, *Reflections of Emma, Joseph Smith's Wife*, 115)

If, as Brigham Young and William Clayton claimed, Hyrum had angered Emma by trying to convince her to obey an alleged revelation that allowed Joseph to take plural wives, Emma would have likewise shown Hyrum the door and ordered him out of her house! And she would not have respected Hyrum for the rest of her life—any more than she respected the patronizing elder whom she ejected for an offense of even less portent. To the contrary, there is proof that Emma honored Hyrum and vigorously came to his defense—the most outstanding example being her promotion of the aforementioned antipolygamous document, "The Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo," which specifically defended Hyrum.

Both Emma and Joseph Came to Hyrum's Defense

Although the "Voice of Innocence" event was treated in chapter 7, certain aspects of it bear repeating because they so clearly demonstrate Emma and Joseph's defense of, and respect for, Hyrum. Readers will recall that there was a man at Nauvoo named Orsimus F. Bostwick who accused Hyrum of having sexual relationships with "certain females of Nauvoo." The Utah LDS Church published the following as Joseph's record of what happened on February 26, 1844:

In the afternoon, held court at the Mansion. City of Nauvoo versus Orsimus F. Botswick [*sic*], on complaint of Hyrum Smith for slanderous language concerning him and

certain females of Nauvoo. Bostwick was fined \$50 and costs. Francis M. Higbee, his attorney, gave notice he should appeal to the municipal court, and then to the circuit court. I [Joseph] told Higbee what I thought of him for trying to carry such a suit to Carthage—it was to stir up the mob and bring them upon us. (LDS *History of the Church* 6:225)

It is significant that Higbee, who had practiced spiritual wifery with Dr. John C. Bennett and his clique, was the attorney for Bostwick. Higbee was, at the very time of the Bostwick trial, conspiring with William Law against Joseph and Hyrum.

It is stated above that Bostwick's court case was held at the Mansion House, which was Joseph and Emma's home. Emma, who was President of the Ladies' Relief Society, could have been an observer at the Bostwick hearing in her home, and if so would have heard Bostwick's accusations against Hyrum, Attorney Francis M. Higbee's arguments for Bostwick and against Hyrum, and Hyrum's defense against Bostwick's accusations.

As stated in the above quote, Bostwick was found guilty of slandering Hyrum, and was fined. After that trial, to further stop the conspiratorial slandering and infiltration of polygamy into the Church, Joseph directed the writing of a paper entitled "The Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo" (see *Nauvoo Neighbor*, March 1844). The paper condemned polygamy and was approved by thousands of Church members at a meeting of the membership and by over 1,000 ladies belonging to the Relief Society.

"A Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo" strongly condemned Bostwick for his false charges against Hyrum, and those who were conspiring against Hyrum and Joseph. This is important because the reader will recall that M. G. Eaton had made affidavit that he had heard Attorney Chauncey L. Higbee (Francis Higbee's brother—who was also a lawyer and dishonest) state that Hyrum was involved in secretly practicing spiritual wifery. Eaton swore:

the said Higbee commenced talking about the spiritual wife system. He said he had no doubt but some of the Elders had ten or twelve [wives] apiece. He said they married them whether the females were willing or not; and they did

it by recording the marriage in a large book; which book was sealed up after the record was made, and was not to be opened for a long time, probably not until many of the husbands of those who were thus married were dead. They would then open the book and break the seals in the presence of those females, and when they saw their names recorded in that book they would believe that the doctrine was true and they must submit. He said this book was kept at Mr. Hyrum Smith's. I asked the said Chauncy Higbee * * * *

[Here follows some expressions too indecorous for insertion.] (*Times and Seasons* 5 [May 15, 1844]: 541–542; brackets in original)

Emma's response to Bostwick's charges against Hyrum (and the widows with whom he was accused of being illicitly involved) was to publicly come to Hyrum's and the women's defense, and commend Joseph for his ruling that Bostwick was guilty of slander. Her actions show that she believed Hyrum to be monogamous and innocent.

If, as Brigham Young and William Clayton avouched, Hyrum went to Emma to read her the polygamous document, she would have known firsthand that Hyrum believed in the doctrine of polygamy and would not have so valiantly defended Hyrum's innocence in "The Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo"!

Emma Asserted Clayton and Brigham Young Lied When They Said That Hyrum Presented Her with the Revelation

To her dying day Emma Smith vehemently denied that Hyrum had ever approached her with the alleged polygamy revelation (Section 132). Yet, on August 8, 1852, when Brigham Young introduced the document now known as Section 132, he stated:

The original copy of this Revelation was burnt up; William Clayton was the man who wrote it from the mouth of the Prophet. In the meantime, it was in Bishop Whitney's possession. He wished the privilege to copy it, which brother Joseph granted. Sister Emma burnt the original. The reason I mention this, is, because that the people who did know

of the Revelation, suppose it is not now in existence. (*The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* 15 [Supplement, 1853]: 31)

Emma Smith declared until her death that she never saw the polygamous document until it was published by Apostle Orson Pratt in *The Seer* in 1853. She also asserted that when Brigham Young said she “burnt the original,” he told a falsehood.

In April 1867 Elder Jason W. Briggs of the Reorganized Church visited Emma Smith Bidamon (who had remarried) at her home in Nauvoo, Illinois. He questioned her about the polygamous document. Below is an extract from Briggs’s interview with Emma. Editor Jason Briggs published:

And when [the polygamy document was] introduced, certain statements are made . . . that when the revelation was given, Emma Smith got possession of it in its *original and “burnt it.”* Upon this point we subjoin the following questions and answers from a memorandum of an interview with the Sister Emma Smith referred to (now Mrs. Bidamon), at Nauvoo, in April, 1867.

“J. W. Briggs.—Mrs. Bidamon, have you seen the revelation on polygamy, published by Orson Pratt, in the *Seer*, in 1852 [1853]?”

“Mrs. [Emma] B.—I have.

“J. W. B.—Have you read it?”

“Mrs. B.—I have read it, and heard it read.

“J. W. B.—Did you ever see that document in manuscript, previous to its publication by Pratt?”

“Mrs. B.—I never did.

“J. W. B.—Did you ever see any document of that kind, purporting to be a revelation, to authorize polygamy?”

“Mrs. B.—No; I never did.

“J. W. B.—Did Joseph Smith ever teach you the principles of polygamy, as being revealed to him, or as a correct and righteous principle?”

“Mrs. B.—He never did.

“J. W. B.—What about that statement of Brigham Young, that you burnt the original manuscript of that revelation?”

“Mrs. B.—It is false in all its parts, made out of whole cloth, without any foundation in truth.” (RLDS *History of the Church* 3:351–352; *The Messenger of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* 1 [April 1875]: 23)

**Apostle Edmund C. Briggs Validated
Emma’s Testimony That Hyrum Never
Showed Her a Polygamy Revelation Document**

Edmund C. Briggs, brother of Jason W. Briggs, was present when Jason interviewed Emma. Edmund wrote:

I was also present when my brother, Jason Briggs, asked Sister Emma in relation to the purported revelation on polygamy, published by Orson Pratt in 1852, and she again denied that her husband ever taught polygamy, or that she ever burned any manuscript of a revelation purporting to favor polygamy, and that “the statement that I burned the original of the copy Brigham Young claimed to have, is false, and made out of whole cloth, and not true in any particular.” My brother [Jason W. Briggs] was quite particular in his inquiry, when she said, “I never saw anything purporting to be a revelation authorizing polygamy until I saw it in the *Seer*, published by Orson Pratt.” Several were present at the time, and I shall never forget the candid manner of her expression when she, without a single hesitancy, with honesty and truthfulness marking her countenance, gave the lie to Brigham Young’s assertion on the twenty-ninth of August 1852 in Salt Lake City, when he said, “The original of this revelation was burned up. . . . Sister Emma burned the original. The reason I mention this is because that the people who did know of the revelation, supposed it was not now in existence.” Mark the thought: “*The people who did know of the revelation, supposed it was not now in existence.*”

Brigham Young, at the very instance when it was introduced, claimed that no one else on earth except himself knew of the existence of this purported copy of a revelation which is sweeping in its character. (Edmund C. Briggs, *Early History of the Reorganization*, 95)

There are two important points brought forward by the above accounts of Emma's interview. First, Emma denied having ever seen the polygamy document. This contradicts William Clayton who said Hyrum showed it to her and tried to convince her of its truth. It also contradicts Brigham Young who said she burned the original. (This was certainly a convenient explanation as to why Brigham had only a "copy" and not the "original.") Emma's testimony that she never saw the document strongly indicates the statements of both Clayton and Young were false and that Joseph never authored the document.

Second, in addition to Emma's statement that she never saw the document, she also stated that Joseph never taught her the principles of polygamy. Thus, she never believed or practiced polygamy and stood against it in her lifetime. If the polygamy revelation were true, she would have been in disobedience to it and thus destroyed (killed) according to its promises. However, this was not the case. In 1879 Emma died at the age of seventy-four—almost twice the average life span for women in the United States at that time. Obviously, she was not destroyed as the polygamy revelation (LDS DC 132) promised. Emma's longevity of life is historical proof that this revelation is false and not of God.

Emma Named Her Newborn Son Hyrum to Honor Joseph's Brother

On June 23, 1844, when Joseph was preparing to go to Carthage to face down his accusers, he prophesied to Emma, who was four months pregnant. He told her that their unborn child would be a son and that she was to name him "David."

The Mansion House and surrounding area was crowded with approximately one hundred men who had come to accompany Joseph and Hyrum to Carthage where they planned to surrender to law officials. Policeman Libbeus Coons, one of Joseph's personal guards, witnessed a touching scene between Joseph and Emma as Joseph said his final good-bye to her. Elder Edmund Briggs later interviewed Coons, who described what he heard and saw that fateful day. Briggs recorded:

In the week [August 22, 1859], I visited . . . Libbeus T. Coons.

The latter tells me of a remarkable incident that occurred in Nauvoo, Illinois. He says, “I was present at the Mansion House, or hotel, ostensibly kept by Sister Emma, Joseph’s wife, when he was about to start for Carthage, the county seat of Hancock County, Illinois, where he [Joseph] was arrested for treason at the time of his martyrdom. There were quite a number of men, all on horseback, and Joseph got off his horse and went into the hotel. He seemed to be in deep thought, and looked around as though he had forgotten something he wanted. He returned and got onto his horse again, but he still looked perplexed and in deep thought, as though in trouble. The second time he dismounted and went into the house, and again seemed confused, and looked around the room as though distressed in mind. He returned and remounted his horse, pulled up the reins to start, but a third time dismounted and went into the hotel, and immediately stepped to Emma, who was sitting in a chair, and laid his hands on her and blessed her, and said, ‘Thou shalt bear a child, and though he should be incarcerated in solid rock, yet he shall come out and make his mark in the world. Call his name David.’ Emma said, ‘Suppose it be a girl?’ He answered, ‘Call him David!’” (ibid., 154–155)

Four days later, Joseph and Hyrum were murdered at Carthage. Nearly five months later, on November 17, 1844, Emma gave birth to a son and named him David, as Joseph had foretold. Then she gave him a middle name—Hyrum—in honor of Joseph’s brother!

Emma’s family had been repeatedly disparaged, sued, threatened, assaulted, and terrorized. The Saints had been chased from their torched homes in the dead of winter and chased barefoot across frozen prairies. They had been jailed, kidnapped, raped, and murdered. And now, because of polygamy, Joseph was forced to go to Carthage to confront and battle his accusers—and was killed. If Hyrum had been a polygamist who had angered and insulted Emma by presenting to her the Section 132 polygamy document, Emma would not have honored her newborn son with Hyrum’s name.

The fact that she did name him Hyrum testifies of her sisterly love and respect for Hyrum. It also testifies of her firm conviction that Hyrum had only one wife, and that he never tried to convert Emma to the doctrine of polygamy.

Hyrum's Alleged Plural Wives—Problems with Their Claims

As referenced at the beginning of this chapter, Hyrum allegedly married three plural wives at Nauvoo in 1843. They are listed as Mercy R. Thompson (a sister of Hyrum's legal wife, Mary, and a widow of Robert Thompson); Catherine Phillips; and Lydia Dibble Granger. Some authors list more plural wives; however, these three are most often listed.

Hyrum's Alleged Plural Wife Mercy R. Thompson Gave Conflicting Testimony. Mercy R. Thompson was married to R. B. Thompson until he died in 1841. Mercy was a sister to Hyrum's legal wife, Mary. If she actually was a plural wife of Hyrum Smith after R. B. died as she maintains, she not only would have been an aunt, but also a plural stepmother to Joseph Fielding Smith (a.k.a. Joseph F. Smith), the son of Hyrum and Mary Smith. Joseph Fielding was five-and-a-half years old when his father, Hyrum, was murdered. Thus, he should not be cited as a reliable eyewitness to most events at Nauvoo.

Mercy became a plural wife of Apostle John Taylor. She later divorced him and married James Lawson.

If the above is not confusing enough, Mercy's personal testimony adds much more confusion, for in the Temple Lot case, Mercy asserted under oath that she was Hyrum's *only* plural wife. However, modern historians declare that he had two additional wives. While on the witness stand, Mercy testified in the presence of her nephew Joseph F. Smith (who was then a councilor to the president of the Utah LDS Church) that Hyrum had no plural wives other than her. Her testimony contradicted his church's official claim that Hyrum had plural wives. She went on to elaborate that *she* had not borne any children by Hyrum. She further stated that no woman other than his legal wife had borne him children. Mercy testified, "No, sir, I never saw, while I lived in Nauvoo, any child,

boy or girl, of Hyrum Smith's, or that was claimed to be his, except the children of his first wife. There were no others that I know of' (*The Temple Lot Case*, 345, 346, 351).

It is important to remember that the Utah LDS Church lists dozens of women with whom Joseph and Hyrum supposedly had relations *for the express purpose of raising up righteous seed*. Yet, none of those women had a single child by them. According to Mercy's Temple Lot case testimony, it was even "prophesied" that she might have children by Hyrum. However, she had none. This fact is strong indication that she was not Hyrum's plural wife.

Hyrum's Alleged Plural Wife Catherine Phillips Produced a Very Misleading Affidavit. Catherine Phillips gave a sworn testimony on January 28, 1903, asserting that she had been the wife of Hyrum Smith. She declared:

I was married to Hyrum Smith, brother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as his plural wife, and lived with him as his wife. The sealing was performed by the Prophet Joseph Smith himself, in Nauvoo, State of Illinois, in August, 1843, in the brick office belonging to my husband [Hyrum Smith], and occupied at the time as a dwelling by Brother and Sister Robert and Julia Stone, and was witnessed by my mother, Sister Stone and her daughter Hettie.

In consequence of the strong feeling manifested at the time against plural marriage and those suspected of having entered into it, I, with my mother, moved to St. Louis near the close of the year, where I was living when the Prophet Joseph and my husband [Hyrum] were martyred. . . . Catherine Phillips Smith. (Joseph F. Smith Jr., *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, 70)

The words of Catherine Phillips's affidavit are misleading because they lead readers away from the historical certainty that it was Hyrum and Joseph who were at the forefront in the fight against plural marriage! Of all the people in Nauvoo, Joseph and Hyrum manifested the strongest feelings against those who were practicing polygamy. They condemned polygamy as long as they lived

and tirelessly prosecuted and disfellowshipped those so involved.

In addition, the reader will recall that alleged plural wife Mercy Thompson stated under oath that Hyrum had no plural wives other than herself, which further degrades Catherine's claim to also be so categorized.

Hyrum's Alleged Plural Wife Lydia Dibble Granger Was a Polygamy Supporter Who Could Be Relied on to Uphold Utah LDS Allegations. It is alleged that Lydia Granger at age fifty-three became Hyrum's plural wife in 1843. However, the reader will recall that alleged plural wife Mercy Thompson stated under oath that Hyrum had no plural wives other than herself, which degrades Lydia's claim to also be so categorized. Lydia was born in 1790 and was the widow of Oliver Granger, who died in 1841 (see *Times and Seasons* 2 [September 15, 1841]: 550). She, like Mercy Thompson, later became a plural wife of Apostle John Taylor (see George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy* "... but we called it celestial marriage", 627, 628). Having both been verifiable plural wives of John Taylor, it is odd that Lydia and Mercy did not corroborate their stories about whether or not they were both also married to Hyrum!

Conclusion

The authors believe that Hyrum neither taught nor practiced polygamy for several reasons. First, William Clayton's statement is false about how the polygamy revelation (LDS DC 132) was recorded and about Hyrum's involvement with it. Second, Hyrum never had children from any alleged polygamous wife, even though a primary purpose of polygamy was to raise up righteous seed. Third, the testimonies of the alleged plural wives contradict each other. Fourth, Hyrum fought against his polygamy accusers in court on at least three occasions: The *Bostwick* case and two other cases shortly before his death. (See the May 8, 1844, *Francis M. Higbee v. Joseph Smith* case, *Times and Seasons* 5 [May 15, 1844]: 539; also the *Nauvoo Expositor* case, *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 19, 1844.)

The falsity of Clayton's statement regarding the polygamy revelation has ramifications beyond Hyrum's innocence of teaching or practicing polygamy. It is only Clayton's "eye-witness" account that places Joseph as the author and Hyrum as the supporter of the polygamy revelation. Without it, however, the evidence of their involvement—as well as the truth of the polygamy revelation itself—crumbles.

As shown in this chapter, Clayton's accounts of the Urim and Thummim, the uninterrupted solitude in Joseph's office, and Hyrum's discussion of the document with Emma were false. This can only lead one to the conclusion that Joseph and Hyrum were not involved in the polygamy revelation, and thus it is false. This is confirmed by Emma's statements over her lifetime and by the fact that the predictions of the document about her destruction were never fulfilled.