

## Chapter 1

### Joseph Smith Continued to Fight Polygamy through 1843

The series of books entitled *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy*, Volumes 1, 2, and 3, offer a different view than the prevailing narrative that Joseph Smith introduced polygamy into the Church. These volumes give evidence that Joseph, from the Church's beginning, dealt with the problem of polygamy and opposed it. Despite his efforts, however, it became so deeply established that the supporters of polygamy conspired to do away with Joseph, who stood in the way of their plans to implement it into the Church. These books also reveal how polygamous apostles led the way by increasingly attaching Joseph's name to the practice to avoid the responsibility they bore, and to add an air of authority to their deeds.

Volume 2 of *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy* ended by describing how, in 1842, Joseph Smith was coping with a long list of polygamous allegations that were being promulgated by those who wished to entangle him in that practice. Included were Dr. John C. Bennett, who after being caught in adultery and teaching and practicing spiritual wifery, had countercharged that Joseph had tried to seduce Sarah Pratt, Nancy Rigdon, and others. In that year Joseph also brought the young lawyer, Chauncey L. Higbee, to trial. Chauncey claimed that he (Joseph) had given him permission to seduce several women in order to practice "spiritual wifery" (another name that was used for polygamy). He also taught that Joseph had received a revelation supporting a plurality of spiritual wives.

If Joseph had been guilty of polygamy, one would have expected him to avoid drawing any further attention to the claims of such men as these—especially since some of them were lawyers and doctors or held other forms of influence. However, Joseph

chose to do what an innocent man would be expected to do—he openly opposed them. In the case of one elder, William Henry Harrison Sagers, he even launched high-profile court actions (Church and civil) against him.

In the case of Udney Hay Jacob<sup>1</sup>, who was not a Church member, Joseph made a public statement in the Church's *Times and Seasons* denouncing his writing. Jacob, who lived in Pilot Grove Corners (also known as Jacob Corners) in eastern Hancock County, Illinois, needed a printer to publish his pro-polygamous pamphlet, *The Peacemaker*. At the *Times and Seasons* office he found apostles in charge willing to print his pamphlet. The *Times and Seasons* printing establishment was owned and operated by the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. Although Joseph Smith was listed as the editor, he had very little time for editorial work, and his influence over that which was published was very limited. The apostles told him only what they wanted him to know. It can be ascertained, from a statement later made by Joseph concerning Jacob's pamphlet, that the apostles controlling the print shop did not make him aware of Jacob's pamphlet which they were publishing. They printed Joseph's name as printer, on the pamphlet, without informing him of the existence of the publication nor asking his permission.

The apostles who resided at Nauvoo during this period included Brigham Young and his first cousin Willard Richards. Richards lived at times in the *Times and Seasons* building and had an office there, making it easy for him to keep an eye on what was published. Apostle Heber C. Kimball was a member of the Young family by marriage.<sup>2</sup> Both Apostle John Taylor (who was Joseph's assistant editor) and Apostle Wilford Woodruff worked at the *Times and Seasons* printing establishment, and they would have assisted

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1. See a full discussion of Udney Jacob in *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy*, Volume 2, chapters 8 and 9.

2. He was the son-in-law of Brigham's sister. Heber's wife, Vilate Murray, was Brigham's niece. Brigham's sister Fanny had married Vilate's father, Roswell Murray, and Vilate is often referred to in historical writings as Fanny's daughter. Brigham's father, John Young, considered Vilate Kimball his granddaughter and she honored him as her grandfather (see Eugene England, *Brother Brigham*, 4, 18–19).

Jacob by publishing his pamphlet. Apostles Orson Hyde and George A. Smith, the Prophet Joseph's first cousin, supported the above-named apostles in their secret polygamy conspiracy.

The failure of the apostles to discuss with Joseph the printing of Jacob's pamphlet shows their disrespect and callous disregard for Joseph and his fight against polygamy. They did not publish according to his high moral expectations, nor respect his opinions or his authority. They knew that at that time both Joseph and the Church were being reproached with the crime of polygamy. They also knew that publishing Joseph's name as printer of *The Peacemaker* would cause him to be branded as a promoter of polygamy.

Joseph, as chief editor, had an office at the *Times and Seasons* building. His Church office, which was in his store building, was nearby. Taylor, Richards, and other apostles talked with him daily. Joseph was in and out of the *Times and Seasons* building where Jacob's pamphlet was being typeset, yet Joseph was kept in the dark about the polygamous work that would carry his name as the printer.

Their actions show they wanted the Saints and the public to believe that Joseph had plural wives. Therefore, they were successful in keeping the printing of the pamphlet from Joseph until after it was published; then Joseph was made aware of its existence. He was very disturbed, and had the following statement published:

#### NOTICE.

**There was a book printed at my office, a short time since [*The Peacemaker*], written by Udney H. Jacobs [*sic*], on marriage, without my knowledge; and had I been apprised of it, I should not have printed it; not that I am opposed to any man enjoying his privileges; but I do not wish to have my name associated with the authors, in such an unmeaning rigmarole of nonsense, folly, and trash.**

**Joseph Smith.**

(*Times and Seasons* 4 [December 1, 1842]: 32)

Note that Joseph stated in his notice that the book was "printed at my office . . . without my knowledge." He was referring to his office in the *Times and Seasons* building, where Assistant Editor

Taylor took the liberty to attach Joseph's name as the printer of Jacob's polygamy pamphlet.

Joseph's notice, denying that he printed *The Peacemaker*, was published in December 1842. The publishing of *The Peacemaker* by the apostles, using Joseph's name, shows their determination to implicate Joseph as supporting polygamy in order to promote it within the Church at that early date.

The year 1843 was certainly a very important year in the battle against polygamy. It began as the old year had ended, with Joseph engaged in fighting polygamy. Two very different stories have grown out of 1843. One is Joseph's story of his innocence, his hatred of polygamy, and his fight against the infiltration of that doctrine (in all forms) into the Church. Joseph's published statements, and those of other Church officials, plainly show that he was a bitter foe of polygamy throughout that year.

A very different story of what happened is told by Brigham Young and his followers in the Utah LDS Church. They declare that Joseph had plural wives in 1843, and that he received a revelation on the subject of plural marriage for time and eternity (hereafter referred to as the "Plural Marriage Document"). They allege that he sent that document to members of the Nauvoo Stake High Council for their approval as a doctrine of the Church. They also claim that the original Plural Marriage Document was destroyed by Emma Smith and was thus thought lost to the world. However, eight years after Joseph's death, an unknown copy suddenly appeared, which they have designated as Section 132 in their Doctrine and Covenants (hereafter referred to as "Section 132").

The polygamy problem continued through 1843, causing major problems for Joseph and the members of the Church. However, Joseph faithfully struggled to put down the practice and its thousands of rumors. Meanwhile, Brigham Young and other polygamists increased their practice of polygamy by taking more wives under the cover of strict secrecy. Further, the apostles under Brigham's leadership gradually gained more and more control of Nauvoo and the Church, so that polygamy (which many of them were already practicing) became more difficult for Joseph to combat.

With this background information in mind, we shall now commence documenting Joseph's fight against polygamy in 1843 and into 1844. Reviewing the polygamy court cases which

occurred in 1843 reveals that Joseph was plagued with the problem continuously.

### **Oliver Olney's Polygamous Charges Condemned**

One problem which Joseph had in 1842—the apostasy of Elder Oliver H. Olney—carried over into 1843. Olney had aligned himself with Dr. John C. Bennett, who had been previously disfellowshipped for unchristian conduct. (Bennett was found to be teaching and practicing polygamy and performing abortions.) Elder Olney was disfellowshipped in 1842, as is shown by the following record dated March 17, 1842:

**The High Council withdrew the hand of fellowship from Elder Oliver Olney for setting himself up as a prophet, and took his license.** (*LDS History of the Church* 4:552)

Joseph referred to Olney in an editorial entitled “Try the Spirits,” in which he explained:

**We have also had brethren and sisters that have had written revelations, and have started forward to lead this Church. Such was . . . Oliver Olney of Nauvoo. . . . Mr. Olney has also been tried by the High Council, and disfellowshipped because he would not have his writings tested by the word of God.** (*Times and Seasons* 3 [April 1, 1842]: 747, 748)

Bennett found a ready ally in Olney. Shortly after Bennett began publishing his polygamous accusations against Joseph in the *Sangamo Journal* newspaper at Springfield, Illinois, Olney rushed to endorse Bennett. At that time, Bennett was on a lecture circuit spreading plural marriage charges against Joseph.

In February 1843 Apostle Taylor, who was editor of the Church periodical, the *Times and Seasons*, published an article explaining more about Olney’s apostasy and his support of Bennett’s falsehoods. Taylor published:

**“Mr. Olney has also been tried by the High Council, and disfellowshipped, because he would not have his writings**

tested by the word of God; evidently proving that he loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil.”

Since his expulsion from the Church, he has been engaged in a campaign against Mormonism, and has been one of John C. Bennet’s [sic]<sup>3</sup> right hand men—he was also one of the contributors to the filthy columns of the “Sangamo Journal,” making or professing to make, a great expose of the corrupt principles of Mormonism. . . .

Mr. Olney has long been a member of this Church, and until within two or three years ago, has always maintained a consistent character. He began to be wild and visionary about that time, and having become loosed from the moorings of eternal truth, and been dashing about on the waves of superstition, fanaticism and uncertainty, he became a fit subject to be duped by the notorious Bennet, and it would seem has been too apt a scholar to his teaching until he has become engulfed [sic] in the whirlpool of destruction. (*Times and Seasons* 4 [February 1, 1843]: 89; see also *LDS History of the Church* 5:269–270)

And what had Dr. Bennett published in the *Sangamo Journal* that caused Apostle Taylor to call the columns “filthy”? It was Dr. Bennett’s accusations that Joseph was involved in practicing polygamy. It was the same letters and documents that have been reviewed and refuted in previous volumes (1 and 2) of *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy*. Here are a few examples from the *Sangamo Journal* for that time period:

In the July 7, 1842, issue there is an article by Bennett on the subject of “clandestine wives of Joseph Smith under the new dispensation.”

The July 15, 1842, publication contains Bennett’s charges that Joseph had attempted to get Nancy Rigdon, Sarah Pratt, and others to be his plural wives. Also in this issue is the allegation that Joseph had received a plural marriage revelation.

The issue for July 22, 1842, features Bennett’s charges against Joseph involving Martha Brotherton, Emmeline White, and others.

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3. Dr. John C. Bennett’s name was often spelled Bennet.

In the *Sangamo Journal* for August 19, 1842, there appeared Bennett's infamous "Sixth Letter" in its entirety. The headline declared:

**"6th Letter from Gen. Bennett. Joe Smith's Letter to Miss Rigdon, in defense of the spiritual wife doctrine . . ."**

Dr. Bennett's "Sixth Letter" was printed in full. (For a study of that false document see *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy* 2:21–40.) Bennett's "Sixth Letter" can also be read under the title of "Happiness" in *LDS History of the Church* 5:134–136, where it is falsely attributed to Joseph Smith by Utah LDS writers of their history. Reliable historical records prove that Joseph Smith denied that he was the author of Bennett's "Sixth Letter."

### **Olney Published a Pamphlet**

Oliver Olney published a pamphlet, *The Absurdities of Mormonism Portrayed*, in Nauvoo, Illinois, in the spring of 1843. A synopsis of Olney's pamphlet is found in the *Stanley Snow Ivins Collection* in the library of the Utah State Historical Society at Salt Lake City, Utah. Stanley Ivins made the following notes as he quoted these words directly from Olney's pamphlet:

p [page] 10—Under a section headed "Polygamy", he [Olney] says: "Polygamy was first introduced in Kirtland, Ohio, about eight years ago. Hint after hint has been going, until we have to say, they have begun to do, as well as say, This subject has been kept in the dark as long as it could be, as it was first said to be too strong meat for the Latter Day Saints to bear. But as some have long waited impatiently, and the plainness of the Scripture is such on the occasion, has forbid any further delay. . . .

"Again, a dark saying arises in the name of the Lord, in the form of a pamphlet, said to be written by a man by the name of Jacobs, but published by Joseph Smith/ "Editor. We find that if the pamphlet was not written by the authorities of the Church, it by them was revised in Jacobs name. But to come to its contents, it argues polygamy; that there is hardly

a saying in the Bible but what misapply to polygamy.” He says polygamy “can no longer be kept in the dark; as many are actually attached to the second living companion; and a door is fast opening on this subject, that many is arguing it to be the will of God. That in these days God designed to raise up a more righteous people on the Earth than has been for many ages past. It is argued that those of the chosen of God, is to father them, . . . A number of wives have been made, to effect that order, and get it established.

But nothing seemed to prevail, until they got a wise Master Free Mason to come and establish a lodge among them.” He had them form a woman’s lodge. “But altered the name, that they could be distinguished from the lodge of the men. That they called the ladies benevolent society.” The sisters were then allowed to receive certain degrees of Masonry. (*Stanley Snow Ivins Collection*, Manuscript Collection on Polygamy, bk. 6, pp. 160–161)

In another notebook, under the heading of “Papers of Oliver Olney—Original Mss. . . . *Journal of Oliver Olney* . . .,” Stanley Ivins makes further notes from Olney’s writings which show that Olney repeated Dr. Bennett’s claims that Joseph was taking plural wives from within the Ladies’ Relief Society. Ivins recorded the following from Olney’s *Journal*:

He [Olney] tells how he was brot before a High Council, which “set me afloat”, because he would not show them “the record that I had kept of the Church.”

p. 8, 9—He [Olney] says: “We have of late” had Masonry set up, and the Master Mason: “He said there were certain Degrees/for the fair sex of the land/They soon met in Union/A Lodge to form but changed the name/That they might be distinguished/From the Lodge of the Men/” (This is written in a sort of doggerel and the marks (/) indicate line divisions.)

p 10, 11—He tells of the organization of the Relief Society. Said the first degree was organizing to help the poor. Of the second degree he said: “It was that those of high renown/went in to the water and gathered/A plurality of wives/”



**Says he will not expostulate on the 3d and 4th degrees until another time.**

**May 13, 1842—He warns against “a multiplicity of wives”—  
“They will be a trouble to you/As they will harrass you/Both  
by Night and by Day/They will depend on you for a living/  
That will come out of the tithing of the L.D.S./Be satisfied  
with one as is the custom around”/**

**June 4, 1842—He speaks of stories that make “the daily  
rounds”, and thinks that so much smoke must mean a fire.**  
(*Stanley Snow Ivins Collection*, Manuscript Collection on  
Polygamy, bk. 8, p. 228; italics added)

### **Joseph Condemned Polygamy in Speech to Temple Workers**

Because polygamy had, in fact, entered the Church in spite of Joseph’s constant denials and his condemnation of Jacob’s *Peacemaker* in *Times and Seasons* 4:32 (December 1, 1842), there was much speculation whether or not Joseph was a polygamist. (For evidence that Joseph was not connected with the publication of Jacob’s *Peacemaker*, see *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy* 2:146–148.)

More and more Saints were learning that members of the Twelve and others had plural wives, and the saying became popular, “There cannot be so much smoke without some fire.”

On February 21, 1843, Joseph spoke to those who were building the Temple—a group consisting of both men and women—and told them that he knew what people were saying about him. Joseph is reported to have declared:

**There is a great noise in the city [caused by plural marriage allegations against Joseph by Oliver Olney and others], and many are saying there cannot be so much smoke without some fire. Well, be it so. If the stories about Joe Smith [having plural wives] are true, then the stories of John C. Bennett are true about the ladies of Nauvoo; and he [Bennett] says that the Ladies’ Relief Society are all organized of those who are to be the wives of Joe Smith. Ladies, you know whether this is true or not. (LDS *History of the Church* 5:286)**

The above quotation shows that Joseph spoke boldly of the “great noise in the city” caused by people discussing whether or not he was a polygamist. He met his accusers head-on. He could not have met them with more force than when he reminded his audience—gathered at the holiest spot (the Temple) in the city—that if they accepted Bennett’s statements that he had plural wives, they must also accept his (Bennett’s) charge that many members of the Ladies’ Relief Society were also Joseph’s plural wives. And since the Relief Society women (some were certainly present) knew that they were *not* his wives, they also knew that Joseph was *not* practicing polygamy, as Olney and Bennett had charged!

It is ironic that years later the Utah LDS Church leaders would rewrite history and switch from mildly defending Joseph to defaming him. They would adopt the same claim that Bennett and Olney had made and would actually name prominent members of the 1843 Ladies’ Relief Society as having been Joseph’s wives. As will be shown, they made the switch many years later when their own practice of polygamy would become undeniable and be condemned. These were the same charges that Joseph had scoffed at publicly because, to him, it was such a ridiculous accusation. It is astounding that Joseph’s denials of those charges have been ignored, and Bennett and Olney’s charges are still being lauded as truth by the Utah LDS Church.

### **Sidney Rigdon Condemned Polygamy Charges against Joseph**

In *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy* 2:21–25, it is explained that Apostle Willard Richards wrote and delivered a letter to Sidney Rigdon’s nineteen-year-old daughter, Nancy, on the pretense that it was authored by Joseph. Bennett published that Joseph had sent the letter to Nancy in order to convince her to become his plural wife. However, Joseph declared to Elder Rigdon that he was not its author, and published a statement to that effect. The Utah LDS Church leaders were aware that Joseph denied writing that letter and denounced its originator, but decided it would be to their advantage to attach Joseph’s name to it to promulgate plural marriage. They therefore chose to use Bennett’s story instead of Joseph’s, and that letter, falsely attributed to Joseph, is considered a

sacred document to members of the Utah LDS Church. They reverently gave the document the title of “Happiness,” and knowing Joseph was not its author, they attached his name to it to bolster up their allegations that he had plural wives.

Dr. Bennett’s fable of Nancy Rigdon, and Willard Richards’s letter falsely blamed on Joseph, caused President Sidney Rigdon, who was the Nauvoo postmaster, to be deluged with letters requesting him to divulge the true facts in the case. Rigdon’s son-in-law George Robinson, who was Bennett’s ally, kept Dr. Bennett (who left Nauvoo after he was expelled) abreast of Nauvoo news. Robinson informed Bennett:

**Mr. Rigdon . . . has letters from all quarters, making inquiries about your accusations against Smith.** (John C. Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 247)

Sidney and other Church leaders were bombarded with so many questions that over four pages (pp. 97–101) of the February 15, 1843, *Times and Seasons* were devoted to the problems which Joseph and the Church were facing due to Bennett’s falsehoods. Included in those pages was a copy of a letter by Elder Rigdon in which he condemned the slanderous statements against Joseph and the people of the Church. President Rigdon wrote:

**Nauvoo, Ill. Feb 19, 1843.**

**MR. ALFRED ED. STOKES—**

**Dear Sir,—In obedience to your request, I send you one number of each of the papers published in this place [the *Times and Seasons* and the *Wasp*]. I am well aware, that designing men, for sinister purposes, have put in circulation reports concerning the people here, which are so monstrous, that it is a matter of surprise how any rational being could profess to believe them at all. If I were to even profess to believe such incredible and ridiculous nonsense about any people, I should consider the public would have sufficient cause to scorn me, as the mere tool of corrupt and foul slanderers; but any thing to stop the progress of that, which cannot be done by fact and scripture truth. That man must**

**have a large stock of moral courage, who dare, in any wise, profess belief in such outlandish representations as are made in the public papers concerning the people of Nauvoo, and circulated orally by wicked and designing men. . . .**

**Yours, with respect,**

**SIDNEY RIGDON, P. M. [Postmaster]**

*(Times and Seasons 4 [February 15, 1843]: 100, 101; LDS History of the Church 5:280–281)*

The testimony by Elder Rigdon on behalf of Joseph and Church members at Nauvoo has been generally ignored, as has been Rigdon’s reference to “reports concerning the people here, which are so monstrous”—which refers to polygamy charges.

### **Joseph Reaffirmed His Innocence**

Many newspaper publishers increased their sales and profits by publishing Dr. Bennett’s sensational lies about Joseph and the members of the Ladies’ Relief Society. Bennett’s lectures and writings stated that the Relief Society members were part of a “seraglio,” which is another name for a sheik’s harem. One editor who published Bennett’s seraglio story was the editor of the *Chicago Express*. Joseph answered those falsehoods by writing the following letter to be printed in the Church’s newspaper:

**To the EDITOR of the TIMES & SEASONS.**

**Sir, . . . The slanderous allusion of a “seraglio,” like the Grand Turk [who was a polygamist], which the editor [of the *Chicago Express*] applies to me, he may take to himself, for “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Every honest man, who has visited the city of Nauvoo, since it existed, can bear record of better things, and place me in the front ranks of those who are known to do good for the sake of goodness, and show all liars, hypocrites; and abominable creatures, that while vice sinks them down to darkness and wo, virtue exalts me and the saints to light and immortality. . . . JOSEPH SMITH. (*Times and Seasons* 4 [March 1, 1843]: 113)**

Over forty years later, Joseph F. Smith (a son of Hyrum Smith and president of the Utah LDS Church) and other Utah LDS officials published, for the first time, sworn affidavits of women who (decades after Joseph died) claimed to have been wives of Joseph. They had been members of the Ladies' Relief Society at Nauvoo.

The affidavits were made after Joseph and Emma's sons, Alexander and David, grew to manhood and went to Salt Lake City, Utah, as missionaries for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and were convincing Utah LDS Church members there that their father, Joseph Smith Jr., had not practiced polygamy! Faced with that crisis, the Utah LDS leaders resurrected the "seraglio" charges that Dr. Bennett and other enemies of the Church had invented decades before, and hurriedly produced affidavits to prop up the same.

It is interesting to note that Joseph F. Smith wrote to Orson Pratt on July 19, 1875, and stated that, as he began to put together evidence of Joseph's involvement in polygamy and its historical unfolding, he "was astonished at the scarcity of evidence, I might say *almost total absence* of direct evidence upon the subject" (Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy* 1:9; italics added).

### **Joseph Defended in the Boston Bee**

Having been expelled from the Church in 1842 for various and sundry moral misdeeds and felonies, Bennett found himself out of a job, so he wrote a lewd book against the Church and went on a speaking tour to promote it. Bennett's book, *The History of the Saints*, was published in Boston late in 1842, and he lectured there. As a result, there was much said and written in the Boston newspapers against Joseph and the Church. Among the topics discussed were Bennett's charges that the doctrines of plural wives and common stock (communal ownership of what would normally be private property) were prevalent at Nauvoo. However, a Church member who signed himself simply as "H. R." wrote a letter to the editor of the Boston *Bee* refuting Bennett's charges. Editor John Taylor republished the letter in the *Times and Seasons*. H. R. wrote:

**Mr. Editor, SIR. . . . I have heard General Bennett's lectures, and left not a stone unturned to find its character . . . . We are charged with advocating a plurality of wives, and common property. Now this is as false as the many other ridiculous charges which are brought against us. No sect have a greater reverence for the laws of matrimony, or the rights of private property, and we do what others do not, practice what we preach.** (*Times and Seasons* 4 [March 15, 1843]: 143)

### **Joseph Invited the Saints to Reveal Any Misconduct on His Part**

On April 6, 1843, a special conference convened at Nauvoo, and Joseph gave members an opportunity to bring charges (including plural marriage) against him. If Joseph had been guilty, he would not have opened the way for his own prosecution for bigamy, which was a crime in Illinois. He would not have stood before thousands and invited anyone with a complaint to openly make a charge against him. The record reveals:

**President Joseph then asked the conference if they were satisfied with the First Presidency, so far as he was concerned, as an individual, to preside over the whole Church; or would they have another? If, said he, I have done any thing that ought to injure my character, reputation, or standing; or have dishonored our religion by any means in the sight of men, or angels, or in the sight of men and women, I am sorry for it, and if you will forgive me, I will endeavor to do so no more. I do not know that I have done any thing of the kind; but if I have, come forward and tell me of it. If any one has any objection to me, I want you to come boldly and frankly, and tell of it; and if not, ever after hold your peace.** (*Times and Seasons* 4 [May 1, 1843]: 181)

Not one hand was lifted. Not one voice was raised. No complaint was made against Joseph, and he was unanimously chosen to continue as President and Prophet of the Church (see *ibid.*).

### **Missionaries Continually Proclaimed Joseph's Innocence**

Under Joseph and Hyrum's direction, Church missionaries waged constant warfare against Bennett's writings and lectures. An example is found in a letter written by Elder George P. Dykes, who was one of those sent forth by Joseph and Hyrum in August 1842 to declare Joseph's innocence and Bennett's untruthfulness. George Dykes wrote Editor Taylor as follows:

**One year since, I visited a settlement of Norwegians, in La Salle county, Illinois. . . . I returned to Nauvoo, where I found the whole country deluged with falsehood, from the pen of J. C. Bennet, and I immediately returned to La Salle, but the people there, looked upon him [Bennett] as a wicked designing man; his lies continued but a short time, when eternal disgrace fell upon his own head. I soon returned to Nauvoo, and in a few days was appointed by the special [Church] conference, in August [1842], to travel through Illinois, to correct the misstatements of Bennet, in which journey I travelled through eighteen different counties. I was generally successful in convincing the people that Bennet maliciously slandered the innocent. (*Times and Seasons* 4 [May 15, 1843]: 195)**

Elder Dykes was one of the 380 missionaries who left Nauvoo following a special conference held there on August 29, 1842. The missionaries were to travel throughout the land and distribute thousands of copies of a broadside filled with affidavits that denied the plural marriage charges against Joseph. The broadside was entitled *Affidavits and Certificates Disproving the Statements and Affidavits Contained in John C. Bennett's Letters* (see *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy* 2:87–102). So for nearly nine months, missionaries were in the field verbally defending Joseph and distributing the “Affidavits” which declared that he did not have plural wives.

### **A Pittsburg Editor Accused Joseph of Having Numerous Children**

A number of newspaper editors in search of sensational stories traveled to Nauvoo. They were usually guests at the Mansion House, which served as Joseph and Emma's home, a hotel, and a place for conducting Church services and Church and city business. Most of these gossip editors no doubt thought that boarding at the Smith's home would make them privy to wonderfully awful scenes, which they could write about for the entertainment of their readers.

Among those who ate at Joseph's table in 1843 was the senior editor of the *Pittsburg Gazette* who was seeking a sensational story about Joseph. After partaking of the bounty at Joseph's table, and finding no proof of polygamy in that household, he left Nauvoo and went to Warsaw among the Church's bitter enemies.

From there he penned a story of his Nauvoo visit in which he mentioned Joseph's "numerous children" and dependents as if they truly existed. He purposely worded his story in a way that would lead people to believe that a goodly number of children and adults at the Mansion House were Joseph's plural wives and their and Joseph's children.

Apostle John Taylor knew that Joseph had no sons by anyone but Emma and that his only daughter was their adopted daughter, Julia. Whether by Joseph's insistence or his own composition, Editor Taylor published the following in Joseph's defense:

**It is a little singular, how men can step aside so far from truth, when they endeavor to give the conversations of General Smith. . . . The Senior Editor says, the prophet's "numerous children," and dependants were at the table, &c. Now as to the prophet's numerous children, they consist of three sons and one adopted daughter, and his dependants are either orphans or honorable men and women, who know better than to taint the truth. (*Nauvoo Neighbor* [December 27, 1843], 3)**

Overseeing the entire operation of the Mansion House, which provided both sleeping and eating accommodations, was Joseph's wife, Emma Hale Smith. The Mansion House was very popular, and many travelers preferred staying there (even those with children),



for they could view Joseph in both his home and Church settings.

The accommodations there were very good, which had a main lobby or parlor, bedrooms, and a large dining room which was noted for its excellent food. Therefore, a staff of workers was required, which Emma chose with care. Emma was President of the Ladies' Relief Society which had been organized "for the relief of the poor, the destitute, the widow and the orphan; and for the exercise of all benevolent purposes" (*Times and Seasons* 3 [April 1, 1842]: 743). Therefore, those waiting on the tables, cooking, cleaning, and performing all the tasks required to efficiently operate a clean, flourishing hotel were the destitute. They were the fatherless young people whom Emma was attempting to assist. Joseph had only one wife and four young children in 1843, thus, workers and guests were among those whom the gossip columnist inferred were Joseph's polygamous family!

### Summary

Because the year 1843 was such an important time in the history of the Church, it is important to consider the differing stories and their sources related to events that may or may not have transpired. It is the opinion of the authors that Joseph was an honest man, unafraid of telling the truth. He was truthful when he denied being involved in polygamy in all forms, and battled the doctrine of polygamy throughout 1843. However, he could not hold back the tide of that crime which Dr. John C. Bennett, Brigham Young, and the majority of the apostles were spreading under the cloak of secrecy.

The double standards of Apostles Young, Willard Richards, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, John Taylor, Parley P. Pratt, and other members of the Quorum of Twelve has caused a perplexing problem. On the one hand they weakly defended Joseph and the Church against charges of polygamy, while on the other they were living with plural wives and begetting children. This has made the task of uncovering the truth enormous. Not until the true facts of Joseph's fight are known can the difficulties he faced, while battling polygamy in 1843, be understood. The truth can largely be found in Joseph's steady and continual denials (as opposed to the extreme and bombastic tones of his accusers), and in the fact that he had no children by any woman but his wife, Emma.