

Chapter 3

Joseph Asserted His Innocence of Polygamy in 1843

The year 1843 was very important in the life of Joseph Smith and in the life of the Church, because Joseph was fighting to rid it of polygamy and was attempting to prepare Church members for the possibility of his death. During that entire year he never deviated in his stand against plural marriage in all forms.

Also significant is—despite his public stand against polygamy that year—the Utah LDS Church claims Joseph committed a polygamous revelation to writing on July 12, which they allege he first received in the early 1830s. They also dubiously assert that he sent that document to the Nauvoo Stake High Council to be reviewed for acceptance in August. While the Utah LDS Church continues to publish information that Joseph had plural wives, the Church’s publications at Nauvoo in 1843 and 1844 support Joseph’s insistence that he was a monogamist, that he opposed polygamy, and that those who claimed otherwise bore false witness.

The Times and Seasons Attested to Joseph’s Innocence

In January 1843 the first issue of the Church’s official newspaper, *Times and Seasons*, published a letter from Elder Orson Spencer which offers insight into Joseph’s character and ministry. Elder Spencer portrayed Joseph as always providing proper scriptural interpretation and counsel and being unafraid to express his beliefs on the Old and New Testaments. Spencer’s declaration is seen as an endorsement of Joseph’s willingness to stand against high officers in the Church who cited Old Testament accounts of Abraham, Jacob, David, and others as an excuse for modern polygamy. Spencer wrote of Joseph:

No man is more narrowly watched by friends and enemies than Joseph Smith. . . . I firmly avow in the presence of God, that I believe Mr. Joseph Smith to be an upright man, that seeks the glory of God. . . . Naturally, he is kind and obliging, pitiful and courteous; as far from dissimulation as any man; frank and loquacious to all men, friends or foes. He seems to employ no studied effort to guard himself against misrepresentation, but often leaves himself exposed to misconstructions. . . .

In doctrine Mr. Smith is eminently scriptural. I have never known him to deny or depreciate a single truth of the Old and New Testaments; but I have always known him to explain and defend them in a masterly manner. (*Times and Seasons* 4 [January 2, 1843]: 56, 57)

This is not the description of a man who believes in plural marriage, nor of one who is so fearful that he will secretly practice that doctrine and at the same time lie to his followers that he does not. The editors of the *Times and Seasons* evidently agreed with Elder Spencer to such a degree that they placed his letter prominently in the newspaper.

Apostle Orson Hyde Declared Accusations against Joseph Were False

Joseph was rightly concerned that the false polygamous charges (and other false allegations) by John C. Bennett, Martha Brotherton, Oliver Olney, Harrison Sagers, and others would discourage Church members from gathering to Nauvoo. Accordingly, Joseph was anxious for letters and articles to be printed which exonerated him and exposed those who were maligning his character. Apostle Orson Hyde responded to his request by writing a letter to the editor of the Church's newspaper in defense of Joseph. He wrote:

Bro. [John] Taylor:

By and with the advice of President Smith and several other leading members of our Church, I take the liberty to drop you a little note. . . .

I hope that none of the Saints will be discouraged from coming here on account of the tales of slanderers, and of apostate wicked men and women, for I can assure the Saints from a careful inquiry and strict observation of circumstances since I arrived here, that apostate renegades have made “lies their refuge, and under falsehood have hid themselves.” But the time is near when lying and slandering tongues will be silent, and sink under the just contempt of an abused public, while truth and virtue will be exalted and shine forth in all their beauty and loveliness.
(Times and Seasons 4 [February 1, 1843]: 90, 91)

The lies and slanders referred to by Orson Hyde certainly included the highly publicized polygamous charges being made against Joseph.

Joseph Proclaimed That He Spoke the Truth

In November Joseph gave the editor of the Church’s official publication a copy of a letter which he had written to James Arlington Bennett of New York. In the letter, Joseph declared himself a truthful man. He published the following words over his signature:

**I combat the errors of ages; I meet the violence of mobs;
 I cope with illegal proceedings from executive authority; I
 cut the Gordian knot of powers; and I solve mathematical
 problems of Universities: WITH TRUTH, *diamond truth,*
*and God is my ‘right hand man.’ . . . JOSEPH SMITH.***
(Times and Seasons 4 [November 1, 1843]: 375)

Joseph Preached on the Subject of God’s “Marriage” Laws

Another important event which had a bearing upon Joseph’s stand against plural marriage occurred at Paw Paw Grove, Illinois. It was there that Joseph was requested by nonmembers to preach a sermon on the law of God respecting marriage.

Joseph’s Paw Paw Grove sermon was preached under unusual

circumstances, in that he was a prisoner when he gave the sermon. It happened in June after Joseph, Emma, and their children visited Emma's sister Elizabeth Wasson and her family in Lee County, Illinois. Three of Elizabeth's children—Lorenzo, Harmon, and Clara—joined the Church (see *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III (1832–1914)*, 336).

After someone who knew of Joseph's travel plans informed Missouri law officials that Joseph planned to visit Dixon, Illinois, the officers surmised he would then be away from the protective arm of the Saints at Nauvoo. Therefore, Sheriff Joseph H. Reynolds of Jackson County, Missouri, and Constable Harmon T. Wilson of Carthage, Illinois, set out to capture Joseph, which so far had proven an impossibility at Nauvoo.

Reynolds and Harmon arrived in the Dixon area and, by pretending to be Mormon missionaries, were directed to the Wasson residence where they found Joseph, drew their pistols and (without showing any writ or serving any legal process) captured him and, to the shock and dismay of his family, hustled him away in a waiting carriage.

The lawmen planned to take Joseph to Missouri to stand trial on the old, trumped-up charges of treason and attempted murder of Lilburn Boggs, the ex-governor of Missouri (see *Times and Seasons* 4 [July 1, 1843]: 242). The trek to Missouri included an overnight stay in Paw Paw Grove, Illinois.

Hearing of Joseph's capture, citizens from Paw Paw Grove, Dixon, and the general area gathered the next morning at the tavern where he was being held and requested him to preach to them on the subject of marriage as it is related to God's laws. Joseph evidently preached with much liberty, for he reported later that he spoke on the subject for an hour and a half. The Utah LDS Church has published the following brief account of the Paw Paw Grove sermon in the first person, as if Joseph personally recorded the following statement:

I was conveyed by Reynolds and Wilson, upon the first writ of habeas corpus, towards Ottawa, as far as Pawpaw [sic] Grove [in Illinois], thirty-two miles. . . .

The news of my arrival had hastily circulated about

the neighborhood; and very early in the morning the largest room in the hotel was filled with citizens, who were anxious to hear me preach and requested me to address them. . . . I addressed the assembly for an hour-and-a-half on the subject of marriage, my visitors having requested me to give them my views of the laws of God respecting marriage. My freedom commenced from that hour. (LDS *History of the Church* 5:444, 445; italics added; see also *Journal of Discourses* 2:168–169)

By “My freedom” Joseph was humbly referring to the momentous events that soon transpired, when the Paw Paw Grove citizens confronted his captors and advocated in favor of Joseph. Soon thereafter, hundreds of men from the Nauvoo Legion came to Joseph’s rescue, the renegade lawmen were arrested, and Joseph was freed.

On June 30, after Joseph was back safely in Nauvoo, he addressed an audience of 8,000 people at the Grove and made reference to his sermon at Paw Paw Grove. A report of Joseph’s Nauvoo address gives almost identical wordage of the quote above. He is reported to have said:

The news of my arrival had hastily circulated about the neighborhood, and very early in the morning the largest room in the hotel was filled with citizens, who were anxious to hear me preach, and requested me to address them. . . . I addressed the assembly for an hour and a half on the subject of marriage, my visitors having requested me to give them my views of the law of God respecting marriage. My freedom commenced from that hour. (LDS *History of the Church* 5:472)

It is only logical that the citizens of the Paw Paw Grove region requested Joseph to preach on the subject of marriage as related to God’s laws, as a result of the widespread polygamous charges against him by Dr. John C. Bennett, Udney Jacob, Harrison Sagers, and others. Those men’s accusations raised the question in the minds of people as to whether or not plural marriage was a part of Joseph’s teachings. The citizens from the Paw Paw Grove

area wanted to hear directly from Joseph's own lips if his beliefs on marriage were scriptural. Evidently his audience was pleased with his sermon and their hearts were more softened toward him.

Joseph's Paw Paw Grove sermon on marriage was evidently so acceptable to the nonmembers and the lawmen who heard it that no one bothered to even historically note what he said. Surely, if Joseph had sprung unscriptural interpretations of the laws of marriage on the crowd, that news would have been broadcast far and wide—but such was not the case. Likewise with his marriage sermon to thousands in Nauvoo a few days later. Yet, it is alleged by the Utah LDS Church that only twelve days after Joseph spoke to the 8,000 assembled at Nauvoo he, on July 12, dictated a plural marriage document which today is known as Section 132 in their Doctrine and Covenants.

Of course, after a man has been dead eight years, it is easy for his enemies to get away with making such claims.

Joseph Wrote Often for the *Times and Seasons* in 1843

John Taylor, who succeeded Joseph as editor of the Church's publication, published that after Joseph resigned as editor, he was still a major contributor to the pages of the *Times and Seasons*. Editor Taylor wrote:

we [are] indebted to our beloved brother JOSEPH, for his timely counsel, the access he has given us to his writings, and the many rich treats which have been furnished our readers through his instrumentality, without which, our sheet would in many instances have been comparatively dry and barren. (*Times and Seasons* 4 [October 15, 1843]: 359)

Joseph's participation in the publication before and after his retirement as editor suggests that he used his influence to make that publication one of the few rays of truth in a dark wilderness of lies.

**Joseph Published His History in the
Times and Seasons for Truth's Sake**

Joseph began publishing his autobiography entitled “History of Joseph Smith” in the *Times and Seasons*, March 15, 1842, page 726. He continued to publish his history serially throughout 1843 and until his death in June 1844. After his death, others continued to write and to publish it in the first person, as if Joseph had written it. However, those writings published after his death cannot be considered as his work. Joseph prefaced his history with a promise that he would write it in “truth and righteousness,” saying:

Owing to the many reports which have been put in circulation by evil designing persons in relation to the rise and progress of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, all of which have been designed by the authors thereof to militate against its character as a Church, and its progress in the world, I have been induced to write this history, so as to disabuse the public mind, and put all enquirers after truth into possession of the facts as they have transpired in relation both to myself and the Church, so far as I have such facts in possession.

In this history I will present the various events in relation to this Church, in truth and righteousness, as they have transpired, or as they at present exist, being now the eighth year since the organization of the said Church.
(Times and Seasons 3 [March 15, 1842]: 726–727)

The editors and writers in the 1843 *Times and Seasons* certainly took a position against plural marriage, and since Joseph still had some influence in what appeared on its pages, that publication is a historical witness of Joseph Smith’s innocence. The March 15 issue of the *Times and Seasons* also published a statement by Apostle Wilford Woodruff, in which he asserted that the writings in that paper were historically correct. He wrote:

The period has arrived when that veil of false hood and misrepresentation that has been drawn like a dark curtain

over America to cover the black deeds of Missouri in their unhallowed persecutions against the saints, must be drawn back, that the world may have a view of the scene. . . . Let it be written as with an iron pen upon the tables of your hearts, and a record of the same be carefully preserved in your houses for your children and your children's children, unto the latest generation, that they may learn the history of the persecution of the saints, the rise and progress of the Church, and the deeds of their fathers. I would to God that not only every family of the saints in Nauvoo, but throughout the world, would carefully peruse and preserve a copy of each volume of the *Times and Seasons*, as they are issued from the press, not only for their present benefit, but as a future history. (*Times and Seasons* 4 [October 15, 1843]: 360, 361; italics added)

A Wary Visitor from England Investigates Joseph Smith and Finds Him to Be Biblically Sound

In the same issue of the *Times and Seasons*, Editor Taylor printed a lengthy report by a man from England who visited Nauvoo during the summer of 1843 for the purpose of determining whether or not the rumors of polygamy and other crimes were true or false. After visiting Nauvoo and mingling with Church members, the visitor submitted extracts from his personal journal for publication in the *Times and Seasons*. The visitor wrote:

Having, whilst in my native land, heard a great deal said respecting the people called Mormons, I thought it would be well, in the course of my rambles (or tour) to visit their city, hold converse with them, see their city, investigate their principles, and judge for myself. . . . I took ship and arrived in safety at New Orleans. I then sailed up the Mississippi, and landed at St. Louis. As soon as I had taken lodgings I commenced my inquiries respecting the Mormons. What think you of the Mormons, I asked? I had scarcely spoken before my ears were saluted from all quarters, from high and low, rich and poor. The Mormons! The mean Mormons! . . . I heard them calumniated, and

vilified, nay, abused beyond belief. They informed me that their crimes were of the deepest dye. That *polygamy* was not only tolerated but practised amongst them. . . . I landed at Nauvoo on a beautiful morning in the summer season. . . . I took up my abode as convenient to that edifice [the Temple] as I could, in order that I might be the better enabled to take cognisance [*sic*] of every circumstance which might come under my observation. I had resolved to keep upon a strict look out, and to keep my head and understanding from being confused in order that I might be enabled to judge correctly, and have a true and correct report to send to my native land. . . . The Prophet is a kind, cheerful, sociable companion. I believe that he has the goodwill of the community at large, and that he is ever ready to stand by and defend them in any extrimity [*sic*], and as I saw the Prophet and his brother Hyrum conversing together one day, I thought I beheld two of the greatest men of the nineteenth century. I have witnessed the Mormons in their assemblies on a Sunday. . . . With respect to the teachings of the prophet, I must say that there are some things hard to be understood, but he invariably supports himself from our good old Bible. (*Times and Seasons* 4 [October 15, 1843]: 355, 356; italics added)

After meeting individually and with the Saints in their worship services, the visitor wrote that he “perceived that the people called Mormons are grossly abused and misrepresented” (ibid., 354). He observed nothing that implicated Joseph in polygamy. Editor John Taylor, in publishing the English tourist’s letter, gave the appearance of having taken that position also.

Joseph Said the *Times and Seasons* Contained “Treasures”

In the November 1 issue of the Church’s publication, Joseph, who was striving to get the truth to the Saints, advised them to subscribe to the *Times and Seasons*. He wrote:

TO THE SAINTS. . . .

It has been so long since I addressed the saints through the medium of the Times and Seasons, that I feel confident that a few words from my pen, by way of advice, will be well received, as well as a “way mark” to guide the “faithful” in [the] future. . . .

In all the world, the Times and Seasons is the only paper that virtually sustains, according to the forms of Scripture and prophecy, “apostles, prophets, evangelists and revelations[”]. . . . Unity *is* power, and when the brethren as one man, sustain the “Times and Seasons,” they sustain me, by giving a spread to the revelations, faith, works, history, and progress of the Church. . . .

Many of the articles which appear in the Times and Seasons, are extracts of revelations, translations, or are the united voice of conferences, which like “apples of gold in baskets of silver;” are treasures more than meet for the called, chosen, and faithful among the saints; and should be more than *drink* to those that hunger and thirst after righteousness. . . . JOSEPH SMITH. (*Times and Seasons* 4 [November 1, 1843]: 376, 377)

Joseph suggested that his written words, if heeded, would give them a “way mark,” a guide for their lives. He promised also that his words, if studied, would be to them like “apples of gold in baskets of silver.” Joseph took these words from Proverbs 25:11, which states, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Only by being honest could Joseph have made that promise. If he had been practicing and teaching plural marriage in secret but denying it openly, he would have been a lying, deceitful, cowardly man and a false prophet. But none of those labels fit Joseph, who went to Carthage to confront and expose his accusers even though he knew he would likely not return alive. That act alone is evidence that he was not cowardly and did not fear death. It dispels the Utah LDS argument that he lied for years about involvement in polygamy out of fear. It also dispels the nonmember argument that he was a false prophet who would say anything if it brought pleasure to his life. Joseph also

knew the penalty for lying, for it was he who was inspired to add these words of Christ, which appear in different chapter and verse in the King James Version of the Bible:

Break not my commandments for to save your lives; for whosoever will save his life in this world, shall lose it in the world to come. (Matthew 16:27, Inspired Version)

A Treasure That Joseph Published for the Saints

During the period that Joseph was editor of the *Times and Seasons*, he could not entirely control what was published in the Church paper and on the press, as the printing of Udney Hay Jacob's pamphlet proves (see *Times and Seasons* 4:32; *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy* 2:123 and 3:2). However, some of the spiritual treasures which Joseph did publish in the *Times and Seasons* to mark the way can be used to ascertain whether or not he was involved in practicing polygamy in 1843.

One of these treasures is found in the "History of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons*, November 15, 1842, page 12. It is a revelation given by God to Joseph indicating that baptism performed by the authority of His Church is a new and an everlasting covenant.

Revelation to the Church of Christ which was established in these last days, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty: Given at Manchester New York, April 1830, in consequence of some desiring to unite with the Church without rebaptism, who had previously been baptized.

Behold I say unto you, that all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing, and this is a *new and an everlasting covenant*; even that which was from the beginning.— Wherefore, although a man should be baptized an hundred times, it availeth him nothing; for you cannot enter in at the strait gate by the law of Moses, neither by your dead works; for it is because of your dead works, that I have caused *this last covenant*, and this church to be built

up unto me, even as in days of old. (See also RLDS DC 20:1a–c; LDS DC 22:1–3; italics added.)

However, the Utah LDS Church alleges that in July 1843 Joseph dictated a revelation that also announced a “new and an everlasting covenant.” This document became Section 132 in the Utah LDS Doctrine and Covenants, but it was not made public until eight years after Joseph’s death. (See chapter 14 for evidence that Joseph did not author this document.) It commands plural marriage and damns those who will not accept it. This document endorses the doctrine of plural marriage for time and eternity and declares it to be a “new and an everlasting covenant.” However, this is a redefinition of the term “new and an everlasting covenant” because in the above quoted revelation from *Times and Seasons* that term referred only to baptism.

The term “new and an everlasting covenant” is redefined in Utah LDS Doctrine and Covenants 132 as follows:

I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines. . . .

Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

For behold, I reveal unto you a *new and an everlasting covenant*; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory. . . .

And as pertaining to the *new and everlasting covenant*, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God. (LDS DC 132:1, 3–4, 6; italics added)

According to the plural marriage revelation above, the “new and everlasting covenant” pertains to plural marriage and it, not baptism, is the gateway or entrance into the fullness of God’s

glory, which is Celestial Glory. Once this law has been revealed to a person, if they do not participate in it, even if they have been baptized with the authority of His Church, they will be “damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory.” This, of course, is false doctrine according to the scriptures, revelations, and teachings of Joseph Smith Jr. in the original LDS Church.

How wonderful it is that Joseph printed the above treasure of the revelation on baptism to both mark the way for the Saints to believe in the true Gospel and alert them to the false way. As is stated in 2 John 1:9, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”

A Treasure about Celestial Glory Refutes Section 132

In February 1843, eleven years after Joseph had beheld the vision of Celestial Glory, he wrote a poem entitled “A Vision,” which contained seventy-eight stanzas. Joseph’s poem was published in the *Times and Seasons*, and of Celestial Glory Joseph stated:

**66 I beheld the celestial, in glory sublime;
Which is the most excellent kingdom that
is,—
Where God, e’en the Father, in harmony reigns;
Almighty, supreme, and eternal, in bliss.**

**67 Where the church of the first born in union
reside,
And they see as they’re seen, and they know
as they’re known;
Being equal in power, dominion and might,
With a fulness of glory and grace, round his
throne. (*Times and Seasons* 4 [February 1, 1843]: 85;
italics added)**

On February 16, 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon beheld a vision of Celestial Glory (see DC 76), in which they saw God the Father upon the throne, Jesus Christ at His right hand, and angelic hosts around them. With this marvelous vision there came divine revelation revealing conditions of Celestial Glory and the witness that those who obtain that state (through righteousness) are equal. Joseph declared:

And thus we saw the glory of the celestial, which excels in all things; where God, even the Father, reigns. . . . They who dwell in his presence are the church of the Firstborn . . . and he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion. (RLDS DC 76:7i, j; LDS DC 76:92, 94, 95)

However, Utah LDS Doctrine and Covenants Section 132, to which Joseph's name is falsely attached, teaches inequality in Celestial Glory:

I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant . . . Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection . . . they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things. . . . Then shall *they be gods* . . . then shall *they be above all*, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and *the angels are subject unto them.* (Utah LDS DC 132:19, 20; italics added)

Thus, it is seen that in 1843 Joseph Smith taught celestial equality just as he did in 1832. This is additional evidence that the Utah LDS doctrines of plural marriage, celestial inequality, and exaltation to godhood (as found in LDS Section 132) were not inspired by, nor did they originate from, the same source as did Joseph Smith's Section 76 revelation.

A Discovery That Joseph's Journal Condemned Polygamy

On May 26, 1844, Joseph is reported to have declared in a sermon:

For the last three years [since 1841] I have a record of all my acts and proceedings, for I have kept several good, faithful, and efficient clerks in constant employ: they have accompanied me everywhere, and carefully kept my history, and they have written down what I have done, where I have been, and what I have said; therefore my enemies cannot charge me with any day, time, or place, but what I have written testimony to prove my actions; and my enemies cannot prove anything against me. (*LDS History of the Church* 6:409)

But Joseph's so-called "faithful, and efficient clerks" were not always faithful. After his death they, and some Church leaders who were not his clerks, took great liberties with Joseph's diary and personal papers. Research indicates that his entry for October 5, 1843, was changed drastically and serves as a startling example of how Joseph's history was changed to suit the new doctrines Brigham Young and his cohorts dictated. Compliant clerks under Brigham Young's leadership changed Joseph's original monogamous statement to favor plural marriage. The counterfeit passage was also written in the first person to give the appearance that Joseph had recorded the following polygamous statement:

walked up and down the streets with my scribe [Willard Richards]. Gave instructions to try those persons who were preaching, teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives; for, according to the law, I hold the keys of this power in the last days; for there is never but one on earth at a time on whom the power and its keys are conferred; and I have constantly said no man shall have but one wife at a time, unless the Lord directs otherwise. (*LDS History of the Church* 6:46)

But Joseph's diaries or manuscripts do not contain the above statement. Joseph's actual and original quotation is in an "untitled journal of 278 manuscript pages," thought to be in the handwriting of Willard Richards who was one of Joseph's scribes. Here is the correct statement:

Walked up and down St[reet] with Scribe and gave instructions to try those who were preaching, teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives on this Law. Joseph forbids it and the practice thereof. No man shall have but one wife. (Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, 417; see also *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy* 1:106–107)

What a tremendous treasure to find that on October 5, 1843, only eight months before his death, Joseph rejected polygamy and gave instructions to Apostle Willard Richards to "try those who were preaching, teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives"! And what did Richards do with that order given by Joseph? Nothing! He refused to carry out Joseph's directives on that subject.

Why did Richards disobey Joseph's order? Richards, who was a married man at the time, disregarded Joseph's instructions because he was already a polygamist, and he did not dare bring charges against others for fear of having his own crimes exposed. The *Archive Record* for Willard Richards states that he entered into plural marriage in January 1843. During that year he married Sarah [Sara] Longstroth, Nanny Longstroth, and Susannah Lee Liptrot Walker, which made him the husband of four wives by the end of that year (see Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, *A Book of Mormons*, 229; see also Salt Lake City, Utah, LDS Church Archives, *Archive Record* of Willard Richards).

It is evident that Apostle Richards, a polygamist, refused to obey Joseph's instructions. Instead, Richards chose to conspire with his first cousin, Apostle Brigham Young, and others, to continue in their polygamy. Moreover, by false testimony and false documents, the message was conveyed to the Church and the world that the monogamous Joseph was the author of that false doctrine.

The discovery that Joseph instructed Richards to bring charges against those who were preaching, teaching, and practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives is consistent with Nauvoo Stake President William Marks's declaration that Joseph gave him similar instructions. Marks asserted:

He [Joseph] said that he would go before the congregation and proclaim against it [polygamy], and I must go into the High Council, and he would prefer charges against those in transgression, and I must sever them from the Church, unless they made ample satisfaction. . . . The mob commenced to gather about Carthage in a few days after, therefore there was nothing done concerning it.

After the Prophet's death, I made mention of this conversation to several, hoping and believing that it would have a good effect; but to my great disappointment, it was soon rumored about that Brother Marks was about to apostatize, and that all that he said about the conversation with the Prophet was a tissue of lies. (RLDS *History of the Church* 2:733; *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy* 1:60)

Changing Joseph's history, as Richards did, and refusing Joseph's order to prosecute polygamists, *was* definitely part of a conspiracy to erase the true story of Joseph's fight against the doctrine which he fought valiantly to eradicate.