

Biographical Sketch of the Life of Mary Elizabeth Knight

Mary Elizabeth was the daughter of Joseph Knight, Jr. and Betsy Covert Born at Gallatin, Clay County, Missouri 16 June 1836. Married to Charles Henry Bassett in Salt Lake City, March 5, 1853, baptized 1844 by T. Riggs, confirmed by J. Johnson, rebaptized July 9, 1853, received endowments August 6, 1852. Nine children were born to this union.

Joseph Knight, Senior, grandfather of Mary Elizabeth though not rich was well to do. He owned a farm, a gristmill and a carding machine. He had occasion to hire men in his own business and occasionally hired the young man Joseph Smith. The Knight family seemed to have become greatly attached to Joseph Smith.

Joseph Knight Sr arranged his affairs to be at the Smith family residence at the time the plates came into Joseph's possession. He had driven there with a horse and. buggy, or carriage, and we are told that in this conveyance Joseph and his wife, Emma, on the morning of September 22, 182? before daylight, drove away supposedly to the Hill Cumorah where he received the plates.

Joseph Knight Sr was one of the early converts to the church and his sons were highly esteemed by the Prophet for all their loyalty under all the persecutions. He and his wife, Polly Peck, were among thirteen persons who, early in the morning of June 1830 at Coleville, New York, were baptized by Oliver Cowdery. In order to do this it was necessary to repair a dam. Before the baptizing was finished a mob began to collect and about fifty persons surrounded the house of Mr. Knight where the party went after the baptizing.

When the Knight family moved to Jackson County, Missouri, Mrs. Knight was very sick, but she was determined to set her feet upon the land of Zion and to have her body buried there. But on the way she was so sick it was feared she would die before reaching the end of the journey. A son, Newell Knight, bought lumber to make a coffin. But she survived the journey, though she died soon after and her body was buried there as she had desired.

Mary Elizabeth Knight and her family, Joseph Knight Jr., remained in Nauvoo until the exodus of the Saints in 1846. They were first expelled from Missouri when she was four years old. Well she remembered the miracle of the quails while they were camped on the banks of the Mississippi opposite Nauvoo, when they were without food and were wet and cold. The quails came down in flocks and landed on the ground in their campsite. When asked by the writer of this copy how they caught them, she told me with her own lips that they just walked up to them and caught them with their hands. She had no other thought but what this was an act of God in their behalf.

Her father and grandfather were close friends of the prophet Joseph Smith, even before the church was organized. At her parents home in Missouri the Prophet was a frequent and welcome visitor and he often took Mary Elizabeth on his knee and fondly caressed her. She heard him preach in the bowery just west of the Temple in Nauvoo.

She died November 16, 1926 at Salt Lake City, Utah.

Received by Grace Bassett Newey from Athleen Bassett, granddaughter of William Henry Bassett, August 1988.

Edited for spelling and other insignificant errors by Stanley D. Hansen Jan. 22, 2007