

Joseph Knight Family Connections to the 2025 Come Follow Me Lessons



The Big Blue River in Missouri

Church and family growth for the Knights in Missouri in 1832-33

Joseph Smith welcomed the Colesville Branch to Independence in July 1831. Independence was a scrawny town with three stores and 20 houses, which mostly were made of logs with dirt floors and windows covered by quilts according to historian William G. Hartley. But it was an important trading post that was only 12 miles from the border of the United States and the town was on the cusp of great growth.¹

The land in Kaw Township near the Big Blue River where the Colesville Branch first settled, is now part of Kansas City, Missouri. A Community of Christ researcher, Ron Romig, concluded the location of the Colesville Branch today would be near where the north-south street of Paseo intersects with 51st street to about 55th street.²

One of the Colesville members, Emily Coburn, later wrote that in those years there were always teams being dispatched to St. Louis to obtain farm machinery, dry goods and other necessary items. It took four days round trip to get things from Saint Louis.³ Jackson County was seeing great growth with an influx of both saints and gentiles.

¹ William G. Hartley, *Stand By My Servant Joseph*, Deseret Book, 2003., p. 125-6.

² Ibid., p 145.

³ Hartley Ibid. p 143.

The presiding ecclesiastical leader in Missouri in 1831 was Bishop Edward Partridge.

Bishop Partridge led the meeting in January of 1832 held in Newel and Sally's home in Kaw Township. Newel was part of the council of the 11 High Priests who helped govern church matters in Missouri until a stake was formed in 1834.

That was the council that in July of 1832 divided the members in Missouri into three branches, and into five branches in 1833: The Coleville Branch, the Independence Branch, the Prairie Branch, the Whitmer Branch, and the Cincinnati Branch.⁴ There were also church members living in the settlements of Big Blue and Westport. In that same time period, it was announced that Kirtland would be made a stake.

Newel wrote that attending to church matters as the president of the branch consumed much of his time.⁵

The Colesville Branch members were mostly young, growing families and the Knight family continued to grow.

- March 22, 1832 Joseph Knight, Jr. married Elizabeth Covert, and 15 months later they welcomed their first daughter, Martha.
- September 29, 1832, Anna Knight DeMille gave birth to a daughter, Adelia. She was the fifth child of Anna and Freeborn DeMille.
- October 14, 1832 brought the miracle that Sally and Newel Knight had prayed for – Sally gave birth to a baby boy. Newel wrote in his journal about the event:
“On the fourteenth of October my wife bore to me a son. She had never before given birth to a living child, and the doctors who had attended her before had said it was impossible that she should. But Brother Joseph blessed he and said she should have the desire of her heart. She never doubts the prophet's words and as soon as her son was born she desired him to be called Samuel for she said she had asked him from the Lord. My wife soon recovered from her sickness and she and her child are doing well.”⁶
- 1833 Emily Coburn, the younger sister of Sally Coburn Knight married Clark Slade, the son of Father Knight's sister Molly. Emily and Clark's first child, Helen was born in 1834.
- 1833 Esther Knight Stringham gave birth to her fifth child she named Hyrum. Unfortunately, Esther died not long after giving birth. Esther's younger sister Polly took over care for Esther's baby and older children and two years later Polly Knight married William Stringham, her sister's widowed husband.

⁴ Ibid., p 145.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Newel Knight Journal, Allen typescript, p 15.

- 1833 Father Knight married Phebe Crosby Peck, the widow of Benjamin Peck, who was the younger brother of Polly Peck Knight his deceased first wife; he married his sister-in-law. His wife Polly had passed away two years earlier soon after arriving in Missouri. Joseph was 61 and Phebe was 33 and the mother of four small children. Joseph Knight, Sr. still had two unmarried daughters living with him, Polly and Elizabeth.

Joseph and Phebe would have two children together, Ether Crosby Knight born in 1834, and Charles Colson Knight born in 1836.

Diane Mangum – July 2025