

ANNA KNIGHT AND FREEBORN DEMILLE

BAPTISMAL STORIES

The Colesville Branch and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon, BYU Studies 1970,
Larry C. Porter (excerpt pages 5-6)
Transcribed by Susanne Quayle Price, with minor changes

Newel Knight was the first in his family and apparently the first of the Colesville Saints to accept the new gospel. During the last week in May 1830, he visited at Fayette, where he was baptized by David Whitmer. Soon after the first conference of the Church, held June 9, 1830, at the Whitmer farm, Joseph Smith returned to Colesville, accompanied by his wife Emma, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer and David Whitmer.

The Sabbath arrived [June 27, 1830], we held our meeting, Oliver Cowdery preached, others bore testimony to the Book of Mormon, the doctrine of repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, etc. Early on Monday morning [June 28, 1830], Oliver Cowdery proceeded to baptize Emma Smith, Hezekiah Peck and wife [Martha Long], Joseph Knight and wife [Polly Peck], William Stringham, Joseph Knight Jun., Aaron Culver and wife [Hannah Peck], Levi Hall, Polly Knight and Julia Stringham. Although not named in the above account, there were others baptized on June 28, 1830. Esther Knight Stringham, daughter of Joseph Knight, Sr., was baptized with her parents and her husband, William Stringham. Sally Coburn Knight, wife of Newel Knight was also baptized at this time. However, her baptismal date is listed as June 29, [June 28?] 1830, a Tuesday, which would have been the day following Joseph's arrest.

Anna Knight De Mill, of the Colesville Branch and daughter of Joseph Knight, Sr. and wife of Freeborn De Mill, was similarly baptized on June 29, [June 28?] 1830. It should also be noted here that "a short time afterwards," Emily Coburn, sister of Sally Coburn Knight, was baptized over the strenuous objections of her father, Amasa Coburn, and the Reverend Mr. Shearer of the Presbyterian faith.

Joseph Knight, Jr., relates that the baptisms of June 28 were accompanied by disruptive events: "... when we were going from the water, we were met by many of our neighbors, pointing at us and asking if we had been washing sheep; before Joseph could confirm us he was taken by the officers to Chenango Co. [South Bainbridge] for trial, for saying that the Book of Mormon was a Revelation from God; my father employed two lawyers [James Davidson and John Reid] to plead for him and cleared him; that night our wagons were turned over and wood piled on them, and some sunk in the water, rails were piled against our doors, and chains sunk in the stream and a great deal of mischief done. Before Joseph got to my Father's house, he was taken again to be tried in Broome Co. Father employed the same lawyers who cleared him there.

The confirmation of the new Saints, so rudely interrupted by the constable, was subsequently accomplished. Newel Knight and his wife Sally visited Joseph Smith in Harmony in early August 1830, and with Emma, were confirmed members of the Church. The remaining confirmations were completed

on August 29, 1830, when Joseph, Hyrum Smith, and John and David Whitmer visited Colesville. "That evening we assembled the Church, and confirmed them, partook of the Sacrament and held a happy meeting."

One report says that on September 6, 1830, Freeborn De Mill, husband of Anna Knight De Mill, was baptized by Hyrum Smith and confirmed by Joseph Smith at Colesville. However, another source lists his baptism at September 26, 1830. If the second date is correct, this would conceivably place him in Fayette for the first day of the second conference of the Church where "A number were baptized. . .and the word of the Lord prevailed." The minutes of this conference, which assembled at the Whitmer farm September 26–28, 1830, lists the "whole" membership of the Church as sixty-two. They also note that Newel Knight was "ordained a priest under the hand of Brother Oliver Cowdery."