

# History of Polly Knight Stringham

Compiled by her great-great-granddaughter LaRue Stringham Larsen

Polly Knight Stringham was born 7 Mar 1811 to Joseph Knight Sr. and Polly Peck in Halifax, Windham County, Vermont.

Polly was fifteen and living in Colesville with her parents when Joseph Smith came to work for her father. Her brother Joseph was eighteen and her sister Elizabeth was nine. By this time Polly's older brother Newell was married to Sally Coburn, her sister Anna was married to Freeborn DeMille, and her sister Esther was married to William Stringham. All of her brothers and sisters and their families were living in Colesville.

While Joseph Smith was in the process of translating the Book of Mormon, Polly's father, Joseph Knight Sr. provided provisions to help him with the translations. After the Book of Mormon was printed, Joseph Smith organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 6, 1830.

Polly and her family were converted to the gospel and were anxiously waiting for Joseph Smith to visit them. After a conference held in June 1830, Joseph Smith accompanied by his wife Emma, Oliver Cowdery and John and David Whitmer visited Colesville. Joseph and Emma stayed with the Knight family and Joseph called a baptism meeting for Sunday, June 27th. The day before, on Saturday afternoon, Joseph Smith said, "We had erected a dam across a stream in order to form a place for baptism. During that night, a mob collected and tore away our dam, which hindered our intentions of baptizing".

The next day, 28 June 1830, Polly gathered with her family to be baptized. Men had repaired the dam and Elder Oliver Cowdery did the baptizing. Polly was baptized along with Emma Smith, (the Prophet's wife), Polly's parents, Joseph and Polly Peck Knight Sr. Polly's brother, Joseph Knight Jr., Polly's sisters Anna Knight DeMille and Esther Knight Stringham, Esther's husband, William Stringham and their daughter Julia Ann Stringham.

After they were baptized everyone expected to be confirmed by Joseph Smith at an evening meeting, but hostile neighbors interfered. Joseph Smith's account says "that a mob of about fifty men surrounded the house of Mr. Knight. They were angry and determined to commit violence upon us". Joseph Knight Jr. recalled that "before Joseph could confirm us he was taken by the officers to Chenango County for trial". He was arrested on a warrant charging him with disorderly conduct and of setting the country in an uproar by preaching the Book of Mormon and other such charges.

The first that Joseph Smith was able to confirm Polly and the Colesville Saints was the end of August 1830. Joseph had received a revelation that he should confirm the saints at Colesville (D&C 26) so, as Joseph and Hyrum Smith and David and John Whitmer prepared to go, they "called upon our Heavenly Father in mighty prayer that he would blind the eyes of our enemies so that they would not know us and that we might, on this occasion return unmolested". That prayer was answered literally, Joseph said, "for when they encountered a large company working at the public road near Joseph Knight Sr.'s place, among them some of our most bitter enemies, the workmen looked earnestly at us, but not knowing us, we passed on without interruption.

After her baptism, Polly Knight's brother Newell Knight stated that "Polly became the target of a local priest's tirade against Mormonism. He had chosen my sister as a mark for his abuse. Polly and the minister exchanged letters in the which, the priest was so decidedly used up, that he was glad to give it up and back out completely whipped. I regretted I did not save the letters so that my children may see how a weak woman, inspired by the Lord, was enabled to confound and put to confusion the learned of the day".

In December 1830, Joseph Smith received a revelation which announced that the church members were to leave New York and move to Ohio "because of the enemy and for your sakes". Polly moved with her family and they settled in Thompson which was 25 miles away from Kirtland. Polly's sister Esther passed away in 1833 after having a little son. Some records list his name as Hyrum and in the ward records of Nauvoo he is listed as Huron or Theron. Polly took care of little Hyrum and then in 1835, married Hyrum's father William Stringham. William was her deceased sister Esther's husband. Together Polly and William had a son Walter, born 4 Feb 1837 in Clay Co. Missouri. (Walter is my g-grandfather).

Polly received her Patriarchal blessing on April 6, 1839 from Patriarch Joseph Smith Sr. in Kirtland, Ohio (Vol. 9, Page 202). William and Polly moved to Nauvoo, Illinois and were listed as members of the Nauvoo 2nd Ward along with Walter and Huron (Theron or Hyrum).

In 1842 the Nauvoo Female Relief Society was created with Emma Smith serving as president. On March 30th of that year, Joseph Smith met with several charter members and instructed them to admit as new members only those who were worthy. Two weeks later the society approved as new members Polly Knight Stringham, Polly's stepmother Phoebe Knight, and Polly Peck's sister-in-law Martha Peck. Polly's sisters Anna Knight DeMille and Elizabeth Knight Johnson joined a few weeks later.

The Relief Society met in the assembly room above Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store. Polly and her Relief Society sisters sewed clothing and collected food and supplies for the temple workmen. When Polly married William Stringham she became the second Polly Stringham in the family. William's brother George had married Polly Hendricksen and the two Polly Stringhams were members of the Nauvoo Relief Society.

Polly Knight Stringham passed away on 28th of April, 1844. The Sexton Records of Burials 1839-1846 lists Polly Knight Stringham as passing away at age 33 years, 1 month and 20 days from dropsy. The Old Nauvoo Burial Grounds Inventory lists the death date of Polly Knight Stringham as 28 April, 1844. Polly Knight Stringham was endowed and sealed to her husband William Stringham on the 22nd of January, 1846 in the Nauvoo Temple. Eliza Lake (William's fourth wife) acted as proxy.

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the Knight Descendants and William Hartley for publishing the book "Stand by my Servant Joseph", Most of my information of Polly Knight came from this well-researched, historical book.

LaRue Stringham Larsen, lives in Richfield, Utah. This was presented at the Joseph Knight Family Reunion held in St. George, Utah.