

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE KIRTLAND ERA

by Gracia Denning

(A talk given at the Smith Family Reunion in Kirtland, August 1977)

I close my eyes and try to conjure up a vision of those years the Smith family spent in Kirtland ... and I catch a glimpse into what seems to me an alien time ... an alien place.

Erase all evidence of modern power ... gone the miles of poles and wires that spell refrigeration; central heating; air-conditioning.

Vanish ... hospitals; penicillin; insulin; toothpaste; pre-natal clinics; super markets; Avon Ladies; airplanes; no-iron shirts; telephones; television ... in short, wipe out the rat-race 20th century world of luxury, leisure and frenetic idleness ... enter the Kirtland Era 1831 - 1838.

It was a time of high hopes ... of free wheeling pioneer spirit. It was a man's world and all over the western reserve the men "played it to the hilt."

From homesteading new land to founding the Restored Church the Smith men set to with gusto. Andrew Jackson was in the Whitehouse. The Erie and Ohio Canals were finished. Money was scarce, but land was plentiful. Anyone with ingenuity, thrift and ambition could build an empire. This is what the Smiths proceeded to do in Kirtland.

In this era of men on the move, the woman's role was less than glamorous. In general, women were not considered capable of business activities. No respectable lady would travel without male escort nor could she "work out." A woman in those days had little or no legal status. If they owned property it had to be administered by a male guardian. Women were not allowed to vote. They seldom were educated. Many died young from consumption, childbed fever, or became prematurely old and worn out due to poor diet and over-work. Poor medical care took its toll. A common prescription for pneumonia at the time was to wrap the patient in cold wet sheets. Few survived the treatment.

Spinning wheels, looms, sad-irons, constant knitting and sewing engulfed their lives. Unlike their modern sister who does those things as a hobby, these women were required to make with their own hands nearly every article of clothing used by the family. Those same hands must make lye soap from the raw ingredients of fat and wood-ashes for the purpose of keeping the clothing clean. For the woman in Kirtland, domestic activities must have consumed almost every waking moment. She bore her children with the aid of a midwife and without painkillers ... add to all of this ... *persecution*.

Prior to the Kirtland years, the Smith women had already known persecution. From the moment the knowledge spread of the youthful Prophet's first vision, his family had been the center of bitter controversy. When Emma arrived in Kirtland it may have been her hope that this new place and new people would accept them and they would find a haven there. Certainly this was the hope of the Colesville group who made their way from New York with Lucy Mack Smith as their leader. As others flocked to Kirtland in obedience to the

call to gather there, nearly all who came had tasted the bitter gall of persecution. From a nucleus of six members on April 6, 1830, the church grew by leaps and bounds. Branches were established in Canada, England, and all over the New England seaboard as well as throughout the state of Ohio, with the center Stake or "hub" at Kirtland. There was another "hub" in Jackson County, Missouri. It was a thousand miles between.

So closely linked is the Smith Family to this phenomenal growth in the Restored Church, that it is impossible to discuss the one without mentioning the other ... for it was the Smith Family that lent stability and strength to the "hub" and it was the Smith women who helped form the life, breath and soul of that "hub" ... *Kirtland*. Lucy, after leading a group to Kirtland in 1831, proved herself an able, even a dynamic leader. Her faith seems never to have wavered ... her strength and endurance worthy of emulation. Keen, often outspoken, she became *Mother in Israel*.

Into Kirtland flowed convert families from all over the world and out of Kirtland went the men as missionaries, as soon as they were ordained and instructed and could find boarding places for their families.

In crowded houses, often women and children from three or four families lived together while they waited and waited and waited.

So ... a good title role for the women in the Kirtland Era could be "Ladies in Waiting."

Although the women seldom engaged in active missionarying, their state of waiting was not one of idleness. With the men off on missions, the farm chores, combined with the burdens of domestic routine aforementioned, would have been sufficient to keep the women occupied. Coupled with these duties in those difficult times it became the lot of many women to engage in "outside occupation" to raise money to support their missionary husbands, sons, and brothers as well as to meet their own living expenses. In an article in the *Evening and Morning Star*, July 1833, Joseph writes:

It is said, that women go out to work; this is a fact, and not only women but men too; for in the church of Christ, all that are able, have to work to fulfil the commandments of the Lord; and the situation in which many have come up here has brought them under the necessity of seeking employment from those who do not belong to the church."

In the same issue he writes concerning how a Bishop was to handle the receipt of property as to converts wishing to consecrate land to the church:

"Kirtland, the Stake of Zion is strengthening continually. When the enemies look at her, they wag their heads and march along. We anticipate the day when the enemies will have fled away and be far from us. You will remember

that the power of agency must be signed by the wives as well as the husbands, and the wives must be examined separate and apart from the husbands, the same as signing a deed, and a specification of effect inserted at the bottom, by the justice before whom such acknowledgment is made, otherwise the power will be of none effect."

This underlines the fact that within the Church, women were considered equal with men and although in the world of 1833, a man could sell his property or give it away or anything he desired with or without his wife's consent, in Zion, under the direction Joseph Smith, a wife's wishes were to be considered in any transfer of property.

Women in Kirtland worked in many occupations. Women like Mary Fielding taught public school. Mary Lightner made straw hats to sell, sewed fine shirts for gentlemen of position, and sometimes cooked at an Inn. Nearly every woman who had a roof of her own took in boarders and many women and girls served as maids in these boarding houses.

An unmarried woman, Hepzibah Richards, writes to her brother Willard who is in England on a mission and says: "There are in this house nine children under eight years old ... much noise."

For a maiden lady, the year of 1838 in Kirtland was one of great uncertainty. Her letters reflect this uncertainty, as well as confidence and despair mingled with fear and hope. Not yet a member of the Church, she comments, "I have never liked Kirtland.." and again she reflects, "I believe there are many good people in Kirtland but not a good place to make Mormons."

As she is packing to leave ... though when or where she was to go she had no idea, she went out to try to collect money owed to Dr. Willard Richards. She was unsuccessful so without money and without a male protector she pleaded with Willard to hurry home from England. She said that she hopes, if she goes to Far West she will find a more pleasant and permanent place. She mentions saving the seeds from any apples they eat because the seeds could be sold.

After Hepzibah Richards got to Far West she was baptized. She died within a short time of arriving in Far West. She got her wish for a more permanent situation. We can only hope it was a more pleasant one. Hepzibah was a great aunt of Aseneth Smith Conklin who is also a daughter of Joseph F. Smith. It is a great pleasure to have her here with us at this reunion. Her's is a doubly great heritage.

A favorite story of these waiting years is that of Lucy Mack Smith and the school house.

Everyone had agreed that it was necessary for the community to have a school building. An effort was made to raise money for one, but due to lack of funds and time, the preparations for Zion's camp taking precedence, the effort flagged.

Finally, Lucy decided to take matters into her own hands. She wrote up a paper stating that she would return every cent if it should not be possible for the money to be used to build the school. She took it to her husband and asked his permission to try to raise the money with this paper. He gave his consent and blessing and she went to work gathering subscriptions. Soon she had enough money to

begin the building. It was built of log and measured 14 feet by 14 feet. In her own history, Lucy writes that soon after her sons returned from the trip to Jackson County, Missouri and Zion's camp ...

*"I took Joseph and Hyrum with me and showed them the new meeting house, with which they were highly pleased, and they approved all that I had done relative to the matter."*

Another of the roles of the women ... as they waited and worked, was prayer.

While on the march with Zion's camp, cholera broke out among the brethren. The afflicted men called the leaders of the church to lay hands upon them to heal them...but since the affliction was a judgement from God, instead of healing, the disease fell upon those who administered.

Joseph and Hyrum were in a matter of minutes stricken with "an awful agony". They went out of the house and knelt together to pray that God would deliver them from this dreadful situation. So stricken were they that they could barely walk, bent double with cramps, they fell to their knees. They struggled to pray three times and finally succeeded. At last the cramp began to ease and in a short time Hyrum sprang to his feet and exclaimed, "Joseph, we shall return to our families. I have had an open vision in which I saw Mother kneeling under an apple tree, and she is even now asking God, in tears, to spare our lives, that she may again behold us in the flesh. The Spirit testifies, that her prayers, united with ours will be answered!"

When they returned home, Lucy confirmed what had occurred. Upon hearing this Joseph said, "Oh, my Mother!" How often have your prayers been the means of assisting us when the shadows of death encompassed us!"

William too recovered from Cholera at this time with careful nursing from his sisters. Lucy's precious sons were saved. But her grandson Jesse Smith died. One of the many grandchildren and loved ones. Lucy was to lose in those Kirtland years.

It is no wonder that Joseph Sr. paid this tribute to his wife:

"Mother, do you not know that you are of the most singular women in the world?" And in 1833, the Prophet said of his mother:

"Blessed is my mother, for her soul is ever filled with benevolence and philanthropy; and not withstanding her age, she shall yet receive strength and be comforted in the midst of her house; thus saith the Lord, she shall have eternal life."

Building the Temple in Kirtland was one of the greatest achievements during the era. I don't think we can begin to comprehend the poverty they endured in order to build the "House Of The Lord". The sacrifice so often mentioned, of the women giving their glass dishes to be crushed to make a shining plaster is touching. This represents more than sacrifice of luxuries. In reality, the women sacrificed much, much more in the form of simple human necessities and even to the point of self denial of food and clothes in order that the needs of the workers could be met. No wonder Joseph commented "the enemies walk in the streets and wag their heads..." Their amazement is understandable. How could anyone

understand the spirit of sacrifice that moved upon all the Saints ...but most especially upon the women?

One of the first acts of violence against the church in the Kirtland era occurred in 1832 when Joseph and Emma were living at the Johnson home at Hiram, Ohio, a distance of about 30 miles out of Kirtland. This event set the stage for almost continual persecution and among the chief sufferers was Emma, whose hopes of better days was dashed to pieces.

On a cold March night, exhausted after tending the adopted twins who had been sick with the measles, Joseph and Emma had fallen asleep. A mob came into the room and carried Joseph out before he could fully waken. He was stripped of his clothing and his flesh was scratched with fingernails and then his tormentors poured hot tar into the wounds. They tried to put tar in his mouth and broke his front tooth trying to make him swallow poison. Imagine Emma's terror as the mob dragged her husband out into the night. Imagine her fear and anguish as she listened to the fiendish noises ... and her agony of spirit, as silence ... almost more foreboding and horrible than the noise ... and then came Joseph's appearance at the door. Naked and covered with tar, he called for a blanket. Seeing the terrible sight she thought he was covered with blood and she fainted. That night was spent in pulling the tar from his body. His hair on the sides of his head was pulled out at this time, and afterwards, he always combed his hair forward a little.

The *Times and Seasons* records this slightly humorous side of a hideous scene...

"The feathers which were used with the tar in this occasion, the mob took out of Elder Rigdon's house. After they had seized him, and dragged him out, one of the bandits returned to get some pillows; when the women shut him in and kept him some time."

Nothing more is recorded on this ... but one need only to imagine the brave act of those women shutting in that mobber. Did they hold the door until he broke free? Did he escape by way of a window ... with or without the pillows? We'll probably never know. But the women were not easily frightened, even by persecution.

The morning following this mobbing, Joseph appeared as scheduled and delivered a sermon on "brotherly love". Some in the crowd were his persecutors and later became members of the church.

As a result of the exposure to the weather, the infant son, Joseph Murdock Smith died three days later. In this great sorrow they were not permitted to mourn in peace but due to the constant threat of mobs, Joseph found it necessary to leave the area.

In the company of Newell K. Whitney, Peter Whitmer and Jesse Gauze, he set out on the 1,000 mile journey to Independence. Concerned about Emma, he was encouraged by Newell K. Whitney to have her go to his wife in Kirtland. Joseph wrote to Emma telling her to do so.

When Emma and little Julia arrived in Kirtland and the Whitney home, they had enjoyed only a two hour visit when she was asked to leave due to Sister Whitney's aged Aunt who lived there voicing her insistance that there was not room for them both. Emma went to Reynold Cahoon's, then Father Smith's and also Dr. Williams home. Tossed to and fro with an infant daughter, Emma, separated from her husband, estranged from her parents and family, suffered the pangs of pregnancy, loneliness and homelessness. Adding to her distress, rumor and dissention rocked the

members. When Joseph returned to Kirtland and two months later he found Emma "very disconsolate". His first order of business was to find a home for her. The place he found was an apartment above the Whitney Store. This was to be their home for years to come. In this home, Joseph was to have 19 of the revelations, a visitation of the Father and Son, numerous dignitaries of the ancient Gospel. Here he completed the translation of the scriptures and held the first School of the Prophets. In this home their first living child, Joseph III was born. Here, Brigham Young made his first acquaintance with the Smith family. Known for his conviviality and enjoyment of his friends, when Joseph was home, Emma must have been a busy hostess.

To what extent Emma may have shared in many of these glorious events is not known. Probably very few. In the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Emma is told "Murmur not for the things thou has not seen ..." Is it possible Emma lived in the bustling household tending to the children, cleaning and cooking ... barely aware of the events going on within that little room? Clearly the business of the Church was not woman's business and Joseph was away a good deal, the demands of the Church always taking precedence.

After the death of his son, Joseph went directly to Independence and held a conference at which he was voted President of the High Priesthood by acclamation. He received a revelation from the Lord declaring his sins forgiven.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, my servants, that in as much as you have forgiven one another of your trespasses, even so I the Lord forgive you..." With the untimely death of his little son less than a month behind him, Joseph was still struggling with his feelings. From some distance away on his return trip to Kirtland he wrote to his wife:

"My situation is a very unpleasant one although I will endeavor to be contented, the Lord assisting me. I have visited a grove which is just back of the town almost every day where I can be secluded from the eyes of any mortal and there give vent to all the feeling of my heart in meditation and prayer. I have called to mend all the past moments of my life and am left to mourn and shed tears of sorrow for my folly in suffering the adversary of my soul to have as much power over me as he has had in the past but God is merciful and has forgiven my sins and I rejoice that he sendeth forth the Comforter unto as many as believe and humbly themselves before Him.

"I was grieved to hear that Hiram had lost his little child. I think we can in some degree sympathize with him but we all must be reconciled to our lots and say the will of the Son be done..."

"I am happy to find that you are strong in the faith of Christ and at Father Smith's. I hope you will comfort Father and Mother in their trials and Hiram and Jerusha and the rest of the family. Tell Sophronia I remember her and Calvin in my prayers. My respects to the rest and I should like to see little Julia and once more take her on my knee..."

One may speculate upon Emma's feelings as she read this letter asking her to comfort others when she herself was without comfort and by no means settled,

having gone from place to place during Joseph's absence. For her there was no warm welcome, no acknowledging vote, no heavenly manifestation. Hers was the lot of a castaway ... and when Joseph returned, he records in his Journal ... I found Emma most disconsolate. He brought the first copy of Emma's hymnal, 90 hymns chosen by her at God's command. It was a small triumph, but it was Emma's.

After establishing Emma in the apartment over the Whitney store, Joseph left for New York to obtain paper for the printing press. He would be gone through August and September. While Emma waited the last miserable months for her baby to come. During this time the *Evening and Morning Star* carried an article that must have made the women's blood run cold as they waited there in Kirtland and many of their men were in New York.

#### *The Cholera*

*"This desolating sickness is spreading steadily over the U. S. and a count of it's ravages and many cases in New York to July 1832 is 3,731. Deaths, 1,520."*

Death was no stranger to the Smith family during the Kirtland years. Emma's own little twins, her adopted son, Joseph Murdock Smith and Hyrum and Jerusha's little Mary were a few whose graves lay in the cemetery across from the Temple. Another sad loss occurred in 1836 when Hyrum's wife Jerusha died while he was away on a mission. Lucy records this event with pathetic simplicity in her history:

"About one year after my husband returned from his mission, a calamity happened to our family that wrung our hearts with more than common grief. Jerusha, Hyrum's wife was taken sick and after an illness of perhaps less than two weeks, died while her husband was absent on a mission to Missouri. She was a woman everybody loved that was acquainted with her, for she was every way worthy. The family were so warmly attracted to her, that, had she been our own sister, they could not have been more afflicted by her death."

This lovely dark eyed woman's last words to her children were ... "Tell your father when he comes that the Lord has taken your Mother home, and left you for him to take care of..."

There is perhaps no outrage like that of the death of a mother leaving small children behind... and surely Jerusha's death was no exception. A victim of inhumane prescription for pneumonia (in those days they wrapped the patient in cold wet sheets, if they didn't die of the disease, they almost certainly died of the treatment) she left five young children, one an infant less than three weeks old. With Jerusha laid to rest beside her little Mary in the cemetery across from the Temple, Hyrum was burdened with his family, and unable to attend to his church duties. Presently he was directed by Joseph to marry Mary Fielding. It was the "will of the Lord."

Certainly it was not the most romantic reason to get married ... to secure a mother for five children. What woman in her right mind would accept?

There is every reason to believe Mary Fielding was in her right mind. And from her letters which span the years from 1833 when she first arrived in Kirtland to the exodus in 1837, this wonderful woman's spirit of sacrifice and service proves the Lord's choice an

excellent one... and of course, Hyrum's wisdom in accepting it.

That Mary Fielding adored Hyrum is evident from her first letters. She was not a stranger to the family. Her letters to her sister Mercy Thompson contain detailed accounts of the activities of Joseph and Hyrum. They reveal feminine interest in the doctrinal evolution taking place as well as the personalities involved. Mary, no doubt, is representative of the majority of the women in Kirtland during those years. Writing letters ... wishing to hear from far off loved ones. Too often when the longed for letters arrived, they contained the sad news of a beloved mother, father or brother or sister dying. Too seldom would letters bring cheering news.

Mary's letters tell of her situation as a live-in teacher and nurse to the Dort Children. Her joy as being at the Temple dedication ... her worries, her reflections ... all beautifully revealed in spidery writing as she wrote small to get as much as possible on a page.

Mrs. Dort was a niece of Lucy Mack Smith. While living there Mary wrote:

"My Heavenly Father has been very gracious unto me both temporarily and spiritually ... a kind sister has proposed my going to stay for a while with her to take charge of two or three children who have been in my school; they propose giving something besides my board and I think this will suit me better than a public school, if it is but little. I expect to go there in a day or two and hope to be quite comfortable as I know the family to be on the Lord's side; the mother is a cousin of Brother Joseph's and took care of him when a child. Their name is Dort."

Mary Fielding's letter continues in a breathless account of a narrow escape Joseph had with a mob. Her words reflect one of the chief activities of the women, recounting the latest experiences of the Church leaders and speculating as to the possibilities that the loved family members might come to Kirtland.

In October 1836, she writes ...

"I am still in Brother and Sister Dort's family as teacher besides which I make myself as useful as I can in needle work. I go out to the mears (lake) and visit among the friends at pleasure and am most kindly and respectfully treated by all the family and am as comfortable as I can be out of a home of my own, but I do not expect to remain here many weeks longer as only two or three months were mentioned when I was first requested to come. I know not where my next home will be, or what my next circumstances will be, but as I have said before, I will endeavor to trust in the Lord for all that is to come. Sister Dort is at this time much afflicted with a liver and complications of other complaints which almost disable her from moving around the house ... she is nearly as feeble a person as the late Mrs. Pratt. She has several times been confined to her bed or her room entirely, for a year or two at once; she is a second wife and has but one only darling child about four years of age being her first which she considers as a great miracle. As one of the twins died she is step mother to all but one ... a situation I desire as little as I ever did."

In another she writes ...

"I teach little Maria to read." And again ... "I frequently stop in to see after our things at Brother Humphrey's, it sometimes causes my spirits almost to sink when I look over them" Another time she wrote ... "I cannot help but feel that my lot is much worse than yours." A typical expression of joy and depression filled these days for the women.

The wedding of Mary Fielding and Hyrum was a quiet one. She was 36 years old ... and nowhere can I find recorded how she felt as the ceremony made her a step mother ... a lot which only a few months before she had admitted having such an aversion to. Perhaps the Lord listens when we utter a chance reelection and may sometimes choose to test us in the thing we would least desire. If so, Mary passed the test with flying colors. Proving a devoted step mother to all of Hyrum's children and bearing him two others, Joseph Fielding and Martha Ann.

During the Kirtland years there were romances aplenty. With the entire Smith family at home together in the winter of 1833, the handsome Smith boys must have cut a wide swath. It must have been a great subject for speculation just which of the many unattached females would end up married to each of them.

When Samuel Smith and Orson Pratt were on a mission in Boston, they taught the Gospel to two worthy young women. Mary Bailey and Agnes Coolbrith. They were disowned by their families when they affiliated themselves with the Mormons. So, they went to board with a woman who was a member. It is said that their landlady had a dream in which she saw Mary Bailey and Agnes Coolbrith going to Kirtland and each marrying a man in high standing in the church. They did eventually get to Kirtland and they boarded the winter of 1833 in the home of Joseph Sr. and Lucy. About these two girls Lucy writes:

"They devoted their time to making and mending clothers for the men who were employed on the house ... (Temple)."

She goes on to describe the situation:

"There was but one mainspring to all our thoughts and actions, and that was the building of the Lord's house." (But for the young there is always courting time!) Lucy goes on to say, "How often I have parted every bed in the house for the accomodation of the Brethren and then laid a single blanket on the floor for my husband and myself, while Joseph and Emma slept upon the floor with nothing but their cloaks for bedding." Reading journals and letters of this period reveals an astounding number of entries "Boarded at the Smith's".

Sharing in these circumstances, the Boston girls must have had an inside track with the Smith boys, for Samuel married Mary Bailey and Don Carlos married Agnes Coolbrith.

Almost the entire Smith family came to Kirtland. Young Lucy, Sophronia and Katherine ... Uncles and Aunts and many cousins. Sophronia's husband Calvin Stoddard and Katherine's, William Salisbury united with the Church. These couples were having their young children during the Kirtland years and young Lucy typical with all teenage sisters, came in for a great deal of baby-sitting as the two Smith sisters worked to set up organized working plans for the women who made all the draperies and carpets for the temple on a large loom as well as making clothing for the men at work on the Temple. The momentum of the effort that built the

temple carried right through to it's dedication. Joseph noted the faithfulness of the sisters in their labors and commended them for it.

In 1836 an important and happy event took place. Uncle Silas brought Mary Duty from New York. She endured the 500 mile journey and enjoyed a joyful day with her children, grandchildren, and great grand-children around her. The first Smith family reunion ... held here in Kirtland! How appropriate that we, her descendants should meet here again over one hundred years later. That night, after enjoying the close family around her, she hung her pocket on the bedpost and slipped beyond the veil to meet Asael. For that day at least the family buried any unpleasantness and united in love and harmony. But tentions there were, and the revelation on the word of wisdom seems to mark a certain point where it began. Apparently Joseph's uncles and family were able to accept any doctrine ... but that young "Whipper Snapper" was going too far if he denied a New Englander his favorite drink and his tobacco to boot! Some of the family left the Church at this time over these things. But the Church went on and even though they severed membership, they stayed in the group and endured all the joys and sorrows that were to come.

Of course, the high point was the dedication of the Temple. Singing was an important part of the life of the women in Kirtland and choir practice took place several evenings a week. At the dedication of the Temple, female voices rose high and clear in the glorious strains of "The Spirit of God like a Fire is Burning" found on page 120 of the tiny hymnal prepared by Emma.

In the closing days of the Smith family in Kirtland, the women once again endured great stress as the men left hastily in the night leaving the women to settle their affairs and follow. Due to the heavy financial involvement nearly everything that belonged to the Smith Family was subject to foreclosure. Emma soon found the store being stripped of goods but no money finding its way into the till. Many of her most bitter persecutors had once been guests at her table, ministers in the Priesthood with her husband and most hurtful of all, onetime friends. In May of 1837 Emma wrote to Joseph:

"I have been so treated that I have come to the determination not to let any man or woman have anything whatever without being well assured that it goes to your own advantage, but it is impossible for me to do anything as long as everybody has so much better right to all that is called yours than I have."

In the past few weeks I have in imagination trod the streets of Kirtland. I've walked hand in hand with those women who lived here ... worked here ... praised their God here ... wept ... suffered ... waited ... and died here ...

Many of our family are buried in that graveyard by the Temple. In that graveyard stands a monument inscribed ... "To the memory of two who symbolize the abounding faith, courage and fortitude of the pioneer women of the Church." No names declare an honor richly earned ... it is for us to privately enjoy the knowledge that those two women are ours ... Smith women ... Mary Duty Smith and Jerusha Barton Smith.

As the Kirtland era drew to a close, and they were faced with the loss of all that seven years hard labor and sacrifice had gathered ... how would the women react? Would Mary Bailey and Agnes Coolbrith return to Boston and renounce their foolhardy choice? Would

Mary Fielding take this perfect opportunity to flee the terrors of stepmotherhood? Would Emma cease to lead the singing of the congregation? Would Clarissa, wife of John, Betsy, wife of Aaseal, Mary, wife of Silas, all getting on in years, plead age and infirmities as an excuse to stop somewhere at peace? Would Lucy and Joseph Sr. disclaim their sons at this, their hour of obvious disgrace? No ... all proceeded as one thought and one action united in the service of one another and the belief in the divinity of their purpose and the eternal nature of their family. No earthly loss could annihilate the dream . . . their royalty is in the bloodstream of America.

I have not sought for chronology in this presentation . . . but for a mood, Not so much for bare facts as the essence of life as the role of the women in Kirtland era unfolded.

My feelings have grown very tender towards all the women who lived here. Their work worn hands scrubbed the floors and polished the woodwork of that Temple; how their tearfilled eyes must have lingered

wistfully upon the last sight of that building gleaming as the sunlight flashed upon the plaster made with powdered glassware. Their babies lie in that cemetery and some of them ...

Though many conflicts rose within the family during these Kirtland years, if wounds were made, they healed, and in the healing, formed a bond so powerful that only death could separate and even that separation cannot hold out against the eternal destiny of this, a remnant of the house of Israel.

When a mother calls her children, they come. Lucy has called, and we are here ... I feel her spirit here. I rejoice in my privilege as one of her descendants. I cherish within myself qualities I think were hers and I excuse (almost with a touch of pride) those faults we seem to share.

It is a woman's role to bind up all wounds and hold a family close. It is for woman to sacrifice her name, her life blood, her time, and strength, in short, to give her all on the alter known as "Family". It was so in Kirtland ... and it is so today.

