

Joseph Knight Sr. Account, circa 1835-1847

Joseph Knight Sr. (1772-1847), handwritten manuscript, circa 1835-1847, MS 3470, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. Dean C. Jessee wrote that the document appears to have been written in Joseph Knight's hand. First published in *BYU Studies* in 1976. One leaf (two pages) was missing when church clerk Thomas Bullock added a title to the manuscript. Some paragraphs shortened for easier reading. Angle brackets < > indicate word(s) added above the line. Original spelling retained and brackets [] added to help read the account.

From thence he¹ went to the hill where he was informed the Record was and found no trouble for it appeared plain as tho he was acquainted with the place it was so plain in the vision that he had of the place he went and found the place and opened it and found a plane Box he oncovered it and found the Book and took it out and laid [it] Down By his side and thot he would Cover the <place> over again thinkinking [thinking] there might be something else here But he was told to take the Book and go right away and after he had Covered the place he turned round to take <the> Book and it was not there and he was astonished that the Book was gone he thot he would look in the place again and see if it had not got Back again he had heard People tell of such things and he opened the Box and Behold the Book was ~~gone~~ there he took hold of it to take it out again and Behold he Could not stur the Book any more then he Could the mount[a]in

he exclaimed why Cant I stur this Book[?] and he was answer[e]d you have not Done rite [right] you should have took the Book and a gone right away you cant have it now Joseph says when can I have it[?] the answer was the 22nt Day of September next if you Bring the right person with you Joseph Says who is the right person[?] the answer was your oldest Brother² But before September Came his oldest Brother Died³ then he was Disap[o]inted and did not [k]now what to do But when the 22nt Day of September Came he went to the place and the personage appeared and told him he Could not have it now But the 22nt Day of September nex[t] he mite [might] have the Book if he Brot with him the right person Joseph Says who is the right Person[?] the answer was you will know then he looked in his glass and found it was Emma Hale⁴ Daughter of old Mr Hail⁵ of Pensylvany a girl that he had seen Before for he had Bin Down there Before with me⁶

Joseph then went to Mr Stowels⁷ whare he had lived sometime Before But Mr Stowel Could not pay him money for his work very well and he came to me perhaps in November and worked for me until about the time that he was Married which I think was in February⁸ and I paid him the money and I furnished him with a horse and Cutter to go and see his girl Down to Mr Hails and soon after this he was Married and Mr Stowel moved him and his wife to his

¹ Joseph Smith Jr. (1805-1844), was a treasure seeker.

² Alvin Smith (1798-1823)

³ Alvin Smith died on November 19, 1823.

⁴ Emma Hale (1804-1879)

⁵ Isaac Hale (1763-1839)

⁶ Joseph Smith Jr. became acquainted with Emma Hale about November 1825.

⁷ Josiah Stowell Sr. (1770-1844), was a treasure seeker.

⁸ January 18, 1827

fathers in Palmyra Ontario County⁹

nothing material took place until toward fall the forepart of September I went to Rochester on Business and returned By Palmyra to be there about the 22nd of September I was there Several Days I will Say there [was] a man near By the name Samuel Lawrence¹⁰ He was a Seer [Seer] and he had Bin to the hill and knew about the things in the hill and he was trying to obtain them he [Joseph Smith Jr.] had talked with me and told me the Conversation he had with the personage which told him if he would Do right according to the will of God he mite [might] obtain the 22nd Day of Septem[b]er Next and if not he never would have them.

Now Joseph <was> some affraid of him [Samuel Lawrence] that he mite be a trouble to him he therefore sint [sent] his father up to Sams as he Called him near night to see if there was any signs of his going away that night he told his father to stay till near Dark and if he saw any signs of his going you till [tell] him if I find him there I will thrash the stumps with him. so the old man [Joseph Smith Sr.] Came a way and saw no thing like it ~~th~~ this is to shoe [show] the troubles he had from time to time to obtain the plates

So that night we all went to Bed and in the morning I [Joseph Knight Sr.] got up and my Horse and Carriage was gone But after a while he [Joseph Smith Jr.] Came home and he turned out the Horse all Come into the house to Brackfi<rst> [Breakfast] But no thing said about where they had Bin after Brackfirst Joseph Cald me into the other Room and he set his foot on the Bed and leaned his head on his hand and says well I am Dissopinted.[Disappointed] well say I[,] I am sorrey [sorry] Well says he I am grateley [greatly] Dissopinted, it is ten times Better then I expected. then he went on to tell the Length and width and thickness of the plates and said he they appear to be Gold But he seamed [seemed] to think more of the glasses or the urim and thummem¹¹ then [than] he Did of the Plates for says he I can see any thing they are Marvel[o]us Now they are writen in Characters and I want them translated

Now he was Commanded not to let no one see those things But a few for witness at a given time. Now it soon got about that Joseph Smith had found the plates and peopel [people] Came in to see them But he told them that they Could not for he must not shoe [show] them But many insisted and oferd [offered] money and Property to see them But for keeping them from the Peopel they persecuted and abused them and they were obliged to hide them, and they hid them under a Brick h[e]arth in the west Room.

about this time Came this Samuel Lawrence and one Beeman¹² a grate Rodsman and wanted to talk with him and he went into the west Room and they Proposed to go shares with him and tried every way to Bargain with him But Could not. ~~the~~ then Beeman took out his Rods and hild [held] them up and they pointed Dow[n] to the harth whare they ware hid. there says Beeman it is under that harth So they had to garde the house until some time in November¹³

he¹⁴ obtained fifty Dollars in money and hired a man¹⁵ to move him and his wife to Pensylvany to hir [her] Fathers his wife Being onwell [unwell] and wanted to go to her Fathers he Bout [Bought] a piece of Land of hir Father with a house and Barn on it--here the People

⁹ Manchester, Ontario County, New York

¹⁰ Samuel Tyler Lawrence (1786-1847), was a treasure seeker.

¹¹ The term Urim and Thummim would not have been used at the time mentioned.

¹² Alvah Beeman or Beaman (1775-1837), was a treasure seeker.

¹³ Evidently in December 1827.

¹⁴ Joseph Smith Jr.

¹⁵ Alvah Hale (1795-1881), was a son of Isaac and Elizabeth Lewis Hale.

Began to tease him to see the Book and to offer him money and property and they Crowded [Crowded] so harde that he had to hide it in the Mount[a]in.

He now Began to be anxious to git them Translated he therefore with his wife Drew of[f] the Caricters [Characters] exactly like the ancient and sent Martin Harris¹⁶ to see if he Could git [get] them Translated he went to Albeny [Albany] and to Philadelph[i]a and to new york and he found men that Could Translate some of the Carictors in all those places Mitchel¹⁷ and Anthony¹⁸ of New York ware the most Larded [Learned]

But there were some Caricters they could not well understand therefore Anthony told him that he thot [thought] if he had the original he c[o]uld translate it and he [w]rote a very good piece to Joseph and said if he would send the original he would translate it But at Last Martin Harris told him that he Could not have the original for it was Commanded not to be shone [shown]. and he was mad and said what Does this mean and he tore the paper that he wrote all to pieces and stamped it under his feet and says Bring me the original or I will not translate it Mr Harris seeing he was in a passion he said well I will go home and see, and if they Can be had I will wright [write] to you immediately So he Came home and told how it was and they went to him no more

then was fulfilled the 29th Chapter of Is[a]iah. Now he Bing [Being] an unlearned man did not know what to Do. then the Lord gave him Power to Translate himself then ware the L[e]arned men Confounded, for he By the means he found with the plates he Could translate those Caricters Better than the Larned. Now the way he translated was he put the urim and thummim into his hat and Darkned his Eyes then he would take a sentence and it would appe[a]r in Brite Roman Letters then he would tell the writer and he would write it then <that would go away> the next sentance would Come and so on But if it was not Spelt rite it would not go away till it was rite so we see it was marvelous thus was the hol [whole] translated.

Now when he Began to translate he was poor and was put to it for provisions and had no one to write for him But his wife and his wifes Brother would sometimes write a little for him through the winter.¹⁹

the Next Spring oliver Cowdry²⁰ a young man from palmyra Came to see old Mr Smith²¹ Josephs father about this work and he sent him Down to pensylveny to see Joseph and satisfy him self So he Came Down and was Soon Convinced of the truth of the work²²

The next Spring Came Martin Harris²³ Down to pennsylvania to write for him and he wrote 116 pages of the first part of the book of Mormon and about this time Martin wanted to go home a Bout some Buisness and he wanted to take the writings with him But Joseph put him of[f] But he urged him By fair promises that he would be Careful and he would Return it again But he Being free with it some person got hold of it and Cept [Kept] it so that he never Could obtain it again. There fore Joseph Lost his privilage [privilege] for a while. But after Repenting

¹⁶ Martin Harris (1783-1875)

¹⁷ Samuel L. Mitchill (1764-1831)

¹⁸ Charles Anthon (1797-1867)

¹⁹ Emma Hale Smith and her brother Ruben Hale (1810-1887) were scribes for a period of time.

²⁰ Oliver Cowdery (1806-1850)

²¹ Joseph Smith Sr. (1771-1840)

²² Joseph Knight got ahead of himself in his narrative which he soon corrected.

²³ Martin Harris (1783-1875)

he again received the privelage of translating again, as in Book of Covenants²⁴ page 163

Now he Could not translate But little Being poor and nobody to write for him But his wife and she Could not do much and take Care of her house and he Being poor and no means to live But work his wifes father²⁵ and familey ware all against him and would not h[e]lp him he and his wife Came up to see me the first of the winter 1828 and told me his Case But I was not in easy Circumstances and I Did not know what it mite amount to and my wife²⁶ and familey all against me about helping him But I let him have some little provisions and some few things out of the Store apair of shoes and three Dollars in money to help him a Litle

in January²⁷ his father and Samuel²⁸ Came from Manchester to my house when I was Buisey a Drawing Lumber I told him they had traviled far enough I would go with my sley [sleigh] and take them Down to morrow I went Down and found them well and the[y] were glad to see us we conversed about many things. in the morning I gave the old man a half a Dollar and Joseph a little money to Buoy [Buy] paper to translate I having But little with me. The old gentlman told me to Come and see him once in a while as I Could I went home followed teaming till the last of March²⁹ the slaying [sleighting] Being good I told my wife I must go Dow[n] and see Joseph again why Do you go so soon[?] for said she says I Come go and see and she went with me next morning we went Down and found them well and ware glad to see us Joseph talked with us about his translating and some revelations he had Received and from that time my wife Began to Bel[i]eve and Continuwed [Continued] a full Believer untill she Died and that was the 7 Day of August 1831

in the spring of 1829 Oliver Cowdry a young man from Palmry went to see old Mr Smith about the Book that Joseph had found and he told him about it and advised him to go Down to Pensylvany and see for him self and to write for Joseph he went Down and Received a Revelation Concerning the work and he was Convinced of the truth of the work and he agreed to write for him till it was Done

Now Joseph and Oliver Came up to see me if I Could help him to some provisons having no way to Buy any But I was to Cattskill³⁰ But when I Came home my folks told me what Joseph wanted But I had ingaged to go to Catskill again the next Day and I went again and I Bought a Barral [Barrel] of Mack[e]rel and some Lined paper for writing and when I Came home I Bought some nine or ten Bushels of grain and five or six Bushels taters [potatoes] and a pound of tea and I went Down to see him and they ware [were] in want

Joseph and oliver ware gone to see if they Could find a place to work for provisions But found none they returned home and found me there with provisions and they ware glad for they ware out their familey Consisted of four Joseph and wife oliver and his Brother Samuel then they went to work and had provisions enough to Last till the translation was Done then he agreed with Martin Harris to print they therefore agreed with E Grandin³¹ to Print five thousand Coppies which was Printed and Bound at Palmiry in the Spring of 1830.

²⁴ 1835 Doctrine and Covenants

²⁵ Isaac Hale (1763-1839)

²⁶ Polly Peck Knight (1774-1831)

²⁷ January 1829

²⁸ Samuel Harrison Smith (1808-1844)

²⁹ March 1829

³⁰ Catskill, New York

³¹ Egbert B. Grandin (1806-1845)

Now in the Spring³² of 1830 I went with my Team and took Joseph out to Manchester to his Fathers when we was on our way he told me that there must be a Church formed But did not tell when. Now when we got near to his fathers we saw a man some Eighty Rods Before us run across[s] the street with a Bundle in his hand. there says Joseph there is martin going a Cros the road with some thing in his hand Says I how Could you know him so far[?] says he I Believe it is him and when we Came up it was Martin with a Bunch of morman Books he Came to us and after Compliments he says the Books will not sell for no Body wants them

Joseph says I think they will sell well Says he I want a Commandment Why[?] says Joseph fullfill what you have got But says he I must have a Commandment. Joseph put him off But he insisted three or four times he must have a Commandment

We went home to his Fathers and Martin with us[.] Martin stayed at his Fathers and slept in a bed on the flor with me[.] Martin awoke me in the nite and asked me if I felt any thing on the Bed[.] I told him no[.] Says I[,] Did you[?] yes [, he said,] I felt some thing as Big as a grat Dog Sprang upon my Brest[.] Says I[,] Was you not mistekened[?] no[,] says he[.] it was so[.] I Sprang up and felt But I Could see nor feal no thing. in the morning he got up and said he must have a Commandment to Joseph and went home. and along in the after part of the Day Joseph and oliver Received a Commandment which is in Book of Covenants Page 174

I stayd a few Days wating for some Books to Be Bound[.] Joseph said there must Be a Church Biltup [built up][.] I had Ben there several Days[.] old Mr Smith and Martin Harris Come forrod [forward] to Be Babtise[d] for the first[.] they found a place in a Lot a small Stream ran thro and they ware Babtized in the Evening Because of persecution[.] they went forward and was Babtized Being the first I saw Babtized in the new and everlasting Covenant

I had some thots to go forrod [forward] But I had not re[a]d the Book of morman and I wanted to exeman [examine] a Little more I Being a Restorationar and had not examined so much as I wanted to[.] But I should a felt Better if I had a gone forward[.] But I went home and was Babtised in June with my wife and familey.

there was one thing I will mention that evening that old Brother Smith and Martin Harris was Babtised[.] Joseph was fild with the Spirrit to a grate Degree to see his Father and Mr Harris that he had Bin with so much [and] he Bust out with greaf and Joy and Seamed as tho the world Could not hold him[.] he went out into the Lot and appeared to want to git out of site of every Body and would sob and Crie and Seamed to Be so full that he could not live[.] oliver and I went after him and Came to him and after a while he Came in[.] But he was the most wrot upon that I ever saw any man[.] But his joy seemed to Be full[.] I think he saw the grate work he had Begun and was Desirus to Carry it out. on the sixth Day of April <1830> he Begun the Church with six members and received the following Revelation Book of Covenants Page 177 they all kneeld down and prayed and Joseph gave them instructions how to Bild up the Church and exorted them to Be faithfull in all things for this is the work of God

Now after he had set things in order and got a number of morman Books we Returned home. then in June as I Before said I and my familey and a number more ware Babtised³³ Joseph Being present and Confirmed them.³⁴ and through that season there ware many Babtised in many places and the Church grew and multiplied But soon after the Church Began to gro[w] the People Began to Be angry and to persecute and Cald [Called] them fools and said they ware Dec[e]ived.

³² March 1830

³³ Monday, June 28, 1830

³⁴ Confirmed in September 1830

But along to[w]ards fall³⁵ Joseph and Oliver cowdray and David Whitmore³⁶ and John Whitmore³⁷ Came from harmony in Pennsylvany to my house on some Buisness. and some of the Vagabonds found they ware [were] there and they made a Catspaw of a young fellow By the name of Docter Benton³⁸ in Chenengo County to sware out a warrent against Joseph for as they said pertending to see under ground a little Clause they found in the york Laws against such things³⁹ the of[f]icer Came to my house near knite [night] and took him I harnesed my horses and we all went up to the villige But it was so late they Could not try him that nite and it was put of[f] till morning

I asked Joseph if [he] wanted Counsell he said he thot he should. I went that nite and saw Mr James Davison⁴⁰ a man I was acquainted with. The next morning ther[e] gather[e]d a multitude of peopel that ware against him Mr Davidson said it looked like a squaley [squally] Day he thot [thought] we had Better have John Read⁴¹ a pret[t]y good speaker near by I told him we would so I imployed them Both. So after a trial all Day Jest at nite he was Dismissed

then there was a nother of[f]icer was Ridy [Ready] and took him on the same Case Down to Broom[e] County Below forth with. I hired Boath these Lawyers and took them Down home with me that nite the next Day we it Continued all Day till midnite But they Could find no thing against him therefore he was Dismist. Soon after this Joseph Left the Susquehannah river and went to Manchester to his Fathers⁴²

then about the first staing Sidney Rigdin⁴³ Came from ohio to see Joseph and they Boath [Both] Came Down to Broom[e] County and Joseph and Sidney went Down to harmony to settle some Buisness and the Mob found they ware gone and they found when they ware expected Back and we found they had a plan laid to take Joseph and Sidney and me

now Sidney had Be[e]n at my house several Days and had preached there several times and he was too smart for them therefore they wanted to trouble him and the Day we expected them I I sent my son Down to meat [meet] them and told them of their Plan and they turned acrost [across] to Chenango point—and so went to the Lakes and I Looked up what I Could Car[r]y and went away that nite for the Lakes I also took my wife and Daughter for we war [were] calculating to go soon for we a lit[t]le Before had a revelation to go to ohio.⁴⁴ So the Mob watched all nite at the Bridge. But Behold we all Came up missing and the poor mob Lost all their tr[o]uble.

Now Joseph and I went rite [right] on to Kirtland ohio But did not stay long there for in March we went to the town of Thom—<n> Thompson a bout twenty miles and in the spring the Colesvill[e] Church all Came on But Joseph remain[e]d in Kirtland and Sidney soon Came to

³⁵ June 1830

³⁶ David Whitmer (1805-1888)

³⁷ John Whitmer (1802-1878)

³⁸ Abram W. Benton (1805-1867)

³⁹ Joseph Smith Jr, was charged under "pretending to tell fortunes, or to discover where lost goods may be found." *Laws of the State of New York, Revised* (1813), 1:114.

⁴⁰ James Davidson (1779-1847)

⁴¹ John S. Reed (1784-1878)

⁴² Joseph Smith Jr. and David Whitmer were at Manchester in October 1830.

⁴³ Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876) and Edward Partridge (1793-1840) arrived about December 7, 1830 at Fayette.

⁴⁴ December 30, 1830

Kirtland. Now this Spring Joseph received anumber of Revelation[s]. One was to purchase a thousand acres of Land which was Claimed by Leman Copley⁴⁵ and not paid for. He had a little Before Come into the Church and ap[p]ear[e]d to Be Zelaus [Zealous] and faithful. We all went to work and made fence and planted and sowed the fields. About this time we ware [were] Cal[le]d upon to Consecrate our properties. But Brother Copley would not Consecrate his property therefore he was Cut of[f] from the Church.

Then we was Commanded to take up our Jo[u]rney westward to the Boarders of the Lamanites. And we sold out what we Could But Copley took the advantege of us and we Could not git [get] any thing for what we had done. So we left Copleys in June and moved our things to wellsvill[e] on the ohio river which was about ninety miles. Then we went on Board the Steamer the third Day of July and we landed in up[p]er Misouria [Missouri] the 26th of the same Month.

We found our selves among strangers But the people seamed [seemed] to Be frindley [friendly] with us. And we found the Country to be B[ea]utiful rich and plesent [pleasant] and we made our selves as Comfortable as we Could. And in a few Day[s] Joseph and Sidney and a number of Brotherin [Brethren] came and they looked out and Enter[e]d a Considrible [Considerable] of Land, for the People to Settle on. We found it a new Country with some settirs [settlers] on it.

There was one Joshua Lewis⁴⁶ that had Come into the Church the winter Before, he and his wife.⁴⁷ And they ware faithful and good to us and took us in to their house, my wife Being sick as before stated. She Died the Seventh Day of August and Joseph and Sidney attended her funeral on the Eighth. She was Burried in the woods a spot Chosen out By our selves. I was along By where she was Buried a few Days after and I found the hogs had Began to root whare she was Buried. I being verry unwell But I took my ax the nex[t] Day and went and B[u]ilt a pen round it. It was the Last for her. Joseph at this tine Looked out the Country and found the place for the City and Temple and set Mark, and after giving all other nesesary [necessary] instructions he Returned Back for Kirtland. But as time Came along we often heard from him and Recevied Revelation.

The next year ~~he~~ in 1832 he Came again to Missouri and set things in order and Cal[le]d the Colesvill[e] Church to gather and seal[e]d them up to Eternal Life. And this made some little feeling among others But I think he [k]new Best. So that passed of[f] and he Returned to Kirtland again and I think he Did not Come to Missouri the next year for the Mob Began to sho[w] their Black heads in 1833. But Joseph Sent and Couns[e]led During our troubles in Jackson County and after the worst Came to the worst thot [thought] we had Better le[a]ve the County.

⁴⁵ Leman Copley (ca. 1781-1862)

⁴⁶ Joshua Lewis (1797-1835)

⁴⁷ Margaret Kelsey Lewis