



Polly Peck Knight

It was in the Fall of 1826 when Mother Polly Peck Knight and her family first met young Joseph Smith. While he was struggling to survive and preparing himself to receive the Gold Plates, the Knights were well-established land-owners and farmers. The Knights would later befriend Joseph help support him while he translated the Book of Mormon.

They were there on April 6, 1830, when the Church was organized in Fayette, New York. On June 28, 1830, Mother Knight was baptized, along with others of her family. Her large extended family became the first branch in this dispensation of the new Church of Christ, and because of their numbers and neighbors they drew intense persecution, more so, perhaps, than any other group in that period of Church History. It was difficult for them and Joseph spent considerable among them teaching and ministering.

Then in December 1830, came a startling revelation. The Church was to “assemble together at the Ohio.” The entire Church was moving. A succeeding revelation declared, “They that have farms that cannot be sold, let them be left or rented as seemeth them good.” Obedient to that revelation the farm they had lived on since 1811 was left behind. Part of it still not sold when they set out for Ohio.

They arrived in May 1831, and after consecrating all they owned, they were given land to begin anew on the farm of Lemman Copley in Thompson, Ohio. They set to with a vigor plowing, planting, fencing, and building homes. And then three weeks later, Copley, now angry and disaffected from Mormonism, ordered them off his land. Once again, Polly and her family and friends of the Colesville Branch were homeless. Then came another revelation inviting them to be the first to know the location of Zion, gather and purchase its land, and establish the foundations of its city.

It was July 25, 1831, when the Colesville Saints arrived in Independence, Missouri. The trip was particularly difficult for Mother Polly Peck Knight. She grew weaker and weaker as they journeyed. At one point, her son Newel left the company to obtain wood to build a coffin for her. Yet, she hung on, determined to make it to Zion, and praying that she would. And she did, and was able to participate in laying the foundation of Zion, and in the dedication ceremonies both

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of the land, and its temple. No sooner was that complete than on August 6, 1831 she “quietly fell asleep rejoicing in the everlasting gospel and praising God that she was able to see the land of Zion.” Her greatest desire having been fulfilled.

Mother Polly Peck Knight gave her all in faith and journeyed 1300 miles to reach the promised land—the same distance that later thousands would travel from Nauvoo to Salt Lake. And there she lies “a worthy member asleep in Jesus until the resurrection.” She died just on the west side of the Big Blue River west of Independence, Missouri, becoming, as it were, the matriarch of the gathering--the first of thousands to sacrifice all and die on the journey to Zion. Honor and glory be to all those who followed, and will yet follow, her example.