

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF VINSON KNIGHT

by

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Preface

This little sketch has been written that the true life story of our forefathers may live in the memories of our children; that the coming generations may know how we came to be connected with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints.

Most of the dates have been gleaned from the church histories, but the stories were told by Martha McBride Knight, and later by her son, James Knight, and his daughter, Adaline Knight Belnap.

The Author.

Vinson Knight was a man to be admired, well built with strong muscles and broad shoulders, keen dark eyes and dark hair. He was an honest law-abiding citizen, and a bright business man. His disposition was probably the most to be admired, having rather set, determined ways, yet kind and considerate to his friends, tender and affectionate to his wife and children.

He was the son of Rudolphus Knight and Rizpah Lee, and was born at Norwich, Hampshire County, Mass., March 14, 1804. He married Martha McBride, the youngest daughter of Daniel McBride and Abigail Mead, July 6, 1826.

Vinson had two older brothers, Rudolphus and Samuel Lee. The three inherited some portion being a little clearing amid the

timbers of New York, in the town of Perrysburgh, where his thrifty nature had a chance to develop.

In only eight years times Vinson's clearing grew to a beautiful farm. There was a large frame house in the place of the log cabin. There were fields of wheat, potatoes and corn, patches of hemp and flax. Maple trees were tapped for sugar and syrup, and a fruit orchard had been planted. He had stock, horses and sheep, and a large flock of geese. He raised, killed and cured their meat, and made the soap for the household use. The house-keeper complained of a large sack of money that was always in the way on the bottom shelf of the cupboard.

Vinson worked his farm with all the energy of brain and muscle, for coursing through his veins was the proud blood of the Knight family, and the wants of his wife and children must be well supplied, for he had married one of the most beautiful daughters of Massachusetts, and her dainty hands must never be hardened with heavy work.

Martha was a dainty little woman with fine, delicate features, gray-blue eyes, and dark hair. Her sensitive nature was the soul of honor, and although her hands were never idle. There being no sewing machines, she ran the spinning wheel and plied her needle on the woolen goods and yards and yards of linen made from the wool and flax that grew on their own farm. Her hand work was a wonder of neatness, her seams being so small that one could scarcely tell the right side from the wrong, and her stitches could hardly be found.

Her mind was submissive to deep religious thoughts, for her father, Daniel McBride had been a Campbelite minister, and that religion appealed to all the family as being nearest the plan of salvation as taught by Jesus; but sometimes her father, when returning from church, would say to his family, "There is something lacking. I feel that I have not the authority as the prophets of old. If only I could say to the people, 'Thus sayeth the Lord!'

Though he did not live to receive that divine authority himself, he had called the attention of his family to the lack of it, and prepared their hearts to receive the restoration of that order when it was revealed to Joseph Smith.

Abigail McBride was a widow when the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was organized in 1830, but she and others of the family very soon became members, and we have her patriarchal blessing given by Father Smith, June 8, 1836, as follows:

"Abigail McBride, born in Nine Partners, Montgomery County, New York, on January 29, 1770.

My aged sister, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, and by the power and authority of the world, and by the power and authority of the priesthood, I lay my hands on thy head, and on the heads of thy posterity, confer a blessing.

Thou hast had sorrow and affliction, out of which the Lord is delivering thee. He has established thy faith. Thou hast obeyed the gospel of the Savior. Thy name is written in the Lamb's

Book of Life. Thou art of the lineage of Abraham. If thou holdest on thy way, the time will come when thou, like Job, shall see God, in the flesh, standing upon the earth.

Thou shall see angels, and receive the communications of the Holy Ghost. Thy children shall stand in the Covenant, by the power of God. thou shall be strong and rejoice in thy God. Thou shall not want for the things of this life. give up thyself to God and thou shalt see thy Redeemer, whom thou desirest to know. Thou shalt be a member of the Celestial world.

I seal these blessings upon thy head. I seal thee up to eternal life. Amen & Amen."

Kirtland, Ohio, June 8, 1836

This was at the time of the great religious revival, when all people were taking interest in some religion.

Vinson's people were reverent Christians with lofty ideas of their own, and when it was reported that a boy named Joseph Smith had found a golden book, and saw an angel, and was trying to establish a church, they were inclined to smile and believe him to be a dreamer, or an imposter.

But religion had not yet disturbed the peace and quiet of this family.

Vinson and Martha were contented with their beautiful home and family of four children, viz., Almira, Rizpah, Adaline and James. Vinson's mother also made her home with them.

So it happened that March 21, 1834 became an eventful evening for all of them.

Vinson was resting from his day's labor on a buffalo rug in the corner of the room when two gentlemen came to the door and made themselves known as Joseph Smith and Parley P. Pratt.

Martha had heard of them through her folks and bade them welcome. Vinson's mother had also heard of them, and she hurriedly put on her bonnet, and went to the neighbors, a widow who lived nearby. She told her story hastily and asked to stay all night, for, she said, "I could never sleep under the same roof with those Mormons." The widow listened with sympathy, and remarked that it was a good thing that it happened tonight for she says, "My son is away, and you may have his room." Mother Knight felt so thankful when she retired for the night, that she at least, was wise enough not to stay and listen to the stories of deceitful men, and praying for her dear son and daughter, that they might not be deceived, she soon fell asleep.

Now the widow's son knew that his mother was not expecting him home, and thinking not to disturb her, he unlocked the door with his own key, and without making a light, tiptoed to his own room, slipped off his trousers and quickly turned down blanket lane. The widow was awakened by a scream. She started for the scene, but was almost run over by the retreating form of a bashful young man.

It took the widow to tell just how her son looked, but she could never find words to describe the expression on the proud face of Rizpah Knight, and had we waited for her (Mother Knight) to have told it, this story would never have been written.

Vinson inherited the same proud spirit of his mother, and he like her, felt very indifferent toward the visitors. He knew that Joseph Smith had been the talk and laughing stock of the people, and newspapers for several years, but being a generous man, he could not refuse them entertainment. They were friends of his wife's folks, and she felt annoyed to see her husband too indifferent to arise from the buffalo robe!

The conversation of the evening somewhat changed the opinions of Vinson and his wife, and cause them to look into the truth of Joseph's character, and investigate his religion, and even attend some of the meetings.

They soon found that Joseph Smith had been misrepresented, and they became convinced that he was no false prophet, but an instrument in the hands of the Lord to restore the true gospel of Christ that had been taken from the earth.

Many people in New York and Massachusetts accepted the restored gospel, but Vinson's folks were among those who saw and heard no significance in the teaching of Joseph Smith. Therefore it must have been a trial to them all to see Vinson led off, as it were. It must have grieved the tender feelings of his dear mother, who could not connect the doctrines of Joseph Smith with the teachings of Christ. But the whisperings of the gospels' spirit found an echo in Vinson's heart, and he, with his wife, were baptized in the spring of 1834. New thoughts and a new life seemed to have come to them with glad tidings of great joy for the living and the dead, changing their lives and giving them new desires.

If the new members of the new church were going to Ohio, building the city of Kirtland, and a temple, then New York could no longer hold them, for Vinson always did everything with the same energy that he worked his farm with.

Oh! His farm! 'What could he do with it? How could he leave the place where they had spent so many happy years, and which was making him rich? Dispose of it? Of course, at any price. They were seeking a new home, not a home of worldly wealth and comfort, but a home eternal.

It was about 135 miles down to Kirtland, but they traveled by stage coach and canal boat, so it took five or six days. Maria Crandle, a niece of Martha Knight, and Lydia Golwait, who afterwards became the wife of Newell Knight, (no relation to Vinson) came with them, and lived with them for some time. It was the early part of June, 1835, which was a beautiful time of the year to make the trip. The people were working hard, and the town bid fair to become a beautiful city.

The Saints had tried to settle in Jackson County, Missouri, but had been terribly persecuted, and finally driven from their homes.

Brother Joseph had organized a company called Zion's Camp, who went down to Missouri and tried to make peace with the county and get the people back in their homes, but did not accomplish their purpose.

The Twelve Apostles had been chosen members of Zion's Camp and some of them were now away on their first missions.

The Knight family found peace and quietude in Kirtland, and continued so for two years, probably the most peaceful days in early church history.

They soon received their patriarchal blessings from Father Smith. They read as follows:

"Vinson Knight, born in Norwick, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, March 14 1804.

Dear Brother Knight, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I lay my hands upon thee and seal upon thy head a fathers's blessing, which shall be for thee and thy children, and thy children's children, even to the last generation, and if thou art faithful, thou shall have power to confirm it upon your children, and thus by the authority of the Holy Priesthood, shall the blessings remain to all thy generation. And thou shalt have all the blessings that a father could bestow upon thee, were He even here present; for thou art of the seed of Israel, and an heir to the blessings which were pronounced upon the head of Abraham in the hands of Melchizedek, and by virtue of my calling in the Church, I seal them upon thee.

The Lord loves thee; He has looked upon all thy ways and brought thee thus far that He might make thee useful in His Church.

Thy family shall be blessed and when thy children are afflicted with sickness, thou shalt have power to rebuke the disease, and Satan shall have no power over them, if thou wilt teach them in the ways of righteousness; for thou shalt attend to their instruction in the principles of the gospel, that at the age of eight years, they may be baptized. Thou art a chosen vessel unto the Lord, and if thou art faithful before Him, thou shalt be

sanctified and enjoy a fullness of glory. If thou wilt seek it diligently by lifting a warning voice, thou shalt yet see many of thy friends embracing the truth, bowing to the requirements of the everlasting gospel. Thou shalt open thy mouth and the Lord will fill it with words of wisdom upon the principles or righteousness that thou mayest teach thy fellow men. And thou shalt have success in this ministry, and words of wisdom to thine own astonishment. The heavens will yet be opened before thee, and thou shalt have the ministering of holy angels. Thy faith shall be increased, becoming more and more perfect, until by the power of the Holy Spirit, thou shalt behold within the veil. Thou shalt see many afflictions, calamities and wars in thy days, for great tribulations await the wicked, and many desolations must fall upon them. But thou shalt escape if thou art faithful, and the Lord will give thee many great and unspeakable blessings, and grant thee life as long as life shall be for thy good and His Name's glory. I seal these blessings upon thee in the Name of Jesus Christ, and in His name I seal thee up unto eternal life. Even so, Amen."

"Martha Knight, wife of Vinson Knight, born in Checter, Orange or Washington County, New York, March 17, 1805.

"Sister Knight, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I lay my hands upon thy head and ask for thee a blessing, even a father's blessing. The Lord, thy God, loves thee, and notwithstanding Satan has tempted thee many times and sought thy overthrow, yet thou hast been sustained and upheld by the hand of thy God, because of thy youth and the tenderness of thy mind. Let thy heart now be lifted up that thou mayest receive the desires of the same in blessings.

Thou shalt have all the blessings in common with thy husband, and thy age shalt be as his age, thy comfort as his comfort, and thy joy as his joy. Thou hast had many desires for thy friends, and the Lord wilt hear and answer thy prayers, yea, all the desires of thy heart, for thy friends, shall be given thee, and if thou art faithful to thy covenants, all that thou desirest in righteousness shall be thine, for the Lord delights in blessing the pure upright in heart. The Lord will teach thee wisdom, and thou shalt have understanding to bring up thy family in the ways of truth, but thou must be in subjection to thy husband in all things according to the law of the Lord. Lift up thy heart in gladness for great things await thee. Thou shalt be satisfied in beholding the glories which shall come unto the faithful in these last days, and thy children shall rise up and call thee blessed. With these blessings I seal thee up unto Eternal life. Amen."

Ever M. Green, clerk.

June 24, 1835.

It was Joseph Smith, Sr., who selected the name of Nathaniel for their next baby, and blessed him. (Nathaniel was born December 31, 1835 and died October 31 1836.)

By coming to Kirtland, Vinson Knight had the pleasure of studying Hebrew in the School of the Prophets.

At a council meeting, held January 2, 1836, his name was presented, voted upon and approved for the ordination to the office of an Elder, and immediately his busy life in the Church began. On January 13th, he was appointed counselor to Newell K. Whitney, Bishop at Kirtland. Part of the minutes of this council meeting

read as follows:

"Wed. Jan 13, 1836. A council meeting was held and among those present, beside the Prophet, were the presidents of the Kirtland and Zion Stakes, namely, Joseph Smith Sr., Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, and W.W. Phelps, also the Twelve Apostles, the High Councils of Zion and Kirtland Stakes, the presidency of the Seventies and many of the Elders.

The Council came to order by singing Adam-Ondi-Ahman, pg 277, and opened by prayer by Joseph Smith Sr.

The Prophet made some remarks and spoke of the business of the day, which was to fill some vacancies in the Bishopric and in the High Council.

Elder Vinson Knight was nominated as a counselor in the bishopric at Kirtland, the nomination was made by the Bishop and seconded by the presidency. Elder Knight was then ordained under the hands of Bishop Newell K. Whitney, to fill the place of Hyrum Smith who had been ordained to the presidency of the High Council of Kirtland.

Council adjourned by singing, "Come Let Us Rejoice".

The Prophet, in recording his thoughts of the meeting, writes:

"This has been one of the best days I have ever spent; there has been an entire union of feeling

expressed in all our proceedings this day, and the Spirit of the God of Israel has rested upon us in mighty power."

This whole year had been a time of rejoicing for Joseph, the Prophet and his people. Vinson Knight enjoyed the spirit and worked with the rest for he was a doer of everything that was asked of him and he felt it a pleasure to mingle with those noble men. He had the pleasure of being present at so many of those glorious meetings held during the year of 1836. The people were overjoyed at the completion of their temple, and the saints, the speaking, the prayers, and the songs, so full of the grace and glory of God.

That assembly unanimously sustained Joseph Smith, Jr., as the prophet, seer and revelator. They also sustained the Twelve and all the other leaders of the different organizations.

The Prophet was so delighted with the unity of Spirit that prevailed, and in speaking to the people that day his very soul was full of blessing for them all. In unity there is strength, and he blessed them in the name of Christ, and told them, "So long as they held together in unity that all of their blessings of heaven were theirs. But, if not", he said, "the judgements of God will follow close upon you, until that city of that house which rejects us, will be left desolate."

How dearly did the Prophet love his brethren and sister, especially the Twelve Apostles. What pleasure did he take in the new temple, with his brethren anointing and blessing them and prophesying their future, and they in turn anointing and blessings

and even prophesying to others. Vinson Knight received anointing and blessings at that time and had the power given him to officiate in that ordinance from day to day. Years afterwards, one Brother Tyler, of the Mormon Battalion, told Vinson's daughter that her father was a true prophet, for he had given him his anointing and blessings in the Kirtland Temple and prophesied things to him that he had seen fulfilled all during his life, especially during his trials in the Battalion.

If only that beautiful spirit of unity could have remained. If only the people as a whole would listen to the advice of their leaders; but, no, that dark year of 1837 must follow, and was even casting its shadows before it.

There were a good many causes for the dissatisfaction that was now creeping into the hearts of the people. It would take volumes to tell all that happened, but suffice to say that one of the main causes was the failure of their bank. Although, at this time there were banks failing all over the United States, yet some of the Prophets dearest friends, as well as those more distant, blamed him for the failure of this one.

He had little time to think of it, tho, for in spite of everything, Zion was growing. More people were coming into the church daily. The Apostles, who were in England and other places, were sending emigrants to Kirtland, and Joseph must prepare for them. So it was agreed in general conference that more land should be bought. Bishop Whitney and his counselors issued a proclamation to the saints, entreating them to assist all that they could in this understanding.

The Prophet, leaving Apostle Brigham Young to take care of affairs in Kirtland, went to Far West, September 27, accompanied by Bros. Williams and Knight.

It was a long trip, taking more than a month. They held conferences and looked at all the country around and decided there was a gathering place for the Saints, and returned to Kirtland about October 10.

Oh, what a state of affairs now existed in Kirtland. What had the evil powers been doing? One after another had apostatized until the whole church was in commotion. Apostates had united with non-Mormons and undertook to overthrow the church and denounce Joseph Smith as a fallen prophet. Brigham was true to Joseph, and declared by all the powers of the Holy Ghost that Joseph Smith was still the same true prophet. But he lost control of affairs and was forced to go away and leave them.

Some had placed themselves at the head of a new church, declaring themselves to be in the right, that they owned the whole Church, and even the Temple. During one of the meetings when Joseph was trying to preside, one of those class of men, who was standing in the back of the room, became excited and declared that he would put Joe Smith out of the Temple. The aisles being full of people, he stepped upon the back of the bench and started for the stand, stepping from the back of one bench to another between the heads of the people. Brother Joseph was equal to the occasion and remained calm. Turning to Brother Knight he said, "Brother Vinson, Take this man out." Quick as thought, Vinson caught the man by the legs and tossed him head downward over his shoulders, and carried

him, struggling and pawing, out of the building. Brother Knight's little children always remembered that occasion.

Vinson was only one of the many true friends and faithful saints that loved and believed in Brother Joseph, but there were enough untrue men to form a mob and disturb and threaten and become more vicious, until the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon were forced to take to the saddle and flee for their lives in that cold, bleak January of 1838.

Note. There seems to be some pages lost. The next one available begins:

of seventies consisted of 515.

It had been only eight years since the Church was organized with six members, but now there were more than 12,000 not all from Kirtland. There were converts from Canada and several of the Northern states, and emigrants from England, all headed for Missouri.

No wonder the people along the way were in wonderment, and some of the old settlers in Missouri said, "Here is a chance to sell our blue grass land that is so hard to farm." But most of them said, just as the Jackson County people had said five years before, "Don't let them in here. Those people are Mormons and followers of Joe Smith, the Prophet, who has predicted a terrible war between the North and the South. These people may think to bring it about and turn the slaves loose upon us." So the travelers were misunderstood and coolly received.

It is true that they were strong believers of Joseph Smith's prophecies, for the very foundation of their religion is revelations. They believed God to be the same yesterday, today, and forever. Jesus once said to Peter, "Whom do you say that I, the Son of Man, am?" and Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." And Jesus said unto him. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father, which art in Heaven. Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build My Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

However, the travelers, at this time, were not thinking of Joseph's revelation on war, but the one on the glories of Missouri. The Prophet had said that Zion shall be built upon this continent, the center of which would be in Missouri, and the people well knew that Zion meant beauty and order, where a righteous people would live in peace and union. So, with joyous anticipations, they moved toward Missouri, hoping they might be counted worthy of becoming that happy people.

The Knight family arrived with others at Far West, sometime in June, and was sent directly to a new location, 25 miles north, June 28, 1838. Brother Knight was appointed Bishop, to preside over Adam-Ondi-Ahman. They bought a farm from Adam Black, a Justice of the Peace, and gave part payment for the same.

All the family were delighted with their new home, and the children played at will along the shady banks of the river, where, during the summer, all kinds of fruits and nuts grew in abundance.

Homes were made and in a few weeks even towns were built. The people were happy indeed, for they felt that Missouri was their home, perhaps their Zion.

The new town of Adam-Ondi-Ahman was particularly interesting to them for here it was that Adam once dwelt, said the Prophet, and walked and talked with God. Here it was that he and his decedents had built altars and offered sacrifices, and to the joy of the Saints, there was one of those altars still standing on the bluff above the river, as an emblem of an hallowed spot.

With these sacred thoughts thrilling their hearts, could this people be other than true, loyal citizens, and very industrious. The old settlers, from the very beginning, although some of them had sold their lands, were determined that the Saints should not live among them, with no other excuse than that they had an unpopular religion.

In July of that summer the Missourians refused the saints the right of voting and the trouble was started. The Saints tried to make peace. Joseph Smith led out and offered himself in court to answer false charges hoping to save further trouble, and he tried to reason with some men in authority and get them to agree to at least wait until the Saints had committed an offense before they were punished. It was of no use. The government authorities were as determined as were the old settlers to have things go wrong. And more than that, some of these men in authority were rogues in the extreme, and took pleasure in pointing out to the old settlers what wealth they would gain in the coming land sales. Should the Mormons be driven out, they could get possession of their homes

without paying for them. The law must have an excuse for expulsion; so they formed mobs and aggravated the Saints by driving off their horses, sheep, cattle, hogs, etc., and even burned houses and took prisoners, sending out word that they were torturing them. All the degraded characters in the country soon learned that here was a chance to do their villainy with no fear of punishment. A lot of these characters surprised a little town of saints in Hauns Mill and massacred nearly all of them. They fired on Dewitt and drove the Saints away. In fact all the Saints scattered in every direction began to flee to the larger towns for protection.

The Saints tried for peace in every way, and appealed to the government for help, but were told that the quarrel was between them and the mob, and they could settle it among themselves. That was alright; if the Saints could only feel free to defend themselves, it would be a pleasure. One, Colonel Wright (a Mormon) who held a commission into the 54th Regiment, soon had a force of volunteers determined to disperse the mob or die in the attempt.

The mob was badly beaten. Terribly enraged, and seeing that they could not succeed by force, they now resorted to strategy. They went home and emptied their log cabins, and set fire to them, sending reports to the authorities of the States that the Mormons were burning and destroying all before them. This caused Governor Boggs to call out a mob-militia and give the Saints just ten days to leave the state, while the Saints begged to remain in Far West at least until spring.

Now Bishop Knight had no time to lose, just ten days, and not half enough teams left to move the people of his ward. They got

encouragement that they might stay in Far West until spring and a few men might go back and forth for four weeks to gather the remains of their crops. Bishop Knight was forced to work in disguise, as everyone who appeared to be a leader was taken by a mob.

It had been hard for Vinson's wife to see their crops destroyed and their cows driven off to feed a greedy mob, while their own family went hungry, but now to be forced to leave a comfortable home, with her little children, right in the beginning of winter, and live, she knew not where. But her faith in God's care never faltered. Gathering up a few clothes and bedding, she was ready to go.

Her husband was on the road helping others, but he sent Brother Fisk after them, and the children ever remembered the mud and the rain and the ride of 25 miles under a quilt. Adaline was the first to recognize her father in disguise.

It was October, and the miserable storms of a long dreary winter had set in earlier than usual. The Saints were crowding into Far West from every direction, under any shelter they could find. They had been driven and frightened from their homes without sufficient clothing for winter, and there were not enough provisions in Far West to feed the multitude. Some of them were already sick and dying from exposure.

The news of the Hauns Mill Massacre added terror to the occasion. The Prophet's kind words and good advice, while he exerted every effort to relieve their suffering, seemed to be their only comfort.

In this sad condition they were forced to face the most appalling event of their experiences. Let us take the account of it from the pen of one who was there.

In Heber C. Kimball's journal, he writes:

"On October 30, we discovered several thousand of the mob coming to Far West under pretense of being government troops. They passed through our corn and wheat fields, making complete desolation of everything in their way.

Brother Brigham Young and I were appointed captain of fifty men in a hurry, and commanded to take our position right in the thoroughfare on which the mob were seen advancing to the city, momentarily anticipating the awful tragedy of a blood massacre. Brother Joseph was with us, giving council. The word came that Joseph Smith and several others were to be given up, otherwise the mob would massacre every man, woman, and child.

They had until morning to decide to die or give up innocent men to the abuse of lawless men. Think of the suspense of that awful night; men pale as death, women, frantic, knowing full well they were helpless in the hands of rascals, men who cared not for law nor order. Every man and woman in the city had time enough during the dark hours of that sleepless night to decide in their own hearts whether they could remain true to the faith or not. They, who were not deep rooted in their faith, were shaken off as loose leaves, for they saw an escape. Why stay with a church that all HELL was arrayed against? Why count him a Prophet now? Is not this the end of his work. Just turn him over to the mob and save their own lives!

Brother Vinson, what thinkest thou? Thy dear mother's eyes are watching you from a distance, her arms seem to reach out to you, your brothers can remind you that you have seen only trials since you left your home in Perrysburge. Why not return with your family to the peace and wealth and comfort of that former home? Nay, Vinson, thou art true blue. Thy faith and integrity in the cause of Christ is too great to be shaken by trails. Thou hast taken upon thyself the name of Christ and are willing to bear His cross. He, like his fellows, would defend the life of their leaders. However someone has fallen, for the day has dawned, and another Judas has shown the weakness of his faith.

The Prophet, with many others, are betrayed into the mob, but they are willing prisoners, ready to suffer whatever comes to save the city.

Save the city? Nothing will save the city. Heber C. Kimball Writes:

"On November 7, the mob professing to be the regular militia of the State of Missouri, numbering about 7,000 surrounded Far West. Our men were all taken prisoners and then marched a short distance into a hollow, where Col. Lucas had previously pointed his cannon in full range, so that if we failed to lay down our arms he could easily sweep us into eternity, which was his design. We were formed into a hollow square and commanded by Col. Lucas to ground arms and deliver up our weapons of war, although they were private property. After being marched back a short distance on the public square, we were then formed into a hollow square near the house of widow Beeman.

The mob commenced plundering the citizens of their bedding, money, wearing apparel, and every thing of value they could find to lay their hands upon. Much property was destroyed by burning of houses, logs, rails, corn cribs, boards, etc., and all this without regards to owners or asking leave of anyone. In the meantime, men were abused, and women insulted and treated with violence by the troops, while the men were kept prisoners. We were compelled at the points of bayonets to sign a deed of trust for the purpose of making our individual property liable, as they said, to pay all the debts of persons belonging to the church, and also all damages the old inhabitants of Davis County might have sustained in consequence of the difficulties in that county.

When we walked up to sign the deed of trust, to pay those assassins for murdering our brethren and sisters and their children, ravishing some of our sisters to death, robbing us of our lands and possessions and all we had on earth, and other such services, they expected to see us cast down and sorrowful. But I testify as an eye witness, that the brethren rejoiced and praised the Lord and kicked up their heels and thanked God, taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods.

There were judges, magistrates and Methodist, Presbyterian, Campbellite and other sectarian priests, who stood by and saw all this going on, exulting over us, and it seemed to make them more angry, that we bore our misfortunes cheerfully. Judge Cameron said with an oath, 'See those creatures laugh and kick up their heels! They are whipped but not conquered.'."

Although they had permission from the State Government to remain in Far West until spring, they were ready to leave in the midst of winter, and God knows only where. God did know where. His Spirit gave them comfort, while He guided them onward. He softened the hearts of the people in Quincy, Ill., and many other places, where the Saints found shelter until spring.

The Knight family found refuge with some friends in Pike Co., Mo., where a baby boy was born to them. They named him Rudolpus Elderkin.

Heaven bless those unconquered heroes, who had courage to cling to their religion, with so many disappointments.

On leaving Missouri, they had not given up the hope of building up a branch of Zion somewhere. There did not blame the old settlers altogether, but partially themselves. Perhaps God had allowed them to be sent away from Missouri for the present.

There were many classes of people among them who, through their hearts, were converted. Time could only bend their natures to be governed by a United Order. Oh time! How Long art thou!

The recent happenings in Missouri only prove how human nature will violate law and order. George Washington and others were inspired to form a glorious Constitution, with religious freedom for its standard. Every one became converted to that kind of government, yet here we find hundreds of people more than seventy years afterwards, violating these laws by robbing and driving and murdering their fellow citizens because of their religious beliefs. The Saints still have the hope that time will straighten the ruffles of nature and teach each and all to live by higher laws.

Then will the people of Missouri see their mistakes and then will the Saints return and build up the Center Stakes of Zion.

The spring of 1839 found the Saints gathering together again, still hopeful, though weakened in health. Many of their numbers had deserted the cause and returned to their former homes, but their places were more than filled by new members. In spite of the persecution, their numbers grew rapidly and a home for a city must be found for the exiled Saints.

Brother Joseph, who had been in Missouri on false charges, was with them again. He heard of a chance to get land in Illinois, and he, with Alason Ripley and Vinson Knight, were chosen as a committee to go to Illinois and select the new town site. They decided on Commerce, Hancock Co. and bought 135 acres from Hugh White, for which they agreed to pay \$5,000, also a large farm lying west of the White purchase, of Dr. Isaac Gallay for \$9,000.

Before leaving for Quincy, they held a conference on May 4, in the Presbyterian camp grounds near Quincy.

Brother Knight had been bishop pro-tem since his appointment at Adam-Ondi-Ahman until this conference when he was appointed bishop in reality, and after that the purchase of many acres of land for the Church was entrusted to him and he helped to lay out several townsites.

The Saints soon moved to the new location, but the country was swampy and the air full of malaria, and in their weakened state they were ready victims for disease. There was sickness in every camp, thus the faith of the people was tested in another extreme. As the hot summer months passed by, they worked and prayed, were

blessed and healed. They drained the lands which improved the climate and were ready in the fall for another spiritual feast at another conference time. Bishops were appointed for three wards, Newell K. Whitney for the Middle Ward, Edward Partridge for the Upper Ward, and Vinson Knight for the Lower Ward.

The Saints grow so rapidly and worked so industriously that in only two or three years, the world began to hear of a remarkable city called Nauvoo. It was located on the east bank of the Mississippi River on the incline of a hill that gradually sloped to the water's edge. Just here the river was a mile wide and swept around the city in a half circle.

The city was remarkable because of its rapid growth, having 9,000 inhabitants, whose many virtues were noticed by foreigners. One visitor wrote to his friend as follows, having found conditions opposite to what he had expected: "sought in vain for anything that bore the mark of immorality. I could see no loungers on the streets, or any drunkards about the taverns. I heard not an oath in the place and saw not a gloomy countenance, all were cheerful, polite and industrious."

Brother Knight, like other willing workers, was engaged in all kinds of business affairs for the Church and the city. He was elected a member of the first city council in February, 1841. He was a member of many committees and an instructor of other communities. When Brother Joseph was away, it was Vinson who would look after look after the widows and the orphans. Brother Knight, with other bishops organized the Lesser Priesthood on March 21, 1842.

On Monday June 7, 1841, he with many others accompanied Brother Joseph to Missouri for a trial on a false charge.

Vinson Knight was introduced into the Lodge of Masons by Joseph Smith himself, April 13, 1842, and he was a member of the Nauvoo Agriculture Manufacturing Association. He was one of the Prophet's life guards on the Nauvoo Legion.

Thus Vinson's time and talents were spent for the church, for his family and for his country. Nor was he an exception. As a rule the men and women worked the same. Trials persecution, and poverty had driven selfishness from their hearts, refined their thoughts and actions, and united them in brotherly and sisterly love. Thus it was easy to build a famous city, that began so soon to loom up and cast a light over the sea of humanity that would attract attention.

Such a people had no need to be concerned over the loss of Missouri, for if they continued in righteousness they might build a Zion wherever they went. The people were not sorrowful or sad in their natures, but cheerful and pleasure loving, and indulged in all kinds of wholesome sports, which were usually begun with singing and prayer. Brother Joseph taught them to pray without ceasing or always have a prayer in their hearts.

He was once overcome with the spirit of revelation while walking with his brethren upon the street. His brother Hyrum, and Vinson Knight carried him quietly through the school room to his office above. They thought perhaps he was conversing with angels, as he had done many times before, and Vinson prayed in his heart that a comforting word might come to him from the Lord through

Brother Joseph, that he might know the Lord's will concerning himself. To his great delight, when the revelation was written, Vinson's prayer had been answered. It was a long revelation and is recorded in the 124th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, verses 73 to 76 incl. It gives instructions to the Prophet about building the Nauvoo House, and there is also advice and comfort to many people. The words directly to Vinson, read as follows:

"And there are others also who wish to know my will concerning them, for they have asked it at my hands.

"Therefore, I say unto you concerning my servant Vinson Knight, if he will do my will let him put stock into that house for himself, and for his generation after him, from generation to generation.

"And let him lift up his voice long and loud, in the midst of the people, to plead the cause of the poor and the needy; and let him not fail, neither let his heart faint; and I will accept of his offerings, for they shall not be unto me as the offerings of Cain, for he shall be mine, saith the Lord.

"Let the family rejoice and turn away their hearts from affliction; for I have chosen him and anointed him, and he shall be honored in the midst of his house, for I will forgive all his sins, saith the Lord, Amen."

And again in the same revelation, he is called to the office of Presiding Bishop. The 141st verse reads: "And again I say unto you, I give unto you Vinson Knight, Samuel H. Smith, and Shadrach Roundy, if he will receive it, to preside over the bishopric; a knowledge of said bishopric is given unto you in the book of

Doctrine and Covenants.

The magnanimity of these glorious words causes one to pause in wonderment. We can hardly realize without thinking for a moment that the Lord Himself, the great Creator of the Universe has actually spoken to our dear grandfather in this revelation, and has tenderly given him words of comfort and encouragement. To supply the wants of the poor and the needy in those terrible years of poverty and persecution, must have hung heavily upon grandfather's shoulders. "Let him not fail, neither let his heart faint and I will accept of his offerings of Cain, for he shall be mine, saith the Lord."

Shall we lay aside the pen and call this little sketch finished. With these precious words they seem to be the answer to his heart's desire. He was one with the Lord. What satisfaction this must have been, what a glorious reward for the struggle of life.

Yes, we must close, for there is little left to write. But a few more months of work and he became ill and was called to the Great Beyond, and it is no use to question his sad and untimely death.

Dear Grandfather, as thy descendants, and knowing what we have gained through the gospel, which thou so nobly defended, and to which thou remain true to the end of thy mortal life, under such terrible persecutions, we laud thy memory, and pause to read once more the words of that wonderful blessing from the Lord:

"Let his family rejoice and turn away their hearts from affliction, for I have chosen him and anointed him, and he shall be

honored in the midst of his house, for I will forgive all his sins,
saith the Lord."

Oh would that we could
Freaks of nature control,
To graft into our hearts
Some of thy noble soul.