

The Sterling M. McMurrin Connection

Preface

By Robert N. Reynolds

In the early 1960s, while doing graduate work at the University of Utah, I attended two seminars conducted by Dr. Sterling M. McMurrin, Professor of Philosophy. I did so at the encouragement of my mother who related to me that Dr. McMurrin had been a close personal friend of my grandfather, Newel K. Young. One of my objects in attending the seminars was to make acquaintance with McMurrin -- a family thing to do! I did not succeed, however, as the level of philosophical discussion at the seminars was so far over my head that I felt intimidated to let it be known who I was. I have regretted my timidity ever since.

Later, when I learned that my cousin Evelyn Jimerson had succeeded in obtaining a personal tape from McMurrin on his remembrances of grandfather Newel K. Young, I was eager to learn what he said. Carefully, I studied Evie's written construction that followed. Upon its reading I felt a wide range of emotions from enlightened and amused to chagrin, and disappointment.



Dr. Sterling M. McMurrin

Because the document's source was one so prominent, and a known personal acquaintance of Newel K. Young, I believe, for the sake of objectivity it cannot be overlooked. I express gratitude for Evie's work and reconstruction, though painful at times to endure. In many of our communications I have experienced her integrity and scholarship as being of the highest order, and her sensitivity to other human beings far exceeding most of the people I have met in this life. The contents of my courtesy copy of her McMurrin composition are presented herewith in their complete form.

The document created was converted from the Jimerson typescript to PDF via OCR, without omission, November 2010. Footnotes, and a few entries couched in parenthesis and italics, were added to clarify some obscure and "less than flattering" points, and are intended only to accomplish a fair and balanced perspective. In light of the fact that Newel K's teaching career spanned over 43 years and that McMurrin's acquaintance took seed in only the last four of these is cause enough

to apply some caution in accepting his conclusions as the closed book on what was truly a faithful, creative and productive life of serving others.

A little background summary on McMurrin may be helpful: Dr. L. Jackson Newell, professor of higher education and former dean of Liberal Education at the University of Utah, probably knew him best. Many years of first hand data from personal conversations and interviews is presented in the publication, "Matters of Conscience: Conversations With Sterling M. McMurrin on Philosophy, Education, and Religion by Sterling M. McMurrin and L. Jackson Newell," December 1996. "Among the qualities that characterized McMurrin's life and mind," explains Newell in the preface, "perhaps the most notable, is the freedom with which he has spoken his views on both the sacred and the profane.

McMurrin described himself as a "loyal heretic:" he openly expressed his disbelief in many fundamental doctrines of Mormonism. His saving grace in being outspoken against so many LDS cherished beliefs was "his lack of rancor." This ability certainly increased his influence and respect.

Blake Ostler, a Salt Lake City attorney who has published widely in the philosophy of religion and a personal friend of McMurrin, has been widely quoted as saying that "McMurrin never intended to do injury or disbelief. He always tried to put the church in a good light." And finally, McMurrin said, "The church needs to live or die on the quality of the moral life it can produce in its people, and there it looks very, very good."



Tina and Newel K. Young
in late 1930s.

This composition was constructed by Evelyn Francis Young Jimerson from memories recorded on a cassette tape by Dr. Sterling M. McMurrin in response to her request for information concerning her grandfather Newel Knight Young. The tape was recorded on September 10, 1994, and the composition was completed on October 16, 1994.

Sterling M. McMurrin Remembers Newel K. Young¹
September 10, 1994

I am making this tape of my recollections of Newel K. Young for his granddaughter, Evelyn Young Jimerson, of Salt Lake City, who is doing a biography of him.

I recall that Newel K. was rough hewn in his appearance and was sort of bent over, especially in his late years. We always thought of him as being kind of a facsimile of an Old Testament prophet. He spoke with a good deal of assurance and authority, and had a prophetic way about him. He was a person of obvious wisdom, and had a kind of charisma which attracted people to him. People saw in him an example of sincerity and courage.

It was in the fall of 1937 that I first heard of Newel K. Young. I had received a Master's Degree in Philosophy at the University of Utah and had been appointed to teach seminary for the LDS Church in Richfield, Utah. I believe the first knowledge I ever had of him came from conversations with Angus M. Maughan, the principal of Richfield High School, who held him in very high esteem. I think Newel K. had been a seminary teacher at Richfield, sometime earlier and that is why Maughan knew a good deal about him. He told me, for instance, that Newel K. (who was himself hard pressed for money because he had a large family, large obligations, and was working for a very modest salary for the church as a seminary teacher) had once arranged to have a pair of shoes purchased for a student who obviously was in bad straits and needed shoes. Angus Maughan gave me this as an example, among others, of Newel K's remarkable generosity and high quality of character. He described him as something of an authentic saint.

At that time Newel K. was himself a seminary teacher in some location south of Richfield. He may have been located at Circleville, or Panguitch, or Kanab, I

1 Sterling M. McMurrin was 80 years old in 1994 when he recorded his tape referenced here. He died in 1996.

don't remember exactly where. He was well known to M. W. Smith, principal of the Richfield seminary, with whom I worked. One day Newel K. called on me at the Richfield seminary, perhaps in the fall of 1937, or sometime during the winter of 1937-38, or sometime during the winter of 1937-38, or conceivably in the very early spring of 1938.² At any rate, we got acquainted and we spent quite a bit of time together talking about matters pertaining to religion and the church and the work of the church. Newel K. was a person who was in a sense self educated, though he had a good deal of formal schooling. He had two passions where he was extremely well informed; one was Abraham Lincoln (though I personally didn't discuss Lincoln very much with him), and the other was Jesus and the New Testament. He had become something of a competent New Testament scholar and was known for his abilities in this field, certainly among the people in the church education system.

I will say that from our first meeting, Newel K. and I formed a bond of friendship which was strengthened over the years. I had a very real affection for him as a person as well as admiration for him for not only his competence, but even more for his independence of mind and his remarkable courage, and the stand which he was able and willing to take on matters of moral principle.

One of the earliest conversations that I had with him was while we were still in Richfield, and had to do with the so called "Parallel" that B. H. Roberts wrote, which was an essay of something like sixteen or eighteen pages describing the similarities of the Book of Mormon and Ethan Smith's "View of the Hebrew's," which was published in the very early part of the last century, just a very few years before the Book of Mormon. I had never heard of the Parallel until Newel K. told me about it and showed me a copy, which I read with a great deal of interest. It is very well known now, and has been published at least a couple of times, but at that time it was held in considerable secrecy. Newel K. told me that he would see that I got a copy, which he laboriously picked out for me on his typewriter, I think by the finger method of one note at a time. I still have this copy. He told me that he received it from Elsie Talmage Brandley (I think that's the name -- her name does appear somewhere on the copy), who was a secretary, or had been a secretary, of B. H. Roberts.³ By this time, of course, Roberts was

2 During the 1937-1938 school year Newel was assigned as Teacher, Box Elder LDS Seminary, Brigham City, Utah.

3 See as follows:

long gone. He died in 1933 when I was a student at the University.

Newel K. had great admiration for B. H. Roberts, as one might expect. He told me that he called on Roberts once in his Salt Lake office to tell him how much he and others appreciated the great courage he had shown in his battles in the Church. He said Roberts told him, "All you and the others know anything about are simply the skirmishes. The battles have taken place in secrecy behind eight foot walls of granite." Meaning, of course, that they had taken place in the Temple.

Parallels between View of the Hebrews and the Book of Mormon

It has been argued that there are significant parallels between View of the Hebrews and the Book of Mormon. In 1922 B.H. Roberts (1857–1933), a prominent LDS apologist and historian, was asked to answer a non-believer's five critical questions by LDS Apostle James E. Talmage. It is unclear when Roberts first learned of the View of the Hebrews or what motivated him to make the comparison, but he produced a confidential report that summarized eighteen points of similarity between the two works.

In a letter to LDS Church president Heber J. Grant and other church officials, Roberts urged "all the brethren herein addressed becoming familiar with these Book of Mormon problems, and finding the answer for them, as it is a matter that will concern the faith of the Youth of the Church now as also in the future, as well as such casual inquirers as may come to us from the outside world." Roberts' list of parallels included:

- * extensive quotation from the prophecies of Isaiah in the Old Testament
- * the Israelite origin of the American Indian
- * the future gathering of Israel and restoration of the Ten Lost Tribes
- * the peopling of the New World from the Old via a long journey northward which encountered "seas" of "many waters"
- * a religious motive for the migration
- * the division of the migrants into civilized and uncivilized groups with long wars between them and the eventual destruction of the civilized by the uncivilized
- * the assumption that all native peoples were descended from Israelites and their languages from Hebrew
- * the burial of a "lost book" with "yellow leaves"
- * the description of extensive military fortifications with military observatories or "watch towers" overlooking them
- * a change from monarchy to republican forms of government
- * the preaching of the gospel in ancient America.

Roberts continued to affirm his faith in the divine origins of the Book of Mormon until his death in 1933, but as Terry Givens has written, "a lively debate has emerged over whether his personal conviction really remained intact in the aftermath of his academic investigations."

Fawn Brodie, the first important historian to write a non-hagiographic biography of Joseph Smith, believed that Joseph Smith's theory of the Hebraic origin of the American Indians came "chiefly" from

I had been in Richfield one year, and had become well acquainted with Newel K. by the time Natalie and I were married in June of 1938. That summer the Church Department of Education had arranged a summer school session of six weeks, to be held at the Aspen Grove campus on the east side of Timpanogas. The session was under the leadership of Franklin L. West, who was the Church Commissioner of Education and who had been dean of the faculty and professor of physics at Utah Agricultural College, and also of M. Lynn Bennion, who was the head of the seminary system, and would later become Superintendent of Schools of Salt Lake City. Lynn, especially, was a very close friend, advocate, and defender of Newel K. Young. At any rate, for six weeks of that summer the seminary teachers and teachers of religion at the BYU, and teachers and directors in the Church's institutes, were all to be there, where they could take courses for BYU credit, which were given on the six week basis. Newel K. was scheduled to be there, and of course he came; it was really a requirement for all seminary teachers. As Natalie and I were in summer school at the University of Southern California, we arranged to be a week late due to obligations at USC. When we finally arrived on a Sunday morning, Newel K. was already there, and when he got hold of us he said that he had saved a spot for us to pitch our tent. He had arrived early and picked out an excellent place, pitched his tent, and saved a spot right next to him for ours. He was alone, his wife was not with him. For the next five weeks we were close neighbors and became very intimately involved with one another in expressing our ideas. There was a real bond between us.

Every evening we had a big campfire, and six or seven of the more liberal minded, teachers in the institutes and seminaries would join us. Newel K. attracted liberals around him (I call them liberals for want of a better term), like, as one of my teachers, Professor Flewelling used to say, "A picnic ham would attract yellow jackets." So, every night there was this group that would show up at our campfire and we would have very pleasant conversations way into the night, and they would crowd around Newel K. Most of them were very devout people, as far

View of the Hebrews. "It may never be proved that Joseph saw View of the Hebrews before writing the Book of Mormon," wrote Brodie in 1945, "but the striking parallelisms between the two books hardly leave a case for mere coincidence." On the other hand, Mormon apologists argue that the parallels between the works are weak, over-emphasized, or non-existent.

Modern publication

Brigham Young University published a modern edition of the book in 1996.

Source: From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/View_of_the_Hebrews And more on this subject.

as religion was concerned, completely loyal to the church, but people who shared liberal attitudes toward the church, its actions and its teachings. Lynn Bennion dropped by a time or two, but Lynn, of course, had to take care of a lot of things. He and Dr. West, the Commissioner, were living in cabins, not tents, and were teaching courses which we could take for B.Y.U. credit.

On Sundays of this session they had General Authorities as speakers. In addition to the General Authorities, I was one of the speakers at the service; but two of them, whose sermons I well remember, were John A. Widtsoe and J. Reuben Clark. It was then that J. Reuben Clark made a very famous address; I think he read all of it, but at least he read, most of it; It was printed in the Improvement Era and may have been printed also in the Deseret News. It showed up in the Improvement Era as quite a famous statement because in it he really laid down the law about believing one hundred percent of the church doctrine; that there were no exceptions to be allowed; that if there was: anyone in the employ of the church as a religion teacher -- and these were all religion teachers present -- who didn't believe the church doctrine one hundred percent, he should get out now rather than wait to be kicked out. Those aren't his exact words, of course, but nevertheless, that was the whole idea. So after this session that evening, there was a big confab around the campfire, and quite a number of people showed up. In the course of the evening Newel K. said, "I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm going over right now to see Lynn -- he was referring to Lynn Bennion, the seminary boss -- and I'm going to resign!" When he returned he told us that he had resigned.

Now this is quite interesting because Lynn has told me on any number of occasions that whenever Newel K. got upset with things like that, he would come in and resign. And of course, Lynn wouldn't accept his resignation. In the latter part of the forties, when Lynn took the position of Superintendent of Schools of Salt Lake and was no longer to be head of the seminaries, he said he called Newel K. into his office and told him, "Now Newel, I am leaving this job and there will be somebody else appointed to take my place, and you're not to resign anymore because the next time you resign, they'll accept your resignation. You're not to resign anymore!"⁴

4 This is a great story and one Newel K. would enjoy. The only problem with it is that Newel retired from teaching on July 1, 1942 and M. Lynn Bennion did not leave his Seminary position to become Superintendent of Salt Lake City Schools until 1945.
<http://www.archives.state.ut.us/research/agencyhistories/1089.html>

In the second year of our marriage, which was the third year of my teaching in the seminary system, Natalie and I were assigned to Montpelier, Idaho. This put us closer to Newel K., who was then teaching at the Logan seminary, and we would call on him when we passed through Logan on our way between Montpelier and Salt Lake. We also attended regional seminary institute conferences together. One of these meetings was held in Logan, and another in Blackfoot, Idaho. I'm quite sure that we had association with him at the Blackfoot affair, but at the Logan affair he invited Natalie and me to stay with them at his home along with our mutual friend, Heber Snell. Being in the same region, we were all brought together. Heber Snell was at that time head of the Institute of Religion at the college in Pocatello, Idaho, and was the best bible scholar the Church had. I don't remember whether Snell's wife was with him at that time, but Natalie was with me, and we all three, or four, whichever it was, stayed with Newel K. and his first wife in their Logan home, which was a pretty good sized house. We had wonderful conversations.

One of the sessions of the Logan conference was to be a morning session, and I think it was on a Saturday. Anyway, it was to be held at the Logan Temple just for those involved in the conference which was quite a large number. Well, Natalie and I were interested in seeing the inside of the Logan Temple, partly because we had been married in the Salt Lake Temple, and also because we had been in the Manti Temple for a session of this kind when we were in Richfield the previous year. Snell was willing to go, but Newel K. had scruples. He wasn't going to go to the temple -- and he made that very clear to us. So the next morning after breakfast, Natalie and Heber Snell and I went to the temple, and Newel K. stayed away. He had made it clear to Lynn that he did not accept the Temple on any kind of an orthodox basis, and he simply wasn't going to attend. I greatly admired his independence of mind and his courage in things of this kind.⁵

5 Newel had some issues about temple ordinance work since there was diffusivity through the years within the church over his plural marriage to Geneva Cooley which took place in Colonia Juarez, Mexico on 19 November 1900 solemnized by Patriarch Alexander F. MacDonald who had been authorized by President Joseph F. Smith (http://www.lds.org/mormon.com/joseph_f_smith.shtml). The IGI files in the church list Geneva's endowment date as 27 November 1914 via New Family Search. For many years the only information the church would divulge over the sealing of Geneva to Newel K. was that the ordinance was "cleared" meaning that someone in the church had requested its completion but that it was still in process. Finally, a recognized proxy sealing was performed and recorded on 4 March 2006 in the Spokane Washington Temple (see NFS). It is fair to say that there could have been a number of other reasons why Newel K. chose not to attend the temple with Snell and McMurrin on that Saturday. If Newel K. had temple issues other than those recorded here he never made them known in a lasting way.

Newel K. told us that in matters of his beliefs he was a kind of late bloomer, and that in his early years he simply believed everything that the Church taught. By the time Natalie and I got acquainted with him, of course, he was a highly intelligent,⁶ aggressive critic of the church and (some of) its teachings (most notably the issue of blacks and the priesthood). He was a genuine liberal in the social and political sense, as well as in religion.⁷ He told me about some political activities in which he had been involved in earlier years, including a time when, with the approval and support of the church, he ran for sheriff of Salt Lake County.⁸

A very interesting thing occurred during the academic year of 1938-39, when Natalie and I sat with Newel K. during a session of the Logan conference which was held in the Logan seminary building. It was in a small auditorium type room which had a raised stage -- on the stage were Dr. Frank West the Commissioner of Education, Lynn Bennion, and I think Brother Passey, the principal of the Logan seminary, along with one or two others. One of these men was a burly looking character, and I don't remember whether he offered a prayer or why he was up there, but he was a seminary teacher in one of the towns north of Logan. I whispered to Newel K. asking him who this man was. Newel K. in those days was somewhat deaf and he would speak in a loud voice, and his answer was heard by virtually everybody around us: "That is Brother So-and So, who teaches seminary at Somewhere or Other up north (I have forgotten his name and where he was from)." A moment later he said, calling out the name of this man, "So-and-So takes the role of Lucifer in the Logan Temple." Then two or three moments later, and again quite loud, he said, "They tell me that he is a dead ringer for the part!"

That has always stuck with me as a most humorous thing because he said it so loud and so many people could hear what was going on. As a matter of fact, I

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- 6 Newel K. Young probably was always "highly intelligent"! His earliest writings are evidence of that. Is Intelligence (IQ) inherent or learned?
- 7 Ideological labels -- What do they mean today? The ones such as "liberal" and "conservative" used so freely today (2010) were once more useful; now they have so many contradictory meanings that no label really fits anybody. Newel K. gave the middle name Wilson to his son Guy, born in 1917, because of his respect for the liberal president Woodrow Wilson, but the term today does not come close to what it meant in those World War I days. McMurrin's label of "genuine liberal" is misleading in that it does not mean the same today. Newel K. never even heard the common liberal phrases born in the 1960s and that are so freely thrown around today and we simply do not know what his thinking and positions would be on hot button issues that contradict his own written and published works.
- 8 No one in the family that I have talked with ever heard that one.

thought this guy looked very much like the devil and have no doubt that he was a dead ringer for the part.

During that same academic year, 1938-39, when Natalie and I were in Montpelier, I arranged an evening lecture series which was remarkably successful. The nicest ward chapel in town was opened to me for these lectures. I had several people, all of whom were brought in from the outside except one, and that was a young protestant minister, who had just come to Montpelier. His was, I must say, the worst lecture of the whole bunch. We had a number of lecturers, including one of my teachers from the University of London, Dr. Thomas Greenwood, who was then in the region. Another was Heber. C. Snell, who was essentially an Old Testament scholar, and who did a beautiful job. Newel K. came from Logan to give a talk on the life and teachings of Jesus. Natalie and I went to Logan and got him, and then took him home the next day. The thing was held on weekday nights, but still attracted a great deal of attention, and the chapel was always full.

I had heard Newel K. speak a time or two at ward sacrament meetings. He tended to be quite emotional in expressing his convictions, especially in speaking to a group, as for instance in church. Anyway, at the time of these lectures, Natalie's sister was visiting us, and she had a little kid named Dell. I think he was only about four years old. We had all had dinner together, at which time Newel K. and Dell had got more or less, acquainted. Well, Newel K. was delivering his lecture in his prophetic, charismatic stance, and right at a climactic point where had warmed up to a high emotional state and had everyone in the congregation about ready to burst into tears, this damn little kid, Dell, spoke up so loud that everybody heard him, and asked, "Mama, what's the matter with that guy?" At that, Newel K. broke down and laughed, and the audience laughed too. Newel said, "That's right, Dell, it's a good thing for you to stop me when I'm getting so warmed up like this."

Newel K. had a fine sense of humor. He could laugh at himself and he enjoyed life very much. He took the Church with a sense of humor too, a kind of humor that seems now to have pretty well gone out of the Church. He could also put on a marvelous display of sincere commitment.

I should mention another rather interesting thing about Newel K. As I said, liberals in the education system used to crowd around him, and he was the center of a great deal of intellectual activity. I'll never forget when I received a letter from him that was sent out to several of his friends when he was seminary teacher in Logan. It was in connection with the October conference, and he wrote, "Now, during the morning session of the conference, I will be at my usual location at the

west gate of Temple Square. Well, when the time came, I sauntered over to the west gate, and while conference was going on inside the Tabernacle, Newel K. Young was holding forth with his liberal friends at the West gate. They didn't bother to go inside. They had their conference right there with him at the center!

I recall something else which happened at that conference. Newel K. was an avid reader and follower of the liberal protestant preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick, of the Riverside Church of New York, who wrote a good deal of good stuff on the Bible. Fosdick in those days was on the radio at, I think, two o'clock in the afternoon on Sundays. Newel K. had ridden down with Brother Passey, the principal of the Logan Seminary who was very nice and congenial in his relationship with him, a thing Newel K. appreciated very much. Newel had this to tell me about his plans for that afternoon:

"Well now, I'm here with Brother Passey. He has to go back to Logan before the second session of the conference begins at two o'clock. I'm to meet him at one forty-five. He has a radio in his car. I'm sure as we drive back, he's going to want to turn the conference session on KSL, but I'm going to tell him, 'Now, Brother Passey, at two o'clock every Sunday afternoon, I listen to Harry Emerson Fosdick. I hope you're willing to set the dial for him and not for conference!'"

I'm sure that he made that speech to Brother Passey, and I'm sure Brother Passey put Fosdick on the radio instead of conference. Passey deferred to Newel K. in matters like this. I think Newel K. liked him a great deal. He was a very decent person.

Another item of some interest, I think, concerns the book, "No Man Knows My History," by Fawn McKay Brodie, which came out in the late forties. Newel K. told me that he called up Fawn Brodie's mother on the telephone, to, in a sense, commiserate with her in the matter of her daughter's having been excommunicated from the Church because of the writing of this book. He said that Mrs. McKay broke down in tears as they talked and expressed great appreciation for his sentiments and attitude. She said that President McKay, who was then in the First Presidency, and who was her brother-in-law -- her husband was President McKay's brother -- was responsible for the excommunication. I mention this because it's an indication of the kinds of attitudes Newel K. had -- that he would call this woman, whom he felt probably was somewhat decimated -- as she was -- by her daughter's excommunication, and give her an expression of sympathy.

It was well known that Newel K. Young was a polygamist, and we were

acquainted with both of his wives. He lived with the first wife (Tina) in Logan when he was a seminary teacher there. Then after her passing, when he was retired, he lived with his second wife (Geneva) in Salt Lake City, and we had quite a bit of association with her. He had married her in Mexico in 1904 or 1905, whichever it was, in the last wave of plural marriages.⁹ Both of his wives were very quiet women, tending to defer to him in conversations, while he was anything but quiet. Newel K. was always ready to talk and express his views, and did so very eloquently and forcefully.

I perhaps should here relate his account to Natalie and me of his entering into plural marriage in Mexico where he lived in the LDS colonies. In the first place, he told us that before he was married at all, in one of the colonies -- I don't remember just which colony it was -- he was appointed to be marriage counselor to the plural wives who would come to him for advice and consolation in connection with their marriage problems. This somewhat amused him, in view of the fact that he hadn't yet been married at all. I think he was eighteen or nineteen years old at the time, anyway, he was under twenty.

At any rate, I presume it was sometime fairly soon after he had married his first wife, someone came down from Salt Lake City to meet with the men. He mentioned by name the person involved, but as I don't recall it for sure. I hadn't better hazard stating it. I guess the meeting was kind of a priesthood meeting in which this person made it plain that the Church was putting an end to the approval of plural marriages in Mexico. This would have been what is often called the Second Manifesto.¹⁰ Now at times the church has denied that they had ever

9 Newel married his second wife, Geneva Cooley, in Colonia Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico on 19 November 1900. Her first child, LaPrele, was born 3 March 1902 in Colonia Dublan, Mexico. The date of Newel K.'s second marriage is important to this discussion because McMurrin mistakenly tied the timing of Newel K.'s marriage to Geneva solely to the issuance of LDS President Joseph F. Smith's "Second Manifesto" of April 6, 1904 (more in footnote 10 below).

10 The marriage of Newel K. and Geneva, in fact, had little if anything to do with the Second Manifesto issued four years after their marriage, but instead had everything to do with the intermittent sanctioning of plural marriage from 1890 to 1904 by several persistent church's leaders including, at the time, President Joseph F. Smith and some members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. See (http://www.lds-mormon.com/joseph_f_smith.shtml) and (<http://robertnreynolds.weebly.com/grandpa-was-a-polygamist.html>). The many subsequent plural marriages that are now known to have taken place in Mexico between 1900 and 1904 contradict and discount the accuracy of this statement. Newel K. was active in the Priesthood activities of the Juarez Stake during the time in question and probably was aware of the plural marriages that were authorized and performed after his own during the period 1900-1904. The correct chronology of Newel K.'s marriage in relation to the Second Manifesto is documented by the information in Appendix A, which gives a summary and background of the Second Manifesto of 1904 and a little

approved any of these plural marriages in Mexico after 1890, but of course, that isn't at all true. People would go down there with the intention of getting married, and be married there. Sometimes the plural wives would stay there, sometimes they would return to the States with their husbands. ¹¹

At any rate, Newel K. said it was announced at the meeting that, "This is the last chance that anyone has to take a plural wife, if there are any here who want to." He put it to us like this in his own language: "The man from headquarters told us, 'If there is anyone here who wants to get in on this thing, he'll have to let it be known right now.'" So, deciding he wanted to get in on it, Newel K. went up to register. He said that while he was standing there he happened to glance over at Anthony W. Ivins,¹² who was the head of the colonies at this time, and a man of considerable stature and character, who was later in the First Presidency. Ivins looked very disapprovingly at him and shook his head. Newel K. told me, "I should have taken his advice when he shook his head, but I didn't, and I married a second wife." ¹³

about the aftermath.

- 11 In 1900 when Newel K. and Geneva were married, Joseph F. Smith was second councilor to President Lorenzo Snow (April 3, 1814 – October 10, 1901), with whom he is now known to have occasionally differed on the plural marriage issue. Research on this matter had not been published much before McMurrin's death in 1996, so we can excuse him somewhat for clouding it up, however, we want the facts. It is now published substance that while President Lorenzo Snow was holding a strict line on not approving plural marriages after the Manifesto, Joseph F. Smith was periodically giving authorizations for them in Mexico. Smith became President after Snow's death. The Second Manifesto came three years later when Smith was faced with the political realities resulting from the Reed Smoot hearings.
- 12 Anthony W. Ivins served as Stake President of the Juarez Stake from its creation in 1895 until 1907 when he was called to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. It is relevant to this discussion to know that when he became President, Joseph F. Smith renewed permission for Anthony W. Ivins to perform plural marriages for Mexican residents. And Ivins did this from 1902 to 1904. And then he extended that to include permission for Ivins to perform marriages for non-residents. This was more dangerous, because this required written permission from Salt Lake. These written letters for Anthony W. Ivins to perform marriages for non-residents of Juarez Stake, occurred from 1903 to 1904 (LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890 - 1904 by D. Michael Quinn).
- 13 What does it imply that Newel K. at age 72 regretted his marriage to Geneva? I cannot find one whittle of testimony left by any of his 19 children to support the idea that he ever harbored regret for his plural marriage. For Newel K. to have felt that way would be a disappointment to both Geneva and her children. So, did he really? If he didn't hold regrets why would McMurrin present us with this quote? And if Newel K. really did have regrets, why would McMurrin present us with this quote? An observation is in order here for my own progeny who will read this someday: Each of my four polygamist great-grandfathers left strong testimonials of their belief in the principle of plural marriage even though they each paid a terrible price for having lived it! I have no evidence, other than this from self described "loyal heretic" McMurrin, that grandpa Newel felt differently.

Once when Natalie and I had Newel K. and Sister Young, his second wife, for dinner, they talked at some length with us about the Mexico experience, and he gave his reason for marrying a second wife. In exactly these words, he told us, "This girl knows why I married her and she married me; she knows why. It's because we were taught, and we both believed that if we were not married in polygamy, we could not enter the Celestial Kingdom." She nodded agreement with him, "Yes that's why we were married." This would have been sometime during the academic year of 1948-49, right after we had moved to Salt Lake City. Newel K., I think, had now retired and was living in Salt Lake.¹⁴

Now this of course was a common teaching of the church. Most Mormon people today don't know that, and many of them would deny that to achieve the highest degree of glory, a person had to be married in polygamy. Well, somewhere along the line, Newel K. was liberated from this piece of nonsense,¹⁵ but to his great credit, as far as I know, he struggled financially to support his two wives and two families, even though it was, I am quite sure, usually on a kind of marginal basis.

Newel, was of course, getting along in years when I first met him, though he didn't die until sometime in the fifties. By the time of his passing, Natalie and I had moved to Salt Lake City from California where we had lived when I was on the faculty of Philosophy of the University of Southern California. When I became a philosophy professor at the University of Utah in 1948, he was retired, or retired very soon thereafter, and was living in Salt Lake, and we spent a good deal of time together with him. Our association spanned something like fifteen

14 Newel K. was 72 at the time of this meeting. He had been retired for seven years. His senility was becoming obvious to all of his family members, even to me, a twelve year old. Grandmother Tina had been dead for at least five years and Newel K. was being taken care of by Geneva! This is the low point of the recording session because it is so difficult to understand why McMurrin would sit in the presence of his elderly friends, discussing the sacred and personal parts of their marriage, and then afterwards belittle the very religious beliefs that committed the two to marry and produce nine children together, especially and more so, if he thought their commitment to each other was based on nonsense! McMurrin's reputation for freely expressing his views on "both the sacred and profane" as Dr. L. Jackson Newell wrote in the preface to their 1996 book, "Matters of Conscience: Conversations With Sterling M. McMurrin on Philosophy, Education, and Religion," was certainly verified in this example.

15 Herein probably lies the real reason for this particular story -- to criticize the Mormon doctrine of celestial marriage -- something McMurrin took delight in doing. Ironically, Sterling Moss McMurrin personally entered the "new and everlasting covenant of marriage" on 8 June 1938 when he was sealed to his wife, Natalie Barbara Cotterel in the Salt Lake Temple (New FamilySearch).

years. It was always a real delight to be with Newel K. and we got together with him whenever it was convenient and possible.

I recall one such pleasant experience that took place on a Sunday when we were together at the summer session in the mountains near Provo. Newel K. had a son-in-law who lived in Heber City. I forget his name, but he was either a principal or superintendent of schools. Newel K. called him "Oz" and thought very highly of him. Newel K. wanted to drive up to Heber City to visit Oz. I don't remember his full name, but I had occasion to contact him a time or two after Newel K.'s death when he was in the school system, perhaps in the Granite Schools in Salt Lake.

We went in an old car which I had bought a year and a half earlier from Lowell Bennion. It wasn't worth a damn, but it got us around. At that time we were involved in building the dam of the Deer Creek reservoir at the upper end of Provo Canyon. We were interested in the drive and found the trip to be a quite pleasant occasion.

Newel K. was very generous in his attitude toward Natalie and me and ours was a relationship of friendship that was really quite unusual. When he died in the fifties we were away, either in the East where I had various involvements, or in Europe, or somewhere of the kind. I don't recall the date, but I do know that we would certainly have been at his funeral services if we had been in Salt Lake.

I'm a little in confusion as to just when Newel K. retired and moved from Logan, but when Natalie and I moved to Salt Lake in 1948, he was already there. I am a bit confused on the chronology of these events because he was still teaching in Logan when Lynn Bennion left his position as head of the seminaries¹⁶ -- when Lynn told him not to resign anymore -- yet it was Lynn who told me about some retirement arrangements they later made for Newel K. Anyway, it wasn't long after Lynn warned him that he retired and moved from Logan to Salt Lake. He wasn't fired for cause, or anything like that. It was a matter of reaching the age, which I suppose was sixty-five. The Church now has a very good retirement set up for B.Y.U. teachers and seminary teachers and the whole works, but at that time they didn't have anything set up at all. I learned from Lynn that when Newel K. retired they wanted to do something for him in lieu of any retirement program, so they purchased and gave to him the ownership of a quite old but liveable duplex so that he could live in one side and rent the other side. And, that's what he did. I

16 Not true. See footnote number 4. This is kind of like catching yourself in your own trap!

believe it was on Seventeenth South. Natalie thinks at about Second West -- somewhere in that part of the city

It was about this same time that Heber C. Snell's book on the Old Testament, "Ancient Israel, Its Story and Meaning" was published, and a few months later I was asked by a group in Pocatello, Idaho, if I would review the book at a dinner meeting at the Institute at the college there. The group, I think if not entirely, was at least made up mainly of Mormons. I agreed to do this, and Natalie and I invited Newel K. and his wife to go to Pocatello with us. Well, it was quite a trip. It was one of those strange winter days when the snow was deep and the sky and the atmosphere were such that you could hardly see the road. It was a difficult drive, but it gave us a marvelous opportunity to visit with Dr. and Mrs. Snell, and others, and to have extensive discussions with Newel K.

Some months later I was asked by Dr. Thomas Martin, Dean of the College of Applied Science at the B. Y. U., and a member of the General Board of the Sunday Schools, to review Snell's book for a group of faculty people and their wives at Brigham Young University. Martin informed me sometime before this event that the college would not permit them to have the review session on the college campus -- an indication of the kind of censorship that has at times prevailed at the B. Y. U. -- so it had to be held in Martin's home. Natalie and I invited Newel K. and his wife to ride down to Provo with us, and Heber Snell may have ridden with us too, but I'm just not sure. In any event, Snell was there. Martin had a good sized home, and there was a large crowd present.

I might say here that Newel K. often referred to Grant Ivins, who was for a long time a professor of Agronomy or something of that kind at the B. Y. U. He was the son of President Anthony W. Ivins, and a man of considerable stature. He and Newel K. were very close friends, both being from Mexico. Newel often referred to Grant Ivins and would tell us things that Grant had heard his father say. At any rate, following my talk at Martin's home, there was a lull and I think they were getting ready to distribute refreshments or something. Newel K. was way over on the other side of the room when he called out to me in a loud voice so that everyone could hear, "Sterling, Sterling, have I ever told this group what Grant Ivins told me his father, President Ivins, had to say about John A. Widtsoe? Well, neither of us had ever been with this group before, and Martin, who had charge of things said, "Now Newel, we'll talk about that another time. This is not the time for it."

Of course I knew what it was he wanted to tell, which was something he had told me on more than one occasion -- that Grant Ivins said that his father,

President Ivins, said you should never trust John A. Widtsoe with anything. I mention this as an indication of Newel K.'s impulsiveness in his later years, and his being anxious to spread the good word.

On another occasion, Newel K. told me that while living in Provo, he called Grant Ivins on the phone one Sunday and said, "Grant, Sidney Sperry (B.Y.U.'s bible scholar) is the speaker at Sacrament meeting tonight in the ____? ward. Let's go and sit in the back, then we can go over to your house, afterward to criticize (discuss his talk) him." ¹⁷

Newel K. told me a few things about when he was a very young child, perhaps seven or eight years old. ¹⁸ He lived in Orderville, Utah which was the most thorough-going example of the "United Order" in the Church. He was just a kid when the Orderville thing broke up. He mentioned to me two or three things in that connection, for instance, how he observed the Order dividing things up when it was dissolved. When they divided up what they had, their horses, cattle, and so on, he said it was obvious to everyone that things went to people in terms of their

17 These stories are "putdowns" to both Widtsoe and Newel K. I wonder about McMurrin's grasp on propriety here, not long before he died.

18 Newel K. was five years, 6 months old on the day this memory was made. Newel K's half-brother, John Royal Young was five years his senior. John Royal wrote an account of his life and another entitled, "My Mother and Me." In the latter record he remembered leaving Orderville and wrote, *"In the year 1883, on the 25th day of February, with two of his three families, a move away from the Order was commenced. Aunt Lydia refused to leave the Order at that time, but some years later joined him and went to Mexico, where she died some years later. I do not have the date of her death. So with mother and Aunt Tamer we moved across the mountains to Rabbit Valley where a new country was being settled. Again, my dear old mother was preparing food around a campfire for her family. We were about two weeks making the trip and landed in Rabbit Valley in a rain storm."*

In another piece about Newel K's mother, Lydia Knight Young, I wrote, "Sterling M. McMurrin Remembers Newel K. Young, September 10, 1994, is a composition constructed by my cousin Evelyn Young Jimerson from memories recorded on tape. In this composition Dr. McMurrin, a close friend of Newel K. Young related a conversation with grandpa about his Orderville days when as a small boy he remembered his father with his other wives pulling away in a wagon leaving his mother and her children "to shift for themselves." There is no doubt that grandpa Newel as a very young boy had this memory of his parent's parting at Orderville etched in his mind. It is less likely, however, that the context of this parting was accurately captured in the way this story portrays. In the accounts by granddaughters Pearl Stolworthy McGee and Wilma Stolworthy Hawkins we are given what is probably the correct context i.e., Lydia felt "duty-bound" to stay behind even if it meant separation from her husband. The account as reported here gives no credit to John R's correct intent or Lydia's practice of principle! Her decision to stay was final; he had to choose. And choose he did as he moved both Albina and Tamar north to Wayne County and established a homestead in Rabbit Valley."

rank in the priesthood. The Stake President came off better than the others, and so on down the line. He had a long story to tell about that. He mentioned that his mother and he (and I suppose other children -- I don't know how many there were) were standing beside the road when his father came along in a wagon loaded with stuff, and sitting with his father in the wagon was one of his other wives. This is the way Newel K. told it. I don't know what his mother's name was, but I'll call her Mary, and I'll call the other wife Mabel. He said his father stopped the team and said, "Mary, what do you think you'll do? Mabel and I are going to go over into Colorado, or some place." Then after a short exchange, off he went and left Newel K. with his mother and whatever kids she had, to shift for themselves. Now that's the story as he told it.

He told me something else about his father, which was also about James E. Talmage, who was of course, a leading Apostle of the Church and a geologist. He said his father had turned up a number of Indian artifacts from the early Indians in Utah, either Fremont or Anasazi, which he took to Talmage when he was a professor of geology at the University of Utah, to see what he thought of them. Newel K. said that Talmage kept them, refused to give them back to his father, and that he made a gift of either all or some of them to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Newel K. told me that the main thing that got Talmage into the Society (he was a Fellow of that Society), was that he gave them these artifacts, whatever they were. He said there was "quite a lot of stuff," and that his father had a hard time over this, and even threatened to sue Dr. Talmage.

As for Talmage, it became a kind of a fictional tradition in the Church that he had been rated one of the seven most highly educated men in the world. According to Newel K., and I don't know if this is so or not; there were seven people taken into the Royal Society at the time that Talmage was made a Fellow, and that this was the source of this piece of fiction. When I was young it was common in the Church to think of Talmage, whom I became acquainted with later when I was in high school, as one of the seven most highly educated men in the world. When I was Director of the Institute of Religion at the University of Arizona, I well recall a young man who was in the law school saying to me, if you can imagine such nonsense, it's my understanding that James E. Talmage was one of the seven most highly educated men of the world, and when he died, John A. Widtsoe took his place. Such nonsensical ideas were actually believed by people in the Church. Talmage did not have a really good education, as scientists' educations go. John A. Widtsoe did have a first rate education at Harvard and Gottingen in East Germany, but while Talmage was a man of considerable intellectual stature much of his education was highly questionable -- not all of it, but his PhD. degree from an American college was really somewhat questionable.

I must tell of course that in his very late years Newel K. was having trouble with his memory, as most people do in advanced years. He use to call Natalie and me up on the telephone and talk quite a lot, and I have a somewhat humorous, yet rather sad thing to tell about that. He had a son who lived in Long Beach, California. I think it was a son, and not a son-in-law, and at times he and his second wife would spend time in the winter down there with him. As a matter of fact, when Natalie and I were still living in Los Angeles, we had contact with Newel K. there at least once, although I don't remember the details. But this particular time in the fifties, in the dead of winter Newel K. called us on the telephone to tell us that they were leaving with their son to drive down to Long Beach, and that they would be there for some weeks; they would spend much of the winter there. As we talked he said to me, "Well it's really beautiful down here, lots of sunshine and flowers, arid so on." I realized that he was shifting gears and thought that he was already in Long Beach, and I said, "Newel, where are you?" "Well, we're down here in Long Beach with our son." I asked, "Are you sure you're in Long Beach? I think you're still in Salt Lake." He said, "Wait a minute, I'll have to go look out the window and see where we are." So he did, and when he came back to the phone he laughed and he said, "You're absolutely right, we haven gone yet; we're still in Salt Lake!" Actually, that was one of the last conversations that I recall having had with him.

Let me say, Mrs. Jimerson, that I think that it's a wonderful thing that you're working on a biographical sketch of your grandfather, Newel K. Young. He was truly a great figure, a man of highest character, generous, gentle, forceful, and extremely competent. The story of his life, I think, is a great story. He certainly deserves to be remembered in print.

END

APPENDIX A

The Second Manifesto

Summary

The "Second Manifesto" was a 1904 declaration made by Joseph F. Smith, the president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in which Smith confirmed that the church was opposed to plural marriage and set down the

principle that those entering into or solemnizing plural marriages would be excommunicated from the church (*"Official Statement by President Joseph F. Smith", Improvement Era 7:545–546, Apr. 1904*).

Background

In 1890, church president Wilford Woodruff had issued the initial Manifesto, in which he suspended the LDS Church's long-standing practice of plural marriage. However, after the Manifesto, it became clear that a number of church members, including members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, were continuing to enter into or solemnize polygamous marriages.

(Kenneth Cannon II, "After the Manifesto: Mormon Polygamy, 1890–1906", Sunstone, Jan.–Apr. 1983, p. 27 ; D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904", Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Spring 1985, 9–105; B. Carmon Hardy (1992). Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage (Urbana: University of Illinois Press).

Smith issued the Second Manifesto near the beginning of the Reed Smoot hearings, United States Congressional hearings into whether LDS Church Apostle Reed Smoot should be permitted to sit as a United States Senator from Utah; Smoot's opponents alleged that the LDS Church hierarchy's continued tolerance or encouragement of plural marriage should exclude Smoot from sitting in the Senate.

Announcement

The "Second Manifesto" was announced at the general conference of the church held on April 6, 1904. At a public meeting, Smith announced that he would like to read an "official statement" that he had prepared so that his words "may not be misunderstood or misquoted". Smith read:

Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into, contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff of September 24, 1890, commonly called the manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff, and adopted by the Church at its general conference, October 6, 1890, which forbade any marriages violative of the law of the land, I, Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent, or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any

officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage, he will be deemed in transgression against the Church, and will be liable to be dealt with according to the rules and regulations thereof and excommunicated therefrom.

JOSEPH F. SMITH,
President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
(Conference Report, April 1904, p. 97)

Francis M. Lyman, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, then presented the following resolution of endorsement, which was seconded by B.H. Roberts and accepted unanimously by those in attendance at the conference:

Resolved that we, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in General Conference assembled, hereby approve and endorse the statement and declaration of President Joseph F. Smith just made to this Conference concerning plural marriages, and will support the courts of the Church in the enforcement thereof (*Conference Report, April 1904, p. 97*).

Smith's official statement was later published in the Improvement Era, an official magazine of the church ("*Official Statement by President Joseph F. Smith*", *Improvement Era* 7:545–546, Apr. 1904).

A number of church leaders were opposed to the enforcement of the "Second Manifesto", including Apostles John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley. As a result of their opposition, both were expelled from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1906, and in 1911 Taylor was excommunicated for continued opposition (*Victor W. Jorgensen & B. Carmon Hardy, "The Taylor–Cowley Affair and the Watershed of Mormon History", Utah Historical Quarterly* 48:4 (1980).
Source: (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Manifesto)

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