

Mary Elizabeth Rollins

SUSA YOUNG GATES PAPERS  
USHS Box 14 Fd 4

Was Born in the Town of Lima, Livingston County State of  
New York April 9<sup>th</sup> 1818 - My Father John P. Rollins Came  
from one of the New England States, I think it was Vermont  
My Mother Keziah <sup>he says</sup> <sup>yes</sup> Barn Bentzen was Born in Albany  
State of New York <sup>May 16<sup>th</sup></sup> 1796 She Married My Father <sup>in 1815</sup> in 1814  
Three Children were the fruit of this Marriage, James  
Henry - Myself and sister Caroline the youngest. When she  
was six month old, My Father was Shipwrecked on Lake  
Ontario during a terrible storm, Only one Person was saved  
out of all the Passengers, and crew - When I was ten years  
old, we moved to Kirtland Ohio, and lived in a house belonging  
to Algernon Sidney Gilbert, Mothers Sisters Husband -  
we remained there two years, when we heard of the Book  
of Mormon, or Golden Bible being found by Joseph Smith  
Soon the news was confirmed, by the appearance of Oliver  
Cowdry, Peter Whitmer, and Ziba Peterson with the glorious  
news of the Restoration of the Gospel through the Prophet  
Joseph Smith - They bore a powerful testimony by the Holy  
Spirit of the truth of the great work they had engaged  
in; and which they were Commissioned by the Father to preach  
to all the World - Quite a number went forward for  
Baptism, Mother and Myself also, in the Month of October  
1830. a Branch of the Church was organized, and Father  
Moorley was Ordained an Elder to preside over it. He  
owned a large Farm, about a mile from Kirtland, and some  
three, or four Families went there to live, and Meetings  
were held there. so, it was called the Moorley Settlement  
a good spirit, and one of union prevailed among Brethren  
for some time. After Oliver Cowdry, and his Brethren  
left there for to go to Missouri to find a place for the  
Center Stake of Zion, ~~and my spirit was with them~~  
~~and were so called and~~ ~~them~~ ~~we were~~ ~~thus~~

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17<sup>th</sup>  
with a private Family at four dollars a week for both  
of us - I continued Teaching until I had sixty dollars  
beside paying Board. I felt quite rich - although in poor  
health, yet I traveled through the hot sun to different  
Houses, some a good distance from others to get means to go  
to Montrose where I might find my Mother, for I was  
near to be confined the second time. So we took Deck  
passage to Montrose, (which was opposite Hannas across the  
Mississippi River) and found Mr Burk had moved ten  
Miles from there, onto what was called the half Breed  
Tract. We hired a Team and went there, we found them  
living in a small log hut, only one Room in it. We  
were joyfully received, and in October 18<sup>th</sup> My Daughter  
Caroline Meziah was Born. When she was three weeks  
old, we moved to Farmington 10 Miles from the half Breed  
Tract, situated on the Desmoine River - Mother lent us a  
Bed, knives and forks - gave us a few quart of flour; (for  
she had but little herself) and some other Necessaries -  
While an Irishman gave us a Bushel of Potatoes, and some  
Squashes - so we commenced House Keeping in two Rooms,  
one Mr Lightner used for a shop. as there was no one  
there that could make furniture, the People gladly let  
him have all the tools, and Lumber he wanted, and would  
take his work for pay. We did well for nearly two years,  
I obtained work from a Tailor, and earned all my clothes,  
and the Childrens, for we were anxious to save enough  
to get a home of our own, which we did by Building a  
Frame House Composing one large Room, which we  
expected to add to, as we got able. in the mean time  
he bought a great deal of Choice Lumber to season  
for Beaus, Tables &c. - Finding our House not in a  
healthy part of the place, we sold it for two hundred  
Dollars Cash, and as he wanted Mahogany, and some  
other things that he could not get at Home, he went  
to Montrose for them. he had been there but a short  
time, when a Steam Boat came in, and brought  
the report that the Bank of which our Money was on  
was broken, and we only got twenty five dollars for our -  
hundred

18<sup>th</sup>  
the more about discouragement, but this was not all, for on looking  
out one morning he found his Mill, in which he was sawing  
his Lumber on fire. Not a plank was saved. What to do  
to pay our debts and live; with winter coming on, we did  
not know. While in this dilemma Mr. Burk, My Step Father  
came over from Nauvo to visit us, he saw our situation, and  
offered us a home with him, until we could do better.  
it seemed a God send to us, and we gladly ~~accepted~~ <sup>hailed</sup> the  
opportunity. So in January 1831 we, Mr Burk, Myself and 2  
Children Crossed the Mirrissippi River on the Ice, as it  
was late in the Evening; he did not dare to take his Team.  
So we walked across the River, and up the hill near  
the Temple where he lived, Next Morning, the ice was  
all broke up, and it was some days before he could get  
his Team across. In the mean time, Brother Joseph, and  
Brother Brigham, Came to see me, and invited me to go  
the next day to his Office in the Brick Store. I was surpris<sup>ed</sup>  
at this, he asked me if I was afraid to go? I replied, why  
should I be afraid of a Prophet of God? he said Bro Young  
would come for me. That night I dreamed I was  
married to him, and occupied an upper Room, in a New  
House, in the Morning, we were called to Breakfast, and  
I wondered what Emma would say to me for I was afraid  
of her, but Joseph took me by the hand and led me down  
stairs, at the foot of which, stood Emma smiling at us  
and conducted us to the Breakfast Room. I awoke then,  
and did not know what to think of My dream.

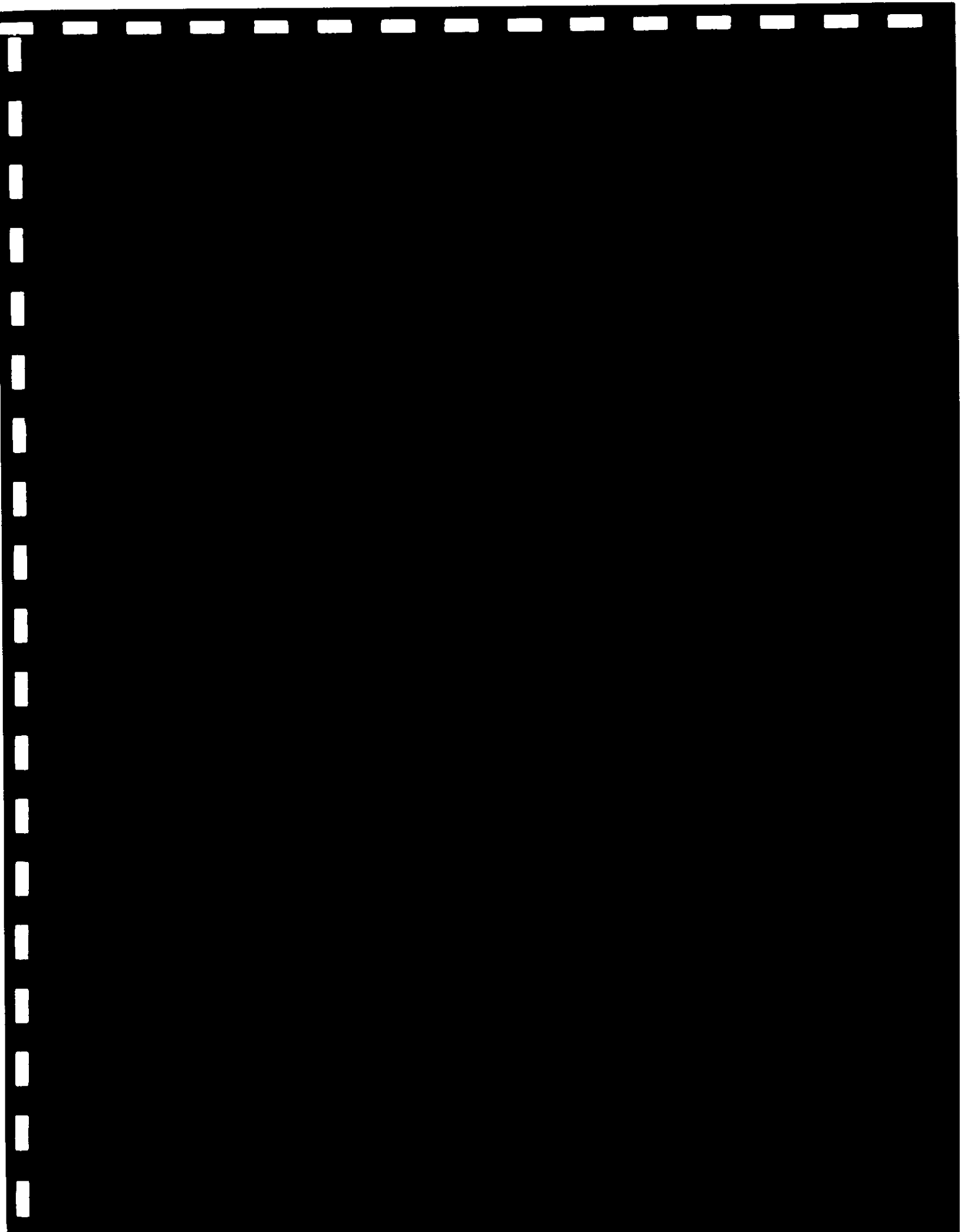
But on going to the office next day, I received the interpretation.  
For what was my astonishment, when Joseph made known  
to me that God had Commanded him in July 1834 to  
take me for a Wife, but he had not dared to make it known  
to me, for when he received the Revelation; I was in Missouri  
and when he did see me, I was married, But he was again  
Commanded, to fulfil the First Revelation; or suffer  
condemnation. For I was created for him before the  
Foundation of the Earth was laid. I said if the Lord  
told you such a thing; why dont he come and tell me?

9<sup>th</sup> Furthermore, I never would consent to be sealed to him, unless I had a witness for Myself. He told me a great many things concerning the Order, and the Blessings pertaining to it &c. I felt that he and I, were both sorry for I had dreamed for years that I belonged to him; and had besought the Lord to take away such Thoughts from My heart - No human being can tell my feelings on this occasion. My faith in him, as a Prophet almost failed Me. I could not sleep, and scarcely Eat. Next day Bro<sup>r</sup> Gouvy came to see me, and said after we left the Office, Joseph told him that an Angel appeared to him, and told him that the Lord was well pleased with him; and that I should have a witness that what he told me was true. I marveled at this - but made it a subject of prayer, night and day. One night in February, I felt impressed to pray as Moses did in the Battle of Israel, with the Arrelekhites by holding up my hands towards Heaven, I also covered my head with a white cloth, and I prayed with all <sup>my</sup> soul, that if the doctrine was true, to give me a witness of the same. One night I retired to Bed, but not to sleep; for my Mind was troubled so sleep fled from me. My Aunt Gilbert was sleeping with me at the time, when a great light appeared in the Room thinking the kindling wood was on fire, that was spread on the hearth; I rose up in Bed to look, when lo, a Personage stood in front of the Bed looking at me. Its clothes were whiter than any thing I had ever seen, I could look at its Person, but when I saw its face so bright, and more beautiful than any Earthly <sup>being</sup> could be, and those eyes piercing me through, and through, I could not endure it; it seemed as if I must die with fear, I fell back in Bed and covered up my head so as not to see it; I pushed Aunt very hard to have her look up and see it too; but I could not wake her and I could not speak, I thought if she were awake, I would not feel so afraid - As it is, I can never forget that face, it seems to be ever before me. A few days after this Joseph asked me if I had received a witness yet? I said no, he said you soon will have; for the Angel expressly told me you should

20<sup>th</sup> Have - then I told him what I had seen, for I fully realized what I had lost by my cowardice. The Family all said they knew something had happened to me, for my Countenance was almost transparent - and when I told them of it, there was great rejoicing and they felt that I had been highly favored of the Lord, as yet they knew nothing of what Joseph had said to me. When Joseph had enquired about the appearance of the Person, and I had told him he seemed much affected, and told me that it was an Angel from God, and that it came fraught with more knowledge, and Revelation, than he dare reveal, <sup>at that time</sup> and that if I had prayed in my heart to God, all fear would have left me, as it was Satan snatched the Cup from my lips - he told me of many things to take place soon in my life, as a sign of the truth of what he had revealed to me. His words were verified to the letter. After receiving other Testimonies, I felt I could no longer disbelieve, and in the Month of March 1841 Brigham Young sealed us for time, and all Eternity.

Willard Richards, and Heber C Kimball knew of it, but were not present. on the 22<sup>d</sup> of March I was Confined with my 3<sup>d</sup> Child we called him George Algernon, Mr Lightner had settled up his Business in Farmington, paid his debts by giving up all his tools &c - which left us poor indeed, but as some of the Brethren owed us nearly two thousand Dollars, we thought we could get some of it to help us, but those that owed us the most, took the benefit of the Bankrupt Law and refused to pay us. One Man offered to let us have a bbl of Pork and a Coffee pot, if we would give him back his note of five hundred dollars which we held, we did so, and was very thankful for it - But when we opened the Barrel, we found the Meat sour, and full of Measels - My Husband could get no work, and I commenced teaching painting, to Julia Maudoc Smith, Steven Marks Daughter, and Sarah Ann Whitney - I also painted fig leaf aprons for the twelve on Larch skin, also fifty Masonic Aprons for the Lodge I also procured a lot a Block below the Joseph Mansion But as we could get no more work in Nauvoo, Mr Lightner found a job of cutting Cord wood, 15 Miles up the River at a place called Courtosare. he got a little log Room with a Burr-beam floor, made of logs split in two, and very rough

1<sup>st</sup> Joseph on learning that we were going to leave there felt very  
sad, and while the tears ran down his cheeks - he prophesied  
that if we attempted to leave the Church, we would have plenty  
of sorrow; for we would make property on the right hand, and lose  
it on the left, we would have sickness, on sickness, and lose our  
Children. And that I would have to work harder than I ever dream<sup>ed</sup>  
of and at last when you are worn out, and almost ready to die  
you will get back to the Church. I thought these were hard  
sayings, and felt to doubt them. But the sequel proved  
them true. before leaving Nauvoo, on a 1<sup>st</sup> of July there was  
a general parade of the Legion, about noon Emma came to  
me to borrow my dining Table, as the Officers were to dine  
with her, and Joseph came also, he said the Lord commanded  
him to Baptise us that day. Emma asked why is this? they  
have always been good members in the Church? and another  
thing, dinner will be ready soon; and you certainly wont  
go in those clothes? No he said he wanted us to be ready by the time  
he was, for he would not wait for dinner, as we lived on the Bank  
of the River, we were soon ready. Mother Henry and Wife, Aunt  
Gilbert and myself were Baptised, and Confirmed. Joseph tried  
hard to get Mr Lightner to go into the Water, but he said he did not  
feel worthy, but would some other time. Joseph said to me that he  
never would be Baptised, unless it was a few moments before he  
died. it was with sorrowful feelings that I went to Pontreue to  
live, but by me taking in sewing we made out to live, and that  
was all. A Lady called on me and asked me if we had a Cow?  
I said no, she said if I would let her have my Bedstead, she would  
give me a Cow, and I & pigs I gladly accepted her offer, and slept  
on the floor until we could nail up a substitute. in a short time  
George was taken sick, and died, I was alone with him at the  
time, husband had gone to a neighbors for assistance. an Old Lady  
helped me dress him - and Mr Lightner had to make the Coffin -  
as he was the only Carpenter in the place. the two Men that dug<sup>the</sup>  
grave, and a little Girl was all that went to Bury my Darling.  
I felt that the Prophets words were begining to be fulfilled, we  
then moved to a more Commodious House. in 43 my 3<sup>rd</sup> son Florentine  
Mathias was Born. When he was two Months Old - I commenced  
teaching a few Children in Spelling & Reading. I had not taught  
long before I took a severe Cold that caused inflammation of the  
bowels - I was so low that my life was despaired of by two Physicians



9 Oct 1869

1226

President Geo. A. Smith wrote the following important letter to Joseph, son of the prophet Joseph Smith:

Salt Lake City, 9 Oct. 1869.

Cousin Joseph Smith,

Your letter from Plano of the 7th inst. was received. You are no doubt aware that from the year 1833, until the time of his massacre, I was intimately acquainted with your father, and on such terms of friendship with him as were enjoyed by but few others, In 1834, when on the journey to Missouri, I was his armour bearer and stood guard at the tent in which was held his Councils. I was present at the organization of the High Council at Kirtland and that of Missouri. Was ordained a member of the 3rd High Council of the church which was organized at Adam-ondi-ahman.

\* I visited your father in Liberty jail during his incarceration when he notified me that it was the will of God that I should be ordained one of the Twelve Apostles; after which I went on my mission to England, which occupied about two years, starting from "The foundation of the Lord's House" in Far West, Missouri, where at the hazard of our lives a few of us recommenced the foundation of the Temple; whence the brethren of the Twelve took leave of the Saints on the 26th of April, 1839. At one of the first interviews thereafter with your father I was greatly astonished at hearing from his lips that doctrine of Patriarchal marriage, which he continued to preach to me from time to time. My last conversation with him on this subject occurred just previous to my departure from Nauvoo (May 9, 1844) in company with Elder Wilford Woodruff, to attend Conference in Michigan. \* A duty assigned us by your father in carrying out his instructions to the Twelve to hold conferences throughout the States, on which mission they were engaged at the time of his death, with the exception of Elders Richards and Taylor, who shared his wrongs and participated with him and Hyrum in the bloody scenes enacted in Carthage Jail.

\* In his last conversation, he administered a little chastisement to me for not stepping forward as he had indicated in patriarchal marriage. He assured me that the man who had many virtuous wives had many great prizes, though he admitted that the man who had one virtuous wife had one great prize. He testified to me and to my father that the Lord had given him the keys of this sealing ordinance, and that he felt as liberal to others as he did to himself. He remarked that he had given Brigham Young three wives, Heber C. Kimball two, John Taylor