

Hannah Grover Hegsted and Post-Manifesto Plural Marriage

Julie Hemming Savage

WILFORD WOODRUFF'S MANIFESTO OF 1890 declared that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was "not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice."¹ After the issuance of the Manifesto, most church members aligned themselves with the law of the land by not entering new plural marriages. Beliefs about the importance of polygamy within the church began to change as new generations began to accept monogamy as the rule.²

There was, however, a minority of church members, most of whom were leaders, who continued after 1890 to enter polygamous relationships with the apparent approval of church officials. With at least 262 plural marriages performed in the church after the Manifesto, there is clearly a disparity between the claims of the document and what was secretly practiced in the church at that time.³ While thousands of Mormons believed the public statements of their leaders, hundreds of stalwarts kept the principle of plural marriage alive with encouragement from those same church leaders.⁴

Books and articles on post-Manifesto polygamy have typically focused on church leaders and contradictions between their official statements, which declared that the church had discontinued the practice of polygamy, and the actual continuation of the practice. D. Michael Quinn has chronicled in detail this dichotomy of words versus actions⁵; and B. Carmon Hardy

1. Official Declaration-1, in any LDS edition of the Doctrine and Covenants since 1981.

2. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 351.

3. *Ibid.*, 425.

4. *Ibid.*, 338.

5. D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Spring 1985): 9-104.

has further studied church leaders' experiences with polygamy before and after the Manifesto.⁶ What is missing is knowledge of the women who became involved in post-Manifesto unions.⁷ While many women participated in new plural marriages, their experience has been neglected.

One woman who was directly affected by the church's ambiguous stand on polygamy was Hannah Grover Hegsted. She became the third wife of Bishop Victor C. Hegsted on 1 May 1904, fourteen years after the first Manifesto was issued, and a month after the so-called Second Manifesto. Hers is one of the many stories behind the institutional confusion; an understanding of her life helps to fill the silence about why women became involved in post-Manifesto plural marriages. Although she is only one among many who faced the challenges of post-Manifesto polygamy, through her we can discover what led one woman to make such a decision and how that decision affected the rest of her life.

Hannah left behind a substantial written record which includes an unpublished journal, letters from her husband, Victor Hegsted, and seven patriarchal blessings which were given to her over a forty-year period. In searching these documents, we discover a passionately righteous, intelligent, devoted woman who, with the encouragement of her church leaders (but contrary to the developing norms against polygamy), believed that marrying Victor Hegsted fit into God's plan for her life. Multiple factors contributed to this decision, beginning early in her life.

Hannah's parents, Elizabeth Heiner and Thomas Grover, Jr., originally settled in Morgan, Utah. In 1868 they were called by Brigham Young to help colonize the Muddy River, located in Lincoln County, Nevada.⁸ During their stay in Nevada Hannah was born on 26 November 1870. By going to Nevada at Young's call, her parents set an example of religious diligence. Hannah repeated this pattern of commitment throughout her life as she accepted callings and challenges which appeared to be above her capacity. When asked to preside over the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association of the Fremont Stake in Idaho, she wrote that "it seemed such a responsibility, the people strange, the conditions unknown. Yet it seemed that I must do it, for I had long ago

6. Hardy.

7. A preliminary look at women who entered new plural marriages shows what appears to be a diversified group. While Quinn and Hardy only mention these women in passing, it is clear that a number of them were related to the church's elite through family, by associations through high church callings, or the church-sponsored educational system. Most, however, are not easily categorized.

8. Louise Heiner Anderson, "Life History of Johan Martin Heiner (1818-1897)," 15, typescript in my possession.

learned not to refuse to perform any duty required at my hands by the Priesthood."⁹

Hannah's family was steeped in the Mormon polygamous tradition. Soon after her birth in Nevada, her parents moved their small family back to Morgan, Morgan County, Utah, where she was surrounded by this tradition. Hannah's paternal grandfather, Thomas Grover, had married polygamously in Nauvoo, Illinois, and eventually had six wives. Her father was also a polygamist, having two of his three wives alive at the same time.¹⁰

Hannah wrote often about visiting her aunts, many of whom were her grandfather's plural wives. On one such occasion, her Aunt Lucy told her that "had she her life to repeat she would again enter plural marriage."¹¹ Though the statement is in itself significant, it is still more significant that Hannah noted it in her journal two years prior to her own plural marriage. Evidently, she was talking to others about polygamy, weighing its possibilities in her mind. Who better to turn to for advice than women who had participated in polygamous marriages?

So polygamy was nothing new for Hannah. During the first twenty years of her life, the church defended the practice of polygamy through all manner of persecution. Members who would not deny the practice, who went to jail in defense of their belief, became heroes in their communities. They were prisoners for conscience's sake.¹² John Taylor, church president, died a fugitive because of his unwillingness to give up the principle.¹³ These realities and the church's commitment to polygamy could not have escaped Hannah's notice.

Hannah was eleven years old when her mother died in childbirth, leaving six small children. Aunt Louie, her father's second wife, came to live with them for awhile. When Aunt Louie left, Hannah, who was the oldest child, took care of the family. With her mother gone, Hannah's home was with her siblings. But as her brothers and sisters grew and married, they each left Morgan and since she was not married, this left her without a place to call home; Hannah felt this loss intensely. Once, upon returning to Morgan, she wrote that "Not one of the immediate family [was there] to welcome me back and no place to call home. The days wore by and Pa

9. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 26 Jan. 1901, 74, typescript in my possession.

10. Stephen Grover and Dean R. Grover, eds., *Thomas Grover: His Ancestors and Descendants* (Phoenix: WA Kruger Co, 1966), 5.

11. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 20 July 1902, 112.

12. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 407.

13. Quinn, 30.

returned but still the vacancy was almost more than I could stand. I cried until crying seemed to be all that I could do."¹⁴

Similar to this experience was a visit she took to Heiner's Canyon, "the spot where the old house stood," where today only a few stones were left to mark the spot. On this visit, her feelings of displacement found themselves centered on an old deserted stove which was sitting out in the open air. This stove had "been a sort of wonder" to her during her childhood; now it looked "diminished and quite insignificant." Upon realizing this, she said that she "sat down on the rusty top while a few silent tears told me of other days when it held such an honored place in our home."¹⁵

Hannah did not, however, constantly mourn the past. She was an active participant in life. She devoted tremendous amounts of energy to learning and teaching. Education was an early priority. Even with the death of her mother and the responsibility of taking care of her younger brothers and sisters, she continued to attend school, finding great pleasure in learning and getting good grades. She wrote of the 1887 school year that it was "a wonderful one for me. How I loved it. My teachers were true friends to me as long as they lived."¹⁶ She gained self-esteem from her successes in school. And when she began teaching school (beginning with a part-time job in 1885),¹⁷ she often confessed of the need she felt for "recognition and expression of appreciation" for her "untiring labors."¹⁸

Hannah decided to further her education, and at the age of twenty-seven she entered the Brigham Young Academy in Provo, Utah, where she studied for two years. During this time, she became so involved in school and newly-formed friendships that she found little time to write in her journal. There is a break from September 1897 to May 1898, at which point she summarized her school year by recording that she had "studied very hard all winter and every effort has been crowned with all the success [she] could ask for."¹⁹ In her second year she assumed charge of the Domestic Sciences Department. When her studies were completed and it came time for her to leave, she expressed her feelings with the following: "Little journal, I could write a volume on those two happy years, the friends, the blessings and joys and the tears that made up their being."²⁰

She plainly enjoyed her profession, but she also struggled to accept her lot as a single career woman. On one such day of worry in 1897, she wrote:

14. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 31 May 1899, 59.

15. *Ibid.*, 30 June 1900, 67.

16. *Ibid.*, 1887, 3.

17. *Ibid.*, 1885, 3.

18. *Ibid.*, 30 May 1899, 58.

19. *Ibid.*, 26 May 1898, 48.

20. *Ibid.*, 28 May 1899, 57.

"I spent the noon intermission conversing with President W. H. Lewis of Lewistown, I was strengthened and encouraged by the conversation in regard to what in the past had been great trial so I could easier acknowledge the hand of God in my career."²¹

Part of this struggling probably stemmed from the many patriarchal blessings she had received which promised her marriage and family. She was given her first patriarchal blessing at the age of sixteen. At that time she was promised that she would "have the Privilege to make [her] own choice of a Husband for Time and all Eternity" and her children would "appear as gems in [her] crown." She was also cautioned, "Let thy heart be Contented for in due time thy husband shall seek thee out."²² In each of the six pre-marriage patriarchal blessings she was given, Hannah was promised similar blessings: a husband and posterity. Her 1895 blessing pointed out that not only would she become an "honored mother in Israel," but that this would be a "great portion" of her mission on earth.²³

Beginning in 1898, new wording began to appear in her blessings. Each patriarch referred to her "petitions" and reassured her that she should "be of good cheer for the Lord has heard [her] petitions [and] accepted [her] offerings"²⁴ and that her "prayers shall be answered for the Lord will make of thee a great mother in Israel."²⁵ These blessings must have brought both hope and frustration as the years passed and Hannah found herself still unmarried.

Not only did Hannah receive these divine promises of marriage, she also received less formal blessings from church apostles which confirmed the truths in her patriarchal blessings. Here again, it is not only significant that she was given these blessings, but that she felt they were worthy of noting in her journals. On one occasion, she attended a Y.L.M.I.A. meeting where President Lorenzo Snow encouraged the women with this blessing: "Sisters, I say to you in the name of the Lord that all of you, each and every one under the sound of my voice, who honestly desires in your hearts to be blessed with husbands and children shall receive that blessing."²⁶

On another occasion, in 1901, when she was leaving a Y.L.M.I.A.

21. *Ibid.*, Apr. 1897, 25.

22. Patriarchal blessing given by Welez B. Corbet, Morgan, Morgan County, Utah, 5 Apr. 1886, typescript in my possession.

23. Patriarchal blessing given by Rd. Rawle, Morgan, Morgan County, Utah, 25 July 1895, typescript in my possession.

24. Patriarchal blessing given by John Smith, Salt Lake City, Utah, 12 Aug. 1900, typescript in my possession.

25. Patriarchal blessing given by Charles D. Evans, Provo, Utah, 2 Apr. 1898, typescript in my possession.

26. *Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted*, 29 May 1899, 57.

council meeting, Apostle John W. Taylor²⁷ asked her if she were a "married sister." When she said that she was not, he responded with the following words: "Sister, do your duty in this calling and I promise you in the name of the Lord Israel's God that you shall be blessed with a companion suited to your condition."²⁸ These blessings necessarily affected her opinions of God's will concerning her future.

It is also evident from Hannah's journals that she always enjoyed children, especially her nieces and nephews. She seemed so pleased on one visit to her sister's home when the children came running to her yelling, "Aunt Hannah has come."²⁹ She was involved with the Primary organization and in a moment of lighthearted celebration, she recorded:

I surprised the Primary children with a feast of strawberries. Preceding the temporal feast, we had a spiritual one about flowers; the house and children were adorned with earth's fairest flora. I returned home feeling the day was well spent and another seed of love planted and I thank my Heavenly Father for granting me the privilege of laboring among the sweet innocents [sic] of Zion and that I can be a missionary at home as others are abroad. Praise ye the Lord.³⁰

This passage reflects both Hannah's love of children and God. Clearly she would be glad for the blessings of motherhood as well.

But for Hannah to marry and have a posterity, she needed cooperation from possible suitors. Sadly, her attempts at love seemed always to end in disaster. Time and time again, she put her heart into relationships but was eventually left alone. This pattern began early in her life. On 13 December 1891 Hannah promised to be the wife of Marcus Taggart; however, nearly five years later, on 11 October 1896, she stated that "the ties between Marcus and me were severed because of another girl."³¹

Shortly after that relationship ended, Hannah began to spend more time with Tom R. Condie. On 9 June 1897 she wrote that "Bro. Condie . . . declared his love for me and the desire that I should be his wife. Received testimony in answer to my prayers."³² Eight days later, "Brother Condie," as she always called him, left to serve a mission in the Southern States

27. John W. Taylor was a particularly strong advocate of continued plural marriage. As a result of this support of new plural marriages and for "being out of harmony regarding post-Manifesto polygamy," he had to resign from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in October 1905 (see Quinn, 102-103). In 1911 he was excommunicated (see Hardy, 266).

28. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 26 Jan. 1901, 74-75.

29. *Ibid.*, 28 July 1899, 61.

30. *Ibid.*, 2 July 1897, 40.

31. *Ibid.*, 11 Oct. 1896, 10.

32. *Ibid.*, 9 June 1897, 37.

Mission. During his mission, she wrote about him often, mentioning how the missionary work was going in Mississippi and worrying when he became ill. One evening, while she was attending B.Y.A., she wrote that her nerves were too unsettled to sleep and so she spent the remainder of the night writing to Condie, telling him of her "success, hopes, and fears and throwing a portion of [her] heart's joys and anxieties onto him."³³

When Condie returned from his mission in July 1899, the couple began to spend time together again. Hannah greatly enjoyed this reunion, but their relationship was brought to another standstill when he was called on an M.I.A. mission to Arizona. Before he left, Hannah made the following entry in her journal: "After many expressions of love, devotion and hopes Brother Condie and I again knelt before our Maker and asked his guidance and protection and dedicated ourselves to him and his cause with an earnest request that we would be preserved in purity for each other after our winter's mission was over."³⁴ But before their "winter's mission was over," Condie fell in love and married another woman. This, Hannah wrote, "blighted the hopes of a devoted heart."³⁵

She accepted a teaching position at Ricks Academy in Rexburg, Idaho. This new challenge kept her occupied; nonetheless, the "change in Bro. Condie's affections" brought on a period of loneliness and melancholy which did not end until Victor Hegsted entered her life. After 1899 she spoke again and again of being lonely. While change always appeared to be difficult for Hannah, any which occurred thereafter affected her more profoundly. She had consistently found great joy in her associations with people, reveling in the bonds of friendship. At this point, however, she began to feel the lack of constancy in her relationships more keenly. As her friends, students, and work associates moved on with their lives, she found it more difficult to let go. When a Brother Todd, a fellow teacher at Ricks Academy, accepted a teaching position elsewhere, Hannah wrote:

Foolish child, I cried but I could not help it; it seemed to me that I could not go to the Academy with him gone. He had been such a true friend and pillar to me in that work that I thought life in it without him would be impossible. Foolish heart have you not yet learned that you must part with all that you have learned to cling to and that you must lean . . . on God and not on man?³⁶

Battling this lack of permanence, she took out a loan, which interestingly was cosigned by Victor Hegsted, and bought a house in Rexburg. In

33. *Ibid.*, 5 May 1899, 56.

34. *Ibid.*, 8 Oct. 1899, 63

35. *Ibid.*, 9 Oct. 1899, 64.

36. *Ibid.*, 20 May 1901, 78.

September 1901 she was ready to move in. Still she struggled to overcome her feelings of loneliness. On her ride to Rexburg, she bemoaned going "alone to live in a lone house." She was struggling to suppress her feelings and "keep the tears back," when she ran into a friend. After talking for a few moments, he "was gone and gone also was the heavy cloud of despondency." She wrote: "Hope welled up in my bosom. My students loved me; they would be near and I would live for them."³⁷ She threw her whole soul into teaching and fulfilling her calling as president of the Y.L.M.I.A. in the Fremont, Idaho, Stake. She took students attending Ricks Academy in as boarders and filled her life with service to those around her.

Yet even while serving, she experienced moments of profound loneliness. On 29 September 1901, after spending two days watching over her dying cousin Adelgunda, Hannah went home and made this entry: "The strangeness of everything, that I thought I was alone coupled with the anxiety over my cousin were quite sufficient reasons for my night being very much disturbed and full of lonely wakeful hours."³⁸

Amid this loneliness, Hannah first recorded opportunities to enter plural marriage. Within six months of her break-up with Tom Condie, she had the following experience:

Brother E. W. Hunter invited me to spend the time at their home which I accepted. In connection with his wife, he told me of the high esteem in which they had always held me and asked for the privilege to become a wooer of my heart if ever the opportunity came again to the L.D.S. to live that Higher Law of Marriage providing that I form no other ties in the meantime. The three of us talked together on the subject, Sister Addie expressing herself as freely as did her husband.³⁹

Interestingly, this offer does not appear to have surprised Hannah. She reported it as a part of the regular news of her day and then proceeded to write about other things. However, while she might not have been taken aback, and never appeared to give this particular marriage proposition much thought, it played a role in preparing her for other such offers she received.

In fact, in 1902 Hannah was offered two other chances to enter into polygamous relationships. As with other important decisions, she was concerned foremost with making the right choice.

One of these offers came from Martin Randall. In 1894 Hannah had boarded at the Randalls' home while she was teaching at the primary school

37. *Ibid.*, 15 Sept. 1901, 89.

38. *Ibid.*, 29 Sept. 1901, 90.

39. *Ibid.*, 6 Oct. 1900, 72.

in Centerville. At that time she noted the "beautiful loving spirit" in their home and wrote that "Sister Randall was patient and kind and Bro. Randall so true and helpful. It did me a great deal of good and I shall ever prize the experience."⁴⁰ For many years following, Hannah stayed in their home on trips to and from Salt Lake City.

The other offer came from Bishop Victor Hegsted of Salem, Idaho. Interestingly, Hannah never identified Victor by name. She wrote about this other suitor as Bro. —, and it is only by looking back that the reader knows who Bro. — is. This secrecy appears to have been a typical behavior among those who participated in new plural marriages. For example, when Rudger Clawson, a notable defender of polygamy, was preparing for his plural marriage to Pearl Udall, he never identified her by name.⁴¹ People who kept otherwise "remarkably complete" journals were sometimes conspicuously silent around periods when they were directly involved in making or aiding a plural union.⁴²

Victor Hegsted, or "Bro. —," appeared on the scene on 17 May 1902. He asked her to take a ride with him one evening, and after they had returned to her front gate, he told her that he had a "proposition of interest" for her and asked her to consider it. She continued:

We talked for a moment or two and I promised to do so. When I went into the house it seemed as if a new world had suddenly rolled into sight and I went immediately to my bedroom and knelt down and asked God to guide my thoughts and my actions and show me the way I should go. I intended leaving the next day for Utah and expected while there to have to give another his answer for which he had been waiting for four years. My heart was humble and I did need the Spirit of the Lord and oh how I sought it.⁴³

This is the first time Hannah mentioned that another, Martin Randall, had been seeking her hand at all. With Victor's "proposition" added to Randall's, Hannah was forced into a period of deep introspection and heavenly invocation.

Hannah spent that summer taking classes at the University of Utah, away from both the Randalls and Victor Hegsted. Then, in the middle of her already confusing life, she had an emotionally devastating experience. On 15 June 1902 Hannah was not feeling well and missed the day's stake conference. She mustered her energy to attend the evening's conference,

40. *Ibid.*, 1894, 8.

41. Hardy, 210.

42. *Ibid.*, 224.

43. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 17 May 1902, 101.

however, and found a seat along the side of the room. Looking out over the congregation, she saw, directly in front of her, Tom Condie and his wife.

He was loving and fondling the baby and the sight pierced me to the quick. Just as I was trying to control myself I was called to the stand to speak. I went to the stand and asked to be excused saying that I was unable to do it but Sister Eddington and Apostle Taylor insisted. I tried a few sentences but finally broke down. Never shall I forget how I felt. My trip was spoiled and all resolutions to be brave and strong was [sic] gone to the four winds.⁴⁴

Thereafter she felt "quite unfit to do anything" with her summer school studies. Characteristically, however, she worked hard and did well in school. Then, around the middle of September 1902, when she was back in Rexburg, she received "a letter from Bro. Condie regarding the old relation" and one from Bro. Randall, telling her that he was coming to visit to get an answer, once again, to "his heart's question." Hannah was worried and did not know what to do, so she fasted and prayed. When she consulted with her father, he advised her to accept Victor. She felt "easier but not decisive" until the next day when she went to the train to meet Brother Randall. As soon as she saw him, she felt, "You are not for me." He was "earnest and anxious," but the more they talked, the more she felt confirmed in her decision. Closing the "Brother Randall" episode, she wrote:

One more drama enacted. He had been very kind and a true friend, was a man of honor whom I respected; all this I felt and as I watched him off on his journey disappointed, a telltale tear found its way down my cheek and I queried "Why is it so?" and at the same time answered, "but it will be for the best." How I longed for a confidential moment with that other one that my restless heart might be stilled. Life is so uncertain and these steps so grave.⁴⁵

She did not have an opportunity to talk to Victor privately until Christmas when they took a ride in his cutter. In January 1903 she wrote that the evening "was made sacred by the long quiet evening spent with ——. So many plans and hopes must be gone over and so many things to be learned." The night following, she told him, "I cannot let you go," and declared that "in those words my heart love went out never to be recalled. Then it seemed our destiny was sealed that we would only live in each other."⁴⁶

44. *Ibid.*, 15 June 1902, 109.

45. *Ibid.*, Sept. 1902, 117-18.

46. *Ibid.*, 25 Jan. 1903, 122.

With this manifestation of love, her language concerning Bro. — became adoring and intimate; she began to refer to him as "sweetheart," something she had never done in any other relationship. Still, she never wrote that her sweetheart was Bishop Victor Hegsted. Curiously, she chose to hide only Victor's name, not Randall's or the Hunters'. A possible reason for this could have been Victor's proximity. Both the Randalls and the Hunters lived in Utah, farther away from possible scandal. Another could have been Victor's position as bishop of the Salem ward. This could also show that acceptance of new plural marriages by the general membership of the church was waning.

Hannah kept her love for Victor confidential for many months. On one occasion she wrote: "I introduced my sweetheart to [Sister Goddard] and later she asked who he was, adding: 'I liked that face, he has such a good look.' How my heart throbbed to tell her more."⁴⁷ This was difficult, as she was terribly in love with him.

She spoke of their times together in glowing tones such as the following: "How my heart beat as — came, . . . the greeting was whole souled; the memory never will fade, I feel his hand clasp still."⁴⁸ On another day, she recorded: "Thursday, sweetheart came and we spent a most delightful hour driving in Logan Canyon. Our hearts were overflowing and everything sang of love. The scent of the wild roses he gathered for me linger with me still, telling me anew the story of love. During the afternoon we loitered in the temple grounds and rested in the shade of that sacred edifice."⁴⁹

That July she called on Sister Ada Hegsted, Victor's second and only living wife, to talk over their future plans together. Hannah received a warm welcome which was noted in her journal. She said that she "received her consent to and approval of the same," and upon Hannah's departure, Sister Hegsted said, "Come again, as long as I have a home you will be welcome in it." She also said, "If you want V. you can have him."⁵⁰ At this point, it is important to note that as Hannah had been going to school, attending conferences, and assuming leadership positions, she had associated with many leaders of the church, including those who secretly sought to continue plural marriage. This involvement helped to make possible her relationship with Victor; without it, she might not have even considered plural marriage as an option, in keeping with her faith.

One of her earliest and dearest associations was with Professor George Brimhall of Brigham Young Academy. In 1893 she mentioned that he taught

47. *Ibid.*, 27 Jan. 1903, 123.

48. *Ibid.*, 15 Mar. 1903, 124.

49. *Ibid.*, 11 June 1903, 127.

50. *Ibid.*, 1 July 1903, 128.

the "Y.M. class," stating simply that "We all loved him."⁵¹ She encountered him often after that, always writing of him in warm, respectful tones. Brimhall entered into a post-Manifesto plural marriage with Alice Louise Reynolds, who was also a good friend and B.Y.A. classmate of Hannah's.⁵² The president of the academy, Benjamin Cluff, whom Hannah also mentioned in her journal, took a plural wife (Florence Reynolds) in 1900.⁵³ Clearly, Hannah was well acquainted with people who had entered post-Manifesto marriages while she was trying to make the same decision.

Another association worth noting was with Owen Woodruff, a general authority who had married his second wife, Eliza Avery Clark, in 1901.⁵⁴ In May 1902, following the officers' meetings of the Y.L.M.I.A., she had lunch with the Woodruff family. She enjoyed their "sweet home spirit" and noted that when one of their little sons became sleepy while eating, "Bro. Woodruff excused himself and undressed and put the little fellow to sleep."⁵⁵ With such a heavy decision weighing on her mind, the significance of such a small act of kindness and the spirit she felt in the Woodruffs' home cannot be underrated.

These encounters were also particularly meaningful to Hannah because from an early age she was taught to revere and follow the guidance of her leaders. At the close of a conference in 1901, Hannah told her journal, "I thought how humble and yet how great the spirit of the Lord makes men. How thankful I am for the association of such faithful ones and for the inspiration that I draw from their lives." Following that statement, she wrote that "a few brief moments were spent in talking to Bro. V. C. Hegsted and they too hold a hallowed place."⁵⁶

In keeping with her righteous desires, it appears that Victor and Hannah sought approval for their marriage from church leaders. When they attended April 1903 general conference she stated that the "sweetest part of the stay was my [erased but looks like "dear"] boy's return from the home [erased but looks like "apostle"] with instructions and information in regard to [erased but looks like "our"] life."⁵⁷ Most likely, she had approval from an unidentified church official. During a period when the apostles were divided about whether or not new plural marriages

51. *Ibid.*, 8 Jan. 1893, 6.

52. Hardy, 397.

53. Quinn, 87.

54. Woodruff firmly believed in the principle of plurality and made "strong comments . . . in behalf of post-Manifesto polygamy, as well as his own polygamous marriage" (see Hardy, 208-209).

55. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 30 May 1902, 105.

56. *Ibid.*, 2 Sept. 1901, 88.

57. *Ibid.*, 4 Apr. 1903, 125.

should be performed,⁵⁸ Hannah and Victor must have received endorsement from one of the apostles who continued to crusade quietly for polygamy's continuation.⁵⁹

Not only was their marriage approved by a church leader, but Hannah had also received encouragement to enter the marriage from her father. It appears, however, that the greatest factor in her decision to marry Victor was her belief that the marriage was sanctioned by God. As previously noted, Hannah sought divine instruction to guide her actions; evidently, she felt that she had received sanction. This belief is echoed in a letter which Victor sent to Hannah after their marriage. He wrote: "I know as you say our love is no accident a wiser mind than *ours* guided us in the right direction. we have accepted the situation with the firm determination to do right — and *we will*. God be with you sweetheart and comfort you always."⁶⁰

On 12 September 1903, Hannah wrote in her journal and simply chronicled her day and mentioned nothing of Victor or love or marriage. Following this entry, there are five blank pages. She did not continue until January 1905. Different from her earlier writings, most of these entries are retrospective. The "Salem Ward Record of Members" shows that Hannah and Victor were married in Salt Lake City on 1 May 1904.⁶¹

They married during a time when Mormon polygamy was once again a topic of heated debate in national politics. Rumors of continuing plural marriage and the election of Apostle Reed Smoot to the U.S. Senate led the Congress to investigate the church's polygamous activities. At that time, church president Joseph F. Smith issued the Second Manifesto of 7 April 1904, which stated that "no [plural] marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent, or knowledge" of the church since Woodruff's Manifesto. It further declared that: "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."⁶² Following much debate within the Quorum of the Twelve, the church began to "quietly remove men who had married after 1890 from positions of

58. "By this time at least a third of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles were new, younger men who, like [Reed] Smoot, had only one wife and were anxious to acquit the hectorated reputation of the church" (Hardy, 262).

59. Quinn, 95-96.

60. Undated and unsigned letter in Victor Hegsted's hand, typescript in my possession.

61. Hardy, 406.

62. Jessie L. Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 15.

visibility in church organizations." They also began to excommunicate those who had entered plural marriages after 1904.⁶³ Most likely, Hannah and Victor avoided serious repercussions partially because they kept a low profile and partially because they were married within the year 1904, before the church began "excommunicating those involved in post-1904 plural marriages more vigorously than at anytime previously."⁶⁴

They did not entirely escape censure for their marriage, however. Hannah gave up her job at Ricks Academy and her house in Rexburg to live at her aunt Maria Butler's in Utah, and Victor was released as bishop of the Salem, Idaho, Ward on 29 January 1905, after serving only five years.⁶⁵ Apparently, the people of Rexburg were generally unwilling or unable to accept their union. Freeman Grover Hemming, Hannah's nephew, remembers that while everyone knew that Hannah and Victor had married polygamously, no one, particularly his mother (Hannah's younger sister Adelgunda), talked about it; the subject was completely taboo.⁶⁶

Until Ada, Victor's second wife, died in 1912, Hannah never lived with Victor on a continuous basis. She wrote of his coming to bless each of her babies. The entry about her first baby's blessing is representative of each of these blessing visits: "Rulon Grover was blessed by his papa. Aunt Ada was present."⁶⁷

While Hannah never complained to her journal about being lonely, she voiced her feelings of isolation in her letters to Victor. This is evidenced in a portion of a letter that Victor wrote to Hannah on 21 May 1905:

Pet I have read your letter several times and I can understand your heart-yearnings for me and all the freedom you used to enjoy, and dear I cannot tell you how I feel for you in this matter, or how I have planned for the future, for all our plans are likely to be changed on a moments notice that they are almost useless to us yet, HOW. Dear I can't tell as to that but it will come to us. and in the meantime let us enjoy [sic] what we have and thank God we have what we have.⁶⁸

During this lonely time, she was shown great kindness by many individuals. While Victor's visits were mentioned in Hannah's writings,

63. Hardy, 292.

64. Ibid.

65. The bishop who preceded Victor served for sixteen years. The bishop who followed him also served sixteen years. Zelda Mortensen et al., eds., *Salem Second Ward History* (Salem, ID: Privately printed, 1990), 41-75.

66. Freeman Grover Hemming, interview, Rexburg, Idaho, 15 July 1992.

67. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 27 Feb. 1905, 135.

68. Victor Hegsted to Hannah Grover Hegsted, 21 May 1905, typescript in my possession.

the substance of her commentary involved others who filled her life, administered to her children and brought her joy. After Rulon was born, Ada's father went to see Hannah and gave her "words of encouragement and blessings" and then invited her to stay with his family for the winter. She noted: "We did this and Grandpa and baby Rulon had some wonderful times together and how they romped and tumbled on the floor and laughed. We spent Thanksgiving at their home. They had been invited away to other kindred and Rulon and I stayed all alone and cheered each other."⁶⁹ Victor also expressed gratitude for the kindness shown to Hannah by some of their friends. Responding to one of Hannah's letters, Victor wrote back on 21 May 1905, with the following words: "Yes we are glad to think that we have some friends who will 'wish us well' and I certainly thank your dear friends who were thought full [sic] enough to express it."⁷⁰

By January 1907 Hannah was pregnant with her second child. In preparation for the birth, she received a washing and anointing from Maria Dongall, Ruth Fox, Sarah Eddington, and Rose Bennett. She carefully recorded the substance of a portion of that blessing. It was the first time that Hannah recorded anything in her journal that revealed an insecurity about her decision to marry.

It was such a glorious privilege and included every blessing that my heart could ask for. One especially beautiful feature was Sr. Eddington's prayer in which she said it was my gift from God not to doubt anymore in regard to my position and the important step I had taken in regard to God's law. That my faith should remain sure and that I never should be left in doubt.⁷¹

This blessing calmed Hannah's soul, and her baby was born. She wrote, "Dear Little Marion came to live with us. My what a joy to little lonely Rulon as well as to Mamma . . . In looks he was so much like his papa."⁷² Her children, as she had been promised in her patriarchal blessings, brought her a great deal of happiness; many of her writings focused on them.

Four years after Marion's birth, in October 1911, Hannah's journal tells another important story. She reported: "Moved to Forest Dale Ward in the Granite Stake [Salt Lake City] and once again became identified with the church in regular order. Victor and Adam came and worked in

69. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 27 Feb. 1905, 135.

70. Victor Hegsted to Hannah Grover Hegsted, 21 May 1905, typescript in my possession.

71. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 12 Jan. 1907, 137.

72. *Ibid.*, 18 Jan. 1907, 138.

the temple that winter."⁷³ Aside from her silence about holding church callings, this is the only evidence that she was not accepted by the church after her marriage. It is unclear exactly what form this disapproval took, although it does not appear that official church action was taken against her.⁷⁴ In order to keep a low profile, she probably did not hold leadership positions. The church was avoiding more scandal by keeping most post-Manifesto polygamists out of the public eye.⁷⁵ This must have been a trial for a woman who had shown her devotion to her church by serving in numerous leadership positions.

It is worth noting the circumstances in which Hannah once again became an accepted member in the church. In the same year that she moved into the Granite Stake, it was determined that if the church released all of the leaders who had married polygamously after the first Manifesto, the entire stake presidency would have been affected.⁷⁶ Apparently, Hannah was living in an area where other people had formed plural unions after the Manifesto, and it seems that she found greater acceptance there.

While Hannah says little of her relationship with Ada, she made one entry before Ada's death which connotes a definite rapport between the two. On 4 April 1912 Hannah wrote about Victor's oldest daughter getting married in the Salt Lake Temple. Ada was unable to attend, so Hannah gave the couple a little reception at her home and then wrote to her mother to tell her "about this sacred marriage and other happenings of the day."⁷⁷ Ada died that same year.

Following Ada's death, Hannah and Victor were married civilly.⁷⁸ This procured a place for Hannah in mainstream Mormon society as she now appeared to be no different from others who were living in monogamous marriages. Finally in 1914 Hannah moved to Driggs, Idaho, to be with Victor. Victor was a dashing figure who knew how to make Hannah feel thoroughly loved. She wrote: "The little children and I returned to Driggs where Victor met us. He gave me such a big welcome and told me how much he needed me."⁷⁹ Once they were in Driggs, her fourth and last child,

73. *Ibid.*, 11 Jan. 1911, 141.

74. She mentions that "Bishop Moroni Marriott . . . came to us during conference and brought our recommends to us. Victor and I both appreciated this visit and this kindness" (*ibid.*, 5 Sept. 1906, 137).

75. Hardy, 295.

76. *Ibid.*, 292.

77. *Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted*, 4 Apr. 1912, 141.

78. *Certificate of Marriage*, 1914, Salt Lake City, Utah, in possession of Val G. Hemming.

79. *Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted*, 23 May 1914, 143.

Karl, was born. She recorded that "he was a very tiny little fellow but what an ocean of love he brought into the home."⁸⁰

Her life became distinctly more complicated following her civil marriage. Soon after her move to Driggs, she found herself running a huge household. She reported that "During these years our household duties were heavy for we numbered twelve in the family nearly all of the time."⁸¹ This household included not only Hannah's family of four children, but also Aunt Ada's four, and a few other relatives and friends.

In addition to this, with her acceptance back into the fold, she again held positions of responsibility in the church and in the community. In the church, she served in the Relief Society, in the Primary, and worked extensively in the temple. Characteristically, she loved the people she worked with and devoted herself to her callings. When members of the Relief Society General Board stayed in Hannah's home, she noted that, "We had a wonderful visit together, and received so much encouragement in our work."⁸² She also wrote that she worked "very zealously" in her Primary calling.

In the community Hannah was made the principal of school in Driggs for three years, and then in 1923 she accepted the position of county superintendent of schools. She also went back to Provo for summer school as the Relief Society delegate from the Teton Stake. She stated, "It was one of the most glorious privileges of my life."⁸³ She calls these her "busy years," adding that "I cared for my family and home also."⁸⁴ Compared with her early journal, Hannah treats this period summarily; so it is difficult to obtain a good understanding of her later years. In these writings, however, she continued to emanate a sense of joy about her life and relationships.

While Hannah may have had her lonely times, there is no evidence that she wished she had taken a different path. She made her decision to marry with integrity. Using her family life and church leaders as examples, and believing in blessings that promised her a husband and a posterity, she prayed to God and married Victor Hegsted. As with other experiences in her life, she met the challenges of being a post-Manifesto plural wife with strength and dedication to the church. Whether her experience with post-Manifesto plural marriage is typical is a question for future historians.

80. *Ibid.*, 9 Feb. 1915, 143.

81. *Ibid.*, 1 Oct. 1915, 144.

82. *Ibid.*, Nov. 1915, 144.

83. *Ibid.*, 1919-23, 144.

84. *Ibid.*, 145.