

Recovery from Mormonism (RfM) discussion forum.

What happened to Fanny Alger?

Posted by: NeverBeenaMormon ()
Date: May 07, 2016 06:36PM

Can anyone share any knowledge/links on Fanny Alger's life after her relationship with Horny Joe?

Admin note: Per the LDS.org site, Fanny was 'sealed' to Joseph Smith some-time while in Kirkland around 1833. She was 16 when she first moved into the Smith home. This was years before the revelation of the temple ceremony for eternal marriage. The Mormon church had to retroactively make this appear to be a sealing instead of it being what it really was - infidelity. See historical note at the bottom of this article.

Re: What happened

Posted by: Greyfort ()
Date: May 07, 2016 06:40PM

Wikipedia says:

"Joseph Smith asked Fanny's uncle, Levi Hancock, to conduct her to Missouri, but she accompanied her parents instead. The Algers stopped in Dublin, Wayne County, Indiana, and there Fanny met and, on November 16, 1838, married Solomon Custer, a non-Mormon, listed in various censuses as a grocer, baker, and merchant. Although her parents continued on their way to Nauvoo, Illinois, and eventually Utah Territory, the Custers remained in Indiana. Fanny bore nine children, only two of whom survived her. In 1874, she joined the Universalist church in Dublin. Her funeral was held at the Dublin church after she died at the home of her son in Indianapolis, Indiana, on November 29, 1889.[3]

Many years later, an early acquaintance remembered the young Alger of Kirtland as a "very nice and comely young woman ... toward whom ... everyone seemed partial for the amiability of her character." [4] Her obituary reported that in Indiana she was "generally beloved by all who knew her and was noted for her benevolence of spirit and generous-heartedness."

Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?

Posted by: NeverBeenaMormon ()
Date: May 07, 2016 07:01PM

"amiability of her character".....if you know what I mean

Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?

Posted by: NeverBeenaMormon ()
Date: May 07, 2016 07:04PM

Interesting, thank you. So even though she'd been living with and seen close up a man who was constantly receiving messages from God, was His mouthpiece on Earth and lived a moral life of holiness she didn't want to stay a member of his church.

Almost as if she'd realised that none of that was true!

[Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?](#)

Posted by: Forgetting Abigail ()

Date: May 07, 2016 07:05PM

She's buried in Dublin, Indiana.

[Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?](#)

Posted by: NeverBeenaMormon ()

Date: May 07, 2016 07:07PM

Do any sources reveal how Joe reacted when Fanny didn't appear in Missouri?

[Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?](#)

Posted by: Greyfort ()

Date: May 07, 2016 07:35PM

I knew she had married and had kids, but I didn't realize that it was outside of the Church, or that it was so many kids.

[When did the "transaction" in the barn take place?](#)

Posted by: Hedning ()

Date: May 07, 2016 08:10PM

Anybody know the approximate date, does the church give a sealing date to JS?

[Re: When did the "transaction" in the barn take place?](#)

Posted by: Shinehahbeam ()

Date: May 09, 2016 02:24PM

There was no sealing. Joe hadn't even thought up the "sealing power" at that point. There's no way for the "church" to say this was anything other than an affair.

[Re: When did the "transaction" in the barn take place?](#)

Posted by: snuckafoodberry ()

Date: May 10, 2016 12:29AM

Very interesting

[Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?](#)

Posted by: Doubting Thomas ()

Date: May 07, 2016 09:10PM

She was lucky. After such a close association with Joseph Smith, she was able to leave Mormonism all behind and live a full life.

[Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?](#)

Posted by: Amyjo ()

Date: May 07, 2016 09:34PM

Considering she was raped by Joseph she was wise to leave that past behind for a better life ahead than anything he offered her. What exactly did he provide for his multiple wives? Emma kept all their property upon his death. His other "wives" collected nothing for their services.

Fanny was sexploited. That's all she was to Joseph, a sex object.

She grew up. Joseph died in his folly.

[Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?](#)

Posted by: kathleen ()

Date: May 09, 2016 11:08AM

If Fanny had two perfectly good parents, why did she ever live with Joseph Smith and Emma?

[Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?](#)

Posted by: randyj ()

Date: May 09, 2016 01:56PM

"If Fanny had two perfectly good parents, why did she ever live with Joseph Smith and Emma?"

She worked in the Smith home as a servant and nanny. She was known as Nanny Fanny.

[Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?](#)

Posted by: Doubting Thomas ()

Date: May 09, 2016 10:55PM

Make that "Nanny with the hot fanny!"

[Re: What happened to Fanny Alger?](#)

Posted by: icedtea ()

Date: May 09, 2016 02:45PM

It was very common during that time period for teen girls to hire out as domestic helpers. They earned money and

experience that would be useful when they married and had families of their own. There were not a lot of ways for young women to earn income (back before fast-food jobs) and much more physical labor involved in running a home and supplying a family than now, so it's not surprising that Fanny and many others did so.

[And Joeseeph had a bad habit of nailing the house help.](#)

Posted by: Hedning ()
Date: May 09, 2016 04:54PM

I don't think any Mormon woman who looks into who the young women were that Joseph forced into his Harem could tolerate thinking of him as a Prophet, Seer and Revelator. Just a simple look at the list looks like 5 women who were in his household help, lodging or care. The guy was a sexual predator plain and simple.

[Re: And Joeseeph had a bad habit of nailing the house help.](#)

Posted by: abcdomg ()
Date: May 09, 2016 05:16PM

For those of us whose families go back to the beginning, there is that terrible moment when you realize your female ancestors rarely if ever had a choice when it came to who they had sex with. "Consensual sex" was not a concept that existed in the church up until a few years ago, and even now it is dismissed in many abusive, church-approved relationships.

In the past, our female ancestors were forced to marry and have sex their whole lives whether or not they wanted it, and no one came to rescue them. Fanny was fortunate, but her story of escape was also extremely rare.

Smith and 16-year-old Fanny Alger

Smith's first known sexual affair was with a teenager named Fannie Alger, who was living with Smith and his first wife Emma in their Kirtland, Ohio, home. Fanny was also Smith's first confirmed plural wife [see LDS.org]. Smith 'came to know [her] in Kirtland during early 1833 when she, at the age of 16, stayed at his home as a housemaid. Described as 'a very nice and comely young woman,' according to Benjamin Johnson, Fanny lived with the Smith family from 1833 to 1836.'

Fanny eventually became the target of Smith's sexual advances, with Smith's predatory behavior soon becoming the talk of the town:

'Martin Harris, one of the 'Three Witnesses' to the Book of Mormon, recalled that the prophet's 'servant girl' claimed he had made 'improper proposals to her, which created quite a talk amongst the people.' Mormon Fanny Brewer similarly reported 'much excitement against the Prophet . . . [involving] an unlawful intercourse between himself and a young orphan girl residing in his family and under his protection.'

Emma discovered the sexual affair between Smith and Fanny and exploded in anger. Caught with his hand in Fanny's cookie jar, Smith confessed. A noticeably pregnant Fanny eventually was kicked out of the house by Emma, as reported thusly:

'Former Mormon apostle William McLellin later wrote that Emma Smith substantiated the Smith-Alger affair. According to McLellin, Emma was searching for her husband and Alger one evening, when through a crack in the barn door she saw 'him and Fanny in the barn together alone' on the hay mow. McLellin, in a letter to one of Smith's sons, added that the ensuing confrontation between Emma and her husband grew so heated that Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and Oliver Cowdery had to mediate the situation.

"After Emma related what she had witnessed, Smith, according to McLellin, 'confessed humbly and begged forgiveness. Emma and all forgave him.' While Oliver Cowdery may have forgiven his cousin Joseph Smith, he did not forget the incident. Three years later, when provoked by the prophet, Cowdery countered by calling the Fanny Alger episode 'a dirty, nasty, filthy affair.'

'Chauncey Webb recounts Emma's later discovery of the relationship: 'Emma was furious, and drove the girl, who was unable to conceal the consequences of her celestial relation with the prophet, out of her house' . . .

". . . Webb, Smith's grammar teacher . . . reported that when the pregnancy became evident, Emma Smith drove Fanny from her home. . . . Webb's daughter, Ann Eliza Webb Young, a divorced wife of Brigham Young, remembered that Fanny was taken into the Webb home on a temporary basis Fanny stayed with relatives in nearby Mayfield until about the time Joseph fled Kirtland for Missouri.

'Fanny left Kirtland in September 1836 with her family. Though she married non-Mormon Solomon Custer on 16 November 1836¹⁴ and was living in Dublin City, Indiana, far from Kirtland, her name still raised eyebrows. Fanny Brewer, a Mormon visitor to Kirtland in 1837, observed 'much excitement against the Prophet . . . [involving] an unlawful intercourse between himself and a young orphan girl residing in his family and under his protection.'

(Van Wagoner, 'Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait in Religious Excess,' p. 291; and Van Wagoner, 'Mormon