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Project Zion Podcast

Josh Mangelson 00:17

Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

Karin Peter 00:33

Welcome to Project Zion Podcast. This is Cuppa Joe, where we explore Restoration history and I'm your host, Karin Peter. Today's episode is the third of three in a mini-series about the three successive wives of Joseph Smith III, and our guest, that has been with us through all the interviews on this topic, is Wendy Eaton, and she works at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois, and she's the Administrative Assistant to the Historic Sites Foundation. Wendy has also been our guest before for an episode on the restoration, or some of the restoration projects at Historic Sites in Community of Christ. So, we've had Wendy for our guest lots of times and we're happy to have her again as we do our final interview on this mini-series. So, hi, Wendy, welcome.

Wendy Eaton 01:28

Hello, Karin, thanks.

Karin Peter 01:30

I'm really happy to do this interview. I've learned so much about the three women who were each married to Joseph Smith III and most of our listeners are aware that Joseph Smith III, son of Joseph Smith Jr., was the first Prophet President of the Reorganization, called then The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, now Community of Christ. What people may not know is that he had three wives successively, and he lost his first wife, married again, after she died, married a third time. And so, we've been learning about these women beyond just the basics of that kind of information. And the women's names are Emmeline, Bertha and Ada. And as I recall, Ada, our topic today, you had already acquired a lot of information on Emmeline and Bertha, but Ada was one you didn't know a whole lot about until you prepared to discuss this topic for our mini-series. So, what you told me was that Ada was a caregiver who, and I quote, "navigates the Smith family with grace," unquote. So, that sounds like an interesting way to describe her relationship with the Smith family, and I'm looking forward to hearing more about her life. So, let's begin.

Wendy Eaton 02:59

Alright, so, like you said, Karin, I really didn't know much about Ada. In fact, one of the last times I was at the Independence Temple in the museum, I saw a picture of Joseph Smith III with this woman and I had no idea who it was. Come to find out it was Ada not long after they had been married. You'd think I would have been able to recognize her by photo at least. So, like you said, after the death of his second wife, Bertha, Joseph is struggling to resume his cheery nature as he continues on with his family and church work. His youngest two, Hale and Lucy, are still living at home. His daughter, Audentia, and her family have moved into Liberty Hall so that they can manage the house, help take care of the younger two siblings and help look after Joseph as well. He puts it in his memoirs that he's lost some of the

domestic companionship that he had so enjoyed throughout his adult life. His other children are not too far away, but they're growing up. They have lives of their own and are quite busy themselves. So, in 1897, church travel takes him to Toronto. We're going to be going to Toronto a lot during this interview. He's reintroduced to a woman named Ada Rachel Clarke. The two had met before, about a year and a half earlier, at a conference at Kirtland Temple in Ohio. Ada was born July 23, 1871 at Garafraxa in Ontario. Ada and her family had been very active in another church. She was one of the principal organist for that congregation. And then they heard a young missionary named R.C. Evans preach, and like many others, were converted to the RLDS church.

Karin Peter 05:06

So, I'm going to stop you right there, Wendy, and just say that John Hamer did a Project Zion episode on R.C. Evans.

Wendy Eaton 05:12

Yes.

Karin Peter 05:13

So, if our listeners haven't listened to that, you might want to go back and pick that one up. Okay, sorry to interrupt. Go ahead.

Wendy Eaton 05:19

No, he's a great guy, and he'll come up a couple times in our story today, too. So, the family join as a family in September of 1893. Ada is 22 years old.

Karin Peter 05:33

Okay, you know what my question is.

Wendy Eaton 05:35

Uh huh.

Karin Peter 05:37

How old was Joseph Smith III?

Wendy Eaton 05:39

In 1897, I would have to stop and do the math, but they are 40-ish years apart in age.

Karin Peter 05:46

Alrighty, then.

Wendy Eaton 05:49

We'll get there. So, they spend some time together during this conference and then Joseph leaves. He has responsibilities in the eastern United States. He comes back to Toronto in October and their friendship kindles into love. He writes to her father, who would have almost been a contemporary in age to Joseph. He asked permission to marry Ada. And so, Ada's parents write to her and have her

immediately come home, so that they can discuss this matter as a family. But Ada is quite happy to marry Joseph, and so, her father agrees, and they set a date. Joseph has, again, more church responsibilities, but he promises to return to spend Christmas with the Clark family and then they would be married in January. So, Joseph writes to his children about this plan to marry and the best I can tell from the accounts, he hasn't been home this entire time he has courted Ada. And so, all of this is happening with his family by letters, letting them know what's going on. But he writes to Emma and Carrie, two of his oldest, "I have decided again to marry. Ada Clarke of Waldemar, Ontario, a young woman, though old enough to be entitled the name old maid by several years. I will be much pleased if my chosen companion pleases you children, when you see and know her. To Audentia he writes, "I write to inform you that I have a range to bring over from Queen Victoria's domain, a bundle of goods, wares, and Canadian products, properly labeled and directed to past inspections at the customer's house. The principal piece will be labeled Mrs. Ada Smith before being started for the border. I hope to arrive with it in my possession or in my companionship, January 14, or 15th." So, he's writing to his children that he's planning to get married, and he will be bringing his new wife.

Karin Peter 08:12

Cargo, he is bringing cargo is what he actually says.

Wendy Eaton 08:15

Yes. He has a sense of humor...

Karin Peter 08:17

He does.

Wendy Eaton 08:17

...and that really shines in the family letters, which is part of the fun of studying this.

Karin Peter 08:22

I also want to note when he writes, "to be labeled an old maid at 20 something," was very typical for the era. I mean, if you hit 20 and you're not married, as a woman, you start to go into what, spinsterhood for that time period. But what I also want to point out, for people who are reeling at the 40 year+ age difference, and fear that this might travel into lechery in some sense, Joseph Smith III was very much the romantic in the other two episodes that we did. His relationship with his first wife was one of a great romance. And, in the story of his second wife, I thought perhaps we might not hear of his romantic and clever and witty nature, and yet it was very much evident in his relationship with her. And so, here in his letters to his children, you can already see, for whatever reason, that he is still at this point in his life, a romantic.

Wendy Eaton 09:25

Yeah, yeah. I know, the 40 year difference is uncomfortable for people. And it's interesting to note, there were people back then who were uncomfortable with it as well. And so, just for reference, even, since we're already in this realm of being uncomfortable with this age difference, Joseph had just turned 65. Ada is 26. And I think it's important to understand how old Joseph's children are at this point. So, his oldest two, Emmeline's two children who are still living at this point, Emma is 40, Carrie is 36.

Both are married and have families of their own. Emma has a fairly large family. Carrie and her husband decided to just have one child. Audentia is 25. She's married and has a couple young children of her own. Fred is 23. He's a newlywed at this point, I think even just within a year or so. Israel's 21 and I think he's still in University at this point. And then, as I mentioned, Hale and Lucy are still living at home. Hale is 16, Lucy's 13. So, the children are quite a bit older. Even Lucy, at 13, is getting to be a, we'd say teenager today. They probably weren't quite thinking that way then. But it's interesting, the ages and how they fall in this, that at least a couple of the children are older than Joseph's new wife, and again, it's uncomfortable, but it's part of the story. The evidence, when I've read through these letters and the memoirs, it's very much a marriage of love and companionship. So, I hope that allays any uneasiness that people may be feeling right now. I did find it interesting that in all these letters, the children, and I know I'm calling 40, a 40 year old a child, but that's how they refer to them back then, and that just keeps the generation straight. But the children almost always, in writing to Ada, use her first name. They don't call her mother or stepmother. It's just Ada. And at least one of the grandchildren, they sign a letter to her "Grandpa" and "Aunt Ada". So, maybe it was a little more comfortable for all around to just think of her as an aunt rather than a grandmother at not quite 30 years old. So, there was that. Okay, let's go back into the story.

Karin Peter 12:10

Okay. Sorry, I took you on a tangent there. All right.

Wendy Eaton 12:14

I think it was an important one to go down. So, January 12, 1898, in her parents' home, Joseph and Ada are married, and R.C. Evans officiates the ceremony. They have a dinner and then they climb into her brother's sleigh for the ride to the train station. And the sled hit a slick spot during this ride, and Joseph and James, they're so wrapped up in blankets against the cold, they slide right off the driver's seat and into a snowbank. No one's hurt, but it adds to the merriment and the joy of the day. So, a couple days later, the train arrives at Lamoni, and there are very few people there to meet them. On pulling into the Liberty Hall driveway, they only see Joseph's brother, Alexander, standing on the porch. But Joseph makes the story a little bit better. He writes in his memoirs, "As the broad door swung open, there was revealed, old and young, kith and kin, the whole family clan, extending smiling greetings, loving hand clasp and affectionate caresses. It was indeed a royal and characteristic welcome and did much to reassure the young woman who had consented to become so intimate a member of a family, unknown and strange to her." So, the family were very positive and supportive in Joseph's decision to remarry. There's a little more trepidation about introducing Ada to the Lamoni branch though. Joseph writes that on the following Sunday, he stood in the pulpit and introduced sister Joseph Smith to the congregation. There had been some gossip about this young woman showing up at his house and seeming to move into the home. And gossip happens, speculation happens. He puts their mind to rest and they quickly embrace and welcome Ada as well and she becomes a fairly active member of the area. But she does travel a lot more than Joseph's first two wives, so you're going to see that as we continue on. So, spring of 1898, they've just been married a couple months, the general conference for the church was held at the Stone Church in Independence, Missouri. And so, for our listeners who might not be familiar, at this point in RLDS history, the general conferences are not fixed in one location. During the conference they vote on to where to have the next conference. And so, they traveled around between Kirtland, Lamoni, Independence and a few other locations. And so, during this

conference at the Stone Church, the vote comes to decide where to hold the following conference and one of the cities is Toronto. Joseph records in his memoirs that when the standing vote was taken, so when you voted in approval of something, you stood so they could see you clearly. "When the standing vote was taken, brother R.C. Evans and I promptly arose to our feet in favor of the Canadian city. Sitting almost opposite, among the delegates, were my wife and sister of O.H. Riggs, both of whom at once followed our lead and arose. At this evidence of feminine support, brother Evans and I gallantly bowed to the lady's and raised our hands to our temples and salute, which gesture was followed by much applause and a ripple of merriment in the assembly. Doubtless the four of us standing to vote for that faraway city did present an interesting and contrasting group. I was portly, bald and gray bearded, while brother Evans was small, young and dapper. My wife was tall, over five foot nine, fair and rosily blushing, while sister Riggs was short, dark, sparkling and smiling roguishly. For some time after we continued to hear comments on the ill-assorted quartet which wanted to go to Toronto for the next general conference. Near the end of May of 1898, so we're still within just the first few months of their marriage, Joseph is traveling for the church and Ada decides to make a trip on her own up to Toronto for a sister's wedding. She's between two and three months pregnant at this time and when she returns in mid-June, she and Joseph, along with Hale, the oldest of the two children that's living at home still, attend the Bluff Park reunion. And so, Bluff Park is not a reunion grounds that's still used but it's on the opposite side of the Mississippi River from Nauvoo, so you can kind of see where it was from the Smith family properties here. In his memoirs, Joseph records that, "It's Ada's his first reunion of this kind." So again, she's getting a new experience with church activity going on, and being introduced as Mrs. Joseph Smith. Hearing that Joseph was so close, the residents here in Nauvoo send word inviting him to come and talk to them and he, of course, wants to take them up on this offer. And he had spent so many years navigating the Mississippi River, he decides to make the trip over by rowboat by himself, and he's nearly 66 years old. So, he's not letting his age stop him. So, he makes the journey over, finds that the river has changed a little from his memory, and then he climbs up the hill. So, it's about a mile, mile and a half up to the city hall where this meeting was to take place. By the time the meeting ends, it has gotten very hot for his walk back down the hill, and he gets down to the bottom and it's raining, but he decides he, it's fine. He's going to row himself back over anyway. Well, he finally makes it across the river to find that Ada had very anxiously stood on the opposite bank watching his progress as he rowed across the river. So, it's pretty sweet that she was concerned about him being so determined to make this trip on his own.

Karin Peter 19:05

That's the caregiver Ada that you were talking about, coming out a little bit?

Wendy Eaton 19:12

One of my favorite Liberty Hall storytellers, Martha Harper, introduced me to the next story I want to share. So, it's now December of 1898. They've been married nearly an entire year, and they're about to celebrate their first Christmas. So, none of Joseph's children were going to be at Liberty Hall. I think Lucy may have been invited to stay with one of her sisters. So, they plan this quiet dinner. They decided to invite some friends over, all widows, and this is something that the two of them do quite a bit during their marriage. They would invite friends over who were going to spend the holiday alone to have dinner with them. Joseph hitched up his horses, equipped with sleigh bells, and set out to pick up these women to bring them home. The very next day, Ada gives birth to their first child.

Karin Peter 20:09

Oh my, a dinner party.

Wendy Eaton 20:13

So, they named this little boy Richard Clark and they generally call him R.C. So yeah, my first reaction is, you're holding a dinner party and you're that far along in your pregnancy, okay? I guess, whatever makes you happy and whatever you're capable of doing, go for it. The following summer Joseph is traveling when he receives a troubling telegram from home. His daughter Audentia's youngest child, Viola, had developed diphtheria and had died. Joseph's daughter Lucy also has the disease. Joseph's torn between returning home or continuing on with his church business and spends the evening in prayer. The following morning, another telegram arrives saying that it seems that Lucy is out of danger, so he's able to wrap up his business quickly before he returns home. And he learns that the danger had been pretty great for a while but thankfully Liberty Hall was built so that it was airy and well ventilated and Ada and baby R.C. were able to stay in the home with her. He notes that Dr. Bertha Greer had come and regularly visited and treated Lucy as well as a visiting nurse so that Ada wouldn't have to be in the room with Lucy, putting her and the baby in danger. So, as Lucy recovers, it's determined that she would benefit from some fresh air and mild outdoor activity. So, Joseph changes his plans and arranges for Lucy, Ada and baby R.C. to accompany him to his next reunion, which is in western Iowa. Ada is again impressed with the size of the reunion. It's one of the largest church gatherings she experiences and Joseph seemed to greatly enjoy the good humored comments and teasing that he got because he was the one who typically was pushing the baby carriage around the reunion grounds. In November 1900, a second son joins the family, William Wallace, who's named for an early church leader, W.W. Blair. The family call him Wallace and he may be familiar to some of our listeners, as in 1958, he becomes president of the RLDS church after his brother Israel. In 1903, we open the year with the birth of their third child, another little boy who they named Reginald Archer, but they almost always call Babe. In the summer, Joseph takes his furthest journey from home to the British Isles. Ada and the boys don't go with him, and there's not a lot of family letters exchanged at this time, and his memoirs are just taken up with his experiences in the British Isles. So, I don't know a lot of what's going on at this time. But there is a fairly steady routine over the following years that when Joseph is on his long trips for the church, Ada almost always packs up the boys and they head to Toronto so that she could be with her family during that time. So, it seems like she's traveling quite a bit for family while he's traveling for the church in these years. So, let's move ahead to October 1904. Joseph is wrapping up a trip and Ada takes a train to meet him in St. Louis, without the boys in tow, so they get a little time to themselves. They attend the Louisiana Purchase Exposition there in St. Louis, and they enjoy visiting a tea shop in particular to take in the sights and watch people walk by. They, there's one interesting thing to note, I love in the family letters with Ada, you see the advancement of technology. And one of the things in this particular account that I loved so much, Joseph said that, "One day it was hot and they were tired so they decided to go take in a moving picture. The first time either of them experienced that."

Karin Peter 24:46

Oh, how fun.

Wendy Eaton 20:48

I know. He said, "The humor was a bit childish, but he thought it was a novel experience for the two of them to have." So, it's fascinating to look at how quickly technology is advancing when you barely have photographs of Joseph when he's a teenager and a young adult, to now he's in his 60s and he's attending a movie for the first time. I don't...

Karin Peter 25:13

Or attending the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis which in the states is famous for the old Judy Garland movie.

Wendy Eaton 25:20

Yeah.

Karin Peter 25:21

Yeah, that's fun.

Wendy Eaton 25:26

Alright, so in 1905, Ada's family have sold their Ontario farm and they've moved to Vancouver over in British Columbia, and so they work out a plan. Joseph has a lot of church travel up in this part of both the United States and Canada, so they arrange that Ada and the boys will go with him and they'll just make a long vacation of it. So, they take a train from Lamoni and they visit Montana and Idaho, Washington, British Columbia, Oregon, and Ada's family who are living out there. They share one story about visiting her sister Jenny who lives in the mountains of Idaho, that the older two of the boys loved getting out and learning to ride horses, while Babe snuck into the garden unnoticed and gorged himself on peas until he got sick. He got better, but a lot of these little incidences, with especially Babe, he seems to get into all sorts of things. When it comes time to leave the farm there in Idaho, they travel to Spokane by train, stay a couple days and then head over to Seattle again, rest for a couple days before heading north into Vancouver, and spending time with Ada's folks and visiting church members in that area. They returned back to Seattle and board a steam boat to travel to Tacoma. And in Tacoma, R.C. ends up staying with Aunt Mabel, while the others travel to Castle Rock, and Joseph takes Wallace to go visit that rock formation. And then they head to the Portland reunion, during which Babe again wanders away and gets lost for a few hours. But again, they find him. The family take a couple days break during the Portland conference to attend a fair that's being held in Portland. This time it's R.C. who wanders away and gets lost for a couple hours before being reunited with the family. And then, by mid-September, so this is early summer and now we're at mid-September. This is a long trip. By mid-September, they wrap up in Portland and they make their trip back to Lamoni which includes a stop in Salt Lake City. Ada and the boys don't stay in Salt Lake but Joseph does. His son Fred M. is currently living out there and the two of them spend some time visiting family while Ada makes the trip back to Liberty Hall. Now after this marathon of traveling, we're now at November of 1905. Joseph is incredibly unwell by all of this traveling and exertion, so his children convince him to not travel quite so much this coming winter. And everything that they had so loved about Liberty Hall was becoming burdensome; the size of the farm, the size of the house, and the heating and the chopping wood and getting things ready for winter. It was just too much and the home, even though it doesn't seem like it, is enough of a distance from Lamoni to be a little bit of an inconvenience to picking up goods that you might need from

the store. So, they decide to move into Lamoni, to a smaller home, next door to one of the family members. And Dr. Bertha Greer steps in to offer her advice for a time period and says that Joseph really should not be involved in the moving itself. So, Ada coordinates the packing up the house and the moving and heavy lifting and hauling and getting things back into place in the new home. They're settled just before Christmas of 1905 and the Liberty Hall home is sold to the church. So, with this intention of slowing down, that continues on into the next year, except for February, when Joseph is required to travel to Washington D.C. on business connected to the Reed Smoot case. I don't know a lot about the Reed Smoot case and thankfully I don't feel like I need to get into that too much with this talk, but Ada travels with him so that she can provide care during this trip. It's going to last about two and a half weeks, and Ada is given permission to be in the courtroom so that she's able to stay with Joseph the whole time. And in the mornings when he's up to it, they take in the sights of Washington D.C. So, back home, neither Audentia or Lucy are able to stay with the boys. Audentia has quite a large family of her own by this time and Lucy had just been married and had moved away from Lamoni. And so, they stay with a church friend and Ada writes to Lucy about the parting and then the subsequent reunion. And I want to read these letters because I find them pretty funny. R.C. is seven, Wallace is five and Reginald again, who they typically called Babe, is three. And this, I think, is the first time they've been away from both parents for any length of time, even if it's just about two and a half weeks. Ada writes, "The boys stood the parting fine, Reginald being the only one to cry. Just as I had on my hat and coat to go, he cried, 'I want to go with you, Mama.' I took him up and comforted him until he stopped and he sat on Sister Whitehead's knee and said that I might go. I had given each of the boys a nickel to spend for themselves. R.C., seeing how sad Babe felt, gave him his nickel saying, 'Here Babe, I'll give you my nickel if you'll stop crying.' Babe took it and stopped crying right away. The sight set Wallace's lip quivering, but he didn't cry." And when they returned, Ada writes again to Lucy, "We have arrived home on the early train. The boys were all dressed up and each had on a paper hat. Babe knew us right away, came running and threw his arms around my neck. They looked so good, so healthy and so fine to me." Not long after, the boys, one after another, come down with scarlet fever and the household is under quarantine for about 35 days. Joseph, once everybody's better, travels to Independence for the spring conference, but since the boys are still recovering, Ada stays home with them. While in Independence, several church leaders talk to Joseph about the idea of moving to Independence and he talks the matter over with Ada, but they don't talk to too many other people. They talk to a few of the children but they keep the news pretty quiet. They do decide to go ahead and make the move and that takes place in July. Their new home is three miles from where today Community of Christ headquarters are and the home is fitted out with all the modern conveniences you could want. There are gas lights and a gas stove. There is a furnace that heats the home with hot air. There's a bathroom indoors with hot and cold water. And it's small but there's enough room to have a few family members over. The rail line is very close by and there are many trolleys to make getting around easy. And there is a big construction project just about to get started in Independence, the Sanitarium, which is the church hospital. And it becomes a very important part of church life in Independence and is part of the reason, I think, that a lot of people, not only the Smith family, but the Sanitarium's presence, begin migrating to Independence at this point in time. In the late spring of 1908, Joseph is visiting Nauvoo. He's looking to establish a memorial to his father and uncle. So, we're starting to catch up with some of the history that I'm a little more comfortable with, but we're not getting into too much of that. When the trip wraps up, he meets Ada and the boys in Lamoni. The older two boys stay in Lamoni with their sister Lucy while Joseph, Ada and Babe continue north through Michigan, up to Toronto, and then eventually over to

Boston, where they attend a church reunion at what today is known as the Onset Reunion Grounds. Part of the journey between Toronto and Boston was on the St. Lawrence River and they say that the scenery was lovely, but the rapids on one stretch caused Joseph to fall and hurt himself. It's not a bad injury and he doesn't let it stop him from having a good time. It's important to note that his vision is also getting worse and worse by this point.

Karin Peter 35:10

How old is he at this point?

Wendy Eaton 35:13

1908, he is, he's in his 70s. He's getting close to 80.

Karin Peter 35:20

Okay, okay, so this all makes sense for just, just for that age.

Wendy Eaton 35:27

Right, so after their time in the Boston area wraps up, they had back to Toronto and then back down to Lamoni, and they reunite with the older two boys in time to attend a reunion there in Iowa. And you would think that after three months of travel, when he's had this fall, he would just sit back and relax and enjoy the reunion. No, he preaches several times. He attends almost every meeting that he could, and he meets with many, many friends. I imagine the big difference with this, as compared to other long trips that he had taken, Ada was with him the whole time, able to care of him and monitor him, probably making sure he's eating well and taking care of himself. So, I'm sure that made a big difference at this point in time. In 1909, the only thing I really wanted to bring up, he, Joseph's not traveling a lot at this time. But he and Ada do go back to Lamoni for his brother, Alexander's, funeral. So, a lot of Joseph's family, his brothers and sister, his friends, are starting to reach the ends of their lives. So, he's starting to recognize that he needs to be a little more careful with himself and his time. So, life is much quieter without him traveling. He's almost completely blind by 1911. Ada lays out his clothes every morning so that he still looks nice in case people stop by. The family has a typewriter and a steady stream of secretaries come through to take dictation so that he could keep working, particularly on his memoirs and other church correspondence, but also family letters. He seems to take over the communication from Ada. She's taking care of everything else, so he's writing to the family at this point. His son, Israel, is one of his regular secretaries, so it's kind of nice that it's a family member helping keep in contact with all the other family. But a lot of these letters between Joseph and the others are peppered with, "Ada said to tell you this." or "Ada may, wants me to make sure that she said this to you." So, you're getting her influence even if we're not getting her words at that point. In the summer of 1912, Ada takes a trip away from home, by herself, to go visit family up in Canada. The oldest daughter, Emma, stays at the home and helps take care of her father and the three little boys. In November 1912, Joseph celebrates his 80th birthday and many of the family come to Independence to help celebrate. And because I love Smith family cookie stories so much, the next couple letters made me laugh quite a bit. And so, in January of 1913, just a couple months later, Joseph writes to Carrie about the cookies she had made for his birthday and says that, "By careful management, Ada had made them last." And I'm guessing that means Ada hid them from Joseph and the boys. He writes...

Karin Peter 38:53

“That's what I would do.”

Wendy Eaton 38:55

So, he writes to Carrie, “The good housewife was careful to see that the star boarder himself had his cookie and his cup of tea so that they lasted the resiege of two months.” And they must have been something like a ginger snap to stay fresh for two months, but I mean, he liked his cookies. The following Christmas, Carrie again sends cookies to the family and Joseph writes a thank you letter back to her again. And I love this because he flexes his poetic muscles at this time. And he writes in the letter, “I dreamed a dream the other night when all around was still. I thought I saw the cookies rare come tumbling down the hill.” So, a nice little poem from Joseph and some of you might catch the little bit of information in there. Carrie's living in Lamoni and Lamoni is often called The Hill at that point in time, just, kind of, everybody knows it as The Hill or Graceland's up at The Hill. So, you get that little bit of information in there too. So, we've now moved into Joseph's last life and it's filled with Ada having the family very close by to help her out during this time. He has a fall in June of 1914 and Ada's having to care for him as he's recovering. And so, it's really helpful to her to have his older children around to help with the boys, to help with the household chores, to give her a break so that she could get some rest. And the family does still get out occasionally and have some fun together, including there's a letter that says they went for a ride in brother Crick's automobile, which Joseph wasn't quite sure what to make of that experience. By the early days of December 1914, most of the family has gathered to Independence, including Ada's sister, Mabel. On December 10, Joseph dies, and he's buried in Mound Grove Cemetery in Independence, Missouri. In March 1915, Ada writes to Carrie and Lucy thanking them for the letters which had brought so much cheer to her household. She writes that the boys are doing well and that they're all trying to remember Papa Joseph as best they could. And she includes these words, “Surely his life was a blessing and his death a mighty benediction. So, we are getting along, slowly trying each day to do a little to lift the load from someone.” She's looking to get very involved with outreach to the poor and the sick and those in need. Unfortunately, her health takes a decline. For two years, she had been living with the malignant goiter, and it suddenly becomes worth, worse. Again, her sister Mabel is there, so she's able to help take care of Ada. But in May, Ada has to go into the Independence Sanitarium for surgery. Emma comes into town and stays with the boys so that they have somebody with them all the time, and so that Mabel can be with her sister all the time. Not long after the surgery, Mabel starts taking over the writing to the family and she sends to Carrie that she's worried that Ada is not going to get better. She said she would like to see a steadier upgrade in the fight that she's making. And that if it wasn't for the little boys, she didn't think Ada would be fighting as hard as she was. Fred and Israel had been able to be around and visit Ada but they were all very cautious about letting the little boys into the hospital to see their mother. They wanted to make sure that she was better able to talk, that her blood pressure was under control, that her sleep was pretty regular. Mabel tells Carrie to share these letters with Lucy because she's not sure she's going to have enough time to write to everybody. But apparently Lucy sends a letter directly to Mabel greatly concerned about her little brothers. So, Mabel takes the time to respond to this one. She says that she thanks Lucy for Lucy's offer of taking the boys into her home to take care of them, but she's hoping that their mother will recover and that won't be necessary. And I can't help but think and feel for Lucy at this point. Her brothers are at the age that she was when she lost her mother and so, I think that must be what's causing her to be so concerned and she's still living in Lamoni at this time. She feels so far away and

she had been so involved in their early childhood days when the family was all still in Lamoni. I'm not sure how long Ada was in the Sanitarium that summer. The test showed that this growth was cancerous but she's eventually able to go home. In October, she's admitted once more to the Sanitarium and after a few weeks, she dies, 10 months and 10 days after Joseph. Her funeral is held in the Independence Stone Church and then she was buried near Joseph at Mound Grove Cemetery. The boys are young. R.C. is 15, Wallace is 14, and Babe is 12, and their older siblings, wanting one less change for the boys in this very difficult year, decide that Israel and his wife Nina and their little boy Joseph would move in to the family home to help raise the boys. Audentia and Emma are close by. Lucy, Carrie and Hale are not too far away, and they all do the best that they can to raise their little brothers to adulthood. And, as I mentioned, after Israel is president of the church, Wallace becomes president of the church. So, we have three of Joseph's sons following him in presidency.

Karin Peter 45:30

Okay, so it almost sounds like Ada's health deteriorated rapidly at a time when she already was suffering from grief, and loss of Joseph, which contributed to her not fighting quite as well, which the romantic in me wants to think that that was partly from a broken heart. All of these stories, Ada, Bertha Emmeline, all have these sad, kind of, melancholy aspects to them in their life, in a relationship with Joseph Smith III, and yet his stories and his delight in each relationship is really evident when you recount some of the conversations that he had and the letters that he wrote. I'm curious about, they lived in Independence. How was Ada involved with the church at that time? Was there any comment on that or discussion of that?

Wendy Eaton 46:36

One of the books that I used as a resource, *33 Women of the Restoration*, it's full of all sorts of great stories, but it's not full of great citation. So, the chapter that's about Ada does say that she was involved with a number of the church societies, both in Lamoni and Independence, as specifically the Lamoni Might Society which was an outreach program that the women were involved in there. And in Independence, it said that she was involved with raising money for the San. as it was being built, and that she was involved with Daughters of Zion, which was a women's organization at that time period. But I haven't been able to back those stories up with firm references yet, so I'll have to keep looking on that. But it wouldn't surprise me that she was involved. But at the same time, she's got three kids and a husband that she is very much the caretaker of who's got a very busy life of his own. So, if it turns out that she wasn't very involved in these groups, it wouldn't surprise me at the same time.

Karin Peter 47:54

Right. Joseph Smith III married some really wonderful, capable women, there is no doubt, as we listen to the stories, women who knew their own mind and were very independent, each in their own way. So, before we bring this episode to a close, our episode on Ada Smith, do you have any closing thoughts on Ada and her life?

Wendy Eaton 48:19

I think my biggest closing thought with Ada is I'm so glad I finally had the chance to really focus some time on finding her story, because as you and I had talked about, I had known Emmeline pretty well, because I live in Nauvoo, and she lived in Nauvoo. And then I had picked up quite a bit on Bertha on

my own because she lived so long and her children were so vibrant and active in their adult years. It was nice to be able to round out this family story, learning more about Ada herself. And she seemed to be quite a treasure of a woman. I enjoyed the sense of humor that came out in the family letters. That's why I said, she's navigating this family with grace. She just seems to blend right in, very easily with them.

Karin Peter 49:14

Especially with the disparity of ages in Joseph Smith III's own children.

Wendy Eaton 49:19

Yeah.

Karin Peter 49:20

So, that's a marvelous story of how the different generations find a way to be together as family. So, I want to thank you for, not just this episode, but the three that we've had in this mini-series about the women who had married Joseph Smith III. It's been a great way to learn the stories of the women that we don't always hear about because we're concentrating on the lives and doings of the men in the history of the Reorganization. But I'm hoping that as we go forward from here you will return to us and we could do some other stories, and maybe even some other mini-series on stories of women in the Reorganization. So, for our listeners, if you have any additional questions for Wendy about Ada, or about Emmeline, or Bertha, you can reach her at weaton, w e a t o n@cofchrist.org. And in the meantime, we hope to see [inaudible] here at Cuppa Joe, part of the Project Zion Podcast. I'm Karin Peter. Thanks so much for listening.

Josh Mangelson 50:34

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