

The Visit of Angels

*Story taken from the book "Logan Temple – The First 100 Years"
By Nolan P. Olsen (page 173)*

John Farnham Boynton was one of the original twelve apostles of latter days. At Nauvoo, Joseph Smith had preached the doctrine of plural wives and had told John that it was the will of the Lord that he take another wife. He talked it over with his spouse and they decided they didn't want another wife. The Prophet



reminded Brother Boynton three or four time of his marriage responsibilities, which went unheeded. Because of this and other matters, John was excommunicated from the church.

He returned to his home state of Massachusetts to live, but at Nauvoo he had caught the spirit of genealogy and temple work. He never lost his testimony of the gospel and was a Mormon at heart all of his life. He eventually had three wives, but only one at a time.

In the 1870's, John went to work to compile a history and genealogy of the early Boynton families of America. In one of his letters he said, "I am in correspondence with more than eleven hundred descendants of William and John Boynton who located in Rowley, Massachusetts; I have issued 2, 200 circulars and distributed 1,700 newspapers; I have traveled over 6,000 miles examining libraries, local histories, deeds, probate and county records, and archives of states and national departments."

Olive Boynton, a sister to John F., had married Jonathan Harriman Hale, Bishop of the Ninth Ward at Nauvoo. The Hale family headed west with the pioneers where the parents died at Winter Quarters. The four sons and a daughter arrived in Utah, September 24, 1848, and settled in Grantsville in 1854.

As John F. compiled his thousands of names in family order, he sent copies to his nephews in Utah, knowing they would soon have a temple and could do the temple work for his families.

In April 1888, the Hales moved to Cache Valley bringing their voluminous genealogy records with them and began an extensive temple activity. At this time they arranged with Samuel Roskelley, to prepare the sheets for temple work. He kept names in the temple continuously from then until about 1903. That fall his health began to fail, his eye sight was poor, and he decided to give up all his record work. He brought the records to Sacramento meeting one night and gave them to Alma H. Hale, and told him it would be necessary to get some one else to take over the work.

Jonathan H. Hale wrote: "During the following week, father was very depressed and worried all the time, and was hardly able to work or eat. He could not decide what to do, for neither he nor any of the Hale family knew how to proceed with the work. A great deal of information had been gathered and the family felt a great responsibility to complete the work. The whole family made it a matter of prayer for the week.

The next Sunday at meeting, Brother Roskelley came to father and said: "Bring the records back to me. I have to finish them. Friday evening as I was returning home from the temple, near Hyde Park, a messenger on a white horse appeared by the side of my buggy and said he wanted me to finish the Hale record. He assured me that the work was done right and that it was all being accepted. He said thousands of the Hale family were anxious that the work go on. I explained that I was too busy to do any more record work and that my eye sight and health would not permit it. Then the messenger made me this promise – that if I would continue, the Lord would bless me with health and strength, my eye sight would be good and the way would be opened so I would have the necessary time to do the work. He stayed by my side until I finally promised to do it and then he blessed me and disappeared."

When Brother Roskelley described his messenger to father, he answered, "Why that was my own father, Jonathan Harriman Hale, the first of the Hale's to join the church in 1834. He died in 1847 at Winter Quarters."

When Brother Roskelley finally finished the record he said that the greatest load he ever carried was lifted off his shoulders. He had made a promise to a heavenly being and couldn't rest until the work was completed. He went home that very night and took off his glasses and never wore them again in this life. He enjoyed much better health and found more time for the work than he had hoped for.

The Hale family had a week long reunion in the temple about 1905, when they completed the last baptism and endowment, and then on Friday afternoon the last sealing was done for the 4,000 family members. As President Merrill neared Smithfield that night on his way to Richmond, he turned to tell the temple goodbye, as was his

custom, and his heart about jumped out of his body. He could see the temple was on fire, but as he looked at it for a few minutes he was satisfied that there were no red flames licking upwards. The whole temple was filled with light and the outside of the building shone with a pale pink glow. All the people in the neighborhood gathered to watch the phenomena and said they heard a heavenly choir sing for nearly two hours. Everyone marveled at the sight, for there were no electric lights in 1915. The same thing happened the following night too, with all the rooms and the building lighted and the heavenly choir singing.

President Merrill knew that we had had a very heavenly manifestation. When he reported the incident to President Wilford Woodruff, the president asked what special work had been done in the temple. He was told of the unusual activity of the Hale family and how they had accomplished so much in such a little time. President Woodruff said the Hale and Boynton families had been permitted to come from the other side to sing and rejoice and celebrate their deliverance in the Logan Temple.