
Jesse Gause

1785–1836

D&C 81: Introduction

From 1806 to 1829, Jesse affiliated with the Society of Friends (Quakers). During that twenty-three year period, he resided in the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Massachusetts, and Ohio. Eight months after resigning from the Society of Friends, Jesse joined the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing (Shakers). In 1831 he and his wife moved to the Shaker community of North Union, Ohio, to be with believers in the divinity of Mother Ann Lee.

In 1831 Jesse forsook the Shakers' faith for the truths of the Restoration. On March 8, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote, "Chose this day and ordained brother Jesse Gause and Broth[er] Sidney [Rigdon] to be my counsellors of the ministry of the presidency of the high Priesthood."¹ At the time of his ordination, Jesse was age forty-seven—twenty years older than Joseph Smith. The Prophet received a revelation confirming Jesse's call to the presidency and explaining "the dignity of the appointment" (D&C 81: Introduction).

Jesse served as a counselor in the First Presidency for six months. He also served as a scribe for Joseph Smith and a member of the United Firm. In April 1832 he traveled with the Prophet Joseph and other Church leaders to Jackson County, Missouri. After he returned to Kirtland in August 1832, Jesse was called to be the missionary companion of Zebedee Coltrin.

On their mission, he and Zebedee journeyed to North Union and Thompson, Ohio. They also journeyed to Economy, near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

¹ Kirtland Revelation Book, 10, as cited in Robert J. Woodford, "Jesse Gause, Counselor to the Prophet," *BYU Studies* 15 (Spring 1975), 363.

Of the places they visited, details are only available of their visit to North Union. Apparently, Jesse requested that his wife, Minerva, an adherent of the Shaker faith, join him in the Restoration. She refused. Matthew Houston, a leader of the Shaker society at North Union, wrote of Jesse's attempt to convince his wife to accept Joseph Smith as a prophet:

I presume you was acquainted with Jesse Gause from Hancock he was here a few days since after his wife Minerva—she utterly refused being his slave any longer—he had to go away without her. altho he tryed what the law could do for him he was very much intraged threatened to take away Minerva's child—she presented it to him but he went away without it and her—he is yet a Mormon—& and is second to the Prophet or Seer—Joseph Smith—this state of exaltation may tend to steady him or keep him away from us a little longer—for which I am heartily glad for he is certainly the meanest of men.²

Jesse and his companion, Zebedee Coltrin, continued their missionary journey until sickness overcame Zebedee, who turned back to Kirtland on August 19, 1832. What happened to Jesse after Zebedee departed is unknown. It is presumed that he was residing in Chester County, Pennsylvania, at time of his death.

² Letter of Matthew Houston to Seth Y. Wells, 10 August 1832, North Union, OH, as cited in Woodford, "Jesse Gause, Counselor to the Prophet," 364.