FANNY YOUNG
(Sealed November 2, 1843)

Fanny was born in 1787, to John and Abigail Howe Young in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. Fanny was an older sister of Brigham Young.

Fanny married Roswell Murry in 1832 and while he refused to join the Church, Fanny was baptized later that year. The Murrys moved to Kirtland, Ohio, and then to Missouri, and finally Nauvoo, Illinois, where Roswell died in 1839, leaving Fanny a single woman.

Beyond one recollection from Fanny's brother Brigham Young, relatively little is known regarding her November 2, 1843, sealing to the Prophet. In 1873 Brigham reminisced:

I recollect a sister conversing with Joseph Smith on this subject [of plural marriage]. She told him: “Now, don’t talk to me; when I get into the celestial kingdom, if I ever do get there, I shall request the privilege of being a ministering angel; that is the labor that I wish to perform. I don’t want any companion in that world; and if the Lord will make me a ministering angel, it is all I want.” Joseph said, “Sister, you talk very foolishly, you do not know what you will want.” He then said to me: “Here, brother Brigham, you seal this lady to me.” I sealed her to him. This was my own sister according to the flesh.¹

Fanny was then fifty-six years of age. In 1870, one of Brigham’s plural wives, Harriet Cook, affirmed that Fanny Young’s sealing was for time and eternity.² As a widow, conjugal relations were not disallowed from a religious standpoint, but there is no indication that sexual relations were contemplated or experienced by the participants. The union was likely created to fulfill D&C 132:16–17 in giving Fanny an eternal spouse.

Helen Mar Kimball remembered:

Aunt Fanny was a true Saint, and was beloved by all who had the pleasure of her acquaintance; her sympathies were always exercised for the poor and distressed. She was agreeable society for old or young and many an evening her young acquaintances would gather at her house to hear her sing or relate the “Scottish Chiefs,” “Children of the Abbey,” and other like tales, which she could do as I never heard anyone else. She had been a great reader; and I was named by her after the Scottish Lady, Helen Mar.

The Youngs were all gifted singers and when they sang together they made a grand choir. Aunt Fanny sang many beautiful songs, but the one I loved best was “Oft in the stilly night.” She had a clear melodious voice, and sang with such pathos, that all present would be affected to tears. The words are so touching and so expressive that I often repeat them as applicable to my own feelings.³

The November 2, 1843, sealing between Fanny Young and Joseph Smith represents the last documented plural marriage contracted by the Prophet. Whether Emma was informed is unknown. Since the context of the sealing was to allow Fanny to have a husband in the celestial kingdom, it probably would not have been a great concern to Emma.
Fanny Young Murry migrated to Utah and died in 1859 in full faith.

Endnotes:


Appendix — Evidences of Joseph Smith’s plural marriage to Fanny Young:

- Jenson, “First list of wives,” Document #1, Andrew Jenson Papers, MS 17956, Box 49, fd. 16.
- Jenson, “Fanny Murray biographical information sheet,” Document #4, Andrew Jenson Papers, MS 17956, Box 49, fd. 16.
- Jenson, “Plural Marriage,” 234.
- George A. Smith, Letter to Joseph Smith III, October 9, 1869.
- Eliza Jane Churchill Webb, Letter to Mary Bond, April 24, 1876.
- Proxy sealing to Joseph Smith, April 4, 1899, under the direction of President Lorenzo Snow, Salt Lake Temple Sealing Records, Book D, 243, GS film, 184,590, LDS Family History Library, in Tinney, “The Royal Family of the Prophet Joseph Smith” 41, 63.