

*When a mob attacked the Church's print shop and tossed the press and papers into the street, Vienna attempted to gather up the papers amid the confusion.*





# VIENNA JAQUES Woman of Faith

*From her baptism until her death at age 96,  
Vienna Jaques stood as an example of faith in difficult times.*

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Vienna Jaques<sup>1</sup> had been in her new home in Jackson County, Missouri, USA, for only six weeks when violence erupted on July 20, 1833. Local residents had demanded that the Latter-day Saints leave the county, but Church leaders demurred to accept. Mobs in the area then attacked Church members and their property.

On that day, 46-year-old Vienna saw the mob tar and feather Edward Partridge, the bishop in Missouri, and Charles Allen. Meanwhile, others demolished the Church's print shop and threw the printing press and papers out the window, including unbound and incomplete copies of the Book of Commandments.<sup>2</sup> After the attack, Vienna knelt in the dirt road alone, furiously collecting scattered pages of the Book of Commandments. A mobber came over and hovered menacingly over her, declaring, "Madam, this is only a prelude to what you have to suffer."<sup>3</sup> This traumatic event affected Vienna for many years. Still, she courageously remained faithful, even after this intensely violent episode in Missouri.

This event is one of many examples of Vienna's faith in the face of hardship. Though she lived more than 100 years ago, Vienna's life stands as an example to members of the Church today. She was strong-minded when it came to the gospel of



Jesus Christ. She had a testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and she followed his leadership. She freely gave all she had temporally and spiritually to help build the kingdom of God during this crucial time in Church history.

### Life in Boston, Massachusetts

Born on June 10, 1787, in Essex County, Massachusetts, to Henry and Lucinda Jaques, Vienna Jaques grew up to be a woman who enjoyed self-reliance. She lived into her 40s in Boston, Massachusetts, as an unmarried woman with considerable financial means. She also had a secondary residence in Providence, Rhode Island, with friends and family there. City directories over the years listed her as a nurse, midwife, and laundress.

When she first encountered Mormon missionaries in 1831, she was 44 years old and a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. But Vienna was a spiritual seeker who sought after truth. Upon hearing of Joseph Smith, Vienna obtained a copy of the Book of Mormon. According to her obituary, she did not fully comprehend the importance of the book when she first read it. Then, one evening as she

**Dated September 4, 1833, this letter from Joseph Smith to Vienna Jaques is among the earliest surviving letters written by him.**

considered what to include in her prayer, she had a “vision of the Book of Mormon” that prompted her to ask the Lord about this new scripture. Subsequently, “she was firmly convinced of its divine authenticity.”<sup>4</sup>

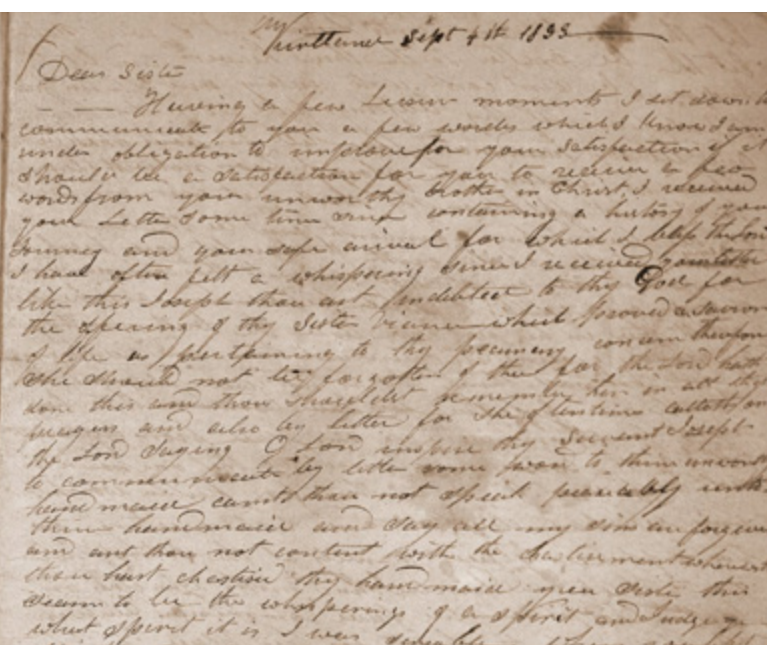
Vienna then wanted to meet the Prophet Joseph Smith, so she traveled alone to Kirtland, Ohio, in the summer of 1831 by canal boat and stagecoach. She was baptized while there. Vienna returned to Boston in the fall of 1831, and during the next year her faith made her an excellent missionary as she helped Joseph’s brother Samuel Smith and Orson Hyde establish a small branch in Boston. She provided housing for the two missionaries, and she connected them with her network of friends, family, and acquaintances. This gave the men a constant audience for preaching.<sup>5</sup>

Samuel Smith’s diary provides examples of how Vienna Jaques taught the gospel and bore a strong testimony of her faith. Samuel wrote on July 13, 1832, that he and Orson Hyde arrived in Providence, Rhode Island. “Some of the people were believing,” they discovered, because they “had heard Sister Vienna tell concerning the Book [of Mormon]. Some of them came in the same evening and we taught them.”<sup>6</sup>

### Life in Kirtland, Ohio

Vienna left her comfortable living in the Boston area to gather with the Saints in Kirtland in the fall of 1832 and remained there through the spring of 1833. The Prophet Joseph received a revelation on March 8, 1833, that called Vienna by name to go to Zion—which referred to Jackson County, Missouri, at the time—to receive her inheritance (see D&C 90:28, 30). The revelation also gave her a promise for the future. She would receive a reward in “due time” and be able to “settle down in peace inasmuch as she is faithful, and not be idle in her days from thenceforth” (D&C 90:29, 31).<sup>7</sup> Vienna thus became one of two 19th-century women mentioned by name in the Doctrine and Covenants (the other being Emma Smith).

By the time of that March 1833 revelation, Vienna had freely given to the Church a substantial financial offering—a sacrifice borne out of faith. Her gift came at a propitious time, as Church leaders were planning to purchase several





***Vienna, who had worked as a nurse and a midwife, helped care for members of Zion's Camp when cholera hit the company near Jackson County, Missouri.***

parcels of land in Kirtland, including the land on which the Kirtland Temple would be built.<sup>8</sup> The Church needed funds to carry out such transactions, and her contribution aided these endeavors.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Joseph wrote that this single sister's financial offering "proved a savior of life as pertaining to [the Church's] pecuniary [financial] concern."<sup>10</sup>

### **Life in Jackson County, Missouri**

After the revelation in March 1833, a Church council encouraged Vienna to move to Jackson County. She left Kirtland in May and arrived in Jackson County by June 7, 1833. Vienna had donated precious funds and moved to Missouri in anticipation of living in peace in accordance with a divine message through a living prophet, but in the aftermath of the July violence where two men were tarred and feathered, such a situation seemed doubtful.<sup>11</sup>

A few weeks after the attack on the Church's print shop, Joseph Smith wrote a letter of gratitude and comfort to Vienna, stating that he felt prompted to answer her prayers through a letter. He wrote words of reassurance and guidance to Vienna, as well as his own prayer to the Lord in her behalf: "After this great tribulation, let Thy blessings

fall upon Thy people, and let Thy handmaid live till her soul shall be satisfied in beholding the glory of Zion. Notwithstanding her [Zion's] present affliction, she shall yet arise and put on her beautiful garments and be the joy and glory of the whole earth." The Prophet Joseph further counseled Vienna to "live in strict obedience to the commandments of God and walk humble before Him and He will exalt thee in his own due time."<sup>12</sup>

As a result of mob violence in Jackson County, the Prophet Joseph Smith led a company of about 200 faithful volunteers from Kirtland called Zion's Camp to aid Church members in Missouri. They departed on this rescue mission in May 1834. On June 19 they arrived at a fork in the Fishing River. Here a fierce storm protected them from their enemies. However, at the end of June, cholera hit the company and eventually killed thirteen camp members and two other Church members residing in the area.<sup>13</sup> Vienna helped attend to the sick. Writing of those who helped, Heber C. Kimball stated, "I received great kindness from them and also from sister Vienna Jaques, who administered to my wants and also to my brethren—may the Lord reward them for their kindness."<sup>14</sup>



### Life in Nauvoo, Illinois

Vienna continued faithful through the remainder of the turbulent 1830s that saw the Church evicted from the state of Missouri, only to re-emerge stronger in Nauvoo, Illinois.

When the first baptism for the dead took place on September 12, 1840, in the Mississippi River, Vienna was there.<sup>15</sup> Less than a month later in general conference, she heard Joseph Smith explain that the Saints had the opportunity to introduce to their dead ancestors the fulness of the gospel, thereby giving them “the privilege of coming forth in the First Resurrection.”<sup>16</sup> Vienna gained a great appreciation for the sacred work she could do for her deceased ancestors. Indeed, while she lived in Nauvoo she acted as proxy in more than 50 baptisms for the dead, most of which were for her own ancestors.<sup>17</sup>

In the winter months before they left Nauvoo, the Saints

finished the Nauvoo Temple and thousands received their endowments. Vienna received her temple covenants on January 22, 1846. Over the next 40 years she developed an understanding of the temple’s importance and made every effort to share her perspective and appreciation for the sacred ordinance work that the temple allows.

### Life in the Salt Lake Valley

Vienna Jaques experienced the further tumult and violence in Illinois, eventually resulting in the migration of the Saints to the Salt Lake Valley. Vienna too journeyed in faith to the valley, driving her wagon across the plains in 1847 in the Charles C. Rich company. Members of this group were among the first to settle in the valley. Vienna was given a city lot in the Salt Lake 12th Ward. Here she ultimately found the place of rest promised her in the March 1833 revelation.

*At age 60, Vienna drove her own wagon in 1847 from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley.*



A few historical snippets from the rest of her life reveal her continued faithfulness and diligence in the Church. Vienna was indefatigable in her work and service in the Salt Lake 12th Ward Relief Society. Some of her statements and testimony reveal that the work and focus of the Church, and of the Lord, are also, in many ways, remarkably constant. At one meeting Vienna felt “called upon to say a few words” on the subject of prayer. She stated that she had learned through her experience—perhaps alluding to her earlier prayer inquiring about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon—that prayer was most effective for her when she thought “to simply ask for those things which she needed.” She offered additional counsel, telling the women in a beautifully simple way that they should never “be afraid to do good. You will never be sorry. Don’t neglect your duties. When we neglect our duties, we lose; when we lose, the adversary gains.”<sup>18</sup>

Vienna also continued to appreciate the privilege of doing ordinance work for deceased ancestors and encouraged others to make the temple a priority.<sup>19</sup> At a June 1876 Relief Society meeting, she remarked that her mind had “been very much occupied in regard to the temple.”<sup>20</sup> That same month, when aged pioneers were honored at an event in Provo, Vienna traveled by railroad with Church leaders John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Orson Pratt. She was among the featured speakers who addressed an audience of about 800 people, sharing accounts of her exciting, difficult, and faith-building experiences in the early Church.<sup>21</sup>

As Vienna moved into her 90s, she remained self-reliant. An article in the July 1878 *Woman’s Exponent* said of her: “She lives entirely alone, . . . does all her own housework, including washing, ironing and cooking, writes many letters, and does a great deal of reading. Sister Vienna is very familiar with the Scriptures. This last Spring she has made sixty-one pounds of butter, and milked her own cow.”<sup>22</sup>

### Enduring to the End in Faith

Vienna Jaques died in her own home in Salt Lake City, Utah, on February 7, 1884, at the age of 96. She was “strong and full of faith in the principles of the Gospel”<sup>23</sup> and was

generous in her dealings with others.<sup>24</sup> She led a truly Christlike life that demonstrated her devotion to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Her history offers us an excellent example of discipleship. Like the lives of so many other Church members in history, Vienna’s life teaches us much about the power of faith and also the importance of seeking after truth with humility, compassion, and sacrifice. ■

*Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been standardized in some quotations.*

#### NOTES

1. Vienna consistently spelled her last name Jaques, not Jacques.
2. See “Letter from John Whitmer, 29 July 1833,” *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, vol. 3 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (2014), 186–98.
3. See Vienna Jaques, Statement, Feb. 22, 1859, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; see also “A History, of the Persecution, of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints in Missouri,” December 1839–October 1840,” *Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847*, vol. 2 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (2012), 209–11.
4. See George Hamlin, “In Memoriam: Vienna Jaques,” *Woman’s Exponent*, Mar. 1, 1884, 152.
5. See Samuel Harrison Smith, Diary, June 22–Aug. 7, 1832, Church History Library; Orson Hyde, Journal, June 25–Aug. 7, 1832, Church History Library.
6. Smith, Diary, July 13, 1832.
7. See “Revelation, 8 March 1833 [D&C 90],” *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, vol. 3 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (2014), 30–31.
8. See *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, 30; Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (1877), 441; Hamlin, “In Memoriam: Vienna Jaques,” 152.
9. See *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, 46–50, 108–12.
10. “Letter to Vienna Jaques, 4 September 1833,” *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, 292.
11. See “Home Affairs,” *Woman’s Exponent*, July 1, 1878, 20–21; Hamlin, “In Memoriam: Vienna Jaques,” 152.
12. “Letter to Vienna Jaques, 4 September 1833,” *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, 293. Note that this is the earliest surviving letter from Joseph Smith to a woman other than his wife, Emma.
13. See Thomas G. Alexander, “Wilford Woodruff and Zion’s Camp: Baptism by Fire and the Spiritual Confirmation of a Future Prophet,” *BYU Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1 (2000), 146.
14. Heber C. Kimball, “Extracts from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons*, Mar. 15, 1845, 839–40.
15. See statement in Addresses, 1839–1842, Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library; see also Jane Neyman Statements, Nov. 29, 1854, Joseph Smith History Documents, 1839–1860, Church History Library.
16. Vilate M. Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, Oct. 11, 1840, Vilate M. Kimball Letters, Church History Library; see also *Times and Seasons*, Oct. 1840, 186.
17. See Susan Easton Black and Harvey Bischoff Black, eds., *Annotated Record of Baptisms for the Dead, 1840–1845: Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois*, 7 vols. (2002), 5:3256–65.
18. In Twelfth Ward Relief Society Record Book, Church History Library, 177.
19. See Vienna Jaques to Brigham Young, July 2, 1870, Brigham Young Incoming Correspondence, 1839–1877, Church History Library.
20. In Twelfth Ward Relief Society Record Book, 233.
21. See “A Gay Excursion Party,” *Deseret News*, June 21, 1876, 330.
22. “Home Affairs,” 20–21.
23. “Home Affairs,” 21.
24. See “Funeral Services,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 13, 1884, 57.