

THE WIVES OF POLYGAMY: A STUDY OF WOMEN AND PLURAL MARRIAGE IN THE
EARLY AMERICAN WEST

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SARAH VICTORIA POTTER

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Jeffrey Ostler

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Although polygamy has not been a tenet of the Mormon Church for nearly 100 years, it remains one of the most controversial issues in the history of the Church. There has been little work done on how polygamy effected the women who participated in it. What were the specific problems and benefits of living "in the principle?" This thesis primarily relies on Fanny Stenhouse's published autobiography Tell it All; Annie Clark Tanner's A Mormon Mother, an autobiography intended only for her descendants as an explanation of her life in polygamy; and letters Catharine Cottam Romney wrote to family and friends throughout her life. Other journals, letters, and published autobiographies were also used. Though much of the research on polygamy attempts to vilify, uphold, or ignore the practice, my research suggests that polygamy was a complex issue and its effects were neither as horrendous nor beneficial as most research suggests

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Background	3
	Non-Mormon Views of Polygamy	6
	Mormon Views of Polygamy	10
	The Present-Day Debate	13
	Polygamy: Neither Utopia Nor Slavery	16
II.	POLYGAMY AS BENEFACITOR	20
	Help raising children and freedom from household duties	21
	Equality and Independence	24
	Careers	26
	Political power	31
	Close-Knit relationships- the foundations of family	34
	Conclusion	39
III.	POLYGAMY AS BURDEN	41
	Accepting the principle, the first major obstacle	42
	Loneliness- The Chief Complaint in Polygamous Marriages ...	46
	Jealousy: A nearly universal evil	50

Effects on the Husband/Wife Relationship	54
Poverty- a condition of many plural households	57
Perceived inequality	60
IV. CONCLUSION	65
APPENDIX	
A. THE REVELATION	70
B. GENEALOGY OF THE ROMNEY FAMILY	82
C. GENEALOGY OF THE TANNER FAMILY	83
ENDNOTES	84
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

I. Introduction

When Caroline Sophia Soreson Buchanan was nearly an adult, her father entered into polygamy and began another family with his second wife. Shortly after, Caroline entered into plural marriage with Archibald Waller Overton Buchanan, and was introduced to polygamous life for the second time. The first time, adjusting to her father's second wife, brought with it difficult times and feelings of jealousy, but in time Caroline grew to care for the second family and was proud of all of the second wife's children. Her own polygamous household was also filled with "trials and sore afflictions" such as jealousy, poverty, and loneliness. Caroline's experience with polygamy was not completely negative. She developed a warm and loving relationship with other wives, who were "true and good" to her throughout her life. Furthermore, polygamy taught her independence and self sufficiency that would allow her to support herself and her family, go to school, and eventually become a nurse.

Polygamy carried with it a number of risks, especially after the persecutions began. As a child, before the persecutions began, Caroline had been teased on the playground. Her classmates often called her "Mormon, and that was the worst name they could call anyone." After the persecutions began, Caroline had much more to worry about than taunts and insults. She, her husband, and his wives, were pursued by state marshals on charges of bigamy and the consequences of being caught were often jail-time. This threat of persecution caused many women, including Caroline, to go into

hiding. The risk was especially high near the time of childbirth, because a pregnant woman with no obvious husband was an easy target. While Caroline was pregnant and in hiding, her husband was captured and his other wives and older children were subpoenaed to testify against him in court. Archibald's other wives were forced to go to Caroline's hiding place to leave their small children with her while they went to testify. This move, however, had tragic consequences. The state marshals were alerted to Caroline's whereabouts and she was again forced to flee. During this flight, her children were stricken with diphtheria and the baby boy she had gone into hiding for died. She was so broken by this loss that she refused, for a moment, to hide from the marshals, even though they were closing in on her hiding place. She said, "Do what you please, I would just as soon go to the pen now that my last boy is taken from me."¹ Luckily, the marshals took the wrong road and Caroline was able to elude them. However, even though her baby was dead, she could not come out of hiding. "I was left alone with my two sick girls and my dead baby, and I didn't dare let my name be known."²

When it was relatively safe to return home, she found that she could no longer reside there. Because cohabitation with more than one woman (even including boarding houses who rented to more than one woman) was illegal, she was forced to move away. Soon after, Caroline, her husband, and all his wives decided to go to Mexico, where they could remain together as a family. Their devotion to each other caused them to flee. Years later, after the Salt Lake Temple had been completed, the family returned to Utah, but Caroline and her husband could no longer live together as husband and wife.

Although she cared for him until his death and still maintained close bonds with the other wives, they had to obey “the law of the land.”

During her life, Caroline supported herself and her family through various jobs. In 1908 she borrowed money and went to school to become a nurse. During her career she delivered over 100 babies and cared for hundreds more sick and injured people. Her accomplishments were partly due to the independence and sense of self she developed during polygamy. Caroline’s experience in plural marriage is typical of most polygamous households. Though it was filled with “trials and tribulations,” Caroline considered the practice to be a holy institution and claimed she was “glad to have had the experience of living in it, with his other wives. They are all true and good, and I love them.”³

Background

Polygamy, also called plural marriage, was the 19th century Mormon practice of a man marrying more than one wife (technically called polygyny). Though it was practiced by a relatively small percentage (estimates range from 15-30 percent) of the Mormon population in the early West, it remains today one of the most controversial and least understood issues in the history of the Mormon Church. Polygamy was officially entered into Mormon doctrine in 1843, although there is substantial evidence that Joseph Smith, founder of the church, was involved in several plural marriages during the 1830’s. Polygamy was practiced in secret until 1852 when Orson Pratt, President of the Mormon Church, made a public speech defending it as a tenet. Ever since the 1830’s, rumors

about polygamous Mormons were spread throughout the West and this led to widespread persecutions. After 1852, anti-Mormon sentiment continued to grow and persecutions eventually led to anti-Mormon legislation. In 1854 polygamy and slavery were termed the “twin relics of barbarism” by the Republican Party, and by 1862, Congress passed the Morrill Act. This act prohibited plural marriage in the territories, unincorporated the Church, and restricted the Church’s ability to own property. This Act was not enforced because the country was in the midst of the Civil War and by 1867 the Utah legislature asked Congress to repeal the Morrill Act. However, instead of repealing the Act, Congress demanded to know why it was not being enforced and introduced the Cullom Bill to strengthen the Morrill Act. The Cullom Bill did not pass but most of its provisions became law in later years.⁴ The most significant and most effective anti-Mormon legislation were the Edmunds Act, passed in 1882, and the Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1887. The Edmunds Act made cohabitation with more than one woman (even within a boarding house) illegal and punishable by law. The Edmunds-Tucker Act forced wives to testify against their husband in court, witnesses had to appear in court even without a subpoena, adultery could be prosecuted without a complaint from a spouse, women were disenfranchised, and the bill also allowed the Federal Government to take all church owned property that was not a cemetery or a chapel. This Edmunds-Tucker Act allowed the most effective persecutions of the Mormons and fueled anti-polygamy forces in the West.

This legislation led to the imprisonment of hundreds of men suspected of polygamy. Those who were able to avoid capture often sent their wives to different areas

of the state in the hopes they would not be labeled a polygamist. Some families were forced to flee to Mexico to avoid the persecution in the United States. Catharine Cottam Romney, plural wife of Miles Romney, was forced to be separated from her husband and most of her children because of persecutions in her hometown. Anti-Mormon activists were jailing those with more than one wife so Catharine and Annie (another one of Miles Romney's wives) fled to different nearby cities. After months of hiding they returned to their home only to find more persecution and danger. Miles and his first wife, Hannah, fled to Mexico. Later, after Miles had established a home, Annie and Catharine were able to join him in Mexico, where they lived most of their lives.

In 1890, Wilford Woodruff, the 4th president of the church, received a revelation and issued the "Manifesto" that stated the church would no longer allow the practice of plural marriage. However, plural marriage was still commonly practiced and endorsed by the church until 1904 when Joseph F. Smith, the 6th president of the church, received another revelation and issued the "Second Manifesto." After this document was issued, it was church policy to excommunicate any member either practicing or openly advocating polygamy. While polygamy is still practiced today, those who do it are no longer considered part of the Mormon Church. Any member found to practice polygamy or openly support it is excommunicated, and every president since Joseph F Smith has continued to denounce the practice.

Polygamy remains one of the most controversial issues in the history of the early American West. Though some authors such as Julie Roy Jeffrey and Kimball Young have attempted to show a balanced picture of the lives of polygamous families, most

secondary research falls into one of two categories: they take the pro-polygamy standpoint and ignore the negative aspects or take the negative view and ignore the positive aspects of polygamy, also called “living in the principle.” The debate over polygamy and whether or not it had negative or positive results has been ongoing since polygamy was officially declared a principle of the Mormon Church.

Non-Mormon Views of Polygamy

Non-Mormons pictured plural wives as degraded, miserable, and bitter. They thought polygamous women were the pitiful victims of a system of institutionalized lust designed by lecherous Mormon husbands, and they considered polygamy “a slavery which debases and degrades womanhood, motherhood, and family.”⁵ C. Sheridan Jones, in the introduction to the 1920 book *The Truth About the Mormons* wrote, “Mormonism spells polygamy and polygamy means the enslavement of women.”⁶ Though many people compared slavery to polygamy, some believed it was far worse than slavery. Before the Civil War, Metta V. Fuller wrote in her book *Mormon Wives*,

Repulsive as slavery appears to us, we can but deem polygamy a thing more loathsome and poisonous to social and political purity. Half-civilized states have ceased its practice as dangerous to happiness, and as outraging every instinct of the better nature within every breast; and as ages rolled away they left the institution behind as one of the relics of barbarism which marked the half-developed state of man as a social being.⁷

Moral attacks, such as this one, were most frequent, likening the practice of polygamy to a deadly sin or one of the “evils” of their time such as prostitution or slavery. Different

Christian denominations set up conferences on Mormon Polygamy and many people lectured or wrote about the evils of the subject. Some even organized “rescue parties” to retrieve women from Utah and free “the poor downtrodden women from their polygamous yoke.”⁸

These lectures and meetings produced a deeply held opposition to polygamy. It wasn’t long before there was a call to action and people demanded legislation to stop this assault on women, motherhood, and the home. In 1884, the Committee on Mormon Polygamy of the Central Methodist Church reported that polygamy was “a subversive of every principle of morality, and abhorrent to every feeling of virtue.”⁹ It was a scheme, developed by immoral Mormons “in the deepest depravity, and is shared by three motives- money, power, and lust.”¹⁰ They believed that it would not be long before polygamy would have taken hold so strong that it could never be eradicated. They said,

It is so rooted in the soil, the politics, the family life, and the religious fanaticism of that part of the country [Utah], that nothing but prompt and extreme measures will eradicate the evil. And unless the government shall immediately take decisive steps to exterminate the abomination, it will soon acquire such dimensions and potency as to render it impossible to remove the evil by legislation, or by civil measures. Indeed, it is the belief of some well informed men now that this dreadful ulcer can only be removed by a resort to arms.¹¹

Polygamy was seen as a threat to the very family unit. It was an abomination that could not be allowed to continue. Because cohabitation had been made a crime, critics argued that it should not be covered under the First Amendment nor given any Constitutional consideration. It was this attack upon the family that caused the most hatred toward polygamy. Cornelia Paddock, in her book In the Toils, said that she believed the

Mormon attack on the American family made it her duty to oppose polygamy. She wrote,

It is my business [to oppose polygamy] because I am a woman, and polygamy degrades my sex below the level of humanity; because I am a wife, and polygamy makes that sacred name a by-word; because I am a mother, and polygamy makes maternity a curse, and puts the brand of shame on the innocent foreheads of little children.¹²

The protection of innocent children seemed to be one of the primary reasons polygamy needed to be stopped. Early studies on polygamy indicated that polygamous children were diseased and deformed. It was even hypothesized that the children were degenerating (probably from lack of virtue and morals) into an entirely new species. The new species was characterized by “the yellow, sunken, cavernous, visage; the greenish-colored eyes; the thick , protrubant lips; the low forehead... [all] constitute an appearance so characteristic of the new race, the production of polygamy, as to distinguish them at a glance.”¹³ Strangely, this condition never struck the first wife’s children, who were always healthy and strong, but only the immoral children who were conceived in depravity and sin. Though reports of physical deformity and mental retardation (another sign of a polygamous child) were largely false, the idea that the practice was hurting the family as well as innocent children brought the issue of polygamy to the forefront of American politics. Many urged Congress to stop polygamy, and by extension, the Mormons. Eventually legislation such as the Edmund-Tucker Act was passed in 1887 to stamp out polygamy. Though successful (mostly) in the United States, thousands of polygamous families fled to Mexico and Canada to avoid persecution and continue living in plural marriages.

Both moral and legislative attacks on polygamy described it as a disease, “A festering sore, a putrid spot in the heart of the nation,” which had to be eradicated in order for virtue and morality to triumph.¹⁴ Most of these attacks relied on the stories of apostates, people who had left the church, and disgruntled plural wives who were willing to speak to outsiders. However, there also existed a large body of fiction on the subject of polygamy.

Although polygamy was seen as an evil, it sold many books and seemed to fascinate the people who attacked it; even Sherlock Holmes once was put on the trail of a treacherous Mormon missionary. Polygamous men were almost always evil and the women could be either evil or victims of the evil Mormon men. Men also usually married women half their age. In Boadicea: The Mormon Wife, Life Scenes from Utah, Boadicea is distraught when her husband marries another wife, who is physically more attractive than herself. Boadicea suffers terribly with the evil new wife and is nearly killed when the new wife tries to poison her. Finally Boadicea successfully escapes from Utah and concludes with these words, “Such events as I here laid bare before the reader, are *daily* occurrences among the Mormons. No better idea of pandemonium can be conceived; it is a veritable hell upon God’s fair and beautiful earth.”¹⁵ Though fictional accounts of polygamy were, no doubt, exaggerated, they helped fuel the fire of anti-polygamy attitudes in the East.

The Non-Mormon view of polygamy emphasized the immorality and depravity of the practice. Polygamy offended puritanical visions of morality and propriety and reports of broken families and deformed children helped fuel the outrage against polygamy.

Fictionalized accounts of escapes from polygamy or polygamous enemies also helped vilify the practice in contemporary minds.

The Mormon View of Polygamy

Most Mormons did not see polygamy as slavery. Most did not consider it to be degrading or believe that it lowered the status of women. Mormons saw polygamy first and foremost as a Divine Commandment. It is essential to realize this simple fact: Polygamy was a commandment from God that could not be disobeyed if one wanted to obtain the most exalted status in heaven. They saw it not as the degradation of humanity, but as God's way to lift up humanity. Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, in her 1884 book Why We Practice Plural Marriage said that "As for its [polygamy] being degrading, it has proven to be the very opposite. It was exalting in its tendency and calculated to raise mankind from the degraded condition into which they had fallen under the practice of a corrupt and hypocritical system of enforced monogamy."¹⁶

There were four main arguments for polygamy: 1) It was the command of God, 2) Historical evidence supported polygamy, 3) Polygamy had distinctive advantages over monogamy, and 4) It was only to be carried out in certain ways. The first we have already briefly discussed. Joseph Smith received a revelation from God (for full text see Appendix A) stating that the practice of polygamy was to begin and that it would stop when God sent another revelation stating that the time had come to end polygamy. According to Mormon theology, polygamy had several important effects and purposes.

Mormons believed that the universe was filled with lost souls. Only through birth could these souls be saved, so every Mormon woman was encouraged to release as many souls as possible from their endless wandering. The place in heaven that the married couple would receive was partly based on the number of children they had produced. This belief reinforced the practice of polygamy. By having one man marry many wives, more children could be born and God's plan would be better accomplished.¹⁷

The second argument relies on the Bible and points to the several occurrences of polygamy occurring there. The Bible describes many polygamous relationships, the most famous being that of Solomon, who had 300 wives and 600 concubines. Other examples include Rehoboam, who had 18 wives¹⁸, Gideon, who had over 70 sons because he had "many wivcs,"¹⁹ and Jacob, who had four wives that enabled him to father the "twelve tribes of Israel."²⁰ Mormon theology states that there are times polygamy will be necessary and will be ordained by God, as it has been previously ordained in the Bible. When these times are over, polygamy should not be practiced or it will be against God's wishes. Polygamy may come again at any time God deems it necessary. Orson Pratt, President of the Mormon Church, even challenged the Gentiles (Non-Mormons) to use their Bibles to prove that polygamy was wrong. There is no record of anyone taking his challenge.

Mormons believed that polygamy was a positive marital union and had positive effects for all involved. Mormons made a sharp distinction between polygamy and adultery and said that polygamy completely eliminated adultery and prostitution. It was widely believed that men were, by nature, polygamous and this system simply allowed

them to do what was natural while at the same time not dishonoring their wives.²¹ This helped wives because they no longer had to fear that their husband was unfaithful, and helped husbands because they no longer had to sin. A resolution passed by a public Assembly of Mormon Women in January, 1870 stated

That we acknowledge the institutions of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the only reliable safeguard of female virtue and innocence; and that the only sure protection against the fearful sin of prostitution and its attendant evils, now prevalent abroad, and, as such, we are and shall be united with our brethren in sustaining them against each and every encroachment.²²

For the Mormon women, the distinction between polygamy and prostitution was important. While courting another women for the purpose of plural marriage, a man was engaging in the work of the Lord. It was not degrading either woman's honor or virtue and was not harmful because it was not for lust, but for holy marriage. Polygamy protected women from the shame of a philandering husband and protected men from sinning by eliminating the need for prostitution.

Mormons also believed that polygamy was better than monogamy and created more peaceful households. Orson Pratt wrote,

Instead of the plurality of wives being a cause of sorrow to females, it is one of the greatest blessings of the last dispensation: it gives them the great privilege of being united to a righteous man, and of rearing a family according to the order of heaven. Instead of being compelled to remain single, or marry a wicked man who will ruin her and her offspring, she can enter a family where peace and salvation reign... where the head of the family stands forth as a patriarch, a prince, and a savior to his whole household; where blessings are unspeakable and eternal are sealed upon them and their generations after them; where glory is eternal and her joy is full.²³

Mormons used this type of portrait to insist that polygamy created happy households and was better for women because it allowed them to choose a good family instead of a bad man simply because he was single. In this way, the good men were able to father more children and the women were able to have good, honorable husbands. Mormons also often described familial relationships between the wives as amiable and jealousy free, all being treated equally in every respect. Mormon society was dedicated to upholding the principle of polygamy. They described it as holy institution based on God's word. This institution had a variety of benefits not only for the society, but for the people who practiced the principle. Women were able to have more independence and equality while at the same time being protected from sins such as prostitution. Finally, polygamous families were happy and well-adjusted because it allowed the "good" men in society to father more children and marry more women.

The Present-Day Debate

The present debate over Mormon polygamy follows the same basic structure as it did nearly 100 years ago. The debate over the effects of polygamy can be divided into four principle categories: critics of polygamy, supporters of polygamy, ambivalent historians who take no position at all, and historians who objectively look at both sides of the issue. Critics of polygamy do not exaggerate the "miseries" of polygamous life to the extent that past scholars and authors have, but they still rely on the basic principle that polygamy was a tool for the oppression of women and was used by sex-crazed Mormon

men for their personal benefit. There was seldom any good to come out of plural marriages and polygamy helped restrain the women's movement. Critics argue that because polygamy oppressed women and Mormon society was heavily based on patriarchy, the women's movement for independence and liberation was stifled in Utah. This side of the debate tends to ignore the positive aspects of polygamy such as close-knit families, greater freedom to pursue education or business interests, and increased political power.

Critics tend to exaggerate the negative aspects of polygamy, relying heavily on accounts from apostates. They focus on the tragic lives of women who were ignored, lonely, and reduced to nothing more than household slaves. However, they also ignore the large body of evidence pointing to happy, well-functioning polygamous families. For example, Jerald and Sandra Tanner's 1972 book, Mormonism- Shadow or Reality?²⁴ exaggerates claims of loneliness and concentrates on allegations of depravity or adultery on the part of Church leaders. It does not mention any of the benefits polygamy could bring to women.

Supporters of plural marriage exaggerate the claims of happy, well-functioning families and largely ignore the negative aspects of living in polygamy. They usually rely heavily on Church motivations and justifications as well as reports from happy families. They use newspaper articles to support their claims that polygamy united the community, gave women more independence, and liberated them from the oppressive male hierarchy that existed in American society in the late nineteenth century. They argue that women were full economic partners in Utah and that they had more say in household functions

than most of their contemporaries. These stories of polygamous life often barely mention or completely ignore the loneliness, jealousy, and poverty often suffered by polygamous families and therefore they cannot be considered accurate representations of polygamous life. One such article is Joan Iversen's "Feminist Implications of Mormon Polygyny"²⁵ This article analyzes polygamy from a feminist perspective and concludes that polygamy did have a positive effect on the way women were treated and their ability to act in society. However, the article, though it does mention problems such as loneliness and jealousy, does not give adequate descriptions or does not adequately consider the effect of negative aspects. It also does not consider how these negative aspects may have effected the feminist agenda the article says polygamy supported.

The third category of literature on polygamy is ambivalent about the effects of the practice. It does not argue that polygamy was either positive or negative and prefers to simply acknowledge that polygamy existed and explain the historical facts behind its origin. Perhaps out of fear that they would offend either critics of the practice or supporters of it, many authors chose to discuss polygamy in only the driest of historical terms. They mention that it occurred but do not attempt to analyze it or its effect on women, men, or Mormon society. The Story of the Saints,²⁶ a 1976 book by James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, does not devote a significant portion of the book, or even of a chapter to the discussion of polygamy. Less than 30 pages out of nearly 650 even mention polygamy. Another 20 pages or so is devoted to discussing anti-polygamy legislation. Polygamy was a fundamental part of early Mormon society and has continued to be an issue for the Church throughout its existence, yet less than fifty total

pages even mention it. Those fifty pages consist mostly of dry factual information about the most important dates in the history of the practice. It seems as if this book tried to minimize the discussion of polygamy by denying its central role within the Church. For example, Allen and Leonard write, “Even though plural marriage became one of the major focal points for persecution against the Church, it played a relatively small role in the total life of most Mormon communities.”²⁷ By denying the central role polygamy played in Mormon society, Allen and Leonard are able to avoid discussing it. Instead of being a “Mormon issue” it was simply a means used to attack the Church.

These works do not advance the study of polygamy. They simply brush over the complex issues involved in the practice. Because they do not attempt to explain or take a stand on the issues, they avoid the controversy that surrounds this topic.

The final category, historians who look at both sides of the issue, consists of relatively objective analyses of polygamy and its effect on Mormon society and its people. These works such as Julie Roy Jeffery’s Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880, Kimball Young’s Isn’t One Wife Enough, and Lawrence Foster’s Women, Family, and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons, explore the complex issues of polygamy and usually rely on a variety of sources. This thesis attempts to further the work of these authors by exploring the variety of first-hand experiences in polygamy and analyzing the complex issues these sources present.

Polygamy: neither utopia nor slavery

In fact polygamy was neither as good or as bad as portrayed. It was not really “a slavery which debases and degrades womanhood, motherhood, and family.”²⁸ Nor did it make life easy, give women a higher status, or completely liberate women. Most plural marriages were somewhere in between and in fact, functioned much the same as monogamous marriages: some were good and others bad. Daniel Bachman and Ronald K. Esplin, historians, wrote,

As with families generally, some plural families worked better than others. Anecdotal evidence and that healthy children that emerged from many plural households witness that some worked very well. But some plural wives disliked the arrangement. The most common complaint of second and third wives resulted from a husband displaying too little sensitivity to the needs of plural families or not treating them equally. Not infrequently, wives complained that husbands spent too little time with them. But where husbands provided conscientiously, even time and wives developed deep love and respect for each other, children grew up as members of large, well-adjusted extended families.²⁹

For those plural families who did not like the arrangement, there were often jealous feuds between the wives, and the family lived in misery. However, it is unlikely that it was polygamy alone that caused the breakdown of these families. As in monogamous marriages, it is often the people involved, and not their situation, that leads to happiness or misery.

People of every type entered into polygamy and this variety of people naturally produced a variety of results. Fanny Stenhouse, who later left the church because of her hatred of polygamy, admitted that life in the principle was neither horrible or euphoric for anyone. Although she often emphasized the bad side of polygamy, even she admitted that polygamy did produce good families and good people. She wrote,

It is a fact that Polygamy among the Mormons has been entered into by people of every kind, under all circumstances, and from every conceivable motive- from the basest to the purest. But its effect has invariably been to develop the weaker side of human nature. At the same time, like other institutions which for religious purposes have suppressed true manly and womanly instincts, it has in exceptional cases produced much that was noble and generous.³⁰

Because of the large variety of results and feelings about polygamy, it is unfair to categorize it as simply good or bad, liberating or oppressive. The variety of experiences speaks to the variety of results and an analysis of polygamy without including both the good and the bad aspects of the practice is incomplete. Though authors such as Julie Roy Jeffrey and Kimball Young have written about polygamy from a relatively unbiased standpoint, neither defending nor attacking it, their work does not go far enough into the study of the effects of polygamy on women. Though much has been written about the effects of polygamy on the Mormon faith, on the society in general, and on families, little has been written on the lives of Mormon plural wives. For them, polygamy entailed a specific and separate set of challenges, benefits, and shortcomings. Julie Jeffrey's chapter on polygamy in her book Frontier Women: the Trans-Mississippi West 1840-1880 does focus on women but does not provide adequate details or fully illustrate the benefits and problems polygamy caused. Another unbiased analysis of polygamy, Jessie L. Embry's Mormon Polygamous Families³¹ offers a primarily statistical analysis that does not provide an adequate picture of early frontier life for polygamous women. Kimball Young's Isn't One Wife Enough is a very good and complete source but is lacking because it is full of various stories but contains very little analysis. Young does not attempt to explain or give meaning to the stories, only to record them and this, too, is

not enough to obtain an adequate look at the lives of polygamous Mormon Women. It is my hope that, with this thesis, I will be able to bridge some of the existing gaps in present research.

This thesis is based on primary documents and relies heavily on the published account of Fanny Stenhouse's life, Annie Clark Tanner's biography that was written to her children in order to help them understand her choice to enter a polygamous marriage, and the letters that Catharine Cottam Romney wrote to her friends and family throughout her life in polygamy.

II. Polygamy as Benefactor

Many women learned to love the principle of polygamy. Though it had its trials and hardships, many were proud to enter the practice. Caroline Sophia Sorensen Buchanan was one of these women. Although polygamy presented many difficulties for her, she loved the practice and its benefits for her. She said,

In the year of 1876 I married Archibald Waller Overton Buchanan and entered into the law of plural marriage. I had my trials and sore afflictions, but as far as the principle is concerned, I can say it is a pure and holy one, and I am glad that I have had the experience of living it, with his other wives. They are all true and good, and I love them.³²

The good experience Caroline refers to was the combination of living in a Mormon society that gave her many economic, social, and political opportunities as well as practicing polygamy, which gave her more free time and allowed her to create lasting bonds with her sister-wives.

Though Mormon society provided many economic and political opportunities for all women, plural wives were more able to take advantage of these opportunities because of their increased independence from men and increased free time due to help from the other wives. Even women who lived in fairly unhappy marriages received some of the benefits of polygamy. Because there were more women to help with household duties, many plural wives shared the burden and each had “less” to do. Also, having a larger number of women in the house gave plural wives help with childrearing and childbearing.

Many times, one wife would stay home to take care of the children while the others would pursue their own interests. Some became businesswomen and others went to school to become teachers, nurses, lawyers, or politicians. Because of the freedom polygamy gave some women from household chores and childrearing, they were allowed more independence and did not need to rely on their husbands for everything. They also had control over their own money, partly because the husband was not always home, and they were able to spend it as they wished. This however, did not mean that the women's income went only for frivolous things, but because she often bought food, clothing, and other necessities when her husband was gone, plural wives were often seen as the "head of the household" not only for local purposes, but for federal tax purposes. Another benefit of polygamy was the close-knit relationships that could develop between the wives and their children. These relationships were often a source of joy and support. Though outsiders often believed plural wives were the victims of a system of institutionalized lust and that they were little more than slaves, polygamous women actually enjoyed far more independence, and freedom than their most of their contemporaries as well as more economic, political, and social power.

Help raising the children and freedom from household duties

In most polygamous households, the chores were split between the wives. This occurred most often, obviously, in families where the wives all resided in the same house. In polygamous marriages where the wives lived at different houses there was little

assistance with housework available but the other wives would still occasionally look after the children. Aside from cooking, cleaning, and looking after children, frontier women were responsible for making soap and candles, canning fruit and vegetables to be eaten throughout the winter, making all the clothes and washing them by hand, as well as making bedding or rugs for the floor. Help from the other wives was certainly appreciated and gave the women not only a break from everyday household chores, but more time for themselves to enjoy their own interests such as church work, independent employment, or going to school. In the Romney family, "Hannah sewed and took care of chickens; Annie supervised molasses making, took care of the cream, and made the butter, and Catharine separated the milk and made hats and slippers."³³

Helping to care for other wives' children was also beneficial to the plural wife. Many times, freedom from her children meant extra time to pursue business interests or other Church activities. Caring for other wives' children also led to the sense of a cohesive family. In Catharine Cottam Romney's home, the children were not often segregated. In her letters to her family, Catharine never indicated which children were hers and which were the other wives'. She simply lumped them together and treated them all as if they were her own.

This was a common practice in successful polygamous households. One boy in a plural household said,

The meals were taken by all members of the family at one table. On the one side was the father and his three wives, with all the girls ranked according to age. On the other side sat all the boys also ranked according to age. The children were mixed without reference to their mothers 'because they were advised to run their families like that,' That is, the

children were all regarded as full brothers and sisters and were so treated.³⁴

Children also affectionately called the other wives “Aunt” and a warm loving family was created. This sense of family became incredibly important during the persecutions of polygamists.

Like many other plural wives, Annie and Catharine Romney were forced to flee. Once in hiding there was less risk that Miles would be prosecuted for polygamy. Because they had to flee quickly, both Annie and Catharine were forced to leave their children behind. Thankfully, Hannah was able to care for them. Catharine wrote,

Hannah packed up what things she thought we would need, and on Monday night late, the brethren started with us four fugitives for this place, making quick time, and arriving here Tuesday afternoon... I feel so bad about having Hannah left with so much additional care and labor, and her health is not the best, but she is ever good, true, and faithful.³⁵

Not only was Hannah willing to help Annie and Catharine, it is clear that Catharine truly appreciated Hannah’s work. She cared about Hannah’s well-being and usually in times of sickness (Hannah often had health problems) Annie and Catharine were able to care for her.

Another benefit of polygamy arose in childbearing. With other wives in the same household or close by, women did not have to be alone or even send for a doctor during childbirth. The other wives were often a great help after the delivery and could take over other household duties while the new mother rested and regained her strength. Catharine, after the birth of one of her children, wrote,

Baby was born at 20 minutes to 3 o’clock in the morning, she weighed 9 lbs. And is a very fine little girl. I think we shall call her Ethel. How do

you like her name? She has been troubled with snuffles and colic some so that she has not been quite as good as my babies generally are but I think she will soon be all right as I hardly think it is crossness. The children are very much delighted with this little sister, perhaps because Ma hasn't had a little baby for so long. I have had good nursing and attention and have got along well. I had only our own folks with me. Hannah is as good a hand as we have here, and I felt I would rather have her than anyone.³⁶

Good nursing and attention after the birth of a new child helped mothers recover faster. In large families it gave the mother ample time to recover and concentrate on her baby while the other mothers took care of her other children. When the baby was sick, ample help spared the family the expense of a doctor and gave the baby much needed attention.

Equality and Independence

Partly because of the difficulties of managing several households, polygamy often led to greater equality in the home. Even in polygamous marriages where the women lived in the same house, some women seemed to obtain more equality and say over household functions. The church placed heavy demands on men and sent them on missions away from their families for months or even years. Women were forced to fend for themselves. Because men were often not around to manage the everyday aspects of the house, women were relegated to that role. This gave them a sense of independence that monogamous wives did not have. Though even monogamous wives faced the challenges of living without their husband, when he was away on church business, they were able to rely on him much more when he was in town. Claudia Bushman, a historian, wrote,

A plural wife could not be the helpless, fainting, protected female or she would likely faint alone. Plural wives often had to look to themselves rather than their husbands for financial support and physical labor. For practical purposes they were more like widows than traditional wives.”³⁷

Though often being alone and having nobody to depend on may seem like a negative consequence of polygamy, plural wives often enjoyed the independence their situation gave them. As Annie Clark Tanner, second wife of Marion Tanner said,

I felt the responsibility of my family; and I developed an independence that women in monogamy never know... [because the plural wife] becomes conscious of her own power to make decisions. She learns that it takes more than the authority of the leader in a patriarchal marriage to make a successful home.³⁸

As women began to be conscious of their own power they also began to develop an identity separate from their husbands.

Polygamy gave women the necessary time and freedom to develop their own sense of self. Mary Isabella Horne, a stake Relief Society president, said that since her husband’s plural marriage she was able to “Do herself individually things she never could have attempted before; and work out her individual character as separate from her husband.”¹⁹ Plural wives often shared financial responsibilities while monogamous marriages left those decisions up to the man. Many times this financial responsibility rested on the fact that many polygamous women had careers from selling eggs for extra money to running stores or becoming doctors and lawyers.

Careers

Because polygamous marriages allowed the women more freedom and the close companionship with other women allowed for shared household and child burdens, many women were able to develop careers. In Catharine Romney's family one woman would often stay home to tend to the children while the other two were free to pursue business interests. While Catharine stayed to care for all the children, Annie taught school (she had been educated at Deseret University) and Hannah helped organize and run a ladies co-op, a store run completely by women. According to a survey of 291 polygamous wives, 20 percent worked outside the home for salaried positions and another 40 percent helped support their families through the sale of farm goods or taking in boarders.³⁹ Still more were involved in church work or attended school at Deseret University or schools in the East. It was fairly common to see households where one woman was in charge of looking after children while the other wives were able to do other things with their time.

Part of the reason polygamous women had these advantages was the structure of Mormon society. While these opportunities were often available to all women, polygamous women had an easier time taking advantage of the opportunities because they had sufficient help at home to take over their household duties and childrearing duties. Mormon society encouraged female education. Brigham Young stated that

We have sisters here who, if they had the privilege of studying, would make just as good mathematicians or accountants as any man. We believe that women are useful, not only to sweep houses, wash dishes, make beds, and raise babies, but that they should stand behind the counter, study law or physic [medicine], or become good bookkeepers and be able to do the business in any counting house, and all this to enlarge their sphere of

usefulness for the benefit of society at large. In following these things they but answer the design of their creation.⁴⁰

As Jeffrey stated, “Mormon women had the support for a responsible and expanded social role which women on other frontiers did not.”⁴¹

One woman to take advantage of the increased availability of education was Ellis Reynolds Shipp, plural wife of Milford Shipp. Shipp left her three children in the care of her sister-wives while she went to medical school. Because she had childcare available she was able to take advantage of this opportunity. Wives in monogamous households would have had a far more difficult time arranging childcare for their children while attending school back east. Even with the conveniences of childcare and a large supportive family network, completing medical school was a difficult task.

Despite financial difficulties and some doubts about her ability to complete the degree, Ellis passed her first-year examinations and returned home to Utah. She returned for her second year, pregnant and without money. By taking sewing jobs and guarding the hall of cadavers at night she earned enough to cover her tuition and living expenses. Her sixth child, a daughter, was born in the spring of her second year in Philadelphia, and mother and child did not return to Utah until after her third year, when she graduated with high honors and a Doctor of Medicine degree.⁴²

After returning home to Utah, Ellis delivered thousands of babies and trained hundreds of other girls to become registered midwives through The School of Nursing and Obstetrics, which Ellis founded after returning from college. Because of the help given to her by her sister wives and her families, as well as her own determination, Ellis was able to complete her medical degree. She often helped take care of her sister-wives’ children when she too decided to go to school. Without the family network created by polygamy

these mothers and wives would have had a much more difficult time completing their degrees.

Mormon society encouraged female productivity and plural wives often had the most time to run businesses and contribute to the society. Through the Relief Society, an all women's church organization, women opened ladies co-ops, saved and stored grain and other supplies for emergencies, and even tried to raise silk worms in an attempt to boycott Eastern silk manufacturers. Mormon society was based on the idea that they needed to be self-sufficient. This meant that if the girls wanted silk dresses and handkerchiefs they would have to raise the worms and spin the silk themselves. Often, it was the plural wives who were able to undertake such time-consuming activities. The silk industry, for example, took hours of dedication each day, time that monogamous mothers could less likely spend raising worms.

The voracious worms required mulberry leaves to grow and the sisters, through the Relief Society, planted thousands of new mulberry trees to provide shade and food for the worms. Women also taught classes and imported special machinery to help with their work. They did all this without the help or finances of men. Sometimes the worms began to interrupt household activities. Marilyn Warenski, another historian, wrote,

The activity created havoc in many Mormon households as the worms began to occupy two or three rooms of the house. Diligent sisters requested several ounces of eggs, but from each ounce of eggs, many large worms emerged. In some cases the entire family had to be activated to gather enough leaves to feed the voracious worms and to provide clean trays and controlled temperatures for them. To make matters worse, the worms gave out a most unpleasant odor.⁴³

Annie Clark Tanner collected leaves for the worms as a child. Though her mother always had other chores for the children to do, she did allow Annie and the other children to spend their summer collecting leaves. Not only did Annie's family mobilize to feed the worms, but their experience was typical of many Mormon silk worm raisers: the worms invaded their homes and for all their hard work, little actually materialized. She wrote,

I don't know how mother ever spared us to go off and pick mulberry leaves for the silk worms. I suppose it was because President Young was promoting the silk culture in Utah. Aunt Nancy, father's third wife, secured some sheets of paper on which were silk worm eggs, and emptied her rooms to make a place for shelves and scaffolds on which the leaves were spread over the hungry worms. There were some large mulberry trees in Bountiful. A hayrack load of young folks would accompany Aunt Nancy there, where we filled dozens of sacks with the leaves... Sarah and I expected some silk dresses for that hard summer's work, but were disappointed. Aunt Nancy reeled the silk from some of the cocoons and dyed the skeins which we used for our artwork.⁴⁴

Skeins of yarn for artwork or a few small silk handkerchiefs were all that ever came out of the silk industry, but thanks in large part to the work of polygamous women, the silk industry proved to be an outlet for females to assert their own power and role in society.

Many Mormon men began to complain of "turning the parlors over to the worms"⁴⁵ and some thought the smell was so bad that they refused to eat inside. Despite these disadvantages, and even amidst the protests of some men, the women continued to pursue their work. This shows that contrary to non-Mormon's beliefs, men did not have all the power in polygamous marriages. Instead, women and men were often equal and when it came to the women's business engagements. The men had little say in what they did.

Houses were often seen as belonging to the wife and not the husband, especially when each wife had a separate household. Women often set up and took care of their own houses without help from their husbands. Because the husband had limited resources, the wife often sewed, sold eggs, or ran part of a business to make ends meet for her own family. Annie Clark Tanner worked her entire life, mostly as a teacher, to set up a small home on her own lot. Her father had given her the land and \$ 1,000 before he died as her inheritance. She used the money wisely and, combined with her own money, was able to build a home. Years later, after her husband had a total of six wives, he asked her to sell the house. Annie had not even met the three new wives and refused her husband's request. She said,

What would you do if your husband had increased his family from three wives to six, some of whom you had never seen? Were there just the three of us, I'd make any sacrifice, but am I justified in robbing my children of an ideal home, situated among all my people, and where they have the opportunities for an education?⁴⁶

Annie, unlike most monogamous women of her time, was able to stand up to her husband because she had gained independence and power through her polygamous marriage. Also, she was in control of her own money and her own household so there was little her husband could do to persuade her. For many women, power over their own affairs was a significant benefit of polygamy. These women were not always subservient and they certainly weren't slaves. Annie Clark Tanner was aware of her family and did almost anything to help them; her house, however, was where she drew the line. Once, when her husband needed money to finance a farm he was starting in Canada, Annie cashed her \$1,500 share in her father's estate and handed the money to her husband. She asked

nothing in exchange and gave it to him out of love and the knowledge that it was best for the entire family.

Because the women often ran their own businesses, they were able to maintain control over the money they earned. Some women worked to support their families so they would not have to ask their husband for everything. Others worked because they loved it, like Annie Romney teaching school. Annie Clark Tanner also taught school, but not necessarily out of love for her work. She taught while her husband was on his three-year mission to Europe. She supported not only herself, but her husband and her half-sister. She wrote, “While Mr. Tanner was laboring as a missionary in Europe and Palestine, I taught school and sent him nearly all my salary. I also helped my half-sister who was a practical nurse and whose work was with mothers and young babies.”⁴⁷ Her sense of family and ability to work allowed Annie Clark Tanner to support herself and also help others. No matter why women earned money, they ultimately had control of it. This economic power gave women a political tool. They had the money and the power to form political organizations. Most often, these political organizations centered around polygamy and protecting the institution from outsiders.

Political Power

Because of the strong anti-polygamist attitudes in the east, Mormon women pulled together to support their husbands, their church, and their way of life. Though most women did not enter into polygamy, all Mormon women viewed attacks on

polygamy as an attack on the entire religion. They vowed to oppose the outsiders who threatened their religion. Likewise, Mormon husbands supported their wives and Utah became one of the first states to grant women's suffrage. Women in Utah received the vote in 1870, nearly fifty years before the rest of the country. This was done partly to increase the power of the Mormon vote over the Gentile vote in Utah but had the effect of giving women political power of their own.

However, the women of Utah lost their right to vote in 1887 under the Edmunds-Tucker Act, a piece of anti-Mormon and anti-polygamist legislation. Anti-polygamy forces joined with woman suffrage supporters who hated polygamy, and they were able to stop the vote in Utah. The suffragists hated polygamy so much that they were willing to suppress women voters in order to abolish it. The attacks on polygamy and insults directed toward the Mormon Church and its followers caused the Mormon women to retaliate with unprecedented political activism. Mormon women, both polygamists and non-polygamists, mobilized to support universal women's suffrage and by 1889 had organized the Utah Woman Suffrage Association. They also vigorously supported polygamy.

Polygamy became the center of most Mormon/non-Mormon debates. Between 1852 and 1890 Congress introduced 79 different pieces of legislation attempting to abolish polygamy and therefore solve their "Mormon Question."⁴⁸ The Mormon Question involved much more than polygamy, even though the majority of legislation was aimed at it. Most people hated Mormons for three reasons: economic, political, and religious. Mormons were seen as an economic threat because they bought up large tracts

of land and established a variety of businesses. These businesses competed with already existing shops and many feared that “The Mormons were determined to take over all their lands and business.”⁴⁹ The Mormons were also a significant political threat in the regions they occupied. On the basis of sheer numbers Mormons could have dominated the political sphere. Many also feared Mormons because they were a new religious sect that threatened Protestantism. Mormons were often labeled fanatics, which only fueled the opposition against them. In addition to these reasons, there was polygamy, which became the central focus of legislation against the Mormons. Polygamy, because it was offensive to all groups, was an easy target.

Mormon women perceived this attack on plural marriage as an attack on their very religion and although many Mormon women did not personally support or endorse polygamy, they united in public to defend the practice. The Women’s Exponent, an early Mormon newspaper, declared that under plural marriage a woman was more than “a play-thing, or a hot-house plant.” Instead she became “the head of her own household and the intelligent companion of her husband.”⁵⁰ The women continuously tried to uphold polygamy and became united by their dual struggle: save their religion from persecution and regain the vote for themselves. The women formed committees and set up rallies and large gatherings to espouse their beliefs.

By 1895 women had regained the right to vote, and this time they could also hold political offices. By the turn of the century several women had been elected to the state legislature. One of these women was Martha Hughes Cannon, a physician and polygamist. She won the election (five candidates out of ten were selected) by defeating

her husband as well as several other contenders. She was well known for having independent views from her husband and even ran on the Democratic ticket while he was a Republican. She proposed a variety of bills while she was a legislator, most emphasizing the public health concerns that had inspired her to become a doctor. One of her bills led to the establishment of a State Board of Health.⁵¹ In her private life, she was a polygamist and she used her position of influence and relative fame to support the practice, which she firmly believed was necessary for her salvation. In a public speech, Cannon claimed that a plural wife was not at all the slave that New Englanders imagined. She said, "If her husband has four wives, she has three weeks of freedom every month."⁵² Again, polygamy allowed women to pursue their own interests, business or political.

Close-Knit relationships- the foundations of family

Many of the most successful polygamous families formed close relationships. Wives who supported each other and genuinely cared for each other often found satisfaction and happiness in their families. Because the men were often gone, women who relied on each other were more able to avoid feelings of loneliness. Families with good relationships had the fewest problems with jealousy and found the most satisfaction in their marriages. Part of this relationship began before the marriage.

Relationships between wives usually developed after a sense of acceptance. Most often the wives had to see themselves as equal to truly develop a lasting commitment. To do this, the first wife had to accept the second. While many women did not like the idea

of sharing their husbands with other women, they tried to make the best of it. In a letter to her Aunt, Mary Jane Mount Tanner wrote, "I don't care much about sharing my husband with anybody though, but if it is right I should, and they are willing to share with me and not try to crowd me out, I will try to do the best I can."⁵³ Later, after living in the principle, she said, "I am used to plurality and can live very happy in it with a good woman. I am not very selfish and feel willing to accord every body their rights."⁵⁴ When old wives were willing to accept the new wives and also give them equal standing, lasting relationships could develop. These relationships often led to happiness and a feeling of security and contentment.

The affection and caring shared between the wives was most often evident at times of crisis. When Annie Clark Tanner's son, Myron, came home from his job sick, it took the dedication of both other wives to save his life. Annie wrote,

I appreciated so much the loyalty of Aunt Jennie and Josephine which was illustrated that summer of 1909 when Myron [Annie's eldest son] came home from Alta, very ill with typhoid fever. His father was away. The doctor, who was Josephine's brother, said the boy should go to the hospital. The company, for whom Myron worked, provided hospitalization in a very poorly equipped hospital. The doctor told Josephine that it was not a good enough place for one of her boys. 'It isn't good enough for Annie's then,' said Josephine. Neither Josephine nor I had any money, but Aunt Jennie had some, so she made arrangements for my son to have the care he needed in the St. Marks hospital.⁵⁵

Josephine, the third wife, thought herself the equal of Annie and did not think her children deserved better. This sort of attitude created lasting relationships because there was little competition. Jennie, the first wife, was willing to give her money to help Annie's child even though she could have used it for herself. Money, though available,

was not plentiful, and Jennie's sacrifice shows her love for both Annie and Annie's children. The dedication between wives in times of crisis helped keep the family unit cohesive and strong, which led to times of happiness once the crisis had passed.

Catharine Cottam Romney's family also helped her in times of crisis. In 1887, Catharine's seven year old son, Claude, died. Catharine was grief stricken and for many days her only solace was found in gathering flowers along the river and weaving them into baskets.⁵⁶ During her time of loss she did not have any material to make Claude's burial suit. She also had no money to buy one. At this time of crisis, Hannah came through. Catharine wrote,

I feel great satisfaction in the thought that he was laid away very nicely. As it happened, Hannah had a piece of beautiful linen, just enough to make him a pair of pants, waist, and shoes, which together with a pair of nice white stockings and garments, and a white ribbon bow at this neck made up his burial cloths, and he looked very natural, and had such a sweet expression on his dear little face.⁵⁷

Catharine was able to take a small amount of comfort in burying her son in nice clothing. Though it was a small gesture on Hannah's part, it meant a lot to Catharine.

The Romney family was incredibly supportive of each other. When they could not be together because of the persecutions, they missed seeing each other as much as they missed their children. Their reunions were happy ones, and they always enjoyed each others' company. While this does not mean there were not times of trouble or small fights, it shows that their family was functional and happy in polygamy. They delighted in seeing each other, helping each other, and looking after each other's children. When Catharine was in hiding so Miles would not be arrested for polygamy, she had a baby

girl, Emma, who did not see Hanna, Annie, or even many of Catharine's own children until she was nearly four months old. She said, "Hannah wrote that she wants to see us very badly, especially this little stranger (baby Emma)"⁵⁸ This close bond that developed between the wives continued even after Miles died. After his death in 1904, the wives lived together for several years. In 1907 they finally sold the farm where they all lived and moved into separate residences. Although they never lived together again they remained in contact and still supported each other.⁵⁹

This practice was common among wives who had close relationships. Another plural wife, who lived in St. George, Utah, described her experiences both before and after the death of her husband. She said,

There's three of us [wives]. He's dead. I was the first one, and the second lives up in Iron County, and the third lives here. We love each other and we always did, even when he was alive, and we all lived together. And we hardly knew our children apart, it was so much like one family. They called their own mothers 'Mother,' but they all called me 'Ma' whether they was mine or not.⁶⁰

Again, the family relationships formed a well-adjusted and happy family. The children did not seem to distinguish between each other and all the wives treated all children the same. These wives also liked each other well enough to stay close even after the husband's death.

Even Fanny Stenhouse, who later left the Church because of her hatred of polygamy, felt the strength of the relationships that could form in a polygamous marriage. When her husband was looking for a second wife, Fanny met Carrie and they formed a deep and lasting bond. Mr. Stenhouse had also met Carrie and it was later

revealed that he had courted her and they had discussed marriage. When Carrie was sick, Fanny promised her that she would allow Carrie to be her husband's second wife. She truly loved Carrie and their relationship made the thought of polygamy bearable for her. Although Carrie died before she could be sealed (married) to Mr. Stenhouse, Fanny took her place and married Carrie to her husband by proxy.¹ Fanny's relationship with Carrie caused her to feel differently, at least for a while, about polygamy. She said,

In my sorrow at parting from her, and the great affection that I felt towards her, all feelings of jealousy were utterly forgotten. Before I left I said, 'Carrie, whether you live or die, you shall be married to my husband, if he ever enters into Polygamy; and I say this although I do not doubt that he will do so, and at the same time I think that you will live.' I really believed that she might recover; for now this burden was off her mind, I thought she would have strength to subdue her sickness, and at first it seemed as if this would really be the case.⁶¹

Fanny's relationship with Carrie was enough to promise Carrie to her husband even if Carrie were to live. This was more than simple friendship, but the lasting and deep bond that is created by family, those you care about enough to live with. By this time Fanny knew that polygamy was unavoidable and she knew that, with Carrie, at least she would have a companion and someone she truly cared about in her life. Though this may seem like simple friendship, Fanny developed this "friendship" knowing that it would lead to polygamy.

¹ Mormon marriages often involved being "sealed" for all eternity. This meant that marriage was not only for this world but also for the next. They also allowed (but do not practice it now) marriage by proxy. This was used as a way to marry for the dead so that they could be reunited with their spouse in eternity. Marriages by proxy were just as binding in heaven. In Fanny and Carrie's case, Fanny took the place of Carrie and was married for her. In this way Fanny sealed Carrie to her husband for all eternity. This process was also used to seal long deceased people, such as Kings and Queens, to one another to ensure they could be exalted in heaven. Baptisms could also take place by proxy. This process, commonly called Baptism for the dead, is still commonly practiced today.

Relationships between the wives were not the only benefits of polygamy. Many wives developed strong relationships with their children. This occurred to the greatest degree in polygamous households where each wife had a separate home. Without the constant companionship of the other wives, many women turned to their eldest children (most often a daughter) for comfort, support and friendship. Annie Clark Tanner depended on her daughter, Jennie. She wrote

I had a close relationship with Jennie [Annie's first daughter, named after the first wife who was, at that time, childless], perhaps because she was the eldest of my children... For years she and I were more like sisters than mother and daughter... She was my companion. We read books and laughed together over O. Henry's funny stories. We went to lectures, discussed sermons, and plays as well as our own problems.⁶²

This close relationship brought a great deal of joy to both Annie and her daughter. These types of family relationships were most often found in successful polygamous households. They encouraged interconnectedness in the family and led to a happy environment. Just as in monogamous marriages, it is often the disposition of the family members and their willingness to be interdependent that makes a home successful or not.

Conclusion

Polygamy offered a variety of benefits to the women who participated in it. It gave them help with household duties and childrearing, gave them more independence from their husbands, the ability to sustain a career outside the home, control over their own finances, political power, and close-knit family relationships. Though many times the same opportunities were available to monogamous women, the freedom and increased

free time often available to polygamous women made them more likely to take advantage of the opportunities Mormon society gave them.

III. Polygamy as Burden

Though polygamy had many benefits, it was not wholly without its difficulties. Though few plural marriages were as bad as those described by Fanny Stenhouse, most had a variety of problems. Oftentimes plural wives were jealous of each other and animosity within the family led to a variety of difficult situations. Husbands were often gone for long periods of time attending to church business or visiting other wives, and many plural wives faced loneliness and a severe lack of financial support from their men. Because of the large number of obligations a man had to fulfill, resources were often scarce and many polygamous families lived in poverty. Relationships between husband and wife were equally strained, partly because a wife had little say in marital affairs. She could not rely on her husband, know if he was planning to marry someone else, or even know when she might see him again. This aggravated animosity and enhanced feelings of loneliness and helplessness among plural wives.

Polygamy also had disadvantages within the community. Although all members of the Church would defend polygamy when outsiders challenged the principle, they were not likely to truly support the principle within their own communities. Many non-polygamous wives abhorred the concept and urged their men not to marry other wives. At the same time, Church elders and officials pressured many men into taking other wives. The community looked down upon women who entered into polygamy while the church pressured people to enter it. This caused a great deal of stress in the pressured

families and led to unhappiness. These bad aspects of polygamy were present in almost every marriage. Like monogamous marriages, it wasn't all joy or all sadness but rather a mix of the two.

Accepting the principle, the first major obstacle

Before a marriage became polygamous it was necessary for at least one partner to agree with the principle. In most cases both the husband and the wife would at least perceive that the principle of polygamy was divine and that it must be followed. The theology behind polygamy stated that in order to be fully exalted in heaven a family must be polygamous. Further, women were “spiritual cripples”⁶³ in the sense that the only way they could attain salvation was by marrying a “man endowed with the priesthood.”⁶⁴ The only way a woman could be truly exalted was if she married into or became part of a polygamous family. Because there was a threat to their salvation, many women entered the practice even though they disagreed with it. The most hostile feelings toward polygamy occurred near the beginning of its practice. Because these people had been raised with the “Christian” ideals of monogamous marriage it was not easy to trade these for the polygamous ideal. Polygamy meant rejecting everything they had learned and some found the practice to be wholly degrading. Fanny Stenhouse, upon hearing about the practice, wrote,

Hereafter our hearts were to be daily and hourly trampled upon; the most sacred feelings of our sex were to be outraged, our affections were to be crushed; -henceforth we were to be nothing by ourselves; without a husband, we were told, we could not even enter heaven! But had our trials

been limited to this life we might have borne them, as many a weary soul has done, waiting for the relief of death. But death was to bring no hope to us: we were told that in the other world Polygamy should be the only order of marriage, and that without it none could be exalted in glory.⁶⁵

Like many women, Stenhouse prayed and tried to accept the principle as God's word. She taught the principles to other women when she was a missionary and "learned to regard polygamy as an essential part of the Mormon faith."⁶⁶

This was a common reaction to polygamy, even for those who would later come to love the principle. Eliza Roxy Snow was one of the biggest proponents of polygamy. She routinely went from house to house encouraging the practice and was one of the few women who regularly helped with ceremonies in the endowment house, the place where marriages took place before the temple was completed. But even Eliza had a hard time accepting the principle when she first learned about it. In her autobiography, partially written as an answer to Fanny Stenhouse's Tell It All, a book that was very critical of polygamy, Eliza wrote,

In Nauvoo I first understood that the practice of plurality was to be introduced into the church. The subject was very repugnant to my feelings- so directly was it in opposition to my educated prepossessions, that it seemed as though all the prejudices of my ancestors for generations past congregated around me. But when I reflected that I was living in the Dispensation of the fullness of times, embracing all other Dispensations, surely Plural Marriage must be necessarily be included, and I consoled myself with the idea that it was far in the distance, and beyond the period of my mortal existence.

It was not long, however, after I received the first intimation, before the announcement reached me that the 'set time' had come- that God had commanded His servants to establish the order, by taking additional wives- I knew that God, who had kept silent for centuries, was speaking- I had covenanted in the waters of baptism to live by every word He should communicate, and my heart was firmly set to do His bidding. As I increased in knowledge concerning the principle and design of Plural

Marriage, I grew in love with it, and today esteem it as a precious, sacred principle- necessary in the elevation and salvation of the human family- in redeeming woman from the curse, and world from corruptions. ⁶⁷

Not all people came to “love” polygamy and many women found it to be repugnant even after they had allowed their husbands to take additional wives. However, it is important to remember that they thought they were living a Divine principle. Not all Mormons agreed with the “Divine Principle” or even supported it in their own communities. Even though they might defend it heartily to an outsider, they might not be as supportive of their friends and neighbors. Mary Jane Mount Tanner faced opposition within her own family when she decided to enter into polygamy. Even after fifteen years living in the principle, her aunt did not understand and was not willing to accept Jane’s decision. Jane wrote,

I know you cannot understand poligamy[sic]. I can hardly do it myself but there is no immorality in it anymore than in marrying one wife. There is some jealousy and many weaknesses to overcome, but I see no one but has trials of one kind or another, and many are unhappy where there is but one wife. ⁶⁸

While facing opposition from family and friends was one problem, pressure from the Church was another. Many times the Church would pressure high ranking members of the community into polygamy while friends and neighbors would try to prevent polygamy. This created a hostile situation. According to Fanny Stenhouse, in the beginning of polygamy

The authorities at that time... had urged every person, without distinction, into Polygamy. Men and women had been forced to marry one another without any respect to affection or fitness, and the result was that hundreds

of marriages were entered into which made those who contracted them miserable for life.⁶⁹

Even some high-ranking officials in the Church were conflicted about their ideas of polygamy and the status of the women who entered it. Brigham Young, president of the Mormon Church, had urged Miles Romney to take a second wife. When he finally married Catharine Cottam, all was well. However, even though Brigham Young had encouraged the marriage, some members of his family did not approve. Jennifer Moulton Hansen, a historian, wrote

Sometime between 1873 (when Catharine and Miles were married) and 1877 (when Brigham Young died), Brigham Young hosted a party at this winter home in St. George, to which the Romneys were invited. Miles and Hannah planned to attend a school board meeting in the early evening and to meet Catharine later at the party. After their meeting, Miles and Hannah stopped at home to check on things and found Catharine there, upset. She had gone to the party, only to be informed by one of Brigham Young's daughters that they were expecting only Mile's first wife to accompany him. Since other plural wives were there, Catharine felt she had been singled out for this humiliation because of her previous status as a servant in the Young home. Miles sent word to the party that the Romneys would not be coming. Brigham Young went to the Romney home to inquire and apologized on behalf of his daughter, but Miles refused to go.⁷⁰

Though this could have been a simple mistake, or the daughter could have looked down on Catharine because of her servant status, Catharine believed that she was not receiving the same treatment as the other polygamous wives. Catharine was painfully aware of her previous status as a servant and though she thought her polygamous marriage to Miles would have exalted her from that status, this event served to remind her of her lower position. Though the Church said that this was the way to exaltation and pressured people to enter into polygamy, not all marriages were treated the same.

Treatment was often based on the social status of the family or the social status of particular wives. In the larger community, some people looked down on polygamous wives all together and believed they were of a lower status. Alice Johnson Reed, a plural wife, recorded in her diary the negative reactions of fellow church members to her polygamous marriage. She wrote, “I made a call on Mrs. Joseph Young and had a smart discussion on the merits of my choosing a man who had a wife and how much more the fist wife had to endure than those who voluntarily took the man afterwards.”⁷¹

On another occasion Alice had another encounter with those who disapproved of plural marriage. These women looked down on Alice for participating in a plural marriage and said “that she would not consider permitting her husband to have another wife.”⁷² This sort of opposition puzzled and hurt many plural wives. Alice wrote, “It seems to me a strange thing to believe in Mormonism and not believe or receive the doctrine of plurality of wives.”⁷³ Though problems within the community could cause problems for members of polygamous families, problems within the family had a much larger effect on the happiness of the household.

Loneliness- The Chief Complaint in Polygamous Marriages

Almost all plural wives complained of loneliness, especially those who lived in separate houses from the other wives. This minimized the amount of time the husband would be around. With his other houses, missions, and Church business, each individual wife received little attention. Without a husband to confide in and depend on, most plural

wives found themselves alone. Even when the husbands were home, they often divided their time between various households. Fanny Stenhouse said,

When a man has more than one wife, his affections must of necessity be divided; he really has no home in the truest sense of the word; his houses are simply boarding-places. Should he have all his wives in one house, as is often the case, they are then slaves to the system, each one is watching the others-and they know it- trying to discover something that can be secretly told to the husband to draw away his affections from the rest.⁷⁴

The lack of a husband's undivided attention could often lead to feelings of loneliness, especially for those who were used to a busy household. Occasionally, when all the wives lived in the same household, a plural wife would find herself alone, the other wives being in different locations and the husband usually away on business. These occasions were most likely to spark feelings of loneliness in polygamous women. Catharine Cottam Romney wrote, "This is Sunday night, and as I have been at home all day and am all alone with the wind whistling around the house and the children all asleep I feel rather lonesome, so I think I shall go to bed."⁷⁵ Catharine was used to a bustling house with two other women, all of their children, and her husband, who was often at home, unlike most polygamous men.

Annie Romney, another of Miles' wives, also had her share of lonely times. After the persecutions against polygamists grew dangerous, each plural wife had to scatter to a separate area to avoid detection and protect her family. She wrote, "I would find it very lonesome here if I had any spare time, but I have too much to do to think about it very often. I generally feel worst when I try to write, for a long time I always had to have a good cry, but I am getting hardened now so that I don't mind it so much."⁷⁶ It is

important to note that the loneliness these two women are discussing is not only because of a neglectful spouse. In both cases the women were away from the companionship of the other wives, who they frequently relied on and confided in. They were also, especially during the persecutions, often separated from their children as well. In many cases loneliness was due to persecutions just as often as it was to a rambling spouse.

However, often loneliness did stem from lack of attention from the husband. Two weeks after Annie Clark Tanner became Joseph Marion Tanner's second wife, he failed to visit her as promised. This was her first experience with the loneliness that would surround much of her life. She said

I craved some assurance of his love after placing 'my all' on the marriage altar. When he treated so lightly his appointment to come to see me two weeks after our marriage, is there any wonder that I was brokenhearted. A week later he came but my enthusiasm was gone. I was never sure he would keep his appointments after that first disappointment. When I heard the northbound train I never knew whether it would bring me joy or sorrow. In fact, the train itself seemed to personify joy or sorrow to someone.⁷⁷

From that moment on Annie Clark Tanner was always aware of her loneliness. This first act of forgetfulness on the part of her husband had caused her to feel unimportant. This feeling was compounded six months later when Joseph married another wife, Josephine, and promptly left on a three-year mission to Europe and Palestine. Though at the beginning of polygamy, both monogamous and polygamous husbands were sent on missions in equal percentage, after persecution began, there is some evidence to suggest that polygamous men were more often selected to participate in missions. Just as women were sent into hiding to avoid being suspected or persecuted for polygamy, polygamous

husbands were sent on long, foreign missions to avoid being caught and tried.⁷⁸ There is no available information on the length or location of missions for monogamous as opposed to polygamous relationships.

When husbands returned from missions and were able to offer their wives more attention, feelings of loneliness often lessened. Soon after Joseph returned from his mission, Annie's feelings of loneliness temporarily dissipated. She wrote

I had never been so happy. As yet I was still Miss Clark and could go and come among my friends, but never with my husband... I felt secure. I had a worthy husband and the prospect of being a mother. I knew that in a short time I would be hiding out under an assumed name to conceal my identity. This was the practice of all those living in polygamy at that time. Their uncertain condition of living with relatives, friends, or sometimes trusted strangers, under assumed names, was known as living on "the underground."⁷⁹

However, as her time to go underground approached, the reality of the inevitable loneliness that would occur as she fled from persecution began to set in. The underground was often a lonely experience for women.

I had been so happy with my husband before leaving home. We were delighted about my prospective motherhood, and our visits had been so enjoyable that nothing in the temple satisfied me. I was just as homesick and lonesome as I could be. I had been there over two weeks and did not hear from my husband once. He was entertaining Josephine.⁸⁰

This not only shows her terrible homesickness for the comforts of her home and the affection she was longing for from her husband, but also the second biggest problem that arose in polygamous families: jealousy.

Jealousy: A nearly universal evil

As with loneliness, most polygamous households had to deal with some degree of jealousy. Jealousy led to competition among the wives and often also led to disputes and unhappiness. When Annie Clark Tanner bitterly said, “He was entertaining Josephine” she shows that jealousy arose in even the most well-functioning plural families. Jealousy, it seems, was virtually unavoidable due to the nature of polygamous households, but it could be alleviated or aggravated by a number of factors including, the attitude of the husband, the acceptance of the first wife, and the perceived level of equality or inequality among the wives.

The husband’s attitude seemed to have the biggest effect on the level of jealousy found in the family. Husbands could sometimes even promote jealousy and competition among the wives. They did not discourage wives who were constantly “tattling” on the other wives, and therefore helped to create an environment of animosity in the households. Maria Ward, a plural wife of a Mormon elder, often wrote her observations of other households. She often transposed her interviews with other plural wives, like this one with Mrs. Clark, plural wife of Joseph Smith.

Alas, how is it possible for me to tell you all I suffer, all I have suffered? How can I describe the bitterness of unceasing remorse? My husband’s countenance of despair and anguish is continually before me; the cries of my children ring uninterruptedly in my ears. Then the cruelty of this man, for whom I have forsaken all, and the bitter haste of Irene [another wife], who employs every means to prejudice him against me. She flatters herself that if I was once out of the way, she would reign as sole wife and favorite of the Prophet. It was her machinations that induced him to find a new husband for Mrs. Cook. She fabricated some infamous falsehoods about that woman; accused her of being lazy, said she devoured the delicacies of the table which Smith desired to have reserved for himself.⁸¹

Joseph Smith did not discourage jealous games and competition among his wives. His cruelty to those who failed to assert their position through “tattling” and lying, not only alienated those wives, but increased the incentive to bicker in his household. Irene, another of his wives, was jealous enough of Mrs. Clark to “employ every means” to prejudice Smith against her for the sole purpose of being able to “reign as sole wife and favorite of the Prophet.” Mrs. Cook, a prospective wife of Joseph Smith, was evidently cast off because jealousy prompted Irene to fabricate information that was unflattering to the girl. The competition usually worked to secure one wife as the perceived “favorite,” which only fueled the jealousy of the other wives. This cycle contributed to the unhappiness of many plural families.

Jealousy could also be fueled by how willing the first wife was to accept the second wife. Often it was hardest for those who had been raised with the popular conception of marriage to accept the idea of sharing their husband with another woman.

Annie Clark Tanner wrote

I am sure that women would never have accepted polygamy had it not been for their religion. No woman ever consented to its practice without a great sacrifice on her part. There is something so sacred about the relationship of husband and wife that a third party in the family is sure to disturb the confidence and security that formerly existed.⁸²

Though it was undoubtedly hard for a woman to consent to being a second or third wife, the first wife often had the most difficult time accepting the new principle. In many cases, first wives had been married in monogamy for many years and the new principle of polygamy was disturbing. Those who had grown up with the principle still found it hard to accept that they would not be their husband’s only wife. Sister Maynard, in an

interview with Fanny Stenhouse, described her view of the relationship between some plural wives.

You will find that the first wives will have nothing to do with you [because they fear their husbands will take a liking to you and marry you]. You will find when you come to be better acquainted with the people here, that the first wives do not waste much love over the polygamic wives; and, of course the polygamic wives detest the first wives. Then the plural wives get together and talk all manner of evil about the first wives, who do pretty much the same in respect to them. It is only natural that they do so.⁸³

First wives and polygamic wives often did not get along well because of the sense of competition that arose within the family. First wives felt that they were somehow lacking and that this had caused their husband to find a new wife. Plural wives often felt threatened by the increased status sometimes given to the first wife and also felt like an intrusion⁸⁴ on the family. Occasionally the new wife would also believe she was above the old wives because she was so much younger and prettier; this also caused many problems and led to unhappiness in the family.

This sense of competition and jealousy was increased when the wives lived in separate households. Because the husband always had someplace else to go, many wives took it personally when the husband left to visit another wife's home. Annie Clark Tanner wrote,

If things do not go just right for the husband in one home, he could go to another. The wife whom he leaves behind is, of course, brokenhearted. She would frequently blame herself and resolve never to have that experience repeated. But she may, nevertheless, be aware of a great weakness on the part of her husband.⁸⁵

This was not the only problem created by jealousy. Often jealousy of another wife manifested itself in sadness. Many times when the husband announced he wished to take another wife, the first wife (or all present wives) would undergo a type of grieving process. They would be overcome with sadness and a sense of loss associated with “losing” their husband and their ideal picture of marriage. They were also confronted with a great amount of anxiety in anticipating the arrival of the new wife. Often times the women had never met and if they had, it would have only been briefly. The prospect of plurality brought sadness to many Mormon women but they usually tried to deal with it as best as they could. Hannah Romney, Miles’ first wife, was left at home to prepare Catharine’s room while Miles attended his wedding.

I had a room finished for Catharine with new carpet and furniture all ready for her. I cannot explain how I suffered in my feelings while I was doing all this hard work, but I felt I would do my duty if my heart did ache. I had such a hard time with his other wife [who divorced Miles two years later] that I feared I would have the same kind of trial again... When he came home he appreciated what I had done. He admired the home arrangements and was surprised that I had accomplished so much in such a short time. His appreciation of my work partly took away the heart ache.⁸⁶

It is clear that Catharine’s anticipated arrival was hard for Hannah. Her heart ache was because she was losing the monogamous relationship she had regained when Miles’ second wife, Carrie, divorced him. However, Hannah firmly believed in polygamy as a principle, and this helped her overcome her negative feelings about the. Miles’ first venture into polygamy had been a horrible experience. Carrie was unhappy with polygamy and this led to tensions and unhappiness within the family. After having two children, Carrie left Miles. She always allowed the children to visit though and they

lived with their father after Carrie's death in 1879. Because their first experience in polygamy had not been happy, Hannah was understandably anxious about Catharine. Hannah worked diligently to make Catharine feel at home, but she could not help but feel jealous. She had already seen the effects of polygamy on her family and was not eager to feel those effects again.

Effects on the Husband/Wife Relationship

Apart from feelings of jealousy and loneliness, polygamy also had a profound effect on the husband/wife relationship. Because most people who entered into polygamy were used to monogamous marriages and the monogamous ideal that society encouraged, the changes that occurred in the relationship between the husband and his first wife could have disastrous effects. In many cases, the first wife no longer felt the attachment or even the love towards her husband she had previously felt. This sense of “loss” was one of the chief barriers to happiness in some polygamous families. Fanny Stenhouse, whose husband did everything he could to make her feel loved, still faced this problem. She wrote,

My husband did all he could to spare my feelings as much as possible; but it was, nevertheless, a hard task for me to subdue my own heart, and I found that all that I had anticipated in imagination was nothing compared with the realization. Feelings of degradations, disgust, and humiliation filled my heart constantly and without ceasing. From the day of my husband's second marriage, I could never look upon him with pleasure- he was no longer *my* husband, and I now felt no desire to confide in him. Even the very sight of him filled my rebellious soul with the bitterest feelings, although, at the same time, I knew and felt that he tried in every way to smooth my rugged pathway.⁸⁷

For many first wives, polygamy was seen as a way to make up for something they, themselves, were lacking. This, often combined with a husband who did not ask the wife's opinion of entering into polygamy, produced feelings of disgust, jealousy, and inadequacy in many pioneer women. There was also a profound sense of loss. Their husband was suddenly no longer theirs alone. They had to share him and his attention with other women, all of whom the first wife considered as making up for some inadequacy in herself. Obviously, not all first wives felt this way, but those who did often had a horrific experience in polygamy. Mary Burton, a friend of Fanny Stenhouse, also entered into polygamy and had the same disastrous result. She found herself uncaring and callous toward her husband, her children, the other wives, and almost everything else. She said,

A true woman *never* can 'get used' to this hideous system. If the hearts of some are dead and cold, it is a curse to them and a curse to their husbands and their children; and if a wife seems careless or callous, as the case may be, it is because love for her husband has first died out in her heart. She feels no jealousy because she has no love; but if a woman has but a spark of love for her husband she will hate with a deadly hatred any other woman whom that husband loves.⁸⁸

In this case Mary could feel no jealousy because she felt nothing at all. Jealousy, she believed, was the product of still having love. She reasoned that the only way to have a "happy" household in polygamy is if none of the wives actually love the husband. They must all remain callous and cold in order to preserve the peace. However, within Mary's home there was not peace. After her husband decided to take on two additional wives, making a total of four, the wives segregated themselves into two opposing sides. This,

coupled with the loss of feeling the wives experienced toward their husband, created a volatile situation.

We went [to the endowment house] and he married two sisters on the same day, but it did not do him much good. They are handsome girls, but have very bad tempers and we often have a very unpleasant time. The second wife, poor child, suffered most when he married the other two. She did not seem to like me very much at first, which was quite natural, but when the other two were brought home she seemed quite to cling to me, and I have, strange to say, taken quite a fancy to her. In all our disputes she always sides with me, and in return I always stand up for her, as a matter of course. I am getting used to this wretched life; I have stifled all my love; and I am sorry to say that sometimes I almost hate every one around me, including my husband.⁸⁹

Though Mary found companionship in the second wife, the third and fourth wives were a source of great conflict to her. Her husband, evidently, did little to stifle their bickering and complaining so their household was often chaotic. This situation caused Mary to withdraw her feelings further, to the point that she hated everyone, including her husband. This type of family life was hellish for all involved. This makes it easy to see why some regarded polygamy as a horrific and terrible undertaking that could only lead to unhappiness.

Many polygamous wives, especially first wives, noted a decrease in their feelings for their husband when another wife entered the family. However, a great many of these wives, as we have seen, made up for the lack of attention from their husband by forming close bonds with the other women and their children. The degree to which loss of feelings of love were reported seems strongest in those who were introduced to the principle of polygamy later in life. Those who were already married when the principle was announced, often had the strongest resistance to it and reported the strongest feelings

of “loss.” Families such as the Romney family or the Tanner family, seemed to have less of a problem coming to terms with sharing the husband.

Poverty- a condition of many plural households

An obvious consequence of one husband, several wives, and many children (generally approximately eight to ten per wife) was poverty. Though there were a few rich families, such as those headed by Joseph Smith (and his sons) and Brigham Young, who were able to provide their wives and children with whatever they desired, the average polygamous family found its resources to be stretched. Even though most male polygamists had some degree of wealth (Kimball Young found that over 50 percent of polygamous families were above average in economic position, 30 percent were average, and only 20 percent were considered below average),⁹⁰ caring for additional wives and children quickly reduced the actual degree of wealth they enjoyed. While a polygamous family might have more money than a monogamous one, the conditions of polygamy might make both houses equally well off. In most poor polygamous houses, the wives were forced to live in the same house whether they got along or not. Often, families used the wagon box as an extra bedroom. Even small polygamous families had a difficult time providing for anything more than they most basic of needs. Fanny Stenhouse visited one of her friends, who had entered into a polygamous marriage. Instead of the elegant lady she remembered, she found a picture of poverty and unhappiness. She wrote,

[She lived in] A little log cabin of two rooms, with bare walls, bare floor, and miserably furnished; and in this wretched abode Poverty and

Polygamy had wrecked the life of my poor friend, whom I had known under such different circumstances. Here, together with their five children, lived also the second wife, with *her* two children. It was with difficulty that I could recognize the poor, careworn, broken-spirited, and ill-clad woman who stood before me, the once gay, light hearted, happy, and elegantly-dressed lady whom I had known in Switzerland.⁹¹

Polygamy and pioneer life often led to poverty, which of course could lead to unhappiness. As we have seen, this scarcity could lead to opportunities for women because they were often allowed to run their own businesses and become more independent. But in other cases, this scarcity caused problems, especially when one wife received a larger portion of the goods. The Romney family, though happy and well-functioning, was considered poor. Catharine was very excited when Miles finally added two small bedrooms to their house for the other wives. She wrote,

We are all well and as comfortably situated as we could possibly expect in the time. Miles has built two small lumber bedrooms on one end of the house for Hannah and Annie. While I use the large room [the living room]. The girls the tent, (Miles bought one since he came back) the boys the wagon box. And the little children have a bed fixed up in the kitchen, so you see Mother we don't have to make beds down on the floor. And though our bedsteads are not so nice as the ones we had at home, they answer the purpose, and we sleep just as soundly.⁹²

Though the Romneys never complained of their situation and their poverty seldom caused real problems within the family, they were not comfortable in the confines of their small house. Children were forced to sleep outside on the ground simply because there was no room for them inside. The Romney family was so poor one year that Catharine wrote "Christmas will soon be here, but I fear 'Santa Claus' will forget to come this year."⁹³

Scarcity could arise not only from lack of money, but from lack of resources. Occasionally the husband would make enough money to make his large family quite comfortable but because of the way the resources were allocated, one family ended up in poverty anyway. Annie Clark was born into a polygamous family and later, of course, married into one herself. Though in her girlhood home, the wives lived in separate residences, across the street from one another, there was a great inequity in the division of resources. The first wife (Annie's mother was the second wife) received priority in all things (as a matter of status) and was even in charge of doling out food and other resources to the other wives. Whenever they wanted anything they had to ask the first wife and hope she would give it to them. Annie wrote,

No one knew how tried my mother was with the penurious handling out of provisions, which were bought in abundance by father. How glad we were when he was there to dip out the sugar, rice, and beans from the 100-pound sack, or give us a few dozen yards of cloth from the bolts bought for dresses, aprons, gowns, and underwear. On the other hand, it must have been a great trial for Aunt Mary to have us go to her home so often for the things we needed.⁹⁴

Because the first wife was in control of all the provisions, it pained Annie's mother to ask for things. When Mr. Clark was home to dole out resources it didn't feel as much like "taking" from the other family. Also, Annie's father seemed to be more equitable in distributing the resources and though he let his first wife control weekly goods, he controlled larger purchases such as furniture. Because of the power Aunt Mary usually had over the provisions, Annie's family as well as the families of the other wives often received less. Though in most (65 percent) polygamous households, the husband distributed the goods, in twenty percent of the households the first wife was in charge of

distributing all goods. The other fifteen percent of households worked by distributing allowances or basing distribution on necessity.⁹⁵ Though Annie's family was not necessarily poor, they still faced the scarcity problem, and the inequity that developed from it was a source of trial and conflict between the families.

Perceived inequality

Inequality in families was more than simply the result of poverty or scarcity in resources. Often wives fought for status and esteem, which frequently lead to perceived inequality in one area or another. In some families, such as the one in which Annie Clark Tanner grew up, gave higher status to the first wife.

Father's idea of living in polygamy was to give the first wife first consideration. Whenever we went in the carriage it waited for us at the first home, and when we returned, it was unloaded there. It was assumed to be the proper thing for Aunt Mary to be always in the front seat with father and my mother in the back.⁹⁶

Though this in itself was not usually enough to cause unhappiness in the home, the attitude of the wives toward this policy often could. In this case, the first family was well aware of their position and wanted as little to do with the second family as possible. This led to increased tension and caused Annie's family to feel inferior. It also caused them to be wary of asking for anything because they did not want to appear as if they were expecting too much. Though upset by the inadequacies between the two families, Annie did realize there were two sides to this issue.

Naturally, the first family was aware of its superior position, partly because they were older than we. As I think of it now, if they felt imposed on for being expected to consider us in any way, who could blame them? Hadn't they toiled with my father since childhood? Now he had added another family to be supported and share the profits of the farm. And we never thought of complaining to our father because they kept the chicken house locked and because they objected if we knocked a few sweet apples off a tree in their orchard. As children, my father's second family accepted conditions as children do, and like our mother, we expected very little.⁹⁷

Because of their "inferior" status, Annie's family was denied access to resources and was not allowed to share in some profits of the family farm such as chickens or apples. But even though this presented a hardship for her family when she was growing up, she realized that the situation was equally trying on the first family. The first family had long been established when the principle of polygamy was formally introduced to the Mormon Church. The addition of a new family created an extra burden and took profits away from what the first family saw as the fruits of their labor. Their family life had been completely disrupted and they were forced to consider another family, with its own children on the way, in whatever they did. Both sides carried the burden of polygamy and both often felt that they were not as well-off as the other family.

The husband could often prevent perceived inequality from turning into jealousy and competition. In Annie's girlhood home, her father did not often tolerate bickering among the wives. Though this could not alleviate all problems, it did help minimize the jealousy that could often arise. Annie wrote,

Aunt Mary (first wife of Annie Clark Tanner's father) was sure of her position as co-head of the family, but when in a moment of weakness she referred to my mother's bureau as having a better gloss than her own, she was reminded by father that the other had better care. The wives learned that they could not go far in voicing criticism. If my mother began a

complaint when my father was in her home, about the meager supply of provisions which were doled out by Aunt Mary, he walked out.⁹⁸

Annie's father did not tolerate whining or fighting and did not allow one wife to gain an advantage through complaining. Unlike Annie's father, many husbands did cave in to their wives' demands. In these households, bickering and complaining were commonplace instead of rare occurrences. When wives knew they could gain something, they complained more. This led to greater tension and more unhappiness. Though inequity still caused disputes within the family, the husband could help the situation by refusing to acknowledge petty complaints.

Inequity was also a problem when it came to attention, except in this case it was often the newest wife that received the upper hand. Many husbands would favor the new wife. She was often younger than the others and prettier as well. Sister Maynard, a friend of Fanny Stenhouse and the first wife in a polygamous family, told of her experiences with the new wives.

The Mormon men always do make themselves silly over their new wives, and I did not expect my husband to be an exception to the rule; but I was perfectly astonished at the change that took place in Alice (the new wife). Instead of the quiet, modest, girl she used to be, she put on all sorts of airs, and treated me as if I were of not the slightest consequence. I couldn't stand that, and I resolved, if it were only to take the pride out of her, I would get my husband to marry another wife still... That would soon bring Miss Alice to a proper state of mind, and she needed something of the sort, for, do you know, she had actually made that silly husband of mine think that she ought to be treated with the same consideration as myself.⁹⁹

Not only did Alice believe that she was superior, Mr. Maynard began to believe that Alice was better than his first wife. The new wife almost always believed she was

superior because the husband had usually told her that he had never felt love before her. Alice gained influence over Mr. Maynard because he seemed to favor her and this caused hostility and unhappiness in the home. It displaced the first wife from her position of adoration and allowed Alice the top position in the family. This, naturally, infuriated the first (and all previous) wives because it meant less attention for themselves. Mrs. Maynard's solution of finding yet another wife for her husband was successful. Upon his third marriage, Alice did not feel as important and certainly did not feel superior. The third wife, thankfully, did not feel or pretend that she was superior to the rest and from then on their family worked more peacefully.

After Annie Clark Tanner married, she too was occasionally confronted with what she perceived was inequality. Before Jennie, the first wife, had any children, Annie understood why she might need more attention to keep her from feeling lonely. But later, after the birth of Jennie's first child, Annie found it difficult to cope with the inequity in the amount of attention she was receiving. Joseph Marion Tanner, at this time, was in New York, a place that did not welcome polygamous families. As a result he had decided he must reside and take all his meals with his first wife and leave Annie to herself. Annie wrote,

After all, Father in Heaven is the only friend I have, so I fasted until I felt sure that our Father would give Mr. Tanner some idea of justice. I couldn't see that Jennie (first wife) needed much more of Mr. Tanner's attention than myself, now that she was a mother; but argument was no use. I must pray; and finally, after a fast of three days, Mr. Tanner agreed that every alternating Sunday he would have dinner with us.¹⁰⁰

This small compromise on Mr. Tanner's part seemed to make Annie feel much better about the amount of attention she was receiving. Perceived or real inequalities within polygamous families was often a source of conflict. The most egalitarian families were frequently the most happy. Those with large differences in status, economic wealth, or attention, were often fraught with the most problems.

IV. Conclusion

Polygamy presented a variety of specific problems and benefits for women. While polygamous relationships were often fraught with jealousy and competition, many could overcome these obstacles to create happy, life-long bonds with all parties in the marriage. Families were often close knit and women, through helping each other, were often able to pursue other interests, such as work or school. This, in turn allowed them to be in control of a small amount of cash. Despite these benefits, many polygamous households were poor and women often had little say in when their husbands would be there or even if he were planning to marry again. Furthermore, entering into a polygamous marriage often put severe strain on the relationship between the husband and the first wife. The sense of loss and loneliness that accompanied these relationships was a severe hardship for the women involved in them.

Few polygamous marriages were wholly good, or completely miserable. Most were a combination of the two. In the Romney household, the same women who knew that “Santa Clause will forget to come this year”¹⁰¹ and who slept in wagon boxes and on the ground outside, developed a lasting bond and supported each other through the roughest times, such as when Catharine’s son, Claude, died. Though Hannah first felt some jealousy toward Catharine’s arrival and all the Romney wives experienced loneliness at one time or another, they formed a happy enough relationship to remain

together even after their husband died. Though they could have sold the farm and the store they owned and ran in order to live comfortably on their own, as they did a few years later, the women chose to live together. Because they helped each other Annie was able to teach school and Hannah was able to pursue her own interests in running the ladies co-op and helping the Relief Society. Though polygamy meant sacrifice and occasional jealousy, without polygamy they would not have formed such a close-knit family and would not have been able to pursue their own interests.

For Annie Clark, although she was frustrated with the inequity in attention in her household and was often on her own financially and emotionally, she developed a strong relationship for her daughter and found “an independence that women in monogamy never know.”¹⁰² She became conscious of her power a woman and a wife and learned “that it takes more than the authority of the leader in a patriarchal marriage to make a successful home.”¹⁰³

Even Fanny Stenhouse, who of the three women had the worst experience by far, was able to develop a strong relationship with Carrie, a potential polygamous wife, and loved her enough to promise Carrie to her husband. At the time she promised Carrie to her husband, Fanny did not know of her husband’s plan to marry another girl. Although her husband had originally planned to marry Carrie, Fanny’s objections and Carrie’s illness prevented it. Fanny also saw the benefits of having a second or third wife to help around the house through the stories of her friends. Though Fanny Stenhouse was incredibly unhappy in her relationship and was unable to avoid jealousy, competition, and

the loss of her husband's love, even she saw some of the benefits of the "Divine Principle."

These women were not slaves to their husbands and the practice did not suppress the women's movement in Utah. If anything, the practice of polygamy and the Church's willingness to defend the principle helped the women of Utah obtain the right to vote. However, these women also did not live in a utopia and polygamy often presented challenges that monogamy did not. Though polygamy had the power to unite the Mormon community against outsiders, it did not unite the community within itself. Women (and families) faced pressure from the Church to enter into the practice of plural marriage and pressure from the community itself to refrain from entering polygamy.

Though no experience in polygamy was ideal and every marriage had its problems, to a large degree these households functioned the same as monogamous homes. Polygamy presented a unique set of problems and benefits, uncommon to most monogamous marriages. Those best able to take advantage of the benefits and avoid the problems such as jealousy and loneliness often had the happiest marriages and formed long-lasting bonds with the other wives.

There are two questions one must ask in considering women and polygamy. First, one must ask if they were happy in their situation. Were the loneliness and jealousy so overbearing as to make them miserable or did the comfort and compassion of other wives make the experience bearable or even satisfying? Second, was polygamy good for the status of women in America. Did it help or hinder the women's movement? Did it make women economic partners or mere slaves to a patriarchal male? Both the contemporary

and present-day debate have tried to answer these questions. Polygamy was a complex phenomenon and answering either question with an absolute would be simplifying the problem. Though many women were satisfied, they faced incredible loneliness and hardship. Though many found independence and careers as a result of polygamy, society was largely based on patriarchy and the focus for women was ultimately on home, motherhood, and family.

The Non-Mormon view of polygamy clearly exaggerated the negative aspects of the practice. Plural marriages did have positive points and many women enjoyed their experience. However, the Mormon view that polygamy as a utopian experience that left women completely liberated is also false. Although women were given the right to vote, were able to run their own businesses and control the money earned through their endeavors, polygamy did not allow women to fully liberate themselves from the patriarchy supported by the Mormon church and 19th century society. It was not utopian and most families had to learn to cope poverty and internal conflict. In the end, though polygamous marriages had their own problems and benefits, the results were much the same as in monogamous marriages. Most marriages had problems, some worked them out, and others didn't. As Mary Jane Mount Tanner said, "There is some jealousy [in polygamy] and many weaknesses to overcome, but I see no one but has trials of one kind or another, and many are unhappy where there is but one wife."¹⁰⁴ Because of the large variety of results and feelings about polygamy, it is unfair to categorize it as simply good or bad. The experiences shown here speak to the idea that polygamy is a complex

situation for all involved and that characterizing it as simply good or bad denies a large part of what the plural wives experienced.

APPENDIX A

THE REVELATION

Section 132

Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded July 12, 1843, relating to the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant, as also plurality of wives. HC 5: 501-507. Although the revelation was recorded in 1843, it is evident from the historical records that the doctrines and principles involved in this revelation had been known by the Prophet since 1831.

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant, Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines-

2 Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter.

3 Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

4 For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory.

5 For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world.

6 And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fullness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fullness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

7 And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.

8. Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.

9. Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name?

10. Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed?

11 And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was?

12 I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment- that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord.

13 And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God.

14 For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed.

15 Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world.

16 Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory.

17 For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever.

18 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife, and make a covenant with her for time and for all eternity, if that covenant is not by me or by my word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through him whom I have

anointed and appointed unto this power, then it is not valid neither of force when they are out of the world, because they are not joined by me, saith the Lord, neither by my word; when they are out of the world it cannot be received there, because the angels and the gods are appointed there, by whom they cannot pass; they cannot, therefore, inherit my glory; for my house is a house of order, saith the Lord God.

19 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said unto them- Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths- then shall it be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, and if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full fore when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fullness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

20 Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then they shall be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject.

21 Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory.

22 For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me.

23 But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also.

24 This is eternal lives- to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law.

25 Broad is the gate, and wide the way that leadeth to the deaths; and many there are that go in threat, because they receive me not, neither do they abide in my law.

26 Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment, and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation; but they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption, saith the Lord God.

27 The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in the world not out of the world, is in that ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord

God; and he that abideth not this law can in nowise enter into my glory, but shall be damned, saith the Lord.

28 I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was.

29 Abraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord, and hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne.

30 Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins- from whose loins ye are namely, my servant Joseph- which were to continue so long as they were in the world; and as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the world they should continue; both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them.

31 This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham; and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself.

32 Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham; enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved.

33 But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham.

34 God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law; and from Hagar sprang many people. This, therefore, was fulfilling, among other things, the promises.

35 Was Abraham, therefore, under condemnation? Verily I say unto you, Nay; for I, the Lord, commanded it.

36 Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac; nevertheless, it was written: Thou shalt not kill. Abraham, however, did not refuse, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness.

37 Abraham received concubines and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but gods.

38 David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many other of my servants, as also many others of my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me.

39 David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife; and

therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion and he shall not inherit them out of the world, for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord.

40 I am the Lord thy God, and I have unto thee, my servant Joseph, an appointment, and restore all things. Ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto you according to my word.

41 And as ye have asked concerning adultery, verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man receiveth a wife in the new and everlasting covenant, and if she be with another man, and I have not appointed unto her by the holy anointing, she hath committed adultery and shall be destroyed.

42 If she be not in the new and everlasting covenant, and she be with another man, she has committed adultery.

43 And if her husband be with another woman, and he was under a vow, he hath broken his vow and hath committed adultery.

44 And if she hath not committed adultery, but is innocent and hath not broken her vow, and she knoweth it, and I reveal it unto you, my servant Joseph, then shall you have power, by the power of my Holy Priesthood, to take her and give her unto him that hath not committed adultery but hath been faithful; for he shall be made ruler over many.

45 For I have conferred upon you the keys and power of the priesthood, wherein I restore all things, and make known unto you all things in due time.

46 And verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and whosoever sins you remit on

earth shall be remitted eternally in the heavens; and whosoever sins you retain on earth shall be retained in heaven.

47 And again, verily I say, whomsoever you bless I will bless, and whomsoever you curse I will curse, saith the Lord; for I, the Lord, am thy God.

48 And again, verily I say unto you, my servant Joseph, that whatsoever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you give any one on earth, by my word and according to my law, it shall be visited with blessings and not cursings, and with my power saith the Lord, and shall be without condemnation on earth and in heaven.

49 For I am the Lord thy God, and will be the with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father.

50 Behold, I have seen your sacrifices, and will forgive all your sins; I have seen your sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you. Go therefore, and I make a way for your escape, as I accepted the offering of Abraham of his son Isaac.

51 Verily, I say unto you: A commandment I give unto mine handmaid, Emma Smith, your wife whom I have given unto you, that she stay herself and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her; for I did it, saith the Lord, to prove you all, as I did Abraham, and that I might require an offering at your hand, by covenant and sacrifice.

52 And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God.

53 For I am the Lord thy God, and ye shall obey my voice; and I give unto my servant Joseph that he shall be made ruler over many things; for he hath been faithful over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him.

54 And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and I will destroy her if she abide not in my law.

55 But if she will not abide this commandment, then shall my servant Joseph do all things for her, even as he hath said; and I will bless him and multiply him and give unto him an hundredfold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds.

56 And again, verily I say, let mine handmaid forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; and then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she has trespassed against me; and I, the Lord thy God, will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to rejoice.

57 And again, I say, let not my servant Joseph put his property out of his hands, lest an enemy come and destroy him; for Satan seeketh to destroy ; for I am the Lord thy God, and he is my servant; and behold, and lo, I am with him, as I was with Abraham, thy father, even unto his exaltation and glory.

58 Now, as touching the law of the priesthood, there are many things pertaining thereunto.

59 Verily, if a man be called of my Father, as was Aaron, by mine own voice, and by the voice of him that sent me, and I have endowed him with the keys of the power of this priesthood, if he do anything in my name, and according to my law and by my word, he will not commit sin, and I will justify him.

60 Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him; for he shall do the sacrifice which I require at his hands for his transgressions, saith the Lord your God.

61 And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood- if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else.

62 And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.

63 But if one or either of the ten virgins, after she is espoused, shall be with another man, she has committed adultery, and shall be destroyed; for they are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified.

64 And again, verily, verily, I say unto you, if any man have a wife, who holds the keys of this power, and he teaches unto her the law of my priesthood, as pertaining to these things, then shall she believe and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed,

saith the Lord your God; for I will destroy her; for I will magnify my name upon all those who receive and abide in my law.

65 Therefore, it shall be lawful in me, if she receive not his law, for him to receive all things whatsoever I, the Lord his God, will give unto him, because she did not believe and administer unto him according to my word; and she then becomes the transgressor; and he is exempt from the law of Sarah, who administered unto Abraham according to the law when I commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife.

66 And now, as pertaining to this law, verily, verily, I say unto you, I will reveal more unto you, hereafter; therefore, let this suffice for the present. Behold, I am Alpha and Omega. Amen.¹⁰⁵

APPENDIX B

Genealogy of the Romney Family

Husband- Miles P. Romney (1843-1904)

Wives and their children-

Hannah Hood Hill (1842-1929) married on May 10, 1862

Isabell	1863-1919
Elizabeth	1866-1867
Mary Ann	1868-1951
Miles A.	1869-1939
Gaskell	1871-1955
George	1874-1935
Ernest	1877-1951
Maggie	1880-1902
Eugene	1883-1946
Leo	1887-1939

Caroline Lambourne (1846-1879), married don March 23, 1867, divorced

Will	1686-1931
Martha	1870-1943

Catharine Jane Cottam (1855-1918), married on September 15, 1873

Caroline	1874-1954
Thomas	1876-1962
Junius	1878-1971
Claude	1880-1887
Park	1882-1943
Emma	1884-1957
Ethel	1888-1970
Ida	1891-1943
Lula	1894-
Vernon	1896-1964

Annie Marie Woodbury (1858-1930), married on August 1, 1877

Ann	1879-1953
Alice	1881-1923
Orin	1884-1965
Erastus	1886-1920
Eleanor	1888-1956
Ivie	1890-1975
Erma	1893-1981
Frank	1897-1983

Emily Eyrying Snow (1870-1947), married February 1897

Had two children, Theresa and Beatrice from her first husband, William Snow.¹⁰⁶

APPENDIX C

Genealogy of the Tanner Family

Husband- Joseph Marion Tanner (1859-1927)

His Wives and Their Children

Jennie Harrington (1857-1916) married November 15, 1878

LaRue 1891

Annie Clark (1864-1942) married December 27, 1883

Jennie 1888-1923

Myron 1890-19

Herschel 1893-19

LeVinz 1895-19

Belva 1897-1897

Kneland 1898-19

Sheldon 1900-19

Lois 1902-19

Leah 1902-1905

Obert 1904-19

Josephine Snow (1859-1940) married June 25, 1884

Had many children, her first was a son born in 1888, the last child was born in 1902. Names and dates of birth are all unknown.

Carrie Peterson (1870-1956) married in 1900 (post manifesto)

Had one child, born in 1903, name unknown.

Sarah Taylor Evans (1859-) married in 1903 (post manifesto)

Had no children

Lydia Holmgren (1875-1952) married in 1904 (post manifesto)

Had at least two children. Her first child was born in 1907, the last in 1910.

Endnotes

¹ Caroline Sophia Sorensen Buchanan. 28 April 1999 < <http://www.cc.utah.edu/~joseph/genealogy/CSorensen.html> >.

² Caroline Sophia Sorensen Buchanan. 28 April 1999 < <http://www.cc.utah.edu/~joseph/genealogy/CSorensen.html> >.

³ Caroline Sophia Sorensen Buchanan. 28 April 1999 < <http://www.cc.utah.edu/~joseph/genealogy/CSorensen.html> >.

⁴ Jessie L Embry, Polygamy. 28 April 1999. < <http://eddy.media.utah.edu/medsol/UCME/p/POLYGAMY.html> >.

⁵ Julie Roy Jeffrey, Frontier Women, The Trans-Mississippi West 1840-1880 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), 149.

⁶ Kimball Young, Isn't One Wife Enough, (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1954), 1.

⁷ Young, 2.

⁸ Young, 54.

⁹ Young, 4.

¹⁰ Young, 4.

¹¹ Young, 4.

¹² Suzanne Larson, "An Ideograph Analysis of the Mormon Women and non-Mormon Women's Public Argument on Polygamy and Suffrage, 1870-1886,"_ Diss. University of Oregon, 1992, 162.

¹³ B. Carmon Hardy, Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 40.

¹⁴ "Public Meeting of the Woman's National Anti-Polygamy Society," Anti-Polygamy Standard March 1881: 90.

¹⁵ Young, 7.

¹⁶ Young, 29.

¹⁷ Jeffrey, 157.

¹⁸ 2 Chronicles 11:21 found in Polygamy in the Bible 28 April 1999 <<http://www.familyman.u-net.com/biblpoly.html>?>.

¹⁹ Judges 8:30, found in Polygamy in the Bible.

²⁰ Genesis 29 and 30, found in Polygamy in the Bible.

²¹ Hardy, 88-89.

²² Young, 43.

²³ Young, 44.

²⁴ Jerald and Sandra Tanner, Mormonism- Shadow or Reality? (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1972), 202-231.

²⁵ Joan Iverson. "Feminist Implications of Mormon Polygyny" Feminist Studies v. 10 no.3 (Fall, 1984), 505-522.

²⁶ James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976).

²⁷ Allen and Leonard, 278.

²⁸ Jeffrey, 149.

²⁹ Jessie L Embry, Polygamy. 28 April 1999 <<http://eddy.media.utah.edu/medsol/UCME/p/POLYGAMY.html> >.

³⁰ Fanny Stenhouse, Tell It All: The Story of a Life's Experience in Mormonism, (Hartford: A.D. Worthington and Company, 1890.

³¹ Jessie L. Embry, Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987).

³² Caroline Sophia Sorensen Buchanan. 28 April 1999 < <http://www.cc.utah.edu/~joseph/genealogy/CSorensen.html> >.

³³ Jennifer Moulton Hansen, Letters of Catharine Cottam Romney, Plural Wife, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992) 242.

³⁴ Young, 155.

³⁵ Hansen, 88-89.

³⁶ Hansen, 154.

³⁷ Claudia L. Bushman, Mormon Sisters, Women in Early Utah, (Salt Lake City: Utah State University Press, 1997), xxix.

³⁸ Annie Clark Tanner, A Mormon Mother, (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, 1969) 269-270.

¹⁹ Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, The Mormon Experience, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1979), 230.

³⁹ Jessie L. Embry, Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 97.

⁴⁰ Arrington and Bitton, 227-228.

⁴¹ Jeffrey, 162.

⁴² Ellis Reynolds Shipp, 28 April 1999 < <http://eddy.media.utah.edu/medsol/UCME/s/SHIP%20CELLIS.html>>.

⁴³ Marilyn Warenski, Patriarchs and Politics, the Plight of the Mormon Woman, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978), 123-124.

⁴⁴ Tanner, 44-45.

⁴⁵ Warenski, 125.

⁴⁶ Tanner, 172.

⁴⁷ Tanner, 80.

⁴⁸ Larson, 93.

⁴⁹ Allen and Leonard, 82.

⁵⁰ "A Mormon Woman's View," Woman's Exponent 1 Nov. 1884: 82.

⁵¹ Jean Bickmore White, "Martha H. Cannon" found in Sister Saints, Vicky Burgess-Olson ed. (Salt Lake City, Brigham Young University Press, 1978.)

⁵² Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, The Mormon Experience, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1979), 230.

⁵³ Margery W. Ward eds. A fragment: The Autobiography of Mary Jane Mount Tanner, (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, 1980), 199.

⁵⁴ Ward, 199.

⁵⁵ Tanner, 191.

⁵⁶ Hansen, 121.

⁵⁷ Hansen, 119.

⁵⁸ Hansen, 96.

⁵⁹ Hansen, 248.

⁶⁰ William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen eds. Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1958), 431.

⁶¹ Stenhouse, 444.

⁶² Tanner, 298-299.

⁶³ Jeffrey, 157

⁶⁴ Jeffrey, 157

⁶⁵ Stenhouse, 140.

⁶⁶ Stenhouse, 141.

⁶⁷ Maureen Ursenbach Beecher eds. The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxy Snow, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 16-17.

⁶⁸ Ward, Margery, 181.

⁶⁹ Stenhouse, 390.

⁷⁰ Hansen, 15.

⁷¹ Young, 299.

⁷² Young, 299.

⁷³ Young, 299.

⁷⁴ Stenhouse, 465.

⁷⁵ Hansen, 29.

⁷⁶ Hansen, 29.

⁷⁷ Tanner, 69.

⁷⁸ Young, 387.

⁷⁹ Tanner, 100.

⁸⁰ Tanner, 102.

⁸¹ Stenhouse, 104.

⁸² Tanner, 132.

⁸³ Stenhouse, 376.

⁸⁴ Hansen, 13.

⁸⁵ Tanner, 272.

⁸⁶ Hansen, 13-14.

⁸⁷ Stenhouse, 480.

⁸⁸ Stenhouse 397.

⁸⁹ Stenhouse, 404.

⁹⁰ Young, 57.

⁹¹ Stenhouse, 405.

⁹² Hansen, 39.

⁹³ Hansen, 43.

⁹⁴ Tanner, 13.

⁹⁵ Embry, Mormon Polygamous Families, 123-125.

⁹⁶ Tanner, 10.

⁹⁷ Tanner, 12-13.

⁹⁸ Tanner, 11.

⁹⁹ Stenhouse, 375.

¹⁰⁰ Tanner, 136.

¹⁰¹ Hansen, 43.

¹⁰² Tanner, 269.

¹⁰³ Tanner, 270.

¹⁰⁴ Margery Ward, 181.

¹⁰⁵ Doctrines and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, (Salt Lake City,: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1989), 266-273.

¹⁰⁶ Hansen, 286-287.

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