

# Eternal Marriage and Plural Marriage

ANDREW H. HEDGES

Of all that Joseph Smith taught and did over the course of his prophetic ministry, the doctrines and practices he revealed regarding marriage have arguably been the most controversial. The bold declaration that through the authority of the restored priesthood men and women can be married for time and eternity—indeed, *must* be married for time and eternity if they are to receive the blessings of eternal life—challenged fundamental, mainstream Christian beliefs and doctrines about the nature and importance of marriage in the next life and seemed to fly in the face of the Savior’s own teachings on the subject (see Matthew 22:30; Luke 20:34–35). Even more problematic than “eternal marriage” was “plural marriage,” or the doctrine that through the authority of that same priesthood one man could be married to more than one woman at the same time. In nineteenth-century America, marriage between one man and one woman was considered a pillar of Western society, and any deviation from the norm threatened to destroy the foundation of civilization itself. Monogamy—or at least fidelity to a single partner at a time—is still considered the norm in much of the world, leading to ongoing questions about Joseph Smith’s practice of plural marriage that can be difficult to answer today, even for faithful members of the Church.

This essay reviews Joseph Smith's revelations, teachings, and practices regarding eternal marriage and plural marriage and addresses significant issues that these doctrines and practices—especially those regarding plural marriage—might raise for members of the Church today. Topics include the dating of Doctrine and Covenants 132, the doctrine and practice of eternal marriage during Joseph Smith's lifetime, the justification and possible reasons for plural marriage, the difficulties of understanding how it was first practiced, and questions about Joseph Smith's plural wives (their identification, ages, and marital status when they were sealed to Joseph as well as the nature of their relationships with him). The essay closes with a review of the end of plural marriage in this dispensation and a brief discussion of what the doctrine of plural marriage might mean, and not mean, for Latter-day Saints today.

## DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 132

On July 12, 1843, Joseph Smith dictated a revelation to William Clayton explaining the principles of eternal and plural marriage.<sup>1</sup> According to the revelation itself—now canonized as Doctrine and Covenants 132—its origin lay in Joseph's inquiries of the Lord about how Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and other Old Testament prophets and leaders were justified “as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines” (v. 1). Other sources indicate that Joseph had learned at least the outlines of the revelation much earlier<sup>2</sup> and that he had been teaching and practicing its principles for some time. July 12, 1843, then, is best understood as the day the revelation was first recorded, and not as the day it was first received.<sup>3</sup>

## ETERNAL MARRIAGE

Regarding eternal marriage, the revelation teaches that a husband and wife who have been “sealed” during their lives by someone holding the appropriate priesthood authority will, after being resurrected, “pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, . . . which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever” (Doctrine and Covenants 132:19). Marriages that have not been contracted under this authority, on the other hand, will not be of force after death, and the men and women involved will “remain separately and singly, without exaltation . . . to all eternity” (see vv. 15–17).

According to William Clayton, Joseph had explained and clarified this doctrine while on a visit to Benjamin and Melissa Johnson in Ramus, Illinois, two months earlier. “He [Joseph] said that except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity while in this probation by the power and authority of the Holy priesthood,” Clayton recorded, “they will cease to increase when they die (i.e. they will not have any children in the resurrection[]), but those who are married by the power & authority of the priesthood in this life & continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost will continue to increase & have children in the celestial glory.”<sup>4</sup> Joseph and his wife Emma Hale Smith, who had been married by the laws of New York State in January 1827, were evidently sealed for eternity on May 28, 1843, as were several of Joseph’s close associates in Nauvoo the following day.<sup>5</sup>

## PLURAL MARRIAGE: JUSTIFICATION AND REASONS

Just as he had taught and implemented the doctrine of eternal marriage before recording Doctrine and Covenants 132 in July 1843, Joseph was also teaching and practicing plural marriage by that time. Both the Book of Mormon and section 132 provide reasons for introducing this practice in this dispensation, as well as the doctrine and principles behind its proper implementation. According to section 132, for example, the practice was an integral part of the Lord’s plan to “restore all things” in this dispensation (vv. 40, 45). Further, the Book of Mormon prophet Jacob taught that monogamy was God’s rule generally but that on occasion, when God would “raise up seed” unto himself, he would command his people to practice some form of plural marriage (Jacob 2:30). Doctrine and Covenants 132, accordingly, teaches that Old Testament patriarchs, prophets, and leaders like Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and David had been commanded of God to take multiple wives and that they were under no condemnation for obeying that commandment (see vv. 35–38). At the same time, the revelation teaches, those who take a plural wife on their own, without God’s consent—as David did in the case of Bathsheba—come under severe condemnation (see 2 Samuel 11–12; Doctrine and Covenants 132:38–39). As section 132 and other sources make clear, Joseph Smith, like ancient prophets before him, had received the commandment and authority from God to institute plural marriage among the faithful Saints of his time (see vv. 30–40, 45, 48, 52, 61–62).<sup>6</sup>

Upon its restoration in this dispensation, plural marriage was tightly controlled by Joseph Smith. And after his death, those who entered into these relationships also were required to have the approval of Church leaders, who sought to ensure that the couples were worthy and capable of living in such relationships. As a result, during the time that plural marriage was practiced, many children were born and raised in homes headed by the most faithful and committed Latter-day Saint men and women—an effect that might at least partly explain what the Lord meant when he said that plural marriage was a way to “raise up seed” unto himself. One might even argue that the practice helped lay a stronger foundation of faithful members early in the Church’s history than would have been possible otherwise, as it allowed virtually every man and woman the opportunity for marriage, it reduced financial inequality as faithful women from poorer backgrounds were able to marry faithful, capable men of means, it helped unite converts from a variety of countries and cultures by increasing the frequency of ethnic intermarriages, and it fostered a sense of “group identification” and uniqueness among Latter-day Saints.<sup>7</sup> The fact that many plural marriages were also eternal marriages, however, suggests that the reasons for instituting plural marriage, as well as its effects, extended beyond the benefits it provided to nineteenth-century Mormon society.

## SOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING JOSEPH SMITH’S PLURAL MARRIAGES

While a variety of excellent sources exist for understanding how plural marriage worked in early Utah, the same is not true for Joseph Smith’s lifetime. As editors for the Joseph Smith Papers point out, “most of the information on the practice during this period comes either from later affidavits and reminiscences or from reports of disaffected members of the church at the time—none of which, for a variety reasons, can be considered entirely reliable historical sources for delineating how plural marriage was understood and practiced by those involved at the time.”<sup>8</sup> The accuracy of the first type of record—that is, records generated through memory—is compromised by “the selective and social nature of human memory and its susceptibility to being influenced by more recent events,” while the second type—records generated by disaffected members of the Church—is subject to being colored by the resentment, fear, and anger the writer may have felt toward the Church.<sup>9</sup> In addition, many of the sources on plural marriage during the Joseph Smith era of Church history are second- or thirdhand

accounts, rather than accounts by the people who were actually involved in the relationship. Those accounts created by people close to the actual participants—family members, for example—are probably more accurate than those created by people who knew the participants less well or not at all, but all such accounts must be used with more caution than those created by the men and women who were actually involved.

## JOSEPH SMITH'S PLURAL WIVES

For these reasons, then, historians today know less about early plural marriages—including Joseph Smith's—than some might think. For example, we are unable to say when, precisely, Joseph began practicing plural marriage or to identify with certainty his first plural wife. Some sources suggest that he married Fanny Alger in Kirtland during the mid-1830s, but the evidence is far from conclusive.<sup>10</sup> Better sources exist for possible plural marriages in Nauvoo, beginning with Louisa Beman in April 1841.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, historians are unable to identify with certainty each of the women Joseph married as plural wives, or even how many plural wives Joseph married during his lifetime. Approximately twenty women have left records claiming to have been one of his plural wives, with the amount and quality of corroborating records in each case varying significantly. Family members and close friends of another ten or so women have identified them as plural wives, although no records making that claim generated by these women themselves have been located. More distant sources have identified several other women as his plural wives as well. Given the limitations of these sources (as described above), one might reasonably conclude that approximately thirty women had been married to Joseph Smith as plural wives by the time of his death in June 1844.

## JOSEPH SMITH'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PLURAL WIVES

Just as the available sources preclude positive identification of all of Joseph Smith's plural wives, they also do not provide a thorough understanding of the nature of his relationship with those wives. The fact that William Clayton's plural wife Margaret Moon gave birth to a son ten months after her marriage to Clayton indicates that at least some plural marriages contracted during the Nauvoo era included conjugal relations;<sup>12</sup> and decades later, in

1892, two well-documented plural wives of Joseph Smith, Malissa Lott and Emily Partridge, testified under oath that their marriages to Smith included such relations. Later accounts, both first- and secondhand, suggest that the same held for at least some of his other wives as well.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, however, some of Joseph Smith's plural marriages probably did not include marital relations;<sup>14</sup> and "the fact that a number of women were sealed to Joseph Smith after his death, when there was no opportunity for conjugal relationships," suggests that such relations were not necessarily part of the marriage in all cases.<sup>15</sup> To date, no solid evidence has been located indicating that Joseph Smith had any children with any of his plural wives.<sup>16</sup>

### "POLYANDROUS" SEALINGS

Several of the women who were evidently sealed to Joseph Smith as plural wives were already married to other men at the time of their sealing to him. Why such sealings were performed is unclear, although several possibilities suggest themselves. Some of these sealings, and perhaps most, may have come about as a result of Smith's well-documented hesitancy to marry specific women as plural wives when he was initially commanded to do so. Several years appear to have elapsed between the time of the commandment and his decision to obey it, during which time the women he had been told to marry—who had been single at the time of the commandment—married other men. Joseph Smith evidently believed that he was still required to marry these women as plural wives in spite of their having married someone else in the interim.<sup>17</sup>

That some of the women were married to men who were not members of the Church may have been another consideration, for according to Doctrine and Covenants 132, only faithful men and women who were sealed to faithful spouses were eligible for exaltation in the kingdom of God (see vv. 7, 13–21).<sup>18</sup> Similarly, that same revelation taught that if a righteous woman was married to a man who had committed adultery, Joseph Smith would "have power, by the power of [God's] Holy Priesthood, to take her and give her unto him that hath not committed adultery but hath been faithful" (vv. 43–44). To what extent these or other considerations were behind these so-called polyandrous sealings is largely unknown, as even fewer reliable sources are extant for these complex relationships than are available for Smith's marriages to unmarried women.<sup>19</sup> No reliable sources have been located indicating that any of these marriages included conjugal relations,<sup>20</sup> although it should be noted that nothing in section 132 or any

of Joseph Smith's other revelations "provides any doctrinal reason for why any authorized plural marriage could not have included such relations."<sup>21</sup>

It should be noted, too, that the best available evidence does not support the charge some have made that Joseph Smith was sealed to some men's wives after having sent them on missions. The cases of Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde, wife of Apostle Orson Hyde, and Sarah Pratt, wife of Apostle Orson Pratt, are frequently invoked as evidence for this charge. Orson Hyde left on a mission in April 1840 and did not return to Nauvoo until December 1842. Thomas Bullock, one of Joseph Smith's clerks, later recorded that Marinda was sealed to Joseph as a plural wife in April 1842, which would have been several months before Hyde's return. Marinda herself, however—who was in a much better position to know the particulars of her sealing to Joseph than Bullock was—dated the event to May 1843, several months after Hyde's return. In Sarah Pratt's case, it was Nauvoo dissident John C. Bennett who initially made the charge that Joseph had made advances toward her while Pratt was on a mission. Testimony from a variety of other sources, however (including witnesses who were not members of the Church), indicate that it was Sarah and Bennett, rather than Sarah and Joseph, who had been involved in a relationship during Pratt's absence.<sup>22</sup>

## AGE, CONSENT, AND EMMA

Several of Joseph Smith's plural wives were in their teens when they were sealed to him, with the youngest, Helen Mar Kimball, being fourteen years old at the time. While marriage at such an age was not common in that period, it was legal, and other examples have been found of women marrying in their mid-teens in that era.<sup>23</sup> Joseph also told at least some of his plural wives—and presumably all of them—that they had the right and ability to obtain their own testimony of plural marriage before they entered into such a relationship.<sup>24</sup> Lucy Walker, for example, who was sealed to Joseph as a plural wife on May 1, 1843, reported in a sworn statement in 1902 that "[w]hen the Prophet Joseph Smith first mentioned the principle of plural marriage to me I felt indignant and so expressed myself to him, because my feelings and education were averse to anything of that nature. But he assured me that this doctrine had been revealed to him of the Lord, and that I was entitled to receive a testimony of its divine origin for myself. He counselled me to pray to the Lord, which I did, and thereupon received from him a powerful and irresistible testimony of the truthfulness and divinity of plural marriage, which testimony has abided with me ever since."<sup>25</sup>



*Purgatory*, by Anthony Sweat. © Anthony Sweat, used with permission.

Similarly, section 132 seems to indicate that a man's first wife must give her consent before he can take a second wife—a requirement evidently known as the “law of Sarah” (vv. 61, 65). Although Joseph's first wife, Emma Hale Smith, “had a difficult time accepting plural marriage,” several sources indicate that she “agreed to and even attended at least some” of these marriages, and “several people close to her and Joseph later reported that she told them or others that she knew it was a true doctrine.”<sup>26</sup> At the same time, it is clear that on at least some occasions, Emma's opposition to the practice



resulted in Joseph's being sealed to other women without her knowledge. This may have been done in accordance with the Lord's instructions as given in Doctrine and Covenants 132:64–65, which teaches that if the man who holds the keys of administering plural marriage teaches his wife about the practice and she rejects it, he is “exempt from the law of Sarah” and is to “receive all things whatsoever . . . the Lord . . . will give unto him.” Such may have been the case in March 1843 when Emily and Eliza Partridge were sealed to Joseph as plural wives. That Emma was unaware of the sealings is suggested by the fact that two months later, in May 1843, she told Joseph that she would allow him to be sealed to the two women as plural wives and the ceremonies were then repeated.<sup>27</sup>

## JOSEPH SMITH'S DENIALS OF PLURAL MARRIAGE

Joseph did not publicly teach the doctrine of plural marriage during his lifetime, choosing rather to limit its practice to a relatively few trusted associates. Even as he and these others fulfilled the Lord's command to take plural wives, he continued to emphasize the Lord's usual standard that “no man shall have but one wife,” and he directed Church leaders to discipline “those who were preaching teaching . . . the doctrin[e] of plurality of wives” without his consent or direction.<sup>28</sup> Joseph and others involved with plural marriage consistently denied the existence of the practice, although the language they employed in doing so was sometimes evasive. Their reasons for the denials are unclear but may include the need to present a message consistent with the public doctrine of monogamy, fear of reprisal, and the fact that rumors about the practice were often so inaccurate that admitting to it would be admitting to something that, in its details, was not true.<sup>29</sup>

## UTAH AND THE END OF PLURAL MARRIAGE

By the time of Joseph Smith's death in June 1844, twenty-nine men in addition to himself had married plural wives in Nauvoo. Under the direction of Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve, that number had grown to between 150 and 200 by the time the Saints left the area in early 1846.<sup>30</sup> The number of people participating in plural marriage continued to grow over the ensuing years, with the result that “probably half of those living in Utah Territory in 1857 experienced life in a polygamous family as

a husband, wife, or child at some time during their lives.”<sup>31</sup> The number of participants began to decline shortly thereafter, however, and by 1870, according to one estimate, only “25 to 30 percent of the population lived in polygamous households.”<sup>32</sup> Federal anti-polygamy legislation during the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s hastened the trend, and in 1890 Church President Wilford Woodruff, acting under inspiration, issued a statement, known as the Manifesto, in which he “declared his intention to abide by U.S. law forbidding plural marriage and to use his influence to convince members of the Church to do likewise.”<sup>33</sup> Some Church leaders continued to perform plural marriages on a limited basis between 1890 and 1904, however, especially in Mexico and Canada, but also in the United States. In 1904 Church President Joseph F. Smith issued a second statement, often known as the Second Manifesto, strictly prohibiting new plural marriages from taking place anywhere in the world. That standard has remained in place to the present time, and “today, any person who practices plural marriage cannot become or remain a member of the Church.”<sup>34</sup>

## PLURAL MARRIAGE IN THE FUTURE

No scriptural support exists for the notion that plural marriage will be restored again in this dispensation or that it is or will be a requirement for exaltation. Jacob 2:30 makes it clear that monogamy is the Lord’s general standard, and Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20 clearly states that “a man” and “a wife”—singular—married by the proper authority can be exalted. Some have understood verses 1–4 in section 132 to say that those who learn about plural marriage must obey it or be damned, but verse 7 makes it clear that the “law” the Lord is discussing in those verses is not plural marriage but rather the requirement that “all covenants, contracts, bonds,” and other agreements be “entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise” if they are to be of any “efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead.”<sup>35</sup> Statements by Brigham Young and other early Church leaders asserting the necessity of plural marriage must be understood in the context of the times in which they were made and are not considered Church doctrine today. One might find a somewhat analogous situation in the ancient law of circumcision, which was required of a certain people at a certain time to fulfill a specific purpose but is not expected or required of everyone in every dispensation.

From what can be determined from the records, at least some, and possibly most, of those who were involved in plural marriages that included

sealing for eternity believed that those sealings would be in effect in the next life.<sup>36</sup> Current Church policy allows a man to be sealed to another wife after a previous wife, to whom he was also sealed, has died, and for a woman who was legally married to more than one man over the course of her life to be sealed by proxy to each of them after all concerned are deceased. Given the current state of our knowledge about the next life, it is unclear precisely how any of these situations—including plural marriage sealings—will be resolved in the next life.<sup>37</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Joseph Smith's revelations, teachings, and practices on marriage—especially plural marriage—will likely continue to be a source of questions and controversy for years to come. Hopefully, additional sources will come to light that will help us better understand how and when the Prophet instituted the practice, who was involved, and the marital dynamics that it included. Hopefully, too, we'll gain a better understanding of *why* the Lord restored the practice in the latter days and what might have been accomplished under plural marriage that could not have been accomplished under monogamy. In the meantime, I think there are several conclusions about Joseph Smith's practice of plural marriage in which Latter-day Saints today can place their full faith and confidence. Other important considerations about the study of plural marriage must be kept in mind as we seek additional understanding on the topic.

- First, Joseph Smith practiced and taught plural marriage as a prophet of God and was acting under His direction and authority when he instituted it in this dispensation.
- Second, available historical sources on Joseph Smith's plural marriages are limited in number and poor in quality, leaving many basic questions about the identity of his wives, the nature of their relationships with him, and other considerations incompletely resolved.
- Third, the best available records suggest that women involved in plural marriages received their own testimonies of the doctrine before being sealed to Joseph Smith or other men as plural wives.
- Fourth, given the conditions under which it was practiced in the early days of the Church, plural marriage may have helped

lay a stronger foundation of faithful Church members than would have been possible under monogamy.

- Fifth, the 1890 Manifesto, issued under inspiration by President Wilford Woodruff, led to the eventual discontinuance of plural marriage in 1904. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do not practice plural marriage today.
- And sixth, there is nothing in the scriptures or current teachings of Church leaders suggesting that plural marriage is or will be a requirement for exaltation for Church members living today.

As we are true to our faith and testimony of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling, and similarly true to the highest scholarly standards of historical research and writing, I am confident that the things that appear so darkly through the glass to us today will one day make much more sense and call forth our even greater appreciation for the men and women who faithfully gave their all to fulfill a revelation that so clearly challenged their most fundamental beliefs and moral sensibilities. As they were true to the best in themselves, so we must be true to the best in ourselves if we are to have any hope of fully understanding their world and of making sense of such a complex and difficult topic.

---

*Andrew H. Hedges is a professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University.*

The foregoing essay is a reading used in the BYU Online Foundations of the Restoration course.

## NOTES

1. See Joseph Smith, Journal, July 12, 1843, Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as CHL). Annotated typescripts of this and other entries from Joseph Smith's Nauvoo journals cited in this essay are available in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals* 2 (hereafter *JSP*, J2, etc.).
2. See Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:193 (October 7, 1869); and Danel W. Bachman, "New Light on an Old Hypothesis: The Ohio Origins of the Revelation on Eternal Marriage," *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 19–32.
3. For a brief account of the events surrounding the recording of this revelation, see *JSP*, J3:57n259.

4. William Clayton, Journal, May 16, 1843, CHL, as cited in *JSP*, J3:17. Portions of Joseph's teaching on this day were later canonized as Doctrine and Covenants 131.
5. See Smith, Journal, May 28, 29, 1843, CHL. Willard Richards, who was keeping Joseph Smith's journal at the time, recorded parts of these entries in shorthand. For a transliteration of the shorthand, see *JSP*, J3:25. See also "Reminiscence of Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson," quoted in Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 194–95.
6. See Brian C. Hales, "Encouraging Joseph Smith to Practice Plural Marriage: The Accounts of the Angel with a Drawn Sword," *Mormon Historical Studies* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 69–70.
7. "Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah," Gospel Topics, [www.churchofjesuschrist.org/](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/).
8. *JSP*, J2:xxv.
9. *JSP*, J2:xxvn51.
10. Principal sources for this possible plural marriage include Mosiah Hancock, Narrative in Levi Hancock, Autobiography, 63, CHL; and Oliver Cowdery to Warren Cowdery, January 21, 1838, Oliver Cowdery, Letterbook, Huntington Library, San Marino, California; Minute Book 2, April 12, 1838, CHL.
11. Principal sources include Joseph Bates Noble, Affidavit, June 6, 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL; Wilford Woodruff, Journal, January 22, 1869, Wilford Woodruff Collection, CHL; and Temple Lot Transcript, part 3, pp. 432, 436, questions 793, 861, CHL.
12. See *JSP*, J2:xxvn52.
13. See Temple Lot Transcript, part 3, pp. 105–6, 371, 384, questions 224–60, 480–84, 751–62, CHL; Benjamin Johnson to George F. Gibbs, 1903, in Dean R. Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon, 1976), 41–44; and Lucy Walker Smith Kimball, Affidavit, 1903, in Joseph F. Smith, Affidavits about Plural Marriage, 1869–1915, CHL.
14. Helen Mar Kimball, for example, reported that her marriage to Joseph Smith was "for eternity alone." See "Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," Gospel Topics, [www.churchofjesuschrist.org/](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/).
15. *JSP*, J2:xxvn53.
16. In some cases, researchers have been able to employ genetic testing to determine Joseph Smith's alleged paternity of several individuals. The results have been negative in each case. See Ugo A. Perego, Natalie M. Myers, and Scott R. Woodward, "Reconstructing the Y-Chromosome of Joseph Smith: Genealogical Applications," *Journal of Mormon History* 31 (Summer 2005): 70–88; Ugo A. Perego, Jane E. Ekins, and Scott R. Woodward, "Resolving the Paternities of Oliver N. Buell and Mosiah L. Hancock through DNA," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 28 (2008): 128–36; and Ugo A. Perego, "Using Science to Answer Questions from Latter-day Saint History: The Case of Josephine Lyon's Paternity," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2019): 143–50.
17. This scenario seems to at least partly explain Joseph Smith's sealings to Mary Elizabeth Lightner and Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde, for example. See Mary Elizabeth Lightner to Wilford Woodruff, October 7, 1887, Mary E. Lightner Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Mary Elizabeth Lightner, Statement, February 8, 1902, Lightner Papers;

- Mary Elizabeth Lightner, Remarks, April 14, 1905, Lightner Papers; and Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde, Undated Statement, CHL.
18. Mary Elizabeth Lightner, for example, reported that she “went forward and was sealed to Joseph for Eternity” after her non-Latter-day Saint husband refused to join the Church. Lightner, Remarks, April 14, 1905.
  19. Richard L. Bushman has suggested another possibility for these marriages—that is, that they provided Joseph Smith with a way to bind or seal other families to his for the eternal benefit of both. See Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 437–46.
  20. See “Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” note 30.
  21. *JSP*, J2:xxv.
  22. For an annotated discussion of the issues surrounding Marinda Hyde and Sarah Pratt, see *JSP*, J2:xxvi, xxx.
  23. See “Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo”; and J. Spencer Fluhman, “‘A Subject That Can Bear Investigation’: Anguish, Faith, and Joseph Smith’s Youngest Plural Wife,” in *No Weapon Shall Prosper: New Light on Sensitive Issues*, ed. Robert L. Millet (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 104–19.
  24. See Lightner, Remarks, April 14, 1905; and Lucy Walker Smith Kimball, Affidavit, 1902, in Joseph F. Smith, Affidavits about Plural Marriage, 1869–1915, CHL.
  25. Kimball Affidavit, 1902.
  26. *JSP*, J3:xix and note 27.
  27. See Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, Affidavit, July 1, 1869, Millard County, Utah Territory, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL; Emily Dow Partridge Young, Affidavit, May 1, 1869, Salt Lake County, Utah Territory, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, CHL; and Emily Dow Partridge Young, *Diary and Reminiscences*, February 1874–November 1883, typescript, CHL.
  28. Joseph Smith, Journal, October 5, 1843, CHL.
  29. As the editors of the Joseph Smith Papers note, for example, the term John C. Bennett used for plural marriage, “spiritual wifery,” was not used by those practicing plural marriage in Nauvoo. Nor is there any corroborating evidence for Bennett’s description of Joseph’s plural wives as a “seraglio. . . . divided into three distinct orders or degrees.” *JSP*, J2:xiix23.
  30. See Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 32, 35; and Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy, Volume 1: History* (Sandy, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2013), 3.
  31. “Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah.”
  32. “Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah.”
  33. “Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah.”
  34. “Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah.”
  35. See Marcus B. Nash, “The New and Everlasting Covenant,” *Ensign*, December 2015, 40–47.
  36. Joseph Smith’s plural wife Lucy Walker, for example, who married Heber C. Kimball “for time” after Joseph’s death, wrote in 1902 that “during the whole of my married life with him [Kimball] he never failed to regard me as the wife for eternity of his devoted friend, the Prophet Joseph Smith.” Kimball, Affidavit, 1902 (underlining in original).
  37. “Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo.”