

AFTER THE MANIFESTO

MORMON POLYGAMY

1890 - 1906

The attitudes of Presidents Woodruff, Snow, and Smith help illuminate the difficult process of abandoning plural marriage.

Many Mormons present during the Church's seventy-sixth annual General Conference of April 1906 must have been surprised to learn of the resignations of John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Others were undoubtedly relieved. The dismissal of Apostles Taylor and Cowley from the Quorum represented the first action taken by Church authorities against those who advocated the continuation of plural marriage.¹ During the previous sixteen years Mormondom had seen two Manifestos, a number of "official" statements (and numerous contradictory private ones by Church leaders), and a secretive but persistent practice of "the principle" by some Church leaders and laymen.*

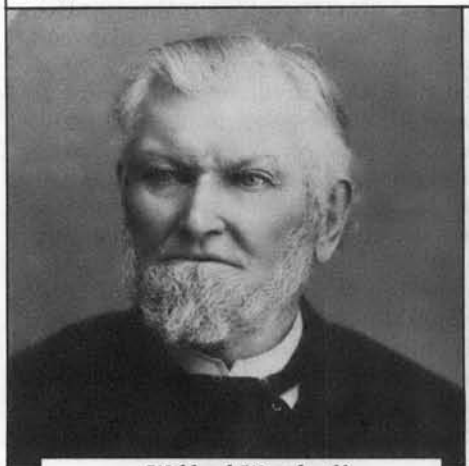
This phenomenon of "new polygamy" is overwhelmingly affirmed by recent historical research.²

*In this paper, "continuation" of polygamy refers solely to the solemnization, sanction, and contraction of new plural marriages and does not refer to the continued cohabitation of couples married in polygamy before the issuance of the 1890 Manifesto. The terms "polygamy" and "plural marriage" are used instead of the technically more correct "polygyny" because of their common usage in Mormon lore.

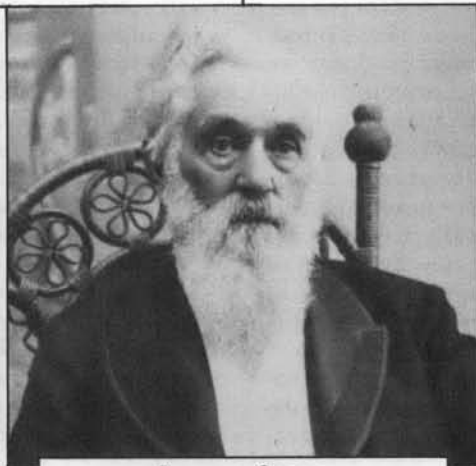
Its prolongation was variously received by the Church leaders of this period (1890-1906), whose differing opinions caused a great deal of stress in the leading quorums of the Church.³ Since theoretically the Church President had authority to sanction the performance of new plural marriages, the sentiments of the three men who held that office during this difficult period—Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith—are especially significant.

While it may be impossible to know exactly what the attitudes of these men were, several areas of investigation prove enlightening: their statements and actions and how their attitudes were perceived by others; the number of plural marriages performed during the incumbency of each; the officers in whose call to the Church hierarchy each President had a central role; and the attitudes (and changes in attitude) of other General Authorities during this period. Conclusions derived from these investigations will throw further light on the difficult process the Mormon church went through in ultimately abandoning its practice of plural marriage.

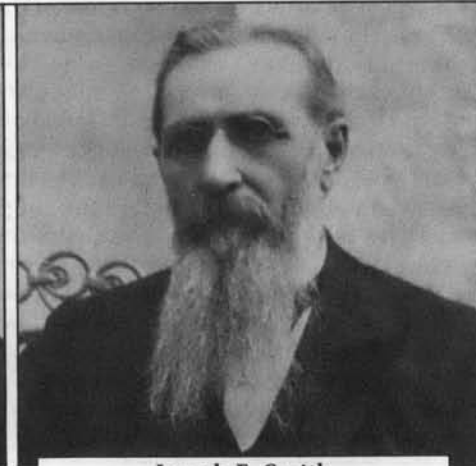
Wilford Woodruff (7 April 1889-2 September 1898)



Wilford Woodruff



Lorenzo Snow



Joseph F. Smith

Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto of September 1890 signaled the official end of polygamy in the Mormon church. This ambiguous statement asserted that Church leaders were not teaching or encouraging polygamy nor were they allowing members to enter into it. President Woodruff denied that polygamous marriages had been carried out during the previous year, declared his intent to submit to the laws of the land, and vowed to use his influence to have Church members "do likewise."⁴ Apparently Elder Woodruff and his two counselors, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith, did stop allowing couples to be married in polygamy for at least a short time after the issuance of the Manifesto.⁵ Privately, however, the President told the Apostles that he expected polygamists to continue to support their wives, strongly implying that this support included cohabitation.⁶

In October of the following year, President Woodruff and other Church leaders publicly testified that plural marriage had ceased, that "the Manifesto was intended to apply to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints everywhere in every nation and country," and that "we are giving no liberty to enter into polygamous relations anywhere." Those who failed to obey the law would be subject to Church discipline.⁷ Woodruff later privately explained his remarks to fellow Church leaders, stating that "he was placed in a position on the witness stand that he could not answer other than he did."⁸

As early as 1893, however, new plural marriages were performed in Mexico, an idea initially proposed by George Q. Cannon. Woodruff agreed with his first counselor's idea, letting Cannon direct this new polygamy so that he would not participate directly as Church President.⁹ Cannon's responsibility included choosing and setting apart certain Church leaders to perform the marriages.¹⁰ In that year at least two couples were married in Mexico, apparently with the approbation of Wilford Woodruff and his two counselors.¹¹

Throughout the mid-1890s the following scenario was repeated on numerous occasions. Church members who continued to believe that participation in polygamy was necessary to their exaltation would approach Wilford Woodruff, asking if there were not some way of accomplishing a plural marriage. In some cases President Woodruff probably told them that for the present plural marriages were not permitted; others he referred to George Q. Cannon who interviewed them and told them of possibilities of plural marriage outside the United States. If the couple were willing to move in order to enjoy the benefits of polygamy, Cannon would send them to a Church leader in Mexico or Canada, such as Alexander F. MacDonald, George Teasdale, or Anthony W. Ivins, who would perform the marriage.¹² Elder Cannon undoubtedly also told the couples to keep secret what he had told them so that unfriendly Gentiles or federal officials would not learn of the new marriages.

Between 1893 and 1896, at least two marriages were performed every year. (See graph.) There are only slight statistical aberrations during these years, probably reflecting natural variations rather than changes in Church policy. In 1897, the first full year after Utah attained statehood, the number of plural marriages

increased dramatically, probably because after Utah became a state, Church leaders realized they could allow more polygamous marriages than before because federal interference would be minimized.¹³ Charges of duplicity would not be as damaging. While this in no way greatly liberalized the number of Mormons who could marry in polygamy, it might have changed attitudes enough to cause the increase in number of marriages solemnized.¹⁴

However, these marriages and Wilford Woodruff's private clarifications of his public statements repudiating polygamy were not matters of general knowledge, a situation which resulted in confusion for many members of the Church as they were left to their own interpretations of their leaders' public pronouncements.¹⁵ Some who heard rumors about President Woodruff's true feelings concerning polygamous cohabitation probably did not believe them; others felt that the President was only beating "the devil at his own game" by having members of the Church go

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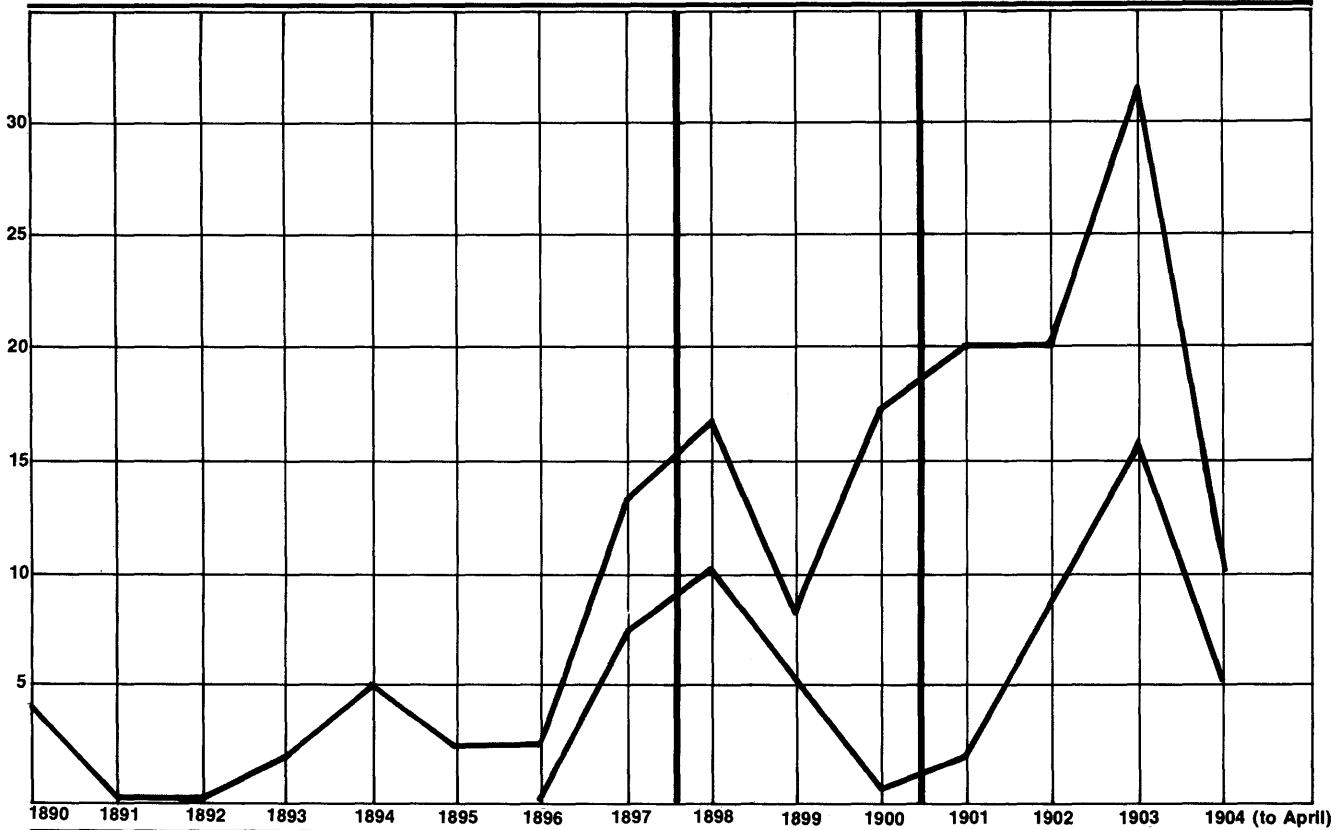
The choice of men called to high Church office during the Woodruff presidency is another important indicator of Elder Woodruff's attitudes toward post-Manifesto polygamy. During his presidency, five men—Marriner W. Merrill, Anthon H. Lund, Abraham H. Cannon, Matthias F. Cowley, and Abraham Owen Woodruff—were appointed to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. All were firmly committed to "the principle."¹⁶ Elders Merrill, Lund, and Cannon were involved in polygamous activities during Woodruff's administration. Although it is uncertain whether Apostles Cowley or Owen Woodruff participated in such activities between their calls in 1897 and President Woodruff's death in 1898, it is certain that both were actively engaged in polygamy thereafter.

Among the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency between 1890 and 1898, at least 58 percent of the members took an active part in post-Manifesto polygamy. If Matthias Cowley and Owen Woodruff are included, the proportion is 70 percent.¹⁷ Historical records indicate that only two men seem to have had

WILFORD WOODRUFF

LORENZO SNOW

JOSEPH F. SMITH



PLURAL MARRIAGES BY YEAR, 1890-1904⁷¹

On the accompanying graph the upper line represents the number of marriages I have sufficiently documented to reasonably ascertain the date of marriage, the persons married, and the fact that the marriages were solemnized with some semblance of Church authority. This represents only a portion of plural marriages performed during the period, and because of its incomplete nature, the graph should be viewed only as suggestive. The lower line is based on the Anthony W. Ivins marriage record and is especially useful in tracing the attitudes of Lorenzo Snow and Joseph F. Smith.

Wilford Woodruff died in 1898 and was succeeded the same year by Lorenzo Snow. When Lorenzo Snow died in 1901, Joseph F. Smith was called to be President. Because two men presided over the Mormon church during these two years, the graph inaccurately represents the number of marriages solemnized under the administrations of the men during 1898 and 1901. In 1898, 15 of the 17 plural marriages were performed while Wilford Woodruff was alive and only two after Lorenzo Snow became President. Of the 20 marriages in 1901, 15 were solemnized while Snow was President and 5 were solemnized after Smith became President.

qualms about the continuation of polygamy during President Woodruff's lifetime: Francis M. Lyman and Lorenzo Snow.¹⁸

Lorenzo Snow (13 September 1898-10 October 1901)

When Lorenzo Snow acceded to the presidency in late 1898, he charted a course different from his predecessor. Shortly after becoming president he announced that plural marriage would not be preached, for it was contrary to the laws of the land.¹⁹ The national embarrassment of the Church on the subject of polygamy which accompanied B.H. Roberts's election to and subsequent exclusion from the U.S. House of Representatives in the last two years of the nineteenth century²⁰ may have strengthened President Snow's conviction that the Church's promises needed to be kept. As President, he felt he was in a position to bring the public position and the private practices of the Church more into harmony with each other.

In December 1899 and January 1900 Lorenzo Snow published statements in the *Deseret News* denying that any plural marriages had been performed with proper

authority since 1890 and affirming that no such marriages had been or would be approved by him.²¹ In a meeting with the Apostles in January 1900, Snow expressed the fear that some new marriages were being solemnized without his knowledge or sanction. According to the Journal History account of the meeting

[President Snow], without reference to anyone present, said that there were brethren who still seemed to have the idea that it was possible under his administration to obtain a plural wife and have her sealed to him. He authorized and requested the brethren present to correct this impression wherever they find it. He said emphatically that it could not be done. President Cannon moved that this be seconded as the mind and will of the Lord. Seconded by Brother Lyman and carried unanimously.²²

A year later President Snow privately expressed the same sentiments to Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., stating he had never given his consent for plural marriage and adding "God has removed this privilege from the people."²³

Both Church leaders and the general membership of the Church seem to have perceived a change in Church policy instituted by Snow's administration. In 1911, for example, Francis M. Lyman expressed his belief that Lorenzo Snow had changed the basic position of the Church toward the continuation of plural marriage when he took office in 1898,²⁴ and Apostle John Henry Smith told Alexander MacDonald in May 1901 that no more plural marriages were to be performed.²⁵

Only statements made by Matthias F. Cowley in his 1911 trial for membership give any indication that President Snow might have allowed some plural marriages to be performed. Cowley testified that when he once approached the President about solemnizing a plural marriage, Lorenzo Snow told him that he "would not interfere with Brother Woodruff's and Cannon's work."²⁶ It is therefore possible that President Snow did indirectly consent to some plural marriages which had been authorized earlier by Presidents Woodruff and Cannon, especially before making his strong statements in late December 1899 and January 1900. However, Cowley cannot be seen as a disinterested party since he knew his case would be served by such statements. Almost all other evidence indicates Lorenzo Snow conscientiously tried to put a stop to new polygamy. He was largely unsuccessful.

While signals from Salt Lake City indicated the abandonment of polygamy, marriages continued to be solemnized in the Mexican colonies by John W. Taylor, Matthias Cowley, and others.²⁷ Mexican colonists probably assumed that Lorenzo Snow's statements were simply new attempts to ward off outside suspicion and interference. The only indication that President Snow's strict position on new polygamy might have been to some extent followed in the Mexican colonies is that the number of marriages solemnized there by Anthony W. Ivins dropped drastically during Snow's presidency. It is possible that Elder Ivins, who often claimed he never solemnized a marriage without proper authority, did not believe that Snow was permitting many marriages and therefore performed very few.

The statistics indicate that in 1899, the first full year of Lorenzo Snow's presidency, the number of plural marriages dropped significantly.²⁸ In 1900, however, the total number of marriages increased sharply, a fact that seems especially ironic in light of Snow's public statements of late 1899 and 1900. In 1901 the total number of marriages remained high, but the number performed by Ivins remained low.²⁹

These statistics are directly related to an increasing polarization in Church leadership. Whereas most plural marriages during Wilford Woodruff's administration were performed outside the United States, a number of marriages after 1898 were performed in America, apparently initiated by members of the Church leadership. Marriner W. Merrill, Matthias Cowley, John W. Taylor, Frank Y. Taylor, George M. Cannon, John M. Cannon, Hugh J. Cannon, Henry S. Tanner, and perhaps Owen Woodruff are some of the prominent leaders who married plural wives in the United States during Snow's presidency.³⁰ Yet Lorenzo Snow almost certainly had nothing to do with these marriages and probably had no knowledge of them.

Why did these leaders continue in a practice to which

the Church President was so openly opposed? One possibility is that President Snow's two counselors in the First Presidency, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith, maintained their support for and sanctioned plural marriages without President Snow's knowledge between 1898 and 1901.³¹ For example, when George Q. Cannon set apart Matthias Cowley to perform polygamous marriages in 1898 or 1899, he told him to talk to no one about the marriages.³² Joseph F. Smith may have performed a plural marriage in Salt Lake City in 1900.³³ This indicates that President Cannon and probably President Smith believed so deeply in polygamy that they were willing to keep their actions from the Church President. With the First Presidency thus divided, members of the Quorum of Twelve would have received mixed signals from the highest governing body of the Church.

Thus for the first time since the 1840s there existed sharply polarized positions about plural marriage in the

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leading quorums of the Church. The two men called to the Quorum of the Twelve during Lorenzo Snow's administration reflected the President's beliefs and increased that polarization. Rudger Clawson, a one-time polygamist, had only one wife when he was called as an Apostle in 1898. Although no indication has been found that he actively participated in post-Manifesto polygamy, he may have approved its continuation. For example, he opposed Joseph F. Smith's "Second Manifesto" of 1904 because he felt it would cause much heartache.³⁴

Reed Smoot, Snow's other appointee, was a monogamist and one of a rising group of Mormons who were ready to throw off the nineteenth century practices which had brought so much ill will on the Church. By doing this, these younger Mormons hoped to assimilate their church into the mainstream of American society. This is not to say Elder Smoot was not committed to the Church. Indeed, it was because of his commitment and his assessment of what Mormonism had to do to survive that he supported the abandonment of "unusual" Mormon practices.³⁵

Other members of the Quorum, such as Francis M. Lyman, began openly to oppose the continuation of polygamy. Some, such as John Henry Smith, apparently changed their attitudes after Lorenzo Snow became President. Still other Apostles and even members of the

First Presidency simply did not follow Snow's directions. This divergence of opinion among the hierarchy caused tensions and, as Thomas Alexander has suggested, was one of the things which threatened the collegiality of the leading quorums of the Mormon church at the turn of the century.³⁶

Joseph F. Smith (17 October 1901-19 November 1918)

The confusion and division persisted in the administration of Joseph F. Smith, Lorenzo Snow's successor. The extent of Smith's involvement in post-Manifesto polygamy is clouded by conflicting evidence. He may have performed plural marriages in 1896³⁷ and 1900³⁸ while he was an Apostle, although the evidence is inconclusive. It is certain, however, that he did know about the new plural marriages being performed during Lorenzo Snow's administration and probably approved of them. And there is evidence that President Smith

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allowed new marriages to be performed during his presidency. Orson Pratt Brown, a bishop in the Mexican colonies, related that on a visit to Salt Lake City he presented President Smith with the marriage records of Alexander F. MacDonald. The President reportedly surveyed the record, stated that "all of this work that Brother MacDonald performed was duly authorized by me," and told Brown to keep the record in Mexico so that a search in Salt Lake City could not unearth the records if federal marshals were to get permission to look for just such materials.³⁹ Additionally, a child of a plural marriage performed in 1903 by Anthony W. Ivins stated that Joseph F. Smith sent a letter to Brother Ivins authorizing that marriage.⁴⁰

In a 1911 telegram to Reed Smoot, President Smith implied his tacit approval of the marriages:

If the president inquires about new polygamy tell him the truth. Tell him that President Cannon was the first to conceive the idea that we could consistently countenance polygamy beyond the confines of the Republic where we have no chartered law against it, and consequently he authorized the solemnization of polygamy in Mexico and Canada after the Manifesto of 1890, and the men occupying presiding positions who became polygamists since the manifesto did it in good faith.⁴¹

Joseph F. Smith's choice of men to be appointed to high

Church office suggests that he may have facilitated the eventual demise of polygamy by choosing men who were willing to abandon the practice. Of the men appointed to the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve Apostles between 1901 and 1906, three—John R. Winder, Charles W. Penrose and Orson F. Whitney—were polygamists. Four—Hyrum M. Smith, George Albert Smith, George F. Richards, and David O. McKay—were monogamists. There is no indication that any of the seven were involved in post-Manifesto polygamy.

Additionally, there exist statements, both public and private, that seem to indicate President Smith's opposition to the principle. In 1902 he told Brigham Young Jr. that no plural marriages were "taking place to his knowledge in the Church either in the U.S. or any other country." He further stated, "It is thoroughly understood and has been for years that no one is authorized to perform any such marriages."⁴² In a meeting of the Apostles in November 1903, President Smith told the leaders that "he had not given his consent to anyone to solemnize plural marriages" and "that he did not know of any such cases." He went on to insist that if members of the Church were entering into polygamous marriages they were bringing trouble "upon the whole community."⁴³

In 1904 President Smith was called to testify before the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections investigating Reed Smoot, who had recently been sent to the U.S. Senate by Utah's state legislature. His testimony included the following statement:

It has been the continuous and conscientious practice and rule of the church ever since the manifesto to observe that manifesto with regard to plural marriages; and from that time till to-day there has never been, to my knowledge, a plural marriage performed with the understanding, instruction, connivance, counsel, or permission of the presiding authorities of the church, in any shape or form; and I know whereof I speak, gentlemen, in relation to that matter.⁴⁴

Evidence collected during the Smoot investigation had created bad publicity for the Church and there was great pressure on President Smith to reaffirm Mormonism's repudiation of polygamy.⁴⁵ Despite opposition from some members of the hierarchy, he therefore issued a statement in April 1904 reaffirming the 1890 Manifesto's prohibition of marriages "violative of the laws of the land." He denied that marriages had taken place and went on to announce the prospective policy of the Church that anyone thereafter performing or entering into a plural marriage would be subject to excommunication from the Church.⁴⁶

The case for abandonment of post-Manifesto polygamy was strengthened during this period by some strategic changes in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Brigham Young, Jr., a proponent of polygamy and president of the Quorum, died in 1903. He was succeeded as president by Francis M. Lyman, the Apostle most opposed to the continuation of the practice. The vacancy in the Quorum was filled by George Albert Smith, who also favored abandonment. Charles W. Penrose, who had similar feelings, replaced Owen Woodruff at his death in mid-1904.

However, other apostles—Marriner W. Merrill, John W. Taylor, Matthias Cowley, and perhaps George Teasdale—interpreted the 1904 Manifesto much as Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto had been interpreted by Church leaders in the early 1890s. These men believed that marriage still could be performed outside the United States. Abiding by this interpretation, Matthias Cowley was married to a woman in Canada in 1905 and John W. Taylor probably solemnized marriages outside the country.⁴⁷

The Senate's investigation of Reed Smoot continued in 1904 and 1905 and the Committee on Privileges and Elections was still very interested in having Apostles Taylor and Cowley appear before it. Elder Smoot wrote in letters to President Smith that all he heard in Washington was "Taylor and Cowley, Taylor and Cowley."⁴⁸ Pressure was mounting on the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve either to force these Apostles to testify or to discipline them in some way.⁴⁹ In October 1905 Taylor and Cowley were asked to submit their resignations to Francis M. Lyman, president of the Twelve, to be announced if the need arose.⁵⁰

Senator Smoot, constantly called upon to defend the Church and its reluctance to discipline Elders Taylor and Cowley,⁵¹ had wanted the two men dropped from the Quorum for some time but knew that that body would not do so unless absolutely necessary. The Apostle-Senator must have been relieved when George F. Gibbs, secretary to the First Presidency, telegraphed him on 7 December 1905 that Smoot could use the resignations whenever the time seemed ripe. Yet Senator Smoot replied in a long letter to the First Presidency that he did not want to be responsible for the "sacrifice" of Taylor and Cowley and that their resignations would do no good at the present. He did add, however, that the announcement should be made at some future time to placate anti-Mormon feelings in Washington, D.C.⁵² But the same day that he wrote the letter, Reed Smoot received a telegram from Gibbs to the effect that the sentiments of the Church fathers had changed and that the "brethren" were not in favor of "sacrificing" Taylor and Cowley for the time being.⁵³ However, by the next week Francis M. Lyman wrote Smoot telling him that he was "at perfect liberty to use the resignations" whenever he saw fit.⁵⁴

On 9 March 1906 Charles W. Penrose wrote Senator Smoot asking that he forestall a decision of the Senate committee in his case until after the April conference of the Church because of actions that would occur there which would have a bearing on the case.⁵⁵ The action alluded to was the announcement of the resignations of Taylor and Cowley. Between December 1905 and April 1906 it had been decided that the two should no longer serve as members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles.

In April three new Apostles were sustained to replace Marriner W. Merrill, a leading proponent of post-Manifesto polygamy who had died earlier that year, and Taylor and Cowley. The addition of these men firmly placed in the majority the faction favoring the abandonment of polygamy. When George Teasdale died in 1907, the entire group of men who favored continuing new marriages was gone from the quorum, either

through death or dismissal.⁵⁶

John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley believed that they would be reinstated after the whole affair blew over;⁵⁷ Reed Smoot feared that would be the case. However, the prevailing sentiments among the Twelve was such that not only were the two not reinstated as Apostles, they were further disciplined by their former quorum—five years later Cowley was disfellowshipped and Taylor excommunicated.⁵⁸

Thus through the first several years of Joseph F. Smith's presidency, it seems probable that he allowed plural marriages to continue, although the evidence is equivocal. He may have carefully denied connection with the practice on several occasions, but always qualified his statements by such phrases as "to my knowledge" and marriages "violative of the laws of the land."

So regardless of these denials, Joseph F. Smith's

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accession to the presidency seemed to have signaled to many people a relaxation of Church policy in relation to polygamy, both at home and in the Mexican colonies.⁵⁹ Several people close to Reed Smoot, for example, doubted that President Smith would issue any statement affirming the Church's abandonment of plural marriage. Senator Smoot's personal secretary, Carl A. Badger, expressed surprise when he learned of President Smith's 1904 statement.⁶⁰ Couples married between 1901 and 1904 believed their marriages had been performed with proper authorization.⁶¹ Matthias F. Cowley testified in 1911 that he believed President Smith "was not opposed to these marriages if it could be done without trouble with the government."⁶² Thus Cowley as well as others who continued to perform marriages believed that at the least Joseph F. Smith did not oppose new marriages if they could be done unobtrusively.

The perception of this relaxed attitude is reinforced by the available statistics of marriages performed. According to the accumulated data (certainly not complete), five marriages were solemnized in 1901 after Joseph F. Smith was sustained as President. Twenty marriages were performed the next year, and there were thirty-three marriages in 1903, more than in any other year between 1890 and 1904. By the time the "second Manifesto" was issued in April 1904, ten marriages had

already been performed. Apparently the last marriage sanctioned by the proper authorities was solemnized on March 29, 1904; the couple had been told to move up their marriage date because a statement might be forthcoming in April Conference.⁶³

Anthony Ivins's record also reveals that he solemnized more marriages during the Smith administration than during the previous two administrations combined. Since Elder Ivins insisted on authorization for the ceremonies he performed, it would suggest that Joseph F. Smith did sanction a number of marriages during those first years of his presidency.⁶⁴

Thus Joseph F. Smith's attitudes toward the practice of polygamy seem ambivalent. He not only gave the public and the U.S. government inaccurate views of the practice, but he also kept his support of the "new polygamy" from some of his fellow Church leaders. His public statements and testimony before the Senate

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committee could be explained by asserting "he had had to say what he did in Washington to protect the Church."⁶⁵ But how could he explain his statements to the Quorum of the Twelve made at a time when he was consenting to plural marriages?

President Smith probably did not feel he could outwardly go back on policies Lorenzo Snow had established because of possible disapproval from such powerful Apostles as Francis M. Lyman. However, a larger proportion of the Apostles was still favorably disposed to the continuation of plural marriage when Joseph F. Smith became President; perhaps he privately told some of them he approved of their polygamous activities while placating others by making statements against the continuation of polygamy.⁶⁶ In any case, it is quite certain that such men as Francis M. Lyman and Reed Smoot believed for many years that President Smith had had nothing to do with the new polygamy.⁶⁷

Conclusions

During the three administrations and sixteen years following the 1890 Manifesto, there existed a notable ambiguity toward polygamy in the ruling councils of the Church. President Wilford Woodruff advocated the continued practice and apparently made this clear to his fellow high-ranking Church leaders, though he and they scrupulously kept it secret from the public and most of the Church. President Snow seems to have been

straightforward in his opposition to the continued practice of polygamy and made his feelings known to the Apostles. President Smith supported the practice but evidently was careful in his selection of fellow Church leaders to whom he made his feelings known.

The common denominator in the administrations of Presidents Woodruff and Snow seems to have been George Q. Cannon. It was Elder Cannon who conceived of the idea that plural marriages could be performed outside the United States and it was he who authorized men to perform plural marriages during Wilford Woodruff's presidency. President Cannon also apparently secretly authorized plural marriages during Lorenzo Snow's administration despite President Snow's opposition and Cannon's supposed acceptance of the President's views. George Q. Cannon died in April 1901, seven months before Lorenzo Snow's death.⁶⁸ After Cannon's demise, Apostles such as Matthias Cowley, John W. Taylor, Marriner W. Merrill, George Teasdale, and Owen Woodruff carried on his work. After Snow's death, these Church leaders worked with the tacit approval of the new president, Joseph F. Smith.

The statistics indicate that few plural marriages were allowed in the early 1890s. The number rose dramatically after 1896, the year Utah was made a state. Plural marriages dropped in 1899 but rose again in 1900 and 1901, despite Lorenzo Snow's best efforts. In 1902 and 1903 more plural marriages were solemnized than in the other post-Manifesto years. The number finally dropped off drastically after 1904, although some plural marriages were still performed without the sanction of the First Presidency of the Church.

The men ordained as Apostles under President Woodruff and Snow largely reflected each man's attitudes on polygamy. Wilford Woodruff's appointees supported the continuation of polygamy while the men called by Lorenzo Snow did not. Those ordained apostles while Joseph F. Smith was president were similar to those called during President Snow's administration—more were monogamists than polygamists, all apparently favoring abandonment of polygamy. President Smith seemingly recognized that, despite his own feelings, the Church needed to show its good faith by eventually abandoning the practice completely and so called men who would facilitate such an abandonment.

During Wilford Woodruff's term as President, there was generally harmony in the ruling quorums of the Church on the question of polygamy, for only a few Apostles opposed its continuation in the first few years after the Manifesto. The harmony was disrupted, however, when Lorenzo Snow assumed office. Although a few leaders modified their views to be more in harmony with his, a majority did not. When Joseph F. Smith became President in 1901, he attempted to placate both factions by allowing polygamous marriages while denying he was doing so. His Manifesto of 1904 reaffirmed the Church's official termination of plural marriage; but for almost two years thereafter, he did nothing to discipline those who refused to follow the dictates of the Manifesto. In late 1905, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was still vacillating on the question of what to do to its members who failed to abide by the 1904 ruling. Not until 1906, when three new Apostles

were appointed was there a consensus in the Quorum favoring the abandonment of polygamy.

But the tensions and difficulties of polygamy did not end in 1906. It was not until three years later that a committee was formed to investigate members of the Church who persisted in the active practice of polygamy.⁶⁹ In 1911 a policy was propounded to the effect that marriages performed before 1904 would be recognized as valid by the Church.⁷⁰ Throughout the years that followed, Mormons who continued to take new wives were disciplined by the LDS church and many of these people formed sects which are loosely identified as "Fundamentalist" groups. These are the major surviving vestiges of a very difficult period of Mormon history.

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Notes

1. The official reason for the resignations was that Taylor and Cowley "found themselves out of harmony with the Presidency of the Church and the Quorum to which they belonged" (*Seventy-sixth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1906], pp. 93-94). Some believe the dismissals were politically motivated (see Victor W. Jorgensen and B. Carman Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair and the Watershed of Mormon History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 48 [Winter 1980]:30-33). Other Church authorities did not believe that the dismissal was political, however. Francis M. Lyman explicitly stated such—that Taylor and Cowley were truly out of harmony with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (*The Trials for the Membership of John W. Taylor and Mathias [sic] F. Cowley* [West Jordan, Utah: Mormon Underground Press, n.d.], p. 10, hereafter referred to as *Trials*; John Henry Smith believed Taylor and Cowley were forced to resign because they had performed plural marriages in the United States and had not limited such marriages to foreign countries (Joseph W. Musser, *Journal*, July 22, 1909, Archives, Historical Department of the Church, Salt Lake City—the LDS Archives will be referred to hereafter as HDC).

2. The Jorgensen-Hardy article referred to above is probably the most comprehensive. See also my "Post-Manifesto Polygamy among L.D.S. General Authorities" (unpublished paper, 1980); Jerold A. Hilton, "Polygamy in Utah and Surrounding Areas Since the Manifesto" (M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1965), pp. 6-17; and J. Max Anderson, *The Polygamy Story: Fiction and Fact* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1979), pp. 123-126, 129. Despite the generally apologetic tone of Anderson's book, he admits that marriages were performed from 1890 to 1904 outside the United States "through the sanction of the President of the Church" (p. 129).

3. Little scholarly attention has been given to changes in attitudes among Church leaders toward the continuation of polygamy between 1890 and 1906 and the stresses these changes caused in the leading quorums generally. Most of the studies listed in note 2 have concerned themselves primarily with sufficiently documenting the continuation of polygamy. A careful reading of their article reveals that Jorgensen and Hardy largely ignore the differences of opinion among the leaders of the Church, changes in these attitudes over time, and differences among the three Church Presidents during this period. An excellent exception which treats post-Manifesto polygamy briefly is Thomas G. Alexander, "To Maintain Harmony: Adjusting to External and Internal Stress, 1890-1930," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Winter 1982), currently in press.

4. *Deseret Weekly News*, October 4, 1890. A more accessible copy of the Manifesto can be found in the Doctrine and Covenants.

5. Abraham H. Cannon, *Journal*, November 2, 1890, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Hereafter the Lee Library collections will be referred to as HBLL.

6. *Ibid.*, October 1, 1890.

7. *Deseret Weekly News*, October 24, 1891.

8. Abraham H. Cannon, *Journal*, November 12, 1891.

9. Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, April 1, 1911, as quoted in Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair," p. 36; Carl A. Badger, *Journal*, March 19, 1904, HDC; *Trials*, pp. 14-18. Church leaders apparently believed that there were no laws against polygamy in Mexico and perhaps Canada. In fact, polygamy was illegal in both countries. Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair," pp. 17-18.

10. *Trials*, pp. 14-16; Stanley S. Ivins to Juanita Brooks, February 25, 1955.

11. Family Group Records of Willard Carroll and Joseph Cardon, Genealogical Society of the Church, Salt Lake City; *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 1, August 16, October 1, 1910. George Teasdale apparently performed the Carroll marriage and might also have performed the Cardon sealing.

12. Joseph T. Bentley Oral History, interviews by Gordon Irving, 1976, typescript, pp. 1-2, The James H. Moyle Oral History Program, HDC; Mildred

Call Hurst Oral History, interview by Jessie Embry, 1976, typescript, p. 12, LDS Polygamy Oral History Project, The Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, hereafter referred to as Redd interviews; Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair," pp. 18-19; Stanley S. Ivins to Juanita Brooks, February 25, 1955, USHS; George Q. Cannon to Anthony W. Ivins, December 27, 1897, February 1, 1898, USHS; H. Grant Ivins, "Polygamy in Mexico" (unpublished paper, USHS), p. 4.

13. Joseph F. Smith, for example, viewed Utah's statehood as a turning point. He believed that after statehood was attained, sentiments softened, at least toward continued polygamous cohabitation. (*Proceedings before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the U.S. Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, A Senator from Utah, to hold His Seat*, 4 vols. [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904-1906], 1:130, hereafter *Proceedings*).

14. Another possible explanation is that the Anthony W. Ivins marriage record (USHS) which begins in 1896, distorts the statistics shown on the graph. The upper line of the graph includes the Ivins marriages. It is possible that the number of marriages in the Ivins record raises the total number just enough to distort the record and provide misleading results. This possibility is unlikely, however, because almost all marriages performed by Elder Ivins were listed in the same independent sources as other marriages during the period.

15. There was even confusion about the continuation of polygamous cohabitation. See, for example, Gary James Bergera, "A Glimmer of that Same Light: The Personal Voice of One Woman's Reaction to Plural Marriage and the Issuance of the Woodruff Manifesto" (unpublished paper, 1980), pp. 8-14. A majority of Church General Authorities continued to cohabit with their plural wives after the Manifesto (see my "Beyond the Manifesto: Polygamous Cohabitation among LDS General Authorities after 1890," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 [Winter 1978]: 30).

16. Marriner W. Merrill strongly favored the continuation of polygamy. He reputedly solemnized marriages after 1890, took a plural wife in 1900 or 1901, and remained strong in his advocacy of polygamy to his death (Anthon H. Lund, *Journal*, January 9, 1900, HDC; John Henry Smith, Photocopy of Diary, January 10, 1900, HDC; *Proceedings*, 1:408-418; Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair," p. 14; *Trials*, p. 15). Anthon H. Lund, a lifetime monogamist, performed at least one and probably more polygamous marriages during Wilford Woodruff's presidency (Personal History of F.F. Hintze, in the possession of R. Sears Hintze; Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair," p. 13). Lund later advocated moderation in discussing new polygamy and in 1904 feared that too many marriages had been solemnized (John Henry Smith Diary, January 9, 1900; Anthon H. Lund *Journal*, March 22, 1904). Abraham H. Cannon married Lillian Hamlin in 1896 after his father had asked him to marry his deceased older brother's fiancée (Abraham H. Cannon *Journal*, November 2, 1894; Family Group Records; Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah* [Boston: n.p., 1911], pp. 176-179). Matthias F. Cowley married a number of couples into polygamy after being set apart to do this by George Q. Cannon. He also married a wife in 1899 and another in 1905 (*Trials*, pp. 14-18; Family Group Records; Samuel W. Taylor, *Rocky Mountain Empire: The Latter-day Saints Today* [New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1978], p. 84; Jerold A. Hilton, "Polygamy in Utah," p. 18). Abraham Owen Woodruff performed plural marriages in 1899 and 1903 and married Avery Clark as a plural wife in 1900 or 1901 (Anthony W. Ivins Marriage Record, pp. 2, 4, 5; Robert F. Gould, ed., *Ezra Thompson Clark's Ancestors and Descendants* [Bethesda, Maryland: n.p., 1937], p. 152; Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair," pp. 13-14).

17. It is possible, of course, that the proportion was even higher.

18. Snow's feelings are documented below. Other evidence comes from statements made after Woodruff's death. Francis Lyman told Joseph W. Musser in 1914 that President Cannon and Apostles Merrill, Teasdale, Cowley, Woodruff, and Taylor "had brot [sic] reproach upon the church and had done wrong" (Musser, *Journal*, February 16, 1914). One source indicates that Lyman was out of harmony with his quorum as late as 1903 on the question of polygamy (Joseph Eckersly, *Journal*, September 2-6, 1903, HDC).

19. *Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, September 15, 1898, HDC (hereafter *Journal History*).

20. See Davis Bitton, "The B.H. Roberts Case of 1898-1900," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 25 (Winter 1975):27-46.

21. *Deseret News*, December 8, 1899, January 8, 1900. Snow claimed that "no member or officer has any authority whatever to perform a plural marriage or enter into such a relation."

22. *Journal History*, January 11, 1900. The statement was probably made in part in response to pro-polygamy sentiments expressed by Marriner W. Merrill and George Teasdale several days before in a meeting of the Twelve (Anthon H. Lund, *Journal*, January 9, 1900; John Henry Smith, *Diary*, January 10, 1900). All members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve were there except Brigham Young, Jr.

23. Brigham Young, Jr., *Journal*, March 13, 1901, HDC.

24. *Trials*, pp. 5, 14.

25. John Henry Smith, *Diary*, May 27, 1901.

26. *Trials*, pp. 15-16.

27. *Trials*, pp. 14-18; Family Group Records; *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 1, August 16, October 1, 1910.

28. While there are possibly alternative explanations, this is likely reflective of

President Snow's unwillingness to allow new marriages.

29. The number of plural marriages performed by Anthony W. Ivins in 1900 is also low, indicating that he at least took the Church President's attitude seriously.

30. Ellen Steffensen Cannon to Katherine Cannon Thomas, December 28, 1953, original in my possession; Family Group Records; *Trials*, pp. 15-18; Samuel W. Taylor, *Rocky Mountain Empire*, p. 84; *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 1, 1910.

31. Elders Cannon and Smith had been in the First Presidency together since 1879 and for much of that time had taken care of much of the Church's business together. Given their close relationship, it is very possible that the two cooperated on direction of the new polygamy.

32. *Trials*, pp. 15-18. Matthias Cowley claimed that all the marriages he performed in 1900 and 1901 had been authorized by George Q. Cannon (*Trials*, pp. 15-18).

33. There are some indications that Joseph F. Smith may have performed the plural marriage of George M. Cannon and Ellen Steffensen in 1901. Stanley S. Ivins to Juanita Brooks, February 25, 1955; Stanley S. Ivins, Photocopy of Journal, November 19, 1944, H. Grant Ivins Collection, USHS; Ellen Steffensen to Katherine Cannon Thomas, December 28, 1953.

34. Anthon H. Lund, Journal, April 4, April 6, 1904.

35. Later, as a U.S. Senator, Smoot was sensitive to the bad publicity the Church received because of his position in Washington. Other younger Mormons who felt much as Smoot did included his personal secretary Carl A. Badger and probably J. Reuben Clark, Jr.

36. Alexander, "To Maintain Harmony."

37. Cannon and O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah* pp. 176-179; *Proceedings*, 4:476. The tradition in the Cannon family is that Elder Smith performed the Cannon-Hamlin marriage while on a pleasure cruise from Los Angeles to Catalina Island. However, Lewis M. Cannon, a close friend and cousin of Abraham who later married Lillian Hamlin in another polygamous marriage, believed that Orson Smith, a local Church leader in northern Utah, performed the ceremony (Carl A. Badger, Journal, December 9, 1905). Elder Smith denied involvement in the matter a number of times (see e.g., Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, April 9, 1904, Reed Smoot Correspondence, HDC).

38. See note 33.

39. Orson Pratt Brown, Journal, pp. 67-68, USHS.

40. *The Most Holy Principle*, 4 vols. (Murray, Utah: Gems Publishing Co., 1970-1975), 4:86. This is made more credible as evidence when the circumstances are considered. If Anthony Ivins refused to perform marriages unless they were authorized by the First Presidency, he would have had to receive some recommendation or notification to perform the marriage from that body. George Q. Cannon had used the medium of ambiguous letters; it is possible that President Smith did the same thing after Cannon's death.

41. Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, April 1, 1911. In Smith's telegram, it was stated that marriages had been performed both in Canada and Mexico with Church authority. In a letter from George Gibbs to Reed Smoot on April 21, 1911, Smoot was instructed that inclusion of Canada in the telegram was a mistake and that the only place where the late plural marriages took place was in Mexico (Reed Smoot Correspondence, HDC).

42. Brigham Young, Jr., Journal, June 5, 1902.

43. Journal History, November 19, 1903; John Henry Smith, Diary, November 19, 1903.

44. *Proceedings*, 1:129.

45. Reed Smoot's Senate seat was very important to the Church and it was threatened by the charges of new polygamy. Much of the non-Mormon public viewed the charges of new polygamy with distaste and the LDS church was placed in an unfavorable light at a time it was courting acceptance by American society at large.

46. *Seventy-fourth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1904), p. 76. Of the apostles present at the conference, at least Owen Woodruff and Rudger Clawson opposed issuing the statement (Anthon H. Lund, Journal, April 4, April 6, 1904).

47. *Trials*, pp. 15-17.

48. Reed Smoot to Joseph F. Smith, December 8, 1905, Reed Smoot Correspondence, HDC.

49. President Smith told Senator Smoot in April 1904 that Taylor and Cowley "have stated their own cases, and they will have to abide the results themselves," but he did nothing to discipline them at the time. (Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, April 9, 1904, Reed Smoot Correspondence, HDC).

50. Copies of both resignations are included in the Reed Smoot Correspondence, HDC. The most salient parts of John W. Taylor's resignation are set out in B.H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 6:400.

51. Reed Smoot to Joseph F. Smith, February 7, 1905, Reed Smoot to the First Presidency, December 8, 1905, Reed Smoot Correspondence, HDC.

52. George F. Gibbs to Reed Smoot, December 7, 1905, and Reed Smoot to First Presidency, December 8, 1905, Reed Smoot Correspondence, HDC.

53. George F. Gibbs to Reed Smoot, December 8, 1905, Reed Smoot

Correspondence, HDC.

54. Francis M. Lyman to Reed Smoot, December 15, 1905, Reed Smoot Correspondence, HDC.

55. Charles W. Penrose to Reed Smoot, March 9, 1906, Reed Smoot Correspondence, HDC.

56. George F. Richards, Orson F. Whitney, and David O. McKay replaced Merrill, Taylor, and Cowley in 1906. Anthony W. Ivins replaced George Teasdale.

57. Samuel W. Taylor, "Interviews with Nettie M. Taylor," January 15, 1936, p. 4 and Raymond W. Taylor to Samuel W. Taylor, May 3, 1937, both as cited in Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair," p. 33.

58. *Trials*, pp. 12, 18.

59. H. Grant Ivins, "Polygamy in Mexico," p. 9; E.H. Callister to Reed Smoot, March 27, 1904, James Clove to Reed Smoot, March 29, 1904, Reed Smoot Correspondence, HDC.

60. Carl A. Badger to Ed Jenkins, April 7, 1904, HBLL.

61. Emma Romney Eyring, "The Story of My Life" (Unpublished manuscript, 1953); Joseph T. Bentley Oral History, pp. 1-2; Theodore C. Bennion Oral History, interview by Jessie Embry, 1976, typescript, p. 2, Redd interviews. President Smith indicated in 1911 that these marriages were approved of by the Church (Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, April 11, 1911), as did Heber J. Grant in the 1930s (Heber J. Grant to Katherine H. Allred, November 15, 1935, First Presidency Letterpress Book, HDC).

62. *Trials*, p. 16. John W. Taylor almost went so far as to say that President Smith had authorized him to perform the marriages he did (*Trials*, p. 7).

63. Hilda B. Farr Oral History, interview by Victor Jorgensen, 1972, typescript, p. 3, Oral History Department, California State University, Fullerton as quoted in Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair," p. 26.

64. Ivins Marriage Record. Ivins wrote his son Grant, "You can count on it[—]I have never performed a marriage seremony [sic] without proper authority" (Anthony Ivins to Grant Ivins, March 7, 1911, USHS).

65. Stanley S. Ivins, Journal, November 19, 1944.

66. John W. Taylor strongly intimated that Joseph F. Smith had told him of his support of new polygamy (*Trials* p. 7.).

67. Reed Smoot to First Presidency, December 8, 1905; Joseph W. Musser, Journal, July 22, 1909.

68. One can only speculate as to what action Elder Cannon would have taken in relation to the continuation of polygamy had he become Church President.

69. George F. Richards, Journal, July 14, 1909, HDC.

70. Anthony W. Ivins, Journal, December 19, 1910, USHS; H. Grant Ivins, "Polygamy in Mexico," p. 17; Heber J. Grant to Katherine H. Allred, November 15, 1935. However, when John W. Taylor was reinstated into the Church posthumously in 1965, the decision was made not to have the sealings restored between Taylor and his last three wives (two of whom he married in 1901). Delbert L. Stapley wrote Taylor's son Raymond, "It is a rule followed by the Genealogical Society that if a marriage took place after the manifesto, that such marriages are not recognized nor will permission be given to seal such women to the man she or they were supposedly sealed to. Regardless of the sincere purpose of the women, they, as well as your father, were in violation of both the civil law and the law of the Church" (Delbert L. Stapley to Raymond W. Taylor, June 4, 1966, Western Americana, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City). Henry E. Christiansen then wrote Taylor on February 2, 1967 and affirmed what Stapley had written (Henry E. Christiansen to Raymond W. Taylor, February 2, 1967, Marriott Library).

71. The upper line of the graph is drawn from a compilation of 150 marriages substantiated in each case by at least two and generally more sources (this is especially important in the case when one of the sources was the *Salt Lake Tribune* because of the paper's obvious bias). I have found evidence of at least seventy-five other marriages but have not yet sufficiently documented them for inclusion here. The lower line is based on the Anthony W. Ivins Marriage Record. It has been corrected for the several monogamous marriages contained in the record.

The upper line was derived from the Ivins record and Joseph Merrill, *Descendants of Marriner Wood Merrill* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), p. 213; Melvin C. Merrill, *Utah Pioneer and Apostle: Marriner Wood Merrill and His Family* (n.p., 1937), p. 501; Samuel W. Taylor, *Rocky Mountain Empire*, p. 84; *Trials*, pp. 15-17; *Proceedings*, 1:389-391, 4:476-478; Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair," pp. 11-15, 18-19; *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 19, 1899, March 5, July 24, July 26, August 1, August 3, August 19, August 21, August 23, August 31, September 1, October 1, 1910; Joseph W. Musser, "The Law of Plural Marriage," *Truth*, June 1948, pp. 6-7; D. Michael Quinn, "Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: A Prosopographical Study" (M.A. Thesis, University of Utah, 1973), pp. 248-291; Hilton, "Polygamy in Utah," pp. 13-15; Joseph T. Bentley Oral History, pp. 1-2; Mildred Call Hurst Oral History, pp. 12-13; Theodore C. Bennion Oral History, p. 3; Family Group Records; Orson Pratt Brown, Journal, pp. 38-40, 47; H. Grant Ivins, "Polygamy in Mexico," pp. 16-17, 21-22, 37; John Henry Smith, Diary, March 5, March 6, March 7, March 8, March 9, March 10, March 11, 1898; John Jacob Walser, Sr., Journal, November 22, 1902, January 5, 1903, HDC; John Jacob Walser, Jr., *Autobiography*, HDC; Ellen Steffensen Cannon to Katherine Cannon Thomas, December 28, 1953; Charles Ursenbach to Jessie Embry, July 22, 1876 [sic], original in the possession of Jessie Embry.