At the personal request of BYU professor, Richard Bennett, one of the Co-Chairs for the Mormon History Association's 2012 Conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, author and scholar D. Michael Quinn agreed to serve as the commentator for session #2A "Reconsidering Joseph Smith's Marital Practices" on June 29. The first paper was given by Lawrence Foster, "Why Polyandry Isn’t the Right Term to Describe Joseph Smith’s Marriages to Women Who Remained Legally Married to Other Men: Reflections on a Difficult and Challenging Issue."\(^1\) It was followed by my presentation, "Joseph Smith’s Sexual Polyandry and the Emperor’s New Clothes: On Closer Inspection, What Do We Find?" Both papers went slightly overtime leaving Michael only 18 minutes for his comments and there was no time for questions.

In order to allow his audience and those who were not in attendance to understand the nuances of his observations, Michael composed an expanded version that he sent to dozens of individuals on August 2nd, as an email attachment. That paper contained over 10,052 words on 71 pages with the response portion comprising the first thirty-five, followed by an impressive 199 footnotes.

On August 25, 2012, I finished my reply to that response that contained 27,610 words on 93

\(^1\) Quinn explained why his response focuses primarily on my presentation rather than Foster’s excellent paper: “Although it will not be obvious to those with access only to these comments, Larry Foster's MHA paper was shorter than Hales’ audio-visual presentation. Moreover, despite time constraints, Hales presented dozens of sub-topics to the MHA session as compared with Foster's highly focused remarks. Therefore, 95 percent of my ‘Comments’ at MHA concerned what Hales said on 29 June 2012 and what he had published beforehand” (58 en2).
pages with 163 footnotes. I made it generally downloadable at my website, www.JosephSmithsPolygamy.com, which will soon be upgraded.

Sometime thereafter, Quinn expanded his original written response with an updated “final” version comprising 54,345 words on 131 pages with 305 footnotes. However, due to computer difficulties (as he explains in a footnote), it has only recently been made available generally. He explicitly states that it can reproduced “verbatim” therefore I have also made it available.

I personally feel very grateful to Michael for several emails we exchanged prior to the conference and for his willingness to tackle this knotty historical topic. Michael's background in Mormon history is unique. Perhaps no one has been exposed to the breadth and depth of documents, manuscripts, and data from the Restoration’s past. That he would specifically address Joseph Smith’s polyandry provides all researchers with an important new perspective, one deserving of consideration. As a defender of the position that the Prophet practiced sexual polyandry, he is not alone. His willingness to weigh and discuss supportive evidence creates a

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2 Quinn acknowledged: “I don't plan to write another version” (1 fn*). He and I declare that these are our last versions. However, those sentiments might change if sufficient reasons were to arise to prompt a revisit to the topic.

3 Quinn explains: “...due to my computer's total malfunction in mid-November 2012, this document's electronic file (in 26-year-old WordPerfect 4.2) was unavailable to me for access, revisions, copying, or distribution for eight months!! As a semi-Luddite, I was unable to finalize and circulate it until mid-2013. This 'expanded-finalized' version (now dated as "31 December 2012") corrects mistakes in my original 'Comments,' discusses more of Hales' approach, and now increases my source-notes to 305 from the original's 199. Far beyond my expectations in February 2012, these 'Comments' have become a monograph” (1 fn*).

4 Quinn wrote: “I give full permission for this monograph to be circulated (VERBATIM ONLY) among those interested. If anyone informs me of mistakes in these "expanded-finalized" comments, I will just take permanent responsibility for them” (1 fn*; emphasis in original).

5 Multiple authors have portrayed Joseph Smith as practicing sexual polyandry in their historical reconstructions. Fawn M. Brodie wrote: “Joseph could with a certain honesty inveigh against adultery in the same week that he slept with another man’s wife, or indeed several men’s wives, because he had interposed a very special marriage ceremony” (No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, 308). Anti-Mormon writer Richard Abanes claimed: “The wives continued to live with their husbands after marrying Smith, but would have conjugal visits from Joseph whenever it served his needs” (One Nation under Gods: A History of the Mormon Church, 193). George D. Smith gave this regal
laser focused review of one of the most difficult subjects in Joseph Smith’s history to understand.

Researchers are further advantaged that he has been willing to respond to a critique of his initial analysis. Such back-and-forth scholarly exchanges allow for a honing of argument and evidence interpretation.

In these exchanges, I would prefer to use first names. However, as I respond to Michael’s paper, I will conform to scholarly conventions using his last name, but hoping at no time to reflect any disrespect. I highly value his incredible knowledge and friendship.

**Topics Evaluated by D. Michael Quinn**

Available historical documentation indicates that Joseph was sealed to 14 women with legal husbands.6 These women experienced two marriage ceremonies so from a ceremonial standpoint,

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6 See Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy: History and Theology*, 1:277-474 for the most detailed look at the women and the relationships.
they had two husbands and practiced “polyandry.” "Polyandry" means "many men," but in the context of plural marriage, it describes a woman with more than one husband. The more important question is whether the women practiced sexual polyandry. That is, were they engaged in conjugal relations with both men in the same season.

Studying polyandrous relationships is complicated for several reasons, specifically, the number of pertinent documents is limited, available historical data contains ambiguities, and contradictory evidence may be found for many interpretations. As readers seek to understand the differences between Michael Quinn’s interpretations and my own, I think I can speak for both of us encouraging everyone to seek out the original documents to decide for themselves, rather than passing judgment based upon either of our evaluations.

In his December 31, 2012 final version of “Evidence for the Sexual Side of Joseph Smith's Polygamy,” Quinn focuses generally on two topics: sexual polyandry, which is the primary focus of my response, but also allegations regarding the level of sexuality the Prophet experienced. Specifically, he explores eight polyandrous relationships alleging sexuality between a woman and both Joseph Smith and her legal husband (Esther Dutcher, Mary Elizabeth Rollins, Elvira Annie Cowles, Zina Huntington, Sylvia Sessions, Mary Heron, Lucinda Pendleton, and Ruth Vose Sayers).

Throughout his paper, Quinn provides a few new documents of minor importance. However, his approach is generally to disagree with my interpretations as found my MHA presentation and in other published sources. Those views are summarized in *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy: History and American Heritage Dictionary, CD-ROM, 1992.*
Theology, which Quinn has not read (and acknowledges he probably will not read). He also affirms that Joseph Smith engaged in sexual polyandry with Hannah Dubois, Martha McBride Knight and, Lydia Kenyon Carter. Other associated topics discussed include “eternity only” sealings, alleged polyandrous children, the August 21, 1842 letter to the Whitneys, Emma and polyandry, and a remarkable assertion that Joseph Smith’s was sexually privileged in God’s eyes and could experience conjugality with other men’s wives by simply performing an “appointment.” Also pertinent to his polyandry are observations regarding Augusta Cobb and Mary Ann Darrow Richardson.

Promoting his position that “Joseph Smith was apparently virile enough to have sexual intercourse daily (or more than once daily) with one or two of his wives” (29). Quinn focuses upon the Prophet’s relationships with Emily and Eliza Partridge, Eliza R. Snow, and Flora Ann Woodworth. He also speculates regarding Joseph Smith's sexual potency and even explores phrenology reports. Phrenology is the non-scientific study of the size and shape of a person’s skull. In addition, he examines two dreams and analyzes an incomprehensible journal entry apparently written by Leonora Cannon Taylor, wife of Apostle John Taylor.

**No Solid Evidence of Sexual Polyandry**

Before examining Quinn’s evidences, it may be useful to note that there is no solid documentation supporting the position that Joseph Smith engaged in sexual polyandry (see 118en267). The lack of solid evidence may be important because demonstrating its existence could be done rather easily by quoting a single credible supportive statement, if such existed.

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8 Quinn explains:“…this response excludes the three-volume study of polygamy that Brian Hales published in early 2013. I have not read it (and don't plan to), but its readers can decide whether he simply repeated the approaches that I criticize here” (1 fn*).
One well-documented testimony from a participant or other close observer (of which there were dozens) indicating that any of the fourteen women had two genuine husbands at the same time would constitute such evidence. Even a passing reference to a polyandrous triangle in a letter or journal would be impressive. Also, a revelation or other theological justification traceable to Joseph Smith authorizing those relations would be very convincing. No evidence of this type has been found.

The absence of any solid documentation of polyandrous sexuality contrasts the abundance of solid evidence establishing the practice of non-polyandrous sexuality in Joseph Smith’s plural marriages. Sexual relations in traditional “polygamy” (technically “polygyny”) is explained and defended in multiple documents from numerous Nauvoo polygamists and other insiders.

A review of the documented behaviors of the alleged sexual polyandry participants reveals that none of them corroborated that such relationships existed. We find no declarations from other polygamy insiders they were taught that sexual polyandry was acceptable for Joseph or anyone else. No credible accounts from any of the fourteen wives exist wherein they complained about it. This could be because it didn’t exist or because the women were very devout. However, more remarkable is the lack of defenses of the practice. Dozens of people were aware of some of these fourteen sealings. That no explanatory texts or defensive references have surfaced is surprising. In addition, none of those Church members who apostatized criticized Joseph for such behavior. In short, the historical record reads as if sexual polyandry in any approved form did not exist and would never have been countenanced. The lack of supportive evidences and observations is inconclusive, but validates the view that it did not happen more than it supports the theories that it did occur.
The significance of the dissimilarity between the documentation for sexual polyandry verses sexual polygyny was emphasized to me during an exchange of ideas with a noted researcher who has critiqued my writings. He affirmed:

You need to show that JS [Joseph Smith] treated his polyandrous marriages different than he did his other polygamous marriages. You are the one with a thesis that needs defending. Where there is no documentation of sex in his polygamous marriages, do you assume there wasn't any. You can't rely on silence where silence is expected.\(^9\)

My response:

I have documented sexual relations in twelve of his non-polyandrous plural marriages with ambiguous evidence in three more. In contrast, there is no credible documentation for sexual polyandry, unless you have found some. In other words, there is no documentation for sexual polyandry but good documentation for sexual polygyny, both of which would have been equally secret.\(^10\)

A comparison of the available documentation of Joseph Smith’s practice of a “plurality of wives” and his alleged practice of a “plurality of husbands” demonstrates some noteworthy contrasts:

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\(^9\) August 24, 2013 FaceBook message from Dan Vogel.

\(^10\) Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Polygyny “plurality of wives”</th>
<th>Polyandry “plurality of husbands”</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plain supportive teachings from Joseph Smith regarding?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written revelation justifying the practice (e.g. D&amp;C 132)?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Women recalling the practice?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Complaints from participants that it was difficult?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal and written defenses from participants?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Officiators recalling the practice?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unambiguous statements discussing the dynamics of those relationships</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-Mormon complaints voiced prior to 1850</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revelation condemning the practice (e.g. D&amp;C 132:41-42, 61-63)?</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statements from Nauvoo polygamists declaring the practice to be sinful?</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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**Quinn’s Conclusions are Insufficient**

Over the past few decades, multiple authors have written articles and book length treatises of Joseph Smith’s plural marriages all concluding, like Quinn, that polyandrous sexuality was present or may have been present. However, their assessments are insufficient for several reasons, most importantly that they have universally ignored Joseph Smith’s theology regarding celestial and plural marriage.

Readers may be surprised to learn that some of Joseph Smith’s revelations discuss a “plurality of husbands” in ways that would have directly impacted the practice if it were ever contemplated. Disregarding these teachings creates an artificial world that cannot accurately reconstruct the experiences of Nauvoo polygamists because they did not ignore those very teachings. Instead, they based their faith and behaviors upon his instructions and revelations, migrating throughout the Midwest building cities and temples and serving as missionaries.
At least four of the Prophet’s doctrines directly impact the idea that a woman could be married to two lawful husbands at the same time, lawful according to God’s laws. The first is the observation that every known description of a “plurality of husbands,” including three in section 132: 41-42, 61-63, condemns the practice. Second, Joseph Smith’s revelations teach that a priesthood marriage would supersede a civil union so thereafter the woman would only have one husband. Third, sexless “eternity only” marriage ceremonies were performed in Nauvoo so assuming all sealings were for “time and eternity” and included sexual relations is not justified. Fourth, Joseph Smith gave three reasons to explain why plural marriage needed to be practice, the most important requiring an eternal sealing, but not sexuality on earth.

**Polyandry was Universally Condemned**

Joseph Smith’s revelation on celestial and plural marriage, now section 132, contains three references to sexual polyandrous relations (vv. 41-42, 61-63). All three label them “adultery,” in two cases stating that the woman involved “would be destroyed” (41, 63).¹¹ In addition, Church members who knew Joseph and were personally taught by him recalled only condemnations of the practice. For example, when asked in 1852, “What do you think of a woman having more husbands than one?” Brigham Young answered, “This is not known to the law.”¹² Five years later Heber C. Kimball taught, "There has been a doctrine taught that a man can act as Proxy for another when absent – it has been practiced and it is known -- & its damnable."¹³ The following

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¹¹ Quinn acknowledges that “Nauvoo apostles Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, and George A. Smith condemned the idea of polyandry from 1847 onward” (129 en296) but Quinn fails to recognize that the three polyandrous relationships mentioned in section 132, the only references to sexual polyandry we have from Joseph Smith, condemn it as “adultery”

¹² Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:361, August 1, 1852.

¹³ Minutes of the Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1835-1893, Salt Lake City: Privately Published [Smith-Pettit Foundation], 2010, 160; see also 157.
year Orson Pratt instructed: “God has strictly forbidden, in this Bible, plurality of husbands, and proclaimed against it in his law.”¹⁴ Pratt further explained:

Can a woman have more than one husband at the same time? No: Such a principle was never sanctioned by scripture. The object of marriage is to multiply the species, according to the command of God. A woman with one husband can fulfill this command, with greater facilities, than if she had a plurality; indeed, this would, in all probability, frustrate the great design of marriage, and prevent her from raising up a family. As a plurality of husbands, would not facilitate the increase of posterity, such a principle never was tolerated in scripture.¹⁵

Belinda Marden Pratt taught the same sentiment in 1854: “Why not a plurality of husbands as well as a plurality of wives?” To which I reply: 1st God has never commanded or sanctioned a plurality of husbands…”¹⁶ On October 8, 1869, Apostle George A. Smith taught that “a plurality of husbands is wrong.”¹⁷ His wife, Bathsheba Smith, was asked in 1892 if it would “be a violation of the laws of the church for one woman to have two husbands living at the same time…” She replied: “I think it would.”¹⁸ All of these individuals were involved with Nauvoo polygamy and several were undoubtedly aware of Joseph Smith’s sealings to legally married women.

Similar denunciations continued as First Presidency Counselor Joseph F. Smith wrote in 1889: “Polyandry is wrong, physiologically, morally, and from a scriptural point of order. It is nowhere sanctioned in the Bible, nor by the law of God or nature and has not affinity with ‘Mormon’

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¹⁸ Bathsheba Smith, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), page 347, question 1142.
plural marriage.” Elder Joseph Fielding Smith reiterated in 1905: “Polygamy, in the sense of plurality of husbands and of wives never was practiced in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah or elsewhere.”

In addition, the Apostle Paul denounced polyandry, calling it “adultery”:

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. (Rom. 7:2–3)

Accordingly, if Joseph Smith engaged in sexual polyandry, he was either a hypocrite, contradicting his own teachings, or he had found a loophole. Advocates would be wise to tell their audiences whether they believe he was practicing sexual polyandry hypocritically or that he felt authorized due to some special exception. If the latter, providing evidence to show that an exception existed and was taught to participants would be helpful.

If sexual polyandry was an acceptable practice either generally or for Joseph specifically, it is surprising that he did not explain the underlying principles to anyone who later mentioned the conversation. He might have included a doctrinal justification with the rest of the new sealing

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21 In fact, Quinn attempts to do this by quoting D&C 132:41 saying that Joseph Smith was given special power allowing him to “anoint” women and have sexual relations with them without committing adultery. Unfortunately, his interpretation is without historical support and would contradict D&C 132:61-63. See below.
doctrines and practices he introduced in Illinois. Why not simply add it to the other revelations explaining it plainly so that the practice would have a theological foundation?

*The New and Everlasting Covenant cause All “Old Covenants” to be “Done Away”*

A second applicable theological principle apparently overlooked by proponents including Quinn is found an 1830 revelation, now D&C 22:1, which states: “Behold, I say unto you that all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing; and this is a new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning.” This revelation was given shortly after the Church was organized in response to a specific question about baptism, which is a new and everlasting covenant between a person and God. The revelation states generally that the new and everlasting covenant causes all old covenants to be done away.

Thirteen years later Joseph recorded another revelation dealing with his question about Old Testament patriarchs who practices a “plurality of wives” (D&C 132:1). As part of the revelatory reply, the Lord proclaimed: “For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant…” The revelation continues declaring that this new and everlasting covenant allows the marriage of a man and a woman to be “valid…[and] of force when they are out of the world” (v. 18; see also 19-20). The question is whether the earlier statement that “all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing; and this is a new and an everlasting covenant” (D&C 22:1) applies to all “new and everlasting covenants” mentioned in D&C 132:4.

Isaiah provided a possible hint regarding the teaching methods of the God of the Bible: “But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little…” (Isaiah 28:13; see also 2 Nephi 28:30). This instruction was repeated to Joseph Smith in one of his revelations (D&C 98:12, see also 128:21).
The 1830 revelation states “all old covenants” are “done away” by “a new and everlasting covenant.” If “all” means “all,” then new and everlasting covenants revealed later in a “line upon line” fashion would be subject to the same constraints as those revealed early. Then sealings in the new and everlasting would cause old legal marriage covenants to be “done away.” In 1854, Jedediah M. Grant recalled that when eternal marriage was revealed in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith taught that “all covenants are done away, and none are binding but the new covenants.”

These verses have important ramifications for the practice of sexual polyandry. They support that from a religious standpoint, a woman previously legally married and subsequently sealed would not have two husbands with whom she could experience sexual relations after the sealing ceremony. The new and everlasting covenant of marriage would supersede the legal covenant of marriage causing it to be “done away.” Thereafter, going back to her legal husband would be adultery because in the eyes of the Church, that marriage ended with the sealing.

“Eternity Only” Sealings were Performed in Nauvoo

Another doctrinal consideration pertinent to sexual polyandry regards the fact that reliable documentation of both “time and eternity” (with sexuality on earth) and “eternity only” sealings (that begin at death and are without sexual relations on earth) were both performed in Nauvoo. This supports that eternity was a focus (if not the focus) of plurality in Joseph Smith’s marriage teachings, not sexuality.

Andrew Jenson’s research notes written in 1887 (and previously unavailable to Quinn and other authors like Todd Compton) as he was interviewing an unidentified Nauvoo polygamist, but likely Eliza R. Snow or Malissa Lott, record:

22 Jedediah M. Grant, February 19, 1854, JD 2:13.
Sayers (Ruth Daggett Vose,) daughter of Mark and Sally vose, was born in Watertown, Middlesex Co., Mass, Feb. 26, 1808, and baptized at Boston Ma in May, 1832…

Sister Ruth/ Mrs. Sayers was married in her youth to Mr. Edward Sayers, a thoroughly practical horticulturist and florist, and though he was not a member of the Church, yet he willingly joined his fortune with her and they reached Nauvoo together some time in the year 1841

While there the strongest affection sprang up between the Prophet Joseph and Mr. Sayers. The latter not attaching much importance to the theory of a future life insisted that his wife Ruth should be sealed to the Prophet for eternity, as he himself should only claim her in this life. She was accordingly sealed to the Prophet in Emma Smith’s presence and thus became numbered among the Prophets plural wives. She however, though she continued to live with Mr. Sayers / remained with her husband until his death.

Another somewhat garbled document referring to the same sealing apparently dating to 1843 appears to be in the hand of excommunicated Mormon Oliver Olney, whose wife, Phebe Wheeler, worked as a domestic in Hyrum Smith's home: “What motive has [S]ayers in it--it is

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23“Horticulture,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (February 1, 1842): 678.
25Ruth Vose Sayers, Draft biographical sketch,” Document 5, Andrew Jenson Papers (ca. 1871-1942), Box 49, fd. 16, pp. 1-2. Jenson apparently used the documents in these folders to compile his 1887 *Historical Record* article, “Plural Marriage.” This sealing is dated “February A.D. 1843” in Ruth Vose Sayers's Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books, May 1, 1869, 1:9. However, the affidavit states that Hyrum Smith performed the sealing, which is unlikely because Hyrum did not accept plural marriage until May 1843.
26Quinn’s original notes apparently record the name as “Sagers” not “Sayers.” Don Bradley suggested as he transcribed Quinn’s notes (now housed at Yale) that the name was probably “Sayers,” which I have silently substituted in my publications. Quinn is critical of this practice and perhaps with merit (64-66 en29). Nevertheless, he ultimately admits: “Due to the citations by Hales from Andrew Jenson's research-notes that Ruth Vose Sayers requested to be sealed "for eternity" to Joseph Smith and that her husband Edward Sayersones agreed, I now realize that my original transcription of the surname was probably in error. The 1843-44 manuscript's handwriting could as easily be read "Sayers" (with a "y"), instead of
the desire of his heart. . . . Joseph did not pick that woman [Ruth Vose Sayers]. She went to see
whether she should marry her husband for eternity.”27 Evidently, Olney was gathering
information through his wife and learned of the episode involving the Sayers and the Prophet.
Lucy Walker remembered the Prophet's counsel: “A woman would have her choice, this was a
privilege that could not be denied her.”28 If true, the reason a legally married woman would have
been sealed to Joseph Smith is because she chose him to be her eternal husband like Ruth Vose
Sayers.

To his credit, Quinn acknowledges: “Despite my decades-long expectation for those specific
words to be in the written records of sealing, Brian Hales has recently persuaded me that Joseph

27[Oliver Olney], typescript excerpt in Quinn Papers, WA MS 244 (Accession:19990209-c) Box 1; italics
mine. I have been unable to identify the primary document to verify this quotation.
28 Lucy Walker Kimball, “A Brief Biographical Sketch of the Life and Labors of Lucy Walker Kimball
Smith,” CHL; quoted in Lyman Omer Littlefield, Reminiscences of Latter-day Saints: Giving an Account
Smith was sealed during his lifetime to one already-married woman in a ceremony that she, her non-Mormon husband, and the Prophet all regarded as applying only to the eternities after mortal life. This was Ruth Vose Sayers…” (5) But he adds: “I regard the Smith-Sayers ceremonial marriage as the only non-sexual relationship among the dozen or so already-married women who became Joseph Smith's plural wives during his lifetime” (119 en268). Quinn takes a curious stance by acknowledging two forms of sealing ordinances in the new and everlasting covenant (“eternity only” and “time and eternity”), but then claims that all but one of Joseph Smith plural sealings were “time and eternity” without specific evidence in each case.

Discerning between the “eternity only” and “time and eternity” sealings might be easier if the language used to seal the plural marriages was known. However, only one document has been found that records the wording used by an officiator to seal Joseph Smith to a plural wife, in that case, non-polyandrously. 29 Also, later recollections may not be helpful. When asked in 1892 if she could remember the words used to seal her to Joseph Smith, Malissa Lott replied: “I don’t

29 Quinn quotes a statement from my “Puzzlement of Polyandry”: "It is true that some later reminiscences [by already-married women] state that their sealings [to Joseph Smith] in Nauvoo were for `time and eternity.' However, to assume that the women were remembering the exact language may not be warranted ... to presuppose that sexual relations were present based solely on a late memoir that declared a Nauvoo marriage (`polyandrous' or not) was for `time and eternity' would be unjustified by the documents alone”). (Hales, "Joseph Smith and the Puzzlement of `Polyandry,'” 127.) Then he chides me: “By significant contrast, Hales accepts without question the memory of elderly persons whenever he agrees with their statements about decades-earlier events. This conveniently shifts his standards of evidentiary analysis in the direction for which Hales is arguing” (18). Quinn brings up a valid point except for two observations. He employs the same practice in his own writings and he would have us believe that a woman saying in the 1880s that she was sealed to Joseph Smith for “time and eternity” was equal to her admitting to sexual polyandry. As noted, not all documents are equally believable and authors should take care to not spin the evidence to their own liking (this applies to Quinn and me equally). Transparency in documentation is paramount to allow readers to make their own decisions regarding interpretations.
know that I can go and tell it right over as it was… I don’t remember the words that were used.”

Similarly, Emily Partridge testified: “I can’t remember the exact words, that he said.”

Another indicator of the type of sealing a woman might have experienced is to discern the presence of sexual relations in the union, which would be consistent with a “time and eternity” sealing. Historical evidence demonstrates the presence of conjugality in twelve of Joseph Smith’s thirty-five sealings with ambiguous documents available regarding three more unions. For all remaining marriages there is no way to know for sure. Proponents of sexual polyandry might affirm that since sexuality was present in some, it is safe to assume it was present in most or all of the remaining plural marriages. However, acknowledging that nonsexual “eternity only” sealings could be performed provides another possible explanation. Accordingly, the reason sexuality is not documented in over half of Joseph Smith’s plural marriages could be because the historical record is incomplete or because they were “eternity only” sealings. In either case, speculation is required to fill in the missing pieces and neither view is based upon reliable documentation.

**Non-sexual Eternal Unions Fulfill the Primary Purpose for Plural Marriage**

Joseph Smith gave three reasons for the restoration of plural marriage with one of them being much more important than the other two. The earliest justification he mentioned was the need to restore Old Testament polygamy as a part of the "restitution of all things" prophesied in Acts 3:19-21:

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30 Malissa Lott, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), pages 95-96, questions 54, 70.
31 Emily Partridge, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), page 359, question 198.
19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

The necessity to restore this ancient marital order was apparently the only explanation given in Kirtland, Ohio, in the mid-1830s, when Joseph married Fanny Alger. Benjamin F. Johnson recalled in 1903: "In 1835 at Kirtland I learned from my Sisters Husband, Lyman R. Shirman, who was close to the Prophet, and Received it from him. That the ancient order of plural marriage was again to be practiced by the Church." A few years later in 1841, Joseph Smith even attempted to broach the topic publicly. Helen Mar Kimball remembered: “He [Joseph] astonished his hearers by preaching on the restoration of all things, and said that as it was anciently with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, so it would be again, etc.” This need for a restoration is mentioned in section 132: “I am the Lord thy God. . . . I have conferred upon you the keys and power of the priesthood, wherein I restore all things” (v. 40; see also 45). It might be argued that this was the only reason Joseph Smith ever needed to give. He simply had to say, “Old

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32 Sherman was a close friend and devout follower of Joseph Smith. He was called as an apostle but died before learning of the appointment. See Lyndon W. Cook, “Lyman Sherman—Man of God, Would-Be Apostle,” 121-24.


Testament patriarchs practiced polygamy and I’m restoring it.” There was no need for a complicated and detailed theology of celestial and eternal marriage.  

The second reason given by Joseph Smith was that, as plural wives “multiply and replenish the earth,” additional devout families would be created to receive noble pre-mortal spirits who would be born into them. Nauvoo Latter-day Saint Charles Lambert quoted the Prophet discussing "thousands of spirits that have been waiting to come forth in this day and generation. Their proper channel is through the priesthood, a way has to be provided.” Helen Mar Kimball agreed that Joseph taught of "thousands of spirits, yet unborn, who were anxiously waiting for the privilege of coming down to take tabernacles of flesh.” These recollections from the 1880s could have been influenced by later teachings. However, this rationale is also explicated in the revelation on celestial marriage: “they [plural wives] are given unto him [their husband] to multiply and replenish the earth” (D&C 132:63).

Quinn acknowledges that libido was not the only driving force for the establishment of polygamy (32). Unfortunately, other defenders of sexual polyandry have portrayed sexual reproduction – to “multiply and replenish the earth” - as the primary reason for plural marriage. They imply that non-sexual sealings could not fulfill the principal purpose of plural marriage (in Joseph Smith’s theology) so sexual polyandry must have occurred. One author went as far as to write: “Celestial marriage was all about sex and children.” Another proclaimed: “The intent of

37 Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, Why We Practice Plural Marriage, 7.
39 George D. Smith, "Persuading Men and Women to Join in Celestial Marriage," The John Whitmer
Smith’s doctrine is clear: to reproduce and provide bodies for children.” These assessments are in incomplete and potentially misleading (see below).

D&C 132 Explains the Third and Most Important Reason for Plural Marriage

The revelation on Celestial and plural marriage (D&C 132) explains the third reason delineating why polygamy needed to be included in Joseph Smith’s overarching cosmology. It explicates the most important theological principle found within all of his teachings, but it is not plurality or involved with sexuality. Judging from their treatises, polygamy critics and polyandry advocates do not seem to take section 132 very seriously.

The revelation begins with Joseph prayerfully inquiring “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 the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines” (D&C 132:1). Clearly the opening question is about polygamy, but plural marriage is not mentioned again until verse 34 and “multiply and replenish” is not mentioned until verse 63.

Instead, in what seems to be an almost random shift of topics, the revelation quickly emphasizes the need for priesthood authority to seal together things on earth so they will persist together after death:

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.

40 Gary Bergera at the author-meets-critic session with Brian C. Hales, August 2nd, 2013, Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah.
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 (D&C 132:7).

This immediate diversion to discuss priesthood power suggests that the primary reason for a “plurality of wives,” even in Old Testament times, is complicated and may transcend the simple commandment to “multiply and replenish” the earth. This verse also identifies “one” man who holds the keys and controls this sealing authority. The next verse emphasizes the order surrounding him and the authority he controls: “Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion” (D&C 132:8). This need for order is repeated again in verse 18.

The revelation next provides four examples to help readers understand the supremacy of this sealing authority and how it is to be exercised. Providing four distinct illustrations to help readers comprehend a gospel concept is singular in LDS scripture. Apparently Joseph Smith’s God wants His followers to understand this power and how it functions on earth and in eternity. Verse 13 explains the first example informing observers that “everything” that is not by God’s word in mortality will be “thrown down” in eternity.

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 (D&C 132:15).

It some ways, verse 13 reiterates principles explained earlier in verse 7.
The second example is in verse 15, which narrows “everything” to one specific covenant – that of legal marriage:

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 (D&C 132:15).

In other words, marriages not performed by the sealing authority held by the “one” man will not persist after death.

Before going on to the third example, the revelation adds important commentary in the next two verses that explains a remarkable concept concerning the consequences that come to individuals who do not access that priesthood power in their matrimonies (as described in verse 15):

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.

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. (D&C 132:16-17.)

According to these verses, the penalties of not accessing the sealing authority when marrying are much great than simply experiencing an eternal divorce at death. These two sentences explain that such individuals are “appointed angels in heaven” to be “ministering servants” to more worthy resurrected beings. They “remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity.” This is damnation within the context of the revelation (vv. 4, 6).
The message of D&C 132:16-17 provides the first intimation in Joseph Smith’s teachings regarding the relationship between eternal marriage and exaltation. These verses declare that there are no unmarried (unsealed) men or unmarried (unsealed) women in the highest heaven, the upper most section of the Celestial Kingdom. On May 16, 1843, William Clayton recorded Joseph clarifying that “in the celestial glory there was three heavens or degrees, and in order to obtain the highest a man must enter into this order of the priesthood and if he don’t he can’t obtain it. He may enter into the other but that is the end of his kingdom” (see also D&C 131:1-4). The Prophet also publicly alluded to this principle: “Those who keep no eternal Law in this life or make no eternal contract are single & alone in the eternal world” (see also D&C 131:1-4). In other words, every man and every woman must be sealed to an eternal spouse or they cannot be exalted.

It may not be immediately obvious why these declarations would be offered in response to Joseph Smith’s original question that dealt with polygamy. However, it is plain in these teachings that either a “plurality of wives” or a “plurality of husbands” would be needed at the final judgment unless there are exactly equal numbers of worthy men and woman.

At this point, readers might expect the revelation to discuss what happens when a couple is sealed by proper authority, thus fulfilling all the requirements. Nonetheless, there is still one more matrimonial situation to be explored before learning of the blessings of compliance. It is the third example and is explored in verse D&C 132:18:

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. (D&C 132:18; bold mine; see also v. 8.)

This verse again reiterates the need for order and the irrefutable need for the authority of the “one” man to create a valid eternal marriage. It indicates that even using the correct sealing ceremony language is insufficient, that sincerity, a burning bosom (i.e. personal revelation – see D&C 9:8-9), and/or tradition are incapable of making up for the lack of genuine sealing priesthood. It appears that this verse is specifically addressed to Mormon fundamentalist polygamists. Their claims to possess the keys of sealing authority are faulty and indefensible. Consequently, their plural marriages are “not valid neither of force when they are out of the world.”

The fourth example is found in D&C 132:19-20, which explains the eternal benefits available to a monogamous couple who are sealed by that authority and then live worthily:

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

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priesthood…[they] shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths… and if ye abide in my covenant…[it] shall be of full force 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 fulness 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 shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.

Even though the original question dealt with a plurality of wives, by verse 20 readers have learned several important things that are seemingly unrelated to it. First, they have been introduced to priesthood authority that can seal covenants on earth so that they will continue in heaven. Second, this power can sanction a marriage union creating an eternal couple. Third, together with obedience, that monogamous couple can be exalted and become “gods” after the resurrection. Verses 7-20 outline what might be considered Joseph Smith’s zenith doctrine: *eternalized marriage and deification.* Ironically, this remarkable theological concept has nothing directly to do with plural marriage, but was given in response to a question about it.

As intimated above, the Prophet’s grand cosmology granting exaltation only to couples creates an undeniable problem if monogamy is the only celestial marital dynamic. Any inequality in the numbers of worthy men and worthy woman at the final judgment would result in damnation of some obedient individuals simply because they have no spouse. A priesthood ordinance could compensate for a situation with either excessive worthy men or women. The question is whether God will sanction polygyny (multiple wives) or polyandry (multiple husbands).
The answer is plain as the revelation finally returns to the original subject of polygamy. Later verses approve the plurality of wives (vv. 34, 37-39, 52, 55, 61-65) and disallow a plurality of husbands (vv. 41-42, 61-63). Without disclosing why, section 132 anticipates more worthy women than men at the final judgment, rather than equal numbers or an excess of qualified men. Apparently Joseph Smith’s God, who is described as knowing “the end from the beginning” (Abraham 2:8), could predict the future thus eliminating the need to provide for all possible outcomes.

These observations allow for several conclusions. First, “eternity only” sealings without sexuality on earth allow fulfillment of the primary purpose of eternal marriage. Second, in the Prophet’s teachings polyandry is unneeded on earth or in heaven and such relationships can be condemned without any everlasting penalty to any worthy man. Third, the primary answer to the Prophet’s question regarding polygamy appears to be that it allows every worthy female to be eternally sealed in marriage in order to avoid damnation. Fourth, while “multiply and replenish” the earth is a reason for polygamy during mortality, it is a minor consideration compared to the everlasting benefits that permit obedient women to become eligible for exaltation. Fifth, section 132 explains that polygamy is a necessary component in the plan of salvation, but billions of righteous monogamous couples can be exalted without it. Sixth, nowhere in the revelation does it proclaim that all exalted men will be polygamists in eternity or that all exalted women will share their husbands in Celestial Kingdom. Seventh, section 132 does not proclaim greater blessings for polygamists over monogamists. A monogamist couple is promised godhood (v. 20) with no suggestions that anything greater could be obtained. “…all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs… he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion (D&C 76:59, 95).
Dynamics of Joseph Smith’s Sealings to Legally Married Women

My research supports that Joseph Smith and all of his plural wives obeyed the theology undergirding the practice of polygamy. That is, a wedding ceremony creating a valid priesthood marriage always occurred, they did not engage in sexual polyandry, and adultery was always condemned.

Looking specifically at Joseph Smith’s marriages to women with legal husbands, I conclude that three were for “time and eternity” (Sylvia Sessions, Mary Heron, and Sarah Ann Whitney) and
included sexual relations with Joseph Smith (or may have included it). Importantly, documentation of sexual relations with the legal husband during the same period is absent because two of the women were already physically separated from their civil spouses (Windsor Lyon and Joseph Kingsbury) and the third case (of Mary Heron) is too poorly documented.

Regarding the remaining eleven civilly married women, the lack of evidence of sexual relations is consistent with “eternity only” sealings. Why they would have chosen Joseph over their legal spouses as their eternal husband is unclear, but according to the evidence, sexuality was not involved.

While the documentation is incomplete, the chart below summarizes the most likely relationship dynamics.

**Proposed Dynamics of Joseph Smith’s Polyandrous Unions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joseph Smith’s “Polyandrous” Wives</th>
<th>Legal Husband</th>
<th>“Eternity Only” Sealing</th>
<th>“Time and Eternity” Sealing with Physical Separation from Legal Husband</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ruth Vose</td>
<td>Edward Sayers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Esther Dutcher</td>
<td>Albert Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mary Elizabeth Rollins</td>
<td>Adam Lightner</td>
<td>Probable</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Presendia L. Huntington</td>
<td>Norman Buell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sarah Kingsley</td>
<td>John Cleveland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Patty Bartlett</td>
<td>David Sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Elizabeth Davis</td>
<td>Jabez Durfee</td>
<td>Probable</td>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lucinda Pendleton</td>
<td>George Harris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Elvira Annie Cowles</td>
<td>Jonathan Holmes</td>
<td>Probable</td>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Marinda Nancy Johnson</td>
<td>Orson Hyde</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Zina D. Huntington</td>
<td>Henry B. Jacobs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Sylvia Sessions</td>
<td>Windsor Lyon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Mary Heron</td>
<td>John Snider</td>
<td></td>
<td>Probable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Piling Up the Improbabilities

As noted above, discerning the presence or absence of sexual polyandry in any of Joseph Smith’s plural marriages has become very controversial. Showing it occurred could be as easy as identifying a single corroborative evidence, if one existed. A solo credible voice could be very convincing to “prove” its existence in the minds of many. That no such attestation is available is in itself surprising if sexual polyandry was practiced in Nauvoo with or without Joseph Smith’s approbation.

In contrast, it is impossible to “prove” sexual polyandry did not exist. That is, you cannot prove a negative.\footnote{In contrast, Quinn writes: “Actually, Hales is overstating the problem of proving a negative. For example, it is possible to prove that someone didn't die on a particular date, didn't enroll in a particular college at any time, didn't serve in the military, or to prove the negative of any other event/activity for which there is reliably continuous documentation. In recent years, that is how several political candidates and office-holders have been proven not to be veterans of the Vietnam War as they had long-claimed. Likewise, prosecutors sometimes prove the negative of a defendant's alleged alibi with closedcircuit television's video showing the defendant in a different place than claimed by the defendant at the crime's time--a place close to the scene of the crime.” Quinn’s examples are not applicable because military service required a person to sign up creating a record that could later be consulted. No records were kept regarding the plural marriage performed during Joseph’s lifetime. Neither were closed-circuit television cameras available in Nauvoo in the 1840s.} The only way to demonstrate it did not occur is by piling up the improbabilities. By identifying one implausibility in the historical record and then adding another and another, the interpretation that such relations did not happen is strengthened, but never “proven.”

The challenges facing anyone trying to demonstrate something did not happen can be illustrated by imagining an allegation that Sidney Rigdon or William Law, Joseph Smith’s counselors in the First Presidency in Illinois. The make-believe accusation is that one of them performed human sacrifices on the Nauvoo Temple site at midnight during every full moon in 1843. (I hesitate to designate either man in this fictional narrative because someone might cite it in the future as evidence that human sacrifice actually occurred.) Also suppose that someone with a personal
agenda to defame the alleged perpetrator emerges to defend this pretended report by observing
that Rigdon and/or Law were living in Nauvoo in 1843 when the moon was full at midnight. In
support, they might also publicize that Joseph Smith taught of the eventual restoration of the law
of sacrifice (D&C 13:1, 84:31, 128:24). In addition, proponents could recruit tales from John
C. Bennett about burnt offering in Nauvoo. They might also speculate and spin folklore
regarding humans being sacrifice in Illinois, without clearly noting in their narratives that their
ideas are not documentable. Several scriptures might be referenced to support the need for such

Whether convincing or not or even if the supportive evidence is weak or nonexistent, it still
remains impossible to prove that something did not happen in Nauvoo in 1843. In this case, it is
impossible to prove human sacrifice was not performed by Rigdon or Law as described.
Observations that it would have been against the law of the land and against Church teachings
prove nothing. The fact that it would have been a heinous action, highly objectionable in the
minds of virtually all observers is inconclusive. Most importantly, that no one reported it,
contemporaneously or in a later recollection, still does not constitute undeniable proof.
Verifying that there were no human sacrifices by Rigdon, Law, or anyone in Nauvoo is
unachievable. The best a historian could hope to accomplish is to quote the historical record to
show how implausible it would have been. By piling up improbabilities, the likelihood of human
sacrifice in Illinois in 1843 diminishes in the minds of readers.

This case parallels allegations of sexual polyandry against Joseph Smith in several ways.
Polyandrous sexuality would have been against the law of the land and against Church doctrines.

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45 See 3 Nephi 9:19-20.
46 John C. Bennett, The History of the Saints: Or an Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), 231.
It would have been an explosive teaching, repugnant to virtually all conservative females and males alike. The fact that all of the women allegedly involved, their legal husbands, the officiators and other witnesses (and even anti-Mormons) did not report it, complain about it, or defend it does not prove it did not occur. These observations simply introduce probability questions. Authors like me who believe it did not happen can only hope to accumulate enough documented observations of historical implausibilities so observers will readily conclude that it did not occur. No matter what efforts are expended, proving sexual polyandry (or human sacrifice) in Nauvoo did not happen is impossible.

**Boundaries of the Alleged Polyandry? Omnigamy? Network Marriage?**

It appears that proponents of sexual polyandry, like Quinn, fail to account for the inevitable doctrinal consequences of their declarations. For example, if both a plurality of wives and a plurality of husbands were permitted in Joseph Smith’s theology, then two husbands could share the same two wives and those two women could share the same two husbands between them as each man practiced polygyny and each woman practiced polyandry. Extending the dynamic would allow three men two marry the same three wives. Expanding it further would permit a dozen men to marry the same dozen women and on and on. The ramifications resulting from both authorized polyandry and polygyny are network marriages or omnigamy (all men are married to all women). Within the network, each husband could cohabit with each wife and each woman could cohabit with each husband under the guise of polygamy.

Practically speaking, Quinn affirms sexual polyandry between Joseph Smith and Sylvia Sessions and her legal husband Windsor Lyon (see below). So if polyandry was acceptable, then Lyon could have been sealed to another of Joseph Smith’s plural wives, say Lucy Walker, and the two
men would be married to both Lucy and Sylvia and Lucy and Sylvia would be married to Joseph and Windsor and each could experience conjugality with either husband or wife.

No polyandry supporter has addressed this obvious weakness of their theory. The clearest defense would be so say that Joseph Smith was the only person who practiced sexual polyandry in Nauvoo (with or without theological justification). However, no polyandry advocate as yet made the claim or defended it. The Prophet’s early revelations designated him as the only person “appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church” (D&C 28:2) and as holding the “keys of the mysteries” (D&C 28:7, 64:5). However, no revelation granted him exclusive marital and sexual access to any woman including those already married and cohabiting with their husbands. Probability questions emerge regarding how readily Church members would have accepted such a matrimonial monopoly without someone mentioning it.

Proponents of sexual polyandry would probably be wise to address this glaring problem with their theories or limit their allegations to the notion that Joseph Smith personally engaged in both polygyny and polyandry, but did not allow others to do so and that sexual polygyny was the only privilege allowed Church membership generally. However, that interpretation generates its own set of historical challenges. Regardless, to allege that Joseph secretly taught polyandry as a companion principle to polygyny is fraught with a remarkable number of implausibilities.

Alleged Participants are Depicted as Caricatures

Besides ignoring Joseph Smith’s theology regarding sexual polyandry, another insufficiency in Quinn’s reconstruction (and that of other proponents) is a lack of contextualization of the alleged practice among the described participants. In his rush to line up his evidences to show sexual polyandry occurred (see below), he fails to explain the behavior of Joseph Smith’s followers who
were aware of his plural sealings to legally married women. Writers like Quinn who disregard this reality risk creating historical fictions upon which they base their conclusions.

When I was a child, I would attend Utah State University basketball games in the old Nelson Field House. I would sometimes become frustrated because the adults around me would stand up at exciting times in the game blocking my view of the basketball floor. I soon learned that I could tell if the Aggies were winning or losing by watching the other grownups around me. If they were cheering and smiling, my team was doing well. If they were quiet or yelling at the referees, then I concluded that the opponents were prevailing. I could not see what happening on the floor, but I could discern what was going on by watching those who could see. Perhaps, this process could help researchers today to discern if sexual polyandry was present in Nauvoo. We cannot know exactly what Joseph Smith did and taught, but we can watch those who were closely involved with him, especially those men and women identified by proponents as participants.

Accordingly, Quinn’s willingness to ignore Joseph Smith’s teaching regarding marriage is doubly problematic because the Nauvoo polygamists did not ignore them. The Latter-day Saints followed the Prophet and many hung on his every word. They built temples in Kirtland and Nauvoo because his doctrines dictated the need to do so. Generally, their decisions in the 1840s to accept plural marriage doctrines were made only after they carefully considered his teachings. It is obvious from the historical record that Joseph Smith struggled with those very followers to introduce a “plurality of wives” as practiced by Old Testament patriarchs like Abraham. Those teachings were cautiously disseminated among believers who reacted initially with disgust, incredulity, and sometimes rebellion.
In contrast, Quinn and other polyandry proponents describe the Prophet as practicing a “plurality of husbands” without any apparent pushback or question from the described participants. Joseph Smith is portrayed as being so charismatic and authoritarian that virtually no one questioned the practice. The wives are depicted as unaffected by any emotional and theological considerations, being willing to jump into polyandrous beds without giving it a second thought. The polyandrous husbands, officiators, family, and other informed polygamy insiders are usually marginalized as ignorant or complacent, but never as active thinkers with feelings and doubts. The Latter-day Saint polyandrists and other insiders are depicted as mindless automatons who could not see the apparent immoral inconsistencies the polyandry advocates declare in their publications over a hundred years later.

The historical record corroborates that the first generation of Latter-day Saints who learned the secret polygamy teachings were not gullible dupes, but skeptical, intelligent, and discerning individuals. For example, non-Mormon Bernard DeVoto observed in 1930: “He [Joseph Smith] attracted to his support not only the ordinary fanatics who gave the American Pentecost its hundreds of sects and supported them all, but also such superior and more significant men as [Sidney] Rigdon, Orson and Parley Pratt, Orson Hyde, W.W. Phelps, and Brigham Young.”47 Fawn Brodie agreed: “The best evidence of the magnetism of the Mormon religion was that it could attract men with the quality of Brigham Young, whose tremendous and shrewd intelligence were not easily directed by any influence outside himself.”48

48 Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, 2nd rev. ed. New York, 1971, 126-27. Joseph Johnson writing in 1885 disagreed: “He [Brigham Young] must have been an idiot, or thought he was addressing idiots.” (The Great Mormon Fraud, Manchester, Butterworth and Nodal, 1885, 17.)
Lucy Walker, Zina Huntington, and Mary Elizabeth Rollins are good examples of female followers who did not blindly followed Joseph Smith. The Prophet promised at least two of them that they could receive their own "spiritual" confirmation that polygamy was right.49 Whether he approached other potential plural wives with similar promises is unknown. Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, who was one of the fourteen legally married women, wrote: "I did not believe. If God told him so, why did he not come and tell me? The angel told him I should have a witness. An angel came to me..."50 Similarly, previously unmarried Lucy Walker recalled: "He [Joseph Smith] assured me that this doctrine had been revealed to him of the Lord, and that I was entitled to received 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."51

Explaining how these individuals participated in sexual polyandry, a practice that was sexually and theologically as foreign to them as anything could have been, is important. Why did they tolerate Joseph Smith’s sexual hypocrisy or alternatively, what teachings did he impart to grant himself a privileged position regarding a practice that is otherwise condemned in every known reference to it?

49 See also example Desdemona Fullmer, Autobiography, [not MS 734 in CHL], quoted in D. Michael Quinn papers – Addition – Uncat WA MS 244, bx 1, Yale University, Special Collections; Helen [Mar Kimball Whitney], to Mary Bond, n.d., Biographical Folder Collection, P21, f11 [Myron H. Bond], item 22, 23, 24, Community of Christ Archives, pp. 3-4. Fawn Brodie observed: “At an early age [Joseph Smith] had what only the most gifted revivalist preachers could boast of – the talent for making men see visions.” (No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, 2nd rev. ed. New York, 1971, 74.)

50 Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, “Statement” signed Feb. 8, 1902 (Vesta Crawford Papers, MS 125, bx1 fd 11. Original owned by Mrs. Nell Osborne, SLC (courtesy Juanita Brooks). See also Juanita Brooks Papers, USHS, MSB103, bx16, fd 13; BYU special collections, Ms 1132.

In summary, no proponent has addressed the problem of how the documented actions of the alleged participants contradict their expected behaviors. Of course, “expected” is subjective, but good researchers acknowledge that generally people behave in plausible ways. When there are exceptions, they offer explanation within a credible framework. Quinn does not do this. By ignoring these important pieces of the plural marriage puzzle, the described polyandry participants seem more like caricatures or comic book characters rather than real historical figures.

Ignoring Joseph Smith’s marriage theology and the reactions of Nauvooans brings several advantages to writers seeking to portray him as practicing sexual polyandry. First, supporters may assert that since these women experienced two marriage ceremonies they subsequently had two husbands with whom they could have sexual relations. However, Joseph Smith’s marriage theology teaches that the sealing would have superseded the civil marriage so the woman would not have two husbands after the priesthood marriage. It also instructs that sexual polyandry is adultery. The introduction of the Prophet’s teachings creates two moral deterrents for believers regarding the practice of sexual polyandry, deterrents that are not addressed in reconstructions written by polyandry proponents.

A second advantage occurs as polyandry advocates overemphasize the importance of “multiply and replenish the earth” – sexuality – in the Prophet’s polygamy ideology. Learning that the primary purpose for plural marriage is to allow all worthy women to be sealed to an eternal spouse removes the need for sexual relations to occur in these marriages. Section 132 declares no eternal penalties for individuals who do not “multiply and replenish the earth.” In contrast, those who are not sealed to an eternal spouse are “without exaltation… to all eternity.” The principal reason for plurality is fulfilled without sexuality on earth.
The third advantage comes proponents depict Nauvoo polygamists as behaving in highly implausible ways, implausible within the doctrinal context of Joseph Smith’s celestial marriage teachings, but perhaps plausible if those doctrines are ignored.

**Quinn’s Interpretive Techniques**

As demonstrated from his previous works, D. Michael Quinn has received a remarkable, perhaps even singular, exposure to Mormon documents. His research spans over forty years and has been the product of views from both inside and outside the LDS Church History Department. Most of Quinn’s topics found in “Evidence for the Sexual Side of Joseph Smith's Polygamy,” are covered in my three volumes *Joseph Smith's Polygamy: History and Theology*. Unsurprisingly however, he provides a few quotations and observations that are new and will be dealt with directly here. Included are discussions of phrenology reports, dreams, and an incoherent journal entry. Some of these references seem unduly weak and perhaps undeserving of consideration. Regardless, none constitute solid evidence supporting his views.

Since we are dealing with the same primary historical documentation, it seems that most of the disagreements between Quinn and me are interpretive. This is not unexpected because researching Joseph Smith’s 14 polyandrous sealings thrusts inquirers into an “archival maze” where at each crossroads they are required to interpret documentary evidence that contains ambiguities and other limitations. The interpretations embraced at each intersection will lead observers in different direction and towards diverse conclusions.

The detailed arguments advanced throughout “Evidence for the Sexual Side of Joseph Smith's Polygamy,” faithfully usher readers through each maze intersection to eventually arrive at Quinn’s desired conclusion. He summarized: “As a historian, I regard the evidence for Joseph
Smith's sexual polyandry to be diverse, widespread, and convincing when viewed as an interconnected (though fragmentary) mosaic.”

Therefore it is no surprise that Quinn and I arrive at different conclusions using the very same documents. The fact that we disagree is advantageous to readers because our back-and-forth exchange helps to expose them to most, if not all, of the primary pertinent evidences and better equip them to form their own opinions.

It seems that Quinn’s interpretations consistently suffer from several weaknesses:

1. Affirming sexuality where sexuality is not mentioned.
2. Willingness to accept a string of assumptions.
3. Ignoring contradictory evidences.
4. Embracing rigid narrow interpretations of ambiguous evidence.
5. Employing "straw man" counter-arguments.

Because of these tendencies, it appears that Quinn’s conclusions vastly out-distance the evidence he presents in virtually every case. Regardless, readers are encouraged to review the primary documents themselves. Both Quinn (in his “Final Version”) and I (in this paper) provide transcripts of pertinent manuscripts and rich footnotes and endnotes to assist researchers who may wish seek out the original documents.

So let’s now take a look at Quinn’s evidences and arguments.

**Esther Dutcher**

After providing an enlightening introduction to historical polyandry, Quinn begins by discussing the plural sealing of Esther Dutcher (1811-1856), legal wife of Albert Smith (no relation to the Joseph Smith or Apostle George Albert Smith). Esther Dutcher's sealing was "polyandrous” in a

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52 P. 57.
ceremonial sense. Like many of the women we will discuss, she had previously experienced a civil marriage ceremony (to Albert Smith) and then later a religious sealing ceremony (to Joseph Smith). She had two husbands from a ceremonial perspective and Quinn readily assumes from a sexual standpoint as well.

In a letter from Daniel H. Wells to Apostle Joseph F. Smith, June 25, 1888, Wells explained:

He [Albert Smith was] also much afflicted with the loss of his first wife. It seems that she was sealed to Joseph the Prophet in the days of Nauvoo, though she still remained his wife, and afterwards nearly broke his heart by telling him of it, and expressing her intention of adhering to that relationship. He however got to feeling better over it, and acting for Joseph, had her sealed to him, and to himself for time.53

Quinn comments:

Esther's "intention of adhering to that relationship" sounds like a reference to a sexual relationship that "nearly broke" her legal husband's heart while Joseph Smith was still alive. To me, it does not sound like "adhering" to a "sealing for eternity only," which the letter itself did not allege. At least, the former is one way to interpret the document's phrasing, a possibility for "sexual polyandry" that Hales doesn't admit (4).

Here at the beginning of Quinn's essay we can detect several of the problematic tendencies that were mentioned above. First, he detects sexuality where sexuality is not mentioned and some would say is not implied. Daniel H. Well's letter does not refer to conjugality, but Quinn affirms its existence in the sealing. Such a reference would be very surprising due for several reasons. The Victorian standards of the time required strict propriety, the issue at hand was the sealing

53Daniel H. Wells, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, June 25, 1888. I am indebted to Joseph Johnstun and Michael Marquardt for bringing this source to my attention.
ordinance performed between Esther and the Prophet, and references to sexuality would not usually have been intimated in official Church correspondence. He is entitled to his opinion, even one that is not based upon any obvious reference.

A second concern involves the number of assumptions that Quinn’s conclusion requires. By assuming a sexual relationship between Esther and Joseph Smith and, at the same time assuming a sexual relationship between her and her legal husband, neither of which is documented, the conclusion that "sexual polyandry" is at least a "possibility" is supported. It illustrates that with enough assumptions, virtually anything may be considered "possible."

The third issue involves the contradictory evidences that are ignored. As discussed above, Joseph Smith taught that the new and everlasting covenant causes old covenants "done away" (D&C 22:1). If Joseph and Esther were sealed for "time and eternity" in the new and everlasting covenant (D&C 132:4), as Quinn evidently assumes, then according to D&C 22:1, her civil marriage covenant to Albert would have been "done away." Continued conjugality with him would have been adultery (see also D&C 132:41-42, 61-63). It appears that Albert and Esther were devout Latter-day Saints and therefore less likely to engage in adulterous relations.

Forth is a tendency to embrace rigid narrow interpretations of ambiguous evidence. In his analysis, Quinn asserts that "the letter itself did not allege" that Esther's "adhering" to the "sealing for eternity" is what "nearly broke" Albert's heart. This interpretation is debatable. Regardless, a more extreme view is promoted that a "sexual relationship" actually broke his heart. However, Well's statement does not mention a "sexual relationship," but a "sealed" relationship is referenced twice in the letter. Furthermore, Quinn states: "Esther's 'intention of adhering to that relationship' sounds like a reference to a sexual relationship…” While it is
theologically possible for her to "adhere" to a "sealing for eternity," it is less clear how she might adhere to a "sexual relationship" with a deceased man.

The last problem stems from straw man arguments regarding Esther Dutcher that Quinn advances in his discussion. It is true that I did not "admit" (or consider) Quinn's interpretation, but addressing every "possible" sexual polyandry reconstruction has never been my intent, especially those that require multiple assumptions accompanied by rather extreme explanations.

Quinn also criticizes my published statement: “To date, no gripes from any of these legal husbands have been identified in the historical documents.” He asserts that Albert’s disappointment that Ester chose Joseph Smith over himself as an eternal husband “contradicts his [Brian Hales’] claim that there were 'No Complaints from Legal Husbands' (Hales's emphasis) of the Prophet's already-married wives” (4; see also 63n22). The problem with Quinn’s interpretation is that my statement, "No complaints from legal husbands" was in reference to complaints against Joseph Smith, not voiced disappointment that their legal wives chose him as their eternal spouse. I have always acknowledged the disappointment of men like Henry Jacobs or possibly David Sessions whose wives were sealed to Joseph Smith. However, according to all available evidence, they did not complain against Joseph Smith for allowing the

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54 Hales, "Joseph Smith and the Puzzlement of `Polyandry,‘” 110.
56 See Joseph Smith’s Polygamy, 1:449.
57 In addition, Quinn accuses me of retroactively changing my meaning: “To me, belatedly specifying such a restrictive meaning for his previously unqualified remarks is a contradiction of what Hales stated in his 2010 ‘Puzzlement’ article about ‘no gripes’ by the legal husbands, which article affirmed that their “response” was ‘nothing’ (his emphasis)” (63 en22). This I deny. Regardless, whether I retroactively changed the meaning of my statement or was simply not as specific as Quinn felt I should be in the original declaration, this discussion point is not that important.
Neither did any of the men voice dissatisfaction about polyandrous sexuality, which is surprising if it actually occurred.

**Hannah Dubois (Smith Dibble)**

Quinn’s essay spends over three pages of text and endnotes discussing accusations regarding Joseph Smith and Hannah Dubois Smith Dibble. Before addressing Quinn’s assertions, two nineteenth century allegations regarding her should be introduced.

The first is a private 1900 interview where excommunicated Church member Benjamin Winchester claimed:

> Before the revelation came out on polygamy [July 12, 1843], he [Joseph Smith] had a child to a Miss Smith of Philadelphia. She had two children before he sealed her as his wife. She was a fine looking woman, and traveled for months with Smith, about nine or ten months before her child was born. It could not have been any other man's child. Smith got Philo Dibble to marry her so as to avoid scandal.\(^58\)

It appears that the “Miss Smith” mentioned is actually Hannah Ann Dubois Smith who married John F. Smith and had a child, Peter A. Smith, with him in 1835.\(^59\) A later reference refers to her as a widow, but the date of her husband’s death is unknown.

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\(^{58}\) “Testimony of Benjamin Winchester,” W. L. Crowe scribe, December 13, 1900, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, P13, f671, Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri.

\(^{59}\) Research into Hannah’s history has uncovered a family tradition that asserts that her first husband, John F. Smith, was actually Joseph Smith who had rendezvoused with her in the early 1830s. However, chronology and geography demonstrate that the Prophet could not have been involved with Hannah at this early date. Family rumors, especially those that connect a genealogical line to Joseph Smith, are sometimes actively perpetuated by descendants, despite the fact that there is no credible evidence supporting the claim.
Benjamin was a member of the branch in the Philadelphia area when Joseph Smith stayed there between December 21st and the 30th, 1839 and January 9th to the 30th 1840. That four week window represents the only time the Prophet traveled to Philadelphia after the Church left Kirtland in the late 1830s. Winchester accused the Prophet of “sealing her [Hannah] as his wife” and impregnating her during that visit. According to the story, Joseph Smith induced Philo Dibble to immediately marry her in order to avoid a scandal and to provide a legal father for the unborn child.

An examination of Winchester’s recollection demonstrates that he confused a few facts. Hannah and Philo did marry but not during the period he specified. Their nuptials occurred over a year later on February 11, 1841, and could not have been in response to her conceiving a child during Joseph Smith’s trip to the East. The Prophet himself performed the marriage ceremony. Philo recalled: “On the 11th of February, 1841, I married a second wife—a Widow Smith of Philadelphia, who was living in the family of the Prophet. He performed the ceremony at his house, and Sister Emma Smith insisted upon getting up a wedding supper for us. It was a splendid affair, and quite a large party of our friends were assembled.” The Prophet’s willingness to perform the marriage for this couple in such a public fashion argues against Hannah’s being one of Joseph’s secret plural wives.

Concerning Hannah’s offspring after Joseph Smith’s visit to Philadelphia, available records corroborate that her first child born on January 7, 1842, eleven months following her marriage to

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62 Philo Dibble, “Philo Dibble's Narrative,” Early Scenes in Church History, Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882, 92-93.
Named Hannah Ann Dibble, her conception would have occurred approximately April 16, 1841, well over a year after Joseph left the east and returned to Nauvoo and about two months after her marriage to Dibble. Clearly this child was not conceived while the Prophet visited Philadelphia.

The accuser in this case, Benjamin Winchester, had a stormy history with Church leaders. Born August 6, 1817, he with his family were baptized in 1833 and immediately removed to Kirtland, Ohio. Serving as a missionary in 1837-1839, he proselytized in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, afterwards visiting Nauvoo for a few months. In August, 1839, he returned to the east, settling in Philadelphia and supporting the Church members living there. He attended the December 23, 1839 conference where Joseph Smith organized the Philadelphia Branch with Samuel Bennett as Branch President. Winchester replaced Bennett as the presiding elder on April 5, 1840, over two months after Joseph Smith’s departure from the area.

Serving as the Philadelphia Branch President, Winchester caused problems. He eventually clashed with Apostle John E. Page, who wrote a letter to Joseph Smith on September 1, 1841:

> Suffer me here to say, that it would be well for some efficient Elder or High Priest to be sent to Philadelphia branch – such as one as would sustain the confidence of the branch to preside over that branch; for the present time there is a feeling existing in the hearts of some concerning Elder Benjamin Winchester that I think cannot be removed better than by changing the President… My humble opinion is that Elder Winchester has not been wise in all things as he might have been… Elder Winchester is very sanguine and unyielding in his course of economy concerning matters

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64 See “Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Philadelphia,” original at Community of Christ Archives. Typescript excerpts by Michael Quinn, “Philadelphia Branch Records (1840-1854),” in D. Michael Quinn Papers, Western Americana MSS S-2692, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.)

and things in the Church. I think that all that is strictly necessary to be done is that the Branch
have a new President.66

Within weeks, Winchester was summoned to Nauvoo where he attended a council meeting with
the Twelve Apostles on October 31st. Joseph Smith recorded:

Attended a council with the Twelve Apostles. Benjamin Winchester being present, complained
that he had been neglected and misrepresented by the Elders, and manifested a contentious spirit.
I gave him a severe reproof, telling him of his folly and vanity, and showing him that the
principles which he suffered to control him would lead him to destruction. I counseled him to
change his course, govern his disposition, and quit his tale-bearing and slandering his brethren.67

Despite this counsel to “quit his tale-bearing and slandering,” in January of 1842, “Benjamin
Winchester was suspended by the Quorum of the Twelve until he made satisfaction for
disobedience to the First Presidency.”68 Three months later he verbally complained and was
censured by the Twelve the following month.

Winchester’s rebellion continued until he was recalled back to Nauvoo the following year. In
April 1843, Joseph Smith counseled: “You can never make anything out of Benjamin
Winchester, if you take him out of the channel he wants to be in.”69 William Clayton recorded
on May 22: “Went to President Joseph's. He received a letter from Sister [Sybella] Armstrong of

66 Journal History for date, September 1, 1841; Richard E. Turley, Jr. Selected Collections from the
Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Provo, Utah: BYU Press, vol. 2, DVD # 1
67 Journal History for date, October 31, 1841. See Richard E. Turley, Jr. Selected Collections from the
Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Provo, Utah: BYU Press, vol. 2, DVD # 1; see also History of the Church, 4:443.
68 Journal History, January 12, 1842, CHL; History of the Church, 4:494.
69 Journal History, April 19, 1843, CHL; Richard E. Turley, Jr. Selected Collections from the Archives of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Provo, Utah: BYU Press, vol. 2, DVD # 1; see also History of the Church, 5:367
Philadelphia complaining of slanderous conduct in B[enjamin] Winchester. The President handed the letter to Dr. [Willard] Richards saying the Twelve ought to silence Winchester…”

Benjamin arrived in Nauvoo at the end of May and a council was immediately convened to deal with his insubordination including his accusations that the Prophet was guilty of “improper conduct” with “Miss Smith.” Joseph flatly denied the allegations, calling them “damnable lies.” Minutes from a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, for May 27, 1843 read:

President Joseph Smith, [said] it has been the character of Benjamin Winchester from the beginning to contradict everybody [and] every thing. And I have been under the ire of his tongue… I disagreed [with] him before the conference and to be revenged he told one of the most damnable lies about me. [I] visited Sister Smith, Sister Dibble [and]… told her to come to Nauvoo with me… and Benjamin Winchester set up a howl that I was guilty of improper conduct.

Wilford Woodruff recorded the aftermath: “Then President Joseph Smith Arose & rebuked Elder Winchester in the sharpest manner. Said he had a lying spirit & had lied about him & told him of many of his errors.” That same day the Prophet recorded in his journal: “Winchester was silenced.” None of the Church leaders in Nauvoo agreed with Winchester’s accusations against Joseph Smith because within weeks of the above meeting Church leaders demanded Winchester’s license, which was soon restored to him after promises to do better.

In summary, Winchester’s accusation against Joseph Smith is not for sexual polyandry, but polygamy (plurality of wives). As a credible witness, Winchester falters in several ways. Besides difficulties outlined above, he acknowledged in a November 8, 1844 letter to the *New York Herald*: “I had no idea that any thing contrary to the principles of morality and virtue, would be advocated by any of the leading men of the society; neither do I now believe that any thing of the kind transpired (with the exception of a few refractory characters)… from the time of the organization of the church up to the year 1841.” In 1889, he recalled: “Up to the year 1843 ‘spiritual marriage’ or polygamy had never been preached or inculcated as a doctrine of the church. Prior to that year my experience had been that the church was fully as strict and as pure with respect to virtue and morality as any other religious organization.” The “sealing” described by Winchester between Joseph Smith and Hannah Dubois Smith would have been between late December 1839 and early January 1840. Hence, his recollection that Joseph Smith was involved with polygamy or adultery in 1840 contradicts these two additional statements.

In addition, Winchester’s willingness to continue to follow the Prophet after the 1840 Philadelphia visit is puzzling if Joseph had there manifested such hypocrisy and transgression. Even as late as February 1844, when Joseph Smith declared his candidacy for the presidency of the United States, Benjamin served along with over three hundred other stumping missionaries.

It is also surprising that in an 1889 interview (ten years before the recollection quoted above), Winchester referred to “Miss Smith” and portrays Joseph Smith negatively., however, he does not mention a sexual relationship between her and the Prophet or her alleged pregnancy:

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During the time of Smith's sojourn with me in Philadelphia we visited quite a number of members of the Church there. Among them was a Mrs. Smith, foreman or forewoman of a glove factory, and some eight or ten girls were working in that factory who were, like Mrs. Smith, members of the Church. Smith, after several silly flirtations with the girls which I witnessed and which created a good deal of scandal and caused me some trouble, finally became enamored with Mrs. Smith and induced her and two girls to leave there and go to Nauvoo. I subsequently met Mrs. Smith at Nauvoo, when she told me that she had lent Joseph all of her money and he had gotten her married to a man by the name of Debble -- that through the "prophet" she had lost her all and was reduced to a condition of abject poverty. 77

If Winchester knew of a polygamous or adulterous relationship occurring in 1839-1840, it is curious he did not mention it in this 1889 interview. As a credible witness, Winchester exhibits many problems. Additionally, the idea that the Prophet could have met Hannah and convinced her of the appropriateness of plural marriage and have been sealed to her in such a short visit seems less plausible.

Another allegation involving Hannah Dubois comes from excommunicated author John Hyde writing in 1857:

There is a Mrs. Dibble living in Utah, who has a fine son. She was sealed, among others, to Joseph Smith, although living with her present husband before and since. On the head of her son, Smith predicted the most startling prophesies about wielding the sword of Laban, revealing the hidden Book of Mormon, and translating the sealed part of the records. There is not a person at Salt Lake who doubts the fact of that boy being Smith’s own child. 78

In his statement John Hyde posits a polyandrous marriage between Joseph Smith and Hannah Dubois Smith Dibble and her legal husband Philo Dibble. As discussed, Hannah married Philo on February 11, 1841, with Joseph Smith performing the ceremony. Compton lists her as one of his eight possible plural wives of the Prophet in part from John Hyde’s assertion, as well as a recollection from Benjamin F. Johnson. If Hannah had been married to Joseph, it seems likely she would have been sealed to him later in the Nauvoo Temple. However, on January 15, 1846, she was eternally married to Philo Dibble by Brigham Young.

The son referred to by Hyde could only be Loren Dibble, born May 29, 1844 (conceived approximately September 6, 1843). Hyde asserted a widespread knowledge of Loren's parentage: "There is not a person at Salt Lake who doubts the fact of that boy being Smith’s own child," which appears to be an overstatement. No similar declarations or even rumors have been identified.

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80 Benjamin F. Johnson, My Life's Review, reprint, Mesa: 21st Century Printing, 1992, 96. Johnson wrote: “At this time I knew that the Prophet had as his wives, Louisa Beeman, Eliza R. Snow, Maria and Sarah Lawrence, Sisters Lyon and Dibble, one or two of Bishop Partridge’s daughters, and some of C. P. Lott’s daughters.” He seems to be in error with respect to C. P. Lott’s daughters, as only Malissa was married to the Prophet. No evidence has been found to support that Mary Elizabeth Lott (b. 1827) or Almira Henrietta Lott (b. 1829) were sealed to Joseph Smith at any time. Accordingly, Johnson may have also been in error concerning a plural marriage between Hannah Dibble and the Prophet.


82 Lawrence Foster recorded a family tradition within the Dibble family reporting that Philo and Hannah Dibble were asked to raise a child born to one of Joseph Smith’s non-polyandrous wives, which may be the source of this rumor. See Lawrence Foster, “Between Two Worlds: The Origins of Shaker Celibacy, Onedia Community Complex Marriage, and Mormon Polygamy,” Ph.D., University of Chicago, 1976, 252.
In addition, Hyde's report that "Smith predicted the most startling prophesies about wielding the sword of Laban, revealing the hidden Book of Mormon, and translating the sealed part of the records" is intriguing but unsupported. It seems that such a remarkable prophesy would have been archived in family records and mentioned in other documents. Evidence corroborating that the Prophet pronounced great (and subsequently unfulfilled) prophecies upon the head of Loren Dibble or that Loren Dibble made remarkable contributions building up of the Church in Utah are nonexistent. He is listed as participating in an Indian altercation on June 26, 1866. One source dubs him as a “gunfighter.”

After providing a very brief introduction to Benjamin Winchester and John Hyde’s allegations concerning Hannah Dubois, Quinn quotes me from my 2010 article, “The Puzzlement of Polyandry”: “Concerning John Hyde's anti-Mormon 1857 book that ‘paired Joseph Smith with Hannah Ann Dubois Smith Dibble in a story based upon hearsay evidence,’ Hales also wrote in 2010: ‘I have found no evidence to corroborate Hyde's assertion’ about this wife of Philo Dibble.” (7-8) Quinn then refers to the May 1843 quote from Benjamin Winchester, cited above and concludes that the “above linkage of documents written in 1842 and 1843” should have persuaded me that supportive evidence exists for Hyde’s claim. In other words, Benjamin Winchester’s 1900 interview should be seen as corroborating Hyde’s charges and I should have “found” such evidence.

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83 Multiple literature searches fails to identify any significant religious contribution from Loren Dibble.
86 Hales, "Joseph Smith and the Puzzlement of `Polyandry,'" 106 (first quote), 106n25 (second quote).
87 45. Minutes for meeting of Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, James Adams, Newel K. Whitney, et al., 27 May 1843, Miscellaneous Minutes, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church History Library.
In response I would say while both accusations deal with Hannah Dubois, Winchester asserts a polygamous (polygynous) sealing in late 1839 or early 1840 in Philadelphia with a widowed Hannah. In contrast, John Hyde affirms a polyandrous sealing after Hannah married Philo Dibble in 1841 in Nauvoo. Quinn also reiterates that Benjamin Johnson listed Hannah as a plural wife of Joseph Smith although Johnson does not declare when that plural marriage might have occurred.88 I can see Quinn’s point that even though significant dissimilarities are found between the two accounts, perhaps Winchester’s recollection could be construed as supporting Hyde’s assertions. Regardless, I think it is a small point for Quinn to contest. The two narratives themselves suffer from important credibility problems if he is trying to corroborate sexual polyandry.

Quinn also takes issue with my interpretation of Winchester’s 1843 testimony, “I [Joseph Smith] disagreed [with] him [Winchester] before the conference and to be revenged he told one of the most damnable lies about me. [I] visited Sister Smith, Sister Dibble [and]… told her to come to Nauvoo with me.”89 I affirm that “Sister Smith” and “Sister Dibble” are the same person, Quinn disagrees:

As Hales notes, the 1843 minutes can reasonably be understood as giving Hannah's post-1841 surname first, followed by her pre-1841 surname. While I admit that is a possibility, Winchester's accusations in early 1843 were two years after Hannah became Dibble's wife and a year after Winchester visited Nauvoo long enough to purchase land there (see the narrative's discussion for my Note 48). Therefore, I think it is far more likely that the minutes for this 1843 trial in Nauvoo referred to Hannah by the only name its participants had known her there for two

years. Thus, the "Sister Smith" notation meant someone else—Agnes [Coolbrith] Smith [widow of Don Carlos Smith] (even better-known to the trial's participants). (69-70n45)

In other words, Quinn declares that “Sister Smith” is Agness Coolbrith Smith. He is apparently unaware of Winchester’s 1889 interview (quoted above) that refers to “Miss Smith” four times and once in his 1900 interview. In every case the only woman Winchester could possibly be referring to is Hannah Dubois Smith Dibble. Granted, these are very late recollections about the same 1840s event, but Quinn’s theory that and Winchester came to Nauvoo and somehow became apprised of the secret plural marriage between Joseph Smith and Agnes Coolbrith Smith and then blurted out her name in the council meeting is an extreme interpretation of the evidence. Notwithstanding, Quinn affirms that it is “far more likely.”

Mary Elizabeth Rollins (9-10)

Perhaps the most problematic of all of Quinn's claims is his interpretation of the statement of Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner: “I know he [Joseph Smith] had six wives and I have known some of them from childhood up. I knew he had three children. They told me. I think two are living today but they are not known as his children as they go by other names.” Quinn writes:

Still another of these women (Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner Smith) told an audience of Mormon college students in 1905 that she personally knew three children who claimed Joseph Smith as their actual father, even though these children "go by other names." The three children who claimed Joseph Smith's paternity had to be adults when "they told me," probably after she

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91 Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, “Remarks” at Brigham Young University, April 14. 1905, vault MSS 363, p. 5
was included in a semi-official list of the Prophet's polygamous wives, as published in 1887 by Andrew Jenson…

Such a claim of paternity would occur only if each child's mother thought that Joseph Smith had impregnated her. DNA testing can disprove assumptions and speculations about paternity, but cannot disprove the basis of Mary Lightner Smith's 1905 claim: three already married women (besides herself) had borne a child they each assumed was produced by their literal relationship with the Prophet Joseph Smith, not by their legally recognized husbands with whom they were cohabiting. (9-10)

Quinn’s logic hinges upon the antecedent of the pronoun “they” in the statement: “They told me.” The only possibility he entertains is that “they” refers to the children themselves, apparently occurring in Utah after they were grown up. This scenario requires a number of assumptions. First, we must assume that if Joseph was their biological father, then their mothers could not have been cohabiting with their legal husband during the period of conception or paternity would not be known. Second, we must assume that their mothers admitted to the children in a convincing way that Joseph was their true father, thus disfranchising their legal fathers who had raised them. Third, we must assume that the three children were comfortable sharing with Mary Elizabeth that their mothers engaged in sexual polyandry with Joseph Smith, even though D&C 132 (canonized in 1876) condemns it and every known statement from Church members and leaders in the nineteenth century declares it immoral. Fourth, we must assume that three children learned of Mary Elizabeth’s sealing to Joseph Smith either by reading Andrew Jenson’s article or through other means. Fifth, we must assume that discussing Joseph’s polygamy was so important to the three children that they traveled to Lehi to talk to her about it or encountered her on some chance occasion. Mary Elizabeth did not circulate a great deal in her
later years and did not talk much about Nauvoo polygamy prior to the 1890s. In addition, we must assume that Mary Elizabeth would have openly admitted to Joseph Smith’s polyandrous sexuality in front of an audience of missionaries at BYU in 1905 despite its status as a transgression.

It seems there is a more plausible antecedent of “they” in Mary Elizabeth’s comments. Before mentioning “I knew he had three children,” she twice referred to Joseph Smith plural wives numbering them at six and saying she knew them growing up: “I know he had six wives and I have known some of them from childhood up.” Then she mentioned “I knew he had three children.” Within the context of the entire discourse it seems more probable that she was simply referring to some of the six wives who had three children. That is, the antecedent of “they” in “They told me” is the plural wives of Joseph Smith, not the three children. This could have easily occurred in Nauvoo where all the women were living in close proximity and would have born the last child prior to April of 1845.

A review of the entire discourse shows that nowhere does Mary Elizabeth’s speak about “already married women” (i.e. polyandrous spouses) who were sealed to the Prophet. Her comments referred to Joseph Smith’s plural “wives” generally without differentiating their ages, sealing dates, or legal marital status. It is unclear why any investigator would assume that any of her comments refer strictly of “already married” wives of the Prophet nor did Quinn explicate his unique view of her remarks. Notwithstanding, Quinn repeatedly refers to the statement as if it were evidence of children being born in sexual polyandry (11, 16).
Elvira Ann Cowles (11)

Regarding Elvira Annie Cowles, Quinn writes:

However, my first objection is that he [Brian Hales] seems to brush-off the significance of some of the evidence he has cited… Shortly before her own death, Phebe Louisa Welling wrote: "I heard my mother [Elvira Ann Cowles Holmes] testify that she was indeed the Prophet Joseph Smith's plural wife in life and lived with him as such during his lifetime." I see no ambiguity in that statement by a daughter who was 20 when her mother died in 1871. Furthermore, I find it difficult to believe that Elvira's 37-year-old widower-husband Jonathan stopped having sex with her only six months after their civil wedding, simply to accommodate the Prophet's sexual relations with her (which in June 1843 seemed likely to continue for many years). (11)

An examination of the available evidences regarding the relationship between Elvira Cowles, Jonathan Holmes, and Joseph Smith demonstrates several ambiguities and potential contradictions. That Quinn would ignore these concerns to definitively declare that sexual polyandry occurred is not surprising, but it might not be considered adequate scholarship.

On December 1, 1842, the Prophet performed the civil marriage for thirty-six-year-old Jonathan to twenty-nine-year-old Elvira in Nauvoo. Six months later on June 1, 1843 she was sealed to Joseph. Jonathan, a close friend of the Prophet, served as a pallbearer at the funeral. He joined the Mormon Battalion and Elvira traveled west with the Jedediah M. Grant company arriving in Salt Lake City October 2, 1847. They eventually reunited settling in Farmington where they raised their family of five daughters, three of whom survived to adulthood. At his death in 1880, Jonathan Holmes served as a member of the Davis Stake High Council.

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92 Elvira A C. Holmes, Affidavit, August 28, 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:78, 4:80, CHL
Phoebe Louisa, born the third child of Elvira and Jonathan in 1851 in Farmington, married Job Welling on December 21, 1868 in Salt Lake City. In 1982, an unidentified descendant of Job Welling compiled historical documents titling the collection: “The Ancestors of Marietta Holmes, Phoebe Louisa Holmes and Emma Lucinda Holmes, Daughters of Jonathan Harriman Holmes and Elvira Annie Cowles Smith.” It includes a section entitled: “Written by Phoebe Louisa Holmes Welling 2/9/38,” which would have been over a year before her June 30, 1939 death at eighty-eight. It reports: “I heard my mother testify that she was indeed the Prophet’s (Joseph Smith) plural wife in life and lived with him as such during his lifetime.” The phrase “lived with him” as a “plural wife” in nineteenth century parlance implies sexual activity. Unfortunately, no other details regarding the declaration are available, nor did any of the other children leave similar recollections.

It appears that all three individuals, Joseph, Elvira, and Jonathan, lived in Nauvoo during the year between Elvira’s sealing to Joseph in June 1843 and his death in June 1844. However, no specific evidence is available regarding the issue of sexual relations between them. Descendant researcher Meg Stout wrote:

> Elvira’s lack of children during this time [June 1, 1843 to June 27, 1844] indicates this sealing to Joseph was not physically consummated, despite Phoebe Holmes Welling’s 1939 history (remembered hearsay recorded almost 100 years later). Family tradition and the lack of children

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95 See, for example, Marietta Holmes Welling June 30, 1887 letter to Andrew Jenson concerning her mother, Elvira Ann Cowles Holmes, and her plural marriage to Joseph Smith. (Andrew Jenson Collection, MS 17956, bx 49, fd 16, document 6.).
also indicate that Jonathan didn’t consummate his marriage to Elvira until after Joseph’s death, as late as February 1845. Elvira's first child, Lucy, was born nine months later. Elvira's daughter, Marietta, would be born nine months after Jonathan returned from his Mormon Battalion service. Elvira continued to bear a child every two years thereafter until she was 43 years old.  

After the martyrdom, Jonathan apparently respected his wife’s sealing to Joseph Smith, standing proxy in the Nauvoo Temple as she was resealed to Joseph vicariously for eternity. Also, their decision to move west indicates a transfer of loyalty from Joseph as Church leader to Brigham Young and the Twelve.

Elvira died March 10, 1871, so Phoebe’s verbatim recollection must have been spoken by Elvira prior to that date and spanned at least sixty-six years. The family records that preserve her recollection contain no indication that she made a written record earlier that would have preserved her mother’s words closer to the time when they were spoken. Nor does it appear that any other relative or acquaintance left a record relating anything similar. Meg Stout further observed:

Phoebe finally recorded her version of the tale in the late 1930s. It was decades after Elvira related the story. Phoebe was old. And according to others in the Welling Family Association, Phoebe was rather addicted to painkillers by that point in her life. Remembering the explanation in a way that supported and exonerated her own polygamous experience would not be much of a stretch.

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97 Brown, Nauvoo Sealings, Adoptions, and Anointings, 284 note 305.

98 Meg Stout, email to the author, August 28, 2013. Used by permission.
On June 2, 1931, seven years before Phoebe made her report, William Wright, a Church member from southern Idaho who had been engaged to Phoebe’s relative, wrote a letter to the First Presidency containing a confusing but intriguing reference to the relationship between Joseph, Jonathan, and Elvira in Nauvoo. This excerpt was transcribed by Quinn in the 1980s and is found in his notes now housed at Yale University. The original letter apparently remains uncatalogued in the Church History Library:

I was well acquainted with two of Joseph’s wives, LaVina [Elvira] and Eliza [Snow or Partridge?]. I came to Utah in ’69, and rented LaVina Holmes farm. Before Joseph was shot, he asked Jonathan Holmes if he would marry and take care of LaVina, but that if LaVina wanted him to take care of her he would take her. He would fill that mission to please his Father in Heaven.¹⁰⁰

This statement is very late, secondhand, and somewhat garbled. It does not say whether Wright heard this claim of a protective marriage directly from Elvira, although it is implied and there is no other obvious source of the information. However, Wright does not remember Elvira’s name correctly creating concerns regarding its accuracy.

Despite the weaknesses, Wright describes the possibility of a “pretend” marriage between Jonathan and Elvira. Such a marriage to protect the Prophet was not completely outlandish. After his July 27, 1842 sealing to Sarah Ann Whitney, Joseph Smith asked Joseph C. Kingsbury, then unmarried, to enter what Kingsbury called “a pretend marriage” to conceal Joseph and

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⁹⁹ As of 2012, the library has re-numbered those boxes and re-assigned them to its only collection of Quinn’s papers, now cataloged as "Western Americana MSS S-2692." See 59 en4.
¹⁰⁰ William Wright, Letter to unidentified addressee but stamped as received in the First Presidency Office on June 2, 1931.
Sarah Ann’s relationship, which was performed on April 23, 1843. In Elvira’s case, an apparently legitimate civil marriage preceded the sealing by almost a year. There seems to be no reason why Jonathan and Elvira’s marriage would not have included sexual relations, but the lack of children during Joseph Smith’s lifetime coupled with Elvira's obvious fecundity afterwards is puzzling.

On August 28, 1869, Elvira Cowles signed an affidavit providing the only evidence of the date when she was sealed to the Prophet, June 1, 1843, nearly a year after her legal marriage. One possibility is that Elvira misremembered the date of her sealing to Joseph Smith. If she had been sealed to him in 1842, then possibly Joseph Smith asked Jonathan Holmes to marry Elvira about a year later to serve, like Joseph Kingsbury, as a “front husband” to shield the Prophet from suspicion should a pregnancy result. In that case, the marriage to Jonathan would have been legal but without connubial relations. This scenario would be more consistent with William Wright’s letter, but I stress that it is only conjecture and that chronological markers in the historical record seem to contradict it.

Regardless, Quinn emphasizes Phoebe Louisa Holmes Welling’s recollection that her mother “lived with” Joseph Smith as his “plural wife” as evidence of sexual polyandry between Elvira, Jonathan Holmes, and Joseph Smith. Quinn is apparently willing to accept a number of assumptions. First, the language in the statement constitutes a declaration of sexual relations between the Prophet and Elvira. Second, it is accurate and is not simply an exaggeration designed to justify Phoebe’s own polygamous relations. Third, concomitant sexual relations

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102 Elvira Ann Cowles Smith Holmes, Affidavit, August 28, 1869, in Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books 1:78. See Elvira Ann Cowles Holmes, Uncatalogued materials, in Andrew Jenson Collection, MS 17956, Box 49, fd. 16, docs. 6-7; see also Box 6, fd. 62.
with Jonathan occurred during Joseph Smith’s lifetime without pregnancy. Elvira’s child bearing chronology supports that the marriage to Jonathan was not consummated until after the Prophet’s death. Fourth, the participants were convinced of the correctness of sexual polyandry, a practice that would have been explosive from a morality perspective and otherwise unknown in their society, and intentionally engaged. Fifth, the trio could completely ignore Joseph Smith’s teachings written July 12, 1843, just weeks after the sealing, that sexual polyandry was adultery (D&C 132:41-42, 61-63). Sixth, in 1838, Phoebe was willing to portray her mother as engaging in polyandrous sexuality, a practice declared to be adultery in all known Church teachings.

Those willing to accept these assumptions might consider Phoebe’s recollection as supportive evidence for the existence of sexual polyandry in one of Joseph Smith's plural marriages. However, it would probably not be considered very strong evidence because it is based upon multiple assumptions and because important contradictory evidences, both historical and theological, are unaddressed.

"Lucy Meserve Smith Quotes George A. Smith Quoting Joseph Smith (11-13)

In defense of the position that all but one of Joseph Smith’s marriages were “time and eternity” sealings with sexuality, rather than sexless “eternity only” unions, Quinn quotes Lucy Meserve Smith, plural wife of George A. Smith. The bracketed text is added by Quinn, the curly braces are text omitted by Quinn, but found in the original document:

I told George A. what sister Emma had said. He related to me the circumstance of his calling on Joseph late one evening, and he was just taking a wash [--] and Joseph told him that one of his

wives had just been confined [for childbirth] and Emma was the Midwife (and he had been assisting her). He [George A.] told me this to prove to me that the women were married for time, as [i.e., because] Emma had told me that Joseph never taught any such thing [---she said that] they were only sealed for eternity [---] they were not to live with them and have children ...

Quinn writes that this statement is "very significant" (11):

…in view of Emma Smith's general hostility toward her husband's other wives, it's impossible to imagine her acting as 'the Midwife' for a woman whose relationship to him Emma knew about. Second, it's difficult to imagine that the Church President's wife would give implicit sanction to the pregnancy of an unmarried woman by serving as her midwife…. Therefore, Lucy Meserve Smith's account of what her husband learned directly from the Prophet must refer to a childbearing woman who was another man's legal wife. Unaware that this woman was also Joseph's polygamous wife, Emma would not object to acting as midwife, especially for one of her friends--as many of these already-married women were (13-14; emphasis in original).

In other words, Quinn asserts that the pregnant woman had a legal husband, but was sealed to and impregnated by Joseph Smith secretly. Emma believed that the civil husband fathered the baby otherwise she never would have consented to act as midwife. He further elaborates:

"Never reconciled to her husband's polygamous marriages, Emma Smith was the first to claim that they were all for ‘eternity only.’ Apostle George A. Smith reassured his plural wife in 1845

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104 Lucy Meserve Smith statement, 18 May 1892, photocopy of her holograph, MS 1322, fd. 9, bx 6, George A. Smith Family Papers, CHL. See also Meserve Smith, Lucy, Statement, Wilford Wood Collection of Church Historical Materials, Microfilm at CHL, MS 8617, Reel 8, Internal reference within collection—4-N-b-2. Concerning this quotation, Quinn implies that I was unaware of its existence: “This statement has been emphasized for thirty-one years in publications that Brian Hales has cited, but his own relevant articles have made no reference to it.” In fact, I encountered this quote in 2007 while personally researching in the Linda King Newell Collection at the Marriott Library, University of Utah. In my publications I chose to quote another report of the same episode, which coincidentally does not lend itself so easily to Quinn’s interpretation. See the discussion in the text below and Joseph Smith’s Polygamy: History and Theology, 1:295, 2:131.
that such a claim was merely an effort to deny the sexual reality of the Prophet's marriages to women other than his legal wife." (20)

This interpretation is problematic for several reasons. First, a second statement reporting the same event is available. An examination of the full text of both of the known accounts of this conversation fail to support Quinn’s extreme explanation. A fuller quotation of Quinn’s reference provides better context:

I worked for the Propet Joseph Smith's wife Emma Hale Smith Aug. to Sept. 1845. She bore testimony to me that Mormonism was true as it came forth from the servant of the Lord Joseph Smith, but said she the Twelve have made Bogus of it. As a matter of course I told George A. what sister Emma had said. He related to me the circumstance of his calling on Joseph late one evening and he was just taking a wash and Joseph told him that one of his wives had just been confined, and Emma was the Midwife and he had been assisting her. He told me this to prove to me that the women were married for time, as Emma had told me that Joseph never taught any such thing they were only sealed for eternity they were not to live with them and have children...105

The point of the Lucy’s statement was to show that even though Emma asserted that the plural sealings were only “for eternity,” George A. disclosed that Emma had helped deliver a child from one of Joseph’s plural wives and so she knew better. Quinn seems adamant that George A. Smith knew the parturient was one of Joseph Smith's plural wives, but Emma had been successfully deceived into thinking the pregnant woman was "another man's legal wife": "the Prophet must refer to a childbearing woman who was another man's legal wife" (13; emphasis in original). Another undated but signed version from Lucy Meserve Smith is even clearer:

105 Lucy Meserve Smith statement, 18 May 1892, photocopy of her holograph, MS 1322, fd. 9, bx 6, George A. Smith Family Papers, CHL
I worked for the Prophet Joseph Smith's wife Emma Hale Smith in Aug & Sept. 1845. […]

Sister Emma bore testimony to me that Mormonism was true as it came forth from the servant of the Lord Joseph Smith, but said she the Twelve have made bogus of it. She said they were living with their wives and raising children and Joseph never taught any such doctrine, they were only sealed to them for eternity. Said I[,] Sister Emma I know nothing about it… Apostle George A. Smith… said to me… Emma knows better. He then related to me the circumstance of calling on the Prophet one evening about 11, o clock, and he was out on the porch with a basin of water washing his hands, I said to him what is up, said Joseph[,] one of my wives has just been confined and Emma was midwife and I have been assisting her. He said she had granted a no. of women for him.¹⁰⁶

This second version further demonstrates that George A. Smith’s comments were designed to show Emma knew that some of the sealings were for “time and eternity” and therefore included sexual relations. How did she know? Because she had delivered a baby from a polygamous union. Whose? Joseph’s. It plainly states that Emma had “granted a no. of women for him [Joseph].”

Available evidence shows that Emma tried desperately to accept plural marriage and participated in four plural marriages including those of Joseph to Sarah and Marie Lawrence, whom she allowed to live in the Mansion indefinitely. Lucy Walker recalled that on at least one occasion, Emma “kept guard at the door to prevent disinterested persons from intruding when these ladies [Joseph’s plural wives] were in the house.”¹⁰⁷ William Clayton remembered that regarding

¹⁰⁷ Lucy Walker, qtd. in Andrew Jenson, “Plural Marriage,” 230.
several of Joseph's plural wives, Emma "generally treated them very kindly." That Emma might have been willing to participate is very possible, especially during the fall of 1843 when she allowed Joseph to marry Malissa Lott and participated as the matron in the expanding temple ordinance work. The second account above states that Emma “granted” women to Joseph, dating Emma’s midwifery to after May of 1843. Her willingness to serve as a midwife would likely have extended right up to the martyrdom when Joseph and Emma living in relative tranquility and Joseph married no new plural wives.

Moreover, believing that Emma might have been completely naïve of facts that were plainly disclosed to George A. Smith (and apparently obvious to Quinn a hundred and fifty years later) seems less probable. Using his remarkable researching skills, he sleuths out that this delivery could have only occurred between October 22, 1843, and May 9, 1844, (13) corresponding to conception dates between January 30, and August 17, 1843. Since Emma “granted” Joseph four wives in May 1843 (Emily and Eliza Partridge and Maria and Sarah Lawrence), the accounts line do not conflict. It is possible that Emma was the midwife for one of Joseph's non-polyandrous wives, like Olive Frost, who delivered a child. Compton lists the Olive Frost plural marriage as occurring in the "summer 1843."

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108 William Clayton, Affidavit, February 16, 1874.
109 Malissa Lott, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), pages 97, 100, questions 102, 156.
111 Joseph E. Robinson Autobiography, recounting October 26, 1902, Ms 7866. See also James Whitehead, interview conducted by Joseph Smith III, April 20, 1885. Original in possession of John Hajicek
112 Todd Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, 6. While no offspring are listed from other non-polyandrous brides, several were married during this period including Almera Johnson (April 1843) and Lucy Walker (May 1, 1843), the Partridge sisters and Lawrence sisters.
Regarding “eternity only” sealings, Emma may have known of and accepted these non-sexual unions several months prior to learning that priesthood sealings could also be for “time and eternity.” Andrew Jenson wrote that Ruth Vose Sayers was “sealed to the Prophet in Emma Smith’s presence” for “eternity only” and Ruth recalled that occurred in “February 1843.”

The evidence is insufficient to draw strict conclusions and Sayer’s chronology may be error (see below). Regardless, most authors have written, for example, that Sarah Kingsley’s 1841-1842 sealing to Joseph Smith was without Emma’s knowledge. Another interpretation is that Emma knew of the sealing and even facilitated it because Sarah’s husband was a non-member and her sealing to Joseph was for “eternity only.” Dogmatic declarations either way are unwarranted by the limited evidences available.

Also, there is no question Emma was aware of sexual relations in some of the four plural marriages that she approved. The night after he gave Emily Partridge to Joseph as a plural wife, Emily stayed with the Prophet. When asked where Emma slept that evening, Emily replied: “She was in her room I suppose. I don’t know where she was but that is where I suppose she was… She was there in her room.” Emily also testified concerning Emma’s immediately reaction: “She [Emma] consented to [the marriage] at the time… [then] she was bitter after

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113 See Lucy Meserve Smith, handwritten statement dated May 18, 1892, copy of holograph in Linda King Newell Collection, Marriott Library, University of Utah.
114 Ruth Vose Sayers, Draft biographical sketch,” Document 5, Andrew Jenson Papers (ca. 1871-1942), Box 49, fd. 16, pp. 1-2. Jenson apparently used the documents in these folders to compile his 1887 Historical Record article, “Plural Marriage.” This sealing is dated “February A.D. 1843” in Ruth Vose Sayers’s Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books, May 1, 1869, 1:9. However, the affidavit states that Hyrum Smith performed the sealing, which is unlikely because Hyrum did not accept plural marriage until May 1843.
115 Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:9. This affidavit is problematic because Hyrum was listed as performing the sealing but he did not accept plural marriage until May. See discussion below.
116 Emily Partridge, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), page 363-64, questions 310-13
117 Emily Partridge, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), page 364, questions 313-16.
that… after the next day you might say that she was bitter.” Emily also noted that subsequently, Emma never again allowed her husband to sleep with Emily: “No sir, never after that [first night]. She turned against us after that… Emma knew that we were married to him, but she never allowed us to live with him.”

**Zina Huntington (14-15)**

When discussing the plural marriage of Zina Huntington, which was performed by Zina's brother, Dimick, Quinn begins: "…it's necessary to respond to an anachronism that Hales has publicly identified… Hales has not recognized that the error was actually the conventional dating of Zina's polygamous marriage as 1841, which was in her 1869 affidavit [October 27, 1841] and its many repetitions thereafter" (13-14; emphasis in original).

Quinn supports the theory that Zina was sealed to the Prophet in 1840 by referencing her 1898 declaration: "When Brigham Young returned from England, he repeated the ceremony for time and eternity" (14). The timetable is problematic because Brigham arrived in Nauvoo from England in July 1841 and theoretically could have performed the October 27, 1841 sealing. To further validate his 1840 dating scheme, Quinn cites evidence from "'Historian's Private Journal' (one volume, 1858-78), entries after 1 July 1866, LDS Church History Library," which lists an 1840 date for Zina's sealing to the Prophet, although the original source of the information

118 Emily Partridge, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), page 365-66, questions 346-51.
119 Emily D. P. Young, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), pages 366, 384, questions 363, 747.
120 Todd Compton observed: “If Zina married Joseph soon after her marriage to [her legal husband Henry] Jacobs (in March 1841), this has important implications for the history of Nauvoo polygamy. She might have married Joseph before Louisa Beaman (on April 5), making her Joseph’s first wife in the Nauvoo period.” (Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997, 659.)
recorded there is not provided (14). Quinn then writes that "obviously" Zina Huntington was sealed to Joseph Smith in 1840: "Someone obviously decided that the easiest way to avoid confusion was to emphasize the month and day of the original ceremonies performed in 1840 by two rank-and-file Mormons, yet assign them to the year (1841) when the ceremonies were solemnized by apostolic authority" (15).

Quinn also defends an 1840 sealing date by disputing the timing of the Prophet’s sealing to a different plural wife, Louisa Beaman, who is traditionally listed as his first Nauvoo polygamist marriage. He quotes RLDS missionary John W. Wight 1890’s statement: "Joseph B. Noble ... claims to have sealed Joseph Smith and Louisa Beaman, but is not sure whether it was in 1840, 41 or 42” (15). Quinn also references the Sunday, December 19, 1880, journal entry from Charles L. Walker: “Br Nobles made a few remarks on the celestial order of marriage, He being the man who sealed Louisa Beaman to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1840 under his instructions.”

Quinn’s chronology requires him to dismiss Joseph B. Noble June 26, 1869 affidavits that affirms that “…on the fifth day of April A.D. 1841, At the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, he married or sealed Louisa Beaman, to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints, according to the order of Celestial Marriage revealed to the Said Joseph Smith.” Another affidavit signed that same day gave additional details: "In the fall of the year A.D. 1840 Joseph Smith, taught him the principle of Celestial marriage or a 'plurality of wives’, and that the said Joseph Smith declared that he had received a Revelation

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124 Joseph B. Noble in Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:3, CHL.
from God on the subject, and that the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, (Joseph Smith) to move forward in the said order of marriage.”¹²⁵ In an additional document, Franklin D. Richards recorded Nobles famous quotation regarding Louisa’s disguise for the sealing – a coat and hat – that also specifies 1841: “he performed the first sealing ceremony in this Dispensation in which he united Sister Louisa Beman to the Prop[h]et Joseph in May—I think the 5th day in 1841 during the evening under an Elm tree in Nauvoo. The Bride disguised in a coat and hat.”¹²⁶

Weighing the evidence, Quinn concludes that the sealing between Louisa Beaman and Joseph Smith occurred in 1840 and therefore supports and 1840 sealing date for the Prophet and Zina Huntington¹²⁷ (14, 15, 77fn79).

Quinn’s theory of 1840 sealings is problematic.¹²⁸ He employs the same problematic logic in dating Zina Huntington’s sealing as he did with Louisa Beaman, by discounting evidence that is

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¹²⁵ Joseph B. Noble in Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:38, CHL.
¹²⁶ Quoted in Franklin D. Richards Journal, January 22, 1869, MS 1215, LDS CHL. Chapter seven discussed the allegation that Lucinda Pendleton Morgan Harris was sealed to Joseph Smith in 1838. However, this assessment assumes that her sealing, if it ever occurred, was Louisa’s, in 1842 or later.
¹²⁷ Apparently to further support his 1840 theory, Quinn criticizes: “Nonetheless, Hales has known for years that Emily and Eliza Partridge erroneously claimed May 11th as the date when Joseph Smith allowed Emma Smith to think she was witnessing their wedding ceremonies, which had actually occurred the previous March…” (78fn79) Quinn then spends a full single-spaced page in his endnotes citing ten different sources seeking to document the existence of these two 1843 sealing dates for the Partridge sisters. It seems to be a straw man argument because I never state there was only one sealing date. Anyone who has investigated the topic (including me) is well aware of the dynamics of the sealings of the Partridge sisters to Joseph Smith, as they have been documented by numerous authors. In addition, the lengthy discussion has little to do with the dating of Louisa Beaman’s sealing to Joseph Smith, the subject of the footnoted sentence, which is itself tangential to the original discussion of Zina Huntington.
¹²⁸ Quinn’s chronology also contradicts the historical reconstruction of authors Martha Sonntag Bradley and Mary Brown Firmage Woodward in their book *Four Zinas: A Story of Mothers and Daughters on the Mormon Frontier* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000): “Joseph pressed Zina for an answer to his marriage proposal on at least three occasions in 1840, but she avoided answering him. Weighing against such a proposal was her affection for the prophet’s first wife, Emma, her respect for traditional Christian monogamy, the strangeness of this new matrimonial system, and the secrecy it would require” (p. 108). This citation is based upon a family tradition as recalled by Mary Brown Firmage Woodward, long time historian of the Zina Huntington family organization. Reportedly, Zina Diantha Huntington told her daughter Zina Presendia Young, who in turn informed her daughter Zina Card, who passed the information along to her own daughter Mary Brown. Besides the family tradition, Martha Bradley reports
more voluminous and generally considered more reliable than that which he cites. Foremost among the documents he dismisses is a hand signed affidavit from Zina herself giving an exact date:

Territory of Utah

S.S.

County of Salt Lake

Be it remembered that on this first day of May A.D. eighteen sixty nine before me Elias Smith Probate Judge for Said County personally appeared, Zina Diantha Huntington who was by me Sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath Saith, that on the twenty-Seventh day of October A.D. 1841, at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by Dimick B. Huntington, a High Priest in Said Church, according to the laws of the same; regulating marriage; In the presence of Fanny Maria Huntington.

that she viewed a single-page typescript of an “autobiography,” then in Mary Brown Firmage Woodward's possession. (Email correspondence to the author from Martha Bradley, March 27, 2008.) Details regarding when it was written, by whom, and other credibility issues, are unavailable. Bradley reported that it corroborated the tradition as cited in Four Zinas. Apparently the document was misplaced prior to the files being donated to the Harold B. Lee Library at BYU. Its current whereabouts are unknown. Even though multiple authors have repeated the Woodward/Bradley account, several observations reveal important problems. (See George D. Smith, Nauvoo Polygamy: “... but we called it celestial marriage”, Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008, 74; “The Forgotten Story of Nauvoo Celestial Marriage," Journal of Mormon History, 36 (Fall 2010) 4:145 and fn47; Todd Compton, In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997, 79-80, 658.)

For example, in an 1898 interview, Zina insisted that Joseph never directly discussed plural marriage with her prior to her October 27, 1841 sealing. Zina explained: “My brother Dimick told me what Joseph had told him” regarding plural marriage, and asserted: “Joseph did not come until afterwards. . . . The Lord had revealed to Joseph Smith that he was to marry me. I received it from Joseph through my brother Dimick.” (Zina D. H. Young, Interviewed by John W. Wight, October 1, 1898, “Evidence from Zina D. Huntington-Young," Saints’ Herald 52, no. 2, January 11, 1905): 28–30. Also in J. D. Stead, Doctrines and Dogmas of Brighamism Exposed, [Lamoni, Iowa: RLDS Church, 1911, 212-14.) Zina’s firsthand declaration directly contradicts the idea that Joseph proposed to her three times prior to their 1841 sealing. The current unavailability of any validating manuscript documentation and our inability to further analyze the referenced document in order to address credibility issues support that this family tradition should be quoted with caution.
Zina D. H. Young

Subscribed and Sworn to by
the Said Zina D. H. Young, the
day and year first above written

E. Smith
Probate Judge\textsuperscript{129}

Three other eyewitnesses signed similar affidavits affirming 1841, one from Dimick Huntington,\textsuperscript{130} a second from Fanny Huntington,\textsuperscript{131} and a third from Presendia Huntington declaring her sealing was in 1841 (December 11).\textsuperscript{132}

In summary, Quinn dismisses the sources quoted above corroborating and 1841 date, instead citing a second or third hand entry in the "Historian's Private Journal" that provides information from an unknown source stating 1840, telling his audience that his interpretation is “obvious.” He then concludes: “Born in January 1821, 19-year-old Zina Diantha Huntington became Joseph Smith's plural wife more than four months before her civil marriage to Henry Jacobs on 7 March 1841… Thus, all the children to whom Zina gave birth before March 1845 could be regarded as Joseph's offspring” (15). The specific chronology of the sealing between Zina Huntington and Joseph Smith is not that critical and Quinn is entitled to his opinion. However, this might constitute another example of drawing an extreme conclusion from ambiguous evidences while simultaneously dismissing more reliable contradictory documentation.

\textsuperscript{129} Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit books, 1:5
\textsuperscript{130} Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books 1:19.
\textsuperscript{131} Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books 1:21.
\textsuperscript{132} Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books 1:7.
Polyandrous children? (15-16)

Quinn also suggests that four children were fathered by Joseph Smith with his polyandrous wives:

First was Zebulon W. Jacobs on 2 January 1842, then Orson W. Hyde on 9 November 1843, then Josephine R. Lyon on 8 February 1844, and Florentine M. Lightner on 23 March 1844. Because of premature death, only two of those (Zebulon W. Jacobs and Josephine R. Lyon) could have been among Joseph Smith's three polygamous children mentioned by Mary Lightner Smith in 1905 ("they told me"). In the 1840s, the publicly identified fathers of the above four were devout Elder Henry Jacobs, Apostle Orson Hyde, excommunicated Windsor P. Lyon, and friendly non-Mormon Adam Lightner. Again, even if DNA analysis shows the biological father to be the legal father, that does not exclude these children from the 1840s assumptions about Joseph's paternity— as restated by various people, including Mary Lightner in 1905... (15-16).

To his credit, Quinn acknowledges he is promoting a "revisionist chronology," but he continues to refer the Mary Elizabeth Lightner’s statement about “two or three children” as referring to offspring of polyandrous husbands, a position that is unfounded.

In addition Quinn provides no credible documentation for the claims, only the observation that the women were sealed to the Prophet and they bore a child afterwards. Regarding Zebulon Jacobs, genetic testing demonstrates Joseph Smith could not be the father.133 No evidence connects the Prophet with Orson Washington Hyde who was conceived approximately February 7, 1843, just two months after Orson Hyde's December 7, 1842 return from his mission to Palestine. Marinda Johnson Hyde had no children while Orson was away. Josephine Lyon

probably was Joseph Smith's biological daughter, but her mother, Sylvia Lyon had separated from Windsor Lyon (which curtailed conjugality with him) after his November 19, 1842 excommunication and Joseph was sealed to her after that date (discussed below). Florentine M. Lightner's mother, Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, lived fifteen miles upstream from Nauvoo in Pontoosuc on July 1, 1842, the approximate date of conception. Nothing in Mary Elizabeth's numerous writings supports a sexual relationship with Joseph Smith so including Florentine is pure speculation. The chart below summarizes all known allegations of paternity against Joseph Smith that I have located.

**Sylvia Sessions (16-18)**

In a section added to his “final response,” Quinn champions a view regarding sexual polyandry between Sylvia Sessions and her legal husband Windsor Lyon and Joseph Smith. Quinn affirms:

> The only real evidence that Hales can produce [to support a separation between Sylvia and Windsor before her sealing to Joseph Smith] is this: “Josephine Lyon's 1915 statement also implies that the excommunication invalidated her [mother's] marriage to Windsor, allowing her [Sylvia] to be legitimately sealed to Joseph Smith and bare a child with him. Sylvia told Josephine that she was ‘sealed to the Prophet at the time that her husband Mr. Lyon was out of fellowship with the Church.’” … No contemporary document nor reminiscence demonstrates that Sylvia perceived that her legal marriage was nullified during 1842-44 (16-17).

This statement is inaccurate. In 1886 and 1887, independent historian Andrew Jenson interviewed several of Joseph Smith plural wives and other Nauvoo polygamists. His handwritten notes refer to Sylvia as “formerly the wife of Windsor Lyons." He also penned:

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134 Andrew Jenson Papers, MS 17956, CHL, box 49, folder 16.
### A. Probable Children of Joseph Smith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Josephine Lyon</td>
<td>Sylvia Lyon</td>
<td>February 6, 1844</td>
<td>Mother's declaration</td>
<td>High probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. &quot;child&quot;</td>
<td>Olive Gray Frost</td>
<td>Unknown; sealing occurred in summer of 1843</td>
<td>Joseph E. Robinson; &quot;Church Historiographer.&quot; October 28, 1852.</td>
<td>During the afternoon I called on Aunt Lizzie... She knew Joseph Smith had more than two wives. Sarah, Mary, and Olive Frost [and] had a child by him and that both died.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. Eighteen Poorly Documented Allegations of Possible Paternity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Orrin L. Smith</td>
<td>Fanny Alger (allegedly)</td>
<td>1817?</td>
<td>&quot;tradition&quot; 1</td>
<td>Genetic testing demonstrates that Joseph Smith could not be the father. The Smith-Alger plural marriage occurred (probability) in 1835; and if she was ever pregnant, it was after the marriage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mosiah Lyman Hancock</td>
<td>Clarissa Reed Hancock</td>
<td>April 9, 1834</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Genetic testing demonstrates that Joseph Smith could not be the father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. John Reed Hancock</td>
<td>Morriett Carter</td>
<td>April 19, 1841</td>
<td>Family tradition</td>
<td>Genetic testing demonstrates that Joseph Smith could not be the father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Oliver Norman Baull</td>
<td>Prescenda Huntington Baull</td>
<td>January 31, 1840</td>
<td>Mary Etta V. Smith’s statement</td>
<td>Genetic testing demonstrates that Joseph Smith could not be the father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. John Hiram Baull</td>
<td>Prescenda Huntington Baull</td>
<td>July 13, 1842</td>
<td>Family tradition</td>
<td>Genetic testing demonstrates that Joseph Smith could not be the father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Don Alonso Smith</td>
<td>Lucinda Pendleton</td>
<td>August 29, 1840</td>
<td>William Hall statement</td>
<td>Genetic testing demonstrates that Joseph Smith could not be the father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Zelubon Jacobs</td>
<td>Zim Huntington Jacobs</td>
<td>January 3, 1842</td>
<td>William Hall statement</td>
<td>Genetic testing demonstrates that Joseph Smith could not be the father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Hannah Ann Dibble</td>
<td>Hannah Ann Dibble</td>
<td>September 7, 1842</td>
<td>Benjamin Winchester</td>
<td>Winchester’s described chronology contradicts the possibility that Joseph Smith was the father: Hannah Ann Dibble was born eleven months after her mother wed Philip Dibble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Loren Walker Dibble</td>
<td>Loren Walker Dibble</td>
<td>May 29, 1844</td>
<td>John Hyde</td>
<td>Evidence of a plural marriage or sexual relationship between Joseph Smith and Hannah Dibble are problematic. John Hyde’s additional claims concerning Loren Walker Dibble are contradicted by numerous evidences. However, Joseph Smith III recalled that a son of Hannah was “shown after father’s death as his.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. George Algemon Lightner</td>
<td>Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner</td>
<td>March 22, 1842</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Joseph and Mary Elizabeth Rollins were sealed in February 1842, after George Algemon’s conception. No evidence of sexual relations in their polyandrous relationship has been located.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Florentina Mathias Lightner</td>
<td>Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner</td>
<td>March 23, 1844</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner was living in Farmington, fifty miles east of Nauvoo, when Florence was conceived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Onsan Washington Hyde</td>
<td>Morrisa Johnson Hyde</td>
<td>November 9, 1845</td>
<td>Fawn Brodie’s speculation</td>
<td>Mary Washington Hyde was living in Farmington, fifty miles east of Nauvoo, when Florence was conceived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Frank Henry Hyde</td>
<td>Fawn Brodie’s speculation</td>
<td>January 23, 1846</td>
<td>Birth certificate and in his obituary would preclude Joseph Smith as the father.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Josephine Henry or Hendry</td>
<td>Margaret Creighan</td>
<td>July 8, 1844</td>
<td>Rumor 2</td>
<td>Chronology in available historical documents shows that Margaret became pregnant before the couple arrived in Nauvoo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Joseph Albert Smith</td>
<td>Esther Dutschke</td>
<td>Sep 21, 1846</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Documentation supports an “eternity only” sealing to the Prophet. Other than observations, no supportive evidence has been found. Legal husband’s name was Albert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Mononi J. Wright</td>
<td>Mary Ann Fred Pratt</td>
<td>December 7, 1847</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Genetic testing demonstrates that Joseph Smith could not be the father and verifies Parley P. Pratt as the biological father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Carolyn Delight</td>
<td>Lucretia Vermillion</td>
<td>May 18, 1847</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Addition made to Ugo Perego. I have been unable to find additional information about Carolyn or her mother.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Probably, Joseph E. Robinson’s aunt-in-law, Mary Elizabeth Green Harris (1847-1911).
3 Although Orrin Smith is “regarded by some as a possible child of Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger,” genetic testing establishes that Joseph could not have been the father. Ugo A. Perego, Natalie M. Myres, and Scott R. Woodward, “Reconstructing the Y-Chromosome of Joseph Smith: Genealogical Extensions.”
8 Stanley S. Ivins Collection, Notebook 4, p. 63.
9 Ugo A. Perego, email to Brian Hale, December 6, 2011.
11 See Chapter 12.
13 Researcher Gregory L. Smith noted: “One bit of evidence often overlooked on potential children is Mary Elizabeth Rollins’ remark that I knew he had three children. They told me. (Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, ‘Remarks,’ given at BYU 14 April 1905, typescript BYU.) It would seem to me that this poses a long way to rule out her children as Joseph’s progeny—he obviously saw nothing wrong with Joseph having children, was before a sympathetic audience, and seemed keen to tell what she knew. If they had been Joseph’s children, you’d think she’d have been proud of it and told them. To seem to be the best she can do—she’s heard about some (by rumor) but knows nothing more detailed.” Gregory L. Smith, email to Brian C. Hale, October 19, 2009.
14 Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, 345 note 464.
16 See chapter 12.
17 Esther Dutcher Smith did not conceive any children while her legal husband, Albert Smith, was on his mission between September 12, 1842, and August 22, 1843. Joseph Albert Smith was conceived about four months after his return (on approximately December 29, 1843). See David L. Bigler, transcriber, “Journal of Albert Smith, 1840-1845,” pp. 2-3, 9, 17 holograph at LDS Church History Library; copy of transcription in my possession.
“Sessions, Sylvia Porter, wife of Winsor [sic] Palmer Lyon, was born July 31, 1818, in Bethel, Oxford Co, Maine, the daughter of [blank] Sessions. Sister of Perrigrine Sessions Became a convert to ‘Mormonism’ and was married to Mr. Lyons-When he left the Church she was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith.”

Hence, three documents support a physical separation or effectual divorce between Windsor and Sylvia, two of them placing it after his excommunication. In contrast, no researcher has produced evidence to show that Sylvia Sessions cohabited with Joseph Smith and Windsor Lyon in sexual polyandry at anytime.

Todd Compton et al. affirm that Joseph Smith was sealed to Sylvia on February 8, 1842. He bases his conclusion upon a document found in the affidavit collection accumulated by Apostle Joseph F. Smith in 1869. It reads:

Territory of Utah

SS.

County of Salt Lake

Be it remembered that on this [blank] day of [blank] A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack a Notary Public in and for Said County Sylvia Lyon [sic], who was by me sworn in due form of law and upon her oath saith that on the eighth day of February A.D. 1842, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois she was married or sealed to President Joseph Smith by [blank] in the presence of [blank].

Compton also acknowledges the document is “unfinished” (not specifically “unsigned”) in a chapter endnote, but in the text of In Sacred Loneliness, he utilizes the date without raising any

135 Biographical Information on Windsor and Sylvia Lyon, undated sheet in Andrew Jenson Collection, MS 17956, Box 10, Folder 81, CHL.
136 Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:60, MS 3423, CH; bold mine.
questions about its reliability. A closer look at the notebooks containing the document shows that a second version exists, apparently written at the same time. It contains similar wording and is also is unsigned but gives the year as 1843 for Sylvia’s sealing to the Prophet:

Clearly neither document is more reliable than the other and reconstructions like Compton’s that preferentially quote one while ignoring the other are problematic.

Quinn cites additional evidence to support the position that the sealing between Joseph and Sylvia occurred on February 8, 1842:

…there is crucial evidence in support of 8 February 1842 as the date when Joseph Smith married Sylvia in polygamy/polyandry. Almost exactly a month later, she served as a witness for the

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138 Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 4:62, MS 3423, CHL
sealing of her already-married mother Patty Bartlett Sessions (age 47) to him… Sylvia's presence as a witness to the polygamous/polyandrous ceremony uniting her mother to Joseph Smith--while her father David Sessions still cohabited with her mother --was consistent with Sylvia as the Prophet's polyandrous wife before March 1842 (17-18).

While Sylvia’s presence at her mother’s sealing would have been “consistent with” her having been married to Joseph at that time, when contextualized, it is hardly “crucial” or conclusive. At least sixteen non-polygamists, besides Sylvia Sessions, can be identified as observing or participating in one of Joseph Smith’s plural sealings, without themselves being a polygamist. The size of this group is even more impressive when researchers consider the small number of reliable references that name the witnesses who were present. Included are James Adams, Joseph B. Noble, Dimick B. Huntington, Brigham Young, Willard Richards, and Newel K. Whitney who all performed plural marriage ceremonies prior to becoming polygamists themselves.139 In the latter half of 1841, Dimick Huntington’s wife, Fanny, witnessed two separate polygamous ceremonies although she was not a plural wife and Dimick did not marry pluraly during the Prophet’s lifetime.140 Two years later, Cornelius and Permelia Lott were present at the sealing of their daughter to the Prophet, but Cornelius would not become a polygamist until 1846.141 Malissa’s unmarried brother Joseph (b. 1834) and sister Amanda (b.

139 All of the men listed performed plural marriages for Joseph Smith and perhaps others. See Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, 59, 81, 122, 179, 213, 298, 348, for marriage performance dates and sealer identities. For the dates on which the sealers themselves became polygamists, see George D. Smith, Nauvoo Polygamy, 574-656, and Bergera, “Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-1844,” 1-74.
140 Fanny Maria Allen Huntington, Affidavits, both dated May 1, 1869, in Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books, 1:5, 7, 19.
141 Cornelius and Permelia were sealed for time and eternity on the same day (September 20, 1843) that Joseph Smith was sealed to Malissa. Cornelius P. Lott, Family Bible, MS 3373. Cornelius was sealed to four plural wives in the Nauvoo Temple. Lisle G Brown, Nauvoo Sealings, Adoptions, and Anointings: A Comprehensive Register of Persons Receiving LDS Temple Ordinances, 1841-1846, 187-88.
1836) also attended the ceremony. At least five other non-polygamists witnessed plural sealings in Nauvoo: Benjamin F. Johnson, Elizabeth Ann Smith Whitney, Sarah Godshall Phillips, Julia Stone, and Hettie Stone. Hence, Quinn’s observation that Sylvia viewed her own mother’s sealing on March 9, 1842 supports that she was a polygamy insider at that time, but not that she was a plural wife of the Prophet.

The chart below summarizes the available evidence regarding this issue. Proponents of sexual polyandry in the relationship between Joseph Smith and Sylvia Sessions (like Quinn) would benefit by identifying more credible supportive evidence.

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142 Malissa Lott, Deposition, Temple Lot Transcript, respondent’s testimony (part 3), p. 100, question 150.
143 These assertions appears in the Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books as follows: Benjamin F. Johnson, March 4, 1870, 2:3-9, 3:3-9; Elizabeth Ann Smith Whitney, August 30, 1869, 1:72, 4:74; and Sarah Godshall Phillips, Julia Stone, and Hettie Stone. See also Joseph Fielding Smith, Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage, 58.
### Evidence supporting early 1842 sexual polyandry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsigned 1869 statement states that &quot;Sylvia Lyon [sic]… Saith that on the eighth day of February A.D. 1842, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois She was married or Sealed to President Joseph Smith&quot;</td>
<td>Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:60, MS 3423, CHL.</td>
<td>Another nearly identical unsigned statement in book 4, page 62 give 1843 as the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia was present for Patty's sealing to Joseph Smith on March 9, 1842</td>
<td>Patty Bartlett Sessions, copy of undated holograph in CHL, MS 3423.</td>
<td>At least sixteen non-polygamists, besides Sylvia Sessions, can be identified in the very limited available documents as observing or participating in Nauvoo plural marriages: Cornelius Lott, Permelia Lott, Joseph Lott, Amanda Lott, Elizabeth Ann Smith Whitney, Sarah Godshall Phillips, Julia Stone, Hettie Stone, Fanny Huntington, Dimick B. Huntington, James Adams, Joseph B. Noble, Brigham Young, Willard Richards, Newel K. Whitney, and Benjamin F. Johnson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia also stated to Josephine &quot;that she was sealed to the Prophet about the same time that Zina D. Huntingdon and Eliza R. Snow were thus sealed.&quot;</td>
<td>Josephine Lyons Fisher Statement, MS 3423, CHL.</td>
<td>Zina was sealed to the Prophet on October 27, 1841 and Eliza, June 29, 1842. However, it is unlikely that Sylvia chose to compare her plural marriage to that of Eliza and Zina because their sealing dates were close to hers because Church members in 1882 were unaware of the chronology of the Prophet's plural marriage sealings in Nauvoo, which were not published until five years later. More likely Eliza and Zina were chosen for comparison because they were unarguably the most publicly recognized of Joseph Smith's plural wives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Evidence of a separation or religious divorce between Sylvia and Windsor at his excommunication (November 19, 1842) and prior to her sealing to Joseph Smith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Josephine reported Sylvia saying she had: &quot;…been sealed to the Prophet at the time that her husband Mr. Lyon had was out of fellowship with the Church&quot;</td>
<td>Affidavit of Josephine R. Fisher, February 24, 1915, CHL, Ms 3423, folder 1, images 48-49</td>
<td>Possible to dismiss as cover-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Jenson referred to Sylvia a &quot;formerly the wife of Windsor Lyons.&quot;</td>
<td>Andrew Jenson Papers, MS 17956, CHL, box 49, folder 16.</td>
<td>Possible to dismiss as cover-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Jenson recorded: &quot;Sessions, Sylvia Porter, wife of Winsor [sic] Palmer Lyon… was married to Mr. Lyons When he left the Church she was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith.&quot;</td>
<td>Biographical Information on Windsor and Sylvia Lyon, undated sheet in Andrew Jenson Collection, MS 17956, Box 10, Folder 81,CHL.</td>
<td>Possible to dismiss as cover-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsigned 1869 statement states that &quot;Sylvia Lyon [sic]… Saith that on the eighth day of February A.D. 1843, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois She was married or Sealed to President Joseph Smith&quot;</td>
<td>Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 4:62, MS 3423, CHL.</td>
<td>Another nearly identical unsigned statement in book 1, page 60 give 1842 as the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual polyandry is condemned in D&amp;C 132:41-42, 61-61 and was condemned by numerous leaders thereafter.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Most authors ignore Joseph Smith's teachings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No journal entries place Sylvia and Windsor together after his November 19th, 1842 excommunication. For example, Emily Partridge wrote concerning her late 1843 change of domicile: &quot;My sister Eliza found a home with the family of Brother Joseph Coolidge, and I went to live with Sister Sylvia Lyons.&quot; On Saturday April 15th, 1843, Eliza R. Snow recorded a visit to &quot;Mr. Lyon's&quot;: &quot;Spent a very interesting and agreeable afternoon at Mr. Lyon's present L[orenzo], Mrs. Scovill, Miss Geroot, &amp;c.&quot; On September 18th, William Clayton recorded: &quot;Joseph and I rode out to borrow money, drank wine at Sister Lyons. P.M. I got $50 of Sister Lyons and paid it to D.D. Yeasley.&quot; On December 20, 1844, Willard Richards journalized: &quot;I went out with her [Jennetta] as far as Mr Lyons where we called and drank a glass of wine [and] were very kindly entertained by Mrs. Lyon.&quot;</td>
<td>Emily Dow Partridge Young, Autobiography, typescript, HBLL, April 7, 1884. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, &quot;Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal,&quot; Brigham Young University Studies 15 (Summer 1975) 4: 404. George D. Smith, ed. An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985. 120. Willard Richards Journal for date, CHL.</td>
<td>Inconclusive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mary Heron (21-26)

Quinn spends four and a half pages discussing Mary Heron Snider. Her story begins with charges of adultery against Joseph Ellis Johnson with a woman named Hannah Goddard who had been previously sealed to Lorenzo Snow in a marriage that was likely unconsummated. Goddard became pregnant by Joseph Ellis Johnson and the transgression was addressed in a priesthood council presided over by Brigham Young in 1850. Secretary Kelly recorded Johnson’s explanatory comments that make it clear he was not attempting to justify his conduct:

I never heard any conversation to say it was right to go to bed to a woman if not found out – I was aware the thing was wrong. – had been with – he sd. He was familiar with the first frigging [slang for sexual relations] – that was done in his house with his mother in law—by Joseph. 144

While Secretary Kelly was surprised by the statement, none of the leaders present apparently voiced any concern. Unfortunately, no additional evidence has been found to provide context for this reported relationship between Joseph Smith and Mary Heron Snyder.

Apparently believing that at least one other historical document connects the Prophet and Mary Heron, Quinn chides me for reporting, ”Despite intensive research, I have found no additional evidence linking Mary Heron Snider with Joseph Smith” (23). The statement referenced by Quinn is from an account from Mary Isabella Hales Horne 145 who related:

Bro. Joseph Smith and several of the brethren and sisters came to Quincy. They came to Mrs. Horne's house, partook of refreshments— and scattered. Bro. Joseph was in the best of spirits. He

144 Miscellaneous Minutes, September 2, 1850, Brigham Young Collection, d 1234, restricted; excerpts transcribed by D. Michael Quinn, Box 3, fd. 2, Quinn Collection, Yale Library. This document is available on Richard E. Turley Jr., ed., Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Vol. 1, DVD #18, but that entry is blacked out, restricted because it deals with Church disciplinary proceedings.

145 Mary Isabella Hales Horne is the great-great-aunt of Brian Hales.
said laughingly, "Sister Horne if I had a wife as small as you, when trouble came I would put her in my pocket and run." Bros. Joseph, Bennet, Law and Mrs. Law remained with Mrs. Horne. The next day Bro. Joseph and some of the brethren called upon Gov. Carlin. He received them cordially and everything seemed satisfactory. Next morning the brethren started on their missions, the rest returning to Nauvoo. *The prophet with Sister Snyder called in his buggy upon Sister Cleveland.* Upon reaching Lima, between Quincy and Nauvoo, some 20 miles from Quincy, he was taken prisoner on a writ from Gove. Carlin and brought back to Quincy.\(^{146}\)

The "Sister Synder" mentioned could be Mary Heron Snider.\(^ {147}\) Unfortunately, no additional document places her in Quincy in 1841. Nauvoo tax records for 1842 identify nine male property owners with the surname of "Snyder" or "Snider," seven of whom were married: Henry Snider to Paulina Voorhees Snider, Isaac Snider to Louisa Comstock Snider, Jacob Snyder to Hannah Anderson Snider, Robert Snider to Almeda Melissa Livermore Snider, Samuel Snider to Henrietta Maria Stockwell Snider, Chester Snyder to Catharine Montgomery Snyder, and George G. Snyder to Sarah Wilder Hatch Snyder.\(^ {148}\) Any of these seven women could have been "Sister Synder" if they had ventured to Quincy at that time. However, since the Prophet was apparently sealed to Mary Heron Snider at some point, she may have been the otherwise undefined "Sister Synder." Without additional documentation, it is impossible to conclusively identify her. Mary Isabella apparently did not view "Sister Snyder's" buggy ride as inappropriate or as something that would reflect negatively on the Prophet's behavior. In 1905 she signed a statement:

\(^{146}\) This is an amalgamation of two accounts from Mary Isabella Hales Horne, "Migration and Settlement of the Latter Day Saints," 11-13 and "Testimony of Sister M. Isabella Horne," 1905, 2-3, MS 5302, LDS Church History Library, combined by Hales, *The Chronicles of the Hales Family in America*, 79; italics added.

\(^{147}\) D. Michael Quinn affirms that the only possible identity of "Sister "Snyder" is Mary Heron Snyder although, as discussed in the text, other candidates exist. Quinn, Evidence for the Sexual Side of Joseph Smith's Polygamy," 13.

\(^{148}\) These marriages are documented at www.ancestry.com and www.earlylds.com (accessed August 5, 2012.)
I testify that Joseph Smith was the greatest Prophet that ever lived on this earth, the Savior, only, excepted... I know that he was true to his trust, and that the Principles that he advanced and taught are true.

I solemnly testify that I know that the principle of Plural Marriage is true; that it came direct from God; I have had evidence of its truthfulness, and have lived in it for nearly fifty years. I counsel all my posterity to avoid condemning or making light of this sacred principle.

I also testify that this Principle (Plural Marriage) was revealed by our Heavenly Father to the Prophet Joseph Smith and was taught and practiced by the Prophet.149

So it appears the only reliable evidence connecting Joseph Smith and Mary Heron Snider is the Joseph Ellis Johnson statement. Several interpretations are possible. One assumes that Joseph Johnson overstated his impression or claimed knowledge he did not actually possess in an attempt to exonerate himself. Excommunication in 1850 would have been a difficult challenge for a man who came from a very prominent family in the Church. Joseph E. Johnson's brother, Benjamin F. Johnson, recalled that in the early 1840s, “In Macedonia the Johnsons were quite numerous and influential and the envious dubbed us the ‘Royal Family.’ When Joseph [Smith] heard of the honor conferred upon us by our neighbors, he said the name was and should be a reality; that we were a royal family.”150 Despite these concerns, Joseph E. Johnson appears to be a trustworthy witness whose comments were probably quoted correctly by the secretary Joseph Kelly.151

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150 Benjamin F. Johnson, My Life’s Review, 93.
151 Quinn writes: “I cannot take seriously the suggestion by Hales that this Church court's official minutes misquoted Johnson's words.” (11) In fact, I believe the Johnson quote is accurate. Quinn was working
A second interpretation acknowledges that sexual relations did indeed occur between Joseph Smith and Mary Heron but assumes that no plural marriage ceremony had been performed, thus documenting Joseph and Mary as adulterers. However, the behavior of Joseph E. Johnson and Mary’s husband, John Snider, both of whom remained true to the faith, seems to contradict this view. If they were privy to such hypocrisy, it seems less likely that they would have continued to hold to their beliefs in Joseph Smith and the Church he restored. We also note that thirteen men were in attendance at the 1850 council where Johnson made his defense, yet his comments did not seem to have affected anyone’s convictions.

A third explanation also acknowledges the existence of sexual relations between Joseph Smith and Mary Snider and assumes that the two were sealed in a plural marriage making Mary Heron Joseph Smith's plural spouse. It also assumes that, at the time, Mary's continued conjugal relations with John Snider (for which there is no evidence) producing a sexually polyandrous situation. Quinn concurred with this view, writing in his notes (now housed at Yale University):

“If the statements about Joseph Smith in this trial are accurate, and they do not seem to be disputed with respect to the impropriety of circulating them, then JOSEPH SMITH HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE (AND PRESUMABLY PLURAL MARRIAGE) WITH MARY HERON SNIDER” (emphasis in original). ¹⁵² This option seems to contradict Joseph Smith's teachings regarding sexual polyandry.

A fourth interpretation also acknowledges conjugality between Joseph Smith and Mary Heron, and assumes that a plural sealing in the new and everlasting covenant occurred that would have

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¹⁵² D. Michael Quinn, Box 3, fd. 2, Quinn Collection, "Western Americana MSS S-2692, Yale Library. Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, 632, lists Mary Heron as a “possible wife.” Compton cites “Quinn, MHOP [Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power], 587 [sic; should be p. 588].” Quinn includes her in a long list of Joseph Smith’s wives writing: “Mary Heron (Snider) 1842/43.”
caused the legal marriage to be "done away" (D&C 22:1) with John continuing as a "front husband" to shield Joseph Smith from suspicion. This explanation absolves Joseph of charges of both adultery and hypocrisy but raises plausibility issues about John Snider's willingness to give up his wife and to thereafter serve as a "front husband." In support of this possibility are the observations that John Snider and Mary Heron seem to have endured significant periods of estrangement after 1833, with no pregnancies after Mary turned twenty-nine. Also, the couple's marriage was apparently never sealed, although the option was available.  

Without any additional evidence, it is impossible to conclusively identify the nature of Joseph Smith’s relationship with Mary Heron, if any special relationship ever existed. Readers’ conclusions will be based on their willingness to accept and reject certain assumptions. Included are (1) assuming that, without additional supportive evidence, Joseph E. Johnson's story was correct and accurately reported; otherwise there was no relationship, (2) assuming that sexual relations occurred without a plural sealing resulting in adultery, (3) assuming that sexual relations occurred with a plural sealing between Joseph Smith and Mary Heron and that Mary continued conjugal relations with her civil husband, thus practicing sexual polyandry, (4) assuming that sexual relations occurred with a plural sealing that caused her legal marriage to be "done away" and that her legal husband, John Snider, agreed to serve as a "front husband" for the Prophet, thus creating consecutive marriages. It is probable that one of these four possibilities describes the actual dynamic in the Joseph Smith-Mary Heron relationship. However, for anyone

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153 Quinn criticizes: “Hales regards as evidence against my claim for a polygamous marriage of Mary Heron Snyder (Snider) and Joseph Smith, that he can find no record of their ever being sealed by proxy, before or after her death in Utah in 1852.” (26) It appears I was not sufficiently clear. I agree with Quinn that Joseph Smith and Mary Heron Snider were sealed in a polygamous marriage. I find the observation that she was never sealed to John Snider (in the Nauvoo Temple or by proxy later) to support that she was at some point in Nauvoo sealed to the Prophet (even if a record of that sealing has not been found).
to affirm one interpretation, to the exclusion of the other possibilities, would be going beyond the evidence.

Johnson stated that the “first” sexual relations “done in his house” involved Joseph and Mary. ¹⁵⁴ My research supports that the only house built by Joseph Ellis Johnson was constructed at Ramus, Illinois, twenty miles east of Nauvoo, in 1843. Thus, the described sexual relations between Joseph and Mary would have occurred at that place and time. However, Quinn disagrees:

Moreover, it is both a red-herring and a fallacy of irrelevant proof for Hales to comment in today's presentation that "Joseph E. Johnson did not build his house in Ramus (Macedonia), Illinois, until 1843." First, Johnson did not state in 1850 that Joseph Smith's sexual intercourse with his mother-in-law occurred in Ramus or Macedonia, and there is no justification for Hales to exclude Nauvoo as a possible location for the 1850 document's reference to "his house." Second, tax-assessment rolls show that "Joseph Johnson" was living in Nauvoo in 1841, when he and John Snider both owned real estate/houses there. The 1841 assessments also listed Johnson's brother Joel H. Johnson as a property-owner in Nauvoo. Third, Nauvoo's 1842 assessment rolls specified if the property-owner was a non-resident, as they did in their entries for Johnson's brother Benjamin F. (24)

Joseph E. Johnson purchased land in Ramus (name changed to Macedonia in 1843) in 1840 and apparently also acquired land in Nauvoo in 1841. Quinn evidently takes that position that the 1842 tax record reliably identified all non-resident property owners, and since Joseph E. Johnson

¹⁵⁴ Miscellaneous Minutes, September 2, 1850, Brigham Young Collection, d 1234, restricted; excerpts transcribed by D. Michael Quinn, Box 3, fd. 2, Quinn Collection, Yale Library. This document is available on Richard E. Turley Jr., ed., Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Vol. 1, DVD #18, but that entry is blacked out, restricted because it deals with Church disciplinary proceedings.
was not so designated, he and Harriet must have been “living in Nauvoo in 1841” (13) and the sexual rendezvous between Joseph Smith and Marry Heron Snider occurred in a home newly constructed there by Joseph Ellis Johnson.

Several evidences contradict Quinn's reconstruction. First, the Johnson family history describes Joseph Ellis between 1840 and 1844 as a resident of Ramus-Macedonia, not Nauvoo. In his biography of Joseph E. Johnson, *J. E. J. Trail to Sundown: Cassadaga to Casa Grande 1817-1882*, Rufus David Johnson describes how the Johnsons migrated from Springfield, Illinois in the "summer of 1840" and stopped "20 miles from Nauvoo" and purchased land that would become Ramus. 155 Joseph E. Johnson visited Nauvoo in the fall to marry Harriet Snider on October 6, 1840, but "the next day Joseph and his bride [returned] to Ramus."156 During the next few years Joseph Ellis assisted in getting a charter for the city, was elected a trustee for two consecutive years, and was appointed the town's first postmaster. There he "rented a large shop where he carried on coopering, cabinet making, and the manufacture of chairs."157 He wrote "I built me a comfortable home in town [Ramus-Macedonia] and with good society lived happily with little means but (much) contentment."158 How these activities might have been accomplished while "living in Nauvoo in 1841" is unclear.

Second, the first child born to Joseph and Harriet was Mary Julia Johnson on December 24, 1841, not in Nauvoo, but in Ramus-Macedonia.159 Similarly, their second child, Eliza Antoinette Johnson, was also born at Macednoia on November 17, 1843.

156 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
Third, Quinn reports that Joseph Ellis Johnson purchased lot 2 on block 154, which purchase I have not verified (89 en136). However, that property is an irregularly shaped half-size block on the shore of the Mississippi and no evidence is provided showing that a house was (or even could have been) constructed upon it.

Fourth, Quinn lists the purchase date for the Nauvoo plot as December 21, 1841 and assumes that Joseph must have been living in Nauvoo prior because he was not listed as a "non-resident" in the paperwork. If Joseph was a resident of Nauvoo prior to that time, his domicile in that city is undocumented. That he lived in a house he had built there is also undocumented. In addition, as mentioned above, his first child was born December 24, 1841 in Ramus-Macedonia.

Quinn's insistence that Joseph Ellis Johnson's newly built house (where Joseph Smith and Mary Heron Snider experienced sexual relations) was in Nauvoo in 1841 rather than Ramus-Macedonia in 1843 is important for two reasons. First, an 1841 date fits Quinn's overall theory that Joseph Smith was "virile enough to have sexual intercourse daily (or more than once daily) with one or two of his wives" (17) and that such behavior began in 1840 and continued until his death. There is no credible documentation supporting this version of Joseph Smith as hyper-sexual, although most readers are willing to make the assumption without supportive evidence. In fact, available manuscripts indicate that most of Joseph Smith's pre-summer 1842 polygamous proposals were non-sexual "eternity only" offers.

The second consequence is that John Snider, Mary's legal husband, was on a mission during most of 1842, so it might be alleged that Joseph Smith called him on a mission to get him out of town in order to woo his wife. The timeline is still problematic, but such claims are common.

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160 His ownership of this lot is not listed at http://earlylds.com/getperson.php?personID=I16491&tree=Earlylds but his lots in Ramus are included. (Accessed August 20, 2012.)
John C. Bennett charged that Joseph Smith sent "husbands… off preaching" so he could marry their wives. An 1843 publication by Henry Caswall entitled, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Mormons*, claimed that, “Many English and American women, whose husbands or fathers had been sent by the prophet on distant missions, were induced to become his ‘spiritual wives,’ ‘believing it to be the will of God.’” According to F. B. Ashley, "He [Joseph Smith] induced several American and English women whose husbands or fathers he had sent on distant missions to become his spiritual wives, or ‘ladies of the white veil.’” Excommunicated Mormon Benjamin Winchester echoed this sentiment in an 1889 interview asserting that, “It was a subject of common talk among many good people in Nauvoo that many of the elders were sent off on missions merely to get them out of the way, and that Joseph Smith, John C. Bennett and other prominent Church lights had illicit intercourse with the wives of a number of the missionaries, and that the revelation on spiritual marriage, i.e. polygamy, was gotten up to protect themselves from scandal.” In his book, *Joseph Smith and His Mormon Empire*, Harry M. Beardsley asserted that, “Joe remained in hiding in Nauvoo for several months, dividing his time between a dozen hide-outs – among them homes of Mormons where there were attractive daughters, or where the husbands were away on missionary tours.”

A review of the evidence fails to support these published declarations. Of the twelve “polyandrous” husbands identified by Todd Compton in his book, *In Sacred Loneliness*, ten

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were not on missions at the time Joseph was sealed to their legal wives. Of the two possible exceptions, only one, Orson Hyde, is documented as serving as a missionary at the time. The second possible case involves George Harris, who left on his fourteen-month mission in July 1840, however, the date of his legal wife's sealing to the Prophet is unavailable and disputed.\footnote{167} If John Snider was on his mission at the time of Mary's sealing to Joseph Smith, Mary Heron Snider could be a third case.

It is understandable that Quinn would recruit the case of Mary Heron to support his theories. By advancing numerous assumptions, the Mary Heron–Joseph Smith sealing can be promoted as an example of sexual polyandry. However, the undeniable fact is that the documentation is too limited to draw strict conclusions.

**Flora Ann Woodworth (26-28)**

In the spring of 1843 Joseph Smith was sealed to Flora Ann Woodruff and thereafter presented her with a gold watch.\footnote{168} On August 23, William Clayton referred to a conflict between Joseph's legal wife Emma, and Flora Ann: “President Joseph told me that he had difficulty with Emma yesterday. She rode up to Woodworths with him and called while he came to the Temple. When he returned she was demanding the gold watch of Flora [Woodworth]. He reproved her for her...
evil treatment. On their return home she abused him much and also when he got home. He had to use harsh measures to put a stop to her abuse but finally succeeded.”

Seymour B. Young, Brigham Young’s nephew and member of the First Council of the Seventy 1883-1924, recalled in 1912 that “Flora Woodward [sic]” was one of the Prophet’s plural wives, and “to whom he is said to have given a gold locket or watch which was stamped under foot by Emma.”

Flora apparently reacted dramatically to the confrontation. The marriage index of Hancock County records Flora Ann marrying Carlos Gove, a nonmember, on August 23, the very next day after this unpleasant confrontation. The level of friendship between Gove and Flora prior to their legal marriage is unknown, but it seems probable that Emma, if she had any further interaction with Flora, would have encouraged the nuptial. Emily Dow Partridge recalled Emma “troubled” her and her sister Eliza who was also a plural wife of the Prophet, pressuring them into “marrying some one else.”

In the aftermath of her daughter’s marriage to Carlos Gove, Flora’s mother entered the picture attempting to assist her strong-willed daughter. On August 26, Clayton wrote: “Joseph met Mrs.

169 George D. Smith, An Intimate Chronicle, 119.
170 Seymour B. Young, Journal, April 2, 1912.
171 Flora Woodworth, Certificate of Marriage to Carlos Gove, August 23, 1843. Helen Mar Kimball recounted a different chronology: “A young man boarding at her father’s after the death of Joseph not a member of the Church had sought her hand, in time won her heart, and in a reckless moment she was induced to accept his offer and they eloped to Carthage, accompanied by a young lady friend, and were there married by a Justice of the Peace.” Helen Mar [Kimball Smith] Whitney, “Travels Beyond the Mississippi,” Woman’s Exponent, 87; emphasis mine. This marriage is not listed in Lyndon Cook, Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839-1845, undoubtedly because his marriage records are extracted from Church publications and records.
172 Emily Partridge recalled that Emma Smith “once proposed to a young man to ask Eliza [Partridge, Emily’s sister] to take a ride with him.” Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents in the early life of Emily Dow Partridge,” MS d 2845, fd. 1;typescript in my possession.
173 Emily D. Partridge Young, “Written expressly for my children…”, Jan. 7, 1877, MS 2845 at CHL
Woodworth and Flora and conversed some time.” The following day Joseph preached his Sabbath message in the grove: “He showed that the power of the Melchisedek Priesthood was to have the power of an ‘endless lives.’ He showed that the everlasting covenants could not be broken.” Whether Flora was present to hear those words is not known.

Regardless, Clayton’s journal reports two additional visits between Joseph and Flora at Clayton’s home, occurring August 28 and 29:

[August 28, 1843. Monday.]…President Joseph met Ms Woodworth at my house.

[August 29, 1843. Tuesday.] A.M. at the Temple. President Joseph at my house with Miss Woodworth.  

A question regarding the reason(s) for these two meetings arises. D. Michael Quinn seems certain they included sexual relations:

Flora later said that she "felt condemned for" her "rash" decision "in a reckless moment" to marry this young non-Mormon, a remorse the 16-year-old girl probably experienced the morning after.

Two subsequent trysts with the 37-year-old Prophet in Clayton's house on consecutive days showed how much she regretted marrying a younger man earlier in the week (27).

In other words, Flora left her new civil husband, Carlos Gove, for two sexual encounters with Joseph Smith that were so satisfying that she regretted her legal marriage.

Throughout his paper, Quinn manifests extreme confidence that Clayton’s entries describe sexual meetings (34, 35, 101 en188). However, his logic is problematic for several reasons. First, if

175 Ibid., 119.
176 Quinn is not the only author to suggest these two references were to sexual relations. For example see
Flora were able to be sexually active with Joseph on the 28th and 29th as Quinn alleges, what would have prevented her from continuing such “sexual trysts” in the future? Also, if she regretted marrying Gove, why not seek a separation from him rather than Joseph Smith or to simply continue the alleged sexual polyandry? Second, Quinn identifies the presence of sexual relations in Clayton’s sentences that do not mention or hint that conjugality was involved. It might be argued that if sexuality is assumed in such neutral wording, where will sexuality not be assumed? Third, Quinn describes Flora Ann as sleeping with two men in the same week under the guise of sexual polyandry and then regretting her decision to marry “a younger man earlier in the week” because her alleged “trysts” with the Prophet were so satisfying. This reconstruction focuses almost exclusively upon sexuality and projects this obsession onto Flora Ann asserting that her overriding concern regarding her choice of a husband was sexual. This single-mindedness on sex might fit the sexuality saturated societal norms found among some cultures in the twenty-first century. However, it ignores the moral, emotional, theological, and traditional values that were embraced by most Nauvooans (and probably Flora Ann as well). Those values would have universally labeled such activities as promiscuous. That she would have repeatedly engaged in such low behavior seems less likely.

Fourth, Quinn informs his audience that "Joseph Smith didn't take two consecutive days in Clayton's otherwise empty house to tell a wife that their polygamous relationship was finished--especially, if he had already announced that fact to Flora and her mother" (16). This is a remarkable interpretation of the skimpy data. Several questions arise: "How do we know the house was empty?" "How do we know what Joseph Smith had stated on those occasions?" "How do we know conjugality occurred during either of the meetings?" In fact, on August 26th,  

just two days before the first of the two meetings, the Prophet met with Flora Ann and her mother at Clayton’s home. The items discussed in the conversation of that gathering between were not recorded, but Quinn assures us that "he had already announced" that "their polygamous relationship was finished" (16).

In reality, by marrying and consummating her civil union, Flora had unilaterally broken her marriage covenant with the Prophet. Joseph would have known this and would not have needed to "announce" anything. This fits his Sunday sermon discussion regarding “everlasting covenants.” A more plausible reconstruction is that Joseph and Flora met at least three times (the 26th with her mother, the 28th, and 29th) to discuss the future of her plural sealing to the Prophet and perhaps even the status of her Church membership. The revelation on Celestial and plural marriage dictated the previous month speaks specifically of Flora Ann's behavior:

And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood--if any man espouse a virgin, and … if one… 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… (D&C 132: 61, 63.)

These verses state that after being sealed in a priesthood marriage, if a plural wife (like Flora Ann Woodworth) is with "another man," (like Carlos Gove) "she has committed adultery, and shall be destroyed." No exceptions for legal husbands are included. While some researchers may be comfortable ignoring Joseph Smith's teachings – which is a general problem of all historical treatises of Nauvoo polygamy published to date – the Nauvoo polygamists did not ignore them. Those pluralists sought his counsel, struggled with its impact in their personal lives, and sincerely strove to follow it. Due to Flora's rash behavior, Joseph was positioned to

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177George D. Smith, An Intimate Chronicle, 118-19. Granting an earthly divorce would not have required breaking the "eternity" portion of the sealing covenant.
judge (D&C 132: 46) and apply Church disciplinary consequences, a process that might have included additional meetings beyond August 29th that Clayton did not record.

On the other hand, if the plural marriage between Flora and Joseph had not been consummated, then the unrecorded consequences might have been different. Flora's willingness to marry Gove on the spur of the moment and her previous behavior with Orange Wight raise the question regarding the level of physicality in the Flora-Joseph plural union. Wight related in 1903:

I now come to that part of my story that you will be most likely interested in. Which regards the doctrine taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith in regard to the Plural Marriage sistem, At first the Doctrin was taught in private. the first I knew about it was in John Higbie's famely he lived close to us and being well acquainted with him and famely I discovered he had two wives…

Now altho only in my 20th year would not be 20 until 29 November, 1843, I concluded to look about and try to pick up one or more of the young ladies before they were all gone, so I commenced keeping company with Flora Woodworth—Daughter of Lucian Woodworth—(called the Pagan Prophet) I was walking along the street with Flora near the Prophets Residence when he Joseph drove, up in his Carrage stoped and spoke to I and Flora and asked us to get in the carrage and ride with him he opened the doore [?—doors?] for us and when we were seated oposite to him he told the driver to drive on we went to the Temple lot and many other places during the Afternoon and then he drove to the Woodworth \house/ and we got out and went in,—

After we got in the house Sister Woodworth took me in an other room and told me that Flora was one of Josephs wives, I was awar or believed that Eliza R. Snow and the two Partra\u/ge Girls were his wives but was not informed about Flora But now sister Woodworth gave me all the information nessary, so I knew Joseph Believed and practiced Poligamy…
Now as a matter of corse I at once—after giving her Flora a mild lecture left her and looked for
a companion in other places, and where I could be more sure, I was now called on a mission to
go up the river 5 or 6 hundred miles to make lumber for the Nauvoo house and Temple.178

Andrew Jenson recorded over forty years later: “She [Flora Ann Woodword] regretted her last
marriage, her husband being an unbeliever, and intended to cling to the Prophet.”179 The word
“cling” could represent a desire to be his sealed plural wife in eternity. Under the direction of
Church President Lorenzo Snow, a proxy ceremony was performed between Flora and Joseph
Smith in the Salt Lake Temple in 1899.180

Many questions continue to surround Flora including whether her plural marriage to Joseph
Smith was ever consummated. Nevertheless, one troubling aspect of Quinn’s discussion is his
apparent willingness to assume and declare details that are historically unavailable.

Emily and Eliza Partridge (28-29)

Quinn briefly mentions two of Joseph Smith's plural wives, Emily and Eliza Partridge: “Joseph
actually ended his polygamous marriages with two sisters in October 1843 by abruptly informing
them of the fact. He had also previously ‘roomed’ with Emily and Eliza Partridge individually,
whom he ‘slept with,’ and with whom he had ‘carnal intercourse.’” (28)

It is true that Emily and Eliza had lived with the Smiths in the Nauvoo Mansion and at some
point, they were sent away. Emily recalled: "She [Emma] wanted us immediately divorced, and
she seemed to think that she only had to say the word, and it was done. But we thought different.

178 “Recollections of Orange L Wight son of Lyman Wight,” written May 4 1903, holograph, CHL, (Ms
405) 19-21. 23.
179 Andrew Jenson Papers [ca. 1871-1942], MS 17956; CHL, Box 49, Folder 16, document #13.
180 Salt Lake Temple Sealing Records, Book D, 243, April 4, 1899; Thomas Milton Tinney, The Royal
We looked upon the covenants we had made as sacred. She afterwards gave Sarah and Maria Lawrence to him, and they lived in the house as his wives. I knew this; but my sister and I were cast off." ¹⁸¹ No documentation that their plural sealings were "ended" has been found and both were resealed in a proxy ceremony in the Nauvoo Temple. ¹⁸²

**Joseph Smith’s Virility – Phrenology “Amantive” Assessment (29-31)**

To support his position that Joseph Smith was highly libidinous, Quinn explains:

> Joseph Smith was apparently virile enough to have sexual intercourse daily (or more than once daily) with one or two of his wives. For example, in July 1842 (shortly before the 36-year-old man's polygamous marriage to 17-year-old Sarah Ann Whitney), Nauvoo's second newspaper *The Wasp* (edited by his brother William Smith) published the Prophet's phrenological chart, which was a standard "reading" of the bumps on a person's head. The chart's author, phrenologist "A. Crane, M.D." introduced it by saying that Joseph Smith "is perfectly willing to have the chart published," adding: "let the public judge for themselves whether phrenology proves the reports against him true or false." This chart emphasized that (out of twelve points possible for each of his "Propensities") Joseph scored "Amativeness--11." The chart explained this as his "extreme susceptibility; passionately fond of the other sex." (29-30)

Phrenology became popular in the mid-nineteenth century, but is not based upon actual science, anatomical or physiological. The “phrenologist” measures and palpates the skull of the subject and then draws conclusions regarding the personality attributes of that person based upon those findings. Joseph Smith submitted to three phrenologist readings during his lifetime although he

¹⁸¹ Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl,” n.d., 186-186b; see also p. 54.
admitted concerning the second report: "I give the foregoing a place in my history for the
gratification of the curious, and not for [any] respect [I entertain for] phrenology."  

Quinn refers only to the second phrenology assessment performed by “A. Crane, M.D., Professor of Phrenology” in 1842. The results were published in the July 2, 1842 issue of The Wasp. Forty different parameters were assessed with Joseph receiving the highest score of 11 for “Time,” “Locality,” “Eventuality,” “Size,” “Comparison,” and “Amativeness.” “Amativeness” was defined in the study as “Extreme susceptibility: passionately fond of the company of the other sex.” He also received 10s for “Secretiveness,” “Approbativeness,” “Self-esteem,” “Benevolence,” “Firmness,” “Hope,” “Marvelousness,” “Individuality,” “Form,” and “Mirthfulness.” In all he scored six "11s," ten "10s," eight "9s," five "8s," four "7s," three "6s," three "5s," and one "4." Quinn apparently believes that the score of 11 given for “Amativeness” is evidence of the Prophet’s virility.

Quinn does not mention the earliest phrenology report done in 1840. It is available online at www.JosephSmithPapers.org. Apparently using a different scoring system, Joseph Smith then received a score of "16" for Amativeness, but had several higher assessments, such as 19 for "Individuality," and three 18s, two 17s. He also received two additional 16s, three 15s, three 14s, three 13s, six 12s, two 11s, two 10s, and two 9s. That report does not support Quinn’s overall claims concerning Joseph Smith’s libido.

Nevertheless, Quinn emphasized the 1842 phrenology experience to corroborate his interpretation:

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183 History of the Church, 5:53-55.
184 http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/phrenology-chart-14-january-1840%E2%80%93b
More amazing, the Wasp (still with Apostle William Smith as its editor) nonetheless re-emphasized such a linkage [between phrenology and Joseph Smith’s alleged “Amantativeness”] on 20 August 1843, when it published a poem which referred to that same portion of the Prophet's phrenological chart. Written by Joseph's secret wife Eliza R. Snow, it began:

Since by chance, the "key bump" has been added to you

With its proper enlargement of brain,

Let me hope all thunder bolts malice may strew,

Will excite in your bosom no pain.\textsuperscript{185}

Her poetry's well-known literary analyst, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, has observed: ... addressed though it be to both Joseph and Emma, [this poem] is demonstrably written only to him and responds in its first two lines to the phrenological reading, Joseph's second, which had recently been published (Crane 1842).

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It is hard to imagine Eliza Snow publicly noting Joseph's sexual propensities-- certainly there is nothing [else] from her extant about anyone's libido, let alone the Prophet's. However another interpretation of the term ["key bump"] is hard to discover [with reference to his phrenology chart] ... Possibly then, she meant the reference humorously\textsuperscript{186} (30-31).

Quinn also observes: “Beecher didn't specify the sexual meanings in the English language of ‘key’ and ‘bump’ during the hundreds of years before Eliza's poem” (99fn170). Beecher gives

\textsuperscript{185}Eliza R. Snow, "To President Joseph Smith, and His Lady, Presidentess Emma Smith," Wasp, 20 August 1842, emphasis in the newspaper.

Regardless, Quinn alleges a “sexual double entendre” because experts on Shakespearean literature allege the words “key” and “bump” could have sexual meaning (32). He postulates sexual innuendo in the opening lines of Eliza’s poem. However, the final stanzas speak of noble future events and would have been a remarkable contrast to the first lines if sexuality was then implied:

Will the righteous come forth with their garments unstained?
With their hearts unpolluted with sin?
O yes; Zion, thy honor will still be sustained.
And the glory of God usher'd in.

An alternate explanation to oblique sexuality is that the “key” refers to keys of knowledge and/or authority given to Joseph Smith (see D&C 35:17-18, 64:5, 132:7) that figuratively might have required an expansion of his brain to cause the “bump,” making it a “key bump.” Eliza was well aware of the sealing keys Joseph had employed to seal her to him just weeks before. This might be an incredibly insightful discovery by Quinn or just another example of seeing sexuality where sexuality is not mentioned.

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Discussion of Fecundity (Fertility) (32-37)

The issue of “fecundity” or fertility is pertinent to a discussion of sexuality in Joseph Smith’s plural marriages because the presence or absence of children could be cited to support either an abundance or paucity of sexual relations. Unfortunately, Quinn accuses me of claiming “that nearly all of Joseph Smith’s polygamous marriages were sexless” (96 en159). This is simply untrue. On my website and in *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy: History and Theology*, I quote verbatim every known text supporting sexuality in twelve of the plural marriages (Fanny Alger, Louisa Beaman, Emily Dow Partridge, Eliza Maria Partridge, Almera Woodard Johnson, Lucy Walker, Sylvia Sessions, Malissa Lott, Sarah Lawrence, Maria Lawrence, and Olive Frost) with ambiguous evidence in three more (Eliza R. Snow, Sarah Ann Whitney, and Hannah Ells). To “multiply and replenish the earth” was a minor reason for plural marriage (D&C 132:63).

However, it is important not to misrepresent the content of the historical record regarding those relations. Quinn and others readily imply frequent conjugality, which is unsupportable from a documentary standpoint. Nevertheless, I do not claim at “nearly all of Joseph Smith’s polygamous marriages were sexless.” I do believe that sexual relations occurred and were sought by Joseph and the women who viewed themselves as his bona fide wives. However, I do not believe they occurred frequently due to several observations including a lack of supportive evidence, the birth of only two children to the plural wives, and multiple geographical constraints.

On pages 32-37 Quinn explains his views on fecundity or why only two children have been documented born to Joseph Smith's plural wives. One was to plural wife, Sylvia Sessions Lyon,

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daughter Josephine Lyon, born in 1844 (discussed above). The second is a child to Olive Frost who did not live long or may have miscarried.  

\[189\] Joseph E. Robinson wrote: “During the afternoon I called on Aunt Lizzie [Joseph E. Robinson's aunt-in-law Mary Elizabeth (Green) Harris (1847-1911)] . . . She knew Joseph Smith had more than two wives. Said he married . . . Olive Frost [and] had a child by him and that both died.”  

\[190\] Quinn's arguments are summarized:

According to the medicine of the 1830s and 1840s, a virile man's ability to father children actually decreased whenever he had frequent intercourse… Therefore, Joseph Smith and his contemporaries had sensible reasons to believe that the more often he had sexual intercourse, the less likely he was to impregnate a female of any age. Thus, his frequent intercourse with dozens of wives would (in his culture's view) make it very unlikely that an otherwise-unmarried female would attract unwanted attention in Nauvoo by becoming pregnant… . Thus, having dozens of wives was a practical method of polygamous contraception in 1842, and remains medically demonstrable today. (33-34; emphasis in original)

In other words, Quinn argues that polygamy insiders believed that having sexual relations often would decrease fertility and that physiologically, frequent intercourse would diminish Joseph Smith's sperm counts making it unlikely or impossible to impregnate even fertile women. This reasoning is problematic. While "multiply and replenish" the earth was not the primary reason for plural marriage, it was one of the reasons mentioned in the revelation (D&C 132:63). Hence, to assume that Joseph or his plural wives would have sought to curtail the birth of children in his plural unions is inconsistent and undocumented. For example, when Heber C. Kimball was challenged to enter plural marriage and sought to marry two women who were too old to have

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\[189\] Joseph E. Robinson, Diary, October 26, 1902. Olive Frost died October 6, 1845. 

\[190\] Joseph E. Robinson, Diary/Autobiography, October 26, 1902. See also James Whitehead, Interviewed by Joseph Smith III, April 20, 1885. This passage also states that Olive Frost bore a child to Joseph Smith.
children, Joseph chastised him saying “Bro K[imball] that arrangement is of the devil you go and get you a young wife one you can take to your bosom and love and raise children by. A man should choose his own wife and one he can love and get children by in love.”

An account from R C. Evans, who had been a member of the RLDS First Presidency, but later disaffiliated, states:

> When in Salt Lake City I called at the residence of Patriarch John Smith, brother of Joseph F. Smith, and son of Hyrum Smith, nephew of the original prophet Joseph Smith, and while there his wife, Helen, told me, among many other interesting things, that “Melissa Lott told me that when a girl she sewed for Emma Smith and took care of the children. Joseph had to pass through her room to go to Emma’s room. She said Joseph never had sexual intercourse with her but once and that was in the daytime, saying he desired her to have a child by him. She was barefooted and ironing when Joseph came in, and the ceremony was performed in the presence of her parents.”

Quinn’s interpretation emphasizes sexuality, not family or eternity. Yet, Joseph Smith’s teachings demand participants in “time and eternity” sealings to “multiply and replenish” the earth. While “eternity only” sealings did not permit sexuality in mortality, they did provide eternal husband for worthy women. Quinn’s description satisfies neither.

Other than the infrequency of sexual rendezvous, no other reason can be identified in the historical record to explain the scarcity of offspring from the plural matrimones.

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191 Helon Tracy, Diary, undated, 72, quoted in Stan Larson, ed., Prisoner for Polygamy: The Memoirs and Letters of Rudger Clawson at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, 1884-87, 12.
192 R. C. Evans, Forty Years in the Mormon Church, 38.
193 Dissident Sarah Pratt’s provided another unlikely explanation: “You hear often that Joseph had no polygamous offspring. The reason of this is very simple. Abortion was practiced on a large scale in Nauvoo. Dr. John C. Bennett, the evil genius of Joseph, brought this abomination into a scientific system. He showed to my husband and me the instruments with which he used to ‘operate for Joseph.’” (Quoted in W. Wyl, pseud. [Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal]. Mormon Portraits, or the Truth About Mormon Leaders From 1830 to 1886. Salt Lake City: Tribune Printing and Publishing Co., 1886, 59; italics in
Notwithstanding, Quinn speculates regarding the process through which this could have been accomplished:

…with dozens of his wives living in or near Nauvoo by 1843, it would have been easy for Joseph Smith to spend an hour every day with one of them in someone else's house, as he did on two consecutive days with Flora Woodworth in Clayton's house. Just as there were dozens of wives, such a daytime rendezvous could occur discreetly in scores of houses. For example, in the bedrooms of each wife's devout parents who (like the Kimballs, Whitneys, and Lotts) gave advance approval for Joseph to marry their daughters, or of her siblings (like Benjamin F. Johnson, who testified of such visits), or of his already-married wives who also served as "an intermediary" for his polygamous proposals (such as Mrs. Cleveland, Mrs. Durfee, and Mrs. Sessions), or of other polygamists (like Joseph B. Noble since 1840/41 and William Clayton--whose journal described such visits\(^{194}\)), or of strictly loyal Mormons who were monogamists before June 1844 (like John Benbow). (35)

Several problems can be identified with this scenario, the first being the lack of supportive evidence. Quinn’s description would have required the cooperation of dozens of men and women. So we must assume a confederacy among them (or some other reason to keep quiet) because none of them left any hint to support the quantity of sexual encounters asserted.

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original). Pratt also allegedly stated: “[Joseph Smith] had mostly intercourse with married women, and as to single ones, Dr. Bennett was always on hand, when anything happened.” (Ibid., 61.) While it is likely that Bennett, as a licensed physician and experienced obstetrician, (Andrew C. Skinner, “John C. Bennett: For Prophet or Profit?” in H. Dean Garrett, ed. *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Illinois*, Provo, Utah: Department of Church History and Doctrine, BYU, 1995, 249-50) knew how to perform abortions and may actually have done so in Nauvoo, the practice of abortion would clearly be at odds with several of the Prophet’s teachings to “raise up a seed unto God” (Jacob 2:30). Abortion produces exactly the opposite result and no reliable historical source supports that Joseph might have been associated with feticide.

\(^{194}\) In fact Clayton’s language is non-specific.
For example, on June 29th, 1842 Eliza R. Snow was sealed to the Prophet. Then seven months later on February 11, 1843, she moved in with the family Elvira Holmes (discussed above), who was sealed to the Prophet June 1, 1843. These two women lived under the same roof for many months without knowing the other was sealed to the Prophet. Apparently, his visits to each of them and other interactions were so sporadic and non-physical that neither came to suspect the other was sealed to him. In 1887 Eliza spoke with a newspaper reporter concerning the secrecy surrounding her sealing: “She lived in the same cottage with another lady for two years [sic] after she had been sealed, but said not a word to her friend and neighbor. At last Joseph told her one day that she might talk with her neighbor on the subject, and then for the first time she revealed her connection with plural-marriage.”

Another example involves Agnes Coolbrith Smith, widow of Don Carlos Smith. Two and a half months after her sealing to Joseph, Clarissa Marvel, who lived with Agnes “was accused of scandalous falsehoods on the character of President Joseph Smith without the least provocation” regarding him and Agnes. Soon Clarissa was forgiven after signing a statement vindicating the Prophet, but it is possible she may have witnessed signs of the polygamous union between Joseph and Agnes without knowing that a plural marriage had occurred. We are not told what happened to convince Clarissa that she had witnessed nothing inappropriate. Most likely she was informed of celestial and plural marriage and thereafter maintained the confidence.

However, it is also possible that she was persuaded that she had not witnessed any improper

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195 "Two Prophets' Widows A Visit to the Relicts of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young," J. J. J., in St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, MO) Thursday, August 18, 1887; pg. 6; Issue 85; col E The dating is problematic in that Eliza lived with Sarah Cleveland at the time of the sealing until August 14, 1842 when she was invited by Emma to join the Prophet’s family in the Homestead where she stayed until February 11, 1843. That day Lucy Mack Smith moved in with Joseph and Emma and Eliza moved to the Morley settlement.

interactions and that afterwards, the Prophet refrained from visiting Agnes when Marvel was around. Either scenario demonstrates the difficulties Joseph would have confronted if he had behaved as Quinn portrays. Either there are a lot of accomplices or a lot of clandestine encounters that nobody detected. Neither depiction seems very plausible.

Importantly, Quinn has overlooked other strong factors that would have prevented his sex-once-or-twice-a-day depiction prior to the middle of 1843. Hyrum Smith, the Prophet’s own brother and Associate Church President did not learn of plural marriage until May of 1843. On May 26, 1843 William Clayton recorded: “Hyrum received the doctrine of priesthood.”\(^{197}\) In addition, Joseph’s second counselor in the First Presidency, William Law, testified he was not made aware until mid-1843, less than a year before the martyrdom and that he never accepted it.\(^{198}\) These men were close to Joseph, close enough to be aware of his daily activities. The question emerges how readily Quinn’s version of Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo sexuality could have occurred prior to the summer of 1843 without alerting one or both of these men who were still unaware of restored polygamy?

Doubtless, the biggest problem with Quinn’s reconstruction was Emma, especially after the middle of 1843. Regardless of the time, she would not have readily tolerated any of Joseph’s concealed conjugalities. Emily Partridge reported: "We were sealed in her [Emma’s] presence with her full and free consent. …before the day was over she turned around or repented of what she had done and kept Joseph up till very late in the night talking to him. She kept close watch of us. If we were missing for a few minutes, and Joseph was not at home, the house was


searched from top to bottom and from one end to the other, and if we were not found, the neighborhood was searched until we were found.\textsuperscript{199}

Similarly, Joseph Lee Robinson recalled: "I knew that Angeline [Robinson, Joseph Robinson’s sister-in-law], Ebenezer’s wife, had some time before this had watched Brother Joseph the prophet and had seen him go into some house and that she had reported to Sister Emma, the wife of the prophet. It was at a time when she was very suspicious and jealous of him for fear he would get another wife, for she knew the prophet had a revelation on that subject. She (Emma) was determined he should not get another…"\textsuperscript{200} How readily could Quinn’s conjectural description of Joseph’s repeated undercover sexual relations have occurred without Emma's watchful and mostly intolerant eyes detecting and interfering?

Also, it is probable that if any of the polygamy insiders had viewed Joseph Smith as pursuing plural marriage simply to expand his sexual opportunities, they would have dumped him and his religion. Such excessive concealed sexuality as described by Quinn would probably have not been viewed favorably, even if under transacted under the garb of "celestial marriage."

Quinn’s theory that low sperm counts (due to excessive sexual relations) were responsible for few plural children suffers from other weaknesses. While lower sperm numbers diminish the likelihood of conception, they do not completely remove the possibility. The Prophet was virile having fathered eight children with Emma, including David Hyrum Smith conceived approximately February 10, 1844.\textsuperscript{201} A review of the child-bearing chronology of Joseph

\textsuperscript{199} Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents in the early life of Emily Dow partridge,” MS d 2845, fd 1, typescript in possession of the author, page 5.
\textsuperscript{201} Alvin Smith (June 15, 1828 – June 15, 1828); twins Thaddeus Smith (April 30, 1831 – April 30, 1831) and Louisa Smith (April 30, 1831 – April 30, 1831); Joseph Smith III (November 6, 1832 – December 10, 1914); Frederick Granger Williams Smith (June 29, 1836 – April 13, 1862); Alexander Hale Smith (June
Smith’s wives after his death and their remarriages demonstrates impressive fertility in several of the women. Most of them became plural wives of other men within two years after the martyrdom and prior to the Saints leaving for the West.

Two of the women, Sarah Ann Whitney and Lucy Walker, married Heber C. Kimball, who is listed as having forty-three wives, with eighteen of them bearing him at least one child. Sarah Ann Whitney was sealed to Kimball on March 17, 1845, and based on the birth date of their first child, became pregnant approximately three months later on June 15. She bore Heber Kimball seven children between 1846 and 1858. Lucy Walker became pregnant about three months after her February 8, 1845, marriage to Kimball. She gave birth to nine of Kimball’s children between 1846 and 1864. Sarah Ann and Lucy were able to conceive, despite being married to a man cohabiting with up to eighteen women and probably more.

According to Quinn's theory however, since Heber C. Kimball fathered many children by his plural wives, he must have experienced less sexuality than Joseph Smith. The fact that Kimball could have cohabitated without the need for secrecy and without resistance from his legal wife Vilate would naturally have facilitated such relations. Yet if more relations means fewer children (lower sperm counts), then Kimball must have had fewer relations. The argument seems specious when applied to the Prophet’s situation.

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2, 1838 – August 12, 1909); Don Carlos Smith (1840 Died at 14 months); David Hyrum Smith (November 17, 1844 – August 29, 1904). A misreading of Joseph Smith’s journal for December 26, 1842 has resulted in the supposition that Emma suffered a miscarriage that day. The History of the Church records: "I found my wife Emma sick. She was delivered of a son, which did not survive its birth." (5:209.) Further scrutiny of the original text indicates a more correct transcription should read: "Sister Emma sick, had another chill." (Scott H. Faulring, ed. An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989, 258.)

203 Sarah’s first child, David Kimball, was born March 8, 1846.
204 Rachel Sylvia Kimball was born January 28, 1846; assuming a full term birth, conception occurred on approximately May 7, 1845.
Other examples include Malissa Lott, who was sealed to Joseph Smith in September 1843, married Ira Jones Willes on May 13, 1849. Their first child was born April 22, 1850, with conception occurring approximately July 30, 1849 (or eleven weeks after the wedding ceremony). Seven Willes children were born between 1850 and 1863. Emily Partridge bore Brigham Young seven offspring between 1845 and 1862. Her sister Eliza married Amasa Lyman and together they had five children between 1844 and 1860. Several other plural wives, like Louisa Beaman, Martha McBride, and Nancy Winchester, also remarried and became pregnant. The obvious fertility of many of Joseph Smith's plural wives who later became spouses to other polygamous husbands is impressive.

Reviewing all of the available evidence supports that sexual relations did occur, but were not common. Any assertions of frequent conjugality are based upon speculation.

*Joseph Smith to Whitneys Letter (21)*

Quinn also refers to a letter from Joseph Smith to Newel K. Whitney, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, and Sarah Ann Whitney, on August 18, 1842 saying: "Written to his new bride three weeks after their wedding, there was a subtext of sex in his letter's use of 'lonely,' and 'great relief, of mind' (with its unnecessary comma), and of 'lonesome'." 205 (36). The entire text is reproduced below to allow readers to determine if they can identify a “subtext of sex” within it:

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Dear, and Beloved, Brother and Sister, Whitney, and &c.—

I take this opportunity to communicate, some of my feelings, privately at this time, which I want you three Eternally to keep in your own bosoms; for my feelings are so strong for you since what has passed lately between us, that the time of my absence from you seems so long, and dreary, that it seems, as if I could not live long in this way: and if you three would come and see me in this my lonely retreat, it would afford me great relief, of mind, if those with whom I am allied, do love me, now is the time to afford me succour, in the days of exile, for you know I foretold you of these things. I am now at Carlos Graingers, Just back of Brother Hyrams farm, it is only one mile from town, the nights are very pleasant indeed, all three of you can come and see me in the fore part of the night, let Brother Whitney come a little a head, and knock at the south East corner of the house at the window; it is next to the cornfield, I have a room entirely by myself, the whole matter can be attended to with most perfect safety, I know it is the will of God that you should comfort me now in this time of affliction, or not at all; now is the time or never, but I have no need of saying any such thing, to you, for I know the goodness of your hearts, and that you will do the will of the Lord, when it is made known to you; the only thing to be careful of; is to find out when Emma [Smith] comes then you cannot be safe, but when she is not here, there is the most perfect safety: only be careful to escape observation, as much as possible, I know it is a heroic undertaking; but so much the greater friendship, and the more Joy, when I see you I will tell you all my plans, I cannot write them on paper, burn this letter as soon as you read it; keep all locked up in your breasts, my life depends upon it. one thing I want to see you for it is to get the fulness of my blessings sealed upon our heads, &c. you will pardon me for my earnestness on this subject when you consider how lonesome I must be, your good feelings know how to make every allowance for me, I close my letter, I think Emma [Smith, his first wife] wont come tonight[,] if
she dont dont fail to come to night. I subscribe myself your most obedient, and affectionate, companion, and friend.206

Several observations argue against Quinn’s allegation regarding a “subtext of sex.” Besides requesting “comfort,” Joseph Smith asks the three Whitneys to afford him “relief of mind,” and “succor.” None of these words seems to naturally carry an erotic connotation. An examination of twelve other separate usages of the word “comfort” or “comforted” by Joseph Smith in his available speeches and writings fails to identify even one that carried an erotic overtone.207 In addition, intermixed with Joseph’s pleas for a consoling visit were triple references to all three of the Whitneys. His message was directed to the parents, as well as Sarah Ann, who was not singled out at any time. It is also questionable whether Joseph would have been so audacious as to allude to a sexual encounter in front of his plural wife’s parents.

In the letter Joseph also refers to his desire to “get the fullness of my blessings sealed upon [their] heads,” an allusion to eternally sealing Newell and Elizabeth’s own marriage. Apparently, the threesome did not join the Prophet that night. Todd Compton explained: “There are evidently further ordinances that Smith wants to perform for the Whitneys. This is not just a meeting of husband and plural wife; it is a meeting with Sarah’s family, with a religious aspect. .

206 Joseph Smith, Jr., to Newel K. Whitney, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, etc., 18 August 1842, CHL; copy of holograph in possession of the author. The text and the signature of this document are in the handwriting of Joseph Smith, Jr. This document has been reproduced in Dean C. Jessee, The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Utah: Deseret Book Co., 1984), pp. 539-40.

. . Three days later, on August 21, Newel and Elizabeth Whitney were sealed to each other for time and eternity.”

**Lucinda Pendleton (37-39)**

Quinn affirms that Joseph Smith also experienced sexual polyandry with Lucinda Pendleton, legal wife of George Washington Harris. Quinn corrects an error in my publications wherein I state that Joseph Smith and Lucinda first met in March of 1838. In fact, as Quinn points out, they probably met over five months earlier when Joseph Smith visited Far West, Missouri, from "the latter part of October or first of November" until shortly after 10 November 1837. Whether in October of 1837 or March of 1838, the exact date of their initial meeting is of small importance.

In support of this 1830s dating scheme, Quinn wrote: “Andrew Jenson's research notes stated in early 1887 that Brigham Young's widow 'Harriet Cook Young is positive that [Lucinda] was married to Joseph in Missouri”’ (37). Quinn quotes Cook accurately, but fails to examine the reliability of her recollection. Harriet’s information must have been secondhand because she was not a member of the Church during the Missouri period, being baptized on May 1, 1842. A year after her baptism, on November 2nd, 1843 she was sealed to Brigham Young and became one of the Nauvoo’s polygamy inner circle. However, it is significant that neither Malissa Lott, nor Eliza R. Snow, included Lucinda as plural wife of the Prophet. Her name is conspicuously absent from the list of twenty-six plural wives they helped create for Jenson. It is possible that

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210 Andrew Jenson Papers [ca. 1871-1942], MS 17956; CHL, Box 49, Folder 16, second document.

211 Andrew Jenson Papers [ca. 1871-1942], MS 17956; CHL, Box 49, Folder 16, first document.
Harriet was privy to knowledge that neither Malissa nor Eliza possessed. However, this seems less likely because Eliza was arguably the best informed of all of Joseph Smith’s plural wives concerning his polygamous relationships. Also, Harriet (d. 1898) and Eliza (d. 1887) both lived at the Lion House in Salt Lake City. That the two could have coexisted under the same roof for dozens of years and never discussed Harriet’s private knowledge of Lucinda, knowledge Harriet later freely shared with Andrew Jenson, seems less probable.

Quinn also observed:

Although Todd Compton, Gary James Bergera, George D. Smith, and I have suggested that her polygamous marriage to the Prophet occurred on an unknown date between 1838 and 1842, Hales emphasized "the first half of the year 1837" in one publication--a year after he published a contrary statement that "the most likely time and place appear to be in 1842." All of us, however, ignored the 1985 analysis by John E. Thompson. He pointed out that Lucinda's marriage most likely occurred during Joseph Smith's visit (without his legal wife) to Far West, Missouri in November 1837, rather than in 1838 when he and Emma Smith stayed with Lucinda and her second husband there. (37)

Quinn’s reference to John E. Thompson 1985 paper entitled “The Mormon Baptism of William Morgan: The Philalethes” is puzzling. Thompson quotes Wilhelm Wyl’s alleged statement from Sarah Pratt:

Mrs. [Lucinda Pendleton Morgan] Harris was a married lady, a very great friend of mine. When Joseph had made his dastardly attempt on me. I went to Mrs. Harris to unbosom my grief to her. To my utter astonishment, she said laughing heartily: "How foolish you are! Why I am his mistress since four years."

Despite the numerous credibility problems with this quotation, Thompson treats it as reliable and expands his theory, which is based upon it, by adding a “must have,” two “may be’s,” a “may have been,” and an “apparently,” ultimately concluding: “Joseph stayed with the Harrises during this visit to Far West in the fall of 1837 and that he took Lucinda, now 36, to his bosom.” Thompson asserts that in just a few days after their initial introduction in late October or early November, Joseph taught George and Lucinda Harris about the restoration of Old Testament plural marriage and converted them to the principle. In addition, Joseph extended the discussion to somehow justify the non-Biblical practice of polyandry—a plurality of husbands—and then married Lucinda with George’s permission (or without his knowledge), all before his departure on November 10th. In his treatise Thompson could be connecting the dots revealing new and useful insights into the relationships between Joseph Smith, George and Lucinda Harris or he could be drawing extreme conclusions based upon limited and ambiguous historical evidences. There does not appear to be any solid evidence to support any of the multiple assumptions employed in this reconstruction.

Quinn also cites another secondary source, a second article by John E. Thompson, this time accompanied by Michael S. Riggs, entitled "Joseph Smith, Jr., and `The Notorious Case of Aaron Lyon': Evidence of Earlier Doctrinal Development of Salvation for the Dead and a Trigger for the Practice of Polyandry?" The paper outlines how Aaron Lyon, a Church leader in Guymon’s Mill, Missouri in the early 1830s encountered a Church member, Sarah Jackson, whose civil husband had sent her ahead to live there with a Brother Best until he could arrive.

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After a time, Aaron Lyon convinced Sarah that her husband was dead and consequently, she was free to marry him. Before the nuptials could occur, however, Sarah’s legal husband returned to claim his wife. Lyon was called up for Church discipline where his license was revoked “in consequence of his being considered not capable of dignifying that office.” 216

After reviewing their evidences, the two writers conclude: “The incident between Aaron Lyon and Sarah Jackson was the likely trigger that stimulated Joseph Smith’s receptiveness to consider ‘taking another man’s wife.’” 217 The authors are entitled to their opinion, but their conclusion is problematic for several reasons. First, there is no supportive evidence. It is pure speculation to assert what Joseph Smith was thinking or what his “receptiveness to consider” might have been. The authors presuppose that in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith accepted a “plurality of husbands,” but as pointed out, all known references to polyandry from the Prophet and all of his contemporaries condemn the practice. Second, while a polyandrous situation might have occurred if Lyon had wed Jackson before the return of her legal husband, none of the possible participants were considering polyandry as an acceptable practice. The absent legal husband did not know what was happening and both Sarah Jackson and Aaron Lyon thought he was dead. Polyandry would have been an unanticipated consequence. Nothing in the record supports that it would have been tolerated by Church members once discovered. Third, even though polyandry did not occur, its possibility brought Church discipline to Aaron Lyon for his attempt to orchestrate the marriage to Jackson. That such an episode could have prompted Joseph to see the dynamic in a favorable light seems less likely. The theory presented by Riggs and Thompson that the Aaron Lyon

episode may have prompted Joseph Smith to think about polyandry is intriguing, but is without any documentary support and seems to require mind-reading across many decades of history.

Quinn criticizes my interpretation of the evidences surrounding the relationship between the Prophet and Lucinda: “…multiple fallacies are involved in part of Hales' argument against the marriage of Lucinda Pendleton Morgan Harris to Joseph Smith in 1837-38” (104fn204). Perhaps the easiest way to assess whether this is true is to look at all the known evidence connecting Joseph Smith with Lucinda Pendleton. This is posted on my website\textsuperscript{218} and in volume two of \textit{Joseph Smith’s Polygamy: History and Theology}. It consists of four quotations, two proxy ordinances, and an observation. If Quinn or other researchers are aware of other useful data beyond that provided here, they have yet to reference it. Unfortunately, each evidence reflects its own weaknesses and ambiguities.

\textsuperscript{218} \url{www.JosephSmithsPolygamy.com}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Willard Richards</td>
<td>&quot;dined at Sister Agness. with Joseph &amp; Sister Harris.&quot;</td>
<td>January 17, 1842, Willard Richards, Journal.</td>
<td>&quot;Sister Agness&quot; is Agnes Coolbrith who was sealed to Joseph on January 6th, 1842. The significance of Sister Harris’s attendance is unclear.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nauvoo Temple proxy marriage to Joseph Smith, January 22, 1846</td>
<td>Lisle Brown, <em>Nauvoo Seatings, Adoptions, and Anointings</em>, 282.</td>
<td>Not all women sealed by proxy to Joseph Smith in the Nauvoo Temple (1845-1846) were married to him during his lifetime. A documented example is Cordelia Cox.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilhelm Wyl reportedly quoting Sarah Pratt in 1886</td>
<td>Mormon Portraits. Salt Lake City: Tribune Printing and Publishing Company, 1886, 60.</td>
<td>The reliability of both Wyl and Sarah Pratt is problematic. &quot;Mistress&quot; is a strange reference if she was a plural wife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Jenson quoting Harriet Cook Young</td>
<td>&quot;Lucinda Harris biographical information sheet,&quot; Document #2, Andrew Jenson Papers, MS 17956, Box 49, fd. 16.</td>
<td>Eliza R. Snow did not list Lucinda as a plural wife of Joseph even though she was more knowledgeable regarding his plural sealings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Jenson interviews with Eliza R. Snow and Malissa Lott</td>
<td>&quot;First list of plural wives,&quot; Document #1, Andrew Jenson Papers, MS 17956, Box 49, fd. 16.</td>
<td>It is probable that Eliza knew of Harriet Cook’s information, but she did not list Lucinda as one of Joseph Smith’s plural wives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Jenson</td>
<td>&quot;Lucinda Harris, also one of the first women sealed to the Prophet Joseph.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Plural Marriage,&quot; <em>Historical Record</em> 6 (July 1887): 233.</td>
<td>Jenson’s notes indicate this declaration is based upon Harriet Cook’s comment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proxy sealing to Joseph Smith, April 4, 1899</td>
<td>Under the direction of President Lorenzo Snow, Salt Lake Temple Sealing Records, Book D, 243, GS film, 184,590, LDS Family History Library.</td>
<td>This was likely performed as a consequence of Jenson’s listing in his 1886 article. Repetition of this ordinance was unnecessary due to the Nauvoo Temple record.</td>
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By reviewing the historical evidences above, observers are positioned to make their own determinations regarding several dynamics: (1) whether Joseph Smith and Lucinda Pendleton experienced a romantic relationship; (2) whether she was ever his plural wife; (3) when and where the purported plural marriage ceremony was performed; and (4) whether sexual polyandry occurred. Due to the ambiguities and contradictions, researchers’ conclusions will depend to some degree, on the assumptions they are willing to accept and those they reject. Quinn demonstrates his willingness to accept multiple assumptions by asserting:

Although Lucinda Harris gave birth to no known children after 1837, having the Prophet as an extra sperm-donor increased her chances (and her legal husband's) of being honored with a child.
This is undoubtedly why George W. Harris stood as proxy for Lucinda's sealing to Joseph Smith at the first opportunity to do so, eighteen months after his martyrdom in June 1844. (39)

Quinn here manifests a willingness to accept dubious documents so long as they tell the story he supports. He also declares what “undoubtedly” motivated George W. Harris in 1846, which goes beyond the evidence.

**Previously Undisclosed Historical Documents (39)**

At this point, Quinn presents new evidences:

I want to examine documentary evidence for sexual polyandry that Brian Hales has not mentioned in today's presentation (nor in his previous publications and presentations about these matters). Until today, I have not discussed three of the following diary-references with anyone during the forty-one years since I discovered them in 1971. I regarded these documents as so sensational, that they required a significant context and detailed overview before I would even consider talking about them… Thus, I am now ending my untypical silence and self-censorship about one particular controversy in Mormon history. (39-40)

The three “sensational” documents apparently involve a dream interpreted by Willard Richard, an account of Augusta Cobb, and another dream of Brigham Young.

**Willard Richards' Wife's Dream (40-42)**

On three pages Quinn discusses a brief excerpt from a dream of the wife of Apostle Willard Richards, who was unacquainted with Joseph Smith and lived hundreds of miles away. Richards described the contents of the dream on January 21, 1842:
Joseph & woman sitting in a chair pulling of[f] her stocking. Little boy in the old wives-lap interrupted.\textsuperscript{219}

Quinn interprets these two sentences as saying that Richards’ wife “envisaged the Prophet in this compromising situation with the mother of a young child”\textsuperscript{220} (40). He also elaborates: “Having never met Joseph Smith, nor visited Nauvoo by January 1842, she dreamed/imagined/intuited that one of the city's young mothers was undressing while ‘sitting in a chair’ with the Prophet” (41).

Quinn’s inclusion of this dream sequence in his paper is surprising. No matter how it is framed, a dream of a woman who had never met the Joseph Smith would generally not be considered strong evidence supporting anything regarding him, including allegations of sexual polyandry.

\textbf{Augusta Cobb (42)}

In his MHA presentation, Quinn also mentioned another possible example of sexual polyandry involving Augusta Cobb who was sealed to Brigham Young on November 2, 1843:

\ldots as early as February 1842, Senior Apostle Brigham Young began performing ceremonies that united Joseph Smith in some way with women who were already married to other men. Then, on 2 November 1843, Joseph united Brigham with already-married Augusta Adams Cobb, who had abandoned "her husband and five of her children in Boston" to travel with Brigham to Nauvoo.

\textsuperscript{219} Quinn reports the source as: “Willard Richards journal, 21 January 1842, LDS Church History Library (where it is currently restricted), with transcript available to the public in my Research Files, Beinecke Library.”

\textsuperscript{220} Quinn acknowledges that his transcription of Williard’s journal differs from one previously made by Leonard Arrington: “The tightly written words-letters of Willard's original holograph are transcribed somewhat differently in Folder 1, Box 15, Series IX, Leonard J. Arrington Collection, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah (i.e., ‘Joseph a woman’ and ‘in the old womans lap.’) After re-examining the original in 2012, I can see why Arrington's transcription of the mid-1970s stated those variants, but I think the quote in my current comments is what Richards intended and what his handwriting indicated.” Claiming to know “what Richards intended” is of course problematic.
Thus, this apostle had direct knowledge of whether sexual intercourse was authorized by the secret ceremony uniting an already-married man with a woman who was already married to another husband. (42)

It is unclear why Quinn included these comments in his discussion of sexuality and sexual polyandry. While Augusta (and Brigham) apparently ignored her legal marriage as they were sealed in plural marriage and thereafter may have engaged in connubial relations, Augusta was obviously not experiencing polyandrous conjugal relations with her legal husband who was still in Boston.

**Brigham Young's Dream (42-44)**

The third "undisclosed historical document" introduced by Quinn involves another dream, this one described by Brigham Young. Current historical research has yet to uncover any specific documentation regarding a plural marriage “test” for Brigham Young, like those that occurred to Heber C. Kimball and John Taylor. However, Quinn hypothesized that in the fall of 1843, Joseph sought to either test Brigham Young by demanding Brigham's legal wife, Mary Ann Angell Young, as a plural wife (or sexual partner) and that that alleged mandate prompted an unsettling dream:

> Brigham recorded his dream in which he, his legal wife, and the Prophet were traveling in a covered carriage: "Br Joseph Smith sat on the Back Seat with my wife [--) he whispered to hir [her--) Sead [said] it was wright [right] if she was a mind to [--] nothing more past [passed] betwen [sic] them." Then, in the dream, she disappears and is next seen as a corpse in a hearse.

(42)

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222 John Mills Whitaker, Autobiography and Journals, 1883-1960, MS 1356, LDS CHL, Reel 1, entry dated November 1, 1890, Whitaker's typed version was apparently based on his shorthand original.
Quinn explains:

Brigham's troublesome dream on 2 December 1843 was not simply expressing a generalized feeling of jealousy about the Prophet's interest in his wife Mary Ann Angell Young. During a meeting of Church President Wilford Woodruff with the apostles in the Salt Lake Temple on 25 June 1896, there was a discussion about "certain trials or tests to which Prests. B. Young and Jno. Taylor were put by Prest. Joseph the Prophet in Nauvoo, as the plurality & Quinn, Eternity of the M. [Marriage] covenant was being revealed. Also what Emma was commanded to abstain from, and O. Hyde's trial also"…Therefore, it is not stretching the evidence, but contextualizing it, to conclude that Young's dream in December 1843 referred to the Prophet's "test" of asking for Brigham's wife to become Joseph's. (42-44)

Quinn’s interpretation is problematic. Without presenting any documentation (and none seems to exist), he claims Joseph Smith possessed an “interest in his [Brigham's] wife" causing a "feeling of jealousy" in Brigham. Quinn then quotes Franklin D. Richards’ reference to some of the tests that Joseph Smith created for the apostles to ascertain their faith. For example, Joseph requested Heber C. Kimball’s wife Vilate. When Heber relented, Joseph revealed it was just a test and Heber and Vilate were ultimately sealed together. Similarly, when the Prophet demanded John Taylor’s wife Leonora and he agreed, Joseph did not marry her (see below). In contrast, this cryptic dream is supposed to support, not a test, but a genuine demand to

223 Franklin D. Richards Diaries –1896 Bk [June 25, 1896]: CHL
224 An additional evidence presented by Quinn is from an 1854 reference from Jedediah M. Grant who was later a member of the First Presidency taught: “Did the Prophet Joseph want every man's wife he asked for? He did not, but in that thing was the grand thread of the Priesthood developed. The grand object in view was to try the people of God, to see what was in them… A man who has got the Spirit of God, and the light of eternity in him, has no trouble about such matters” (Jedediah M. Grant, Journal of Discourses, 2:14, February 19, 1854) (56). Grant’s statement implies that the Prophet may have approached a man, asking to marry his wife and then did so. However, no evidence has ben found to support that Joseph Smith ever completed the process. That is, no documentation exists showing that the Prophet asked a male follower for his wife and then married her as a plural spouse.
Brigham allowing Joseph to marry (or have sexual relations with) his legal wife Mary Ann Angell.

Quinn then observes:

Orson Hyde’s trial was the discovery that (while he was on a mission to Europe and Palestine in 1842) Joseph Smith had polygamously married his wife Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde. After Orson returned to Nauvoo, he learned that fact, accepted it, received plural wives of his own beginning in February 1843, and he assented to the re-performance of Marinda's marriage to the Prophet as a sealing for ‘time and eternity’ in May 1843 (43).

It is true that there are two sealing dates for Joseph Smith and Apostle Orson Hyde’s legal wife, Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde. The earliest, April 1842, supports a sealing ceremony over a year after Orson left Nauvoo on his mission to Palestine. If this date was accurate, Orson’s test would have occurred upon his return and would contrast the tests of Heber C. Kimball, John Taylor, and possibly Brigham Young who were actively involved. The second sealing date, May 1843, was months after Orson’s return. The reason for two sealing dates is unknown.

Regardless, Quinn affirms one or both of the sealing ceremonies were for “time and eternity” (with sexuality) rather than “eternity only” (without sexuality), which is based upon conjecture. There is no evidence of sexual relations in that relationship. Precisely how these sealing dates may have related to Orson Hyde’s “test” is unknown.

In addition, Quinn's explanation of the dream, as with many dream interpretations, is highly speculative. Prominent psychiatrist and author, Carl Jung, noted that "Usually a dream is a strange and disconcerting product distinguished by many 'bad qualities,' such as a lack of logic, questionable morality, uncouth form, and apparent absurdity or nonsense… it is not possible,
except under very special conditions, to work out the meaning of a dream without the
collaboration of the dreamer."²²⁵ Hence, without Brigham Young's involvement, it would be
very difficult to accurately discern the meaning of the symbols in the dream or to know if any of
them truthfully represented real or imagined tensions in his life at that moment.

Caution must be exercised and interpretations of indisputable accuracy are beyond the reach of
researchers. Was Brigham's dream projecting his general repulsion to plural marriage upon
Joseph Smith, or was the dream a reaction to a specific test issued by the Prophet? Did the
dream portray Brigham's underlying fears about Mary Ann’s possible attraction to another man
or Joseph Smith specifically? Or did Brigham sense that, presented with the situation he
described in the dream, Mary Ann would have preferred death to polygamy? There is no way of
knowing. However, it is interesting that Brigham's dream finished with his wife as a "corpse in
a hearse." He related that upon learning of the need to practice plural marriage, "it was the first
time in my life that I had desired the grave, and I could hardly get over it for a long time. And
when I saw a funeral, I felt to envy the corpse its situation, and to regret that I was not in the
coffin."²²⁶

Brigham Young’s dream supports sexual polyandry only if observers are willing to accept
numerous assumptions.

Martha McBride Knight (43)

Quinn also asserts sexual polyandry in the case of Martha McBride Knight whose husband,
Church Bishop Vinson Knight, died July 31, 1842. Sometime prior to that date, he married a

²²⁶ Brigham Young, July 14, 1855, Journal of Discourses, 3:266.
polygamous wife with Joseph Smith’s permission. Virtually nothing is known regarding this plural union or the surrounding dynamics.

Vinson Knight’s legal wife, Martha McBride Knight, was also a polygamy insider. Plurally wed to Joseph Smith within a few months of Vinson’s death, the precise date of the sealing is controversial. If it occurred before his demise, then Martha was a polyandrous wife at least from a ceremonial point; if after, then she experienced consecutive marriages. Unfortunately, Martha signed an affidavit on July 8, 1869 affirming her sealing to Joseph Smith “in the summer of 1842,”\footnote{Martha McBride, July 8, 1869, copied in Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books, 2:36; 3:36. See also Joseph Fielding Smith, \textit{Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage}, 86.} which does clarify the issue. The remaining evidences are contradictory. For example, family biographer Brent J. Belnap’s 1995 biography of Martha states: “Sometime during the summer of 1842 (one source states this was before the death of Vinson Knight), Martha McBride Knight was married polygamously to Joseph Smith, Jr. by Heber C. Kimball.”\footnote{www.belnapfamily.org/martha_McBride_Knight_DUP_Biography_1995, (accessed October 24, 2013).} This late narrative does not identify the “one source” so its reliability is unknown. In contrast, Todd Compton wrote in 1997: “I assume that the marriage was in August. This date is corroborated by her obituary: ‘in August, 1842, she was sealed to the Prophet, Joseph Smith in the Nauvoo Temple [sic.]’ Quinn . . . opts for an early summer date for the marriage, which would give us one more polyandrous relationship. However, I prefer not to posit a polyandrous marriage unless evidence is conclusive, and the obituary supports the August date.”\footnote{Compton, \textit{In Sacred Loneliness}, 724. He is citing Quinn \textit{The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power}, 189.}

Despite the dating contradictions, Quinn declares: “Bishop Knight in 1842 seemed to receive a plural wife in exchange for allowing his legal wife to become Joseph's polygamous wife…

\footnote{227}
Whether we call this "polyandry" or "proxy husband," or "exchange of women," Knight died on 31 July 1842” (43-44).

Quinn’s reconstruction is problematic. While obituaries can be wrong, he readily accepts the earlier date without investigating the reliability of the “one source” supporting his preferred chronology. If Belnap’s “one source,” was in fact Quinn (as referenced by Compton) who offers no historical evidence to support his interpretation, then polyandry in this relationship would be entirely undocumented.

Another problem stems from idea that Joseph Smith would have required Vinson to give him Martha “in exchange,” either as a plural wife or sexual companion, as a condition for Vinson to marry pluraly. Most Nauvoo polygamists did not want to participate in polygamy in the first place. So to believe that Vinson would have been enticed by the offer of receiving a plural wife in exchange for giving Martha to Joseph may exalt sexuality (in Vinson’s and Martha’s emotional priorities) above the reality experienced by them. Martha had been Vinson’s wife for sixteen years, with whom he had had eight children between 1827 and 1841. How readily either Vinson or Martha would have participated is unknown, but it could be argued that adopting sexual polyandry and sexual polygyny (as Quinn describes) would not have felt natural to any monogamous couple who loved each other.

In addition, Quinn affirms sexuality between Joseph and Martha, which is pure speculation. Martha was not called to testify in the 1892 Temple Lot case even though her Salt Lake City residence was closer to the deposition room than two of the three witnesses called. All three of the plural wives called to testify affirmed sexual relations with Joseph Smith as his plural wives. According to Compton: "We know virtually nothing about what Martha's and Joseph's married
life was like, and little is known about Martha's life in Nauvoo from the time of Vinson's death to
Joseph's.”

To accept Quinn’s assessment, readers must assume that the pre-July 31st date for her sealing to
the Prophet is correct. They must also assume that he was able to teach them both of sexual
polygyny and sexual polyandry and convert them to the idea. Also observers are required to
assume that Joseph Smith accepted the non-doctrinal “exchange” of women and implemented it.
Then they assume that polyandrous sexuality occurred with no one ever mentioning it
afterwards. There is no supportive data for the last three assumptions. From a documentary
standpoint, Quinn’s interpretation is tenuous at best.

**Leonora Cannon Taylor (44-48 fn244-62)**

The plural marriage "test" of John Taylor, who died in 1877, was outlined in a November 1,
1890 discourse by Wilford Woodruff and recorded by John Mills Whitaker, one of Taylor’s
sons-in-law:

Tonight after my days work, we all attended the regular anniversary Party of President John
Taylor in the 14th ward assembly Hall, at which Presidents Wilford Woodruff and George Q.
Cannon and other of the General Authorities were present, and at which Presidents Woodruff and
Cannon related how President Taylor was tried as Abraham of Old, by the Prophet Joseph Smith
just after the revelation on Plurality of wives was received, at a special meeting of the Twelve
when the prophet explained the revelation to them, a number
of the Twelve were very reluctant
and in fact felt they could not support such a offensive[?] principal, and John Taylor was the only
one who stood up for the Prophet and a short time after this, the Prophet went to the home of
President Taylor, and said to him, “Brother John, I WANT LEONORA, PRESIDENT’S Wife.”

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[O]f all the requests coming from the Prophet, this was the last straw; it is said. John Taylor never answered the prophet, turned away and walked the floor all night, but the next morning, went to the home of the Prophet’s [sic] and said to him, Brother Joseph, IF GOD Wants Leonora He can have her. That was all the prophet was after to see where President Taylor stood in the matter, and said to him, Brother Taylor, I dont want your wife, I just wanted to know just where you stood.231

Quinn comments that Wilford Woodruff’s sermon was "notably silent about Leonora Cannon Taylor's reaction" (44). John Taylor married Leonora Cannon in Canada in 1833, but the account of Wilford Woodruff’s discourse does mention that she was personally aware of the proceedings. Regardless, Quinn continued: "Eighteen years after her death, the anti-Mormon book, Mormon Portraits, reports, quote" (44):

Mrs. Leonora Taylor, first and legal wife of the present head of the church, and aunt of George Q. Cannon, told ladies who still reside in this city, that all the wives of the twelve were, in fact, consecrated to the Lord, that is, to his servant, Joseph ; and that Joseph's demands, and her husband's soft compliance so exasperated her as to cause her “the loss of a finger and of a baby”232 (44-45).

After repeating Wyl, Quinn explained:

This was consistent with Woodruff's later statement that her husband John Taylor acquiesced, but is there any contemporary evidence to support the rest of this hostile report? Yes, Leonora Cannon Taylor wrote a brief "diary"-memoir (with its last date as 28 January 1845) in which she

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231 John Mills Whitaker. Autobiography and Journals, 1883-1960, November 1, 1890; emphasis in original. Whitaker’s typed version was apparently based on his briefer shorthand journal entry for that date, and actually constitutes a "recollection," rather than a contemporaneous record.

repeated those circumstances and affirmed her negative reaction. In her own handwriting, she recorded this concerning the death of her daughter Agnes in 1843 (45).

Quinn then quotes Leonora's autobiography:

1st of May cut my finger with glass it got very bad my dear Child took sick, my sweet baby died on the 9th of Sept. buried the 10th on the 14th I had the middle finger of my left hand taken off, and buried with my Baby, I had many tryals about this time but I am yet alive. 233

Since there is no mention of plural marriage or Joseph Smith in this paragraph, it is unclear why Quinn would declare that it "repeated those circumstances and confirmed her negative reaction" (45). 234 Quinn then explains that after the martyrdom, Leonora “wrote the following version of her reaction to Joseph Smith's proposal of marriage. Written large, these words filled one full page in the small book she used for her pre-1845 memoirs” (45):

Come Joseph

Don't be filling that up with [bolthroshtosh?] how is your garden this year

I'll show you some summer

apples my lady

O Dear 235 (45-46)

233 Leonora Cannon Taylor, Diary, in George John Taylor Papers, [inclusive dates? 1833-1844], MS 2936, LDS Church History Library. See also Carol Holindrake Nielson, The Salt Lake City 14th Ward Album Quilt, 1857: Stories of the Relief Society Women and Their Quilt, 180-82.

234 Quinn criticizes my earlier commentary on statements he has removed in this version: “Hales, ‘Response’ (dated 25 August 2012), 69, wrongly stated: ‘Quinn asserts: “Leonora Cannon was initially free in associating ...,”’ despite the fact that my 'unabbreviated' version (dated "end of July" 2012, which Hales received on August 2nd) stated in the narrative following its note 165: ‘... was initially discreet in associating ...' (as it does now). As a stunning gaffe, Hales substituted a word that reversed the meaning of the phrase he was allegedly quoting” (113 fn 248). Perhaps I was guilty of a “stunning gaffe,” but his description of the alleged “gaffe” is confusing to me and does not seem pertinent to the discussion.

235 D Leonora Cannon Taylor Diary, in George John Taylor Papers, MS 2936, LDS Church Archives
As Quinn correctly describes, these five lines are found on one of the later pages, in very large letters, horizontally across the paper and were penciled at an unknown time. He spends three pages (45-48) discussing them and confidently affirms: "Without going into specifics, this passage contains four phrases or words with sexual meaning that were well established in the English language before thirty-five year old Leonora Cannon left Castleton, England for the new world… Lenora Taylor literally regarded Joseph Smith's proposal as a sexual in nature, not as eternity only" (46).

Quinn's original transcription now housed at Yale, transcribed the indecipherable word as "[bolthroshtosh?]". Which shares several consonant sounds similar to "balderdash," which Quinn disputes as inaccurate (113 en249). To support his overall view he quotes Frankie Rubinstein,' A Dictionary of Shakespeare’s Sexual Puns and Their Significance (London: Macmillan Press, 1989) illustrating other possible sexual double meanings (114 fn251).

However, one reviewer of Rubinstein's work states that it "is both a valuable and controversial compendium of nearly all the sexual and scatological puns one could possibly infer from the words used by Shakespeare" (italics added). Regardless, the question remains whether Leonora also inferred the meanings Quinn asserts or understood such terms. Even if she had, would she have also included them on a leaf in her hand-written autobiography that she penned for a family audience?

While the scribblings include the name “Joseph,” ostensibly Joseph Smith, other possible identities for "Joseph" are not explored. Leonora's five year old son was Joseph James Taylor.

237 "Balderdash" was offered by Don Bradley who also viewed a copy of the original page.
In addition, she had several acquaintances named "Joseph," like Joseph Fielding who was converted (baptized May 9, 1836) in the same month and at the place as Joseph Fielding (baptized May 21, 1836 at Charleton Settlement, Upper Canada). Fielding lived in Nauvoo at that time and was not the only “Joseph,” besides the Prophet, acquainted with Leonora. Considering this possibility, Quinn wrote: “Hales' accurate description of Fielding and of Nauvoo's residents named ‘Joseph’ is absolutely irrelevant, since Joseph Smith Jr. was the only man that Wilford Woodruff publicly and privately claimed had asked for Leonora Cannon Taylor to be his polygamous wife, plus her account to others (as printed in Mormon Portraits)” (115 fn71). Quinn is correct if the scribbled lines, including the word “Joseph,” were written in response to the “test” posed to John Taylor regarding Leonora. However, available historical evidences provide no context for the lines, but Quinn is willing to fill this documentary vacuum by assuring us they were the result of a sexual proposal from Joseph Smith to Leonora by way of her husband John Taylor (48). Wilford Woodruff’s secondhand account that Joseph Smith sought Leonora Taylor as a plural wife says nothing about her involvement in the interaction. It clearly states that it was only a test and that no marriage or relationship occurred. Quinn also quotes Wilhelm Wyl's dubious narrative that Leonora lost a "finger and a baby" due to her "husband's soft compliance," but fails to cite the next two sentences: "The latter she lost by a premature delivery, being at the time in a delicate condition, and in her fury for help, having thrust her clenched fist through a window-pane, lost one of her fingers. Her honor was saved from the attack of Don Juan." 239 Both sources state that conjugal relations did not occur.

In summary, Quinn affirms that Joseph Smith proposed a sexual relationship with Leonora that never happened but because of it and her husband’s tepid reaction, she lost a child and a finger.

239 Wyl, Mormon Portraits, 71; emphasis mine.
and scribbled an incoherent note with sexual double meanings. In addition, she stayed married to Taylor and maintained her belief in Joseph Smith as a prophet. While intriguing and elaborative, it does not appear to be strong evidence of sexual polyandry and it fails to take into account contradictory historical and theological observations.

**Joseph and Emma (51-52)**

In support of sexual polyandry, Quinn alleges that Joseph Smith offered a polyandrous husband to Emma:

As indication of the concealments involved within the text of the July 1843 revelation [D&C 132], Apostle Erastus Snow publicly stated in 1883 (without naming verse 51) that it actually referred to a threat by the Prophet's legal wife:

Emma used her womanly nature to tease and annoy Joseph and went so far as to threaten Joseph that she would leave Him and cohabit with another man and the Lord forbade her in the Revelation.  

Erastus Snow was one of his polygamous confidants: "Among other things[,] the Prophet Joseph Smith personally taught him the principle of celestial and plural marriage." In fact, William Clayton's 1843 journal verifies Snow's reminiscence, plus shows that Emma's threat occurred less than three weeks before the revelation of 12 July 1843: "he [Joseph] knew she was disposed to be

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240 Quoted (without Quinn’s bracketed addition of "e") in Bergera, "Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists," 37 (with his citation on 38n91 to “‘A Sinopsas [sic] of Remarks made by Apostle E[rastus] Snow July 22 [1883] at Nephi [Utah] Sunday evening,’ reported by Thomas Crawley, clerk of the Juab Utah Stake Conference, LDS Church Archives.”

revenged on him for some things. She thought that if he would indulge himself [in plural marriage,] she would too.\textsuperscript{242}

William Law was the Prophet's still-devoted counselor in the summer of 1843, and reminisced in 1887:

Joseph offered to furnish his wife Emma with a substitute for him by way of compensation for his neglect of her, on condition that she would forever stop her opposition to polygamy and permit him [Joseph] to enjoy his young wives in peace and keep some of them in his house and to be well treated etc.\textsuperscript{243}

Excommunicated in April 1844 for his by-then-adamant opposition to plural marriage and residing continuously in Wisconsin since 1866, William Law obviously had no knowledge of Apostle Snow's unpublished sermon in Utah three years before Law's reminiscence.

Because the D&C 132 revelation said that Joseph Smith actually made an "offer" to Emma, the historical context (both contemporary and reminiscent) shows that he countered her threat in June 1843 by giving his permission for her to choose a man with whom she "would indulge." As indicated in my following analysis, verse 51 was not the first instance in which the July 12th 1843 revelation made a veiled reference to polyandry. (51-52)

D&C 132:51 reads:

\begin{quote}
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
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{242} George D. Smith, ed. \textit{An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton}. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995, 108. Quinn adds the bracketed text "[in plural marriage]" to support his theory that she was threatening sexual polyandry.

\textsuperscript{243} "The Mormons in Nauvoo: Three Letters from William Law on Mormonism, \textit{The Daily Tribune}: Salt Lake City, July 3, 1887.
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.

Quinn brings together several references to marital difficulties between Joseph and Emma in the
summer of 1843. He first quotes a secondhand account regarding Erastus Snow’s report that
Emma threatened to “leave Him and cohabit with another man.” Then he cites William Clayton’s
journal for another threat “that if he would indulge himself she would too.” The third is a more
controversial source, a late recollection from anti-Mormon William Law that does not speak of
any threat from Emma, but claims that “Joseph offered to furnish his wife Emma with a
substitute for him.” Then Quinn refers to D&C 132:51, which mentions an “offer” God
commanded Joseph to extend to Emma, but does not disclose what that “offer” represented.
Quinn nevertheless concludes that it must have been sexual polyandry offered by Joseph in
response to Emma’s threats.

Before examining Quinn’s interpretation, additional historical documents not cited by Quinn
could also be reviewed because they deal with these same problems between Joseph and Emma
during this period. For example, Joseph H. Jackson wrote: “[Joseph Smith] said that the truth
was, Emma wanted Law for a spiritual husband… that she wanted Law, because he was such a
‘sweet little man.’”244 Jackson also remembered telling the Prophet: “He and [William] Law
had better swap wives. To which he replied that that was all Emma wanted…” Then Jackson

244 Joseph H. Jackson, A Narrative of the Adventures and Experiences of Joseph H. Jackson in Nauvoo,
Exposing the Depths of Mormon Villainy (1844), reprinted for Karl Yost, Morrison, Illinois, 1960, 21. A
curious sentence in D&C 132:51, which was recorded July 12, 1843, instructs Emma Smith to “stay
herself and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her.” Precisely what Joseph had
previously offered Emma is unknown. One speculation is that perhaps prior to their eternal sealing
ordinance, which occurred on May 28, 1843, Emma had refused to be sealed to Joseph. Perhaps he
offered her a legal divorce, which would have freed her to eternally marry another.
asserted: “He [Joseph Smith] got up a revelation that Law was to be sealed to Emma, and that Law’s wife was to be his; in other words, there was to be a spiritual swap.”

Similarly, Joseph Lee Robinson recalled Emma’s frustrations:

She (Emma) was determined he should not get another [plural wife], if he did she was determined to leave and when she heard this, she, Emma, became very angry and said she would leave and was making preparations to go to her people in the State of New York. It came close to breaking up his family. However, he succeeded in saving her at that time but the prophet felt dreadfully bad over it.

In 1883, Joseph F. Smith also referred to this period where Emma had threatened Joseph:

“Emma repented of having given them [plural wives] to Joseph, and told Joseph that if he would not give them up, she would bring him up before the law and became very bitter.”

July of 1843 was a tumultuous time for Joseph and Emma. An 1854 affidavit from William M. Thompson, who served as a tithing clerk in Nauvoo, described the tension:

I went down to Joseph’s house at intermission on Sunday 9th [or 16th] July 1843; I had some business with him; he and his family were eating dinner. Sister Emma, William Walker, Mother Smith & Young Joseph was present. I invited me to eat dinner & some others that I did not know. Bro Joseph invited me to eat dinner. Bro Joseph & Emma was talking about the mornings sermon. Emma said that he had made some statements that the Brethren & Sisters thought applied to her that was not very complimentary she said she wanted him to apologise or explain in the afternoon after some talk backwards & forwards between Joseph Emma & others at the table, Bro

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247 Comments of Joseph F. Smith, at Quarterly conference held March 3-4, 1883, USHS #64904, page 271; CD manuscripts series 11, reel 2.
Joseph looked at me where I was sitting in the south part of the house he said looking at me at the same time pointing his finger at Emma & said that there woman was the greatest Enamy I ever had in my life. Yes said he again that there woman was the greatest [sic] Enamy I ever had in all my life & my Bro Hyrum was always my best friend.248

Linda King Newell, and Valeen Tippetts Avery assessed: "Thompson's statement about her being the 'greatest Enamy' may well have been his own invention."249 Thompson's recollection is problematic in other ways. Records indicate Joseph Smith only spoke in the morning on July 9th teaching: "I possess the principle of love… if I esteem mankind to be in error shall I bear them down? No! I will lift them up."250 Levi Richards characterized the discourse as "a conciliatory address to Strangers & all."251 These comments are inconsistent with Thompson's reminiscences.

However, if his recollections were off a week chronologically, then events square nicely. The Prophet spoke on the 16th, just four days after Emma rejected the revelation, mentioning a "Mans foes [may be] they of his own house" in his morning discourse.252 Such a statement could have easily been interpreted by Emma as a reference to her. Apparently in Joseph's afternoon remarks, he appeased her concerns by clarifying the identity of the household foes: "Such as

248 Affidavit of William M. Thompson, August 23, 1854, in CR 100 396; LDS CHL.

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having secret enemies in the city—intermingling with the saints.” It may have been a coincidence that the Prophet’s comments referred to family as possible foes. However, in light of his recent experiences with Emma, he may have sought to explicate a private concern in a general meeting. The quotation appears to be from Jesus’ instruction regarding the need to put the Lord first, even over one’s own family:

For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (Matthew 10:35-37; italics added.)

Rather than declaring Emma an enemy or "foe," Joseph’s public preaching may have been an attempt to emphasize to her the Savior’s words concerning our priorities. During the next few weeks, things appeared to go from bad to worse. Clayton recorded on August 16, 1843:

This A.M. Joseph told me that since E[mma] came back from St. Louis she had resisted the P[riesthood] in toto and he had to tell her he would relinquish all for her sake. She said she would [have] given him E[liza] and E[mily] P[artridge], but he knew if he took them she would pitch on him and obtain a divorce and leave him. He however told me he should not relinquish anything.

O God deliver thy servant from iniquity and bondage.

254 George D. Smith, ed. An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995, 117. See also Clayton's Secret Writings Uncovered: Extracts From The Diaries of Joseph Smith's Secretary William Clayton. Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, eds. Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Co., [1982], 24. Anti-Mormon writer Wilhelm Wyl recorded this undocumented view from a “Mr. W.”: “Joseph kept eight girls in his house, calling them his ‘daughters.’ Emma threatened that she would leave the house, and Joseph told her, ‘All right, you can go.’ She went, but when Joseph reflected that such a scandal would hurt his prophetic dignity, he followed his wife and brought her back. But the eight ‘daughters’ had to leave the house.” (W. Wyl, pseud. [Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal]. Mormon Portraits, or the Truth About Mormon Leaders From 1830 to 1886. Salt Lake City: Tribune
Here Joseph plainly mentioned the possibility that Emma might “obtain a divorce and leave him.” Both Joseph and Emma were conflicted in horrifying ways, each of them torn between their spouse and their God. In attempts for each of them to assuage the sufferings, a “threat” and an “offer” had been made.

*Emma’s Threat*

Together, these quotations agree that because of Joseph Smith’s plural wives, Emma threatened him, but the exact nature of the described threats varies.

1. Emma threatened to leave Joseph and “break up the family.”
2. Emma threatened to “indulge” herself in a behavior apparently similar to his plural marriages.
3. Emma threatened to “cohabit with another man.”
4. Emma threatened to “expose” Joseph “before the law.”
5. Emma threatened to “obtain a divorce.”

From the available accounts, it is clear that Emma was prepared to take very drastic measures to alleviate what she felt to be an intolerable situation brought on by Joseph’s plural marriages (and perhaps other factors). However, the interpretation that Emma threatened Joseph with sexual polyandry is problematic for several reasons.

First, Emma would have needed to identify a second husband for her to marry. Finding a man willing to live with her (and Joseph) in a polyandrous triangle might not have been that easy, especially if the Prophet were resistant. The logical candidate is William Law who is mentioned by both Quinn and Joseph H. Jackson. It appears that Emma and William Law shared a

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255 Joseph Smith apparently expressed concerns regarding Emma’s relationships with two men, William Clayton and Joseph H. Jackson. Clayton recorded on May 23, 1843: “President stated to me that he had
special friendship. He recalled in 1885 that at one point: “Mrs. Smith… spoke freely about the revelation [D&C 132] and its threat against her life, etc. She seemed to have no faith in it whatever.” He also remembered: “Emma complained about Joseph’s living with the Lawrence girls [plural wives Sarah and Maria Lawrence given to him by Emma], but not very violently.” Emma was generally known as being proper and private, so if she actually spoke to Law concerning such personal matters, it seems likely that they shared a privileged relationship.

However, in 1887, William Law debunked Jackson’s claims about Law’s involvement in a possible “wife swap” and declared his “immoveable” opposition to polygamy:

You speak of ‘swapping wives,’ and state that you have it from one who knows. Now let me say to you that I never heard of it till I read it in your book. Your informant must have been deceived or willfully lied to you. Joseph Smith never proposed anything of the kind to me or to my wife; both he and Emma knew our sentiments in relation to spiritual wives and polygamy; knew that we were immoveably [sic] opposed to polygamy in any and every form.

256 John K. Sheen asserted in 1889: “I was on only one occasion in the presence of Emma Smith, ‘The Elect Lady,’ and on that occasion I heard her remark: ‘William Law was a good man, but he acted queer in the end.’” (George D. Smith, An Intimate Chronicle; The Journals of William Clayton, p.105.) Six days later the Prophet approached Clayton: “This A.M. President Joseph told me that he felt as though I was not treating him exactly right and asked if I had used any familiarity with Emma. I told him by no means and explained to his satisfaction.” (Ibid. 106.)


258 “The Law Interview,” The Daily Tribune: Salt Lake City, July 31, 1887.

259 “The Mormons in Nauvoo: Three Letters from William Law on Mormonism, The Daily Tribune: Salt Lake City, July 3, 1887. Law added: “The story may have grown out of the fact that Joseph offered to furnish his wife, Emma, with a substitute for him, by way of compensation for his neglect of her, on condition that she would forever stop her opposition to polygamy and permit him to enjoy his young wives in peace and keep some of them in her house and to be well treated” (ibid.; emphasis in original). At the time of this recollection, Law was a determined anti-Mormon. In Joseph’s theology, offering Emma (or any married woman) at “substitute” husband would constitute adultery.
If accurate, visualizing Law as a participant in either a plurality of wives or a plurality of husbands is difficult. Whatever the level of familiarity between Emma Smith and William Law, Apostle Erastus Snow spoke to Charles L. Walker in 1883 explaining that the relationship created problems for the Joseph: “He told Me of Emma’s spite and vindicitiones [vindictiveness] to[w]ard Her Husband, the Prophet, She acting unwisely with William Law and trying to block his way and causing persecution to come upon him instead of being a help and a solace to him in his time of trial and sore affliction.”\textsuperscript{260} It appears that Law would not have served as a plural husband and Quinn offers no other possible candidate, if such could have been found in Nauvoo in the summer of 1843.

Second, true polyandry would have required a formal organization to solemnize the second marriage ceremony through which Emma would have wed an additional husband. Otherwise the relationship would not have constituted a second marriage for her. Polyandry in the context of plural marriage means “multiple husbands.” Emma could not have freelanced the process creating a second genuine spouse. Neither would state or federal governments have sanctioned such a relationship. Essentially, only a secret religious ceremony introduced by Joseph Smith or completely independent of his teachings could have been recognized by the participants as binding. Either option is problematic because, as already discussed, there are no known supportive documents from any source allowing for such unions.

Third, a “threat” of polyandry does not fit the descriptions above. Emma threatened to “leave” Joseph. If this was to include a divorce, then polyandry would not have occurred with her remarriage. If “leaving” represented a geographic separation, then practicing true polyandry

would have been hampered, if not prevented, by the distances involved. Emma also threatened to “break up the family,” but polyandry does not inherently split a family, but actually expands it if both husbands agree to the dynamic. Additionally, Emma threatened to “indulge” herself, but she could not practice polyandry alone. She needed another husband and another marriage ceremony, which, practically speaking, she could not “indulge” in without Joseph’s active participation. If polyandry was condemned and Emma actually married a second husband, Joseph might have been compelled to divorce her and she may have been excommunicated. The quotations also recount that Emma threatened to “cohabit with another man,” which is adultery, not polyandry. Lastly, Emma threatened to “expose” Joseph “before the law.” If Emma entered into polyandry, she would have been just as guilty as Joseph “before the law.”

Fourth, Emma was capable of acting rashly when dealing with Joseph’s plural marriages. Seymour B. Young recalled in 1912 that Emma destroyed that Joseph had given one of his plural wives: “The name of the Prophet's plural wives as I remember them were…and Flora Woodward [sic] to whom he is said to have given a gold locket or watch which was stamped under foot by Emma.” While Emma may, in a moment of frustration, have threatened a polyandrous or adulterous relationship in order to get revenge upon Joseph, it is uncertain whether she would have or could have carried through. Neither is it clear that she had fully contemplated the consequences of such a relationship. Questions of long term marital dynamics and her future happiness emerge.

A fifth concern is the historical evidence supporting that Emma truly believed in the restoration of plural marriage (polygyny), but struggled to obey. In a 1902 statement, Maria Jane

261 Seymour B. Young, Journal, April 2, 1912, CHL, restricted; excerpt copied in D. Michael Quinn Papers—Addition—Uncat WA MS 244 (Accession:19990209-c), Box 1—Card file—Topic: Polygamy, Joseph Smith's.
Woodward, a servant in the Smith’s Nauvoo home, recalled a conversation she had with Emma that occurred the day after Maria overheard an argument between Emma and the Prophet over plural marriage:

… she told me to sit down on the bed by her and we both sat down on the bed that I was making. She looked very sad and cast down, and there she said to me, “The principle of plural marriage is right, but I am like other women, I am naturally jealous hearted and can talk back to Joseph as long as any wife can talk back to her husband, but what I want to say to you is this. You heard me finding fault with the principle [of plural marriage]. I want to say that that principle is right, it is from our Father in Heaven,” and then she again spoke of her jealousy. Then she continued, “What I said I have got to repent of. The principle is right but I am jealous hearted. Now never tell anybody that you heard me find fault with Joseph of [or?] that principle. The principle is right and if I or you or anyone else find fault with that principle we have got to humble ourselves and repent of it.”

If quoted accurately, Emma acknowledged: “The principle is right but I am jealous hearted.” Based upon available evidence, the “principle” referred to could only have been a plurality of wives. As repeatedly observed, there is no documentation to support a plurality of husbands. Yet we are to believe that Emma threatened to practice polyandry, which, in the context of Nauvoo teachings, would have given one more behavior to “repent of”?

In summary, Quinn’s claim that Emma threatened Joseph with polyandry is inconsistent with the known details regarding Emma’s reported behaviors. Available evidence supports that it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for her to initiate such a union by herself in order to

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262 Signed statement by Maria Jane Woodward attached to George H. Brimhall to Joseph F. Smith, April 21, 1902; on Richard E. Turley, Jr. Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Provo, Utah: BYU Press, vol. 1, DVD # 28.
fulfill any threat or promise. Yet if polyandry was not the issue, what other intimidation might Emma have marshaled in order to compel changes in Joseph’s behaviors? The described threats that Emma was going to cohabit in adultery or to “expose” him are less believable. In contrast, the recollections that she might “break up the family” and “obtain a divorce” (with or without an immediate remarriage) seem more consistent with the historical context.

*Joseph’s “Offer” (from D&C 132:51)*

As quoted above, D&C 132:51 speaks of an “offer” that God commanded Joseph to make to Emma, apparently to mitigate some of the suffering brought on by his plural marriages. The specific nature of that “offer” is the focus of Quinn’s discussion; he and other authors affirm it was sexual polyandry. 263 There are several problems with this interpretation. As discussed earlier, the three references to sexual polyandry in the revelation label it “adultery” twice stating that the woman would be “destroyed” (D&C 132:41-42, 61-63). Accordingly it seems less likely that an offer of sexual polyandry would also have been sanctioned elsewhere in the revelation without some doctrinal justification, which was not included.

A second problem is Quinn’s presentation that the “offer” and the “threat” are precisely the same thing: polyandry. The idea that God commanded Joseph to offer something to Emma that, if she participated, would be an “indulgence,” seems contradictory. More likely, Joseph’s “offer” and Emma’s “threat” were different in their specifics, even if they may have been designed to address the same problem then confronting the couple.

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263 At one point, a search on www.LDS.org for “polyandry” brought up D&C 132:51 as a response. It has since been changed. A search for “polyandry” now brings up no direct responses, but hopefully in the future it will provide references to D&C 132:41-42, 61-63..
The third difficulty stems from the notion that offering Emma sexual polyandry would have assuaged the emotional pains introduced by her husband’s sexual polygyny. She had earlier vocalized her disgust with polygyny (in Kirtland, Ohio) and most of the Nauvoo women despised the thought of sharing their husbands with another wife (or wives). So it is less obvious why reversing the genders in the dynamic would have instantly created a desirable marital situation for Emma. She might have felt some immediate vindication and possibly created some jealousy in Joseph. However, assuming that marrying and bedding another husband periodically, as Quinn’s version of sexual polyandry apparently requires, would have counteracted her suffering theologically or emotionally seems superficial (and to over-emphasize the sexual component). Besides, the polyandrous husband (if she could identify one to wed) would probably have married other plural wives eventually, so Quinn’s reconstruction of the proposition really was not polyandry, but network marriage.

Another concern involves Quinn’s interpretation of Erastus Snow’s quote saying Emma did “threaten Joseph that she would leave Him and cohabit with another man and the Lord forbade her in the Revelation.” Quinn assumes that the reference to “cohabit with another man” was a reference to sexual polyandry and also assumes that the “offer” in D&C 132:51 is sexual polyandry. Yet a better explanation of Snow’s reference is supported by assuming “cohabit” meant “cohabit.” Verse 54 directly addresses that behavior:

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 will destroy her if she abide not in my law.
Consequently, there is no need to conflate “cohabit with another man” to sexual polyandry in Erastus Snow’s quotation or to speculate that the undefined “offer” in verse 51 was referring to sexual polyandry.

While it is impossible to conclusively determine the exact nature Joseph’s “offer,” we know it involved Emma and apparently her marital status. It seems that only four possibilities exist. First, Quinn affirms the offer was authorized sexual *polyandry*, the opportunity for Emma to be sealed to another man, giving her two genuine husbands with whom she would confide and experience conjugality. A second view might assume the offer would somehow have granted Emma the right to commit *adultery* without spiritual penalty. Multiple historical and doctrinal problems exist with either of these interpretations (as addressed above).

A third potentiality is that the Prophet might have offered Emma a temporary *separation*, allowing her “to go to her people in the State of New York” for a season, with or without the children.

A fourth possibility may have been for Joseph Smith to “offer” Emma an *uncontested divorce* including a substantial settlement of assets. A review of the Prophet’s recorded statements and revelations fails to identify even one discussion of the topic of divorce.²⁶⁴ However, it is clear that he worried that Emma might seek to obtain one, suggesting that such had been discussed, or at least considered by them individually or jointly.²⁶⁵ An uncontested divorce would have

permanently freed Emma from association with Joseph’s plurality. She might have quickly remarried, perhaps to someone she already knew.  

However, in the mid-nineteenth century, civil divorces were generally difficult to obtain. Justices of the Peace could marry a couple legally, but circuit courts and even state legislatures were sometimes required to unmarry them or grant a divorce. If he ever discussed the subject in any setting, no surviving records of the discussion were made. He was undoubtedly aware of the perceived need for some couples to dissolve their unions, having judged others who were estranged from their legal spouses.

Doubtless, such legal action would have brought scrutiny and criticism to both of them. It is possible that they might have been able to divorce without exposing Joseph’s polygamous marriages, but only if Emma cooperated fully in deflecting pithy inquiries.

The only person mentioned as a possible candidate is William Law, who denied any willingness or knowledge of such a potential relationship. See William Law, “The Mormons in Nauvoo: Three Letters from William Law on Mormonism, The Daily Tribune: Salt Lake City, July 3, 1887 No other man in Nauvoo has been offered by researchers as a possible polyandrous spouse or remarriage husband for Emma.

See for example, Acts of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky Passed at Called Session, August 1840 and at December Session, 1840, Frankfort, KY: A.G. Hodges, 1841, 102, which states: “Chapter 41… Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, That the marriage contract now existing between Susan James and her husband, Thomas M. James, be, and the same is hereby, dissolved, so far as it relates to said Susan James; and she is hereby restored to all the rights and privileges of an unmarried woman. Approved, January 4, 1841.” Other divorces were “enacted” during the two legislative sessions.

For example, in October of 1835, the Prophet was consulted regarding the status of Lydia Goldthwaite Bailey’s marriage to her abusive husband, Calvin Bailey, who had deserted her three years earlier. At that time, Lydia had received a marriage proposal from Newel Knight and didn’t know what to do, since a formal divorce had not occurred. Hyrum Smith acted as an intermediary. Newel Knight recorded: “Bro Hiram came to me said he had laid the affair before Bro Joseph, who at the time was with his council. Broth Joseph after prayor & reflecting a little or in other words enquiring [of the] Lord Said it is all right, She is his & the sooner they [are] married the better. Tell them no law shall hurt [them]. They need not fear either the law of God or man for [it] shall not touch them; & the Lord bless them. This [is the] will of the Lord concerning that matter… I told her all that had transpired, & we lifted our hearts with gratitude to our heavenly Father for his goodness towards us, & that we live in this momentous age, & as did the ancients, so we have the privilege of enquiring through the prophet, & receiveing the word of the Lord concerning/ us.” (Newel Knight, “Autobiography and journal [ca. 1846];” MS 767, Folder 1, item 4, pages 57-58; LDS CHL.) Joseph granted an effectual Church divorce Lydia to remarry without the formality of a civil divorce proceeding.
Whatever the “offer” represented, several observations indicate that Joseph Smith’s properties and other assets were somehow involved. Verses 51 through 56 directly address Emma’s situation and then verse 57 cautions the Prophet saying: “let not my servant Joseph put his property out of his hands.” This is a random reference to “property” unless Joseph’s real estate resources had already been an issue in the conflict with Emma. The day after the revelation was written, Joseph's personal diary records: "In conversation with Emma most of the day."269 William Clayton’s journal for this period expands on this brief entry and includes two references to property and one to an “agreement” that was finally reached:

[July 12, 1843. Wednesday.] This A.M. I wrote a Revelation consisting of 10 pages on the order of the priesthood, showing the designs in Moses, Abraham, David and Solomon having many wives and concubines &c.42 After it was wrote Presidents Joseph and Hyrum presented it and read it to E[mma] who said she did not believe a word of it and appeared very rebellious. **Joseph told me to Deed all the unincumbered lots to E[mma] and the children.** He appears much troubled about E[mma].

[July 13, 1843. Thursday.] This A.M. Joseph sent for me and when I arrived he called me up into his private room with E[mma] and there **stated an agreement they had mutually entered into.** They both stated their feelings on many subjects and wept considerable. O may the Lord soften her heart that she may be willing to keep and abide by his Holy Law…

[July 15, 1843. Saturday.] **Made Deed for 1/2 S[team] B[oat] Maid of Iowa from Joseph to Emma. Also a Deed to E[mma] for over 60 city lots…**270 (bold added).

In addition, William Law remembered that on one occasion, Emma told him: “Joe and I have settle our troubles on the basis of equal rights.”

If the “offer” specified in verse 51 was a divorce, then for her to “stay herself and partake not” of it, she needed to continue in the marriage and perhaps also modify demands regarding a property settlement. This interpretation seems to be the most consistent with the evidence and does not contradict previous commandments. While we do not know when the offer was initially made, we can confidently assume that she had not partaken of it by July 12, 1843, the day the revelation was written. The offer was then withdrawn, but attempts to equate it with adultery or sexual polyandry are problematic and unsupported.

**Lydia Kenyon Carter (48-50)**

Quinn asserts that Lydia Kenyon Carter was a polyandrous wife of the Joseph Smith. Lydia married Simeon D. Carter in 1818 and bore him three children between 1821 and 1826. She was also sealed to Heber C. Kimball on an undisclosed date although she does not appear to have ever lived with him as a wife. Without a legal divorce, she was later sealed to James Goff on June 8, 1851. Evidence for a sealing to Joseph Smith is found in a notation in the Salt Lake Endowment House records that states: "Lydia Smith [--] wd of Joseph Smith (Prophet).” (30) The letters “wd” presumably mean “widow,” thus signifying that she was sealed to the Prophet ostensibly during his lifetime. Other than this single attestation, no additional evidence has been found connecting Joseph and Lydia.

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272 Stanley B. Kimball wrote: “Her [Lydia Kenyon] marriage to HCK [Heber C. Kimball] seems to have been a sealing to become effective only after her death.” 272 Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981, 316. This would be incorrect if Lydia had been sealed to the Prophet for eternity.
Quinn does not discuss Lydia's reported marriage to the Prophet. He instead alleges polyandrous sexuality later in Utah:

In Utah’s special 1856 census, Lydia was listed as residing with Goff in Provo, with Kimball in Salt Lake City, and near Simeon Carter in Box Elder County (but not in the same household with Carter)… Like polygamous men with their co-wives, Lydia Kenyon Carter Smith Kimball Goff obviously did not spend quality time with her respective co-husbands at exactly the same hour, day, week, or month in Nauvoo and in Utah. However, polyandrous cohabitation seemed to be the reality for her husbands, as it was for Joseph Smith with most of his already-married wives. (49)

Quinn’s willingness to assume sexual relations based upon a census record and nothing more is surprising. Census Marshalls generally record names, not sexual connections. In addition, he acknowledges that she was listed "near Simeon Carter," (49) not in his house or bedroom. The credibility and plausibility of Quinn's claims are not strong. Such manuscripts might constitute supplementary evidence of sexual polyandry if more reliable documentation could be found showing it was generally practiced. However, nothing more is offered in this case to validate the alleged occurrence of “polyandrous cohabitation,” nor does it appear that such supportive evidence exists. Importantly, the polyandrous relationship related by Quinn would have constituted adultery under the teachings of that place and time (as discussed in the introduction).

**Quinn asserts Joseph Smith Received “Divine Immunity” to Practice Adultery (50-56)**

After providing his readers with 50 pages of text (and over 63 more pages of single-spaced endnotes) designed to support the existence of polyandrous sexuality and a highly libidinous Joseph Smith, Quinn devotes the last six pages of the essay to explicate “the revelatory basis on which Joseph Smith believed that all his polygamous proposals, ceremonies, and sexual
cohabitations were righteous, not sinful” (50). Of course, there are problems whenever an analyst proposes to tell us the Joseph Smith personally thought or “believed.” The difficulties are compounded here because Quinn’s conclusions ignore a large volume of contradictory evidences.

Quinn implies that Joseph Smith engaged in adulterous (53-54) and/or sexual polyandrous relationships (50, 52, 56), but without sin because he had been granted “divine immunity”:

…the July 12th 1843 revelation repeatedly conferred divine immunity upon Joseph Smith for any "sin" or "transgression" he had committed in the past regarding other women… The revelation also conferred divine immunity from sin, transgression, or earthly condemnation for anything Joseph Smith might do with other women after July 12th 1843. God's words specifically stated that there were no earthly limits to this immunity (52; italics added).

In support of this view, Quinn cites excerpts from verses 19-20, 26, 40-41, 46, 48, 50, 59 of section 132 and claims that those verses relate to a revelation Joseph Smith had written the year previous, a revelation that purported referred to his “divine immunity”:

…each [of the verses in section 132] expanded one provision in the revelation of 27 July 1842 (a document in Joseph Smith's own handwriting). While providing the wording of the ceremony to unite Joseph Smith with 17-year-old Sarah Ann Whitney, God's words stated that this polygamous wife and her husband should "be each others companion so long as you both shall live [--] preser[v]ing youreselv[es] for each other and from all others and also through [o]ut all eternity [--] reserving only those rights which have been given to my servant Joseph by revelation and commandment and by legal Authority in times passed [i.e., past].” The emphasized phrase

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273 Joseph Lee Robinson recalled: “he [Joseph Smith] inquired of the Lord that the Lord told him that he, Joseph, had never committed adultery.” Oliver Preston Robinson ed., History of Joseph Lee Robinson, History Comes Home, 2007, 40. This quotation is dated in the early 1840s, but the journal does not begin daily entries until 1853, suggesting that it was a reminiscence penned at that time.
indicated that only Sarah Ann was required to preserve her affections and her body "from all others," because God had already given revelation, commandment, and "Authority" for Joseph Smith to sexually cohabit with other women as his wives prior to 27 July 1842. As established by multiple sources, most of those previous ceremonies were with already-married women.

(Underlining in Quinn’s original.)

In other words, the “rights” that had been “given” included immunity from sinning should he have engaged in sexual polyandrous and/or adulterous relationships. Quinn elaborates that those “rights constitute ‘Authority for Joseph Smith to sexually cohabit with other women as his wives prior to 27 July 1842’” (55). Then Quinn observes that “…. most of those previous ceremonies were with already-married women” which dovetails nicely with his assumption of sexual polyandry in those relationships (55).

Of course Quinn is entitled to his opinion, but the reference to “rights” in that revelation is entirely ambiguous. The specificity assigned to the reference by Quinn is unfounded from a scholarly viewpoint. An examination of Quinn’s commentary regarding specific verses in section 132 further supports that he advances a very narrow interpretation of available documents.

_D&C 132:19-20, 26_

The first of the reported “divine immunity” references in section 132, according to Quinn, is found in verses 19-20: "... if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law ... and commit no murder ... then shall they be gods ..." Quinn comments: “Because the only exception was murder, these verses included adultery in their provision for spiritual immunity” (52-53). He further supports this explanation by quoting from verse 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. (D&C 132:26; emphasis mine.)

Quinn then explains: “Because the only exceptions in this verse were ‘murder’ and ‘blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,’ adultery was once again included in its provision for immunity” (52-53). He is not the first to propose that these verses offer divine immunity or unconditional salvation to participants. The earliest allegation was published in the Warsaw Message on February 7, 1844, seven months after the revelation was written. An unidentified author of the “Buckeye's Lamentation for Want of More Wives” mocked the idea, attributing it to the Prophet: “He[Joseph Smith]’ll bless you all your lives / He’ll seal you up, be damned you can’t / No matter what you do / If that you only stick to him / He swears He’ll take you through.”274 Four months later, William Law criticized Joseph Smith in the Nauvoo Expositor, accusing him of teaching of “unconditional sealing up to eternal life.”275

Interpretations such as these of verse 26 are not unexpected because of the ambiguities in the verbiage. Its meaning is admittedly confusing and seems to be contradictory when contextualized within all of Joseph Smith’s revelations. Shortly before his death he declared: “I

never told you I was perfect—but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught.”²⁷⁶

Those revelations teach: "If you keep not my commandments you cannot be saved in the kingdom of my Father" (D&C 18:46). "Inasmuch as ye keep not my sayings, which I give unto you, ye become transgressors; and justice and judgment are the penalty which is affixed unto my law" (D&C 82:4). "For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance" (D&C 1:31; see also Alma 45:16). In addition, the condemnation of adultery is universal throughout his revelations and all scripture. D&C 42:24 declares: “Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery, and repenteth not, shall be cast out” (see also Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18, Matthew 5:27, Galatians 5:19, James 2:11, Revelation 2:22, Mosiah 2:13, 13:22, Alma 23:3, 3 Nephi 12:27, D&C 59:6, etc.).

Accordingly, Quinn’s premise that a priesthood sealing (as described in verse 26) conferred “divine immunity” or “spiritual immunity” upon the married couple is problematic because the verse does not so state. Instead, it declares that the sins (except murder and denying the Holy Ghost) that are committed after the sealing ordinance is performed provoke a penalty: “they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption.”²⁷⁷ This is a time for the sinner to repent and be cleansed through the atonement of Jesus Christ. While, the ultimate blessing of exaltation is apparently not compromised, severe negative consequences still result. In his explanation Quinn does not address the issue of whether God was going to destroy Joseph in the flesh and deliver him “to the buffetings of Satan

²⁷⁷ It is curious that the threat of being “delivered over to the buffetings of Satan until the day of redemption” is repeated almost verbatim four times in the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 78:11-12, 82:20-21; 104:1-10, 132:59). All four declarations are associated with breaking an everlasting “covenant” or “order.” However, only in section 132:59, is the promise that after their “redemption” then “they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation.”
until the day of redemption,” or just forgive him for the adulteries and sexual polyandry Quinn says the Prophet committed.

An even greater problem with Quinn’s interpretation of D&C 132:26 is that the described “divine immunity” would not have been exclusive to Joseph Smith, but would have applied to all Nauvoo polygamists (and everyone sealed afterwards). The revelation states: “if man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise,” then they received the benefits, which according to Quinn, include “spiritual immunity” (see also v. 19). However, according to available historical evidence, none of the earliest polygamists, or any thereafter, viewed the revelation as granting this immunity. For example, in a special blessing given to Sarah Ann Whitney eight months after her sealing to the Prophet, Joseph Smith declared: “Oh let [it] be sealed this day on high that she shall come forth in the first resurrection to receive the same. And verily it shall be so saith the Lord if she remain in the everlasting covenant to the end” (italics added).278 Obedience was still expected. Nowhere in Sarah’s behavior or expressions thereafter do we find any evidence that she considered herself to have “divine immunity.”

Similarly, on May 16, 1843 the Prophet told Benjamin F. Johnson: "Nothing but the unpardonable sin can prevent him [Johnson] from inheriting eternal glory for he is sealed up by the power of the Priesthood unto eternal life having taken the step which is necessary for that purpose.”279 However, there is no indication that Johnson considered himself to have received

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“divine immunity” as a consequence his sealing ordinances. In addition, Joseph Hovey and his wife, Martha Ann Webster Hovey, were sealed in the Nauvoo temple on January 16, 1846 and became partakers of the blessings offered in section 132 including verse 26. Martha Ann passed away months later on September 16th and her husband then recorded his desire to remain worthy to rejoin her in heaven: "If I am faithful I anticipate meeting her and embracing her when she comes forth in the morning of the resurrection… My daily prayer is that I may hold out until the end and enjoy the glories of the Celestial kingdom with her and reign with my brethren throughout all eternity." Many other examples can be identified in the historical record. By 1846 before leaving Illinois, hundreds of other Latter-day Saints had been sealed in eternal marriages, both monogamous and polygamous. Nothing in documents from that era suggests that participants believed that the ordinance gave them “divine immunity” or that any leader taught that it did.

After reviewing available historical documents, it appears that Quinn’s interpretation of D&C 132:26 was not shared by early polygamists. If it were valid, then every person married in the new and everlasting covenant, whether monogamous or polygamous, would have been given “divine immunity” to commit any sin (besides murder and denying the Holy Ghost) thereafter without eternal compromise. In 1855, Heber C. Kimball taught that ordinances alone could not save anyone:

Some will come with great zeal and anxiety, saying, "I want my endowments; I want my washings and anointings; I want my blessings; I wish to be sealed up to eternal lives; I wish to

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have my wife sealed and my children sealed to me;" in short, "I desire this and I wish that." What good would all this do you, if you do not live up to your profession and practise your religion? Not as much good as for me to take a bag of sand and baptize it, lay hands upon it for the gift of the Holy Ghost, wash it and anoint, and then seal it up to eternal lives, for the sand will be saved, having filled the measure of its creation, but you will not, except through faith and obedience.  

Additionally, if it were taught in Nauvoo or later in Utah that the ordinance of eternal marriage brought divine immunity to Joseph Smith and all participants, undoubtedly this benefit would have been discussed more widely. Such an astronomical guarantee would probably have been valued more highly than even eternal marriage. After the revelation was published in 1852, potential converts might have flocked to Church membership in order to garner that benefit while religious critics would have aggressively mocked the idea. Neither phenomenon is identified in the late Illinois and Utah periods of Mormon history.

*D&C 132:48*

As examined above, verses 19 and 26 discuss the blessings of eternal marriage to all participants and Quinn affirms that one of those benefits is "divine immunity." He also quotes portions of other verses to support that this "spiritual immunity" was granted exclusively to Joseph Smith, not to every person sealed in eternal marriage. Included is verse 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 (D&C 132:48).

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Quinn quotes a portion of this verse adding brackets: "... whatever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you give any one [i.e., any wife] on earth, by my word and according to my law, it shall be visited with blessings and not cursings..." and then he comments: “...verse 48 not only authorized the Prophet to perform any kind of marriage ceremony he chose, but its use of ‘whatever’ is significant... I do not understand how he [Hales] overlooks the significance of his required word ‘whatever’ in D&C 132: 48. It [represents] unconditionality...”

It seems that Quinn is the one who overlooks the plainly stated limitations found in this verse that qualify “whatever” to be very conditional. Joseph was authorized to “give whatever” with the stipulation that it was to be “by my word and according to my law.” Quinn sees “unconditionality,” but the reference clearly provides parameters to the Prophet’s powers. The sealings must be according to God’s “word” and His “law.” As discussed repeatedly in this exchange, every known reference in the scriptures to adultery and sexual polyandry condemn them as serious sins. Quinn’s interpretation would be strengthened if he could show that either behavior has ever been consistent with God’s “word” or “law.” Otherwise, these constraints would have prevailed in Joseph Smith’s authority, providing negative consequences, not immunity, to “whatever” he “gave” that was not “by [God’s] word and according to [Gods’] law.”

*D&C 132:46, 50, 59*

Quinn also incorporates interpretations of verses 46, 50, and 59 to support that Joseph Smith alone was privileged by God and received “divine immunity” from Him regarding sexual sins. First, Quinn quotes a portion of verse 46: "... and whosoever sins you remit on earth shall be
remitted in the heavens ..." and concludes: “The above verse allowed Joseph Smith to ‘remit’ his own sins” (53).

In addition, Quinn cites part of verse 50: "Behold, I have seen all your sacrifice and will forgive all your sins: I have seen your sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you ..." and comments: “The above verse absolved Joseph Smith of any mistakes (‘sins’) he may have already committed concerning the revelation's main topic of "plural wives and concubines” (54).

Also included is a fragment of verse 59: "Verily, if a man be called of my Father ... 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” with the following commentary: “The above verse absolved Joseph Smith of any mistake or ‘sin’ he might commit in future concerning the revelation's main topic of "plural wives and concubines” (55)

Quinn’s conclusions reflect important weaknesses. He affirms that the references to “sins” in the verses refer to sexual transgressions because “the revelation's main topic [was] of ‘plural wives and concubines’” (55). It is true that the revelation on celestial marriage (D&C 132) was given in response to a question about a “plurality of wives” (v.1). However, in 1833 Joseph Smith asked about the specific use of tobacco during Church meetings. The revelation given in reply discussed a general health code we now call the “Word of Wisdom” (D&C 89) that addresses the use of tobacco in only one verse (v. 8) out of 21. Accordingly, to assume that references to “sins” in the revelation on celestial and plural marriage must deal with sexuality rather than marriage, or even some other more general subject, may not be justified.

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See Brigham Young, JD 12:157-58.
Quinn’s interpretation of these verses from section 132 affirms that Joseph Smith received “divine immunity” that absolved alleged previous sexual sins and provided essentially “carte blanche” to engage in future sexual sins. In support he also quotes two of Joseph Smith teachings, the first from an 1841 sermon: “What many people call sin is not sin; I do many things to break down superstition, and I will break it down”\(^{284}\) (56). The second is from the Prophet’s letter to Nancy Rigdon:

That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another. God said, 
\[\text{thou shalt not kill.} \]--at another time He said, \[\text{thou shalt utterly destroy.}\] This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, NO MATTER WHAT IT IS, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire.\(^{285}\) (123 en 290; emphasis in Bennett’s original.)

Quinn asserts the word “sins” and “whatever God requires” in these multiple references refers to sexual behaviors including to “adultery” (53-54) and “sexual polyandry” (50, 52, 56) that Joseph Smith had committed. This is consistent with Quinn’s overall approach that offers very specific interpretations of the statements that are ambiguous.


In the letter to Nancy Rigdon, Joseph Smith uses the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” as an example of a divine decree that can be changed when God’s plans required it to be altered. For example, Nephi was inspired to kill Laban to fulfill divine purposes, not for his personal entertainment: “Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief” (1 Nephi 4:13).

In contrast, nowhere in the scriptures do find sexual relations permitted outside of a lawful heterosexual marriage – lawful according to God’s laws, which include a solemnized mutual covenant. All other conjugal interactions are consistently condemned. Throughout his article, Quinn fails to provide any unambiguous documentation showing that adultery and sexual polyandry have ever been authorized by revelation. All references to sexual polyandry denounce it as “adultery” (D&C 132: 41-42, 61-63). Similarly, adultery is never allowed: D&C 42:24 declares: “Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery, and repenteth not, shall be cast out” (see also Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18, Matthew 5:27, Galatians 5:19, James 2:11, Revelation 2:22, Mosiah 2:13, 13:22, Alma 23:3, 3 Nephi 12:27, D&C 59:6, etc.). Even lusting brings significant spiritual compromises: “And verily I say unto you, as I have said before, he that looketh on a woman to lust after her, or if any shall commit adultery in their hearts, they shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear” (D&C 63:16).

Quinn’s interpretation regarding Joseph Smith’s purported “divine immunity” might be likened to the owner of a large carnival theme park who gives a faithful employee a pass to ride any ride, partake of any refreshment, play any game, and attend any show without paying and with full immunity regarding any consequences. But Quinn’s view goes beyond this. The employee is also granted the right to shatter glass windows on the boardwalk, to throw rocks at the overhead
lights, to topple the ice cream stand, to sabotage the rides, and to break rules simply because he felt like doing so. He is authorized to ignore regulations that he and all other employees had been previously commanded to obey.

Quinn’s description of Joseph Smith’s “immunity” ostensibly allowed him to engage in sexual sins that are universally condemned in God’s scriptures. He theorizes that the Prophet was such a good guy that he was given permission to explore his libido, not to fulfill God’s purposes, but for his good pleasure. He can sleep with other men’s wives (in sexual polyandry) because he is attracted to those women. He is permitted to commit adulteries according to his hormonal whims. It is a singular interpretation of religious history.

An alternate view to Quinn’s interpretation is that God forgave Joseph Smith regarding his past sins due to his repentance and promised him absolution for future sins based upon His foreknowledge. According to the Prophet’s revelations, God knows “the end from the beginning” (Abraham 2:8) and “knoweth all things” (2 Nephi 9:20; D&C 38:2). This ability to see the future allows deity to promise forgiveness knowing that future transgressions would not be unforgivable upon repentance.

This dynamic occurred to Book of Mormon to the prophet Nephi in the Book of Helaman. Like Joseph Smith, Nephi also received the promise that “all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word”: “I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will… I give unto you power, that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and thus shall ye have power among this people.” (Helaman 10:5, 7). This
assurance is similar to that given to Joseph Smith in D&C 132, but includes an explanation: “thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will.” God here acknowledges that the promise was based upon His foreknowledge.

Perhaps Quinn would assert that this prophet named Nephi could have thereafter declared adultery or sexual polyandry to be acceptable and then it would have been “done unto thee according to [his] word,” allowing Nephi to thereafter indulge in those behaviors. However, God knew that Nephi would not do that which was “contrary to his will.” As we have observed, no evidence has been presented to support that those sexual immoralities have ever been acceptable to God. Therefore, God could foretell that Nephi would not engage in that conduct. Later verses explain how Nephi exercised his power by causing a famine in the land that brought the people to repentance (Helaman 11:3-17). The power given to Nephi was to allow him to accomplish God’s will, not for Nephi’s personal exploitation.

*D&C 132:41*

Consistent with his defense of sexual polyandry in Joseph Smith’s plural marriages, Quinn advances an intriguing interpretation of verse 41, which he quotes with bracketed commentary: "And as ye have asked concerning adultery, 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 [this other man] unto her by the holy anointing, she hath committed adultery ..." (53). Quinn then explains:

NOTE: First, the woman's adulterous violation of ‘the new and everlasting covenant' was included in the immunity described in verse 26: "any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever ... yet they shall enter into their exaltation."
NOTE: Second, the revelation did not discuss the circumstance this verse only implied—when God APPOINTS another man unto a woman who is already married. Consistent with the above verse, there would be NO ADULTERY on the part of the woman or on the part of this other man whom God has "appointed" to be with her sexually. (53-54; emphasis in original.)

While somewhat confusing, Quinn writes that D&C 132:41 declares that “when God APPOINTS another man unto a woman who is already married…there would be NO ADULTERY” (emphasis in original). So in Quinn’s analysis, this verse provides a separate pathway for a woman to engage in either adultery if “another man” she happens to “be with” is not her legal husband, or in sexual polyandry if “another man” is the woman’s civil spouse. All that is needed is for God to appoint “another man unto a woman who is already married.” How these appointments would occur is not delineated.

Quinn's interpretation is problematic for many reasons. First, his version directly contradicts verses 61-63 of the same revelation (also quoted earlier):

And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood--if any man espouse a virgin, and … if one… 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… (D&C 132: 61, 63.)

These verses provide no loophole allowing an “appointment” to permit the woman to be “with another man” after she has been married in “this law of the priesthood.” It seems an interpretation is more likely to be accurate if it takes into account the entire revelation, rather than isolating a verse and proposing an explanation that contradicts later sections.

Second, there is a problem assuming, as Quinn does, that all of the marriages (“in the new and everlasting covenant”) referenced in the verse are for “time and eternity.” A more obvious interpretation is that if the sealing is for “time and eternity,” (i.e. a marriage on earth), then if the
woman is “with another man,” she commits adultery. In contrast, if the woman is appointed as a wife for “eternity only,” (i.e. *not* a marriage on earth), then the she could marry for time (civilly) and raise a family without committing adultery. In neither case is sexual polyandry permitted and the phrase, “appoint unto her” defines the duration of the marriage and whether she is the sealed husband’s wife on earth.

Third, there is no credible historical evidence to support that it every occurred. No documentation has been found showing that Joseph Smith or any Nauvoo polygamists believed or observed a practice that a male could be appointed to a “time and eternity” wife of another man (her eternal husband) and have sexual relations with the non-husband without committing adultery. Such a sexual relationship would have torn at the hearts of the sealed husband and his wife. To assume that such dynamics might have occurred without anyone mentioning it or complaining is less plausible.

In summary, Quinn affirms that God granted Joseph Smith “divine immunity” for adultery and sexual polyandry. He supplies multiple ambiguous statements in verses from section 132, together with a few other historical teachings that are equally vague. By interpreting them narrowly he has presented a view that is historically unsupported, ignores contradictory evidences, and seems unwarranted by the documents themselves.

**ENDNOTE CONSIDERATIONS**

Most of Quinn’s voluminous and informative endnotes discuss details pertinent to and arguments mentioned in his 56 pages of texts. However, several important assertions and observations are found within them that deserve separate consideration.
Quinn declares that Joseph Smith experienced sexual relations with Helen Mar Kimball who was sealed to him when she was fourteen:

…when she was 52-years-old, Helen's handwritten autobiography stated that Heber C. Kimball "offered me to him [Joseph Smith] ... My father had but one Ewe Lamb, but willingly laid her upon the alter [altar] ..." Likewise, "None but God & his angels could see my mother's bleeding heart--when Joseph asked her if she was willing, she replied `If Helen is willing[,] I have nothing more to say'" Those words about anguished sacrifice are not the way a woman would describe her nonsexual relationship as a teenager with a 37-year-old man.

Quinn interprets these events as Helen being offered to Joseph Smith as a "ewe lamb" upon the sexual alter, but such an interpretation goes beyond the available evidences. Consistent with this view, he earlier wrote in Origins of Power that "fourteen-year-old Helen Mar Kimball... later testified that he [Joseph Smith] had sexual relations with [her]." However, he provided no documentation for that bold statement either. In contrast, researcher Michael Marquardt wrote: “Helen Kimball’s sealing to Joseph Smith was a spiritual one unlike other wives who had sexual relations with the prophet.” Todd Compton claimed a more central position: “Some conclude that Helen Mar Kimball, who married Smith when she was fourteen, did not have marital relations with him. This is possible, as there are cases of Mormons in Utah marrying young girls

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and refraining from sexual relations until they were older. But the evidence for Helen Mar is entirely ambiguous in my view.”

It is clear that Helen’s sealing to Joseph Smith prevented her from socializing as an unmarried lady. She reminisced in an 1881 poem how the ceremony prevented her from associating with her friends as an unmarried teenager, causing her dramatic distress during their thirteen month plural marriage (May 1843 to June 1844). She penned:

Bar’d out from social scenes by this thy destiny
And o’er thy sad’nd mem’ries of sweet departed joys
Thy sicken’d heart will brood and imagine future woes,
And like a fetter’d bird with wild and longing heart
Thou’lt dayly pine for freedom and murmur at thy lot…

She expresses frustrations with her inability to laugh, dance, and socialize with her peers, who subsequently shut her out from their group enjoyments and good times.

Yet do her lamentations support that she was sexually involved with the Prophet as a plural wife? It seems that had such relations commenced, her anticipation of pregnancy and other wifely responsibilities might have made it clear she was no longer single. In view of the conservative sexual standards embraced at that time, her longings to dance with teenage boys and otherwise socialize may have been subdued as she explored the feelings of her wifehood. On the other

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hand, if no physical intimacy was included because of her physical immaturity, the marriage would seem more symbolic than real, except as it prevented her from associating with her friends, causing much consternation.

That the plural sealing was unconsummated may be the reason that Helen was not called to testify in the Temple Lot trial in 1892. During the proceedings, Church of Christ (Temple Lot) attorney, Colonel John N. Southern, was generously assisted by LDS Church leaders who were anxious to dispute RLDS claims that plural marriage was not sanctioned by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) goals ran parallel; by showing that the Prophet taught and practiced full conjugal polygamy, they would demonstrate that the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which did not permit plural marriage, was not the natural successor to Joseph Smith’s original organization and did not own the Independence, Missouri, temple site outright. Any evidence of polygamous sexuality would have supported the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) position.

If Helen Mar Kimball had been sexually involved with the Prophet in their plural marriage, her exclusion from the depositions is difficult to explain. Helen lived in Salt Lake City and had written two books defending plural marriage. Her first, Plural Marriage as Taught by the Prophet Joseph: A Reply to Joseph Smith, Editor of the Lamoni Iowa “Herald” (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882) was a direct response to the claims of the RLDS Church, the plaintiffs in the Temple Lot lawsuit. Her second book, Why We Practice Plural Marriage (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1840), echoed many of the same arguments. In addition, Helen lived geographically closer than two of the other witnesses who were called, Malissa Lott.

(thirty miles south in Lehi) and Lucy Walker (eighty-two miles north in Logan). Both of these women affirmed that sexual relations were part of their plural marriages to the Prophet.\(^{292}\)

Helen's diary journal for March 1892 documents that she was aware of the visit of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) contingent.\(^{293}\) That she would have been an excellent witness to discuss and defend the fact that Joseph Smith taught and practiced plural marriage is undeniable. The most obvious reason that Helen Mar Kimball was not summoned is that she could not explicitly testify that her plural marriage with the Prophet included conjugality. Stanley B. Kimball, Heber C. Kimball’s biographer, concurred:

Many years later in Utah she [Helen] wrote a retrospective poem about this marriage from which we learn that it was “for eternity alone,” that is, unconsummated. Whatever such a marriage promised for the next world, it brought her no immediate earthly happiness. She saw herself as a “fetter’d bird” without youthful friends and a subject of slander. This poem also reveals that Joseph Smith’s several pro forma marriages to the daughters of his friends were anything but sexual romps. Furthermore, the poem reinforces the idea that, despite the trials of plurality in mortality, a “glorious crown” awaited the faithful and obedient in heaven.\(^{294}\)


\(^{293}\) Charles M. Hatch and Todd M. Compton eds., A Widow’s Tale, the 1884-1896 Diary of Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, 494-95. Journal entries recorded on the days the depositions were taking place include Helen’s complaints of health problems, but also recount visits to family and friends. For example, on March 14 she wrote: "Sol's girl baby died" and she "went down" to visit. The following day she attended the funeral. Ibid., 495.

Eliza R. Snow (96 en159)

Quinn affirms sexuality in the non-polyandrous sealing between Joseph Smith and Eliza R. Snow by quoting a 1905 Angus Cannon statement:

He [Joseph Smith III] said, “I am informed that Eliza Snow was a virgin at the time of her death.”

I in turn said, “Brother Heber C. Kimball, I am informed, asked her the question if she was not a virgin although married to Joseph Smith and afterwards to Brigham Young, when she replied in a private gathering, ‘I thought you knew Joseph Smith better than that.”

Quinn explains: "I see only one way to understand her reply: Eliza R. Snow assumed that (as the father of the Prophet's youngest bride) Heber C. Kimball should know that Joseph Smith had sexual intercourse with his plural wives" (96 en159). He is not alone regarding this interpretation. However, available evidence supporting a connubial relationship between Eliza and the Prophet is contradictory. The citation above from Angus Cannon quotes an unnamed source quoting Heber who is quoting Eliza – a late thirdhand late account. It implies that she may have been sexually involved with the Prophet.

However, when asked directly in an 1877 letter by RLDS missionary, Daniel Munns, if she had been a “spiritual wife,” of Joseph Smith, Eliza penned:

You ask (referring to Pres. Smith), “Did he authorize or practice spiritual wifery? Were you a spiritual wife?” I certainly shall not acknowledge myself of having been a “carnal one”… I am

297 See the extended discussion in Willard J. Smith, Joseph Smith; Who Was He? Did He Teach or Practice Polygamy? Grand Rapids: Glad Tiding Publishers, 1899.
298 In November of 1876 Munns was preaching in Kansas. See Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Mo: Herald Publishing House, 1967, 4:149.
personally and intimately acquainted with several ladies now living in Utah who accepted the pure and sacred doctrine of plural marriage, and were the bona fide wives of Pres. Joseph Smith.\(^{299}\)

While it seems unlikely that Eliza would have ever considered herself a “carnal” wife in any setting, overall, this firsthand statement seems to indicate that either she was not sexually involved with the Prophet or she was carefully trying to avoid admitting to it, even though she freely implied its occurrence with some of Joseph’s other plural wives.\(^{300}\) In light of this evidence, the issue of Eliza's sexual involvement with Joseph Smith remains unsettled.

**Quinn’s Willingness to Publicly Share Restricted Materials (84-87 en 113)**

On October 15, 2012, I was asked to share an entire quotation that I had partially cited in an article. The original document is restricted at the Church History Library and had transcribed by Quinn years earlier. That transcription has been made available to the public as part of his Yale Collection and had been transcribed by my research assistant, Don Bradley. I declined to share the document for several reasons including my belief that it was “removed from the CHD [Church Historical Department] without permission by Michael Quinn.” One of the recipients of that email shared my statement with Quinn who immediately informed me by email that I was in error.

In endnote 113, Quinn explains many interesting details regarding his access to restricted materials at the Church Historian’s Office (later Church Historical Department) between 1971

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\(^{300}\) RLDS Church President, Joseph Smith, III, commented in 1876: “If my father had many polygamous wives, why was it that none of these women bore him children? Eliza R. Snow, whom it is said gave birth to a child of his, denies it.” “Joseph Smith, Jr.,” *Salt Lake Tribune,* November 24, 1876, page 4.
and 1986. According to Quinn’s journal entries and recollections, he was given unrestricted access to documents for his own “independent research and publishing” (85 en113) by Donald T. Schmidt, Glenn R. Rowe, and Elder G. Homer Durham of the Seventy. Quinn recalled that he would spend the day transcribing various documents that resulted in “20-30 pages of single-spaced, typed transcriptions with which I left the CHO every day” (85 en113). He relates how at no time was he advised or legally required to limit his subsequent distribution of those transcripts. Consequently, he “did NOT use the phrases ‘by permission of’ or ‘courtesy of’ within my first citation of the LDS Church’s Archives for quoting its manuscripts” (86 en113) in his publications from that period.

I appreciate Quinn’s recounting the process through which so many of his materials, now housed at the Beinecke Library at Yale University, came into his possession. He has demonstrated that he did have permission to access and transcribe those documents. Throughout those years, however, it doesn’t appear that anyone addressed the issue of whether Quinn was subsequently authorized to share those documents, and if so, with whom and how. For a curator to give a researcher (or part-time employee) unrestricted access to thousands of documents might be understandable under certain conditions. However, to grant them the rights to subsequently share their transcriptions freely in any forum, perhaps even for monetary compensation, would be surprising. According to Quinn’s account, the issue was not raised so he has apparently treated the transcriptions as if he owned them independent of the source from which they were obtained.

Despite Quinn’s explanation, I remain unwilling to distribute items from his collection that are “restricted” at the Church History Library today. I still assume he does not have permission to
share them just as he apparently assumes he does. Evidently he can so do legally so our conflicting assumptions are unimportant.

**Mary Ann Darrow Richardson (125-128 en293)**

One additional historical narrative Quinn discusses in endnote 293 promotes a single alleged example of Latter-day Saints in Utah practicing a form of sexual polyandry with a "proxy husbands" being called to father children for a man who was sterile.\(^{301}\) It involves the case of Charles Edmund Richardson and his legal wife Mary Ann Darrow Richardson. Prior to their 1853 baptisms, they were members of a religious group that taught that only two children were permitted. After the births of their daughter Emma (b. 1841) and son George (b. 1846), Edmund submitted to a surgical procedure that rendered him sterile. After their 1857 sealing by Brigham Young, he counseled them to have more children who would be born "in the covenant." They explained their situation and sought his counsel. In a letter dated March 5, 1857, Brigham Young responded:

> In reply to your letter of 22nd Feb. I say, it will be well enough with you and your husband in the eternities, if you do right in time: see what is said of them that became eunuchs for the gospels’ sake, and the promises made to them: if I was imperfect and had a good wife I would call on some good br. to help me that we might have increase; that a man of this character will have a place in the Temple, receive his endowments and in eternity will be as thou nothing had happened to him in time. Thus you see your position is good enough, if you are mutually satisfied & will do right.

\(^{301}\) See Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century*, 163-64; Lawrence Foster, “Sex and Prophetic Power: A Comparison of John Humphrey Noyes, Founder of the Oneida Community, with Joseph Smith, Jr., the Mormon Prophet,” 79.
The letter states “if I was imperfect and had a good wife I would call on some good br[other] to help me that we might have increase” but is ambiguous regarding how that was to occur. Quinn and other authors have affirmed that it involved sexual polyandry. In contrast, Edmund's biographers quoted President Young who explained the details: "You will need to give Mary Ann a civil divorce and allow her to have a civil marriage with another man. Any issue from such a marriage would belong to you because you and Mary Ann are sealed for eternity. This is possible only because the Lord has restored polygamy in time to help you.”

Biographers also provide these details: "As governor of the State of Utah, Brigham Young granted Mary Ann Darrow Richardson a civil divorce from her husband Edmund Richardson. Then, on January 9, 1858, he performed a civil marriage between Mary Ann and Fredrick Walter Cox. . . . Edmund voluntarily moved away but sent regular checks or alimony to support his family." Mary Ann bore two children during the next three years. According to family tradition, shortly after the second child's birth on January 26, 1861, Edmund returned, and Brigham Young divorced her from Fredrick Walter Cox, remarrying her to Edmund.

D. Michael Quinn identifies several apparent errors in the conventional family history presented above (125-127 en293). A primary concern appears to be whether a civil divorce and remarriage occurred because Brigham Young may not have been authorized to grant a legal divorce between Richardson and Darrow or to perform a legal marriage between Darrow and Fredrick Cox on January 9, 1858. Quinn correctly notes that a civil marriage between Darrow and Cox was impossible because Cox was already legally married. Also, officially replaced as governor on

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302 Annie R. Johnson and Elva R. Shumway, Charles Edmund Richardson, Man of Destiny, 28.
303 Ibid., 29.
304 Ibid., 32-34; see also Jeff Richins, After the Trial of Your Faith: The Story of Edmund and Mary Ann Richardson, 267-326; Clare B. Christensen, Before and after Mt. Pisgah, 233-34.
April 12, 1858 by Alfred Cumming, Brigham Young would not have possessed authority as governor to perform a civil remarriage reuniting Richardson and Darrow in 1861.

While Quinn's observations require a rewording of the family’s historical narrative, none of the participants would have doubted Brigham Young's priesthood office allowed him to cancel and perform "time only" priesthood-sanctioned marriages, irrespective of the status of previous legal matrimones. Joseph Smith performed the first such priesthood marriage on November 24, 1835 between Lydia Goldthwaite Bailey and Newell Knight and Lydia had not been legally divorced from her civil husband at that time.305 Priesthood marriages for time were considered even more valid to Church members than civil contracts and would not have affected the "eternity” portion of the sealing between Richardson and Darrow.

To summarize, families histories support that in an unusual series of marriages and cancellations, Richardson and Darrow were sealed for "time and eternity" on April 20, 1857.306 Then in 1858, using priesthood authority, Brigham Young cancelled the "time" portion of that sealing and proceeded to marry Darrow to Cox "for time only" in order to permit her to conceive two children. In 1861, he canceled the Darrow/Cox union and performed a new priesthood marriage for time between Richardson and Darrow converting an "eternity only" sealing back into "time and eternity." Showing, as Quinn deftly does, that Brigham Young did not have legal authority to perform these marriages is less consequential when priesthood power was deemed by all concerned to be superior and more than sufficient.

On October 17, 1859, Richardson and Darrow "met at the Endowment House in Salt Lake City, received their endowments and had their sealing repeated as the prophet had said any couple desiring to be sealed in the Endowment House could do."³⁰⁷ Kathryn Daynes gives a slightly different version saying that Richardson "returned and took his wife to Salt Lake to be sealed again for eternity in the Endowment house."³⁰⁸ Doubtless both were excited to receive their endowments and being resealed for eternity in the Endowment House. Neither ordinance would have conflicted with the "for time" priesthood marriage she had experienced with Cox or the eternal sealing between her and Richardson. ³⁰⁹

In contrast to the family traditional view, Quinn concludes that rather than consecutive marriages, the Richardson-Darrow-Cox interaction included polyandrous sexuality. He writes: "the known and knowable evidence indicates that the Richardson-Darrow-Cox marriages, cohabitations, and births constituted sexual polyandry in pioneer Utah" (128 en293).

Quinn’s conclusions are problematic both historically and theologically. For example, in a private council in December 1847 just a week before the reorganization of the First Presidency when Heber C. Kimball became First Counselor, he anathematized such relations, "[T]here has been a doctrine taught that a man has can [sic] act as Proxy for another when absent--it has been practiced and it is known--& its damnable."³¹⁰ Another account of the same meeting quotes Elder

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³⁰⁹ Quinn asserts that through this Endowment House sealing "Edmund Richardson re-asserted his own spiritual rights to his 'former' wife." (See "Evidence for the Sexual Side of Joseph Smith's Polygamy," 69fn 196.) I have found no evidence that the eternal sealing between Mary Ann Darrow Richardson and Edmund Richardson was ever cancelled, so Quinn's reference to her as his "former wife," would be referring to the temporary separation they experienced during her "time" marriage to Cox.
³¹⁰ Minutes of the Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1835-1893, December 21, 1847, 160.
Kimball, "[W]hat damnable doctrines are tau[gh]t that men may be proxy for others, [for] I wo[u]ld, rather have my head brought to the block than do these things."\(^{311}\) As quoted above, five years later Brigham Young taught that a "woman having more husbands than one… [was] not known to the law."\(^{312}\) In other words, there was no doctrinal justification for the situation described by Quinn, a scenario that was "damnable" according to Heber C. Kimball and "not known to the law" according to Brigham Young. Therefore, the only context for the relationship would have been adultery, which would not have been readily accepted by pious Latter-day Saints.\(^{313}\)

Also, Brigham Young specified in the letter that the “good brother” (Frederick Cox) who was to “help” was to be temple worthy, which worthiness required a strict obedience to the law of chastity or sexual relations only with a lawful spouse. Larry Foster observed: “It is significant that the relationship, whatever it may have been, was an honorable one and fully sanctioned by the Church.”\(^{314}\)

In addition, the historical underpinnings of Quinn’s reconstruction seem to be based upon ambiguous manuscript evidence. The Richardson family tradition describes a genuine separation, not cohabitation with two husbands. Annie R. Johnson and Elva R. Shumway wrote that after her marriage to Cox, "As Mary Ann watched Edmund drive away into the loneliness of the next few years, she whispered these words after him: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that
he giveth his life for another."315 While somewhat dramatic, such recollections seem to describe the beginning of a physical (including sexual) separation.

In contrast, Quinn assumes that Edmund was cohabiting with Mary Ann on June 1, 1860 primarily based upon a census taken on that date. However, the 1860 Instructions to U.S. Marshals regarding the census records states that the census is to include "the name of every free person in each family, of every age, including the names of those temporarily absent on a journey, visit, or for the purposes of education…"316 In addition, the level of detail provided in that document does not allow for such precise conclusions.317 Accordingly, Edmund might have been living in the home as Quinn affirms, or his name may have been included even though he was "temporarily absent," living elsewhere as the family tradition supports. Doubtless, Mary Ann and Edmund considered their separation "temporary" and there was no change in ownership of the home.

Nevertheless, Quinn is to be commended for producing a remarkable amount of evidence to show that Edmund was indeed living in the area at least part of the time Mary Ann was married to Cox (126 en293). He has persuaded me that my assessment, as expressed in my articles and in Joseph Smith’s Polygamy: History and Theology,318 that Edmund had moved to another location for the entire time, is probably in error. Accordingly, Quinn concludes that showing a geographic proximity is tantamount to showing sexual relations between the two. In doing so he

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317 November 8, 2012 conversation with Kathryn Daynes who has conducted extensive research with those documents. Notes in possession of the author.
318 Joseph Smith’s Polygamy: History and Theology, 1:338.
places sexuality above the couple’s moral commitment to Church teachings regarding sexual polyandry.

Another concern regards Edmunds hormonal drive. It is probable that his sterility was due to an orchiectomy (surgical removal of the testicles), which would have also eliminated endogenous testosterone and the testosterone-induced sex drive.³¹⁹ That he, or Mary Ann, who was cohabiting with Fredrick Cox, would have sought conjugal relations requires evidence, which is lacking.

Lastly, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author Deborah Blum observed that in human societies, polyandry is “extraordinarily rare.”³²⁰ Understandably, researchers would, like Quinn and Larry Foster, be motivated a hundred years later to investigate and report upon its novelty, if it actually occurred. Yet to assume that something so scandalous and morally inexplicable then happened, given that no one mentioned it in any context during the century afterwards, seems less likely. In all, the preponderance of evidence does not support that sexual polyandry, Church sanctioned or otherwise, occurred between the three individuals: Mary Ann Darrow, and her eternal husband, Edmund Richardson, and her "for time (three years) only” husband, Fredrick Cox.

"Calculatedly Stringent Requirements" (118en267)

By endnote 267 (of 305), Quinn may have sensed that, despite his extended discussion and citing of multiple evidences, he had failed to produce even a single reliable documentation of sexual polyandry in Joseph Smith’s plural marriages. Or perhaps that he realized that he had not

³¹⁹ Vasectomies were performed in the mid-nineteenth century, but not for sterilization. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vasectomy (accessed August 11, 2012).
adequately contextualized the alleged behavior theologically and historically. Regardless of the reason, he subsequently criticizes the evidentiary threshold that I expect:

…nothing--not the co-residence of legally married couples, not saying "I was the wife of another man for time while I continued to live with my legal husband" (see my Note 61, item "3"), not the childbirth that the wife attributed to her "other" husband Joseph Smith (see the narrative for my Notes 13 and 91)--NOTHING can satisfy Brian Hales' calculatedly stringent requirements that are impossible to achieve, unless he finds a Victorian American woman who said, wrote, or testified that she (as a devout Mormon) alternated sexual intercourse with two husbands during a period of time. (118 en267; emphasis in original.)

In fact, Quinn’s assessment overstates my expectations, but his admission that such documentation is unavailable is helpful. A plain declaration from one of the women stating that she “alternated sexual intercourse with two husbands during a period of time” is not likely for the reasons Quinn lists and others. However, more convincing supportive evidence of such a controversial practice (than what he and other proponents have presented) is expected. As discussed in the introduction, sexual polygyny is plainly and repeatedly documented. In contrast, sexual polyandry is nowhere clearly referenced, defended, or disparaged by any polygamy insider or even Nauvoo antagonists. Quinn also laments: “…for the past decade Hales has done his best to deny or ignore every ‘trace of it [sexual polyandry that] can be found in the historical record’" (123 en289). In this Quinn is partially correct because I do not see polyandry in the “traces” he references. I affirm those “traces” are consistently ambiguous and could support a number of interpretations besides sexual polyandry.

As I read Quinn’s essay, it seems he hypothesizes that Joseph Smith was sexually involved with most or all of his polyandrous wives and possibly even the wives of the members of the Quorum
of the Twelve Apostles. In addition, officiators and witnesses would have been aware of some of
the arrangements. Hence, dozens of people may have known about the polyandrous sexuality,
but in Quinn’s view for me to expect that even one would have acknowledged its existence
through a report, a complaint, or a defense of the behavior is a “calculatedly stringent
requirement” (118 en267).

While Joseph Smith was not perfect (and he admitted that several times), Quinn seems to
acknowledge that there is no slam-dunk credible evidence supporting his interpretations. That is,
despite the astonishing amount of research he and others have performed, no “smoking gun” has
been located in the historical record regarding either adultery or sexual polyandry. 321

Thanks to D. Michael Quinn

I appreciate the time and effort D. Michael Quinn has invested in his essay. To have a researcher
with his incredible experiences and accomplishments examine this topic in such detail is a
benefit for all future investigators. It seems that within his analysis, he compiles the best
evidence available (to date) supporting that Joseph Smith practiced sexual polyandry.

Quinn, whose education and experience are vastly superior to my own, has identified some
minor mistakes in my writing techniques and my citing of documentation. Such “gaffes” (63
en22, 73 en64, 113 en 248) are embarrassing to me and some might have been avoided with the
assistance of an editor. I appreciate his bringing these to my attention so if this paper is every
published, I can update it using his observations.

321 Observation made by the author and Gary Bergera in the question and answer portion of the “Author
Meets Critic: Brian C. Hales and Joseph Smith Polygamy: History and Theology,” Sunstone Symposium,
2013, Salt Lake City, August 2, 2013. See also Dan Vogel in messages exchanged with the author on
Hans Mattsson’s Facebook page.
Unsurprisingly, Quinn is also critical of my analyses and conclusions. He asserts that there are places in my writings where I “contradict or misrepresent the documents” and declares: “I cannot remain silent about the perplexing gaffes in his use of evidence” (63fn22). He further criticizes:

I also see the historical methodology of Brian Hales as ironically similar to what Lawrence Foster described in his "Career Apostates: Reflections on the Works of Jerald and Sandra Tanner," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17 (Summer 1984): 49 ("a logically closed system ... a skillful shell game in which the premises for judgment are conveniently shifted so that the conclusion is always the same--negative"). That is the approach Hales has used to negate any of the evidence for Joseph Smith's sexual polyandry. (125 en292)

In addition, five times Quinn accuses me of discussing “red-herrings” and even a “vacuous red-herring” (24, 69 en42, 87 en 115, 113 en249, 115 en253). He declares one deliberation to be “absolutely irrelevant” (115 en253). Throughout his paper he repeatedly disagrees with my interpretations of the evidence (e.g 72 en61, 188 en267). However, at times he seems nitpicky, spending pages arguing points of little significance.

While Quinn has persuaded me to change my position on a few minor issues, I feel that I could make similar, if not more voluminous, charges against Quinn for abusing the evidences. I could outline numerous places where I feel he has misrepresented the content of the documents he cites. I could resort to a litany of detailed rebuttals of what seem to be straw men arguments. Yet, such tactics could easily divert our attention away from the documentation, which is where we should be focusing our research. A review of all available evidence supports that Joseph Smith was not an adulterer or hypocrite, but a reluctant polygamist called by his God to establish a difficult and controversial practice.
Throughout his paper Quinn does scholarly battle. He battles to provide specificity to ambiguous evidences; he battles to show historical opportunities for polyandrous sexuality; he battles to uncover timelines that would have allowed it to occur; he battles to demonstrate proximity between alleged participants; he battles to establish circumstances conducive to the alleged behavior. Using his formidable writing and researching skills, Quinn also describes Joseph Smith as a man who could not fully control his sex drive, but was ultimately forgiven by God. While such battles and descriptions might appear to recreate an accurate historical panorama, the resulting picture is instead a Picasso version of the available material, disjointed, inconsistent, and without discernable continuity.

While I detect a fatal number of documentary and interpretive deficiencies in Michael Quinn’s impressively endnoted “Evidence for the Sexual Side of Joseph Smith's Polygamy,” I agree with Juanita Brooks who said, “You never get it all,” regarding historical evidences. Perhaps new documents will be discovered that require a reevaluation and maybe Quinn will be the one to find them. However, if that does not happen and it turns out that his essay constitutes the best supportive evidence available, then the interpretation that Joseph Smith did not practice sexual polyandry will continue to be, for me, the stronger position.