

Other References to Post-Manifesto (1890) Plural Marriages

"President Smith told the brethren pointedly that he had not given his consent to anyone to solemnize plural marriages; that he did not know of any such cases, and that if members of our Church have entered into such alliances, they have done it upon their own responsibility and without his approval or sanction, and they must therefore abide the consequences. But if this were being done, he said, such people were not only bringing trouble upon themselves, but upon the whole community, and he hoped there was no foundation in fact to these rumors."

--Meeting of the First Presidency and Apostles, Thursday, 19 November 1890, in Journal History under date

"This talk about polygamy comes from the same source that has always misrepresented and persecuted our church. When Utah was admitted to statehood we made a covenant with the government, and we have kept it. We no longer teach or countenance this practice. We apostles and elders of the church teach obedience to the law." (Mathias F. Cowley interview, Portland Journal (Oregon), reprinted in The Salt Lake Herald, 5 March 1904)

Post-Manifesto (1890) Plural Marriage

... I asked Pres McAllister if plural marriages were allowed in the (St. George) Temple and he told me that they were not. Shortly after this, I visited Mexico and was informed that no plural marriages were allowed in the colonies there by Pres A. F. MacDonald and other, they said that such marriages could not be allowed in Mexico because of the fact that men might come there and marry plural wives and go back to the US and make trouble for the Church.

--J. K. Crosby to Reed Smoot, 5 February 1904 (Crosby is here relating his experiences shortly after the issuance of the 1890 Manifesto.) RSC

On Sept last 1905 Myself and Miss Pearl Gurr of Parowan Ut presented our selves by four Pres Ivins of the Mex Stake and demanded a marriage seramony by performed by was refused by Pres Ivins.

At that time Pres Smith was visiting the Mex Stakes, and I requested that the matter be lade be four him so it was by Pres Ivins. and Pres Smith sed he would not giv his consint nor neathe(r) would he approve of a Plural Marage now under no consideration(,) and as (to) the question would be in the near fucher, his reply was that souch marriages had bin seast and he knew not whin tha would ever be put in to practise again.

--E. H. Confer to Reed Smoot, 6 January 1906 RSC (Confer is writing from Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico.)

Excitement over removals, etc. has died out, but would you believe it, there are still efforts put forth to obtain consent to forbidden marriages.

--Charles W. Penrose to Reed Smoot, 13 June 1906 RSC

At the Pres. Office we found Bro. Tensdale who was called up to explain his marriage to Mrs. Scholes. He said that his wife and he were not living together as man and wife and had an understanding together in this regard. She was not capable to have connection with a man. Reed Smoot says he is going to be attacked on this ground.

--Tuesday, January 26, 1904, Anthon H. Lund Journal CHD

My mind is much agitated on account of the Smoot Trial. I fear that there are more cases of late plural marriages than has been believed by us. There seems to be rumors of such all over.

--Tuesday, March 22, 1904, Anthon H. Lund Journal CHD

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

--Telegram, Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, 1 April 1911, as cited in Reed Smoot to Joseph F. Smith, 18 April 1911, Reed Smoot Correspondence, CHD

Excerpts From the Reed Smoot Journals

(The originals are presently located in Archives and Manuscripts, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.)

Thursday, 8 September 1910

Attended meeting of Quorum at Temple. President Smith was still suffering with rheumatism. He is confined to his bed. The Quorum discussed the question of New polygamy cases and I stated that it was my opinion that all new cases should be excommunicated from the church and that action should be taken at once. Also that the church should not retain any man taking a plural wife after the Manifesto in a church position where people were asked to support him. All members present agreed with this position. Present at meeting Lyman, Smoot, Penrose, Whitney, Richards, McKay and Jos. F. Smith Jr. . . . (Later) I told Pres Lund and John Henry Smith my ideas of the action that should be taken by the church in the new polygamy cases and also thought Pres Smith should instruct the Presidents of Stakes and Bishops and Wards to begin action against any such living in their stakes or wards. Pres Lund wanted me to tell Pres Smith and I will do so as soon as he is well enough. In the evening I met Ep Mibley and we spent a couple of hours in discussing the coming campaign and I told him what I had said to the Quorum of the new polygamy cases. He agreed with me that action should be taken.

Tuesday, 27 September 1910

Attended a meeting of Quorum of Apostles at 10 o'clock AM. All present but Clawson, Geo. A. Smith and Ivins. I opened meeting by prayer. I made a statement regarding the new polygamy cases and insisted that the church take action against them at once. I believe that every person taking a plural wife since the manifesto should not be sustained in prominent positions in the church where the people have to vote for them and I strongly demand that cases at least since April 1904 be excommunicated and vigorous action commenced at once. The question was discussed the whole day. The most of the members agreed with me but thought that a wholesale slaughter should not be made of those who were induced to take plural wives by Taylor, Cowley, Woodruff and Merrill before Pres Smith's declaration of April 1904, but drop them as fast as conditions will permit without making a great stir about it.

Wednesday, 28 September 1910

I called on President Smith and told him what I said to the Quorum on new polygamy cases and I told him I thought some public statement should be made by him at the coming Conference and instruct the President of Stakes and Bishops of Wards to handle all new cases. This must be done to prove to our people we are sincere in our opposition to new polygamy. We talked for over one hour and I tried to cover the whole ground. Meeting of the Quorum at 11 o'clock. Israel Barlow Jr. was summoned before the Quorum to answer to charges against him of marrying Miss Welling within the last few years, also for lying and forgery. He did not appear. He was excommunicated for marrying the girl. The girl's brother was present and stated he knew his sister was not married in April 1909.

Saturday, 1 October 1910

At 11 o'clock met with the Quorum of twelve. All present but Clawson and Geo A. Smith. We had before us Patriarch Judson Tolman having cited him to appear and answer the charge of his having married different men to plural wives contrary to the rules and regulations of the church. We tried to get the whole truth out of him but could not do it. He acknowledged to having performed fifteen plural marriages. We tried to get out of him who they were but he said he could not remember. He mentioned four as follows: Ep Muir, Jas Eldridge, a Mr. Pratt and Merrill. We could not get the names of the others but found out he had married a woman himself but did not know who performed the ceremony. The party had a mask or. He, himself, married most of the parties on the street and some in bugies and one or two in a house. He told us the first marriage he performed was Ep Muir and he insisted all were before April 1904, the year of the declaration of President Smith. It was evident to all he was not telling the truth and had been instructed what to say but he would not tell with whom he had been talking. We adjourned until 3 o'clock and asked Ep Muir to be present. He was present and admitted he married a plural wife on June 14/05. He would not inform on anyone else—did not believe the declaration of President Smith was made in good faith nor the Woodruff manifesto was ever intended to put a stop to polygamy—claimed they had been going on ever since 1890 and no action taken. Believed now that they were stopped because action was being taken. The bunch, as he designated them, knew each one ran a risk and was liable to be excommunicated if found out. We agreed to summon Judson Tolman before us again to show cause why he should not be excommunicated next Monday, October 3rd, at 10:30 am. at Temple rooms. We also thought we would get some additional information from him. I have insisted that action should be taken long ago and today's proceedings demonstrate it beyond a question.

Monday, 3 October 1910

Meeting at the Temple at 10:30 a.m. Judson Tolman was present as requested. He told a little more about how he came to perform the illegal marriages and had been instructed to put them all back of April 1904, by Henry S. Tanner and others because it was necessary to save himself and others. He continued to evade and even lie about certain actions of his. After he was excused it was unanimously agreed to excommunicate him from the church for performing plural marriages and also for having married a woman himself contrary to the rules and order of the church.

Wednesday, 5 October 1910

Meeting of Quorum at 9 o'clock. We discussed the Tolman case for nearly one hour and Pres Lyman was instructed to send him a notice of excommunication similar to published notice in News of last evening. We did not mention his lying and taking another wife in 1905. Pres Lund and John Henry came in at 10 o'clock and reports were made. We clothed and Lyman prayed in opening and I in circle. We took up the question of a circular letter to be signed by the First Presidency to the Presidency's of all the stakes of Zion, calling their attention to new polygamy cases and directing them to bring action against any such persons who have violated the declaration of Pres Smith made at April Conference, 1904. At one o'clock adjourned until 5 o'clock. . . . Meeting at Temple 5 o'clock. We agreed upon the letter and construction of same after nearly two hours discussion. We discussed the question of dropping all known polygamists for positions where the coming Conference was asked to vote for them; that is, all polygamists marrying since 1890. I made the motion but it was not carried as President Lund suggested we do not present the auxiliary organizations at this conference and in doing this we avoid presenting any such person. This was agreed to. I