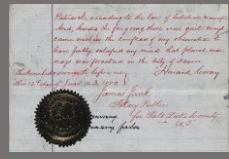


# Joseph Smith Introduced and Practiced Plural Marriage



The quantity, quality, and type of supportive evidence encountered through transparent historical investigation is impressive. It shows Joseph Smith introduced and practiced plural marriage.

## July 12, 1843 Revelation (now D&C 132)

- Mentions plural marriage and Joseph Smith's plural wives
- Recorded by William Clayton and specifically mentioned in his July 12, 1843, journal entry.
- Copy made by Joseph Kingsbury the next day—verified by William Clayton in a signed affidavit.
- Austin Cowles signed a notarized affidavit on May 4, 1844, saying that the revelation had been read to the Nauvoo High Council in the summer of 1843.
- Five other High Councilors affirmed the revelation was read to them on August 12, 1843.
- William and Jane Law signed notarized affidavits on May 4, 1844, declaring that they personally handled and read the revelation.
- The provenance of Kingsbury copy to date is well established and his handwriting verified.

## William Clayton's Journal

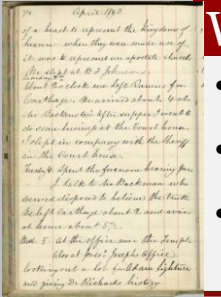
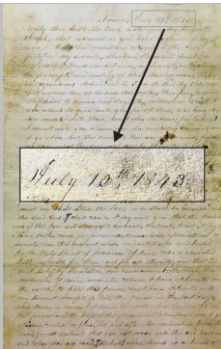
- William Clayton's journal contains dozens of references to plural marriage and Joseph Smith's involvement in 1843 and 1844 entries.
- April 27, 1843: "Went to Presidents who rode with me to Brother H C. Kimballs where Sister Margt Moon was sealed up by the priesthood, by the president" (Joseph Smith).
- July 12, 1843: "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. After it was wrote Presidents Joseph and Hyrum presented it and read it to E[mma]."

## John C. Bennett's 1842 History of the Saints

- Bennett wrote in 1842: "I will semi-state two or more cases, among the vast number, where Joe Smith was privately married to his spiritual wives – in the case of Mrs. A\*\*\*\* S\*\*\*\*, by Apostle Brigham Young; and in that of Miss L\*\*\*\* B\*\*\*\*, by Elder Joseph Bates Noble. Then there are the cases of Mrs. B\*\*\*\*, Mrs. D\*\*\*\*, Mrs. S\*\*\*\*, Mrs. G\*\*\*\*, Miss B\*\*\*\* etc. etc."
- In this paragraph Bennett successfully identifies five of Joseph Smith's plural wives without divulging their names, listing: Mrs. A\*\*\*\* S\*\*\*\* who is Agnew Coolbrith Smith -- sealed January 6, 1842; Miss L\*\*\*\* B\*\*\*\* who is Louisa Beaman -- sealed April 5, 1841; Mrs. B\*\*\*\* who is Presendia Huntington Buell -- sealed December 11, 1841; Mrs. D\*\*\*\* who is Elizabeth Davis Durfee; and Mrs. S\*\*\*\* who is Patty Sessions -- sealed March 9, 1842.

100's of eyewitnesses' descriptions of Joseph Smith's involvement are available—dozens in notarized affidavits.

Compelling supportive contemporaneous evidence



### From Joseph Smith's Plural Wives

- Almira Johnson
- Desdemona Fullmer
- Eliza Partridge
- Eliza R. Snow
- Elvira A. Cowles
- Emily D. Partridge
- Lucy Walker
- Malissa Lott
- Martha McBride
- Rhoda Richards
- Sarah Ann Whitney

### From Other Eyewitnesses

- Gideon Carter
- Harriet Cook Young
- Howard Coray
- John Benbow
- John Pack
- John W. Rigdon
- Joseph B. Noble
- Joseph A. Kelting
- Joseph C. Kingsbury
- Leonard Soby
- Lorenzo Snow

### Other recollections:

- Alexander Neibaur
- Amasa M. Lyman
- Brigham Young
- Ebenezer Robinson
- Erastus Snow
- Heber C. Kimball
- James Allred
- John Benbow
- John D. Lee
- John Taylor
- Joseph Fielding
- Parley P. Pratt
- Thomas Bullock
- Willard Richards



While some of these individuals may have been more worried about Brigham Young's opinion than God's command to not lie, it is implausible to think that they would all join a conspiracy to falsely attribute plural marriage to Joseph Smith.



# Joseph Smith Never Denied Celestial Plural Marriage



But Joseph Smith did deny spiritual wifery, freelance polygamy, and a community of wives.

	Celestial plural marriage	Spiritual wifery	Freelance "polygamy"	Community of wives
Existed as official teaching or practice of the Church, or of the "Mormons," during Joseph's lifetime?	No	No	No	No
Restoration of Old Testament polygamy?	Yes	No	No	No
Ceremony required?	Yes	No	Possibly	Unknown
Priesthood authority required?	Yes	No	No	No
Worthiness required?	Yes	No	No	No
Husband-wife marriage relationship established?	Yes	No	Yes	No
Eternal relationship formed?	Yes	No	No	No
"No sin where there was no accuser" doctrine?	No	Yes	No	No
Need to keep relationship completely secret?	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Joseph Smith denied the practice?</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

Denying spiritual wifery, freelance polygamy, and a community of wives did *not* make Joseph Smith a *liar* or a *hypocrite*.



## Joseph Smith's most famous "denial"

**"What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one."**

- At the time, Emma was Joseph's only *legal* wife and the only wife he ever publicly acknowledged.
- This is not a condemnation of authorized polygamy, but it is the language of someone trying to not lie, without divulging the practice of celestial plural marriage.
- Scholar Carmon B. Hardy explained: "Statements denying plurality were phrased either to permit more than one interpretation or to avoid directly disallowing the possibility of such marriages if correctly authorized."

### "On this Law" Joseph Smith's October 5, 1843 journal entry

- Entry: "walked up and down st. with scribe.—and gave inst[r]uction to try those who were preaching teaching or preaching the doctin of plurality of wives. On this Law. Joseph forbids it. And the practice ther[e]of—No man shall have but one wife."
- What is the meaning of "On this Law"?
- The July 12, 1843 revelation (now D&C 132) discusses a "law" that allows plural marriage only when authorized by "one" man who holds the keys of sealing. Otherwise, only monogamy is permitted.
- As the keyholder at that time, Joseph controlled whether plural sealings would be allowed.
- The ambiguities in the entry were clarified by editors prior to printing in the *History of the Church*.

### Section CI of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants

SECTION CI.  
MARRIAGE.

1 According to the custom of all civilized nations, marriage is regulated by laws and ceremonies: therefore we believe, that all marriages in this church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, should be solemnized in a public meeting, or feast, prepared for that purpose: and that the solemnization should be performed by a presiding high priest, high priest, bishop, elder, or priest, not even prohibiting those persons who are desirous to get married, of being married by other authority. We believe that it is not right to prohibit members of this church from marrying out of the church, if it be their determination so to do, but each persons will be considered weak in the faith of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 Marriage should be celebrated with prayer and thanksgiving; and at the solemnization, the persons to be married, standing together, the man on the right, and the woman on the left, shall be addressed, by the person officiating, as he shall be directed by the holy Spirit; and if there be no legal objection, he shall say, calling each by their names: "Ye both mutually agree to be each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives." And when they have answered "Yes," he shall pronounce them "husband and wife" in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by virtue of the laws of the country and authority vested in him: "may God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and forever. Amen."

3 The clerk of every church should keep a record of all marriages, solemnized in his branch.

4 All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this church, should be held sacred and fulfilled. Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reprobated with the crime of fornication, and polygamy; we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again. It is not right to persuade a woman to be baptized contrary to the will of her husband, neither is it lawful to induce her to leave her husband. All children are bound by law to obey their parents; and to influence them to endorse any religious faith, or be baptized, or leave their parents without their consent, is unlawful and unjust. We believe, that all persons who exercise control over their fellow

Section CI of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants declared:

"Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband."

Scholars point out the ambiguity: "we believe that one man should have [*only* or *at least?*] one wife." The verbiage is unclear concerning possible future plural marriage.

Some voices claim that if Joseph Smith practiced celestial marriage, he was a liar and a false prophet. Neither is true.

Such reductionist thinking fails to account for all the historical data and leads to erroneous conclusions.