AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF


Title:  A Qualitative Study of Women in Modern Day Polygamous Households in the United States

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Susan Shaw

This study will show that polygamy is not a religious freedom protected under the U.S. Constitution, but a power system in which men use economic, political, social and physical force to control the behavior of others. This thesis will use a feminist perspective theory to provide a theoretical outline for investigating the association of power with the emotional and economic dependency of women within the framework of a polygamist social structure. This dependent power system is not limited to women but to their children as well.
A Qualitative Study of Women
In Modern Day Polygamous Households in the United States

by

Suzanne M. Wilson

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APPROVED:

Redacted for Privacy

Major Professor, representing Women Studies

Redacted for Privacy

Committee Member, representing Women Studies

Redacted for Privacy

Committee Member, representing Sociology

Redacted for Privacy

Director of the College of Liberal Arts Women Studies Program

Redacted for Privacy

Dean of Graduate School

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Dedication

My sincere appreciation to all the women who helped me reach my goals. Special thanks to Julie Ehrich for letting me work around my school schedule, Susan Shaw for her guidance, Margaret Erickson for "comma" patrol, and my beloved dog Hershey for all the times I didn't have time to play because I had to work on this paper and for dragging him all over the country while I did my field research.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Improving living conditions for women and children requires that law enforcement, courts and outsiders know how to intervene on behalf of women and children. This is especially true when they are powerless to help themselves due to ignorance or a lack of education, money or freedom. Because polygamous clans are so secretive and little is known about growing up in them, the investigator examined the experiences of women who escaped from polygamous communities and diaries of women who did not. Findings highlighted in this paper examine the significance of polygamy in fashioning American women's experiences of abuse and describe the way that polygamy and abuse can sometimes be interlocked experiences.

Polygamy and Its Beginnings

Unequal power within families often translates into violence that can include any member of the household such as children, siblings, elderly parents and women (Jewkes, 2002). Family power, or the lack of it for women, is a
significant problem, deeply embedded within the cultural history of the United States, a carryover from English law in which a married woman's legal identity became that of her husband and rendered her civilly dead. She had no legal rights in regard to property or even her own body. She could not own property, sue or be sued in court. She was, in fact, his property to do with as he wished. This is not in the same sense as a slave who was considered property; but it was not against the law for a husband to beat his wife as long as he didn't use a stick thicker than his thumb (Cott, 1977). Women had fewer rights and were subordinate partners in marriage, of which the husband was the legal political, economic and religious "head."

In the middle of the nineteenth century, these notions were replaced by a theory of separate spheres for men and women. In these separate spheres, the husband was the breadwinner and the one who entered the public domain, while the wife remained in the private sphere of domestic labor (Cott, 1977). While the notion of separate spheres was an improvement over the spousal unities doctrine because it gave women a role of importance of their own, the theory still preserved and promoted the dominance of males over females in the United States (Flexner, 1975). Men were subject to the law of the land but women were
subject to men in the privacy of the home. It has been argued that after industrialization, women had fewer rights and freedoms because they no longer had a role of importance of their own (Cott, 1977). They lost many of the roles they used to perform within the family and community as the market took over most of their productive labor and their roles became more narrowly prescribed as mothers and housewives. However, the point remains that women continued to be legally subordinate to men.

Laws have changed so that women are no longer legally subordinate to men. However, within polygamy, women and children are still considered subordinate to men and this promotes dominance of males over females as described by Victoria Prunty in a newspaper article (Deseret New, 1998), in which she claims polygamy is a heavily patriarchal society in which a woman exists only to serve:

It's not a co-equal relationship. The husband not only has the complete say-so in the home, but he also has other women he can go to to support his decisions. And all the people under him are looking at him as their lord, or their king. This is a cult. It's not about any kind of consensual sex or preference between adults. And then the children grow up believing this is mandatory in order for them to get to heaven (Deseret News, 1998).

When I began this project I did so with much trepidation. I did not have a great knowledge of polygamy.
My fear of getting into a subject I could not fathom intellectually daunted me throughout this project. The practices protected under the umbrella of religion can be difficult for an outsider to understand. The topic of polygamy is no exception. I was raised in a Christian culture and taught that a husband has one wife and a wife has one husband. I could not understand how a woman could share her husband with another woman, or raise her children to do so and the thought of sharing a husband with several women was beyond my understanding. I wanted to know how and why this was an accepted practice within fundamentalist Mormon sects in the United States of America.

Even though the practice is illegal under the laws of the United States, the practice of polygamy continues within the borders of this country and polygamists have little fear of being prosecuted for the crime. The questions then become those of why this is so and what are the dynamics that surround this a practice? I understood the concept of freedom of religion under which polygamy is practiced, but then I read an article in an Oregon newspaper about a 16-year-old girl with obvious signs of a beating. She had escaped from an isolated buffalo and ostrich ranch located near the Idaho border where authorities say a Utah polygamist sect has an established
re-education camp for non-compliant women and children. She found her way to a pay phone where she called 911. She had run away because she had been forced to marry with her father’s older brother as his 15th wife (Kenworthy, 1998).

The article brought up more questions for me. Where was the girl’s right to not only freedom of religion but to any freedom at all? Did this girl fall into a time warp where children and women still had no voice in their own lives, no property rights, no say in whom they marry, no defense against being forced into a sexual relationship against their will? In women’s history, women’s voices have been silenced, not by the women themselves but by the political narratives surrounding women’s experiences. Who was going to tell the world about this girl’s experience? Certainly not the men who had control over her life!

That history is written from the perspective of those who hold power is problematic for women because history has been written by men’s perspective and excluded women. The invisibility of women to historians was no oversight. When history is conceived as a narrative of public (primarily political) action, its arena is a stage from which women have been excluded. The ideological power of that exclusion in turn fostered a double standard; women were
ignored regardless of their political importance (Evens, 1989).

Were this young girl and other women living in polygamous relationships invisible to the mainstream population? To answer my questions I contacted a group of women who were speaking out against polygamy. They formed a group called Tapestry of Polygamy, later changed to Tapestry Against Polygamy, in which they detailed their personal experiences as ex-wives of polygamous husbands. The group is based in Utah in the center of the greatest concentration of polygamists in the United States.

These women are trying to educate others about the polygamous experience and force law enforcement officials to prosecute the practice of polygamy. Rowena Erickson, considered to be the Moses of the anti polygamy movement by other ex-polygamous wives, says:

Polygamy is the biggest con in the world. Men are in it for sex, not religion. It is power and control in the name of religion. The poverty I experienced was emotionally and spiritually depleting. I lived on food stamps and collected recyclable cans and babysat. Worse than the poverty the loneliness was debilitating. I was just a vessel to this man to bring souls down from heaven. Polygamy was one big lie. I’d been duped. It’s demented. Polygamists are not as spiritual as you’re led to believe. These guys are really sick — there’s wife swapping, ménage à trois, use of pornography. The sexual acts and the incest and the actions against women and
children are so sick. There's no end to it (Tracy, 2001, Erickson 1998).

Why is the practice of polygamy greater in Utah? If it is illegal, why is it not being prosecuted? In the case mentioned above, the father who beat the 16-year old girl was charged with abuse, but the uncle who forced sex upon her was not charged with polygamy. During the trial the fact that her father and mother were half brother and sister was also disclosed. The State of Utah is populated with Mormons and polygamy has its deepest roots in Mormonism in the United States. To do my research, I traveled to Utah, met with the women who formed Tapestry Against Polygamy, and was there during the trial pertaining to the young girl mentioned in the newspaper article. Polygamy now had a face. It no longer was something I just read about. I was seeing the effects first hand.

Polygyny, better known in this country by the name polygamy, has not been limited to Mormons. In cultures in which men have an accumulation of wealth and economic control, in which one man can easily supply several women with the necessities of life, one can find polygamy. This suggests that polygamy is not merely a religious belief but
more a phenomenon of political, economic and social control (Adams, 1998).

To understand the problems associated with polygamy, one must first understand the dynamics of this complex and abusive lifestyle. Polygamy is, in a sense, organized crime. Welfare fraud, tax fraud, incest, statutory rape, physical, emotional and psychological abuse are all elements interwoven in this lifestyle, hidden behind a veil of secrecy, isolation, and depravation (NOW, 1999).

When we think of polygamy in this country, however, we think of Utah and Mormonism. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, was a twenty-four year old New York farmer when he began a religion based on his own translation of a set of gold plates delivered to him by an angel. His translation, The Book of Mormon, "was a record of God's dealings with pre-Columbian ancestors of the American Indian" (Van Wagoner, 1989). The time and place made it possible for Smith to form a new religion. There was unprecedented opportunity in the infancy of this country and Smith took advantage of it. He was most likely familiar with several of the other religions that sprang up from the Shakers to the Harmonists and seemed to incorporate their ideas of utopia into his own beliefs. Smith was not the only prophet to spring up during this
time. He was, in fact, a product of his time, just another prophet.

The entire country was in turmoil. Established churches were breaking up. The Methodists had split up into four sects between 1814 and 1830 (Brodie, 1995). The Baptists had split into Reformed Baptists, Hard-Shell Baptists, Free-Will Baptists, Seventh-Day Baptists, Footwashers and others (Brodie, 1995). Isaac Bullard, naked except for his beard and bearskin girdle gathered a following (Brodie, 1995). Ann Lee, the mother of the Shakers, who called herself the reincarnated Christ, fled New England with her celibate followers and flourished in New York (Brodie, 1995). Jamima Wilkinson, the "Universal Friend," also thought of herself to be the Christ (Brodie, 1995).

All of these new religions sprang up in the area surrounding Palmyra where a young Joseph Smith grew into adulthood and they helped shape his ideas and beliefs. It was the most fertile time in American history for the emergence of new prophets (Brodie, 1995). Not only was Smith surrounded by prophets springing up around him, he came from a family that believed the "inner life is a law unto itself; freedom and integrity of religious experiences must at all costs be preserved (Brodie, 1995).
This idea plays an important part in the Mormon struggle that continues to this day between the American notion of separation of church and state and the freedom of religion that polygamists say is their right.

Smith reinvented himself in his later years after he became a successful prophet, seer, and revelator. His own account of his youth differs greatly from non-Mormon history documents. He was a likeable young man bent toward tall tales and not a brooding mystic with godly visions as he portrayed himself in a letter for his church newspaper (Brodie, 1995).

Smith's theology of marriage and family seemed to draw on ancient Israelite traditions. "Like the biblical patriarchs of old, Mormon males empowered with priesthood were entitled to receive divine guidance in family matters. Women, on the other hand, were denied both priesthood and hierarchic positions (VanWagoner, 1989). This is not particular to Mormonism, but to traditional Christianity and most world religions as well. "Religious imagery appears to buttress male supremacy. God is father, judge, shepherd, and king. Jesus and the twelve apostles are all male" (Brinkerhoff and McKie, 1985). While there are women religious leaders, Christianity still teaches that the husband is the head of the household and if he's doing his
job "right" then everything else falls into place and a
woman's place is still as mother and wife.

Apparently, Smith's focus on the translation of the
Scriptures of the Old Testament gave him the idea of
polygamy as a necessity even though the practice is
powerfully condemned in several passages of the Book of
Mormon (Jac. 1:15, 2:23-2227; 3:5; Mos. 11:2-4, 14: Eth.
10:5). I'm not sure why because in his later years Smith
condemned polygamy and his wife did not approve of the
practice in spite of being a follower and believer in her
husband's newly founded beliefs. Smith has been accused by
his contemporaries and present day historians of being
everything from a true prophet to a sexual predator. The
Old Testament, however, gives substantial evidence of the
acceptance of polygamy in ancient Israel. "Jacob had two
wives and two concubines (Gen. 29-30); Elkanah had two
wives (1 Sam. 1:2), Rehoboam had eighteen wives and sixty
concubines (2 Chron. 11:21); Abijah married fourteen women
(2 Chron. 13.21); David had a large harem (1 Chron. 14.3);
and Solomon managed seven hundred wives and more than three
hundred concubines (1 Kings 11.3) (Van Wagoner, 1985).

Smith never publicly encouraged polygamy and it was
not until eight years after his death in 1852 that the
Mormons practiced polygamy. This is not to say that Smith,
himself, privately did not practice it (Pratt, 1878). There are many accounts from repeated stories and letters written by people in his community of this practice by Smith that led some historians to conclude that he was lecherous (Van Wagoner, 1985). Smith even publicly denied the practice of polygamy "from the stand," but among his inner circle (men who considered themselves the Lord's Anointed) it was widely known that he practiced polygamy. When one of the inner circle, John C. Bennett, was asked why Smith preached so much against polygamy even though it was known he practiced it, Bennett replied that it was necessary for him to do so because "of the prejudice of the public, and that it would cause trouble in Smith's own house (VanWagoner, 1985).

It seems that Smith's own wife, Emma, was against his practice of polygamy. Emma did consent on a couple of occasions to her husband's "sealing" with other women on the grounds that these sealings were "spiritual wifery" or "celestial marriages" and not of this earth. These were ceremonies where women were taken in by the man as wives in an afterlife for eternity and not in a physical sense while on this earth. A woman could only attain a higher state in heaven if she was "sealed" to one of the prophets. But Emma herself was extremely suspicious of her husband,
Joseph, keeping a watchful eye on him after catching him on several occasions alone with young women (Van Wagoner, 1985). When Emma, tired of her constant battle to keep Joseph from bedding young women, turned the tables on Joseph and insisted she be sealed to another man, Joseph became extremely jealous (Van Wagoner, 1985). Apparently, it was fine for his wife to share him with other women, but it was not fine for him to have to share his wife with other men. There are several documented instances in which Joseph Smith approached wives of other living men to marry them, not acknowledging their civil marriages. When confronted, Smith either denied the advances, accusing the women of lying, or said that he was merely testing their faith or loyalty (Van Wagoner, 1985).

By July 12, 1843, when the revelation of polygamy was written, Joseph Smith already had plural wives as he wrote, "And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph..." (Doctrine and Covenants, Section 131, verse 52). It is no secret what Emma herself thought about this when she threw what she thought was the only copy of her husband's revelations into the fire and burned them. Joseph Smith knew that as long as his wife thought what she burned was the only copy his revelation about polygamy that she would be appeased and
there would be relief for him from their constant arguments over the subject. The revelation also supports the fact that Joseph Smith was a deceitful person as it clearly states that the first wife must “give her consent” (Doctrine and Covenants, Section 131, verse 52).

One of his wives, Emily Dow Partridge, testified that she and her sister were married to Joseph Smith without his wife’s consent. “... the Prophet Joseph and his wife Emma offered us a home in their family. We had been there about a year when the principal of plural marriage was made known to us, and I was married to Joseph Smith on the 4th of March 1843, Elder Heber C. Kimball performing the ceremony. My sister Eliza was also married to Joseph a few days later. This was done without the knowledge of Emma Smith” (Historical Record, vol. 6, page 240). William Clayton, Smith’s private secretary, states in his diary that Smith would even fake an excommunication from the church of anyone practicing polygamy to support his public image that he did not condone it: “Says he just keep her at home and brook it and if they raise trouble about it and probably cut you off and then I will baptize you and set you ahead as good as ever” (Clayton, 1843). Smith also announced in the Mormon paper, Times and Seasons, the excommunication of a man who had been preaching polygamy. “As we have been
credibly informed, that an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-day Saints, by the name of Hiram Brown, has been preaching polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines, in the county of Lapeer, State of Michigan. This is to notify him and the Church in general that he has been cut off from the church for his iniquity and he is further notified to appear at the Special Conference on the 6th of April next to make answer to these charges” (Times and Season, vol. 5, page 423).

Smith was making enemies within his own following by his deceptions and by 1844 he knew his life was in great danger both from within his own ranks and from the outside. Smith at first decided to flee to the West, leaving Emma and his children with his brother Hyram and others. During the night of his escape, Smith wrote Emma a letter that he gave to Rockwell to deliver to her and to bring back his best horses. Joseph had abandoned his people. When Rockwell reached Emma she told him to return to Joseph with Reynolds Cahoon and beg him to return. Joseph listened to Cahoon’s concerns that the gathering posse had come to arrest Smith and would destroy his people. “When the shepherd deserts his flock, who is to keep the wolves from devouring them” (Brodie, 1995). Instead of showing the strong leadership he had shown in previous years, Smith
turned to the others with him for direction. His brother, Hyrum, thought they should return and give themselves up, but Joseph feared that they would be killed if they did. He meditated, staring into the fire for a long time, Smith agreed to return (Brodie, 1995). On June 27, 1844 Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were gunned down while being held in prison in the Carthage Jail. The Prophet was dead.

It seemed at first that this would put an end to Mormonism. Ironically it had the opposite effect. Joseph and his brother Hyrum, who died with him, were now called martyrs and their deaths gave strength to the sect. "Joe and his brother will be regarded as martyrs to their faith and but little knowledge of human nature and the history of the past is necessary to inform us of the fact that violence, oppression and bloodshed strengthen instead of subduing fanaticism" (Brodie, 1995). The facts of Joseph Smith's real life now became lost in his death as stories built upon stories carried him above the normal plane of a man and placed him on a pedestal where only gods stood. "The martyrdom was a dramatic symbol that God had placed His seal upon the testimony of His prophet. And it was the legend of Joseph Smith from which all evidences of deception, ambition and financial and marital excesses were
gradually obliterated that became the great cohesive force within the church” (Brodie, 1995).

The Mormons now needed someone else to lead them. Several of the men that followed Joseph Smith tried to take the reins of his new religion. All of them proclaimed revelations and visions and practiced polygamy and all of them failed except for one. Brigham Young saw an opportunity and took it. He claimed his authority as president of the apostles, not just another revelator, and it was to him that the Mormon turned. Historians have commonly held that Joseph Smith’s empire was crumbling from within and that only the genius of Brigham Young saved it from ruin (Brodie, 1995).

Brigham Young now led the Mormons to the Great Basin that is today the heartland of Mormonism and here the evolution of polygamy took place. Polygamy now was not limited to just the leading elders of the church but became respectable as the number of wives became a measure for a man’s faith. “I understand the law of celestial marriage to mean that every man in this Church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness and will not, shall not be damned, I say I understand it to mean this and nothing less, and I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that” (Journal of Discourses). Under Brigham
Young the practice of polygamy flourished (*Journal of Discourses*). It is not until one of the church's presidents, Wilford Woodruff, renounced the practice in a manifesto written in 1890 that Mormons stopped polygamy, but excommunication for practicing polygamy did not come until 1904. For the Mormon church to win statehood and peace the practice of plural marriage was renounced while retaining the principle and ideal (Brodie, 1995).

In spite of the manifesto, polygamy is still practiced by dissenting groups who believe it is their freedom of religion to do so. Because they claim to go back to the fundamental doctrines of Mormonism, those who believe in practicing polygamy today are usually known as Mormon "Fundamentalists" (Tanner, 1988). It is hard to say why the practice of polygamy is considered fundamental within the religion of those who practice it. This is where the Mormon church finds itself in conflict. To deny the doctrine of polygamy would be to say that Joseph Smith was wrong. So while the church believes in the doctrine of plural marriage, it does not allow a man to have more than one living wife. However, a man may be sealed to more than one woman for eternity. If his wife has predeceased him, a man may remarry and be sealed to his second wife as well as his first for time and eternity, but while a woman may
remarry after her first husband has died, she may not be sealed to more than one man for both time and eternity (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 2, p. 78). This is but one example of the subordinate status of women within the early Mormon church, since being sealed to a loved one is a fundamental belief in Mormonism it shows that men and not women may still have more than one wife even if it is in the afterlife giving men more status and excluding women from attaining higher status. According to their beliefs, a man can only attain a higher status in the afterlife if he has at least three wives. A woman, on the other hand, cannot attain a higher status even in the afterlife. She is only used to help someone else, a man, attain a higher status. The stratification is so ingrained within Fundamentalist groups that women and female children have no rights and are not regarded as anything more than a "baby-making machine", for the sole purpose of elevating a man to a higher position within his own community. Women and children, living polygamy, seem to have little, if any, freedom and are on this earth solely to serve men and God under guidelines established by these men (Brodie, 1995).
CHAPTER 2

Literature review

While the degree that polygamy is practiced worldwide is unknown, it is documented in 80% of cultures around the world (Bergstrom, 1994). There has been much controversy lately in the United States concerning the practice of polygamy and its effects on young girls and women in our society (People, 1999).

The largest concentration of polygamists in the United States is in Utah and the surrounding areas of Hilldale, Utah and Colorado City, AZ (Tracy, 2001). Because polygamy is illegal in Western cultures, the polygamous clans are secretive. As a result, there has been little information available about the influence this practice has on women and children until recently. A few women in polygamous relationships “escaped” and formed a group called Tapestry Against Polygamy. Through their voices we are just beginning to hear of the atrocities practiced under the umbrella of “religious freedom.” I have turned to other studies about family violence, domestic abuse, incest and other forms of abuse to inform my understanding of what is taking place within these polygamous clans.
Religion is an important institution to develop and perpetuate the cultural norms of society (NcNamara, 1985). Male practitioners of polygamy claim it is their religious right. However, when a woman is coerced into plural marriage, sexual acts, and forced pregnancies by religious beliefs with no way to change her position, it is sexual slavery (Barry, 1984). The United Nations defines violence against women as "... any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women" (Watts, Zimmerman, 2002).

To "outsiders," women's decisions to stay in these abusive relationships seem like a personal choice. But investigation reveals that the reasons for this behavior are many and complicated and are not necessarily conscious (Gondolf & Fisher, 1991). Women often do not question accepted norms because of fear of reprisal (Watt, Zimmerman, 2002).

Learned helplessness, low self-esteem, depression, fear of reprisal, entrapment either through economics or psychological ambush are a few of the deep seated reasons that women do not or cannot leave abusive situations (Gondolf & Fisher, 1991). A woman might feel she is unable to predict the effect her behavior will have. This
inability to predict the effect of one's own behavior changes the nature of the individual's response to situations. Because they cannot predict their own safety, they believe that nothing they or anyone else does will alter their terrible circumstances (Walker, 1989).

Abuse can manifest in many forms. It may include emotional or verbal abuse, denial of access to resources, restraint of normal activities or freedom that includes isolation from friends and family, sexual coercion or assault, threats to kill or harm, and physical intimidation or attack. In extreme cases it may result in the death of the abused (Gelles, 1997).

Inequality between men and women is associated with violence (Jewkes, 2002), this is a demonstration of the inequality between men and women (Watt, Zimmerman, 2002). Women that are economically dependent on their partners bring fewer resources to the relationship, have fewer options for leaving a bad relationship, and may therefore be more vulnerable to spousal abuse (Kalmuss & Straus, 1990). Women who were unemployed and economically dependent are less apt to leave an abusive relationship than those who were more independent (Barbour 1983). Women's economic dependency on men is an important attribute of stratification systems and an essential force
in the maintenance of gender inequality, that is, the extent that married women rely on the incomes of their husbands (Sorensen and McLanahan, 1987).

The family is a social unit, a power system in which participants use force to control the behavior of others. Men with higher levels of economic resources have more power (Good, 1971). These men do not always have to use physical violence to control their wives and children (Goode 1971). Analysis suggests that cultures with unyielding male ideas of male supremacy have more intimate partner violence (Jewkes, 2002).

Family violence can be physically or emotionally harmful acts between individuals in families or in intimate relationships (Harvey, 1998). Violence is an exhibit of power against those that do not have power (Jewkes, 2002). Men benefit from their advantageous position in the social hierarchy and therefore believe in using traditional sex roles to maintain and enhance the patriarchal structure of society and to sanction the use of violence by men to maintain this privileged position (Yllo & Straus, 1990). Women’s unequal position encourages violence that further fuels the tendency of violence against them (Watts, Zimmerman, 2002). This results in a form of social control that reinforces gender oppression and inequality. But not
all abuse is through physical violence. In Foucaults’ analysis of power, he describes a system of domination and control that is rationalized. Subjects are dominated through norms, rules and techniques of discipline (Foucault, 1984). Networking and support for women can be a form of power for women and therefore abused women become isolated (Jewkes, 2002). Added to this, pressure to conform to sex roles may cause mental health problems for women (Cook, 1990; Franks, 1986). Strict adherence to gender roles has been linked to depression (Good, Gilbert, & Scher, 1971). The result is a radical loss of self-esteem, self-respect and loss of any sense of self whatsoever (Frye, 1983).

Family violence and abuse are produced within a gendered society in which male power dominates (Gordon, 1983). This domestic abuse is not isolated or limited to any socioeconomic, racial or social group (Florsstrom, 1991) and cannot be alienated from bigger issues of child abuse or other violence within the family (Morgan, 1982). Many researchers define marital abuse and child abuse as a continuation of a single family problem, family abuse (Bernard & Bernard, 1983). Abuse is a learned social behavior for both men and women and comes across as normal to those involved thereby setting up a cycle from
generation to generation (Jewkes, 2002). Whenever men consider women and children to be their personal property, they feel warranted in abusing them. The seeds of wife beating lie in the subordination of females and in their subjugation to male authority and control (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Studies reveal that male dominance, religious beliefs and identification with traditional sex roles are a basic underlying cause of family abuse (Gordon, 1983, Yllo & Straus, 1990). Religious institutions are significant in the development and maintenance of cultural norms of society. Generally, authorities know about the abuse but accept sexual exploitation and violence as a matter of the rights of men within a religious setting as normal under specific conditions (Barry, 1984). The acceptance by police and lack of enforcement against abuse suggests that maintaining the status quo is important no matter what the cost to women (Jewkes, 2002).

The Kingston Clan, the largest and wealthiest of the polygamous clans (Deseret New, 1998), practices eugenics, believing that only the leader’s genes can be passed on and purified by interbreeding. This incest has resulted in numerous birth defects and forced marriages. The incest issue was brought to the public’s attention when the trial of a young girl who had been forced to marry her uncle
disclosed that her own mother and father were half-brother and sister.

According to Utah's statute, incest is defined as sexual intercourse with an "ancestor descendant," brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or first cousin. Also, it is considered incest to have intercourse with a stepchild while the marriage is in force or for sex to occur between a half-sister and half-brother. In thirty-seven states, including Utah, first cousin marriage is illegal. Recent studies have indicated that incest, although rarely discussed, is a continuing problem in modern society and prevalent within polygamy (Wallace, 1998).

"Religion is no excuse for abuse," says Rowenna Erickson (Deseret News 1998), a founding member of Tapestry Against Polygamy. The problem with investigating any abuse within these polygamous clans is that authorities seem reluctant to get involved. Even with the scandals in the Catholic Church of recent years, it has taken authorities years finally to acknowledge that they cannot look the other way and allow any church to police itself. The same is true with polygamy. Abuse should not be hidden and protected under an umbrella of religion. Those practicing any religious beliefs in this country should be subject to
the same laws and punishments that the rest of the population is subject to. Anyone's right to practice any religious belief stops where someone else's freedom begins.

Young women and young men able to escape the confines of these polygamous clans are starting to come forward with their own stories of abuses such as incest, prison, forced intercourse, economic abuse, infanticide, birth defects from inter-family marriages and even murder. It has taken them years to feel strong enough to tell their stories and still the threats to themselves and their families continue and are real as well as the total disconnection of family members such as their mothers and siblings left behind. It is a difficult decision at best for young men and women fleeing polygamy and often they do not feel any safer in the outside world. This is a world that they are unfamiliar with and almost as afraid of as they are of staying within polygamy. With no safe homes to flee to many young girls are forced back into the only world they know, back into a world of abuse they cannot escape.
CHAPTER 3

Methods

This research began as a series of semi-structured interviews with women who have left polygamous relationships. Four former plural wives participated in interviews that lasted from thirty minutes to three hours. Each of these women was a founding member of Tapestry Against Polygamy, an organization that works to inform outsiders of the abuses within the secretive world of polygamy as it is being practiced within the United States.

While I was able to interview each woman, after I conducted my interviews, the women asked me not to use any of the information except as background information to help me better understand the workings of polygamy. They were all writing books on their experiences, and they did not want my research to tell their stories first before their books were published. I agreed to this restriction, and so any information used from these interviews appears in this study in aggregate form. The second form of data used in this study comes from my own observation of the events swirling around polygamous sects in Utah during my research. At the same time that I did my interviews with the members of Tapestry Against Polygamy, the trial of a
young girl who had escaped from a polygamous marriage was taking place and I was able to cover the trial. I also followed the members of Tapestry Against Polygamy as much as I could and attended several news conferences during which they talked about their experiences as plural wives. Because my respondents have not allowed me to use their interviews for specific data, most of my data comes from written sources. The diaries of plural wives provided important primary data for the study. Additionally, Tapestry Against Polygamy has formed a website, and I was able to use some of the information from my interviews repeated either on the website or in newspapers in Utah. Kathleen Tracy’s book, The Secret Story of Polygamy, provided a wealth of information about the experiences of women in polygamy and repeated a great deal of my interview material. Newspaper accounts of the trial of polygamists also provided insight into these secretive groups.

The analysis of the data provided focuses on the issues of power and abuse. Using a feminist perspective, I note how, rather than being an expression of religious freedom, polygamy is, in fact, an institutionalized and systemic form of abuse. Within polygamy, key male leaders exert physical, social, and economic control over women, children and less powerful males.
When I started my research I found that polygamy was never included in any literature on abuse and when I researched polygamy I never found any reference about abuse within the practice. I took all the forms of abuse listed in my research from family violence, domestic abuse, incest, and sexual abuse and compared the definitions of these listed abuses to what is taking place within polygamy to determine if abuse was indeed taking place within the practice of polygamy. As I examined the data from diaries, web sites, newspapers and magazine accounts, and my own observations and interviews, I identified various themes that create a context for understanding the abuses that occur within polygamous relationships. These themes form the framework for my discussion of the connections between polygamy and the abuse of women.
CHAPTER 4

Findings

The themes presented here examine American women's experiences of polygamy and abuse. Diaries of the first plural wives of Joseph Smith and accounts of polygamy described by contemporary participants all recount abusive relationships of personal experiences of emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse.

The ideals promoted within the practice of polygamy include a woman's duty to accept her husband's other wives as her wife-sisters, her duty to her family to enter into polygamy as a must for their salvation, total obedience to her husband, her duty to have many children and total control of her every action as well as her physical being by her husband (Deseret News, 1999).

These ideals form the foundation of an abusive system in which women are completely controlled by and at the mercy of powerful male family members. This research suggests that rarely does just one kind of abuse happen within polygamous families. Once abuse was evident it multiplied and transformed into other kinds of abuse as well. For this reason, I have chosen not to separate each particular abuse because they are all connected. I have
tried to list the most serious and apparent abuses that can conceal other underlying abuses. It is difficult to say in these relationships which abuses come first because the very culture of expectations concerning sex-role behavior may limit feelings, thoughts and behaviors of women (Good, Gilbert, & Scher, 1990). It made it difficult to separate some of the abuses into structured categories.

One of the valuable contributions of feminism is that it is responsible for validating problems of abuse such as incest, rape, wife beating and violence against women and children. It gives voice to stories that have been historically silenced and recognizes that a client’s social context is important to understand the psychology of the individual (DeVoe, 1990; Espin, 1993) and provides an audited framework for understanding abuse. Fifty years ago spouse abuse occurred behind closed doors and was considered a private matter. This continuing attitude in areas surrounding polygamous enclaves allowed abuse to flourish in secretive clans of polygamy because law enforcement agencies have refused to intervene. Scott Cosgrove, the male sheriff detective in Box Elder County, states,

We don’t go after it [polygamy] and my deputies are not going to go after it. Number one because we have more important crimes. There is bank
robbery, drive-by-shootings, gangs, home-invasions, robbery, homicide, rape. These are issues of highest priority (Deseret News, 1999)

The crimes declared by the sheriff as important are crimes against men or property. Rape, the one crime usually committed against women, here again declared important is committed by polygamists against young girls forced into plural marriages, yet rape laws are not being enforced against polygamists.

The abuses that occur within polygamy are considered a personal matter best taken care of by the abusers. Again, Sheriff Detective Scott Cosgrove explains, "We're aware they're up there and what they do but they primarily keep to themselves" (Standard-Examiner, 1998). The power of polygamy's patriarchs is reinforced by the institution of law enforcement that refuses to act in a matter considered both less important than "real" crimes and a private matter within the family. The continuing patriarchal notions of the family and the roles of men and women within the family maintain the system of abuse that is inherent in polygamy.

What we find in both the historical and contemporary data is precisely this: systems of power and privilege as expressed in social institutions such as the family, religion, and government reinforce and maintain the abuse of women and children in polygamy.
The Mormon practice of polygamy really starts after Joseph Smith’s death. Smith himself did not live practical polygamy. That is to say, he did not live with or support any of his “wives” and, in fact, denounced polygamy as evil in his later years although he did bed a number of young women and created tension between Emma and these other women. His wife Emma also says that she was his only wife and she did not believe in polygamy in any physical sense of the word.

After Joseph Smith’s death, Brigham Young claimed that he was the next Prophet. It has been said that without Brigham Young’s genius, Mormonism would not have survived (Van Wagoner, 1989). Before his death, Joseph Smith had considered California as a place to take his followers. This could have had great significance in the success of Mormonism and polygamy. Instead, Brigham Young settled the group in Utah. The isolation of Utah helped to protect the practice of polygamy among the Mormons, an unpopular practice to outsiders. California would not have provided the isolation that was needed for polygamy to take root. Once established in the Great Basin, church leaders were
less concerned with hiding their polygamous practice from the public (Van Wagoner, 1989).

More than a religious tenet, early polygamy was a social system in which women often suffered neglect as a result of the time and money demands placed on a husband whose goal was to produce as many children as possible (Compton, 1998). Plural wives tended to be independent and self-sufficient because they had to be or they would not have survived. Nonetheless, polygamy created a context of isolation, insecurity, and neglect (Compton, 1998). Plural wives experienced loneliness, feelings of depression, despair, anxiety, helplessness, abandonment, anger, psychosomatic symptoms and low self-esteem (Compton 1998), all expressions consistent with experiences of powerlessness and abuse.

Zina D. Huntington is one of the best documented of the first plural wives. She kept a diary of her polygamous marriage to Joseph Smith (October 1841) and, after his death, to Brigham Young (February 1846). She is a classic example of Joseph Smith’s early polygamous wives. Her relationship with Smith was polyandrous meaning that she was not required to leave her “first husband.” However, after Smith’s death, Brigham Young married many of Smith’s “wives” by “proxy,” including Zina who had Young’s children, midwifed his other
children, acted as doctor, priestess and spiritual leader within the family and later as a public figure of the Relief Society. Her priestess and spiritual duties, although important, were limited to only other women and sometimes children and only in the absence of any male presence and had nothing to do with the established business. As was typical of polygamy, Young was not a constant presence in her married life. She filled her time and her deepest emotions with siblings and children (Compton, 1998). This theme of loneliness and forced independence would repeat itself with many of the polygamous wives. In 1849 she fell into lonely tears and wrote in her diary:

As I sat in my wagon with a hart tender as if believed of a dear friend mediating I was aroused by a knock on the wagon. BY came to inform me a room was finished &c, &c, &c. O did I not seek a lone retreat beside a murmering[rill]... the water rolled over a falloff about 3 feet where the sound of my voice would not be herd there. I wept yes wept bitterness of Soul ya [yeah] sorrow and tears that wore [were] rung from a heavy hart. Sadness for awhile took her seat in my hart and reigned Predominet for a short time (Young Woman's Journal 1986, Compton, 1998).

The above diary reference seems to reflect Zina's tearful relief that she now would have a room to live in after living in her box wagon for quite sometime. Housing was at a minimum, and many of the plural wives lived in their wagons until rooms could be provided for them,
usually in Young's Lion House where he housed most of his plural wives. This was more like a boarding house where each woman had her own room but shared the rest of the house with all the other wives and children and was expected to share equally in all the chores. This seemed more like a convenience for Brigham Young than any desire to provide for his wives. With all of them in one house the wives could take care of each other and it held his expenses of care to a minimum.

Zina D. Huntington leaned on her brothers and other relatives for financial support and worked hard to earn money for herself (Compton, 1998). An absent husband is a theme that played itself over and over again in the lives of polygamous wives. Zina had no husband in her daily life as Brigham Young was distant being busy with other wives, children and church business, and wrote in 1876 to her daughter's husband "...home is so lonely but I make the best of it I can do..." (Compton, 1998).

Zina D. Huntington, the mother, had a very public life but a private life filled with loneliness and neglect and wrote to her daughter, Zina Card, of her loneliness, "My Own Dear Zina I am very lonely but I expect it is all right...what is home a lone with out you" (Young Woman's Journal, 1895, Compton, 1998).
On May 13, 1896, Zina wrote to her daughter, Zina Card, after a visit and again expressed her private loneliness in a very public life.

Evry thing is lonely & silent just my old black shawl on the childrens hat rack, . . . but Zina I try awful hard to keep the promis I made you, not to feel bad I am quite brave & do first rate . . . I am the happiest when in my bed & put my hand on my side as you held yours before we ware up in the morning (Young Woman's Journal, 1895, Compton, 1998).

As in the case of her sister, Zina, Presendia Buel was approached by Brigham Young and Herber Kimball shortly after Joseph Smith's death. She married Kimball in 1845 as approximately his twenty-first wife and entered into his extended "family kingdom" which consisted of forty-five women before his death in 1868. Presendia Buel had entered Heber Kimball's extended family kingdom, which consisted of forty-five women before his death in 1868. She had two children by Heber and was left to take care of them as well as herself on a daily basis by doing housekeeping, then school teaching. During the winter, she lived in her primitive house and milked her cows herself. She was often helped by a Brother Edward Martin and even spent part of the winter in his more comfortable house (Compton, 1998). Again, a plural wife has to lean on others than her husband for support.
Because social power in these early polygamous relationships resided in the men, plural wives were forced into lives of isolation, loneliness, and neglect. Their unhappiness was hardly a concern to the men who continued to take wives and have children despite their inability to provide emotionally or financially for these families.

On October 3, 1844, Patty Barlett (Sessions Smith Parry), was forced into polygamy when her husband David took another wife. Her only recourse seemed to be prayer as there was little hope of changing her predicament. She wrote in her diary on May 25th,

Rain this morning again Br Kimball came to the wagon said I must not feel bad I was crying when he came I could hardly tel for what for I had many things to hurt my feelings I told him some things he said all would be right, not to give way to my feelings. I feel very bad see that I must live alone I commence family prayer (Smart, 1997, Compton, 1998).

In spite of his first wife's unhappiness, Patty's husband continued to take more wives and at age 55 on January 13, 1850 she wrote in her diary:

He takes her to the farm with him leaves me here alone I feel as well as I can. It snows and is cold and I am all alone feel very lone some. The hay[was] all under snow 3 feet deep I have shoveled snow 2 hours before I could feed the cow mare, then shoveled out the wood I am tired out it has thawed to day (Smart, 1997, Compton, 1998).
Here is yet another example of a polygamous experience for women defined by the husband's absence. His choices left her struggling for emotional and physical survival. The context for her, and other plural wives, unhappiness was completely circumscribed by her husband's unchallenged right to make all the choices about the family.

This theme of abuse by neglect is prominent in the stories of early plural wives. Emily Dow Partridge, one of two sisters that Joseph Smith raised as his own, married him as a teenager and then married Brigham Young after Smith's death at the age of twenty as his approximate eighth wife in 1843. She wrote in her diary:

You can see a young woman with a [three-month-old] child clasped in her arms, seated on a log cold and hungry and a little dejected. You cannot tell what she has on for the snow is falling fast and she is covered with snowflakes it was rather lonesome, when the [Brigham Young] company started on leaving us in the wilderness without home or shelter. My baby was very sick at the time which made it seem much worse (Emily, qtd, Compton, 1998).

By that time, Brigham has married forty other women and they were often left to themselves and to relatives for survival. These marriages formed a dynasty of family connections for the men where they gained wealth and power, but for the women, it only reinforced their loneliness, poverty, and neglect.
After giving birth to three children Emily wrote on February 24, 1853, to Brigham.

I hope you excuse the liberty I take in addressing you thus. I did not wish to write could I have had an opportunity of saying to you what I wanted. Since the death of my child a change has come over my feelings, I feel more lonely and more unreconciled to my lot than ever. [A]nd as I am not essential to your comfort or your convenience I desire you will give me to some other good man who has less care. I realize you have a great many cares and perplexities, a large family, all having their wants (Emily, qtd, Compton, 1998).

Brigham Young ignored Emily’s needs and wants and Emily is forced to continue her life of loneliness, neglect and poverty. In August of 1880 Brigham Young passed away and Emily wrote angrily in her diary:

The Executors treat the heirs as if they were poison. It is worse now to get anything than it used to be it was bad enough then. Expect nothing but to stay at home in my loanlyness. Too old for enjoyment (Emily, qtd, Compton, 1998).

For plural wives, polygamy meant isolation, loneliness, neglect, and powerlessness. As men chose to bring new wives into the family, they placed previous wives in the position of having to provide for themselves and their husbands additional children. By virtue of their survival, these women demonstrated a sort of strength in the face of neglect. Yet the power was not theirs to leave or choose not to participate in a polygamous network.
First wives and favored wives

While one might expect that women living together would form close bonds, in reality polygamy served to put women in competition with one another for male attention and resources. First wives were (and still are) the only legal wives of polygamists and therefore the only ones with access to any legal benefits that accrue to married people. Also, polygamists often played favorites among their wives, creating a hierarchy that exacerbated competition and ill feelings among women and reinforced women’s feelings of isolation and powerlessness.

The following diary entries showed the problems and stratification system between wives. In 1850, Zina D. Huntington moved to a lot and lived in her wagon for a time. On April 26, she began to live in a house that might have been crude and primitive, for this is when she broke down in tears, then moved to Brigham’s Log Row in December and lived with Harriet Cook for a time. An exchange between Harriet and Zina shows the hierarchy found among the wives: “You are nothing but a proxy wife. Brigham doesn’t love you and neither does anybody else” (Compton, 1998). The fact that Harriett referred to Zina as a “proxy wife” showed that she saw Zina as occupying a lower status
in the family (Compton, 1998). A proxy wife was a woman who had been sealed to Joseph Smith and after his death married either Brigham Young or Heber Kimball or perhaps another polygamous man. They were not favored wives.

Women had no power over their husbands' choices to take multiple wives or to show favor to one of them. Another entry in Zina's diary showed a classic plural wife experience when she goes to a party only to find her husband, Brigham Young, there with another wife or wives. In the following entry Zina showed that her experiences of loneliness and neglect as a plural wife were the same for other plural wives as well when she wrote: "Susan [Banler] spent most of the day with me her husband took her sister Electa to wife last night a day of trial for her" (Compton, 1998).

In 1869 the New York World published an interview with Zina about her views of polygamy that also reflected the attitude that plural wives were subject to abuse from first or favored wives. A first wife could be a favored wife and that caused problems of abuse from her to subsequent wives. On the other hand, a younger prettier subsequent wife could cause friction between the husband and the first wife.

First wives are a particular problem, as they have a tendency to look upon the husband with "selfish
devotion" that desires to claim all his time and attention for themselves (Zina qtd, Compton, 1998).

Mormon polygamists were supposed to have the permission of their wife before they took another wife, but this rule seemed to have been ignored more than it was followed (Compton, 1998). The women were powerless, then, to stop their husbands from taking other wives, and this seems to have created an ongoing source of pain, loneliness, and despair for them as evidenced in the example of Patty Bartlett.

Patty Barlett (Sessions Smith Parry) wrote in 1844: "I have seen many lonesome hours this week Mr Sessions has found some fault with me" (Smart, 1997).

Patty felt betrayed and abandoned as a "first wife" because her husband was spending more time with his younger, more attractive newer wife. The next day her husband was "more kind" to her and the next day's entry reveals more of her inner sorrow as she wrote:

I feel bad again he has been and talked with Rosilla and she filed [filled] his ears full and when he came to my bed I was quite chiled [chilled] he was gone so long and I was so cold I had been crying he began to talk hard to me before he got into bed and threatens me very hard of leaving me Oh may the Lord open his eyes and show him where he is deceived by listening to her false tales . . . It rains Rosilla went away told nobody where she was going (Smart, 1997).
As a first and unfavored wife, Patty was the focus of blame for the friction between her and the newer wife. Two days later the younger wife returned and conflicts resumed between her and Patty.

I still feel bad Rosilla wants to cook by herself, I will not let her when she can eat with the rest of us and is well. She will not eat with us nor receive any council from him to do right. I feel bad I am in trouble (Smart, 1997).

Patty, as the first wife, wanted the respect she felt she deserved from a newer wife whom she had to share her husband. But the newer wife seemed to feel she was younger and prettier, and therefore had more power over the husband so should have more power over the first wife. A month later, Patty, David and Rosilla tried to work out problems and Patty wrote:

She was very willful but obstinate he told her to come into the tent and if she did right she would be used well. I told her it was a big cud for me to swallow to let her come in after she had abused me so shamefully. And if I would forgive him and let her come in, he would do it no more and would sleep with me when I was at home and use me well. . . I said if she came in I should be boss over the work and then she must be careful how she twisted and flung at me. . . we left her and went to bed (Smart, 1997).

The emotional abuse Patty suffered is evident. Just from the fact that she wrote about her husband sleeping with the newer wife "three" times. This was not the end of problems between the three of them, as Patty continued to write:
I have to work all the time and notwithstanding all he has said to her about helping me she never has to favour me in the least but before supper [she] gave me the lie many times and talked very saucy to me and when I could bear it no longer I told her to hold her toungue and if she gave me the lie again I would through [throw] the tongs at her. She came into the tent but will not work I cook she [eats] I put James M Flakes wife to bed. He has lain with her three nights she has told him many falsehoods and is tring to have him take her to Nauvoo and then to Maine and leave me for good . . . I go to bed know not what to do (Sessions, 1967).

Patty's son Perrigrine sees the abuse his mother receives from Rosilla and defends his mother.

PG said he had seen me abused long enough and she had causd it she gave him the lie . . . he had seen me cook and she set and do nothing and then come to the table and croud me away (Sessions, 1967).

Patty's husband David was angry with Patty and asked her to pack provisions for Rosilla to live somewhere else and she wrote:

As old as I was to have to maintain her without work he was mad turned his back and said he could do it himself (Sessions, 1967).

The conflicts between the two women were not resolved and the younger wife left. It is not clear if the decision to leave was hers or David's but she returned to Nauvoo although not before she tried to make David go with her.

Come back here sais [says] she is going back to Missisipi river she left word for Mr Sessoins to come over to see her. He went over at night and stad [stayed] with her.
When Rosilla left David stayed with Patty. Patty had her husband back all to herself and settled into her daily routines of nurse and midwife, but it would not last long.

In December David informed Patty he was taking another plural wife, Harriet. The emotional abuse continues for Patty. Her husband did not ask her permission to take another wife, but told her instead. His emotional abuse and neglect of Patty were of no matter to his decision to take another wife and Patty’s only recourse was to turn to prayer.

I feel bad Mr. Sessions has told me his plans and contracts that he has made with Harriet also what Brigham said about it . . . Mr. Sessions rather cold toward me. Mr. Sessions denies me a small favor I feel very bad. He went back carried Adline left me crying I feel very bad see that I must live alone I commence family prayers. Mr. Sessions . . . said things to me that make me feel bad . . . slept but little . . . I wish to do right but I fear I shall fail through sorrow Oh Lord give me thy spirit to guide me safe in the right way. Mr. Sessions came home I was glad. He is (kind) (Smart, 1997).

Mr. Sessions died and Patty married John Parry. She was the only wife, but two years later her domestic peace would once again be skattered by “the principle.”

Mr. Parry saw Brigham [He] told me what he said I felt bad that he did not tell me before Oh Lord help me to do right he is to have a woman sealed to him next Sunday and this is the first I knew about [it] and he has known it a long time but denied it to me (Smart, 1997).
Again, Patty is not consulted about her husband taking another wife. Patty’s diary showed she is left alone to fend not only for herself, but for her husband’s other wife as well even though she was the first wife. It also showed that she was neglected and not provided for by her husband and she wrote in April of 1857:

Mr. Parry has brought me ten and a half pounds of flour and one pound of butter the first he has brought me of his earnings for about two years. Mr. Parry told me that Harriet had but little beside cornbread to eat (Compton, 1998).

Patty told Parry that he could take Harriet some food, she suggested that Harriet come live with her to cut down on costs. Her loneliness and neglect were evident in her diary entry that reveals she is not well and still must provide for herself and the children. And again, her only salvation was her prayers.

He made me no reply. Finish[ed] harvesting and gathering all my peaches and all my vegetables got all my manure out and much of my lot spaded Mr Parry has not been here any days only three times in the evening for two weeks and I have been very unwell just to be able to attend to oversee my business. I am alone the most of my time but my meditation is sweet and I feel to thank the Lord all the time (Compton, 1998).

In another example of neglect Ann Eliza Webb wrote about Marinda and Orson Hyde and showed that being the first older wife was difficult at best.
A few years, since, at a large party at the Social Hall in Salt Lake City, Orson Hyde, one of the twelve apostles met the wife of his youth, the mother of many of his children. He had escorted some of his younger wives there, and she came with a friend. It chanced that they were seated near each other at the table, and were compelled to speak; they shook hands, exchanged a very commonplace greeting, and that was all that passed between them . . . it very often occurs that an elderly lady attends a party with friends, and meets her husband there with one or more younger wives; and sometimes both she and they have to watch their mutual husband while he plays the agreeable to some young girl . . . Sometime these old and middle-aged ladies do not see their husbands once a year, and yet they may not live half a mile apart (Compton, 1998).

For first wives, often the only way they could exert power was over subsequent wives. Charles Rich was an eyewitness to a confrontation between Joseph Smith’s wife, Emma, and one of Smith’s conquests, Eliza R. Snow (Smith Young). Emma never accepted polygamy and when she discovered that Joseph’s marriages were more than “celestial,” Emma kicked the women out.

A door opposite opened and dainty, little dark-haired Eliza R. Snow (she was “heavy with child”) came out . . . Joseph then walked on to the stairway, where he tenderly kissed Eliza, and then came on down stairs toward Brother Rich. Just as he reached the bottom step, there was a commotion on the stairway, and both Joseph and Brother rich turned quickly to see Eliza come tumbling down the stairs. Emma had pushed her, in a fit of rage and jealously; she stood at the top of the stairs, glowing, her countenance a picture of hell. Joseph quickly picked up the little lady, and with her in his arms, he turned and looked at Emma, who then burst into tears and
ran to her room. Joseph carried the hurt and bruised Eliza up the stairs and to her room. Her hip was injured and that is why she always afterward favored that leg. She lost the unborn babe (Compton, 1998).

Emma had done this before with her ejection of Fanny Alger some years before. Emma’s case was a little different. While she believed in Joseph’s newly founded religion, her understanding was that these marriages were only for the afterlife. Her discovery that Joseph actually had sex with these “spiritual” wives provoked anger in her and she seemed to have enough influence over Joseph to have her own way even if it was a false reality for it did not stop Joseph from bedding more women behind her back.

More difficulties ensued for first wives who remarried husbands who already had one or more wives. After Joseph Smith’s death, Eliza accepted Brigham Young and on October 3, 1844 they were married for time. Eliza joined the mass exodus to the Far West with the Markams. It was difficult for women who had been married to Joseph Smith and after his death married to one of the other prophets. It meant that they were not favored first wives and were often resented by the other wives. When they arrive at Morley’s encampment Eliza recorded, for the first time, tensions between her and the Markams:
This morning, Brother Markham manifested a mean jealousy which I need not describe. There is family discord, which I think proper to call hell, reining around me (Compton, 1998).

Over and over again, the historical records show that plural wives shared common experiences of neglect and abuse.

Emily Dow Partridge’s diary gave insight into her feelings toward the powerful group of men that controlled her life and put her into circumstances where at an elderly age, despite the wealth accumulated by these powerful men, she still had to fend for herself.

Today I feel quite unwell. I seem to lack strength. I would be glad if circumstances were such that I would not have to work so hard, but work seems to be my lot. I never did know how to shirk out work. Yesterday Br. Cahoon called to see if I would send a man to help on the water ditch or pay 75 ct as I have no man without taking Carlos out of school. I had better pay it, and I do not think the Presidents men will help me in that. They know very well that he wishes me to take care of myself, and I do not know why he (although it would be very hard on me) It would be preferable to being told of it so much by others (Compton, 1998).

Young used the powerful men he had surrounded himself with to act as a buffer between himself and Emily and seemed to feel no responsibility to take care of her. This seemed to fly in the face of what polygamy was established for, to take care of widowed and older women who had no husband.
If I was well and strong I might do better, but I have not been well since I went to the farm... I had not been in the 12th Ward one year before I received a note stating that Ms Partridge's school tax 75 dollars (of course I could not pay it) and was told that Br Young refused to pay it, so I suppose it stands against me yet. I hardly know sometimes which way to turn to get those things he does not provide. For the past few days a sad feeling comes over me very often, why I do not know. I have been sick in bed for two days. Am much better today. I feel rather dispirited and a good cry might do me good. I feel quite ashamed to be known as a wife of the richest man in the territory, and yet we are so poor. I do not know why he is so loth to provide for me. My children are his children. He provides sumptuously for some of his family. If he was a poor man it would be different... He manifests a desire to cast me off, and I cannot ask him for anything. What his hired men will let me have I get, but it is like pulling teeth to get that sometimes. I feel very lonely tonight. I hope I do not sin in my feelings (Compton, 1998).

Emily did receive some things that she had requested from Brigham. Emily is older now and can no longer work and contribute to the wealth of the powerful men who controlled her life and became only a burden to them. The things she did receive were but tokens to make her go away. It also reflects that she was not provided for as some other more favored wives, but neglected and abandoned. That she might not be able to because of poor health did not seem to matter to the men that controlled the power and wealth that could have changed her circumstances.
It seems to be my fate to have to take second or third hand articles . . . I might feel better about it if all was served in the same way. Different ones have told me that they heard Pr. Young say, "sister Emily ought to take care of herself; he did not intend to do anything for her much longer." And the men in his employ would hardly let me have anything saying, "it was Pr. Youngs orders" and one man said he knew it was hard work for me to get anything as no one wanted to do anything for me, and said he "I actually have to lie when I bring the brand for your cow and tell William it was for someone else" and I and my family have to take insult upon insult from the[ir] hands until I feel as if I want to be free from such things. When I go to Pr. Young for anything he seems annoyed and perhaps will give me no to worry, and I have laid awake many nights thinking and contriving some way to get along independent of Pr. Young, but being poor health and not able to work. (Although I did work and kept myself sick all the time (Compton, 1998).

Woman has had to bear her own burdens, and also a great portion of mans curse. She is not only expected to bear children, but she must drudge from morning un'till night; and her duties as wife and mother often follow her from night until morning, and her labors never cease as long as she can place one foot before the other. I do not think that God designed that man should enjoy all the sweets of Liberty; while woman is bowed down in shackles. Liberty is sweet. As sweet to woman as to man . . . We do not wish to drag our brothers down, but we desire to raise ourselves up to his level We have born the galling chains a very long time (Compton, 1998).

Unlike most of the widowed wives of Joseph Smith, Eliza Maria Partridge (Smith Lyman) did not marry Heber Kimball or Brigham Young. Instead, Eliza entered into another plural marriage as the third wife of Amasa Lyman.
Eliza settled in Utah with other Mormons, but found herself without her husband to provide for her and her children and relied on herself and other plural wives for shelter and food (Compton, 1998).

Amaza Lyman was away most of the time on missions in California and for some reason Eliza was left behind while he took his other plural wives with him (Compton, 1998).

Here again were the themes of loneliness, neglect and the stratification between favored and unfavored wives.

Br. Lyman started with all of his family, except Paullina and me and our children, Oscar and Platte. Everything looks like desolation and lonesome as sister Caroline has gone too. But I have Mother and other friends here yet. Have had a very comfortable summer so far as my health is very poor (Lyman, 1973).

Amasa takes an eleventh wife while in San Bernardino and Eliza wondered how he would provide for his new wife when he could not provide for those he already had. The men didn’t seem to care if they could provide for the numerous wives and children they accumulated, after all, that burden fell to the "other" wives.

Which will leave us without man or boy to do anything. Br. Lyman started on a mission to England leaving us to do the best we could which was not very well as we were as usual in very poor circumstances. We had poor health and no means to help ourselves with. He left his family mostly to their fate or to get along as best they could, although he was with them. When I reached my home . . . it looked desolate and lonely. I
felt as if I were returning from a funeral. I had a family on my hands but had no one to provide for us (Lyman, 1973).

For some reason Amasa Lyman was excommunicated from the Mormon Church. His wives left him then and stayed with the Mormon church. This clearly showed that while polygamy is about power and control for men, it is about religion and salvation for women. Eliza once again was left with no one to provide for her family. On top of this her younger sister, Lydia died. She left a son, Edward, who was taken in by Caroline, and two daughters, Ida, fifteen, and Lyndia May, nine, who moved in with Eliza and added to this, her son Platte was sent on a mission leaving his wife, Adelia, who was seven months pregnant and his two other children to also live with Eliza (Compton, 1998). Her own daughter married into a polygamous marriage and lived mostly with Eliza. Carlie died after giving birth to her first child, a son, while her husband was off with another wife, and Eliza is left to raise her son, a request made by Carlie (Compton, 1998).

Absent husbands and fathers left the everyday care of their families to their many wives while they were out forging more alliances by marrying more wives. The more wives, the more families were united and unity established a power base for these polygamous men. Older wives and
their children were neglected and left to get by the best they could. Their usefulness except as a work force was over and Eliza wrote:

How changed is my situation now from what it was last Christmas. Then the baby's mother and I were alone while all the rest of the household were gone to the party. Now she sleeps in the grave, and her baby is left to keep me company in her stead (Lyman, 1973).

The Farm

Brigham Young's "Forest Farm" provided telling examples of the way women were expected to see to their own survival and also showed the power and control the polygamous men waved over "disobedient" or "troublesome" wives. Emily Dow Partridge (Smith Young) was sent to live in Brigham's "Forest Farm" house, where his herds of dairy cattle supplied milk and butter for the Lion House and was considered a place of exile by his wives (Compton, 1998).

I have not been well since I went to the farm to live about five years ago. Nobody knows my feelings in connection with that place (Compton, 1998).

Ann Eliza Young also wrote of the "Farm" and gives a chilling look into the physical abuse forced upon out-of-favor wives by the powerful men that controlled every aspect their lives.

Every one of the wives who had been compelled to live there had become confirmed invalids before
they left the place, broken down by overwork. There were butter and cheese to make from forty cows, all the other dairy work to attend to, besides cooking for twenty-five or thirty men, including the farm labourers and the workmen from the cocoony (Compton, 1998)

In 1872 Emily is deeded a home by Brigham Young and left the “Farm.” Her telling words reflect upon a life devoid of happiness and filled with neglect forced upon her by powerful and wealthy polygamous men.

Today I am fifty years old. Can it be possible; To look back upon my past life it seems like a troubled dream. There has been but few if any, pleasant reminiscences for memory to dwell upon. My children . . . they are my comfort. The fourth of this month (31) thirty-one years ago I was sealed to Joseph Smith (Compton,

**Lies, Deceit, Coercion**

Joseph Smith used his power as prophet to persuade women to enter into polygamy. He used God for his own benefit to bring young girls and other men’s wives into his bed without accepting any responsibility for his actions. For his followers, using God was a powerful strategy for he was considered a prophet and as such, his words had to be true. But the truth was that he abused his power as a religious leader. Joseph Smith always claimed that plural marriages were ‘celestial’ only, meaning that it was not a physical marriage on this earth, but an afterlife one. But all the men within Smith’s circle knew these marriages were
physical and the 'celestial' story was for Emma only. Smith was busy building himself an empire through dynastic unions that provided wealth and power by uniting families and fortunes. Two of the sets of sisters that Smith married were orphans from families of substance. He adopted them, thereby making claim to their inheritance and then married them, forming powerful family unions. The following diary entry of Josephine Rosetta Lyons reveals that Joseph Smith was indeed having sexual relations and that the 'celestial' marriages he proclaimed to Emma were sexual unions.

Just prior to my mothers death in 1882 she called me to her bedside and told me that her days on earth were about numbered and before she passed away from mortality she desired to tell me something which she had kept as an entire secret from me and from all others but which she now desired to communicate to me. She then told me that I was the daughter of Prophet Joseph Smith, she having been sealed to the Prophet at the time that her husband Mr. Lyon was out of fellowship with the Church (Compton, 1998).

This shows that Joseph Smith was having sexual relations with his polyandrous wives in spite of his protestations (Compton, 1998).

Eliza Roxy Snow (Smith Young) refers to Joseph Smith as "my beloved husband, the choice of my heart and the crown of my life" and affirmed that her marriage to Smith has a sexual dimension (Compton, 1998). Eliza is invited to live with Emma in the Smith household and as I have
noted in other portions of this paper, Emma did not accept
the doctrine of polygamy. I found no references as to why
Emma allowed Eliza to move into the same house with her,
except that she had allowed other women to do so at one
time or other, but when she suspected there was more than a
"celestial marriage" between her husband and the women,
Emma kicked them out angrily.

In 1843, Joseph Smith is in hiding to avoid being
arrested for complicity in a shooting in Missouri. He is
living at Edward and Ruth Daggett's house. It was during
this hiding that Smith got to know Ruth and married her six
months later in February, but as with all of Smith's
polyandrous marriages, she continued to live with her first
husband after the ceremony (Compton, 1998).

The Partridge sisters are two of the best known of
Joseph's wives. They had lived in the Smith household for
years as young girls and married him secretly as teenagers,
then, when Emma selected them as plural wives for Joseph,
they married him again. However, Emma was apparently
unaware that these marriages were physical in nature and
demanded that Joseph expel the two young women from her
home once she discovered that it was (Compton, 1998).

Joseph framed his marriage proposals in terms of being
divine and said that God was the ratifying agent, and it
was sacrilegious to doubt. It was the woman’s duty to comply with the fact that she was already Joseph’s possession (Compton, 1998).

In 1842 Smith proposes to Lucy Walker (Smith Kimball), a fifteen or sixteen year old, demanding that she marry him. This diary entry shows how Smith uses God to get what he wants by wording his proposals as commandments from God and putting a religious “guilt” trip on the young girls if they do not comply.

In the year 1842 President Joseph Smith sought an interview with me, and said, ‘I have a message for you, I have been commanded by God to take another wife, and you are the woman,’ My astonishment knew no bounds. This announcement was indeed a thunderbolt to me. He asked me if I believed him to be a Prophet of God. ‘Most assuredly I do I replied.’ He fully Explained to me the principle of plural or celestial marriage. Said the principle was again to be restored for the benefit of the human family. That it would prove an everlasting blessing to my father’s house. And form a chain that would never be broken, worlds without End. He said ‘If you will pray sincerely for light and understanding in relation thereto, you Shall receive a testimony of the correctness of his principle (Compton, 1998).

She prayed and wrote of her personal struggle with Smith’s request knowing she had no one to turn to for help.

Tempted and tortured beyond endureance until life was not desirable. Oh that the grave would kindly receive me that I might find rest on the bosom of my dear mother. Why-Why Should I be chosen from among thy daughters, Father, I am only a child in years and experience. No mother to council; no father near to tell me what to do, in this trying
hour. Oh let this bitter cup pass. And thus I prayed in the agony of my soul (Compton, 1998).

Lucy rejected Smith's proposal but he was undaunted and told her the marriage would have to be secret but he would acknowledge her as if wife, (Compton, 1998). Again, Smith turns to God as his bargaining tool to force marriage.

Beyond the Rocky Mountains, it is a command of God to you, I will give you until to-morrow to decide this matter. If you reject this message the gate will be closed forever against you (Compton, 1998).

This infuriated the young girl and she seemed to know that entering this marriage meant any dreams she had of a happy future would be gone forever.

This aroused every drop of scotch in my veins . . . I felt at this moment that I was called to place myself upon the alter as living Sacrifice, perhaps to brook the world in disgrace and incur the displeasure and contempt of my youthful companions; all my dreams of happiness blown to the four winds, this is too much, the thought was unbearable (Walker, 1978).

Lucy marries Joseph Smith the day before she turned seventeen and wrote of her personal sacrifice for God:

It was not a love matter, so to speak, in our affairs, - at least on my part it was not, but simply the giving up of myself as a sacrifice to establish that grand and glorious principle that God had revealed to the world (Walker, 1978).

Smith keeps at Lucy to get what he wants from her. He is the prophet of this new religion and why shouldn't he be believed. He used that position of power to persuade Lucy
that God wants her to marry him, again, in secrecy. All her childhood dreams of finding love are sacrificed in the name of God.

Helen Mar Kimball (Smith Whitney) married Joseph Smith at the age of fourteen making her the youngest of Smith's known wives (Compton, 1998). Helen was three when her parents were baptized into the Mormon Church and her father would later become one of the most prominent leaders in early Mormonism (Compton, 1998). Of her father's entrance into polygamy Helen wrote:

The Prophet told him the third time before he obeyed the command. This shows that the trial must have been extraordinary, for he was a man who from the first had yielded implicit obedience to every requirement of the Prophet (Compton, 1998).

Without any preliminaries [my father] asked me if I would believe him if he told me that it was right for married men to take other wives. The first impulse was anger . . . My sensibilities were painfully touched. I felt such a sense of personal injury and displeasure; for to mention such a thing to me I thought altogether unworthy of my father, and as quick as he spoke, I replied to him, short and emphatically, No I wouldn't . . . This was the first time that I ever openly manifested anger towards him. Then he commenced talking seriously and reasoned and explained the principle, and why it was again to be established upon the earth, etc. . . had a similar effect to a sudden shock of a small earthquake. When he found (after the first outburst of displeasure for supposed injury) that I received it meekly, he took the first opportunity to introduce Sarah Ann to me as Joseph's wife. This astonished me beyond measure. Having a great desire to be connected with the Prophet, Joseph, he [Heber] offered me to
him; this I afterwards learned from the Prophet's own mouth. My father had but one Ewe Lamb, but willingly laid her upon the alter: how cruel this seemed to the mother whose heartstrings were already stretched until they were ready to snap asunder, for he had taken Sarah Noon to wife & she thought she had made sufficient sacrifice but the Lord required more (Whitney, 1973).

He left me to reflect upon it for the next twenty-four hours . . . I was skeptical—one minute believed, then doubted. I thought of the love and tenderness that he felt for his only daughter, and I knew that he would not cast her off, and this was the only convincing proof that I had of its being right. I knew that he loved me too well to teach me anything that was not strictly pure, virtuous and exalting in its tendencies; and no one else could have influenced me to accept of a doctrine so utterly repugnant and so contrary to all our former ideas and traditions (Whitney, 1973).

This shows how much pressure was put on these women to enter into polygamy and still only the men benefited.

Helen's father would find favor in the Mormon Church because he not only practiced polygamy, but his daughter entered into it for the family's salvation. Helen wrote that the next day Joseph Smith himself came to her to explain the principle of celestial marriage:

After which he said to me, 'if you will take this step, it will ensure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that your father's household & all of your kindred.' This promises was so great that I willingly gave myself to purchase so glorious a reward. 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.' She had witnessed the suffering of others, who were older & who better
understood the step they were taking, & to see her child, who had scarcely seen her fifteenth [sic] summer, following in the same thorny path, in her mind she saw the misery which was as sure to come as the sun was to rise and set; but it was all hidden from me (Whitney, 1973).

Joseph Smith as Prophet wielded absolute power within his circle and didn’t hesitate to use that power to lie in the name of God, coerce in the name of God and be deceitful in the name of God to get what he wanted.

**Incest**

Incest is one of the worst forms of abuse against women and children leading to long term and deep seated emotional scars and very clearly practiced at the onset of polygamy by Joseph Smith.

In 1843 thirty-seven year old Joseph Smith married nineteen year-old, Emily Dow Partridge (Smith young) in secrecy from her own family and four days later married her sister Eliza. These sisters had also been raised in the Smith home as his own children after their mother passed away and Smith sent their father on a mission (Compton, 1998).

What kind of emotional and psychological problems did these sisters have after being pushed into what must have been an incestuous relationship to them, after all, this was their father figure, a man who raised them in his home.
After Smith’s death the sisters seem to choose not to marry the same husband perhaps trying to avoid the emotional and psychological problems that being married to the same man encompassed.

After Smith’s death Emily marries Brigham Young, but her sister Eliza marries Amasa Lyman as his third wife and shortly after he married her younger seventeen-year old sister, Caroline (Compton, 1998).

In 1842, Sylvia Porter Sessions (Lyon Smith Kimball Clark) was sealed to Joseph Smith when she was twenty-three. Her mother, Patty was sealed to Joseph Smith the same year.

I was sealed to Joseph Smith by Willard Richards March 9, 1842 in Newel K Whitneys chamber Nauvoo, for time and eternity Eternity . . . .Sylvia my daughter was present when I was sealed to Joseph Smith (Compton, 1998).

The incest practiced by Joseph Smith assured his power base within certain families and assured that family property remained within the polygamous circle by blocking the ability of these women to bring other men into the circle that might have a claim on their time, money and property.
Dynastic Unions

The dynastic unions that developed in these polygamous marriages, deprived women of their property, any chance they had of marrying outside of the polygamous circle and their rights in general. The men were amassing power and property by connecting families, property and wealth.

Josephine Rosetta Lyon was born February 8, 1844 to Sylvia. Heber C. Kimball blessed the girl, the first sign of a bond between the Lyon and Kimball families (Compton, 1998).

Saran Ann Whitney enters the historical record on March 22, 1842, when she celebrated her seventeenth birthday party in “the Masonic room” above Joseph Smith’s store. This party gives a brief glimpse into the social life of a teenager in a leading family of Mormon Nauvoo. Those in attendance included Helen Mar Kimball, daughter of Heber and Vilate Kimball; the daughters of Sidney Rigdon and Bishop Higbee, the “Miss Pierces” (including Mary and Margaret later plural wives of Brigham Young); Rachel Ivins (later a plural wife of Jededia Grant and the mother of Heber J. Grant); and Mary Ann Ivins, among others (Compton, 1998).

Helen Mar and Sarah Ann were very close friends and both married Joseph Smith as first husband while still in
their teens, creating dynastic, family-linking sealings between their fathers and Smith, then each married into the other's family in second marriages for time - Helen Mar marrying Sarah Ann's brother, and Sarah Ann marrying Helen Mar's father (Compton, 1998). Sarah's marriage to Smith linked him to a close friend, her father, Newel Whitney, one of the earliest bishops in the church. Sarah Ann is also unique because Smith had her marry a "pretend" husband Joseph Kingsbury, by civil law to mask her polygamous marriage to him (Compton, 1998).

Sarah Ann's marriage to Smith was very much a family activity. On May 4 Sarah's father received his endowment and became a member of the Holy Order (Compton, 1998). A man was not likely to leave the polygamous circle if his children were practicing polygamy and therefore would not be pulling his power, wealth or property out either. By elevating him within the polygamous circle, the man only became more powerful in this dynasty. Money was, after all, usually kept within families.

Helen Mar wrote about Sarah's parents Newel and Elizabeth:

They willingly gave to him [Joseph Smith] their daughter, which is the strongest proof that they could possibly give of their faith and confidence in him as a true Prophet of God (Compton, 1998).
So another dynasty was created. Joseph and Newel had a close friendship and the sealing would link the families of Newel and Elizabeth Whitney and Joseph Smith in this life and in the next. As Orson Whitney, son of Horace and Helen Mar, would later write, that the two men shared a strong 'bond of affection.' This was strengthened and intensified by the giving in marriage of the former of the Bishop's eldest daughter, Sarah, in obedience to a revelation from God. This girl was but seventeen years of age but she had implicit faith in the doctrine of plural marriage. The revelation commanding and consecrating this union, is in existence, though it has never been published. It bears the date of July 27, 1842, and was given through the Prophet to the writer's grandfather, Newel K. Whitney (Compton, 1998).

As a front to her marriage to Smith, Sarah Ann was married to her uncle, Joseph Kingsbury. After Smith's death, when Sarah was nineteen, she was married to Heber Kimball secretly and another male dynasty was created. Now the families of Kimball and Whitney were bound closer than ever (Compton, 1998).

There is little known of Flora Ann Woodworth (Smith Grove) but an entry in the journal of Orange Wight gives a revealing look of the inner dynamics of the marriage of
Joseph Smith to his young bride. Flora was keeping company with Wight when Smith picked the couple up himself and delivered Wight to a woman for "education." The polygamous men chose the men that would enter into polygamy, not women and they were usually men of means. This ensured that wealth was brought into the polygamous circle and also kept women in polygamy and kept the dynastic unions in place a benefit for men in the form of power and control.

He opened the doore for us and when we were seated opposite 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 another room and told me that Flora was one of Joseph's wives, I was awar or believed that Eliza R. Snow and the two Patrage 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 Polygamy .. . Now as a matter of corse I at once after give her Flora a mild lecture left her and looked for a companion in other places and where I could be more sure (Compton, 1998).

Wight had evidently felt that Flora had encouraged his suit because she was told her marriage to Smith was only celestial. Flora was the daughter of a close friend as was Helen Mar Kimball and both their parents received their endowments and joined the Holy Order during their lifetime, supporting the dynastic interpretation (Compton, 1998).
Helen Mar Kimball's (Smith Whitney) marriage to the Prophet at age fourteen seems to have been a dynastic union arranged by Joseph and Heber to seal the Kimball family to a seer, church president, and presiding patriarchal figure of the dispensation of the fullness of times (Compton, 1998).

**Contemporary Polygamy**

Many of the same characteristics evident in the beginnings of Mormon Polygamy in this country are still deeply embedded in the practice today. Wealth, power and control belong to the men and women have little to say about their lives. Incest is widespread, emotional abuse, neglect and poverty still dog women within the practice today and men are building a financial empire on the backs of polygamous wives and children.

The Washakie ranch in Box Elder County Utah is just one of the multiple business and land holdings in the Kingston group's empire. In Box Elder County alone, the Kingston Clan owns at least 12,471 acres near the ranch that is worth an estimated $2.53 million according to court records.

Besides the several larger and better-known polygamous groups, numerous small independent polygamy-practicing
churches exist throughout the Rocky Mountain area from Montana and Idaho to Mexico. Most are confined to a single community (frequently communal in structure). Some have a lineage that can be traced to Lorin Woolley, but others have established their authority on different basis (Anderson, 1979).

Charles Eldon Kingston, a wayward Mormon who believed that the LDS Church's early belief in polygamy was still correct, started the Kingston group, one of the largest (Gallagher, 1998). Kingston recruited followers, most of them Mormons who were dissatisfied with the direction of the church, and started the Latter-Day Church of Christ.

The new church borrowed liberally from LDS beliefs, including the Word of Wisdom, which forbids the use of alcohol and tobacco, though in the Kingston group eating sugar is also frowned upon. Current leader Paul Eldon Kingston, grandson of Charles Eldon, is considered a prophet and is the only one who speaks directly to God (Gallagher, 1998). "We didn't have a one-on-one relationship with God, said a 33-year-old woman whose husband is still employed by the Kingstons. "It's Paul and then God" (Standard-Examiner, 1998).

State records show the Kingstons own businesses in the Salt Lake City area that include a Montessori...
school, a health club, an apartment building and a pawn shop. The businesses, run by group members include: Best Distributing Amusement Games, A-1 Disposal, Standard Restaurant Equipment Co., Family Stores True Value, Sportsman's Pawn Shop, East Side Market, Best Distributing, Little Red School House and AAA Security (Gallagher, 1998). Licenses for these businesses are registered to Kingstons who have been identified as members by law enforcement officers and former members of the clan (Gallagher, 1998). There are many more business holdings than this and it becomes an important issue because so many of the businesses get tax free credits for being part of a religious organization and rake in money from Federal Government Grants (Deseret news, 1998).

Rowenna Erickson, who left the group in 1994, said that originally the sect had admirable, communal goals. But it has become, she said "a money-making organization," with the leaders benefiting from a network of businesses that have included banking and mining interests, retail businesses and gaming related enterprises. Many ordinary followers of the Kingstons, she said live in poverty, with the woman and children often on welfare (Register Guard, 1998).
According to Tapestry Against Polygamy, finances are controlled to make it harder for women to leave. The Kingstons force women and children to live in near poverty conditions while the men 'have access to millions of dollars' (Deseret News, 1999, Tracy, 2001). Even though the men own the housing, women married to the Kingstons are forced to pay rent out of their minimum wage earnings at businesses owned by the Kingstons (Deseret News, 1999). Work is often the way to redemption, the leaders preach because the church needs money and members are told that hard work will be rewarded after 'The Destruction,' and end-of-the-world scenario that will provide the Kingston clan with its pick of beautiful homes, expensive cars and riches beyond their wildest dreams (Standard Examiner, 1998).

But these business holdings and profits are only one side of the Kingston group. The other side is a secret religion that preaches a gospel of destruction, believes no member will reach heaven unless a daughter is married to a clan leader and wants to control members' lives to the extent that it tells them how to rinse milk cartons and conserve shampoo. Leaders of the Latter-Day Church of Christ hold two-hour services every Sunday in one of the family businesses, but sermons run the gamut from "the
early days” of the church under Charles Eldon to the best way to bathe and how much toilet paper to use. The Bible is never used and God is referred to only as “heavenly Father,” and Church members are reminded of their superiority over all others (Gallagher, 1998).

“We look at this as a bad group, but they think they are the chosen ones. It hurts the women when the husband takes another wife but they know it’s the way to the celestial kingdom,” said a young woman who left the church after being told at the age of 16 that she had three days to decide on a husband. Often the message is a double-edged sword where members are told they should never ever lie, unless they are asked about their families. “It’s a little teeny narrow path and if you step off it once you’re going to hell,” the 35-year old said. “They told me I was going to hell for throwing snowballs and not confessing to my teacher but I’d also go to hell if I told the teacher about our family. You can’t win either way (Gallagher, 1998).

According to Tapestry Against Polygamy, women experience multiple stressful and abusive realities within plural marriages.

They have control over our lives by telling people where they should work, expecting attendance at multiple
church services and activities, dictating decisions that should be made by the entire family (Tapestry Against Polygamy, 1998). They manipulate marriages by arranging for people to get married, telling women to stay in abusive home situations and accept the abuse as "correction from the Lord" (Tapestry Against Polygamy, 1998). There is pressure to perform sexual acts through coercion that another sexual partner does not want (Tapestry Against Polygamy, 1998). Threats to "take away" the husband's attention for "wrong behavior" are used daily to intimidate women (Tapestry Against Polygamy, 1998).

The group claims to have "all the answers" to your problems. You begin to feel guilty and ashamed, unworthy as a person. The group speaks in derogatory ways about those outside the religious affiliation. Outsiders are defined as unable to understand and help you with religious matters. Males are believed to have more rights and abilities than females. Leadership is never shared and it's an authoritarian leadership that claims exclusive access to God's will while they take total control over the member's daily lives exclusively while isolating members forming a development of unhealthy emotional dependence. They prohibit critical analysis, independent thinking, and practice methods of ego destruction and mind control, often
prefacing their remarks with things like "The Lord has told me," and discourage free and independent pursuit of education (Tapestry Against Polygamy, 1998).

The Washakie Salers ranch is a landmark that signals the approach of the Idaho border to interstate 15 travelers. A secretive 1,500 member Utah SECT waits for doomsday while they build an estimated $250 million business empire. The isolated property is where John Daniel Kingston, one of the group's leaders, allegedly took his 16-year old daughter and severely beat her for leaving her seven-month marriage to her uncle. The ranch is where the clan allegedly sends it's out-of-favor wives and children. The girl was her uncle's 15th wife (Gallagher, 1998).

Despite the number of wives and children the elite members have, no one escapes the ever-watchful eye of the patriarchs, ex-members say. Step out of line by having children who are too unruly or not doing what you're told and punishment is swift and severe (Gallagher, 1998).

Former clan members say the group uses fear, guilt and coercion to keep its members in the fold and keep their mouths shut (Gallagher, 1998).

Former group members say 43-year-old Daniel Kingston fathered the girl mentioned above, with his half sister and
has as many as 25 wives. Group leader Paul Eldon Kingston, 38, has somewhere between 200 and 300 children (Gallagher, 1998).

"They’ll threaten you with starvation or beatings and say they’re going to send you to Washakie," said Rowenna Erickson, who was raised in the group and was one of two wives. Her husband is still in the group. Erickson, in her fifties, was excommunicated in 1993 after writing a letter to the leaders of the group that was critical of the way women and children were treated (Gallagher, 1998).

The Utah Department of Investigation monitors groups such as the Kingston clan and an officer said he knew about the incident in Box Elder County, but wouldn’t comment on it or anything else about the group. Box Elder Sheriff’s Detective Scott Cosgrove said his office was aware of the Kingstons before the incident, but said there is rarely any trouble. He doesn’t consider them dangerous, though deputies from his department have been to Washakie ranch periodically to investigate calls from neighbors and schools about child neglect (Gallagher, 1998). Most information about the group comes from former members, many of whom are afraid of retribution even after they’ve left the clan (Gallager, 1998).
Brainwashing

For women, polygamy is about God, but for the men within polygamy it is about power and control. The women are told that their only way to salvation for themselves and their families is to be practicing polygamy. They are not told there is any other way of life outside of polygamy. This control extends to every aspect of their lives. If the women question anything they are barraged by threats into believing there is something wrong with them.

Vicky Prunty, a founding member of Tapestry Against Polygamy, recounts her own experience in a polygamous marriage. She is made to feel that there is something wrong with her for not being happy in her polygamous marriage.

We’d been married about seven years and had three children when my husband met his second wife. He had spent time with her family when he met her. She was 19 or 20 and he married her and came back and I had to give her to him in a ceremony, which is typical. I put her hand in his. I felt uncomfortable with it, but I wasn’t convinced it was wrong. I believed that we would be living polygamy at some other time, perhaps in the next world. I thought that trying to practice polygamy on this imperfect earth was like eating your favorite Marie Callender pie in a dump. How was I suppose to leave? What was I suppose to do without money and all these kids? I also have a copy of a scripture he wrote in which he said ‘if the wife is subject to her husband’s law, then she truly has no right to refuse his taking other wives besides her in her lifetime. She is, after all, under his dominion.’ She was so obviously his favorite, so it wasn’t easy at all. At times he would even try to convince me that I was
possessed by demons because I was rebellious and unhappy. Some of the other men in the group would try to exorcise me (Salon Magazine, 1998).

An example of how the woman is made to feel if she is not comfortable with polygamy. Her feelings of unhappiness don’t matter. She’s made to feel there is something wrong with her and again the power and control over her economically makes it impossible for her to leave with her children if she does have the courage to do so.

Another founding member of Tapestry Against Polygamy, Rowenna Erickson, was born into the secretive Kingston church and lived for 34 years as the second of two wives, the first being her older sister. She bore eight children in 13 years. For about a decade of that, she was so poor that she was on and off food stamps and collected recyclable aluminum cans for money.

My mother very much believed in it because of her Mormon background, although my father, a Lutheran, didn’t. My mother idealized it. She felt that, since she hadn’t done it, at least one of her children should. Also, the thought that she’d get religious ‘credit’ and that she’d be more likely to get what we called ‘celestial glory’ in the hereafter, which is what Mormons call heaven. That’s because our church believes that polygamy offers the only true path to the ‘celestial kingdom,’ the highest level of heaven, and that no family member will reach it unless a daughter is married to a leader of the Kingston church. Marriage is considered eternal. So she conditioned me. I was married in 1960, when I was 20 years old. My husband, Leon Kingston, was the firstborn son of the church founder, Charles Eldon
Kingston. He already had a wife; my older sister and I loved her so much that I was willing to enter into this arrangement. You are so controlled by the church that when they said something you jumped. He would have sex with me while my sister was in the next room (Salon Magazine, 1998).

The responsibility of the family’s salvation is put on the shoulders of the daughter. A woman cannot reach the kingdom of God unless it’s through a man and she really has no say. A woman is not worth anything unless she enters into polygamy and still her worth is graded by her subservience to do the will of the men who use God for their own benefit.

Former attorney general of Utrah, Jan Graham, admits that at no point in her career could she say she has done enough to help people in the polygamous communities (Tracy, 2001). Coupled with the attitude of ignoring polygamy is its secretiveness and isolation.

In polygamist clans, they don’t have friends outside, they have no contacts, no way to get the word out (Bell, 1999). Residents are extremely secretive and nonsocial to outsiders, keeping the expressive aspects of their lives limited to the confines of their homes, church, and community (Bennion, 1998).

We’re told, if you tell anyone, you’ll hurt your parents, yourself and you’ll make God angry (Standard-Examiner, 1998).
The control is complete here by keeping secrets and brainwashing women into believing it's all in the name of God. A woman cannot leave if she has several children because the children do not belong to her and where would she go for support if she did want to leave?

Plural marriage is the key to status during this life and the next. Women must bear many children to keep the commandment of multiplying and replenishing the earth and to allow the waiting spirits in heaven a chance to come to earth (Young, 1947).

The first thing they do is get you pregnant so you have a bunch of kids that'll keep you from leaving (Deseret News, 1999).

The economic power and control men have over women and children does not allow them to leave even if they want to. One major setback for women who want to leave the group is that they cannot easily take their children with them (Bennion, 1998).

Finances are controlled to make it harder for women to leave. Leaving polygamy is like a slave in the south leaving their master. They have no way to exist without that master. The Kingstons force women and children to live in near-poverty conditions while the men 'have access to millions of dollars but they don't' feel responsible for

Even though the men own the housing, women married to the Kingstons are forced to pay rent out of their minimum wage earnings (Deseret News, 1999).

You feel trapped. You have no options. You have your sister-wives, but you don’t talk about the painful stuff (Deseret News, 1999).

Women have no economic base to leave polygamy and keeping secrets allows power to control to remain in the hands of the men.

Polygamy is designed to oppress women and to keep them in bondage to men. Choosing polygamy because of religion because you fear that if you don’t chose it you’ll be damned for eternity, is very different from choosing polygamy because you really want to take in a lonely widow – to be kind to family, friends, and neighbors (Deseret News, 1999, Tracy, 2001).

The basis for polygamous marriage is nothing more than power and control where women are taught they are inferior to men and denied an education and pushed into marriages when they are very young so they will not rebel (Deseret News, 1999, Tracy, 2001)
The real issue for women like Rowenna Erickson is that the whole culture of polygamy, the minds-set of religious based patriarchies, is set up to oppress women and deprive them of basic civil rights (Tracy, 2001).

People should be allowed to believe whatever they want but not practice whatever they want. There’s a difference between religious freedom and religious abuse (Deseret News, 1999).

Polygamy is rife with victims even if the victims themselves couldn’t or wouldn’t acknowledge it. Some polygamous clans have much more in common with mind-bending cults than mainstream religion. Most of the women involved in the polygamist lifestyle have never known anything different. They have been conditioned through isolation to be obedient and denied the education necessary to make an informed choice about how to live their lives (Tracy, 2001, Deseret News, 1999).

I truly believe that the act of sharing your spouse is emotional abuse. I’ve seen it in women’s faces, and my shoulder’s been there when they’ve cried on it. It’s very difficult to lay in bed at night, trying to believe you’re doing what God wants, listening to your husband in the next room having sex with another partner. It’s so dehumanizing. Along with emotional abuse of sharing your spouse, there was a lot of isolation and deprivation. Suppressing your emotions in polygamy is the only way you can survive as a woman. If you try to deal with your emotions, they’ll destroy you (Deseret News, 1999, Tracy, 2001).
Fear, power and control keep women in these emotional, physical and economic abusive situations. Women who leave polygamy can be in real danger. Men have been known to threaten harsh punishment and even death. The very act of trying to live outside the community is like being thrown onto another planet. Social Security numbers are unknown to many of the women because such government documents are considered the 'mark of the beast.' Many children born in clans, never have a birth certificate because they are born at home. Likewise, some children are never sent to school. When you're coming out, you pretty much have to step into an entirely different world. Not only is a plural wife lacking in practical social skills or education, because these marriages are not sanctioned by the state, it is more difficult for these women to collect child support or alimony once they leave (Deseret News, 1999, Tracy, 2001).

The poverty Rowenna Erickson experienced was emotionally and spiritually depleting. She lived on food stamps and collected recyclable cans and babysat. Worse than the poverty, the loneliness was debilitating.

I was just a vessel to this man to bring souls down from heaven. Polygamy is one big lie. I'd been duped. It's demented. Polygamists are not as spiritual as you're led to believe. The sexual acts and incest and the actions against women and children are so sick. There's no end to it (Deseret News, 1999, Tracy, 2001).
The complete control and power by the men over women and children within polygamy is rife with several forms of abuse. The isolation and complete authority of men have lead to physical and sexual abuse of women and children within polygamy (Deseret News, 1999).

Polygamy is the biggest con in the world. Men are in it for sex, not religion. It is power and control in the name of religion (Deseret News, 1999).

The practice of polygamy has changed to benefit only the men that practice it and not the women and children it was suppose to take care of according to the teachings of Joseph Smith. According to Rowenna Erickson, "there is no one questioning the man's authority. Probably the safest place for a pedophile is in a polygamous community" (Deseret News, 1999).

The attitude and treatment of women within polygamy is dangerous to all women and not just the women within polygamy as seen by the abduction of Elizabeth Smart. The fact that she was abducted to be brought into a polygamous family shows the thinking of these men. That women are there for a man's use and he has the right to say what her future is going to be.

In a 1998 article in the Deseret News, suggests, "A young woman is more apt to be raped in Utah than she is in
CA. The entire structure of the church makes women feel like property" (Deseret News, 1998).

The fact that our government is so set on helping women in other parts of the world but refuses to even look into the abuses within polygamy at the very least begs the questions, why? "They practice all kinds of things we try to clean up in third world countries. Early polygamy attracted feverishly religious people. Now, it's pedophiles and abusers" (Deseret News, 1999, Tracy, 2001).

Polygamy is no longer an isolated issue in an isolated area. If polygamy is shielded by religion then any kind of religious practice could claim the same protection and that includes groups like the Man/Boy that believes it is their religious right to have sex with young boys. No country can survive if people refuse to obey the law of the land and do as they feel they have a right to do in the name of religion. Abuse in the name of God is still abuse.

The power and control these polygamous men have over women and children within the polygamous clans is no more than sexual slavery, economic chains, neglect that forces women and children to live in poverty and emotional destruction.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The power and control wielded by polygamists solidify the oppression of women that is so integral to polygamy that their experiences are fraught with layered abuses. The women interviewed in my research, reported feelings of being treated unfairly and controlled in almost every aspect of their lives. This research shows that abuse in polygamous families in the United States is complex.

According to Janet Bennion, Women of Principle - Female Networking in Contemporary Polygyny, female solidarity is the attractant to polygamy and that solidarity is lacking in monogamous culture. Bennion says that affiliation with other women in the same circumstances of deprivation cause women to bond. Bennion misses the fact that it is celestial marriage that is required for women’s salvation in the celestial kingdom, and not solidarity. She goes on to say that “a female kinship that is not found in monogamy . . . women in the mainstream do not access this kind of solidarity and relative autonomy.” I don’t believe this is so. Religion in the mainstream, as in any patriarchal culture, stimulates female bonding, solidarity and feminism. Female solidarity is women’s
doing, not men's. It is a coping mechanism, a reaction to male domination, not a benefit to being deprived and oppressed.

Oppressed people have experiences in their life that enforces barriers that keep reinforcing each other and make it difficult if not impossible for the oppressed person to do anything about (Frye, 1983). The experiences of women confined within polygamy with no escape, are akin to being locked in a cage. If five women are locked up together, they will form a bond for their own self-preservation. It doesn't mean that they enjoy being locked up, or that they know they might have other choices. These women and children in the secretive world of polygamy have no other choices in which to compare other ways of life.

These boundaries within polygamy that set apart a woman's sphere is maintained and promoted by men for the benefit of men and men do benefit from its existence. This boundary protects the classifications and status of men as superior and as having rights to sexual access to a female or females and protects a kind of citizenship, which is superior to that of females (Frye, 1983).

Women are oppressed "as women" not as members of any other group. Men are not oppressed simply because they are men (Frye, 1983).
It is important to understand the complexity of polygamy, the abuses that occur within it and the belief system in which these marriages are rooted and to understand why, when polygamy is illegal in the United States, that authorities have pretended nothing is "wrong." Only when more research is done to bring to light what is really going on within polygamous relationships will any of these women and children have the freedom an American citizen of the United States has by birth.

Further research is needed into these secretive clans of polygamy in the United States to compare regularity, intensity, and pervasiveness of abuse compared to monogamous marriages to establish whether polygamy itself is a risk factor for women and children within these families. This seems like a natural step to take in light of the findings of this study that illustrate that abuse and polygamy seem to be intertwined because total power and control for women’s lives are in the hands of the men.
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Definitions

Baptism for the Dead
The Mormons believe that it is possible to perform valid baptisms even after death. This does NOT mean that they actually deal with corpses, instead it means that baptisms are performed on behalf of the dead.

Bigamy
The criminal offense of marrying one person while still legally married to another.

Bishop’s Court
This term has been replaced by Disciplinary Council.

Born in Covenant
A child that was born of two parents sealed in the temple.

Branch
In areas where members are quite spread out, the Church will sometimes have units smaller than a ward.

Brigham Young University
A Church-owned University. Its policies are different from most universities, intending to reflect Mormon values.

Church Handbook of Instructions.
A “Policy and Procedures” manual for the Church leadership. This replaced the old “General handbook of Instructions.”

Deseret
The name Utah was given by the Mormon pioneers when they first arrived there. The name was changed to Utah during the attempt to make the area a state in the U.S.

Disciplinary Council
Internal conflicts are handled by the Church’s own court system. The Bishop of a ward generally is responsible for these. Appeals of decisions can be made to the Stake, and failing that to the President of the Church. The verdict is public information, but the details are not. A Disciplinary Council is usually
done in a ward, arranged by the Bishop, but may be convened by higher offices depending on the rank of the charged, and the situation.

Disfellowship
A punishment by a disciplinary council that is milder than excommunication but harsher than probation.

Excommunicate
To remove someone for the church. This is similar to excommunication in the Catholic Church, but it does not force eternal damnation. An excommunicate may repent and be rebaptized into the Church. This is the harshest action a Church court can take.

Fundamentalists
Sects of Mormonism that continued to support polygamy after revelation removed the principle from the church. Sometimes used to mean any sects that split off to refuse to follow newer revelations.

Gentile
Originally meant non-Jewish. Later someone not Jewish and not Mormon, although this may not be officially condoned.

Golden Plates
The original documents from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon.

Inspired Bible or Inspired Version
Joseph Smith’s retranslation of the Bible.

Jack-Mormon
Someone claiming to be Mormon, but not following the teachings.

Mormons
Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints. So called because their best known book of scripture is the “Book of Mormon.”

Polygamy
From the Creek, poly-many, and gamos which meant “marriage” in old Greek. Used to mean the practice of having more than one wife, also called Plural Marriage.
Polygyny
The condition or practice of having more than one wife at one time.

Quad
A bound volume containing all four of the standard works.

Relief Society
A service organization for women in the LDS church. Originally called the Women's Relief Society. On Sundays, when the men are at Priesthood meetings, women are at the Relief Society meetings.

Reorganized Church of RLDS
A sect of LDS faith that was reorganized in Nauvoo, Ill., from the members that stayed behind after the mass exodus to Utah.

Sealed in the Temple
The Mormon Church has temple ceremonies that bind a husband and wife, or parents and children for "time and eternity." In the case of marriage, this binds the couple in heaven after death in addition to the traditional "till death do them part" of other churches.

Moroni's challenge
From the Book of Mormon, Moroni 10:4. The challenge as often given is that the truth of the Book of Mormon will be made known to you - by the Holy Ghost's power - if you: Sincerely read the Book of Mormon with an open mind. Then pray to God in the name of Christ with real intent, asking to know the truth.