in sacred loneliness the plural wives of joseph smith todd m compton

In Sacred Loneliness - The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith

Beginning in the 1830s, at least thirty-three women married Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism. These were passionate relationships which also had some longevity, except in cases such as that of two young sisters, one of whom was discovered by Joseph’s first wife, Emma, in a locked bedroom with the prophet. Emma remained a steadfast opponent of polygamy throughout her life. The majority of Smith's wives were younger than he, and one-third were between fourteen and twenty years of age. Another third were already married, and some of the husbands served as witnesses at their own wife’s polyandrous wedding. In addition, some of the wives hinted that they bore Smith children—most notably Sylvia Sessions's daughter Josephine—although the children carried their stepfather’s surname. For all of Smith's wives, the experience of being secretly married was socially isolating, emotionally draining, and sexually frustrating. Despite the spiritual and temporal benefits, which they acknowledged, they found their faith tested to the limit of its endurance. After Smith's death in 1844, their lives became even more "lonely and desolate." One even joined a convent. The majority were appropriated by Smith's successors, based on the Old Testament law of the Levirate, and had children by them, though they considered these guardianships unsatisfying. Others stayed in the Midwest and remarried, while one moved to California. But all considered their lives unhappy, except for the joy they found in their children and grandchildren.

Nauvoo Polygamy - "but We Called it Celestial Marriage"

When Joseph and Emma Smith arrived in Ohio in 1831, several families offered them lodging, as did the Whitneys, whose five year-old daughter, Sarah Ann, and her eleven-year-old neighbor, Mary Elizabeth Rollins, would later play a role in Mormon polygamy. The Smiths soon moved in with the Johnsons, where Joseph met fifteen-year-old Marinda Nancy. In 1836, seven-year-old Helen Mar Kimball attended school near the Smith home. Each of these girls, whom Joseph met during the 1830s, would later marry him in the 1840s gathering place of Nauvoo, Illinois, on the east bank of the Mississippi River. In this thoroughly researched and documented work, the author shows how the prophet introduced single and married women to this new form of "celestial marriage" a favor granted to the elect men of Nauvoo. Through their journals, letters, and affidavits, the participants tell their stories in intimate detail before polygamy was forcibly abandoned and nearly forgotten.

Joseph Smith's Polygamy - Toward a Better Understanding

In the last several years a wealth of information has been published on Joseph Smith's practice of polygamy. For some who were already well aware of this aspect of early Mormon history, the availability of new research and discovered documents has been a wellspring of further insight and knowledge into this topic. For others who are learning of Joseph's marriages to other
women for the first time, these books and online publications can be both an information overload and a challenge to one's faith. In this short volume, Brian C. Hales (author of the 3-volume "Joseph Smith's Polygamy: History and Theology") and Laura H. Hales wade through the murky waters of history to help bring some clarity to this episode of Mormonism's past. As Joseph Smith's participation in plural marriage involved more than just the Prophet and his first wife Emma, this volume also includes short biographical sketches of the 35 other women who were sealed to Joseph but whose stories of faith, struggle, and courage have been largely forgotten and ignored over time. While we may never fully understand the details and reasons surrounding this practice, Brian and Laura Hales provide readers with an accessible, forthright, and faithful look into this challenging topic so that we can at least come toward a better understanding. Praise for "Joseph Smith's Polygamy: Toward a Better Understanding" “Few matters of LDS history have proven to be as faith-sensitive as Joseph Smith's plural marriages. While a number of efforts have been made in recent years to shed light on this challenging phenomenon, nothing has brought greater clarity, enlightenment, and, particularly for believing Saints, spiritual reassurance, than has the work of researcher Brian Hales. He and his wife Laura have now rendered a monumental service to Mormons and interested observers by bringing clarity and better understanding to this topic. I for one am grateful for the context, perspective, and both straightforward and faithful answers provided for so many of the questions surrounding Nauvoo polygamy. It is a book that will be read and discussed for years to come.” - Robert L. Millet, Professor Emeritus of Religious Education, Brigham Young University

**A Widow's Tale - 1884-1896 Diary of Helen Mar Kimball Whitney**

Volume 6, Life Writings of Frontier Women series. Few diaries, journals, and memoirs published have provided as rich and well rounded a window into their authors' lives and worlds as the diary of Helen Mar Kimball Whitney. Because it provides a rare account of the widely experienced situations and problems faced by widows, her record has relevance far beyond Mormon history.

**Mormon Enigma - Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804-1879**

Emma Hale (1804-1879) was born in Harmony, Pennsylvania to Isaac Hale (1763-1839) and Elizabeth Lewis (1767-1842). In 1827 she eloped and married Joseph Smith (1805-1844) who was the founder and prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Emma became the mother of eleven children, five of whom lived to adulthood. She and Joseph moved often and suffered great persecution for their beliefs. After Joseph's martyrdom in 1844, Emma remained in Nauvoo and married Lewis Bidamon. She died in her home in 1879.

**Mormon Polygamy - A History**

In this comprehensive survey of Mormon Polygamy, Richard Van Wagoner details, with precision and detachment, the tumultuous reaction among insiders and outsiders to plural
marriage. In an honest, methodical way, he traces the origins, the peculiarities common to the midwestern and later Utah periods, and post-1890 new marriages. Drawing heavily on first-hand accounts, he outlines the theological underpinnings and the personal trauma associated with this lifestyle. What emerges is a portrait that neither discounts nor exaggerates the historical evidence. He presents polygamy in context, neither condemning nor defending, while relevant contemporary accounts are treated sympathetically but interpreted critically. No period of Mormon history is emphasized over another. The result is a systematic view that is unavailable in studies of isolated periods or in the repetitions of folklore that only disguise the reality of what polygamy was. Scattered throughout the western United States today are an estimated 30,000 fundamentalist Mormons who still live “the principle.” They, too, are a part of Joseph Smith’s legacy and are included in this study.

A Frontier Life - Jacob Hamblin, Explorer and Indian Missionary

Todd Compton examines and disentangles many of the myths and controversies surrounding Hamblin. His Grand Canyon adventures and explorations as a guide alongside John Wesley Powell are well documented, as are his roles as a missionary, cultural liaison, and negotiator to the Indian tribes of southern Utah and Arizona.

The Mountain Meadows Massacre

In the Fall of 1857, some 120 California-bound emigrants were killed in lonely Mountain Meadows in southern Utah; only eighteen young children were spared. The men on the ground after the bloody deed took an oath that they would never mention the event again, either in public or in private. The leaders of the Mormon church also counseled silence. The first report, soon after the massacre, described it as an Indian onslaught at which a few white men were present, only one of whom, John D. Lee, was actually named. With admirable scholarship, Mrs. Brooks has traced the background of conflict, analyzed the emotional climate at the time, pointed up the social and military organization in Utah, and revealed the forces which culminated in the great tragedy at Mountain Meadows. The result is a near-classic treatment which neither smears nor clears the participants as individuals. It portrays an atmosphere of war hysteria, whipped up by recitals of past persecutions and the vision of an approaching “army” coming to drive the Mormons from their homes.

Devil's Gate - Brigham Young and the Great Mormon Handcart Tragedy

The Mormon handcart tragedy of 1856 is the worst disaster in the history of the Western migrations, and yet it remains virtually unknown today outside Mormon circles. Following the death of Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon church, its second Prophet and new leader, Brigham Young, determined to move the faithful out of the Midwest, where they had been constantly persecuted by their neighbors, to found a new Zion in the wilderness. In 1846-47, the Mormons made their way west, generally following the Oregon Trail, arriving in July 1847 in what is today Utah, where they established Salt Lake City. Nine years later, fearing a federal invasion, Young and other Mormon leaders wrestled with the question of how to bring thousands of impoverished European converts, mostly British and Scandinavian, from the Old
World to Zion. Young conceived of a plan in which the European Mormons would travel by ship to New York City and by train to Iowa City. From there, instead of crossing the plains by covered wagon, they would push and pull wooden handcarts all the way to Salt Lake. But the handcart plan was badly flawed. The carts, made of green wood, constantly broke down; the baggage allowance of seventeen pounds per adult was far too small; and the food provisions were woefully inadequate, especially considering the demanding physical labor of pushing and pulling the handcarts 1,300 miles across plains and mountains. Five companies of handcart pioneers left Iowa for Zion that spring and summer, but the last two of them left late. As a consequence, some 900 Mormons in these two companies were caught in early snowstorms in Wyoming. When the church leadership in Salt Lake became aware of the dire circumstances of these pioneers, Young launched a heroic rescue effort. But for more than 200 of the immigrants, the rescue came too late. The story of the Mormon handcart tragedy has never before been told in full despite its stunning human drama: At least five times as many people died in the Mormon tragedy as died in the more famous Donner Party disaster. David Roberts has researched this story in Mormon archives and elsewhere, and has traveled along the route where the handcart pioneers came to grief. Based on his research, he concludes that the tragedy was entirely preventable. Brigham Young and others in the Mormon leadership failed to heed the abundant signs of impending catastrophe, including warnings from other Mormon elders in the East and Midwest, where the journey began. Devil's Gate is a powerful indictment of the Mormon leadership and a gripping story of survival and suffering that is superbly told by one of our finest writers of Western history.

**Fire and Sword - A History of the Latter-Day Saints in Northern Missouri, 1836-39**

Many Mormon dreams flourished in Missouri. So did many Mormon nightmares. The Missouri period--especially from the summer of 1838 when Joseph took over vigorous, personal direction of this new Zion until the spring of 1839 when he escaped after five months of imprisonment—represents a moment of intense crisis in Mormon history. Representing the greatest extremes of devotion and violence, commitment and intolerance, physical suffering and terror--mobbings, battles, massacres, and political “knockdowns”--it shadowed the Mormon psyche for a century. In the lush Missouri landscape of the Mormon imagination where Adam and Eve had walked out of the garden and where Adam would return to preside over his posterity, the towering religious creativity of Joseph Smith and clash of religious stereotypes created a swift and traumatic frontier drama that changed the Church.