## The Origin of Polygamy in Mormonism

Part V of Chapter 2: Historical Truth, in the book, The Secret Chamber: Spiritual Wifery & the Doctrine of Christ (pages 72-77)
6 pages, Val Brinkerhoff, 7/12/2020

How did polygamy become fully entrenched in Mormonism, especially when the Book of Mormon preaches against it? By 1850 all of the Quorum of the Twelve in Utah were promoting its virtues. Four had left the quorum earlier; Lyman Wight, John E. Page, Amasa Lyman, and William Smith. Others rejecting Young included the Smith Family, Nauvoo Stake President William Marks, Nauvoo Temple architect William Weeks, and many others, including half of Nauvoo's population. Brigham Young later made polygamy necessary for exaltation in the Kingdom of God. Today it is one of many taboo subjects in church meetings. Later Presidents of the church have also repudiated the practice and a number of other doctrines put forth by Young.

Polygamy is only one form of what was called "spiritual wifery" in early church history. It is a phrase used to describe sexual sin between a man and a woman that is *justified* by religion or religious rites. It can include fornication, adultery, polygamy, polyandry, and even pedophilia. It is not associated with homosexuality, however. The sin of "spiritual wifery" rose up among the Saints quietly in Kirtland, and then took hold firmly in Nauvoo. Later other more positive phrases were applied to it in connection with marriage during Brigham Young's tenure, including "plural marriage" and then "celestial marriage." As addressed earlier, thirteen different terms were attached to it in the later part of the 19th century by the Saints in Utah, primarily as a deception tool to avoid arrest by representatives of the Federal Government (see p. 190). Outsiders simply called it "polygamy."

Polygamy did not originate with Joseph Smith, but with Satan and those influenced by him. He put it into the heart of Lamech, the seventh generation from Adam to first practice it (Moses 5:51), and then centuries later he did the same thing with Brigham Young, after he was exposed to the spiritual wifery of the Cochranites north of Boston, along with the works of David and Solomon in the Old Testament. Satan wanted to destroy Joseph and God's work through the young Prophet (see D&C 38:13 and 28). Spiritual wifery rose up among the Saints in three phases; (1) It first entered Mormonism at Kirtland Ohio in the early 1830's; (2) Later it secretly expanded among the Twelve at Nauvoo in the early 1840's, after they returned from their English missions; And (3) It then became an institutional practice later in Utah in the 1850's, after Brigham Young revealed it had been practiced since the early 1840's.

To understand how this occurred, we must separate the actions of the Prophet Joseph Smith who fought against it right up until his murder, from the actions of Brigham Young and some of the Twelve who embraced it secretly in Nauvoo at first. This separation explains much of our messy, modified history. The division resulted in the separation of the Brighamites west and the Josephites east after Joseph's murder. In the next chapter (3) we will see that some in the Twelve (Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, and John Taylor) formed a "secret chamber" at Nauvoo to practice spiritual wifery, and then install it within the church in a more respectable form as "plural marriage," once the Smith's were out of the way. Prior to this widespread acceptance, most of the Twelve were first exposed to "spiritual wifery" in some form in one or more of the following ways.

- 1. By 1832 Cochranite converts from the Boston area were being brought to Kirtland Ohio by missionaries Orson Hyde & Samuel Smith (Joseph's brother). These converts brought some of their beliefs and traditions with them. The Cochranites coined the phrase "spiritual wifery."
- 2. Brigham Young served at least two missions to the Boston-Saco Maine area (Cochranite territory), doing so alone, by his own request. He would later bring back Augusta Adams¹ from this area to Nauvoo. Augusta was Brigham's third wife. Augusta's child named "Brigham" was born and died just before she and Brigham Young were married. She remained married to her first husband when she became Brigham's second polygamous wife. This is also true of Brigham's first plural wife (Lucy Ann Decker). Two of Brigham's first three polygamous wives were part of polyandry, something Young accussed Joseph of, and something the church today associates with Joseph Smith. It is a lie. Her husband's suit for divorce made national news as it involved a major figure in Mormonism, the President of the Twelve, Brigham Young.
- 3. There were two church conferences held in Cochranite territory between 1834 and 1836. Nine of the apostles are known to have attended at least one of them.
- 4. Polygamy was a focus among clergy and elite educators in Germany, England, and America in the 1830's and

1840's. This is when most of the Twelve were serving missions in England, away from Joseph Smith and their wives. One influence there was the book *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Sons of Jacob*. It supported polygamy, citing the special "patriarchal priesthood" of the ancient patriarchs. Some 100 copies of this book were sold at the church's Millennial Star office in Liverpool. Later in Nauvoo another publication, *The Peacemaker* became a strong influence among leaders there. It was printed on the *Times and Seasons* press in 1842. Joseph's name was placed on it without his knowledge or permission.

5. Brigham Young (1874) and Lorenzo Snow (1899) both said that they had experiences while serving as missionaires in England (1839 to 1845) revealing that polygamy was divinely inspired doctrine. This was reported many decades after their missions when they were immersed in the practice. Elder Edwin Stafford (a Seventy serving with the Twelve in England and Nauvoo) testified in a letter to a friend that he believed Brigham Young was practicing adultery in both cities.<sup>2</sup> The apostles were idolized by many of their converts, increasing the potential for inappropriate relationships.

### The Early Cochranite Influence

As early as 1832, LDS missionary work was occurring among the Cochranites of Saco Maine (north of Boston, 1832). The Cochranite movement *justified* fornication and adultery *within religious rites*. Some of the first Cochranite converts were baptized by missionaries Orson Hyde and Samuel H. Smith (Joseph's brother) in **1832**. Coming to Kirtland Ohio, they brought some Cochranite traditions with them into Mormonism. Satan used this age-old mix of religion with the lusts of the flesh to corrupt the church.

Brigham Young served at least two missions to the Boston - Saco area. He was given permission by the Nauvoo Stake High Council to travel there alone. Two church conferences were held in Saco Maine, home of the Cochranites, between 1834-36. In these conferences, nine of the Apostles were exposed to the practice. The LORD warned Joseph and the Saints that Satan wanted to destroy them in an early message in 1831 in D&C 38. It addressed "a *mystery*, a thing which is had in secret chambers." That "thing" was "spiritual wivery." Six scriptures were given the Saints between 1830 and 1833 tied to God's higher law of monogamy. They were D&C 19:25; 38:13-14 & 28; 42:22-23; 49:15-16; 63:12-16 and verse 4 of the original D&C 101. This Section was known as "the Article on Marriage."

"Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been **reproached** with the crime of **fornication**, and **polygamy**: we declare that we believe that one man should have **one wife**" (D&C 101:4).

Two years later in 1837, in another effort to stop the Cochranite influence from gaining further ground into the church, the Seventies Quorums at Kirtland published their own statement against *spiritual wifery* among the Saints. Their resolution asserted, "That we have no fellowship whatever with any elder belonging to the quorums of the Seventies who is **guilty of polygamy**" (Messenger and Advocate 3: 511, May, 1837). Forty years later in 1876, President Brigham Young removed Section 101 from the D&C (without a church vote), the same year he replaced it with pro-polygamy Section 132, a supposed revelation given to Joseph Smith on July 12<sup>th</sup> of 1843. For more on the Cochranite influences, see *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy*, https://restorationbookstore.org/jsfp-index.htm

## **English Incubation Period**

Polygamy in Mormonism appears to have had additional roots in the English missions of Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, William Clayton, and others between 1839-41. These men would become senior members of the secret chamber later in their return to Nauvoo. Young and some of the other members of the Twelve had already been exposed to spiritual wifery in the Boston and Saco areas. They were now away from their wives and Joseph and Hyrum for an extended period. They were also held in high esteem by most of those whom they were teaching. The conditions were ripe for experimentation with spiritual wifery by at least Young, Kimball, and Clayton. They were married men. Young's cousin, Willard Richards found his first wife while serving his mission there.

Europe was fertile ground for both polygamy and Freemasonry in the early 1800's. Polygamy was an especially popular subject of discussion in religious and university circles in Germany, England, and the U.S. at this time. Polygamy became an acceptable practice among some small groups in these countries. A number of books published in England reveal that it was a popular subject of discussion for some time prior to the arrival of the Apostles, first in 1837, and then in force between 1839-45. Note the books below. The last one was sold in church offices in Liverpool.

- 1. Johannes Lyser, *Polygamia Triumphtrix* (Europe: 1682)
- 2. T. T. Payen, The Cases of Polygamy, Concubinage, Adultery, Divorce, etc., Seriously and Learnedly Discussed (London: 1732)
- 3. Delany Patrick, Reflections on Polygamy (London: 1739)
- 4. John Towers, Polygamy Unscriptural (London: 1780)
- 5. James Cookson, *Thoughts on Polygamy Including Remarks on Theolyphtora and Its Scheme* (Winchester, England: J. Wilkes for the author, 1782)
- 6. William Hepworth Dixon, Spiritual Wives, 2 vols. (London, 1868)
- 7. English, LDS elder & author, Samuel Downes' reprint of an ancient Greek Manuscript, entitled, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Sons of Jacob* (1843).

Latter-day Saint Samuel Downes apparently showed the pro-polygamy book, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Sons of Jacob*, to a number of church leaders in England. It presented Jacob's plural marriage and concubines as godly, stressing *the unique* patriarchal priesthood of the ancient Patriarchs of the Old Testament. Some 100 copies of it were sold in the church's Millennial Star office in Liverpool England. A short review of it was published in The Millennial Star 4 (October 1843, 96). Reprinted by Downes (an "elder" in a local LDS Ward), the book was dedicated to a Patriarch in Manchester. Downes stated, "Having shewn it to many of my brethren, and it having met with their approbation, they are wishful to possess themselves of it also. I now at their solicitation for the church, and for mankind in general, send it forth unto the world" (his new "Preface" to The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs).

In a meeting later in Utah where Brigham first introduced new Section 132 to the Saints in 1852 (and where Joseph's name was falsely attached to it), Apostle Orson Pratt gave a stirring sermon citing the ancient practices of the Patriarchs of the Old Testament as a primary reason for reinstituting the same practice in modern times among the Saints (Orson Pratt JD 1 [1854]: 53–66). Pratt would eventually take ten wives. Four of them were from the British Isles (Utah Genealogical Magazine 27 [1936]: 113–114). Pratt authored *The Seer* (by request of Brigham Young), believing that polygamy was the most efficient way for the Lord to raise up a righteous and numerous people (see Breck England, *The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt*, 175). Later in Utah, another influential book on polygamy would be promoted among the brethren of the Twelve. This one was printed on the Times and Seasons press.

#### Justified Experimentation

The experimentation with spiritual wifery by the some of the Twelve in England did not involve plural marriage, at least yet. It began in adultery and fornication. One Seventy serving in England with the Twelve observed curious behavior by Young with one woman there. He accused Young of adultery (endnote 12). In addition, numerous journal entries by William Clayton reveal his love for a mistress he had during his mission there. His wife and children are absent from this same journal. The entries involve references to foot washing in connection with intimacy which followed, a clear tie to Cochranite spiritual wifery.

In 1841 Heber C. Kimball brought his first polygamous wife back to Nauvoo with him from his English mission. This was two years before Joseph's supposed "revelation" on polygamy (1843). Like two of Brigham's early polygamous wives, she too was married to another man at the time. Her name was Sarah Peak Noon, apparently baptized just before boarding the boat to America. She had Heber's child in Nauvoo. Their child died at an early age, so too the those of Young and Clayton. They were taken like the child of David and Bathsheba in the Old Testament, the one conceived in adultery. The secrecy of Sarah Peaks pregnancy and marriage to Heber wasn't kept for long, however.

Thirty-five years later in Utah (1874) Young knew that these and other historical events might come forth to reveal the truth about Heber C. Kimball's additional wife in 1841. Young moved into action to protect the First Presidency and his long-time friend Heber. Young and Kimball were friends and Freemasons prior to their baptisms into the church. Heber was especially committed to the Masonic brotherhood, also called "the craft." At this point in time in Utah, Young was President, Heber was First Councilor, and Willard Richards was Second Councilor (with 109 wives between them). To protect Heber and the 1852 lying announcement that Section 132 was a revelation given Joseph on July 12 of 1843, Young appears to have put forth a new narrative in 1874. He spoke of a vision or revelation he had on polygamy while serving in England, and for the first time (35 years after it supposedly occurred). Some suspect this "revelation" (occurring sometime between 1839 and 1840) was cover for Heber's pregnant wife, brought to Nauvoo in 1841, and perhaps cover for William Clayton's journal entries which addressed his mistress, Sarah Crooks. No specific date was tied to Young's "revelation" and its actual content was never revealed. His 1874 statement read:

"While we [Brigham & ten of the Twelve Apostles] were in England (in 1839 and 40) *I think*, the LORD manifested to me by vision and his Spirit, things that I did not then understand. I never opened my mouth to any one concerning them, until I returned to Nauvoo; **Joseph had never mentioned this; there had never been a thought of it in the Church that I ever knew anything about at that time, but I had this for myself, and I kept it to myself. And when I returned home, and Joseph revealed those things to me [a lie] then I understood the reflections that were upon my mind while in England. But this (communication with Joseph on the subject) was not until after I had told him what I understood— this was in 1841" (Brigham Young, Deseret News, July 1, <b>1874**).

Young's new narrative opened up a large can of worms. Receiving a revelation for the whole church in place of Joseph went against God's word in D&C 28:2 and 43:3. In addition, the "revelation" went against Young's former 1852 justification for polygamy - that Joseph began plural marriage among the Saints via a July 12, 1843 "revelation." Young then put Section 132 into the Doctrine and Covenants in 1876, without a vote from the church.

Lies were thus used to support polygamy from the very beginning. Reports today suggest Young took his first plural wife in 1842 at Nauvoo, when he was 41 years old. She was 20 and remained married to her first husband (polyandry). This precedes Joseph's "supposed revelation" by a year. At age 42 (1843) Young married 3 more women, including a 19-year-old and 15-year-old. He thus had four wives prior to Joseph's murder (2 remained married to previous husbands). In the latter part of 1844, after the murders, he added 10 more wives, 3 of whom were teenagers. One was 15-year old Clarissa Caroline. Two years after the murders in 1845, he added 21 more wives, 2 of them teenagers. And he added 20 more wives during a single month in 1846, 5 of them in a single day (Feb. 3), their ages being 55, 42, 41, 36, and 18. At age 45, Young married 1 additional wife. She was 16. Finally, in his 60's, Young married 5 more wives, 3 of whom were in their early 20's. All told, Brigham Young had taken 55 wives, 9 of whom were teenagers on their wedding day (5 were 15-17 years of age), and 20 of whom were in their 20's. He later divorced 10 of them.

In the *six months* following the murder of the three Smith brothers (from June to December of 1844), Brigham Young went from 4 wives to 14. Heber C Kimball went from 2 wives to 10. It was an explosion of spiritual wifery, Brigham's way. There were 56 new plural marriages in 1845 alone by church members. By 1846, the "spiritual wives" movement expanded 5-fold - to 255 plural wives (*Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841-46*: A Preliminary Demographic Report, p 32). The three men leading the secret chamber at Nauvoo ended up with **109** total wives as **the First Presidency** of the church in Utah. Young had 55 wives, Kimball had 43, and Richards had 11.

How could Young and others in the Twelve in England go against the clear teaching of Joseph Smith and Jacob 2 in the Book of Mormon and other scripture? The answer may involve two things; (1) Brigham Young taught that the apostles had a special priesthood, that of the **Patriarchal Order** of the ancient Patriarchs in the Old Testament, allowing them to have as many wives and concubines as they wanted. This priesthood involved a special **sealing doctrine** provided by Elijah (this false doctrine was borrowed from the book *The Peacemaker* printed at Nauvoo, see chap. 5). This new doctrine became part of the modified temple endowment Young put in place to promote polygamy after Joseph's murder. Young used this **special priesthood** as justification for polygamy later in 1852 when he wrote verse 1 of Section 132. The very first verse of this Section uses the word "justified" in connection with Joseph's supposed inquiry to the LORD about doing the works of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon, an inquiry, "touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines" (D&C 132:1).

And (2) Young and others may have begun teaching that Joseph was a **fallen prophet**, partly because he didn't support Young's view on priesthood, and because Joseph **later** admitted that the Spirit was not with him *the last few days of his life* because he returned to Nauvoo after originally heading west to avoid trouble in Carthage. Young stated:

"If Joseph . . . had followed the Spirit of revelation in him he never would have gone to Carthage . . . and never for one moment did he say that he had had **one particle of light in him** *after* he started back from Montrose to give himself up in Nauvoo. This he did through the persuasion of others . . . if Joseph had followed the revelations in him he would have followed the shepherd instead of the shepherd's following the sheep."

In his own manuscript diary of the Nauvoo Legion, Joseph said, "contrary to the council of the Spirit . . . I am now no more than another man." This was repeated in a School of the Prophets meeting later in Utah by Colonel Stephen Markham. Abraham O. Smoot, one of Nauvoo's police officers, stated years later that Joseph, "went as a lamb to the slaughter, in opposition to his better judgment, and the Spirit of God in his heart, at the time" (for all three

statements, see Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, Signature Books, p. 145). This loss of the Spirit was just *days* before his murder, not the years of secret polygamy that had taken place in Nauvoo after the Twelve return from England (1841 to 1844). Joseph's loss of the Spirit the last few days of his life was expanded to the last few years of his life, as a convenient **justification** for Young and others, those who took charge of the practice of this whoredom. It was Young who approved all sealings of multiple women to any one man at Nauvoo. Apostle William Smith was later chastised for not seeking Young's approval in his early plural marriages.

# Moving Forward with Decisions

In the Encyclopedia of Mormonism we read one modern report about the mission of the Twelve in England. It stated that being separated from Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the Twelve had to make decisions on their own. One of them was making Willard Richards an apostle, a relatively new English convert. Another was beginning the practice of spiritual wifery, there. Willard was a cousin of Brigham Young. He, Brigham, and Heber were all related by blood or marriage. They would later become the First Presidency in Utah. The Encyclopedia of Mormonism states: "On April 14, 1840, in Preston, they ordained Willard Richards an apostle and sustained Brigham Young as "standing president" of their quorum." Joseph & Hyrum Smith weren't consulted for this ordination. In the June 1987 issue of the Ensign magazine, we read of a letter (most likely manufactured years later) said to be written by Brigham Young to Willard Richards (also in England at the time) in September of 1840. According to Ronald K. Esplin, "Although he [Brigham] had several times written [to Joseph Smith in the States] for direction, by early September [1840], some five months into his mission, President Young still had no answers. With a detailed report to the First Presidency in September, he [Brigham] asked again for counsel on a series of pressing questions. He also knew that he could not await a reply." There is no record of attempted contact with Joseph. Brigham said:

"Our motto is **go ahead**. Go ahead - & ahead we are determined to go – till we have conquered every foe. So come life or come death we'll go ahead, but tell us **if we are going wrong** & we will right it" (*The Historian's Corner: The Willard Richards and Brigham Young 5 September 1840 Letter from England to Nauvoo,*" BYU Studies, Spring 1978, p. 475).

Brigham later claimed that another pressing concern while in England was moving forward with spiritual wifery, and acting on the revelation he had been given. He may have viewed his special priesthood as an apostle as supportive of this move, as he held the priesthood of the ancient patriarchs of the Old Testament. Young stated that **because he had received no word from Joseph, he moved forward,** believing Joseph *and* God were **bound** to sustain him.

"If I do not know the will of my Father, and what He requires of me in a certain transaction, if I ask Him to give me wisdom concerning any requirement in life, or in regard to my own course, or that of my friends, my family, my children, or those that I preside over, and get no answer from Him and then do the very best that my judgment will teach me, He is bound to own and honor that transaction, and He will do so to all intents and purposes" (JD 3:205, this reasoning is similar to that used with the "revelation" on blacks in the church receiving the priesthood in 1978, see Assumption 3, chap. 6).

God is **not** bound by the weak understanding and corrupt will of men. We are bound by His decrees. Young's claim of a "revelation" was used to deceive many into following him into the same practice. "Covered heads" (2 Ne. 27:5; Isa. 29:10) has prevailed since then. The humble and repentant who look to God in all things, can receive God's guidance – according to His will, but the LORD is never bound by our limited understanding, or our will. Our decisions too often manifest "the idols in our heart." Jeremiah's lament in chapter 23 applies to this "awful situation."

"For both prophet and priest are **profane**; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD...Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets...they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers...they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah...they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD... I have not sent these prophets...I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied...I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed...they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams...as their fathers have forgotten my name for **Baal**...Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD...Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies...yet I sent them not, nor commanded them...And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame...(Jer. 23, select verses 1-40).

The justification of special *patriarchal* priesthood and the rumor that Joseph was a fallen prophet were later used at Nauvoo to spread the practice among select church leaders. This occurred on their return from their English missions (1841). By 1844, the Law group, with their strong grievances against Joseph, were used by those in the secret chamber - to effectively spread rumors about Joseph's fallen status and his supposed secret practice of spiritual wifery. To the surprise of the apostles, however, the Law group was also spreading the news that **some of the Twelve were also practicing polygamy** and **polyandry** with Joseph. This truth was told in the first and only issue of *The Expositor*. The Law group and the apostles were both pushing their own agendas. Both used Joseph's name for justification, leading to his murder and the establishment of polygamy as official LDS church doctrine. The Lord told Joseph, "They draw near to me with their lips; but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." Joseph continued, "He again forbade me to join with any of them" (JS-History 1:19-20).

#### **End Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Augusta Adams Cobb https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/60955658/augusta-cobb

In this letter, Stafford accused Young of indiscretions with women in England and Nauvoo. "But I am fully convinced, as I was then, that Brigham (Young), was in adultery in Manchester, England, in the fall, winter and spring of 1840 and 1841. Elizabeth Mayer is the person with whom Brigham was then committing adultery. My reasons are these: We lived next door to her, under the same roof....This Elizabeth Mayer had a father and a brother who were gard[e]ners; they took their dinners, as they worked a long piece from home. After they had left for work, Brigham would step into the house, she would then lock the door and pull down the blinds and curtains, which to me was strange. He never came to see our folks, although not five steps apart; and when he left he was always in a hurry, and she never came to the door with him when he was leaving. This same thing occurred in Nauvoo with a woman and Brigham. Her name was Greenough; her son was about my age, was always driven out when Brigham came, the door was shut and the curtains lowered. I was puzzled to know why he acted so, if he had a good heart, and was engaged in the business of teaching the truth, why drive the boy out? Why not come also and see my mother, only a few steps apart? I am satisfied that Joseph was not in favor of it (polygamy) at all. Would swear to all I have stated" (R. C. Evans, Autobiography of Elder R. C. Evans, pps. 334–335).

See Richard and Pamela Price, "Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy," Vol. 1, chapters 1-5, in http://restorationbookstore.org/articles/nopoligamy/jsfp-vol1/chp1.htm See also Uncle Dale's Readings in Early Mormon History (n.d.). (Newspapers of New England): Retrieved from http://sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/NE/miscne00.htm). For evidence of the indescretions of Heber C. Kimball and William Clayton during their English missions, see Ronald Meldon Kerran, The Exoneration of Emma, Joseph, and Hyrum: Part I, https://www.amazon.com/product-reviews/B07728CX7N

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Spiritual Wifery for Some of the Twelve in England Thomas Stafford (an LDS Seventy serving with the Twelve in England and later Nauvoo) observed Brigham Young in both locations. On August 24, 1891, he wrote a letter to another Seventy, Gomer R. Wells, stating, "The seeds of polygamy was sown, and Brigham the sower...I was present at a meeting in a grove [at Nauvoo], about three weeks before Joseph and Hyrum were murdered, when Joseph made a public statement in the presence of three thousand people, that polygamy was being practiced secretly by some; that it had crept into the church secretly and must be put down speedily or the church would be driven from Nauvoo." This sermon is suppressed among the Brighamites.