

LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904

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I

On 24 September 1890, President Wilford Woodruff issued his famous Manifesto which stated in part, “. . . and I deny that either forty or any other number of plural marriages have during the period [since June 1889] been solemnized in our temples or in any other place in the Territory,” and concluded, “And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.”¹ The Church-owned *Deseret Evening News* editorialized on 30 September: “Anyone who calls the language of President Woodruff’s declaration ‘indefinite’ must be either exceedingly dense or determined to find fault. It is so definite that its meaning cannot be mistaken by any one who understands simple English.” On 3 October it added, “Nothing could be more direct and unambiguous than the language of President Woodruff, nor could anything be more authoritative.”² A few days after this last editorial, the Church authorities presented this “unambiguous” document for a sustaining vote of the general conference. Yet during the next thirteen and a half years, members of the First Presidency individually or as a unit published twenty-four denials that any new plural marriages were being performed.³ The climax of that series of little

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¹ The most convenient source for this document is any LDS edition of the Doctrine and Covenants published since 1908 as Official Declaration and in the 1981 edition as Official Declaration-1.

² *Deseret Evening News*, editorials for 30 Sept. and 3 Oct. 1890.

³ James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964-75) 3: 207, 219, 230-231; *Deseret Evening News*, 7 April, 20 Oct., 29 Oct., 7 Nov. 1891; 29 Dec. 1898, p. 1; 20 May 1899, p. 10; 3 June 1899, p. 10; 30 Dec. 1899, p. 16; 8 Jan. 1900, p. 1; 3 Dec. 1902, 26 Feb. 1903, p. 1; 12 March 1903, 29 April 1903; *Salt Lake Times*, 23 June 1891, p. 1; *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (1 Nov. 1891): 670, 26 (15 Nov. 1891): 697; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 May 1895, p. 8; *Utah Independent*, 3 March 1898, p. 1; *New York Herald*, 15 Sept. 1898 (quoted in

manifestoes was the "Second Manifesto" on plural marriage sustained by a vote of a general conference. President Joseph F. Smith's statement of 6 April 1904, read in part:

Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff, of September 24, 1890, commonly called the Manifesto . . . I, Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.⁴

Several questions would quite naturally occur to the most casual reader of this cloud of public denials and clarifications of an "unambiguous" document. The complexity of the Manifesto of 1890 is indicated by the diversity of answers published since 1904.

What was the 1890 Manifesto? After the document's acceptance by the October general conference, the *Salt Lake Herald* (of which Apostle Heber J. Grant was publisher) editorialized that the anti-Mormon *Salt Lake Tribune* "pretends the declaration is a revelation . . . although no one to day has heard anyone except the lying sheet say it was a revelation."⁵ The majority report of a U.S. Senate Committee declared in bold heading in 1906, "THE MANIFESTO IS A DECEPTION."⁶ The Manifesto was "a COVENANT WITH DEATH and an AGREEMENT WITH HELL," according to Lorin C. Woolley and his polygamist followers among the Latter-day Saints from the 1930s onward.⁷ The Manifesto was "merely a tactical maneuver," according to historian Klaus J. Hansen, but to historians James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard it "was not simply a political document."⁸ And bringing the discussion full circle to the sectarian newspaper battles of 1890, Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith did not specifically identify the Manifesto as a revelation in 1922, but affirmed that "the word of the Lord came to him [Wilford Woodruff] in a

Journal History of the Church, 15 Sept. 1898, pp. 2-4, Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereafter LDS Church Archives); *New York Herald*, 5 Feb. 1899; *Cincinnati Times*, 3 Nov. 1899 (quoted in Journal History, 3 Nov. 1899, p. 2); Journal History, 1 Dec. 1902, p. 5; Joseph F. Smith testimony, 2-3 March 1904 in contemporary newspapers and in the official *Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator From the State of Utah, To Hold His Seat*, 4 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904-06), 1:108, 129, 177 (hereafter Smoot Case).

⁴ *Deseret Evening News*, 6 April 1904, p. 1; Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 4:84-85.

⁵ *Salt Lake Herald*, 9 Oct. 1890, p. 4.

⁶ Smoot Case 4:481.

⁷ Statement of Lorin C. Woolley on 12 May 1932, recorded in Joseph W. Musser, Book of Remembrance, p. 19, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, published in the Mormon Fundamentalist magazine *Truth* 4 (Aug. 1938): 42.

⁸ Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967), p. 177; James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), p. 413.

revelation suspending the practice of plural marriage,” Apostle John A. Widtsoe wrote in 1940 that the Manifesto “was the product of revelation,” Elder Bruce R. McConkie’s *Mormon Doctrine* has asserted since 1958 that the Manifesto “is a revelation in the sense that the Lord both commanded President Woodruff to write it and told him what to write,” President Spencer W. Kimball said in 1974 that the Manifesto was a “revelation,” and historians Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton described it as “a divine revelation” in 1979.⁹

Who wrote the Manifesto? For most writers and commentators about the Manifesto, the answer to that question is so obvious that they find it unnecessary to go beyond identifying the document as Wilford Woodruff’s Manifesto. However, when asked about the Manifesto on the witness stand, a secretary in the First Presidency’s office, George Reynolds, testified in 1904, “I assisted to write it,” in collaboration with Charles W. Penrose and John R. Winder who “transcribed the notes and changed the language slightly to adapt it for publication.”¹⁰ Moving far beyond that statement, John W. Woolley told his polygamist followers in the 1920s that “Judge Zane [a non-Mormon] had as much to do with it [the Manifesto] as Wilford Woodruff except to sign it,” and Lorin C. Woolley told Mormon Fundamentalists that Wilford Woodruff was not the author of the Manifesto but that it was actually written by Charles W. Penrose, Frank J. Cannon, and “John H. White, the butcher,” revised by non-Mormon federal officials, and that Woodruff merely signed it.¹¹ Moreover, Woolley and his Fundamentalist followers have accused George Q. Cannon of pressuring Presidents Taylor and Woodruff to write a manifesto abandoning plural marriage, and at least one Fundamentalist called him “the Great Mormon Judas.”¹²

Were new plural marriages actually performed after the 1890 Manifesto? In 1907, the First Presidency announced, “When all the circumstances are weighed, the wonder is, not that there have been sporadic cases of plural marriage, but that such cases have been so few.”¹³ In 1922, Church Historian

⁹ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1922), p. 606; John A. Widtsoe, “Evidences and Reconciliations,” *Improvement Era* 43 (Nov. 1940): 673; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), p. 423, and p. 466 in subsequent editions; Conference Report, Oct. 1974, p. 5; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), p. 203.

¹⁰ Smoot Case 2:51, 52.

¹¹ Lorin C. Woolley statement in Musser, Book of Remembrance, 7 Aug. 1922, p. 7, John W. Woolley statement in Musser, Book of Remembrance, 13 Aug. 1922, p. 9; Jesse Burke Stone, *An Event of the Underground Days* (Salt Lake City: By the author, 1931), pp. 3–7; *Truth* 1 (July 1935): 8; 6 (Jan. 1941): 182, and various other Fundamentalist publications. According to Lorin Woolley’s 1922 statement, the federal officials were the ones who added the following statements which appeared in the published Manifesto: “I deny that either forty or any other number of plural marriages have during that period, been solemnized in our Temples or in any other place in the Territory,” and “One case has been reported, in which the parties allege that the marriage was performed in the Endowment House,” etc. See discussion connected with notes 151–55.

¹² Musser, Book of Remembrance, 6 Aug. 1922, p. 4; *Truth* 5 (Oct. 1939): 110. The Judas designation appeared in Kirk Arnold, *Civil or Divine Sovereignty* (Salt Lake City: By the author, 1934), p. 27.

¹³ Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 4:151–52.

Joseph Fielding Smith wrote that "some plural marriages had been entered into contrary to the announcement of President Woodruff, and also a statement made by President Lorenzo Snow."¹⁴ Assistant Church Historian B. H. Roberts wrote in the Church's centennial history that "the injunction of said Manifesto had not been strictly adhered to even by some high officials of the Church of Latter-day Saints and people misled by them."¹⁵

Who performed and entered into these new plural marriages from 1890 to 1904? "A few over-zealous individuals" according to the First Presidency statement of 1907; "a few misguided members of the Church," according to the First Presidency statement of 1933;¹⁶ "devoted but misled members of the Church," according to Apostle John A. Widtsoe in 1951;¹⁷ "some high officials of the Church" according to B. H. Roberts's centennial history which later identified them as Apostles John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley who were dropped from the Quorum of the Twelve in 1906 because they were out of harmony with the First Presidency concerning the Manifesto;¹⁸ "a few Church authorities," according to historians Allen and Leonard in 1976;¹⁹ some "die-hards" according to historians Arrington and Bitton in 1979;²⁰ "some who held the sealing power. The most prominent among those was John W. Taylor of the Twelve," according to the Secretary to the First Presidency in 1984.²¹

What were the geographic dimensions of the 1890 Manifesto? In 1922, Church Historian Joseph Fielding Smith wrote that John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley resigned from the Quorum of the Twelve because they "maintained that the manifesto applied to the United States only. However, the attitude of the Church was that it applied to the entire world," and in 1930 Assistant Church Historian Roberts wrote that by 1891 "the prohibition of polygamy was to be universal, as well in foreign countries as in the United States — the decrees against its practice were effective in all the countries of the world."²² But in 1947, President George Albert Smith told the general conference that since September 1890, "there have been no plural marriages solemnized in violation of the laws of *this* land by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."²³ That statement was amplified in 1955 when the

¹⁴ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1922), p. 630.

¹⁵ Brigham H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century I*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1930), 6:399–400.

¹⁶ Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 4:151–52, 5:316–17.

¹⁷ John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1951), p. 33.

¹⁸ Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 6:399–400.

¹⁹ Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, p. 415.

²⁰ Arrington and Bitton, *Mormon Experience*, p. 245.

²¹ Francis M. Gibbons, *Joseph F. Smith: Patriarch and Preacher, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), p. 221.

²² Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, p. 630; Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 6:225.

²³ Conference Report, October 1947, pp. 165–66; italics added.

Church's Deseret Book Company published a book endorsed by an apostle, wherein the author stated: "For several years after the Manifesto was issued, however, members of the Church in Mexico and Canada were allowed to practice plural marriage, but later it was discontinued throughout the Church."²⁴ In 1968, a Sunday School manual stated, "A few were married after 1890 in Mexico, Canada and on the high seas — outside the jurisdiction of the United States. It was not until 1904, under the leadership of President Joseph F. Smith, that plural marriage was banned finally and completely, everywhere in the world, by the Church."²⁵ Church President Spencer W. Kimball approved his biography in 1977 which stated, "There was little or no stigma on polygamy entered into in Mexico after the Manifesto," and in 1984 the First Presidency's secretary wrote:

As to the scope of the proclamation, certain members, including some who occupied positions of high leadership, contended that the instrument applied only to plural marriages performed within the United States and its territories . . . Under this view, plural marriages performed outside the United States, for example in Mexico or Canada, were immune from the proscriptions of the Manifesto.²⁶

How many new plural marriages were performed between 1890 and 1904? The anti-Mormon *Salt Lake Tribune* estimated in 1910 that there were "about two thousand," which was echoed by the schismatic Mormon Fundamentalists forty years later.²⁷ On the other hand, until recently, the official and semi-official publications of the Church have simply rephrased the First Presidency's 1907 statement that there were "few" new plural marriages from 1890 to 1904.²⁸ Historians Arrington and Bitton increased that estimate in 1979 to "perhaps a few score new plural marriages," but the publication in 1983 by lawyer-historian Kenneth L. Cannon II of an annual statistical chart of 150 polygamous marriages from 1890 to 1904 apparently caused a dramatic shift in the official presentation of numbers.²⁹ In 1984, the First Presidency's secretary published the statement that as of 1904, "a comparatively large number of polygamous marriages had been performed after the Manifesto."³⁰

²⁴ Carter Eldredge Grant, *The Kingdom of God Restored* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1955), pp. 291–92. The endorsing apostle was Adam S. Bennion.

²⁵ *Scriptures of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, For the Sunday Schools* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1968), p. 159.

²⁶ Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball, Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977), p. 91; Gibbons, *Joseph F. Smith*, p. 179.

²⁷ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 Nov. 1910, p. 6; *Truth* 15 (Oct. 1949): 133–34.

²⁸ Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 4:151–52; *Deseret Evening News*, 5 March 1910, p. 4; Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, p. 630; *Scriptures of The Church*, p. 159; Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations* 3:33; Russell R. Rich, *An Ensign to the Nations* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1972), p. 429; Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, pp. 415, 443.

²⁹ Arrington and Bitton, *Mormon Experience*, p. 245; Kenneth L. Cannon II, "After the Manifesto: Mormon Polygamy, 1890–1906," *Sunstone* 8 (Jan.–April 1983): 29. There were several inaccuracies, however, in this chart and in Cannon's discussion.

³⁰ Gibbons, *Joseph F. Smith*, p. 221.

And finally, *to what extent were new plural marriages performed from 1890 to 1904 with Church authority?* Aside from denials of the First Presidency already cited, the *Deseret Evening News* editorialized in 1911, "There is absolutely no truth in the allegation that plural marriages have been entered into with [the] sanction of the Church since the manifesto."³¹ Apostle John A. Widtsoe wrote in 1936, "Since that day [6 October 1890] no plural marriage has been performed with the sanction or authority of the Church," BYU historian Gustive O. Larson wrote in 1958 that "While Presidents Woodruff, Snow, and Smith maintained monogamous integrity of the Church, plural marriages were being performed secretly by two members of the Apostles' Quorum," Counselor Stephen L. Richards wrote in 1961, "Since that time [1890], entering into plural marriage has been construed to be an offense against the laws of the Church," Apostle Gordon B. Hinckley wrote in 1969, "Since that time [September 1890] the Church has neither practiced nor sanctioned such marriage," Apostle Mark E. Petersen wrote in 1974 that "the Manifesto put an end to all legal plural marriages," historians Allen and Leonard wrote in 1976 that the performance of new plural marriages outside of Utah from 1890 to 1904 "was without official sanction from the First Presidency," and historians Arrington and Bitton reaffirmed in 1979 that these plural marriages were "without the sanction of church authority."³² Significantly, the schismatic Mormon polygamists accept at face value all of these statements, and use them in connection with evidence of the performance of new plural marriages after 1890 as an argument justifying the continued performance of polygamy to the present:

By this action of President John Taylor [in 1886], which it must be assumed was taken in accordance with instructions from the Lord, additional machinery for the continuance of the Celestial order of marriage was set up. . . . It had been entered into by members of the Priesthood wholly apart and independent of the Church. . . .

It was under this authority conferred under the hands of John Taylor that Anthony W. Ivins exercised the sealing powers in Mexico, after the Church adopted the Manifesto. It was by this authority that John Henry Smith, John W. Taylor, Abraham Owen Woodruff and others joined people in the Patriarchal order of marriage after the issuance of the Manifesto; and it was by the same authority that Abraham H. Cannon, a member of the quorum of the Twelve, entered into Plural marriage, after the Manifesto. The Church neither approved nor disapproved these several actions.³³

³¹ *Deseret Evening News*, 9 Aug. 1911, p. 4. See also index to Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* for many, but not all, of the denials by the First Presidency that they had authorized any new plural marriages after 1890.

³² John A. Widtsoe, *Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Department of Education, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1936), p. 272; Gustive O. Larson, *Outline History of Utah and the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1958), p. 240; Stephen L. Richards, *About Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961), n.p.; Gordon B. Hinckley, *Truth Restored: A Short History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969), p. 143; Mark E. Petersen, *The Way of the Master* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974), p. 62; Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, p. 443; Arrington and Bitton, *Mormon Experience*, p. 184.

³³ *Truth 2* (Jan. 1937): 120. See J. Max Anderson, *The Polygamy Story: Fiction or Fact* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1979) for a point-by-point attack on the priesthood claims of the Fundamentalists.

With due respect to the sincerity of all the above interpretations and assertions about post-Manifesto plural marriages, none of them accurately describes the situation as it existed in the past and is revealed in available documents. Even detailed and scholarly studies of new plural marriages from 1890 to 1904 provide important insights at the same time they repeat inaccuracies of fact and misconceptions of the complexity involved in the subject.³⁴ Contrary to the confident *Deseret News* editorials of 1890, the Manifesto inherited ambiguity, was created in ambiguity, and produced ambiguity.

II

The 1890-1904 period is only the middle section in a complex history of plural marriage among the Latter-day Saints from 1830 to the present. Understanding this history is complicated by the illegality of plural marriage, by the resulting secrecy connected with its practice, by the fact that polygamy has been the center of a sectarian battleground throughout Mormonism's history, and finally by the problem of the meaning and application of "truth" in Mormon theology and practice as they relate to plural marriage. Although my primary emphasis here is on the 1890-1904 period, dimensions of the Manifesto that have been overlooked or only partially recognized emerge only by reviewing earlier sections of my complete study.

With the exception of a fifteen-year period during Brigham Young's presidency, the solemnizing of plural marriages and the resulting polygamous cohab-

³⁴ The first perceptive analysis of post-Manifesto polygamy was journalist Burton J. Hendrick, "The Mormon Revival of Polygamy," *McClure's Magazine* 36 (Feb. 1911): 449-64. Despite his muckraking bias, Hendrick's interpretations and accuracy hold up astonishingly well in view of documentary evidence to which he had no access. The earliest scholarly study of the problem was sociologist Kimball Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1954), pp. 410-22, but Young's published study is difficult as a historical source because he used pseudonyms to identify individual polygamists. William Preston, Jr., "The Watershed of Mormon History, 1890-1910" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1950) devoted only four pages to new polygamy from 1890 to 1904 and did not even mention the new polygamy that occurred from 1904 to 1910. Despite its title, Jerold A. Hilton, "Polygamy in Utah and Surrounding Area Since the Manifesto of 1890" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1965) gave only cursory attention to new polygamists from 1890 to 1904 and concentrated on the later polygamy advocates who were actively excommunicated from the LDS Church. The already cited article by Kenneth L. Cannon was preceded by Victor W. Jorgensen and B. Carmon Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair and the Watershed of Mormon History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 48 (Winter 1980): 4-36. The Jorgensen-Hardy and Cannon studies are the most significant published analyses of post-Manifesto polygamy, and were followed shortly by Christa Marie Sophie Ranglack Nelson, "Mormon Polygamy in Mexico" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1983). Thomas G. Alexander's brief, "'To Maintain Harmony': Adjusting to External and Internal Stress, 1890-1930," *DIALOGUE* 15 (Winter 1982): 44-58, devoted a page to division within the hierarchy over new polygamy after 1890. Other studies in progress about post-Manifesto polygamy have appeared as papers delivered at professional historical meetings, but demonstrate the same weaknesses already indicated by the textual comment in this article. Edward Leo Lyman, "The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Riverside, 1981) provides the most extensive study yet done of the political dimensions surrounding the circumstances leading to the Manifesto of 1890 and its consequences for Utah's statehood in 1896. Because of his political emphasis, however, Lyman's study does not give sufficient attention to the religious, social, and demographic dimensions of the Manifesto, which will be explored here.

itation among the Mormons have always been illegal wherever and whenever practiced. In Illinois, Joseph Smith and trusted associates performed dozens of polygamous marriages during the 1840s and cohabited with their wives who were pregnant with polygamous children as early as 1843.³⁵ An 1833 Illinois state law provided two years' imprisonment and a \$1000 fine for the married man who married another woman and one year's imprisonment and a \$500 fine for the unmarried woman who knowingly entered into a marriage ceremony with an already married man. Illinois statutes defined the resulting sexual cohabitation in such an unlawful union as a continuing offense, with six months in prison and a \$200 fine for the first offense that "shall be sufficiently proved by circumstances which raise the presumption of cohabitation and unlawful intimacy; and for a second offense, such man or woman shall be severally punished twice as much as the former punishment, and for the third offense, treble, and thus increasing the punishment for each succeeding offense."³⁶ Better known is the fact that the Congressional Morrill Act of 1862 outlawed bigamy in U.S. territories, ending the quasi-legality enjoyed by Mormon polygamous unions in Utah and other territories since the departure of the Mormons from Illinois in 1846. After the U.S. Supreme Court declared the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Law constitutional in 1879, all new polygamous marriages in Utah and surrounding territories were in violation of both Congressional and Constitutional law. Moreover, the U.S. Constitution and statutory law had already extended the jurisdiction of federal law (and therefore all anti-polygamy laws) to any persons and activities aboard U.S. vessels traveling on the high seas.³⁷ But new polygamous marriage ceremonies continued to be performed under the direction of the First Presidency.

Not long after these U.S. laws were enacted, polygamy and polygamous cohabitation became illegal in both Canadian and Utah law. Polygamy had been illegal in the western territories of Canada since 1878, and the prohibition was specifically reaffirmed in a new statute after the Mormons established settlements in what is now Alberta.³⁸ A Utah territorial statute of 1892 outlawing

³⁵ James B. Allen, "One Man's Nauvoo: William Clayton's Experience in Mormon Illinois," *Journal of Mormon History* 6 (1979): 44-55; Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, pp. 170-71; Arrington and Bitton, *Mormon Experience*, pp. 195-99; Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1977), pp. 335-61; Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 154.

³⁶ *Revised Laws of Illinois* (Vandalia: Greiner & Sherman, 1833), pp. 198-99.

³⁷ Orma Linford, "The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases," *Utah Law Review* 9 (Winter 1964): 308-70, 9 (Summer 1965): 543-91. For jurisdiction of federal law in matters aboard U.S. registered vessels on the high seas, see U.S. Constitution, Article 3, Section 2 ("The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases . . . of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction . . ."); U.S., *Revised Statutes* (1873), Sect. 5339, p. 1038.

³⁸ "An Ordinance Respecting Marriage," Sect. 2, *Copies of Ordinances passed by the Lieutenant Governor and Council of the North-west Territories, on the 2nd August, 1878*, Canada, Sessional Papers, No. 86, and 53 Victoria 37, Chapter 11 (1890), cited in Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair," p. 18.

polygamy and polygamous cohabitation was reaffirmed in the Utah Constitution of 1895 and in state statute of 1898.³⁹

Although most people have a general awareness of these legal prohibitions, a persistent myth among Mormons maintains that polygamy and polygamous cohabitation were not in violation of the laws of Mexico, where the First Presidency established a polygamous refuge in 1885. On the contrary, since 1884 Mexican federal statutes (which were adopted in the states of Chihuahua, Sonora, and Oaxaca where Mormon colonies were established) prohibited marriage between persons where one partner was already legitimately married, defined children of such a union as “spurious,” and also refused to recognize as legitimate any marriage performed outside Mexico unless it was “valid according to the laws of the country in which it was celebrated.”⁴⁰

Church leaders were aware of this situation from the beginning of the Mormon colonies in Mexico, as indicated by John W. Young’s letter from Washington, D.C., in May 1885 to Apostles Brigham Young, Jr., and Moses Thatcher who were in Mexico City to negotiate with government officials for the establishment of the colonies in northern Mexico. Young warned them that he had been advised by a member of the Mexican Congress not to raise the question of the polygamous marriages of the Mormons who would be entering Mexico “as there was a very plain congressional law [in Mexico] on the subject.”⁴¹ In practical terms, Mexican officials agreed to turn a blind eye to polygamous Mormons, as indicated in May 1885 when the two apostles asked the federal Minister of Public Works, Don Carlos Pacheco: “If a man came into this country with more than one wife and used prudence would he be interfered with? Not unless the wife complained, was the answer.”⁴² Five months later the new Mormon colonists got a scare when authorities of the state of Chihuahua, who apparently had not received the message from the Federal District in Mexico City, “Seemed to be Determined not to allow Polygamy in the state of Chihuahua.”⁴³ Four months after Wilford Woodruff announced the Manifesto, editions of the *Deseret News* published Apostle Brigham Young’s denial that the Mormons had established a polygamous refuge in Mexico: “The Mormons are a law-abiding people; they have found stringent laws in Mexico, prohibiting the practice of polygamy, which laws they have respected and obeyed in every particular”; and as Utah neared statehood in 1895, the

³⁹ Utah, *Laws of Utah* (1892), Ch. 7; Utah Constitution, Art. 3, Art. 26, Sec. 2; Utah, *Revised Statutes* (1898), Title 75, Ch. 24, Section 4209.

⁴⁰ J. P. Taylor, trans., *The Civil Code of the Mexican Federal District and Territories* (San Francisco: The American Book & Printing Co., 1904), pp. 8, 9, 23, 33–35, 42, 470, 472, 482.

⁴¹ John W. Young to Brigham Young Jr. and Moses Thatcher, 21 May 1885, Young Letterbook, LDS Church Archives.

⁴² Brigham Young, Jr., Diary, 14 May 1885, LDS Church Archives.

⁴³ Joseph C. Bentley, Notebook History of Juarez Stake, 9 October 1885, LDS Church Archives.

anti-Mormon *Salt Lake Tribune* reminded the Mormons that there was nowhere in North America where they could legally practice polygamy.⁴⁴

Because polygamy and polygamous cohabitation were illegal everywhere the Mormons might have chosen to go, secrecy characterized these relationships from the beginning. The best statement of that problem was given by Stake President Nephi L. Morris as he was about to excommunicate a man in 1911 for marrying plural wives the previous year:

As a people, we have been in an awkward position for a long time. The practice of plural marriage was indulged in secretly almost from the commencement of the history of this Church. The civil laws enacted against it were evaded, in order that brethren might do what they thought was the Lord's will.

The Church has now declared definitely against further plural marriages, wherever they may occur. Those who act contrary to that declaration must suffer the consequences.⁴⁵

This firm though sympathetic statement was fraught with irony as a preface to excommunicating a recent violator of the Manifesto. Morris's own sister had entered plural marriage in Salt Lake City in 1901 with a member of the Church's Sunday School General Board and had already given birth to three children.

As a further complication, polygamy has been the focal point of a four-way sectarian battle that has had several phases throughout Mormon history. At certain times, LDS Church leaders have been willing to violate the law to promote plural marriages, but they have at the same time struggled to defend the institution of the Church against the attacks of anti-Mormons who knew about or suspected the clandestine polygamy. Anti-Mormons for their part have often had little, if any, direct evidence about polygamous practices and therefore have not only depended upon but have also embellished the rumors surrounding the practice. The RLDS Church defined an official position that not only opposed polygamy among the Mormons of Utah but also denied that Joseph Smith ever encouraged or authorized polygamy in Illinois. Lastly, when LDS Church authorities conscientiously prohibited new plural marriages, some Mormons were willing to challenge Church authority in order to continue the practice. It is a commonplace saying that the first casualty when war comes is truth,⁴⁶ but amid the sectarian warfare involving Mormon polygamy, truth has often simply been a negotiable commodity.

The illegality, secrecy, and self-protection of the individual and the institution all contributed toward the final complication in the history of polygamy among the Mormons: the meaning and application of "truth." In an 1833 revelation dictated by Joseph Smith, the Lord said: "All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself. . . ." (D&C 93:30).

⁴⁴ *Deseret Evening News*, 13 Jan. 1891, p. 4; *Deseret News Weekly*, 17 Jan. 1891, p. 127; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 Nov. 1895, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Salt Lake Stake High Council Minutes, 1911 Book, p. 54, 18 April 1911, LDS Church Archives.

⁴⁶ See Burton Stevenson, ed., *The Home Book of Quotations* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1967), p. 2112, entry 16.

None of the official or semi-official commentaries on Joseph Smith's revelations has pointed out the strong implication of these words that truth ultimately is relative, rather than absolute. But Joseph Smith's own teachings in connection with polygamy in 1842 explicitly denied that there were ethical absolutes: "That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another. God said, 'Thou shalt not kill;' at another time He said 'Thou shalt utterly destroy.' This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted — by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire."⁴⁷ Forty years later, Apostle Abraham H. Cannon gave some instructions about polygamy that indicated one dimension of this question: "It is good to always tell the truth, but not always to tell the whole of what we know."⁴⁸

If failure of full disclosure were the only manifestation of relative truth in the history of Mormon polygamy, the problem would be comparatively simple. But the situation has been compounded by Mormons giving specialized meaning to language that has a different (if not opposite) denotation in conventional usage and by instances of emphatic statements about historical events or circumstances which can be verified as contrary to the allegations. In 1886, a *Deseret Evening News* editorial presented a particularly significant argument in favor of a specialized approach to truth with regard to polygamy, and B. H. Roberts further popularized the argument in a biography of John Taylor published in 1892. Stating that the secret practice of polygamy was the context, both publications argued that if apostles (and by implication, any Latter-day Saints) were under a divine command or covenant of secrecy which one of the apostles violated by telling others, that those who maintained the sacred covenant of secrecy would be justified in, even obligated to, denouncing the disclosures as false.⁴⁹

III

The first significant and long-lasting manifestation of this problem in the history of Mormon polygamy occurred in 1835 when an official statement on marriage was included as Section 101 in the first printing of the Doctrine and Covenants, a collection of Joseph Smith's revelatory writings and statements. Verse 4 states, "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 but one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in

⁴⁷ Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, B. H. Roberts, ed., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1949), 5:135, hereafter HC; and Dean C. Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1984), pp. 507-8.

⁴⁸ Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 14 Dec. 1881, University of Utah.

⁴⁹ *Deseret Evening News*, 20 May 1886; B. H. Roberts, *The Life of John Taylor, Third President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Co., 1892), pp. 223-24.

case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.”⁵⁰ In later years several members of the Church who were prominent in the 1830s would affirm that prior to the canonization of this statement, Joseph Smith had already dictated a revelation authorizing plural marriage, had secretly explained that polygamy would one day become a practice of the Church, and had himself married his first plural wife.⁵¹ This article on marriage became the focal point for a number of polygamy denials during the next fifteen years.

Within a year after Joseph Smith began marrying plural wives himself and performing such ceremonies for others at Nauvoo, Illinois, these practices first were counterfeited and then publicly exposed by one of his counselors, John C. Bennett. On 1 August 1842, Apostle Parley P. Pratt published a rebuttal as an editorial: “But for the information of those who may be assailed by those foolish tales about the two wives [p. 73, “that God had given a revelation that men might have two wives”], we would say that no such principle ever existed among the Latter-day Saints, and never will,” yet Pratt’s autobiography later stated that Joseph Smith disclosed to him the revelation on celestial marriage in January 1840.⁵² Two months later twelve men and nineteen women signed affidavits that stated in part, “we know of no other rule or system of marriage than the one published in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants.” The signers included Apostle John Taylor and Apostle Wilford Woodruff (who had already been taught the doctrine of polygamy by Joseph Smith), Bishop Newel K. Whitney (who had performed a plural marriage ceremony the previous July for his own daughter and Joseph Smith in accordance with a revelation dictated by the Prophet on the occasion), Elizabeth Ann Whitney (who witnessed the plural ceremony), Sarah M. Cleveland (who had become Joseph Smith’s

⁵⁰ *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Latter Day Saints: Carefully Selected From the Revelations of God* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams & Co., 1835), p. 251. This section remained in the book until 1876.

⁵¹ See Ezra Booth in *Ohio Star*, 8 Dec. 1831; Orson Pratt in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool and London: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1853–86), 13:193, hereafter JD; Joseph F. Smith in JD 20:29, 21:9; Erastus Snow in JD 24:165; Benjamin F. Johnson to George S. Gibbs, c1903, LDS Church Archives, also as published in Dean R. Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets: An Analysis of the Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs, Reporting Doctrinal Views of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1976), pp. 37–39; William E. McLellin to Joseph Smith III, July 1872, RLDS Research Library and Archives, The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri; hereafter RLDS Archives. For historical commentary on these early developments of Mormon polygamy, see Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, p. 341; Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 2:95–101; Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, pp. 69–70, 170; Danel W. Bachman, “A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith” (M.A. thesis, Purdue University, 1975), pp. 47–103; Bachman, “New Light on an Old Hypothesis: The Ohio Origins of the Revelation on Eternal Marriage,” *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 19–32; Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, pp. 134–39.

⁵² *Latter-Day Saints Millennial Star* 3 (Aug. 1842): 74; *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1964), pp. 297–98; Philadelphia Branch Minutes (1840–54), 13 Jan. 1840, p. 2, RLDS Archives, for attendance of Smith and Pratt at the conference to which the autobiography referred. At this time Pratt was married to his second wife, the first having died; and even if Joseph Smith did not specify that earthly polygamy was part of the revelation, his teachings for eternity had obvious polygamous implications for Parley P. Pratt and his two wives.

plural wife early in 1842), and Eliza R. Snow (who also married him on 29 June 1842).⁵³

Almost exactly a year later, Joseph Smith, who had performed a ceremony for William Clayton and a plural wife who was now pregnant, reassured Clayton: “just keep her at home and brook it and if they raise trouble about it and bring you before me I will give you an awful scourging & probably cut you off from the church and then I will baptise you & set you ahead as good as ever.”⁵⁴ At a meeting of the Nauvoo City Council in January 1844, Joseph Smith “spoke on spiritual wife System, and explained, The man who promises to keep a secret and does not keep it he is a liar, and not to be trusted,” and a month later he and Hyrum Smith announced that they had excommunicated an elder for “preaching Polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines.”⁵⁵ The previous summer, Hyrum married three plural wives and read to the Nauvoo Stake High Council the revelation on the new and everlasting covenant of marriage and plurality of wives, which (according to William Clayton’s diary) went by the code name “Priesthood,” yet in March 1844, Hyrum Smith wrote that the claim “that a man *having a certain priesthood*, may have as many wives as he pleases . . . [is] . . . false doctrine, for there is no such doctrine taught; neither is there any such thing practised here” (italics in original); and in June 1844 Hyrum told the Nauvoo City Council and published his affirmation that the revelation he had read to the high council “had no reference to the present time.”⁵⁶ Although he had married more than thirty plural wives by May 1844, Joseph Smith told a Nauvoo congregation that he was accused of “having seven wives, when I can only find one.” A month later the Prophet wrote a letter to two of his plural wives instructing them to join him as he fled Nauvoo.⁵⁷

These denials never convinced the anti-Mormons, but they caused a good deal of confusion for many Latter-day Saints and ultimately provided the ammunition for more than a century of argument between the polygamous Mormons of Utah and the monogamist Reorganized Church. The conventional LDS historical explanation for these denials was that those involved were technically denying only any association with the corrupt “spiritual wifery” taught and practiced by John C. Bennett at Nauvoo in 1841–42, and there-

⁵³ *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 Oct. 1842): 939–40; Roberts, *The Life of John Taylor*, p. 98; Andrew Jenson, “Plural Marriage,” *Historical Record* 6 (May 1887): 224, 233–34; Joseph F. Smith, Jr., [Joseph Fielding Smith], *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1905), p. 75; Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippett Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet’s Wife, “Elect Lady,” Polygamy’s Foe, 1804–1879*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), pp. 119, 125, 128–29.

⁵⁴ William Clayton, Diary, 19 Oct. 1843, copy of excerpts, private collection.

⁵⁵ Nauvoo City Council Minutes, 3 Jan. 1844, LDS Church Archives; *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 Feb. 1844): 423. See discussion connected with note 49.

⁵⁶ *Times and Seasons* 5 (15 March 1844): 474; *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 19 June 1844; Jenson, “Plural Marriage,” pp. 227–28; William Clayton, Diary, 7 March, 22 April, 27 April, 23 May, 26 May, 12 July 1843; Bachman, “A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage,” pp. 349, 351, 353.

⁵⁷ HC 5:72; Jenson, “Plural Marriage,” pp. 233–34; Bachman, “A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage,” pp. 113–15, 333–36; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, pp. 598, 697.

fore traditional Mormon apologists have followed the argument of Joseph F. Smith in 1886: "These seeming denials themselves are specific proofs of the existence of the *true coin*, the counterfeit of which they denounced."⁵⁸ The anti-polygamous Reorganized Church, however, accepted the statements at face value because they in fact went beyond denying association with Bennett's "spiritual wifery" to denying the practice of polygamy or any other form of marriage other than that contained in the 1835 Article on Marriage.⁵⁹

Some elements of these Nauvoo denials obviously did not square with the historically verifiable practice of plural marriage during Joseph Smith's lifetime. In an effort to counter the Reorganized Church's use of these Nauvoo denials, Joseph Fielding Smith, an assistant in the Church Historian's Office since 1901, asserted in 1905: "I have copied the following from the Prophet's manuscript record of Oct. 5, 1843, and know it is genuine" and then quoted Joseph Smith's diary that he alleged concluded, ". . . and I have constantly said no man shall have but one wife at a time unless the Lord directs otherwise." The handwritten Nauvoo diary of Joseph Smith for 5 October 1843 actually ends: "No men shall have but one wife."⁶⁰

Even after the Mormons left Illinois in 1846 for territories where polygamy was not in legal jeopardy, these denials continued. In January 1850, the *LDS Millennial Star* in England printed a reply to anti-Mormons, which stated in part:

12th *Lie* — Joseph Smith taught a system of polygamy.

12th *Refutation* — The Revelations given through Joseph Smith, state the following . . . "We believe that one man should have one wife." Doctrine and Covenants, page 331.⁶¹

The editor of the *Star* at this time was Apostle Orson Pratt, who had temporarily left the Church in 1842 because his wife claimed that Joseph Smith had proposed spiritual marriage to her; subsequently converted to polygamy, Pratt, at the time of this 1850 denial, had already married four plural wives and

⁵⁸ *Deseret Evening News*, 20 May 1886, italics in original; Jenson, "Plural Marriage," p. 220; Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, pp. 223–24; Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 2:103–5; Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, pp. 55–57; Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, p. 171.

⁵⁹ A representative example is Russell F. Ralston, *Fundamental Differences Between the REORGANIZED CHURCH and the CHURCH IN UTAH* (Independence, Mo.: Herald House, 1963), pp. 190–200.

⁶⁰ Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, p. 55; Joseph Smith, Diary, 5 Oct. 1843, LDS Archives, microfilm at RLDS Archives. Elder Smith was actually quoting from the edited version of this diary that had appeared decades before in the *Deseret News* and *LDS Millennial Star* and more recently in HC 6:46. However, he presumably had access to the handwritten diary in the Church Historian's Office where he worked; and he claimed to be quoting "from the Prophet's manuscript record," not a published reference. For background, see Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., and John J. Stewart, *The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith, Tenth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1972), pp. 126–27, 134–35.

⁶¹ *LDS Millennial Star* 12 (15 Jan. 1850): 29–30.

fathered two polygamous children.⁶² Nine months later, Apostle John Taylor published a pamphlet of a debate he had in France, which included the statement: "We are accused here of polygamy, and actions the most indelicate, obscene, and disgusting. . . . These things are too outrageous to admit of belief." He answered his opponents by reading the 1835 Article on Marriage. By this date in 1850, John Taylor had married twelve polygamous wives who had already borne him eight children.⁶³

Unlike the situation at Nauvoo, however, the Church president neither authorized nor encouraged such denials once the Mormons settled in Utah. Brigham Young told a meeting of the Utah territorial legislature in February 1851: "Some Deny in the States that we have more wives than one I never Deny it I am perfectly willing that the people at Washington should know that I have more than one wife & they are pure before the Lord and are approved of in his sight."⁶⁴ Nevertheless, not until August 1852 did President Young officially end the secrecy (and the need for denials) by announcing to the world that the Latter-day Saints believed in and practiced "Celestial Marriage."

IV

At this point, plural marriage entered a new dimension of its ambiguous history. Although denials of polygamous practice were no longer necessary and although Brigham Young was in the forefront of an effort to provide institutional and social support for plural marriage within Utah, he actually fostered an ambiguity concerning polygamy that was to last throughout the rest of his leadership of the Church.

The most public evidence of that ambiguity during Brigham Young's presidency involved the 1835 Article on Marriage. In 1852 the Church authorities published the full text of the revelation authorizing polygamy in the *Deseret News*, *LDS Millennial Star*, and in other periodicals and pamphlets, but the newly announced revelation was not added to editions of the Doctrine and Covenants until 1876. Instead, the 1835 Article on Marriage (which denied polygamy and defined the Church as strictly monogamous) was printed in four English language editions of the Doctrine and Covenants published in England between 1852 and 1869 by Mormon apostles who were practicing polygamists. It would not have been a difficult matter to have dropped the article from these editions, even if there was reluctance to print the 1843 revelation on the New

⁶² Thomas Edgar Lyon, "Orson Pratt — Early Mormon Leader" (M.S. thesis, University of Chicago, 1932), pp. 34-44; Orson Pratt Family Group Sheets, LDS Genealogical Society, Salt Lake City, hereafter GS; Frank Esshom, *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah Pioneers Book Publishing Co., 1913), p. 1113.

⁶³ John Taylor, *Three nights' public discussion between the Revds. C. W. Cleeve, James Robertson, and Philip Cater, and Elder John Taylor, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, at Boulogne-sur-mer, France* (Liverpool: By the author, 1850); Nauvoo Temple and Salt Lake Endowment House Sealing Records, GS; Nellie T. Taylor, "John Taylor, His Ancestors and Descendants," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 21 (July 1930): 105-7; Curtis E. Bolton, *Diary*, 12-15 July, Aug. 1850, LDS Church Archives.

⁶⁴ Wilford Woodruff, *Diary*, 4 Feb. 1851, LDS Church Archives.

and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage within the European editions of the Doctrine and Covenants.

In addition to doctrinal ambiguity during the nineteenth century about whether practicing polygamy was necessary for a man to be exalted in the celestial kingdom,⁶⁵ Church leaders during Brigham Young's presidency sent out mixed messages about the permanence of the practice of plural marriage. In 1855, Counselor Heber C. Kimball publicly announced, "The principle of plurality of wives never will be done away," but three years later Brigham Young was so exasperated by the number of applications for divorce among polygamous marriages that he privately announced that he "did not feel disposed to do any [polygamous] sealing just now."⁶⁶ President Young ended this temporary suspension of polygamy within a short time, but at April conference of 1861 he stated: "I would say, if the Lord should reveal that it is his will to go so far as to become a Shaking Quaker, Amen to it, and let the sexes have no connection. If so far as for a man to have but one wife, let it be so. The word and will of the Lord is what I want — the will and mind of God."⁶⁷ Yet four years later, he said, "As for polygamy, or any other doctrine the Lord has re-

⁶⁵ Although the 1843 revelation on the "new and everlasting covenant of marriage" indicates that the revelation was in answer to Joseph Smith's inquiry about biblical polygamy, the lengthy discussion about marriage and exaltation (D&C 132:19–20) was in a monogamous context: "if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant. . . ." Despite defensiveness about the importance of plural marriage, a number of Church leaders gave their definite (or sometimes grudging) affirmation that a monogamist who was true to the sealing covenants with his single wife could be exalted if he believed in the principle of plurality of wives, even though the monogamist's exaltation would not be as "great," or "numerous," or "full," or "high" as that of the exalted polygamist: Amasa M. Lyman in 1863 (JD 10:186), Brigham Young in 1866 (JD 11:268–69), Brigham Young in 1870 (Minutes of Salt Lake School of the Prophets, 12 Feb., 2 July 1870, LDS Church Archives), Brigham Young in 1871 (Joseph F. Smith, Diary, 15 July 1871, and Wilford Woodruff, Diary, 24 Sept. 1871, LDS Church Archives), Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor in 1873 (Minutes of Salt Lake School of the Prophets, 10 Feb. 1873), Orson Pratt in 1873 (JD 16:184), Charles C. Rich in 1878 (JD 19:253), Joseph F. Smith in 1878 (JD 20:28, 30–31), George Q. Cannon in 1880 (JD 22:124), and George Q. Cannon in 1883 (JD 25:2). Nevertheless, Church authorities in the nineteenth century could not simply portray plural marriage as superfluous, in view of the difficulties its practice was causing for individuals and for the Church itself. Therefore, the same Church authorities quoted above also stated that practicing plural marriage was necessary for exaltation: Orson Pratt in 1852 (JD 1:54), Brigham Young in 1866 (JD 11:268–69), 1870 (Joseph F. Smith, Diary, 12 Feb. 1870), and 1873 (JD 16:166, and Woodruff, Diary, 31 Aug. 1873), and George Q. Cannon in 1883 (JD 24:146). I have not included here any statements where the speaker may have been referring to sealing for time and eternity generally, rather than to plural marriage in particular. The ambiguity of the question is perhaps best indicated by Brigham Young's sermon on 19 August 1866 in which he began by saying that if monogamist Mormons were "polygamists at least in your faith" they would be exalted, but concluded by saying, "The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God are those who enter into polygamy." JD 11:268–69. More than a year following the 1890 Manifesto, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated: "We formerly taught our people that polygamy, or celestial marriage, as commanded by God through Joseph Smith, was right; that it was a necessity to man's highest exaltation in the life to come." Statement on 19 December 1891 in Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 3:230.

⁶⁶ JD 3:125; Historian's Office Journal, 17 Dec., 30 Dec. 1858, LDS Church Archives.

⁶⁷ JD 9:36.

vealed, it is not for me to change, alter, or renounce it; my business is to obey when the Lord commands, and this is the duty of all mankind.”⁶⁸

Shortly after Congress outlawed polygamy in 1862, there were apparently appeals from friendly non-Mormons for the Church to voluntarily surrender the practice of polygamy without government coercion. Brigham Young responded in June 1866: “But suppose that this Church should give up this holy order of marriage, then would the devil, and all who are in league with him against the cause of God, rejoice that they had prevailed upon the Saints to refuse to obey one of the revelations and commandments of God to them.” He then affirmed that such a surrender would be followed by a demand to give up all other distinctive doctrines and practices of the LDS Church.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, two months later, Brigham Young said: “If it is wrong for a man to have more than one wife at a time, the Lord will reveal it by and by, and he will put it away that it will not be known in the Church.”⁷⁰ As the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 brought the prospect of an increased non-Mormon population in Utah, Apostle George Q. Cannon replied to those who wondered if the Church would surrender the practice of plural marriage: “God has revealed it, He must sustain it, we cannot; we cannot bear it off, He must,” and Apostle Wilford Woodruff reaffirmed, “If we were to do away with polygamy, it would only be one feather in the bird, one ordinance in the Church and kingdom. Do away with that, then we must do away with prophets and Apostles, with revelation and the gifts and graces of the Gospel, and finally give up our religion altogether and turn sectarians and do as the world does, then all would be right.”⁷¹ Brigham Young demonstrated his resistance to the Morrill Act by fathering five more polygamous children and marrying six more wives after 1862.⁷²

In the early 1870s, at the same time he and other Church leaders were affirming that it was not necessary for a man to be a polygamist to be exalted eternally, Brigham Young was also encouraging private and public discussion of the possibility that the practice of “this most holy principle” could be stopped altogether by another revelation, by special circumstances, or by administrative decision of the Church president. In May 1871, President Young told the congregation at the Salt Lake Tabernacle that if Congress would pass a law compelling every man in the United States to marry honorably, “we would abandon polygamy,” and in June of that year he preached: “If it is right, reasonable and proper and the Lord permits a man to take a half a dozen wives, take them; but if the Lord says let them alone, let them alone. How long? Until we go down to the grave, if the Lord demand it.”⁷³

⁶⁸ Ibid. 11:111.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 239.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 268.

⁷¹ Ibid., 13:208, 116.

⁷² Susa Young Gates and Mabel Young Sanborn, “Brigham Young Genealogy,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 11 (April, July 1920): 51–55, 127–34; Salt Lake Endowment House Sealing Records, GS.

⁷³ Joseph F. Smith, Diary, 21 May 1871; JD 14: 160–61.

After Brigham Young was indicted for adultery in September 1871,⁷⁴ these public statements were more significantly echoed in the private discussions of the Salt Lake School of the Prophets, attended by the General Authorities and all prominent Church leaders in the Salt Lake Valley. In December 1871, Daniel H. Wells, second counselor in the First Presidency, introduced the subject by stating, "It is possible that we as a people may be denied the principle of a plurality of wives — hereafter, for not honoring it thus far. . . . If we do not honor this great principle, God will surely take it from us." At a subsequent meeting of the School that month, Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., said that he personally could not give up the practice of plural marriage, "unless Prest. Young was to take the responsibility upon himself, by counselling us to lay it aside for the time being," following which Counselor Wells read a letter from President Brigham Young that "there was no danger of us having to surrender any portion of our religion — but as to Polygamy, if anything ever caused that principle to be withheld from us, it will be in consequence of the God of Heaven being displeased with many who have gone into it."⁷⁵

To some, these statements about not surrendering but withholding the practice of plural marriage seemed to be a calculated prelude to the 1872 constitutional effort for Utah statehood, which included a proposed state constitution that invited Congress to establish its own terms for admission of Utah.⁷⁶ But George Q. Cannon, who chaired the committee that adopted the constitutional provision, privately gave the reassurance "that no man of the First Presidency or Twelve Apostles has ever had any idea of giving up the doctrine of celestial marriage, or its practice," but significantly observed that they "certainly have never made such idea, if they have had it, public."⁷⁷ Yet even after the failure of the 1872 statehood effort, Brigham Young affirmed that if every marriageable man would marry, "we would not be under the necessity, perhaps, of taking more than one wife."⁷⁸

For twenty years of his presidency, Brigham Young made and apparently authorized others to make at least tentative suggestions that under certain circumstances the practice of plural marriage could be suspended or stopped altogether with God's sanction. Apostle John Henry Smith (who was a bishop during this time and did not marry a plural wife until the year of Brigham Young's death) observed: "Prest. Young once proposed that we marry but one wife."⁷⁹ Many Mormons may have come to similar conclusions.

⁷⁴ Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 5:394–415. President Young was under house arrest from January to April 1872.

⁷⁵ Minutes of the Salt Lake School of the Prophets, 9 and 23 Dec. 1871.

⁷⁶ Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 5:458–63.

⁷⁷ Cannon to George Reynolds, 24 April 1872, Reynolds Papers, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

⁷⁸ JD 16:166.

⁷⁹ Anthon H. Lund, Diary, 10 Jan. 1900, LDS Church Archives.

V

Young's successor as senior apostle and Church president from 1877 to 1887 was John Taylor, renowned for his unflinching defiance of federal pressure to end polygamy. After the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the 1862 Morrill Anti-Bigamy Law in 1879, John Taylor told the October general conference that Congress had committed a "shameless infraction of the Constitution of the United States," which the Supreme Court had confirmed but that "no legislative enactment, nor judicial rulings" would stop the Latter-day Saints from following their conscience in obeying God's command to practice plural marriage.⁸⁰ In 1882, Congress passed the Edmunds Law which provided up to five years' imprisonment and a \$500 fine for entering into polygamy, six months' imprisonment and \$300 fine for the resulting unlawful cohabitation, and which disfranchised polygamists. President Taylor responded with a sermon in which he asked, "Are we going to suffer a surrender of this point?" and then he answered, "No, never! No, never!"⁸¹ He made his resistance to what was now the Constitutional law of the land more emphatic in October 1882 by announcing a revelation of God which stated: "You may appoint Seymour B. Young [a monogamist] to fill up the vacancy in the presiding quorum of Seventies, if he will conform to my law; for it is not meet that men who will not abide my law shall preside over my Priesthood."⁸² As federal pressure increased to arrest polygamists and otherwise suppress Mormon polygamy, John Taylor responded with greater defiance: at a special priesthood meeting at April conference of 1884 he asked for all monogamists serving in ward bishoprics or stake presidencies either to make preparations to marry a plural wife or to offer their resignations from Church office, and he even called out the names of monogamous stake presidents.⁸³ In his last public discourse on 1 February 1885, John Taylor reminded his Salt Lake City audience of the federal efforts to suppress polygamy, and rhetorically asked if he should disobey God in order to support the government. His answer: "No, Never! No, NEVER! NO, NEVER!"⁸⁴ President Taylor left the stand and went into permanent exile to avoid arrest by federal officers.

For the next two and a half years, John Taylor demonstrated continued resistance to compromise while he was "on the underground" in various hid-

⁸⁰ JD 20:319–20.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 23: 240–41.

⁸² Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, pp. 249–51; Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 6:105; Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 2:347–49. The Church published this revelation that same year in a pamphlet titled, *Revelation given through President John Taylor, at Salt Lake City, Utah Territory, October 13, 1882, to fill vacancies in the Twelve.*

⁸³ William Paxman, *Diary*, 6–7 April 1884, BYU; Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 6–7 April 1884; William McLachlan, *Diary*, 6 April 1884, LDS Church Archives; Francis A. Hammond, *Diary*, 6 April 1884, LDS Church Archives. For analysis of the divided loyalties caused by these pressures against compromise, see James B. Allen, "'Good Guys' vs. 'Good Guys': Rudger Clawson, John Sharp, and Civil Disobedience in Nineteenth-Century Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 48 (Spring 1980): 148–74.

⁸⁴ JD 26:152.

ing places in Utah. In July 1885, he suggested that due to the federal anti-polygamy raid, the American flags on all Church properties be lowered to half-mast for Independence Day, which outraged the non-Mormons of Salt Lake City and nearly caused a riot in the city.⁸⁵ After eight months in hiding, John Taylor and his first counselor, George Q. Cannon, issued a First Presidency letter at October 1885 general conference: "Well-meaning friends of ours have said that our refusal to renounce the principle of celestial marriage invites destruction. They warn and implore us to yield." They reported their response: "We did not reveal celestial marriage. We cannot withdraw or renounce it."⁸⁶ Four months later, Cannon was arrested by a U.S. marshal, remaining free prior to trial on a \$45,000 bail bond, which President Taylor had Cannon forfeit so that he could return to hiding.⁸⁷

During this 1884–86 period there were numerous appeals by prominent Mormons and friendly non-Mormons for President Taylor to issue a statement or new revelation that would set aside the practice of plural marriage.⁸⁸ Burdened by his own exile and the sufferings of other Church members, John Taylor "asked the Lord if it would not be right under the circumstances to discontinue plural marriages," in response to which President Taylor received "the word of the Lord to him in which the Lord said that plural marriage was one of His eternal laws and that He had established it, that man had not done so and that He would sustain and uphold his saints in carrying it out."⁸⁹ Presently

⁸⁵ Heber J. Grant, Journal, 3 July 1885, LDS Church Archives; Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 6:159.

⁸⁶ Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 3:27.

⁸⁷ Mark W. Cannon, "The Mormon Issue in Congress, 1872–1882: Drawing on the Experience of Territorial Delegate George Q. Cannon" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1960), pp. 229–30. Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 6:126–32 gives the story of the arrest and establishment of bond, then drops the story and skips ahead to unrelated events.

⁸⁸ JD 25:309, 26:7; *Deseret Evening News*, 23 April, 5 June 1885; *Juvenile Instructor* 20 (1 May 1885): 136, 20 (15 May 1885): 156; Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 13 May 1885; Heber J. Grant, Journal, 13 May 1885; Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 3:27; George Q. Cannon, Diary, 6 Nov. 1885, copy in CR 1/48, LDS Church Archives; "Extract from Mr. Gibson's Letter of Aug. 18th [1886]," in Franklin S. Richards Papers, LDS Church Archives.

⁸⁹ Statement of John W. Taylor to the apostles in Heber J. Grant, Journal, 30 Sept. 1890, also in First Presidency Office Journal, 2 Oct. 1889, copy in CR 1/48, LDS Church Archives; in Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 1 April 1892; in Minutes of the Quorum of Twelve, 22 Feb. and 1 March 1911, LDS Church Archives. John W. Taylor consistently stated that he found the 1886 revelation among his father's papers after John Taylor's death in 1887. On an envelope containing an unpublished revelation to his father of 19 November 1877 about the settlement of the Brigham Young estate, John W. Taylor made the following handwritten note:

Directions about
Settling Church Property
Revelation of Prest John Taylor
in Envelope —
and all the rest of these papers are Documents that
should go to Prest. Woodruff
J.W. Taylor
read. Oct 22nd 1887.

available documents of 1885–86 are silent about this revelation, but much later documentation and commentary identified this revelation as having been received by John Taylor on 27 September 1886.⁹⁰

Such a revelation on this date would explain the dramatic change in John Taylor's personal circumstances and resistance to federal laws against polygamy. Until 1886, John Taylor's public and private defense against the U.S. government was the argument that he had married his fifteen wives prior to the 1862 Morrill Act, that his last polygamous child had been born in 1881 and therefore all his polygamous children were legitimized by the provisions of the Edmunds Act of 1882, that he had sought to comply with the 1882 Edmunds Act prohibition of unlawful cohabitation by living separately from his plural wives (the youngest of whom was forty-five years old in 1882), "and has

Although John W. Taylor presented these documents, apparently including the 1886 revelation, to Wilford Woodruff in 1887, this 1877 revelation and envelope ended up in the Joseph F. Smith Papers in the Church Historian's Office, where I examined them in 1971. Taylor may have received back the original 1886 revelation document when he left the Quorum of the Twelve, because his brother Frank Y. Taylor gave it to the First Presidency on 18 July 1933.

⁹⁰ "REVELATION to President John Taylor, September 27, 1886, copied from the original manuscript by Joseph F. Smith, Jr., August 3, 1909," in Joseph Fielding Smith Papers, LDS Church Archives; Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 22 Feb., 1 March 1911, 23 Jan. 1914, LDS Church Archives; Lorin C. Woolley, "Statement of Facts," 6 Oct. 1912, LDS Church Archives; Joseph W. Musser, *Diary*, 12 March 1922, LDS Church Archives; Musser, *Book of Remembrance*, 7 Aug. 1922, pp. 6, 8; J. Leslie Broadbent, *Celestial Marriage?* (Salt Lake City: N.p., 1927), pp. 15–16; William K. Ray, pseud. [Charles W. Kingston and Jesse B. Stone], *Laman Manasseh Victorious* (Idaho Falls: By the author, 1931), pp. 95–97; Stone, *An Event of The Underground Days*, pp. 3–7; B. Harvey Allred, *A Leaf in Review* (Galdwell, Ida.: Caxton Printers, 1933), pp. 183–87; J. Reuben Clark, Jr., Memorandum, 18 July 1933, in Frank Y. Taylor File, General Correspondence Binder, Box 349, Clark Papers, BYU; Joseph W. Musser and J. Leslie Broadbent, *Supplement to the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Truth Publishing Co., 1934), pp. 55–61; Melvin J. Ballard to Esie D. Jensen, 31 Dec. 1934, in *Marriage: Ballard-Jenson Correspondence* (Salt Lake City: Truth Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 27; *Truth* 4 (Oct. 1938): 84–86, 6 (Nov. 1940): 134–36; Dean C. Jessee, "A Comparative Study and Evaluation of the Latter-day Saint and the Fundamentalist Views Pertaining to the Practice of Plural Marriage" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1959), p. 101; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Coming of the Manifesto," *DIALOGUE* 5 (Autumn 1970): 15; Gilbert W. Fulton Jr., *The Most Holy Principle*, 4 vols. (Murray, Utah: Gems Publishing Co., 1970–75), 3:225–31; Lynn L. Bishop and Steven L. Bishop, *The Keys of the Priesthood Illustrated* (Draper, Utah: Review and Preview Publishers, 1971), pp. 119–91; Samuel W. Taylor, *The Kingdom or Nothing: The Life of John Taylor, Militant Mormon* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 365–70; Fred C. Collier, *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., 1981), pp. 145–46, 177–206. Polemical attacks on the validity of this 1886 revelation and events alleged to have occurred therewith have appeared in Paul E. Reimann, *Plural Marriage, Limited* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Co., 1974), pp. 201–24, and in Anderson's 1979 *Polygamy Story*. In 1976, J. Max Anderson's unpublished manuscript, "Mormon Fundamentalism" stated on page 156 that the 1886 revelation was "a little known, but authentic revelation of the Lord to John Taylor," but the published, abbreviated version of the manuscript that appeared in *Polygamy Story* eliminated this assessment and emphasized the uncertain historicity of the document. The latter position may have been required by Apostle Mark E. Petersen, who chaired the Church committee that shepherded Anderson's study to completion and publication. Elder Petersen's *The Way of the Master*, p. 57, had already stated in 1974, "To justify their own rebellion, certain recalcitrant brethren . . . concocted a false revelation, allegedly given to President John Taylor in 1886."

entirely separated himself so far as bed is concerned.”⁹¹ Yet less than three months after the recording of the 1886 revelation, seventy-eight-year-old John Taylor married as a plural wife twenty-six-year-old Josephine Roueche on 19 December 1886. The ceremony was performed by her father, a high priest, and witnessed by George Q. Cannon and one of the “Underground” guards, Charles H. Wilcken. At the end of 1886, President Taylor had chosen for the first time in his life to specifically violate federal laws on polygamy and unlawful cohabitation, and he lived with his new bride at the Roueche home in Kaysville, Utah, the remaining seven months of his life.⁹²

If anything, John Taylor’s public resistance against compromising the practice of polygamy during his presidency was exceeded by the other General Authorities. The second-ranking apostle, Wilford Woodruff, dictated a revelation in January 1880 (accepted as the “word of the Lord” by John Taylor and the Quorum of the Twelve the following April) which stated in part: “And I say again wo unto that Nation or house or people who seek to hinder my People from obeying the Patriarchal Law of Abraham which leadeth to a Celestial Glory . . . for whosoever doeth those things shall be damned.” A year later Wilford Woodruff told the Latter-day Saints in two published sermons that “if we were to give up polygamy to-day,” they would have to give up revelation, prophets, apostles, temple ordinances, and the Church itself.⁹³ At October 1884 general conference, George Q. Cannon said that the appeal for a new revelation to “lay polygamy aside” was in vain because such a revelation would be useless “unless indeed the people should apostatize.”⁹⁴

During the year President Taylor went into hiding, Church periodicals bombarded the Latter-day Saints with the message that stopping the practice of plural marriage was impossible. In April 1885, the *Deseret Evening News* editorialized concerning “the demand that plural marriage relationship be abolished,” and stated, “Were the Church to do that as an entirety God would reject the Saints as a body. The authority of the Priesthood would be withdrawn . . . and the Lord would raise up another people of greater valor and stability.”⁹⁵ The next month, Counselor George Q. Cannon published two editorials in the *Juvenile Instructor* in which he acknowledged that some people suggested that “we do not ask you to give up your *belief* in this doctrine; we merely ask you to suspend for the time being your practice of it,” to which

⁹¹ JD 25:349, 26:153, 223–24; George Q. Cannon to Daniel Manning, 7 Aug. 1885, cited in Lyman, “Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood,” p. 54; Taylor, “John Taylor, His Ancestors and Descendants,” pp. 105–7; Nauvoo Temple and Salt Lake Endowment House Sealing Records, GS.

⁹² “Temple Ordinance Book B, Out of Temple Sealings,” p. 109, LDS Church Archives; Taylor, *Kingdom or Nothing*, p. 374.

⁹³ Wilford Woodruff, 1873–80 Diary for entries of 26 Jan. and 22 April 1880, the 1880–85 Diary for full text of the revelation following summary of events for 1880, the 1893–97 Diary, pp. 288–71 (in reverse pagination) for another full text of the revelation; Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), pp. 530–31; JD 22:174, also 22:147–48.

⁹⁴ JD 25:321–22.

⁹⁵ *Deseret Evening News*, 23 April 1885, editorial.

he replied that “I look upon such a suggestion as from the devil,” that doing such a thing would demonstrate utter apostasy, and merit the vengeance of God.⁹⁶ In June 1885, the *Deseret Evening News* lashed out against those who used quotations from the Doctrine and Covenants (presently Section 124:49–50) “in favor of the renunciation or temporary suspension of the law of celestial marriage,” and the editorial said that these were “the shallow pretexts of semi-apostates” who were twisting the Doctrine and Covenants quotations out of context, and that this “revelation does not apply even remotely to the present situation.”⁹⁷ At least as significant as these public repudiations of suspending the practice of plural marriage was George Q. Cannon’s declaration in November 1885 to George L. Miller, an emissary from the Cleveland administration, that even if the First Presidency issued such a statement, the Latter-day Saints would not accept it, “and if they did, and we were to repudiate this principle our Church would cease to be the Church of God, and the ligaments that now bind it together would be severed.”⁹⁸

Nevertheless, despite the almost universal historical view that John Taylor refused to compromise the practice of plural marriage, he actually promoted an undercurrent of compromise throughout his entire presidency. Although he gave encouragement, revelation, and an ultimatum for presiding officers of the Church to be polygamists, more than a third of President Taylor’s appointments as General Authorities were monogamists, including two of his sons: William W. Taylor (who waited four years after his appointment before marrying a plural wife) and John W. Taylor (who did not marry a plural wife until after his father’s death).⁹⁹ The degree to which John Taylor was willing to compromise his own public ultimatums as well as the published revelation of 1882 that required presiding officers to be polygamists is indicated by his refusal to grant permission for plural marriages to John W., to John Q. Cannon, son of George Q. and a member of the Presiding Bishopric, and to Bishop Orson F. Whitney. He undoubtedly did this to protect the men from the jeopardy of arrest. Even after this refusal contributed to John Q. Cannon’s excommunication for committing adultery with his long-intended plural wife, John Taylor did not relax this selective suspension of plural marriage for the other two, even though plural marriages continued to be performed from 1885 onward in the Logan Temple and Salt Lake Endowment House.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ *Juvenile Instructor* 20 (1 May 1885): 136, 20 (15 May 1885): 156; italics in original.

⁹⁷ *Deseret Evening News*, 5 June 1885, editorial.

⁹⁸ George Q. Cannon, Diary, 6 Nov. 1885, copy in CR 1/48; Lyman, “Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood,” pp. 57–60.

⁹⁹ Of the thirteen appointments from 1879 to 1887, the following were monogamists when they became General Authorities: William W. Taylor in 1880, Heber J. Grant in 1882, Seymour B. Young in 1882, John W. Taylor in 1884, and John Q. Cannon in 1884.

¹⁰⁰ Reported in Franklin D. Richards, Diary, 30 Jan. 1888, LDS Church Archives, and in Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 30 Jan. 1888, LDS Church Archives. For information on the John Q. Cannon excommunication, see *Deseret Evening News*, 6 Sept. 1886, and Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 4 Sept. 1886. John W. Taylor and Orson F. Whitney had to postpone entering polygamy until Wilford Woodruff gave them permission in 1888.

Although historians have examined John Taylor's progression from opposing the inclusion of a prohibition of polygamy in Utah's proposed 1887 Constitution to allowing such a provision, they have underestimated his enthusiasm for that compromise.¹⁰¹ On 15 June 1887, George Q. Cannon presented to President Taylor the constitutional prohibitions of polygamy which had been secretly drafted for the proposed Utah constitution by the Cleveland administration in Washington:

Subsequently President George Q. Cannon stated to him that there were two points which troubled some of the brethren, who had tender consciences, and probably large numbers of our people would think upon these points and would like to be relieved respecting them, by knowing the will of the Lord upon them. The first is, "Will we offend our God by declaring that to be a misdemeanor in our brethren, which He views as a virtue and has commanded them to practice?" Second: "Will we displease Him if as jurors we frame indictments and render verdicts against our brethren as criminals for obeying the law which He has commanded them to observe?"

President Taylor said: "There is no necessity for the brethren to be too particular or scrupulous in such matters."¹⁰²

These elements of John Taylor's conduct with regard to the practice of plural marriage and its possible suspension require a reassessment of his reputation for refusing to compromise the practice and a reconsideration of some widespread assumptions about the significance of the 1880, 1882, and 1886 revelations about "the Principle."

VI

Although Wilford Woodruff had previously been one of the most vocal opponents of surrendering the practice of plural marriage, almost as soon as he became presiding authority of the Church as senior apostle, he favored further compromise. By 17 September 1887, Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Church lawyer LeGrand Young privately expressed themselves as convinced that it was necessary for polygamists to promise the courts to refrain from unlawful cohabitation because they "seem to think it is necessary to do something of this kind in order to convince Congress of the sincerity of our efforts to gain Statehood."¹⁰³ But when Wilford Woodruff presented this as a proposal to the rest of the apostles twelve days later, he did so in a noncommittal way as a "document without date or signature but supposed to have come from the Administration at Washington," to which he added LeGrand Young's draft of the exact wording polygamists might use in making such a promise before the courts. Woodruff apparently did not express his earnest support for this proposal to the apostles who voted it down because they were of "the almost unanimous opinion that no latter-day saint could make any

¹⁰¹ Henry J. Wolfinger, "A Reexamination of the Woodruff Manifesto in the Light of Utah Constitutional History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 39 (Fall 1971): 339-49; Lyman, "Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood," pp. 77-96.

¹⁰² First Presidency Office Journal, 15 June 1887, copy in CR 1/48.

¹⁰³ Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 29 Sept. 1887.

such promise and still be true to the covenants he had made with God and his brethren when in the House of God and having wives sealed to him.”¹⁰⁴

President Woodruff’s reason for not simply announcing his decision about this proposed polygamy concession and asking for the apostles’ sustaining vote was that he was facing a difficult administrative dilemma that seriously limited his leadership. On one hand, several of the apostles (particularly thirty-year-old Heber J. Grant) had already told President Woodruff that they regarded him as too old and wanted a younger, more vigorous man as Church president.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, the younger, more vigorous, and eminently qualified man to whom Wilford Woodruff looked as his counselor and strength was George Q. Cannon against whom half of the apostles bore various personal and administrative grudges of such intensity that they effectively blocked the organization of the First Presidency for almost two years following the death of John Taylor. The apostles had already convened on 3 August 1887 for the first of several periodic meetings where they not only severely criticized Cannon but also indicated that they had deep-seated resentments against the former First Presidency for making decisions and setting policy without consulting the apostles. The apostles were so polarized that when Wilford Woodruff specifically proposed organizing the First Presidency in March 1888, four apostles voted against the motion.¹⁰⁶ All this frustrated Wilford Woodruff’s desire to organize the First Presidency and choose his counselors, made him hesitant as president of the Quorum to tell the apostles he approved the proposition for which he was ostensibly asking their evaluation but actually seeking their endorsement, and caused him by 1889 to confide to his secretary that “he would about as soon attend a funeral as one of our council meetings.”¹⁰⁷

In 1888, Mormon leaders sent out mixed messages about continuing the practice of plural marriage. In February, the Salt Lake Stake President Angus M. Cannon testified that President Woodruff had stopped “for nearly a year” giving recommends for plural marriages in the temple; and yet Cannon married another plural wife in the Salt Lake Endowment House the day before he testified and again five months later. During that year polygamous marriages continued to be performed in the Logan Temple by Marriner W. Merrill, in the Salt Lake Endowment House by Franklin D. Richards, aboard ship by Francis M. Lyman, and in Mexico by Moses Thatcher and Alexander F. Macdonald.¹⁰⁸ In April, Wilford Woodruff expressed dismay that some speakers

¹⁰⁴ Heber J. Grant, Journal, 29 Sept. 1887.

¹⁰⁵ Wilford Woodruff to Heber J. Grant, 28 March 1887, LDS Church Archives; Heber J. Grant, Journal, 5 April, 25 July, 3 Aug. 1887.

¹⁰⁶ Cannon, “The Mormon Issue in Congress,” p. 255; see entries for 3 Aug. 1887, 5–6 Oct. 1887, and 20–23 March 1888 in Heber J. Grant, Journal, Franklin D. Richards, Diary, Wilford Woodruff, Diary, and Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; L. John Nuttall, Diary, BYU, and John Henry Smith, Diary, University of Utah.

¹⁰⁷ L. John Nuttall, Diary, 27 Feb. 1889.

¹⁰⁸ *Deseret Evening News*, 29 Feb. 1888; Logan Temple Polygamous Sealing Records, LDS Church Archives; Salt Lake Endowment House Sealing Records, GS; John W. Taylor Family Group Sheets, GS; Francis M. Lyman, Ordinance Book, LDS Church Archives; Orson

at the general conference had referred to plural marriage, despite a decision by the apostles to avoid such expressions,¹⁰⁹ yet at the dedication of the Manti Temple on 17 May 1888, President Woodruff said, "We are not going to stop the practice of plural marriage until the Coming of the Son of Man."¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, in July the Church's emissaries in Washington, D.C., obtained the commitment from the U.S. Solicitor that the temples would be safe from confiscation under the provisions of the Edmunds-Tucker Act, and in August 1888, Utah's delegate to the House of Representatives, John T. Caine (who was also an unofficial representative of Church authorities) stated in the House: "Mr. Speaker, there is no longer a possibility of objecting to Mormons on account of polygamy. That is a dead issue. It can not be vitalized . . . because it has ceased to exist."¹¹¹ Yet when the apostles met before October 1888 conference to discuss the question: "Shall we repudiate plural marriage to save the half Million dollars the U.S. has seized," they decided to let the Church lawyers conduct the legal challenges as best they could without an officially announced end of polygamy, "and we retain our honor before men, and our integrity to God."¹¹²

Newspapers reported that the non-Mormon allies of the Church were severely disappointed that the October 1888 conference adjourned with "no further revelation upon the polygamy question. It was fondly hoped . . . that some good angel would speak out commanding the Saints to abandon polygamy at least 'for a season,'"¹¹³ and the Idaho Supreme Court ruled that under Idaho law all Mormons were disfranchised because the Church president had made no statement abandoning polygamy:

That although the evidence went to indicate that the practice of polygamy or bigamy had neither been advised, counseled nor encouraged within the past two years, yet it was nowhere shown that a like modification had been made in the teachings and doctrines of the general Church in such a way as to reach the whole body of members in that Church. . . . Such a course might have been expected at the last General Conference, but as no movement of the kind had taken place, it was safe and proper to conclude that nothing of the kind might be anticipated in the near future.¹¹⁴

F. Whitney, *Through Memory's Halls* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1930), p. 194; Alexander F. Macdonald, Marriage Records, 1888-90, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁰⁹ Wilford Woodruff to Joseph F. Smith, 19 April 1888, LDS Church Archives. See Lyman, "Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood," pp. 180-85 for a discussion of the negative effects of these conference addresses on the lobbying effort to obtain Utah statehood.

¹¹⁰ Heber J. Grant, Journal, 17 May 1888; also John Henry Smith, Diary, 17 May 1888.

¹¹¹ John T. Caine to Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith, 21 July 1888, Caine Papers, LDS Church Archives; Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 22 July 1888; Heber J. Grant, Journal, 23 July 1888; *Polygamy In Utah — A Dead Issue: Speech of Hon. John T. Caine, of Utah, in the House of Representatives, August 25, 1888* (Washington: N.p., 1888), p. 8. Caine entered the theocratic Council of Fifty in 1881 and was selected to be Utah's delegate in 1882, first by the First Presidency and Council of Twelve, second by the Council of Fifty, and third by the central committee of the Church's People's Party before he was actually elected to that office by Utah's voters. See D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844-1945," *BYU Studies* 20 (Winter 1980): 176, 193.

¹¹² Brigham Young, Jr., Diary, 5 Oct. 1888.

¹¹³ *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 16 Oct. 1888, editorial.

¹¹⁴ *Deseret Evening News*, 17 Oct. 1888.

Rather than acquiescing to non-Mormon expectations of an official pronouncement at October conference validating what the Salt Lake Stake president had said in February and what Utah's delegate had said in August, the apostles gave the Idaho saints permission to "withdraw from membership" as Latter-day Saints in order to vote, a decision the Quorum regretted within three weeks.¹¹⁵

Almost three months later, on 20 December 1888, Wilford Woodruff, still without an organized First Presidency, asked the apostles to consider a document "said to have come from Washington, but no name or names were given to it," which was addressed to the Latter-day Saints in Utah and throughout the United States, "asking them to conform their lives to the Laws of Congress," a document which was supposed to be signed by all the Church leaders when published.¹¹⁶ It is impossible to ignore the parallels between this situation and the circumstances of the September 1887 document that we know Wilford Woodruff wanted approved, even though he did not mention his preference to the apostles who rejected the proposal in 1887. After having his secretary read the 1888 document twice to the Quorum, President Woodruff said, "It is of the greatest importance that we decide by the Spirit what decision to make regarding the same" and, making no comment on the document itself, asked the rest of the apostles to express themselves from youngest to eldest. George Q. Cannon, George Teasdale, and John W. Taylor were absent from the meeting, but all the other apostles rejected the document; and John Henry Smith, Francis M. Lyman, Moses Thatcher, and Joseph F. Smith said that they could not approve such a document without the word of the Lord through Wilford Woodruff, the senior apostle.

After this overwhelming repudiation, Woodruff told the apostles, "Had we yielded to that document every man of us would have been under condemnation before God. The Lord never will give a revelation to abandon plural marriage." If these had been his views before the apostles rejected the document, it is unlikely that he would have asked them to consider signing it. Even the degree of compromise to which Presidents Taylor and Woodruff had already acquiesced by the end of 1888 was unsatisfactory to the apostles, as indicated in Heber J. Grant's comment about this meeting: "I thank God sincerely for a stopping point in the plan of yielding & compromising that we have been engaged in, of late."¹¹⁷ President Woodruff's diary does not state his own feelings about the decision of the apostles to reject what he described as the "Document got up for us to accept to do away with Poligamy," but almost the last words he spoke to the apostles on this occasion had a tone of defensiveness:

¹¹⁵ Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 12 and 31 Oct. 1888.

¹¹⁶ Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 20 Dec. 1888; Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 20 Dec. 1888. The First Presidency Office Journal records Wilford Woodruff as saying that the document "has come from some source and has not been gotten up by us or any person in the Church," copy in CR 1/48. Lyman, "Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood," p. 220, assumed the document was written by John W. Young, a counselor to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who had previously acted as their emissary with national leaders.

¹¹⁷ Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 20 Dec. 1888; also First Presidency Office Journal, 20 Dec. 1888, copy in CR 1/48.

"I don't feel that I owe any apology in presenting this document and I will now withdraw it and I don't want anything said about it."¹¹⁸

Wilford Woodruff had kept his own counsel about the prospects of ending plural marriages until the First Presidency was organized in April 1889 with George Q. Cannon as first counselor and Joseph F. Smith as second. Then President Woodruff made his position more explicit. In June he replied to a resident of the Mormon colonies in Mexico who wanted permission to marry a plural wife: "The spirit of the Lord suggests that extreme prudence and precaution should be observed in reference to these matters for the present, and perhaps for some time to come, especially in regard to my own acts in relation thereto."¹¹⁹ Even though Alexander F. Macdonald of the Mexican Mission had been allowed to perform two plural marriages for U.S. residents in January 1889, one in May, and two in July, President Woodruff obviously extended the "extreme prudence" of his June letter to a ban on all plural marriages in Mexico: Macdonald performed no other plural marriage there through the rest of 1889.¹²⁰

Wilford Woodruff did not even advise his first counselor of this decision until 9 September 1889. They were asked by the Davis (Utah) Stake president what to do about requests for polygamous marriages: "President Woodruff, in reply, said . . . I feel that it is not proper for any marriages of this kind to be performed in this territory at the present time . . . He intimated, however, that such marriages might be solemnized in Mexico or Canada." When President Woodruff invited his counselor to respond, George Q. Cannon was stunned:

I made no reply; for I was not fully prepared to endorse these remarks, and therefore thought it better to say nothing. . . .

This is the first time that I have heard President Woodruff express himself so plainly upon this subject, and therefore I was not prepared to fully acquiesce in his expressions; for, to me, it is an exceedingly grave question, and it is the first time that anything of this kind has ever been uttered to my knowledge, by one holding the keys.¹²¹

Cannon's remarks indicate that both he and Wilford Woodruff knew that the public statements in 1888 about the cessation of new plural marriages did not describe reality; plural marriages had continued to be performed in and out of Utah by Church authority. Further, Cannon obviously did not conceive the idea of restricting plural marriage, but in fact resisted every effort, first by John Taylor and now by Wilford Woodruff, to make what Cannon regarded as compromises of "the Principle." Finally, Cannon's remarks make clear that it was not until September 1889 that the First Presidency decided not to issue any

¹¹⁸ Wilford Woodruff, *Diary*, 20 Dec. 1888; First Presidency Office Journal, 20 Dec. 1888, copy in CR 1/48.

¹¹⁹ Wilford Woodruff to Ammon M. Tenney, 2 June 1889, Woodruff 1887-93 Letterbook, LDS Church Archives. This was not in the regular series of First Presidency letterbooks and was apparently his personal letterbook, strengthening the conclusion that he did not inform his counselors of this decision.

¹²⁰ Alexander F. Macdonald, *Marriage Record*, 1888-90.

¹²¹ George Q. Cannon, *Diary*, 9 Sept. 1889, copy in CR 1/48.

more recommends for plural marriages in Utah. Consequently, previously signed plural marriage recommends were used in new marriage ceremonies throughout the summer until 22 September 1889 in the Salt Lake Endowment House and until 2 October in the Logan Temple.¹²²

Coincidentally it was on 2 October that Wilford Woodruff called a meeting of the First Presidency and apostles to announce this policy. He explained that he felt it was necessary due to the publicity of the recent arrest of Hans Jespersen, who had married his plural wife in the Salt Lake Endowment House the previous April. George Q. Cannon had overcome the uncertainty he felt when President Woodruff revealed his intentions the previous month and told the other apostles that he "was not in favor of plural marriages being performed in this Territory, but they might be attended to in Mexico or Canada, and thus save our brethren from jeopardy in attending to these matters." Lorenzo Snow suggested that if this was President Woodruff's new policy, there should be a public announcement of it, but Snow's motion was opposed by Counselor Joseph F. Smith and by Apostles Francis M. Lyman and John W. Taylor. In view of the situation then and thereafter, John W. Taylor's comment at this meeting was prophetic:

This is something that I never expected to hear discussed in this light. I have understood it was policy for the brethren to take wives outside of the United States. You could not publish that you will not give your consent that plural marriages shall be consummated and at the same time have the marriages consummated in Canada or Mexico. I think it will be best policy to let the matter rest without saying anything about it, because if plural marriages are solemnized it will soon be known and we will be considered insincere. I feel to have faith that the Lord will bring something about for our deliverance. If we published anything on this matter it will be impossible for us or the Elders to fully explain to the Saints, and much confusion will ensue.¹²³

Despite this warning and the consensus of the meeting of 2 October 1889, less than two weeks later Wilford Woodruff made the following statements during a newspaper interview:

"I have refused to give any recommendations for the performance of plural marriages since I have been president. I know that President Taylor, my predecessor, also refused.

....

". . . I am confident," said the president, "that there have been no more plural marriages since I have been in this position, and yet a case has recently occurred which I will say to you I do not understand at all. It is giving us a good deal of trouble. Perhaps you have heard of it?" The president referred to the Hans Jespersen case . . .

"It seems incredible if it is true," Woodruff said, "It is against all of my instructions. I do not understand it at all. We are looking into it and shall not rest until we get at all the facts. There is no intention on our part to do anything but to obey the law."¹²⁴

¹²² Salt Lake Endowment House Sealing Records; Logan Temple Polygamous Sealing Records.

¹²³ First Presidency Office Journal, 2 Oct. 1889, copy in CR 1/48. Details of the Jespersen case appeared in the morning editions of *Salt Lake Tribune*, 27 Sept. 1889, p. 2, and 2 Oct. 1889, p. 2.

¹²⁴ *New York Herald*, 13 Oct. 1889; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 Oct. 1889, p. 2.

It should not have been difficult for President Woodruff to discover the facts about the Jespersion plural marriage in the Salt Lake Endowment House in April 1889: Apostle Franklin D. Richards performed the ceremony, which was recorded in the Endowment House sealing record, and the most likely individuals to have signed the recommend were either President Woodruff himself or George Q. Cannon.¹²⁵ A week later, President Woodruff authorized the destruction of the Salt Lake Endowment House, not, as later claimed in the 1890 Manifesto, because the Jespersion plural marriage was performed there in April 1889, but as a part of a plan to employ hundreds of Mormons who were not residents of Salt Lake City on work projects so that they could register to vote against the anti-Mormon political party in the upcoming Salt Lake City election.¹²⁶

A month later, the Church attorneys urged that it would help the Church's cause in the courts by having John W. Young testify under oath that the First Presidency had ruled no plural marriages were to be performed, and "there was some mention made of this being done in Conference and not in the court." George Q. Cannon vigorously argued against the proposal because it would not persuade the Church's enemies and would "hurt the feelings and faith of our own people. . . . I want President Woodruff, if I can have my feelings gratified and if anything is to be said on this subject in this direction, to be able to say, 'Thus saith the Lord.' The matter was then dropped."¹²⁷ President Woodruff considered the matter alone for several hours that evening and dictated a revelation of 24 November 1889 which stated in part:

Let not my servants who are called to the Presidency of my church, deny my word or my law, which concerns the salvation of the children of men. . . . Place not yourselves in jeopardy to your enemies by promise . . . Let my servants, who officiate as your counselors before the Courts, make their pleadings as they are moved by the Holy Spirit, without any further pledges from the Priesthood, and they shall be justified.

A month later, President Woodruff presented this revelation to the Quorum of the Twelve, who rejoiced in its message. Apostle John Henry Smith wrote, "How happy I am," Apostle Franklin D. Richards said the reading of the revelation gave "great joy" to the Twelve, and Abraham H. Cannon wrote, "My heart was filled with joy and peace during the entire reading. It sets all doubts at rest concerning the course to pursue."¹²⁸

But if anything, the 1889 revelation painted the First Presidency into a corner. It specifically denied Wilford Woodruff's prayerful request to issue an official statement in court or in a general conference that there were to be no

¹²⁵ Salt Lake Endowment House Sealing Record, 8 April 1889, GS.

¹²⁶ Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 17–18 Oct. 1889; Lyman, "Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood," pp. 237–38.

¹²⁷ George Q. Cannon, *Diary*, 23–24 Nov. 1889, copy in CR 1/48; also First Presidency Office Journal, 24 Nov. 1889, copy in CR 1/48.

¹²⁸ Wilford Woodruff, *Diary*, 24 Nov. 1889; George Q. Cannon, *Diary*, 25 Nov. 1889, copy in CR 1/48; L. John Nuttall, *Diary*, 24 Nov. 1889; Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 3:175; Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, John Henry Smith, *Diary*, Franklin D. Richards, *Diary*, all for 19 Dec. 1889.

more plural marriages, and inevitably, the General Authorities to whom this revelation had been presented would remember it in responding to future developments.

Events took an increasingly disastrous turn on 3 February 1890, when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the section of the Idaho state constitution that disfranchised all Latter-day Saints in Idaho; and on the 10th of the month, the anti-Mormon political party won the Salt Lake City election.¹²⁹ On the same day the Church lost political control of Salt Lake City, George Q. Cannon's newspaper interview was published in response to the central question: "Why doesn't the head of your Church — the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles — issue an official declaration upon the subject. Why don't you say, as a Church, that polygamy is no longer taught and is not encouraged by the Church?" Of course this was the very announcement the 1889 revelation prohibited the First Presidency from making, but Cannon obviously did not want to tell the newspaper that. Instead, he said that such an announcement would give ammunition to those who claimed that Mormons blindly followed their leaders, and then President Cannon simply stated: "Plural marriages have ceased. Those of us, men and women, who went into polygamy years ago are dying off. A few years will end that issue."¹³⁰

Plural marriages had ceased in Utah, but (possibly in response to the revelation of 24 November 1889) the First Presidency had already resumed giving recommends for plural marriages to be performed in Mexico. Alexander F. Macdonald performed twenty-four polygamous marriages there from 1 January through 27 June 1890.¹³¹ Meanwhile, George Q. Cannon met on 17 February 1890 with the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Senator Calvin S. Brice, and used similar arguments against Brice's recommendation for a public announcement of the cessation of plural marriages. Cannon added, "How could any man come out and say that it was not right or that it must be discontinued, and set themselves up in opposition to God."¹³² Yet the motivation was increasing for doing something substantial to deflect the federal crusade against polygamy. In April 1890, bills were proposed in the U.S. House and Senate to disfranchise all Latter-day Saints because they belonged to an organization that taught and encouraged polygamy.¹³³

By May 1890, the federal government was pushing the Church further down the road of compromise. On 3 May, the *Deseret Evening News* editorialized: "The practice of polygamy has been suspended, if not suppressed."¹³⁴ This did not impress federal officials who demanded an official statement end-

¹²⁹ *Davis v. Beason*, 133 U.S. 333 (1890); Lyman, "Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood," pp. 254–62.

¹³⁰ *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 10 Feb. 1890, reprinted in *Deseret Evening News*, 21 Feb. 1890.

¹³¹ Alexander F. Macdonald Marriage Record, 1888–90.

¹³² George Q. Cannon, Diary, 17 Feb. 1890, copy in CR 1/48.

¹³³ *Deseret Evening News*, 11 April 1890; Lyman, "Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood," pp. 279–82.

¹³⁴ *Deseret Evening News*, 3 May 1890, editorial.

ing plural marriages, and two weeks later the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Edmunds-Tucker Act was constitutional in its provisions to disincorporate the Church and confiscate Church properties.¹³⁵ By mid-May, George Q. Cannon, his son Frank, and other Church emissaries were at the nation's capital in a desperate effort to persuade the House and Senate Committee on Territories to table the bills that would disfranchise all Mormons. Eight years later, a semi-official history by Orson F. Whitney said that Secretary of State James G. Blaine intervened on the Church's behalf "with the understanding that something would be done by the Mormons to meet the exigencies of the situation."¹³⁶ Blaine did not simply make this assumption, but he also prepared a document "for the leading authorities of the Church to sign in which they make a virtual renunciation of plural marriage," which Counselor Cannon showed to his son, Apostle Abraham H. Cannon, in mid-June 1890 at New York City.¹³⁷ George Q. Cannon appreciated Blaine's good will but, as later events show, ignored Blaine's proposed document as merely one more piece of unsolicited non-Mormon advice.

When Cannon returned to Salt Lake City later in June, the second counselor in the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, warned him that plural marriages being performed in Mexico might become public knowledge because "the last few who had gone down there to meet Brother Macdonald had attracted considerable attention." That was an understatement. Early in June, ten couples accompanied Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., and his intended polygamous wife to Mexico. According to the son of one of these couples, the excursion was conducted like a gala outing:

He [Young] sent word through the grapevine that if there was any couples up in this area, these stakes, that contemplated marrying into polygamy that they were to

¹³⁵ *Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, et al. vs. United States*, 136 U.S. 1 (1890).

¹³⁶ Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Company, 1898), p. 743. Whitney obviously got his information from the publishers, George Q. and Frank J. Cannon. Ten years after President Cannon's death and six years after his own excommunication for apostasy, Frank J. Cannon wrote that in May 1890, after he told his father about his meeting with Blaine, George Q. Cannon told his son to give the Senators and Congressmen this assurance: "President Woodruff," he said, "has been praying. . . . [sic] He thinks he sees some light . . . [sic] You are authorized to say that something will be done," and on the basis of that statement Frank Cannon said he told the Congressmen and Senators that the Church would soon make a concession about polygamy, and U.S. Senators later verified that is what Frank Cannon told them. See Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah* (Boston: C. M. Clark Publishing Co., 1911), pp. 90-91, 93, and R. N. Baskin, *Reminiscences of Early Utah* (Salt Lake City: By the author, 1914), p. 184. George Q. Cannon's diary is the only source in existence for what he actually told his son Frank in May and June 1890, and I have not seen the entries for that period, but I doubt very much that President Cannon made the statement his son attributed to him. After his father's death, Frank J. Cannon took several steps to distance his father's memory from the promotion of polygamy and to portray others as resisters of concession. George Q. Cannon's diary does show that in mid-September 1890 he was still resisting suggestions from non-Mormon political allies for the Church President to make such a concession, and he made no suggestion then that President Woodruff was on the verge of that action.

¹³⁷ Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 12 June 1890.

catch this train. They went down to Cache Junction. They caught the train there and went to Salt Lake. There was others that went with them. They went down there [to Mexico] and Brigham Young Jr. married another polygamous wife and he had several wives.

The group arrived at the Mexican border on 7 June 1890, and Alexander F. Macdonald performed the polygamous marriages for all eleven couples the same day.¹³⁸ Whatever concern the First Presidency felt about this report was increased on 20 June when George M. Brown, a polygamist lawyer who had moved to the Mexican colonies to avoid arrest, warned the First Presidency that “international difficulty” could result if U.S. authorities learned of the plural marriages Macdonald was still performing in Mexico for U.S. citizens who were returning to the United States.¹³⁹

This report confirmed Wilford Woodruff’s reluctance for having allowed (possibly at the urging of his counselors) the new polygamous marriages after he had stopped them in Mexico in June 1889 and in Utah in September 1889. “He has not felt very favorable to marriages being solemnized at all,” George Q. Cannon wrote, “but has consented to some few being performed in Mexico.” President Woodruff had allowed twenty-three recommends to be issued for polygamous marriages in Mexico from December 1889 to the mass marriage of 7 June 1890, after which he had approved only one more marriage which Macdonald performed on 27 June. George Q. Cannon then noted that on the afternoon of 30 June 1890 the First Presidency concluded “for the present” that there would be no plural marriages even in Mexico unless the plural wife remained there.¹⁴⁰

The First Presidency undoubtedly felt impelled to make this decision because they had just received the text of the Senate’s new disfranchisement bill. The *Deseret Evening News* printed it the same afternoon, commenting that it was more likely to be passed in Congress because the bills proposed earlier in the year were too drastic to succeed.¹⁴¹ This decision of 30 June 1890 ended new

¹³⁸ George Q. Cannon, Diary, 30 June 1890, copy in CR 1/48; William L. Wyatt, Oral History, interviewed by Jessie L. Embry, 1976, p. 21, LDS Polygamy Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, BYU; Brigham Young Jr., Diary, 7 June 1890; Alexander F. Macdonald, Marriage Record, 1888–90. The Joseph F. Smith statement was recorded retrospectively in Cannon’s entry for 30 June.

¹³⁹ George Q. Cannon, Diary, 20 June 1890, copy in CR 1/48.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 30 June 1890; Alexander F. Macdonald, Marriage Record, 1888–90. Lyman, “Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood,” p. 294, was unaware of the demographics of polygamy but regarded this decision as “the greatest concession on plural marriage made that year, though the Woodruff Manifesto issued almost three months later has always been emphasized as the most important step.” I do not agree for two reasons. First, President Woodruff had stopped approving new plural marriages in Mexico a year earlier, but then had resumed the recommends six months later. On its face, the June 1890 decision was no more dramatic and had no guarantee of being more permanent. Second, a decision cannot be regarded as a concession if it is not announced to those who expect or demand it. The First Presidency did not privately or publicly inform non-Mormons of this decision until after the Manifesto, which claimed that Woodruff had stopped plural marriages a year earlier than this decision. The Presidency told the apostles about the 30 June decision on 10 July 1890. Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 10 July 1890.

¹⁴¹ *Deseret Evening News*, 30 June 1890. The importance of this bill in causing the Presidency decision is indicated by the fact that the First Presidency Office Journal errone-

authorized polygamous marriages throughout the world until the Manifesto-connected events of October 1890.

The next two months were filled with new disasters. On 1 July, the Senate introduced a bill that would bar polygamists or anyone belonging to an organization teaching or promoting polygamy from homesteading in Wyoming; on the 15th, the anti-Mormon political party won the Salt Lake City school trustees election and now had control of secular education in that city; on the 29th the Utah Supreme Court ruled that polygamous children could not inherit from their fathers' estates, and on 5 August the anti-Mormon party won most of the county offices in Salt Lake and Weber Counties.¹⁴²

Then President Woodruff began to hear rumors that the U.S. government might attempt to confiscate the Church's three most important and sacred buildings, the Manti, Logan, and St. George temples. Before Brigham Young, Jr., left Salt Lake City for a mission to England on 16 August, he heard President Woodruff exclaim, "We must do something to save our Temples."¹⁴³ On 30 August and 1 September came direct confirmation of the government's intent, despite the agreement in 1888 not to disturb the temples.¹⁴⁴ For nine years, Wilford Woodruff had publicly warned that the government would want the Saints to give up all temple ordinances if they gave up the practice of polygamy. Federal officials were now on the verge of confiscating the temples because he would not officially announce the abandonment of polygamy; yet the revelation he dictated in November 1889 specifically instructed: "Place not yourselves in jeopardy to your enemies by promise." It was a cruel dilemma for an eighty-three-year-old man who valued temples and temple ordinances above anything else, and he hurriedly left Salt Lake City with his counselors on 3 September 1890 for San Francisco to avoid being subpoenaed to testify in the court case.¹⁴⁵

VII

While the First Presidency was in San Francisco, two developments provided the final catalysts for President Woodruff's action. First, they met on 12 September with Morris M. Estee, a California judge who had been chairman of the Republican National Committee during the successful candidacy of the current U.S. president. Estee said he and the Church's other influential

ously gives the date of the decision as 28 June 1890, when the U.S. Senate Committee on the Territories adopted the bill, rather than on 30 June when the Presidency received the text, had it published in the *News*, and made their decision. First Presidency Office Journal, 28 June 1890, copy in CR 1/48.

¹⁴² *Deseret Evening News*, 1, 15 and 29 July, 5 Aug. 1890.

¹⁴³ Retrospective entry in Brigham Young, Jr., *Diary*, 24 Sept. 1891.

¹⁴⁴ Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 30 Aug., 1 Sept. 1890; Utah Supreme Court case of *U.S. vs. the Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, transcription of testimony, pp. 12, 21, 23, Microfilm 695, LDS Church Archives; Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 23 July 1888.

¹⁴⁵ Wilford Woodruff, *Diary*, 2-3 Sept. 1890; Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 3 Sept. 1890. Although he did not connect it with the Manifesto, Cowley's *Wilford Woodruff*, p. 491, commented on President Woodruff's devotion to temples and temple work. See note 93.

Republican friends would do everything they could to help the cause of the Church and Utah statehood, which were intertwined, but he affirmed that it would be absolutely necessary “sooner or later” for the Church to make an announcement “concerning polygamy and the laying of it aside.” Cannon commented about the “difficulty there was in writing such a document — the danger there would be that we would either say too much or too little.”¹⁴⁶ He could also have stated the other problems: When would they issue such a document? What reason would they give for issuing the statement then and not at some other time? Two days later, the *Salt Lake Tribune* printed the most recent report of the federal Utah Commission, which supervised elections, to the Secretary of the Interior, including the following:

FORTY-ONE NEW POLYGAMISTS

The Commission is in receipt of reports from its registration officers [in Utah] which enumerate forty-one male persons, who, it is believed, have entered into the polygamic relation, in their several precincts, since the June revision of 1889.¹⁴⁷

As the 1890 Manifesto itself later declared, this report by the Utah Commission impelled President Woodruff’s formal reply.

After returning to Salt Lake City on Sunday 21 September, the First Presidency met the following morning with Church Attorney Franklin S. Richards and *Deseret News* editor Charles W. Penrose, who stressed the likelihood that the Utah Commission’s report would assist in the passage of the disfranchisement bills before Congress. George Q. Cannon’s diary reveals the genesis of what became the Manifesto:

They have accused us of teaching polygamy and encouraging people in its practice, and since June 1889, there have been at least 45 plural marriages contracted in this Territory. I felt considerably stirred up over this, and thought that there should be a square denial, and I remarked that perhaps no better chance had been offered us to officially, as leaders of the Church, make public our views concerning the doctrine and the law that had been enacted.¹⁴⁸

Cannon saw a denial as necessary to forestall hostile legislation but also wished to reaffirm the doctrine of plural marriage without specifically promising to obey anti-polygamy laws. He apparently felt that such an official statement would not be a concession of polygamy, would not violate the 1889 revelation’s injunction against making “any further pledges from the Priesthood,” but would answer the crisis of 1890 by simply denying the accuracy of the Utah Commission’s report. Significantly, however, Cannon misread the report made by the Utah Commission as a charge of forty-one new polygamous marriages performed *in Utah*, whereas the report’s heading and context claimed that forty-one male residents of Utah had married polygamous wives in ceremonies performed at unspecified places. The crucial substitution of new plural marriages in Utah for the actual charge of new polygamists in Utah was also re-

¹⁴⁶ George Q. Cannon, Diary, 12 Sept. 1890, copy in CR 1/48.

¹⁴⁷ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 Sept. 1890, p. 2.

¹⁴⁸ George Q. Cannon, Diary, 22 Sept. 1890, copy in CR 1/48; Joseph H. Dean, Diary, 24 Sept. 1890, LDS Church Archives.

peated in the *Deseret Evening News* editorial of 23 September 1890.¹⁴⁹ That same day President Woodruff decided to respond to the situation and told Apostle Moses Thatcher whom he met in Salt Lake City to stay for a meeting the next day. He also telegraphed Marriner W. Merrill at Logan, Franklin D. Richards at Ogden, and Lorenzo Snow at Brigham City to meet with the First Presidency on the afternoon of the 24th.¹⁵⁰ Yet President Woodruff left his office on the evening of the 23rd without having written the document he had scheduled the meeting to discuss.

As he entered the First Presidency's office the morning of 24 September 1890, Wilford Woodruff told John R. Winder, then a member of the Presiding Bishopric, that he had not slept much the night before. "I have been struggling all night with the Lord about what should be done under the existing circumstances of the Church. And," he said, laying some papers upon the table, "here is the result."¹⁵¹ George Q. Cannon confided in his diary: "This whole matter has been at President Woodruff's own instance. He has felt strongly impelled to do what he has, and he has spoken with great plainness to the brethren in regard to the necessity of something of this kind being done. He has stated that the Lord had made it plain to him that this was his duty, and he felt perfectly clear in his mind that it was the right thing."¹⁵² What President Woodruff presented in his own handwriting was a document of 510 words. This document was edited to create the published Manifesto's text of 356 words.

George Q. Cannon very carefully outlined the revision process for the Manifesto "because it is frequently the case that when important documents are framed there is a disposition to attribute their authority to one and another, and I have been often credited with saying and doing things which I did not say nor do." He further observed that "I have not felt like doing anything connected with this document, except upon hearing it read to suggest alterations in it." Counselor Cannon described three levels of revision in the Manifesto that occurred on 24 September 1890: First, the First Presidency was engaged in other deliberations that morning and they asked George Reynolds, Charles W. Penrose, and John R. Winder to "take the document and arrange it for publication, to be submitted to us after they had prepared it." Second, when

¹⁴⁹ *Deseret Evening News*, 23 Sept. 1890, editorial. Lyman, "Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood," p. 296, also mistakenly says that the report charged forty-one males with "having entered polygamous relations in the territory."

¹⁵⁰ Reported by Moses Thatcher at a meeting of the apostles 30 Sept. 1890, as recorded by Heber J. Grant's journal of the same date; Marriner W. Merrill, *Diary*, 23 Sept. 1890, LDS Church Archives; George Q. Cannon, *Diary*, 24 Sept. 1890, copy in CR 1/48.

¹⁵¹ Statement of John R. Winder, 6 July 1902 meeting of temple workers, Salt Lake Temple Historical Record, 1893-1918 Book, p. 71, LDS Church Archives, and his nearly identical statement at a meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve on the same day as reported in Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 6 July 1902, University of Utah.

¹⁵² George Q. Cannon, *Diary*, 24 Sept. 1890, copy in CR 1/48; Wilford Woodruff, *Diary*, 25 Sept. 1890; Franklin S. Richards, "Address Delivered by President Franklin S. Richards to the High Priests Quorum of Ensign Stake, Sunday November 13, 1932," in Richards Papers, LDS Church Archives.

the document this committee prepared was read, President Cannon himself “suggested several emendations, which were adopted.” Third, beginning at 2:30, Wilford Woodruff’s Manifesto as already revised by Reynolds, Penrose, Winder, and Cannon was read to the meeting of the First Presidency and Apostles Franklin D. Richards, Moses Thatcher, and Marriner W. Merrill (Lorenzo Snow was not able to attend the meeting), and “one or two slight alterations were made in it.” As soon as the First Presidency and three apostles approved these final changes, George Reynolds incorporated the revised Manifesto into a telegram the First Presidency sent for publication in national newspapers.¹⁵³ As the Presidency left this meeting, they greeted a returning mission president, to whom President Woodruff remarked, “We are like drowning men, catching at any straw that may be floating by that offers any relief!”¹⁵⁴

Wilford Woodruff’s first draft of the Manifesto was substantially the same as the shortened, printed version. It is obvious that when he wrote it, he depended upon his memory of the Utah Commission’s report as printed in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, because his first draft said the Commission “state that the Mormons are still carrying on the plural marriages in our temples or otherwise; and that, [sic] marriages have been attended to during the past month,” which he denied, and then concluded redundantly more than four hundred words later that “the Utah Commission has reported that there have been some 80 cases of plural marriages in the last month. There is no truth in these charges.” The final version was changed to read, “that forty or more such marriages have been contracted in Utah since last June or during the past year.” George Q. Cannon specifically suggested this change on the morning of 24 September and also recommended that President Woodruff’s reference to the publicized Jorgenson marriage (“this marriage was not with our permission or knowledge”) be changed simply to “without my knowledge” in the final version. Cannon pointed out that the first version would make the Jorgensons “unhappy, as it would throw a doubt on the legality of their marriage.”

Cannon also recorded some significant alterations in President Woodruff’s original draft of the Manifesto. One was the omission of his claim that “as soon as the Edmunds-Tucker law was passed President John Taylor gave orders for all plural marriages to cease” (which thousands of Latter-day Saints knew was untrue). Another was the revision of the statement “we are neither teaching nor practicing the doctrine of polygamy” to eliminate its inclusion of unlawful cohabitation by polygamous couples previously married, and to change the phrase “our advice to the Latter-day Saints is to obey the law of the land” (which would also have included unlawful cohabitation for previously married couples) to the narrowed definition of obedience in the final version: “to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.” As had been true since 1887, Wilford Woodruff wanted to go further in making concessions about the practice of plural marriage than either his counselors or

¹⁵³ George Q. Cannon, Diary, 24–25 Sept. 1890, copy in CR 1/48; First Presidency Office Journal, 24 Sept. 1890, copy in CR 1/48; Wilford Woodruff telegram to John T. Caine, 24 Sept. 1890, Woodruff Papers.

¹⁵⁴ Joseph H. Dean, Diary, 24 Sept. 1890.

the other apostles. The final significant change was that President Woodruff drafted the original Manifesto as a third-person statement which he obviously intended to be published over the signatures of the full First Presidency or of the combined Presidency and Quorum of Twelve. Cannon's diary does not comment upon this except to say, "This whole matter has been at President Woodruff's own instance," and apparently his counselors and the three apostles wanted to leave it that way in the published Manifesto.¹⁵⁵ The final document was a personal statement.

Even the revised Manifesto was a curious document because most of its retrospective statements were untrue. The Utah Commission report claimed that forty Utah male residents married plural wives since June 1889. Sealing and genealogical records demonstrate that at least thirty men did so. Since Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith authorized and knew about the polygamous marriages in Mexico for Utahns during that period, they chose to redefine the Utah Commission's report as a charge of new polygamous marriages performed *in* Utah, and yet even that did not end the difficulty: somebody in the First Presidency also signed recommends for the dozen plural marriages performed in the Salt Lake Endowment House and temples from June through October 1889. Wilford Woodruff in the final version of the Manifesto referred to the publicized Jorgenson plural marriage in the spring of 1889 and said, "But I have not been able to learn who performed the ceremony." One of the three apostles who approved the Manifesto before its publication was Franklin D. Richards, who had officiated at the Jorgenson marriage and had also performed ten other plural marriages in the Endowment House from June through August 1889. The second of the three apostles who approved the Manifesto prior to publication was Marriner W. Merrill, the Logan Temple president who married a plural wife in July 1889 in that temple and who had performed several other plural marriages there from July to October 1889.¹⁵⁶

Obviously, what set the Manifesto apart was President Woodruff's specific commitment to stop new plural marriages; and in the eyes of many Mormons, this was a painful surrender to government authority. Immediately after the publication of the Manifesto, Thomas C. Griggs wrote, "It makes me sad," and Apostle Abraham H. Cannon observed, "There is considerable comment and fault-finding among some of the Saints because of a manifesto which Pres. Woodruff issued on the 24th inst."¹⁵⁷ Although President Woodruff wrote in his diary on 25 September 1890 that he published the Manifesto after it was "sustained by my Councillors and the 12 Apostles," only three apostles approved it in manuscript, and half the Quorum was barely supportive when the apostles met on 30 September and 1 October 1890 to discuss the published document. Of the nine apostles present, two said that they were bewildered

¹⁵⁵ George Q. Cannon, Diary, 24 Sept. 1890, copy in CR 1/48.

¹⁵⁶ Salt Lake Endowment House Sealing Records; Logan Temple Polygamous Sealing Records.

¹⁵⁷ Thomas C. Griggs, Diary, 25 Sept. 1890, LDS Church Archives; Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 26 Sept. 1890.

by the announcement (one referred to the 1886 and 1889 revelations that seemed to prohibit such a declaration), and of the seven apostles who announced their support, four specifically stated that they understood it to apply only to the United States.¹⁵⁸

These reactions indicate why President Woodruff did not consult with the full quorum before publishing the Manifesto, a consultation that would have required a delay of only three days. It seems obvious that President Woodruff's experience with the apostles since 1887 convinced him that at least a portion of them would not approve such a document in advance. Therefore, while the rest of the Quorum was out on conference assignments, Wilford Woodruff invited responses from only four apostles: Lorenzo Snow and Franklin D. Richards (two senior apostles who had consistently supported him in previous confrontations with the younger apostles), Marriner W. Merrill (one of the most junior of the apostles who had not been involved in the earlier administrative conflicts, and who, like Apostle Richards, knew that most of what the Manifesto said was untrue anyway), and Moses Thatcher (who would not be expected to oppose the 1890 Manifesto since he had preached for four years that the Millennium would occur in 1891).¹⁵⁹ When the full First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve formally voted retroactively on 2 October 1890 to sustain what President Woodruff had already done, they discussed whether to present the Manifesto to the upcoming general conference for a sustaining vote, and "some felt that the assent of the Presidency and Twelve to the matter was sufficient without committing the people by their votes to a *policy which they might in the future wish to discard*."¹⁶⁰ Only because the U.S. Secretary of the Interior demanded it as evidence that the Manifesto was official Church policy did the First Presidency and apostles decide on 5 October 1890 to present the Manifesto the next day for a sustaining vote.¹⁶¹

The general conference of 6 October 1890 was an emotionally charged and dramatic event. For years, Church authorities had publicly and privately expressed the conviction that the Latter-day Saints would not vote to sustain a document like the Manifesto, and George Q. Cannon's diary indicated that President Woodruff was afraid they would not do so today.¹⁶² To prepare the way, he had them first sustain officially the familiar Articles of Faith, written by Joseph Smith, with its now particularly significant twelfth article that previously had been honored more in the breach than the observance: "We believe

¹⁵⁸ Heber J. Grant, Journal, 30 Sept.–1 Oct. 1890. Also Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 26 Sept., 30 Sept.–1 Oct. 1890; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Coming of the Manifesto," *DIALOGUE* 5 (Autumn 1970): 22–24 examined these meetings.

¹⁵⁹ See notes 106–7. For Thatcher's intense millennial views about 1891, see Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 14 Oct. 1886. In fact, Thatcher referred to his millennial anticipations for 1891 when he expressed his support for the Manifesto at the meetings of the apostles on 30 Sept.–1 Oct. 1890. See Heber J. Grant, Journal.

¹⁶⁰ Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 2 Oct. 1890, italics added; also Heber J. Grant, Journal, 2 Oct. 1890, and in George Q. Cannon, Diary, 6 Oct. 1890, copy in CR 1/48.

¹⁶¹ First Presidency Office Journal, 5 Oct. 1890, copy in CR 1/48; Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 5 Oct. 1890.

¹⁶² George Q. Cannon, Diary, 6 Oct. 1890, copy in CR 1/48.

in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law."¹⁶³ As the Manifesto was next read to the capacity crowd in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, tears streamed down Wilford Woodruff's cheeks, nearly everyone in the audience wept, and the women "seemed to feel worse than the brethren."¹⁶⁴

Although official accounts of this meeting state that the congregation voted unanimously to sustain the Manifesto,¹⁶⁵ that was not the case. William Gibson, later a representative in the Utah legislature, voted against it: "I am not ashamed of my action on the manifesto. I voted 'no' in the conference. When George Q. Cannon announced a clear [unanimous] vote, I said, 'All but one, right here.' We must let Babylon have her way for awhile, I suppose."¹⁶⁶ The majority of the congregation refused to vote at all when the Manifesto was presented, with the result that Apostle Merrill observed "it was carried by a Weak Vote, but seemingly unanimous," Joseph H. Dean recorded "many of the saints refrained from voting either way," and Thomas Broadbent noted, "I thought it A very Slim vote Considering the multitude Assembled."¹⁶⁷ Following the vote, the first speaker was George Q. Cannon who quoted the Doctrine and Covenants (now Section 124:49-50), and stated, "It is on this basis that President Woodruff has felt himself justified in issuing this manifesto." One of those in attendance said that Cannon's remarks "produced a profound sensation," and some of the audience may have remembered that five years earlier the *Deseret Evening News* had editorialized that only "semi-apostates" would use those verses in the Doctrine and Covenants to justify a declaration ending the practice of plural marriage.¹⁶⁸ Two years later, a Utah bishop observed, "The manifesto disturbed the equanimity of some I know. Several left the church through that."¹⁶⁹ For both the hierarchy and the general membership of the

¹⁶³ Ibid.; *Deseret Evening News*, 11 Oct. 1890.

¹⁶⁴ Byron H. Allred, Diary, p. 131, 6 Oct. 1890, LDS Church Archives; Joseph H. Dean, Diary, 6 Oct. 1890. Also Heber J. Grant, Journal, 6 Oct. 1890.

¹⁶⁵ *Deseret Evening News*, 11 Oct. 1890; last statement in the Doctrine and Covenants printing of the Manifesto.

¹⁶⁶ Statement of Rep. William Gibson in the Utah House of Representatives, reported in *Deseret Evening News*, 28 March 1896, p. 1.

¹⁶⁷ Marriner W. Merrill, Diary, 6 Oct. 1890, LDS Church Archives; Joseph H. Dean, Diary, 6 Oct. 1890; Thomas Broadbent, Diary, p. 24, *Miscellaneous Mormon Diaries*, Vol. 10, BYU. Somewhat defensively, Apostle Heber J. Grant described the abstentions in this manner: "There were some of the people that did not vote. There were not many as I noticed that the vote was as large if not larger than that which had been given to the Authorities when they were sustained." Heber J. Grant, Journal, 6 Oct. 1890. With unintended irony, Grant was saying that on the day the Latter-day Saints expected the Manifesto to be presented, even more of them refused to vote for the General Authorities than refused to vote for the Manifesto. Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 6:222 noted that the vote was "nearly unanimous." To place this in the context of LDS congregational sustaining votes, see D. Michael Quinn, "From Sacred Grove to Sacral Power Structure," *DIALOGUE* 17 (Summer 1984): 13-15.

¹⁶⁸ *Deseret Evening News*, 5 June 1885 editorial, 11 Oct. 1890; Thomas C. Griggs, Diary, 6 Oct. 1890. See also discussion connected with note 97.

¹⁶⁹ Charles D. Evans to John Henry Smith, 3 Dec. 1892, George A. Smith Family Papers, University of Utah.

LDS Church, the Manifesto inaugurated an ambiguous era in the practice of plural marriage rivaled only by the status of polygamy during the lifetime of Joseph Smith.

VIII

Another year passed before the First Presidency, though without a conference vote, officially and authoritatively defined the full scope of the Manifesto in a manner exactly the opposite of President Woodruff's assurances in September–October 1890. Although the First Presidency prior to the Manifesto had imposed and then rescinded various kinds of restrictions on performing plural marriages outside the United States, the understanding of the First Presidency and apostles in September–October 1890 was that the Manifesto prohibited new polygamy only in the United States. The First Presidency's secretary, George F. Gibbs, later wrote: "President Woodruff's manifesto of 1890 abandoning the practice of polygamy was not intended to apply to Mexico, and did not, as the Church was not dealing with the Mexican government, but only with our own government; and for the further reason that the Mexican government extended the hand of welcome to Mormon polygamists."¹⁷⁰ As regards continued sexual cohabitation and child-bearing in polygamous marriages entered into before the Manifesto, a meeting of the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, and all stake presidencies on 7 October 1890 clearly indicated the scope of the Manifesto in that respect: "President Woodruff drew the attention of the brethren to the fact that the Manifesto did not affect our present family relations, but it simply stated that all plural marriages had ceased."¹⁷¹

Nevertheless, federal officials demanded that the Manifesto include unlawful cohabitation before they would return the Church's confiscated property, and the First Presidency acquiesced in 1891 by publicly defining sexual cohabitation with pre-Manifesto wives as contrary to the Manifesto and the rules of the Church. In June 1891, Presidents Woodruff and Cannon gave an interview that was reprinted in three editions of the *Deseret News*:

Would you or any officer of the church authorize a polygamous marriage or countenance the practice of unlawful cohabitation?

Again we have to say we can only speak for ourselves, and say that we would not authorize any such marriage or any practice violative of the law.¹⁷²

In response to this published interview, one Latter-day Saint wrote that plural wives and their husbands "feel that they are measurably deserted by the brethren as judged by the public utterances and published utterances of those in authority."¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ George F. Gibbs to Barnard Greensfelder, 8 Nov. 1915, First Presidency Letterbook, and copy in "Frank J. Cannon" Folder, Box 1, CR 1/44, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁷¹ First Presidency Office Journal, 7 Oct. 1890, copy in CR 1/48. Also Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 7 Oct. 1890; Marriner W. Merrill, Diary, 7 Oct. 1890.

¹⁷² *Salt Lake Times*, 23 June 1891, p. 1; reprinted in *Deseret Evening News*, 24 June 1891, p. 5; *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 26 June 1891, p. 2; *Deseret Weekly News*, 4 July 1891, pp. 33–35.

¹⁷³ Thomas C. Griggs, Diary, 24 June 1891.

As the First Presidency met on 20 August 1891 with the Church lawyers and some of the apostles to discuss the upcoming court appearance before the Master in Chancery to regain the confiscated Church properties:

President Woodruff, expressing himself in this connection, said he foresaw what was coming upon us; that our temples were in danger, and the work for the dead liable to be stopped, and he believed he would have lived to have witnessed the hand of the government extended to crush us; but the Lord did not intend that Zion should be crushed, and He averted the blow by inspiring me to write and issue the manifesto, and it certainly has had the effect of doing it so far.

Then President Woodruff responded directly to the pointed disagreement between his counselors on this occasion as to whether the Manifesto was a revelation: "Brethren, you may call it inspiration or revelation, or what you please; as for me, I am satisfied it is from the Lord."¹⁷⁴

Two weeks after having the general conference of the Church resustain the Manifesto on 6 October 1891, President Wilford Woodruff took the witness stand in the confiscation case. He made the following statements under oath which were reprinted in three editions of the *Deseret News*:

A. Any person entering into plural marriage after that date [24 September 1890], would be liable to become excommunicated from the church.

Q. In the concluding portion of your statement [the Manifesto] . . . Do you understand that the language was to be expanded and to include the further statement of living or associating in plural marriage by those already in the status? A. Yes, sir; I intended the proclamation to cover the ground, to keep the laws — to obey the law myself, and expected the people to obey the law.

. . . .

Q. Was the manifesto intended to apply to the church everywhere? A. Yes, sir.

Q. In every nation and every country? A. Yes, sir; as far as I had a knowledge in the matter.

Q. In places outside of the United States as well as within the United States? A. Yes, sir; we are given no liberties for entering into that anywhere — entering into that principle.

. . . .

Q. Your attention was called to the fact, that nothing is said in this manifesto about the dissolution of the existing polygamous relations. I want to ask you, President Woodruff, whether in your advice to the church officials, and the people of the church, you have advised them, that your intention was — and that their requirement of the church was, that the polygamous relations already formed before that [Manifesto] should not be continued, that is, there should be no association with plural wives; in other words, that unlawful cohabitation, as it is named, and spoken of, should also stop, as well, as future polygamous marriages? A. Yes, sir; that has been the intention.

These answers of President Woodruff were echoed on the witness stand by his two counselors in the First Presidency and by Lorenzo Snow, president of the Quorum of the Twelve. President Woodruff restated and defended his court testimony in stake conferences later that month, and said: "The Lord showed me by vision and revelation what would take place if we did not stop this prac-

¹⁷⁴ First Presidency Office Journal, 20 Aug. 1891, copy in CR 1/48.

tice.” The official publications of the Church reprinted both the court testimony and the conference talks.¹⁷⁵

Moreover, the First Presidency’s Office Journal recorded on 21 October 1891 that President Woodruff stated “that the manifesto was just as authoritative and binding as though it had been given in the form of ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ and that its affecting unlawful cohabitation cases was but the logical sequence of its scope and intent regarding polygamous marriages, as the laws of the land forbid both, and that therefore, although he at the time did not perceive the far-reaching effect it would have, no other ground could be taken than that which he had taken and be consistent with the position the manifesto had placed us in.”¹⁷⁶ Thus, by October 1891, the First Presidency and the President of the Quorum of the Twelve had proclaimed under oath in court, at stake conferences of the Church, in private, and through the official organs of the Church that the 1890 Manifesto prohibited new plural marriages and sexual cohabitation with pre-Manifesto plural wives anywhere in the world, and that violators of this interpretation of the Manifesto were liable to be excommunicated.

This fulfilled all the expectations of the most stringent government officials and other opponents of Mormon polygamy, but it put Church leaders and polygamous families in an impossible situation. Polygamous husbands and wives prior to the Manifesto had made sacred covenants with each other and God to multiply and replenish the earth, and the 1891 official interpretation of the Manifesto required them to break those covenants either through total abstinence or by divorce. The result was that most pre-1890 polygamists and every polygamous General Authority continued to cohabit with their plural wives of childbearing age.¹⁷⁷ The 1891 inclusion of polygamous cohabitation in the meaning of the Manifesto also doomed the effort to halt new polygamous marriages; the ultimate meaning of the 1891 testimony was that it was no more

¹⁷⁵ Transcript of testimony before the Master in Chancery, 1891, pp. 61–74 and *passim* in Microfilm 695, LDS Church Archives; reprinted in part and summarized in *Deseret Evening News*, 20 Oct. 1891, pp. 4–5; *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 23 Oct. 1891, p. 4; *Deseret Weekly News*, 24 Oct. 1891, pp. 578–79. His stake conference talks were printed in *Deseret Evening News*, 29 Oct. 1891, p. 4, 7 Nov. 1891, p. 4; *Deseret Weekly News*, 7 Nov. 1891, p. 627, 14 Nov. 1891, pp. 659–60; Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 3:225–28; Doctrine and Covenants, 1981 ed., p. 293. His famous statement at the Cache (Utah) Stake conference of 1 Nov. 1891 as quoted in the text is the first reference I have found to a vision or revelation providing for the Manifesto. Wilford Woodruff’s diary contains no apparent reference to such a vision or revelation, even though he repeatedly copied the texts of his 1880 and 1889 revelations about polygamy into his diary. George Q. Cannon regarded the Manifesto as a revelation, but his diary did not record President Woodruff making a visionary or revelatory claim for the manifesto, other than that quoted in note 152. Wilford Woodruff’s first allusion to the visionary basis of the Manifesto was his statement to some of the apostles on 20 August 1891 that he “foresaw what was coming upon us.”

¹⁷⁶ First Presidency Office Journal, 21 Oct. 1891, copy in CR 1/48.

¹⁷⁷ Kenneth Cannon II, “Beyond the Manifesto: Polygamous Cohabitation Among the General Authorities After 1890,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Winter 1978): 24–36. Published family histories and other genealogical records demonstrate that this was a widespread pattern. Some polygamous families broke up after this 1891 testimony; but until the demographic evidence is available, we must be content with impressionistic evidence that “most” polygamists continued cohabitation with their plural wives of childbearing age.

a violation of publicly defined Church policy to enter into new polygamous marriages than it was to continue the plural marriages established before the Manifesto. Therefore, the general knowledge that most polygamists were continuing to cohabit with their pre-Manifesto plural wives and to father new polygamous children was a continual encouragement for entering into new polygamy on the part of men whose wives were childless, or for couples who had been engaged to marry polygamously on the eve of the Manifesto, or for Mormons who were simply responding to two generations of emphasis on fulfilling "the Principle."

IX

But at this point, let us turn the traditional question on its head and ask: Were there any new polygamous marriages after the Manifesto that did not *necessarily* involve Church authority? Yes, there were six types of such unions.

The first type was civil marriage to a new wife where the legal wife was either dead or divorced, but where at least one pre-existing plural marriage of the man was still in force. This was the most frequently chosen method of entering a post-Manifesto plural marriage without necessarily seeking Church authority for permission or performance of the ordinance, and the popularity of this method was due to its legal invulnerability. Under criminal law, such an additional marriage was untouchable because the law did not recognize the validity of any polygamous marriage; therefore pre-existing, continuing polygamous marriages could not be a legal impediment to a civil marriage with a new wife. After this new civil marriage, the polygamist was no more vulnerable to arrest than he had been for cohabiting with his plural wife or wives before marrying another wife civilly. Utah civil marriage laws also sheltered such arrangements from prying eyes: it was possible for residents of one county to obtain a marriage license in a different county and have the civil ceremony performed in a third county.

Although this legal method of acquiring an additional wife after the Manifesto did not require Church authority, it became a matter of discussion in Church circles as scrupulous Mormons sometimes applied to the First Presidency or other Church officers for permission. At a family party of Brigham Young's children and their spouses in May 1892:

Bro. George Q. Cannon submitted a question to be decided by the company. It was as follows. A man aged 60 had married in poligamy a woman five years older than he was afterwards his first wife had died but according to the laws of the land and the Manifesto issued by the Pr. of our church he could not live with his 2nd wife without marrying her over again. Now the question is would it be best to marry his old wife that could bear him no children or get him a younger wife that could raise a family. Some decided in favor of the old wife, and some for the younger wife.¹⁷⁸

This may have been a hypothetical case for Counselor Cannon in 1892, but two years later the entire First Presidency decided in favor of "a younger wife" in a similar case. When the plural wife of Panguitch Stake President Jesse W. Crosby complained to President Woodruff about her husband's plan to obtain

¹⁷⁸ Emily Dow Partridge Young, Diary, 6 May 1892, LDS Church Archives.

a new wife in this way, the First Presidency not only approved the new marriage in April 1894 but also asked the current plural wife to give her husband written permission to marry the new wife civilly, which he did and subsequently fathered children by both the pre-Manifesto and post-Manifesto plural wives.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, in January 1895, when the full Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve discussed a similar application, they concluded “to advise against it,” and the Oneida Stake High Council released David Jensen as an alternate high councilman in 1898 because “of his recent marriage with another wife by the law of the land.”¹⁸⁰

Still, such active Latter-day Saints as Bishop Robert Morris and Patriarch Lorin Farr continued to make such marriages. When a grand jury investigated Bishop Morris’s marriage to his new wife as a possible case of post-1890 polygamy, the *Deseret Evening News* dryly noted that county records showed that she was the legal wife; and two years after pioneer Lorin Farr married a new wife in the Salt Lake Temple in this manner, he introduced his two previous plural wives to Theodore Roosevelt during the president’s visit to Ogden in 1903.¹⁸¹

The second type was civil marriage to a new wife after the legal wife was civilly divorced, but the man continued to cohabit with his divorced wife as well as his new legal wife. Men who did this justified their action on the basis that a civil divorce did not cancel the first marriage sealing covenants for time and eternity with the attendant requirement to multiply and replenish the earth. Acquiring a new plural wife in this manner did not require permission of Church authority but maintaining one’s standing in the Church did, once these marital relationships became known. Those who kept their Church standing most successfully under these circumstances had obtained advance approval. David Cazier’s autobiography noted: “I took my case before the high council [at Nephi, Utah] in regards to giving Eliza a sham divorce and marrying Sarah Ann and they gave their consent.” The Juab (Utah) Stake High Council Minutes of October 1892 corroborate that Cazier asked for permission: “Bro W A C Bryan moved that it be the sense of this Council that Bro David Cazier is fully justified in taking unto himself a wife and that in so doing he will have the blessings and best wishes of the Council. Carried unanimously,” and Cazier remained a member of the high council for nineteen more years.¹⁸² What local leaders might allow was different from what the Church president could specifically condone. When a Latter-day Saint in 1897 asked similar permission, President Woodruff replied, “I do not know anything about such

¹⁷⁹ Francis M. Lyman, *Diary*, 20 April 1894, excerpts in private hands; Jesse W. Crosby, Jr., *Family Group Sheets*, GS; *The Kinsman* 1 (Jan. 1899): 81; Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 31 Oct. 1896.

¹⁸⁰ John Henry Smith, *Diary*, 31 Jan. 1895; Oneida Stake High Council Minutes, 31 March 1898, LDS Church Archives; David Jensen Family Group Sheets, GS.

¹⁸¹ *Deseret Evening News*, 7 March 1901, 2 June 1903; *New York Herald*, 9 Aug. 1903, quoted in *Journal History*, 9 Aug. 1903.

¹⁸² David Cazier, *Autobiography*, p. 13, BYU; Juab Stake High Council Minutes, 14 Oct. 1892, LDS Church Archives.

things as sham divorces” and warned the man that such an action would probably result in his imprisonment.¹⁸³ Six years later, another man was disfellowshipped in Sanpete County after he divorced his first wife, legally married another woman, and then fathered a child by the divorced wife.¹⁸⁴

The third type was the traditional form of bigamy: civil marriage to a new wife where the legal wife was still alive and undivorced. In most cases, the second civil marriage occurred outside the state where the first wife lived, and the husbands apparently asked no questions of Church leaders before taking the step. On the other hand, Samuel S. Newton may have obtained (or thought he obtained) permission for such a marriage. In December 1900, his stake president recorded talking with “Bro. Samuel Newton, who desired to know how he could get a plural wife. I told him I could not tell him! [which was ironic, because the stake president knew of his own son’s plural marriage in Salt Lake City four months earlier] He was hard to convince that it would not be done, when he was told by me to call on the Presidency of the Church, if he did not believe me and let them tell him.” It is unknown what the First Presidency told him, but less than two months later Newton crossed the border to marry his new wife civilly in Wyoming, was sealed to her a week later in the Logan Temple, and then moved to the Mormon settlements in Canada where he continued to be an active Church worker.¹⁸⁵ Thomas Chamberlain III claimed that Marriner W. Merrill, a temple president and apostle, counseled him in 1902 to marry a new wife civilly while his estranged wife remained in Idaho, and then to move to the Canadian settlements. Merrill denied this, but Church authorities had sufficient confidence in Chamberlain’s statement to dismiss a later complaint by the legal wife and make him first a bishop and then a member of a stake high council.¹⁸⁶

The fourth type was a variation on the traditional form of bigamy: in it a man remained legally married, cohabited with his legal wife, and then used a pseudonym to enter civil marriage with an additional wife. The obvious subterfuge made the man almost defenseless against either Church or state, as indicated when Henry M. McCune was first imprisoned in 1896 and then excommunicated in 1897 for such a marriage.¹⁸⁷ That same year, Simeon A. Hun-

¹⁸³ Wilford Woodruff to John C. King, 5 Nov. 1897, First Presidency Letterbook.

¹⁸⁴ Anthon H. Lund, Diary, 22 Nov. 1903; Sanpete County Marriage Records 3:196, 4:318.

¹⁸⁵ Angus M. Cannon, Diary, 3 Dec. 1900, LDS Church Archives; Uinta County, Wyoming, Marriage Book C, p. 542; Logan Temple Sealings of Previously Married Couples, Book A, p. 1, GS; Samuel S. Newton Family Group Sheets, GS; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 Dec. 1904, 28 Sept. 1908, p. 4, 27 Aug. 1909, p. 4.

¹⁸⁶ Kane County Civil Records for the uncompleted action of *Chamberlain vs. Chamberlain*; Thomas Chamberlain, “Jr.” [actually, III], Family Group Sheets; Cache County Marriage Book 6:95; Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund to Marriner W. Merrill, 12 Feb. 1904, Presidency Letterbook; Marriner W. Merrill to Joseph F. Smith, 18 Feb. 1904, Smith Papers, LDS Church Archives; Blackfoot Stake High Council Minutes, 14 Feb. 1914; Arco Ward and Lost River Stake records of officers, 1920–30, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁸⁷ James W. Paxman Diary, 27 Jan. 1897, BYU; Juab Stake High Council Minutes, 16 March 1897; Charles M. Owen Papers, LDS Church Archives.

saker used the surname “Hansal” to marry an added wife civilly to whom he was sealed a week later in the Logan Temple, but he received no more than a severe public reprimand because he claimed that when he asked how he could marry a new wife President Woodruff told him in a private interview “that anyone who wished to take a woman through the temple must have a license or marriage certificate.”¹⁸⁸ And as a resident of the Mexican colonies after the Second Manifesto of 1904, Don Moroni LeBaron married a new wife civilly in Texas in November 1904 under the pseudonym “Marona Lebron,” and apparently experienced no difficulty in his subsequent Church career in Arizona, although the *Salt Lake Tribune* published the fact of the marriage.¹⁸⁹

The fifth means of marrying a plural wife after the Manifesto without Church authority (at least in the traditional sense) involved a man and woman making solemn covenants of marriage without a ceremony being performed. The earliest known precedent for this in Mormonism occurred at Nauvoo in December 1845, when Apostle Willard Richards recorded:

At 10. P.M. took Alice L h [sic, Longstroth] by the [shorthand: hand] of our own free will and avow mutually acknowledge each other husband & wife, in a covenant not to be broken in time or Eternity for time & for all Eternity, to all intents & purposes as though the seal of the covenant had been placed upon us, for time & all Eternity & called upon God. & all the Holy angels-& Sarah Long-th. to witness the same.¹⁹⁰

Apostle Richards had received other plural wives prior to this time in ceremonies performed by Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and it is not presently clear why he chose on this occasion to marry by solemn covenant without an officiator only a week before the Nauvoo Temple opened for sealing of marriages, but the Manifesto of 1890 encouraged other men to think of this method of polygamy. In the Salt Lake Stake, Charles Barrell, a high priest, entered into such a solemn covenant with a new wife about 1892 by whom he fathered a child, and senior president of the stake seventy’s quorum Enoch B. Tripp did likewise about 1897, but the high council excommunicated both men “for desecrating one of the most sacred ordinances or rites of the Holy Priesthood, and for adultery.”¹⁹¹

Despite the shocked response of many to this means of obtaining a plural wife, the First Presidency had already approved the solemn covenant method of post-Manifesto polygamy in principle. On 5 April 1894, George Q. Cannon told the temple meeting of the Presidency and apostles, “I believe in concu-

¹⁸⁸ Simeon A. Hunsaker Family Group Sheets; Weber County Marriage Book, 30 June 1897; Logan Temple Signature Book and Sealing Record of Previously Married Couples, 7 July 1897, GS; Rudger Clawson Diary, 20 Oct. 1898, 23 Nov. 1899.

¹⁸⁹ Don Moroni LeBaron Family Group Sheets; Presidio County, Texas Marriage Book 2:417; Diaz Ward, Dublin Ward, Garcia Ward, Juarez Ward, Mesa Ward, and Nephi Ward membership records, LDS Church Archives; Salt Lake Temple Signature Book and Sealing Record for Previously Married Couples, 11 Oct. 1907; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 July 1910, p. 6.

¹⁹⁰ Willard Richards, Sept. 1845–Feb. 1846 Diary, 23 Dec. 1845, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁹¹ Salt Lake Stake High Council Minutes, 22 March 1893, 8 June 1898; Joseph H. Dean, Diary, 16 June 1895.

binage, or some plan whereby men and women can live together under sacred ordinances and vows until they can be married," to which President Woodruff responded, "If men enter into some practice of this character to raise a righteous posterity, they will be justified in it."¹⁹² Cannon advised some men to sidestep the Manifesto in this way to have posterity they were otherwise unable to have by their legal wife,¹⁹³ and it is possible that he gave this advice directly to John P. Rothlisberger of Arizona during visits Cannon made to that territory in 1890–92. In any event, Rothlisberger's first wife was childless, and he entered into what his family calls a "common law" marriage with her sister about the same time as George Q. Cannon's visits to the stakes in that area, fathered ten children by this second wife, and remained an active seventy in the St. Johns Stake.¹⁹⁴

The last type of post-Manifesto polygamous marriage contracted without Church authorization was a marriage entered into by Latter-day Saints who claimed an authority independent of the Church. The only example of this during the 1890–1904 period was Israel A. J. Dennis who taught that the LDS Church erred in issuing the Manifesto. He claimed that an angel gave him authority to organize the "Church of the First Born" on 7 March 1895 and to introduce a sealing ceremony among his followers, which Dennis described as "a very simple ceremony, by which the parties entered into a covenant one with the other." He authorized his counselor Newark S. Dawson to marry again while he himself took two plural wives in the same manner, beginning 6 April 1895, the anniversary of the LDS Church's founding. When Dennis was arrested and tried for adultery in 1896, he and his new wife (who was still legally married to another man) denied "having ever had criminal relations," and they were acquitted by the jury, but by then Dennis's schismatic polygamous organization had disintegrated.¹⁹⁵

Nevertheless, only 10 percent of the new polygamous marriages formed from the announcement of the Manifesto through the end of 1904 fit into these six categories of polygamy that did not require LDS Church authority. Ninety percent of new polygamous marriages contracted from September 1890 through December 1904 directly involved Church authority. Because this subject is so complex, we will begin with a chronological overview of the involvement of Church authority in new plural marriages after the Manifesto.

¹⁹² Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 5 April 1894.

¹⁹³ Reported to Carl A. Badger, secretary to apostle and senator Reed Smoot, in Badger *Diary*, 18 Sept. 1905, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁹⁴ John P. Rothlisberger Family Group Sheets; *Salt Lake Herald*, 18 Aug. 1905; George F. Gibbs to Reed Smoot, 3 April, 10 April 1906, First Presidency Letterbook; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 June 1910, p. 6; Minutes of 104th Quorum of Seventy; Minutes of the St. Johns Stake conferences and high council, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁹⁵ These activities were published in the newspaper reports of Third District Court testimony in *Salt Lake Herald*, 7 Feb. 1896, p. 8, 8 Feb. 1896, p. 8, 11 Feb. 1896, p. 8, and *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 Feb. 1896, p. 3. Dennis apparently published some tracts containing his claims, which were read into the court record but which did not survive long enough to appear in any library or archives.

From the publication of the Manifesto until November 1890, the First Presidency authorized seven residents of the United States to go to Mexico to be married there. All but one of the couples remained in the Mexican colonies. After approximately six months during which no new polygamy was authorized anywhere, two marriages were performed in 1891 for residents of the Mexican colonies upon verbal authorization transmitted to the resident apostle there, and two other plural marriages were performed for Mexican colonists, possibly without specific authorization from Salt Lake City. In July 1892, the First Presidency authorized a couple of marriages to be performed in Mexico and Canada, but without such authorization a couple more plural marriages were also contracted by subterfuge in the Utah temples. In 1893, the Presidency authorized only one U.S. resident to visit Mexico for a plural marriage ceremony, and only one was performed there for a local resident. In 1894, the First Presidency committed themselves to the position that there were circumstances under which plural marriages would not only be permitted but also encouraged, and by the authority of the Presidency, one plural marriage occurred in Canada, six in Mexico, and two in Utah temples. That pattern continued about the same in 1895 and 1896. Plural marriages had ceased for six months in Mexico even for residents of the newly created Juarez Stake until two apostles visited the colonies early in 1897 and performed plural marriages for two residents. During the last six months of 1897 the First Presidency authorized seven U.S. residents to visit Mexico for plural marriage ceremonies and also authorized two ceremonies to occur aboard ship.

During 1898, mounting pressures for polygamy resulted in an expansion of orderly avenues for performing new plural marriages. The First Presidency authorized nine more U.S. residents to visit the Juarez Stake for their polygamous ceremonies, but visiting apostles were the only ones who would perform plural marriages for residents of the Mexican colonies who were becoming impatient that their stake president would perform plural ceremonies only for visitors who had letters from the First Presidency, not for them. Toward the end of the year, the First Presidency instructed the Juarez Stake president to perform plural marriages for worthy residents of the stake without obtaining specific authorization from the First Presidency for individual cases. Although lower-ranking Church members continued to travel from Utah with letters from the Presidency for their plural marriages to be performed in Mexico, during 1898 the First Presidency established still another avenue for plural marriages to be performed by an apostle in the United States for higher-ranking Mormons.

During 1899 a confused state of affairs emerged concerning Church authorities and new plural marriages, a confusion which continued for the next five years. Plural marriages were being performed in Mexico and in various places in the United States, but because anti-Mormons began publishing accusations of these violations of the Manifesto, Church authorities began excommunicating a few new polygamists. The Church president stopped plural marriages in Mexico in 1899 but turned a blind eye to those still occurring in Utah and Idaho.

As an extension of the confusion of the previous year, in January 1900 the Church president made a public denial that either new polygamous marriages or polygamous cohabitation had his or the Church's sanction. In the quarterly meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve that began the day after this announcement, nearly all the apostles expressed opposition to the publicly announced position of the Church president. Later in the year, a split developed within the First Presidency itself because of the President's refusal to authorize the Juarez Stake president to continue to perform plural marriages in Mexico, and one of the counselors in the First Presidency personally authorized the performance of a plural marriage in Mexico for a man whom the Church president had specifically refused. The counselor also commissioned a patriarch in the Juarez Stake to perform plural marriages for the residents of the Mexican colonies without the knowledge or authorization of the Church president.

In 1901, the Church president continued to refuse to authorize the Juarez Stake president to perform plural marriages in Mexico, but marriages continued there anyway because of the separate avenue established by his counselor. All the while, Latter-day Saints of prominent Church position continued to enter into polygamy in Utah on the basis of still another authorized avenue. The Church president compounded the confusion by authorizing several apostles individually to marry plural wives at the same time he refused to give the apostles generally that permission. The public and private messages on new plural marriages had become so muddy by 1901 that prominent Church authorities became opponents or advocates of new plural marriages sincerely believing that they had First Presidency authorization for their contradictory positions. Other Church authorities, even at the highest levels, were confused about the rumors of new plural marriages and ambivalent in their own feelings about the correctness of such unions. On 11 September 1901, the *Deseret Evening News* branded as "groundless" and "utterly false" the statement of a Protestant minister that "one of the Apostles had recently taken an additional wife," when in fact four apostles had married plural wives so far that year.

In 1902, the Church president authorized the Juarez Stake president to resume performing plural marriages for Mexican colonists, who were also having their polygamous unions solemnized by the stake patriarch and visiting apostles. But the First Presidency prepared no recommends to authorize plural marriages in Mexico for U.S. residents who continued to have their polygamous ceremonies performed in the United States rather than in Mexico.

The year 1903 was the climax of post-Manifesto polygamy with Church authority. Anti-Mormon newspapers were accusing Mormons of new plural marriages, a young man voted in Salt Lake stake conference against sustaining a prominent post-1890 polygamist, a grand jury in Salt Lake City convened to investigate this new polygamy, and the U.S. Senate received a protest to investigate these charges. Yet at the same time, apostles were performing new polygamous marriages in the United States and Mexico, where both the stake patriarch and president were also officiating for residents of the Juarez Stake. The stake president had, furthermore, been authorized by the First Presidency to perform plural marriages for U.S. residents with the necessary letter from Salt

Lake City. In addition, for the first time since the establishment of the Canadian settlement of Mormons, the Church president authorized local Church authority to perform plural marriages there for Canadian Mormons.

In 1904, with the investigation of the Church and new plural marriages by the U.S. Senate, Church authority and new plural marriages went into a rapid decline. The Second Manifesto ended some avenues of Church authority for new plural marriages that year, but not others.

X

Although necessary to give some cohesion to understanding post-Manifesto polygamy, this chronological overview inevitably obscures the individual. In few periods or topics of Mormon history have the contrasting activities of individual Church authorities been so crucial. It has often been assumed that documents still under the direct control of the First Presidency in various closed repositories were necessary to specify the details of Church authority and new polygamy after the Manifesto. Although those presently unavailable manuscripts would bring further corroboration and precision, sufficient information exists to verify the participation of Church authorities in new plural marriages from September 1890 through the end of 1904.

WILFORD WOODRUFF (APOSTLE, 1838–98, CHURCH PRESIDENT, 1887–98)

Wilford Woodruff was thirty when he married and nearly forty before he entered polygamy. During thirty years after the death of Joseph Smith he married ten plural wives, several of whom are lesser-known wives who divorced him. Although he married wives after the 1862 polygamy law, he had married none since the Edmunds Act of 1882, which legitimized all the plural children ever born to him.¹⁹⁶

President Woodruff may have thought that he had settled the question of new polygamy on 24 September 1890, but a number of men already had long-standing engagements to enter plural marriage and they began to appeal to him for exceptions. When Erastus Beck brought his intended plural wife to the First Presidency's office to get a recommend for a plural marriage immediately after the Manifesto's publication, Wilford Woodruff was not at the office, and "they only laughed at us when we asked where we could find it [authorization]," but as the couple left they met Dan Seegmiller, a counselor in the Kanab Stake presidency, who said he would intercede on their behalf. Beck's post-Manifesto plural wife later said, "In a short time he came back with it signed and we left for Mexico," where their plural marriage was performed

¹⁹⁶ Wilford Woodruff Family Group Sheets; Wilford Woodruff, *Diary*, 2 Aug., 29 Aug. 1846, 28 March 1852, 10 March 1877; transcriptions of shorthand entries for 10 March 1877, 1 April 1878, 25 Nov. 1878 in *Wilford Woodruff's Journal: 1833–1898 Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Murray, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–84), 7:338, 407, 439; Salt Lake Endowment House Sealing Records, 28 March, 20 April 1852; *Salt Lake Herald*, 3 Feb. 1905.

in October 1890.¹⁹⁷ When Byron H. Allred asked for permission to marry the young woman who accompanied him to the President's office on 4 October 1890, President Woodruff patiently explained the reasons he had issued the Manifesto and then told Allred to move as soon as possible with his intended plural wife to Mexico where Alexander F. Macdonald would perform the ceremony.¹⁹⁸ Anson B. Call was bold enough to come to Woodruff's own home about the same time and found the president hoeing strawberries. President Woodruff told him to sell all his property in the United States and move to Mexico with his intended wife. Upon his arrival in Colonia Juarez on 11 December 1890, Call was married in polygamy by A. F. Macdonald, "to whom my note of recognition, from President Woodruff was addressed." Macdonald said he had been expecting them a long time and married them immediately.¹⁹⁹

Call's marriage was the seventh and last plural ceremony to be performed in 1890 after the Manifesto. President Woodruff stopped signing recommends for these marriages by November 1890 because "such things had ceased to occur even there [in Mexico]. One young man who recently had this privilege, came back and allowed the knowledge of it to go out, and thus put the Church in danger."²⁰⁰ This young man was thirty-one-year-old Christian F. Olsen who on 17 October 1890 was the first one married with these post-Manifesto recommends, but who brought his plural wife back to live with him and his first wife in Hyrum, Utah.²⁰¹ By the time word of his actions reached the Presidency, Wilford Woodruff had already signed the recommends for the other six plural marriages. When Joseph C. Bentley personally appealed to President Woodruff in December 1890 for permission to move to Mexico and marry a plural wife, Woodruff refused.²⁰² Yet that same month, President Woodruff did not give a flat refusal to George M. Brown, the Mexican colonist who had warned the Presidency in June about the diplomatic jeopardy of continued Mexican plural marriages. A secretary in the Presidency's Office wrote that the authorization for Brown's request would be communicated verbally by

¹⁹⁷ Elizabeth Acord Beck Interview, 14 Feb. 1935, Box 1, Fd. 12, Kimball Young Papers, Library of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois; Alexander F. Macdonald, Marriage Record, 1888-90.

¹⁹⁸ Byron H. Allred, Diary, p. 131, 4 Oct. 1890; Alexander F. Macdonald, Marriage Record, 1888-90.

¹⁹⁹ Anson Bowen Call, Autobiography, LDS Church Archives. His daughter said, "President Woodruff gave Papa a letter of recommendation that he could marry this girl." Mildred Call Hurst, Oral History, interviewed by Jessie L. Embry, 1976, pp. 17-18, LDS Polygamy Oral History Project, BYU; see Alexander F. Macdonald, Marriage Record, 1888-90.

²⁰⁰ Related by George Q. Cannon in Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 2 Nov. 1890.

²⁰¹ Christian F. Olsen Family Group Sheets; Alexander F. Macdonald, Marriage Record, 1888-90. Heber Bennion to Heber J. Grant, 9 July 1929, CR 1/44, said that George Q. Cannon told him "that if I had presented my case promptly after the Manifesto I might have got through but some of those let through had acted so unwisely — registering as man and wife in Salt Lake after going to Mexico to be married — that President Woodruff stopped the whole business."

²⁰² Joseph C. Bentley, Journal, quoted in Joseph T. Bentley, *Life and Letters of Joseph C. Bentley: A Biography* (Provo, Utah: By the author, 1977), pp. 80-81.

one of the General Authorities who next visited the Mexican colonies, because “the brethren prefer not to write much on such subjects.”²⁰³

In 1891, President Woodruff sent out equally mixed messages. When a woman wrote that her daughter was planning to move to Mexico to become a plural wife, Woodruff answered in March 1891 that “when they reach Mexico they would find that all plural marriages had ceased there as well as in the United States,” yet at a meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve on 2 April 1891, he said: “The principle of plural marriage will yet be restored to this Church, but how or when I cannot say.”²⁰⁴ Moreover, after he made the most explicit and authoritative public pronouncements that the Manifesto prohibited polygamous cohabitation and that excommunication was the penalty for violating the Manifesto, President Woodruff told the First Presidency and Twelve on 12 November 1891 “that he was placed in such a position on the witness stand that he could not answer other than he did; yet any man who deserts and neglects his wives or children because of the Manifesto, should be handled on his fellowship.” He then encouraged the assembled General Authorities to agree that men must try to avoid being arrested or convicted for unlawful cohabitation “and yet they must not break their covenants with their wives.”²⁰⁵ Exactly one week later, President Woodruff joined with his counselors and the apostles in petitioning U.S. President Benjamin Harrison for amnesty for all Latter-day Saint polygamists because they had strictly honored the Manifesto of 1890 and, “as shepherds of a patient and suffering people we ask amnesty for them and pledge our faith and honor for their future.”²⁰⁶

Nevertheless, in July 1892 President Woodruff consented to renewing the performance of plural marriages in Mexico for a few men who continued to pester him for that privilege. Although he personally signed the recommends for the polygamous marriages performed between October and December 1890, President Woodruff thereafter tried to distance himself as President of the Church from future authorizations. His counselor, George Q. Cannon, indicated that the distance was not very great when he copied in the First Presidency letterbook the following authorization to Apostle George Teasdale for the first plural marriage for a nonresident of the Mexican colonies since the end of 1890: “It will be quite satisfactory *to all of us* for you to render him the services which he needs.”²⁰⁷

Yet for nearly two years, President Woodruff did not encourage new plural marriages and permitted only three United States residents and one local

²⁰³ George Reynolds to George Teasdale, 22 Dec. 1890, in First Presidency Letterbook, 1890–91, p. 225.

²⁰⁴ Wilford Woodruff to Mrs. Rebecca Thomas, 20 March 1891, First Presidency Letterbook; Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 2 April 1891. Heber J. Grant’s journal for that date recorded this statement as follows: “He [God] will yet open doors that the principle of plural marriage can and will be restored.”

²⁰⁵ Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 12 Nov. 1891.

²⁰⁶ Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 3:230–31.

²⁰⁷ George Q. Cannon to George Teasdale, 18 July 1892, concerning a plural ceremony for Rasmus Larsen, First Presidency Letterbook; italics added.

resident to marry plural wives in Mexico and Canada. That changed in 1894. At the meeting of the Presidency and Twelve in the Salt Lake Temple on 5 April 1894, President Cannon expressed regrets that there were no provisions for polygamous marriages, to which President Woodruff replied: "The day is near when there will be no difficulty in the way of good men securing noble wives."²⁰⁸ A month later, President Woodruff wrote a letter of instruction to Apostles Brigham Young, Jr., and John Henry Smith concerning their second trip to Mexico in five months, authorizing them "in adjusting all matters that properly comes [sic] under your calling." Whether President Woodruff added verbal clarifications, Apostle Young, who had told the Mexican Saints in February that it was impossible for any man to marry a plural wife anywhere in the world and to cancel any polygamous engagements, performed at least five plural marriages there when he returned in May–June 1894. Among these plural marriages was one for Franklin S. Bramwell, then a stake high councilman, who later wrote, "When I took my second wife I had a letter signed by President Woodruff himself and went to Mexico with a personal letter from Prest. George Q. Cannon."²⁰⁹ President Woodruff may or may not have known that George Q. Cannon signed a recommend on his behalf at this same time for a plural marriage to be performed in the Logan Temple,²¹⁰ but there can be no question that in October 1894 President Woodruff personally authorized Apostle Abraham H. Cannon to marry a new plural wife: "Father [George Q. Cannon] also spoke to me about taking some good girl and raising up seed by her for my brother David. . . . Such a ceremony as this could be performed in Mexico, so Pres. Woodruff has said."²¹¹ Six months later, Wilford Woodruff gave a newspaper interview: "I hurl defiance at the world," said President Woodruff, "to prove that the manifesto forbidding plural marriages has not been observed."²¹²

No specific evidence of Wilford Woodruff's direct involvement in new polygamous marriages emerges again until 1897. In June 1897, the First Presidency authorized Juarez Stake President Anthony W. Ivins to perform polygamous ceremonies in Mexico, and in the fall President Woodruff authorized Anthon H. Lund to perform two plural marriages aboard ship, one on the

²⁰⁸ Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 5 April 1894. Also Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 5 April 1894, and Francis M. Lyman, *Diary*, 5 April 1894.

²⁰⁹ Wilford Woodruff to Brigham Young, Jr., and John Henry Smith, 1 May 1894, First Presidency Letterbook; remarks of Brigham Young, Jr., in *Mexican Mission Record*, p. 91, 24 Feb. 1894; Franklin S. Bramwell to Joseph F. Smith, 25 Dec. 1914, Box 1, CR 1/44; Temple Book B.

²¹⁰ See discussion connected with note 273.

²¹¹ Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 19 Oct. 1894. Woodruff's permission was enthusiastic, not grudging, as indicated in the second reference to this prospective polygamous marriage in Cannon's diary for 24 October: "Pres. Woodruff promised the Lord's blessing to follow such an act." Joseph F. Smith's wife Edna later told Reed Smoot, "that Woodruff consented to Abraham C's marriage." Carl A. Badger, *Diary*, 9 Dec. 1905.

²¹² *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 May 1895, p. 8.

Pacific Ocean and one on the Great Lakes.²¹³ President Woodruff met with Lund on 1 December 1897, apparently to authorize the aboard-ship ceremony that Lund would perform exactly one month later en route to Palestine, and Lund made the following observation: “President Woodruff took me to one side and spoke to me concerning Mrs. Mountfert. I was rather astonished.” Born in Jerusalem and raised as a Christian, Madame Lydia Mary von Finkelstein Mountford claimed descent from Ephraim and Judah, and lectured throughout the United States about Palestine and evidences for Christ’s life. She was baptized in the LDS Church shortly after her first lectures in Salt Lake City in February 1897.²¹⁴

Circumstantial evidence indicates that Wilford Woodruff married Madame Mountford as a plural wife in 1897. President Woodruff recorded attending her lecture on 7 February 1897, the first of ninety references to her in his diary during the next eighteen months. By April, he was recording frequent “private” or “personal” talks with her in the First Presidency’s office, and she was a dinner guest at the Woodruff home. She left Salt Lake City on 28 April to stay in San Francisco. By 8 May 1897, President Woodruff indicated his increasing interest in the charismatic forty-nine-year-old woman:

Bro Nuttall came. I had some talk on private matters with him and in some writing I wished to send to San Francisco. . . .

I went to the office & attended to some personal writing with Bro Nuttall. . . .

Nine days later, he recorded a further conversation with his trusted secretary about “Madam Mountford who is now in California.” President Woodruff’s letters to and from her were the only references to correspondence in his diary for 1897–98. She returned to Salt Lake City from July to August, when she was a frequent guest at the Woodruff home. After her return to California, Wilford Woodruff began referring to her as “M,” and asked his secretary to go with him “on the quiet” to the Pacific coast, waited until the day before his departure to inform his wife Emma of the trip, and irritated her by declining her request to accompany him because it was to be “a very quiet trip.” On the train from Utah to Portland, President Woodruff “talked with Bro Nuttall confidentially in regard to some of my personal affairs,” and once the two were on the coast they not only avoided the usual visits with Mormon officials and non-Mormon friends, but President Woodruff also noted that they made all their hotel and travel arrangements under “assumed names.” Nuttall manifested uneasiness about the trip that seemed less and less than merely “for a change of air and exercise,” and while in their Portland hotel room, he vocally prayed that he would do nothing on the trip to offend God. In response, Presi-

²¹³ Stanley S. Ivins, “Facts in regard to the post-Manifesto practice of polygamy related by my father A. W. Ivins [on 16 September 1934, and recorded 15 October 1934],” Ivins Papers, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereafter USHS; Anthony W. Ivins, *Marriage Record*, USHS; Temple Book B.

²¹⁴ Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 1 Dec. 1897; Lydia Mamreoff Von Finkelstein Mountford, *The Life Sketch of Lydia Mamreoff Von Finkelstein (Madame Mountford)* (New York: By the author, 1908), pp. 13, 17, 21, 32–3; “Madame Lydia von F. Mountford,” *Relief Society Magazine* 8 (Feb. 1921): 71–77.

dent Woodruff “then laid my hands on Bro Nuttall’s head and blessed him for any emergency that may arise and which may be necessary now or in the future in mine or our behalf.”

In view of the abundant references to Madame Mountford’s residing in San Francisco before this trip, there is a deafening silence concerning her name during the trip, particularly during their stay in that city from 18 to 20 September 1897, when they boarded a steamship for the return trip to Portland. Their train did not reach Ogden until 25 September 1897, after which they corresponded several times a week, and she visited President Woodruff twice before she traveled to Palestine from which she did not return until after his death. Four years after L. John Nuttall accompanied President Woodruff on this trip to the Pacific coast, Madame Mountford wrote him a letter from New York City, to which Nuttall responded, “I have not forgotten the Ogden & other days with our Mutual friend.”²¹⁵

Although there is no presently available document that records the sealing ceremony specifically, the evidence seems compelling that L. John Nuttall performed a polygamous marriage for Wilford Woodruff and Madame Lydia Mary Mountford aboard ship on the Pacific Ocean on 20 September 1897. That such a marriage has never been acknowledged in the Woodruff family’s published genealogies is no argument against its existence: those genealogies also fail to mention that he married Eudora Young Dunford as a plural wife in 1877, even though she bore him a child that died the day of its birth. Their divorce less than two years after this pre-Manifesto plural marriage was apparently the reason neither the Woodruff nor Young family histories acknowledges the marriage, and President Woodruff’s manifesto was greater cause to ignore the polygamous wife the ninety-year-old Church president married a year before his death. At any rate, there is documentary evidence of the polygamous ceremony President Woodruff authorized Apostle Anthon H. Lund to perform “on the Pacific Ocean” a month later; and at the meeting in December 1897 where President Woodruff apparently gave final authorization to Lund for the second aboard-ship ceremony Lund would perform, President Woodruff confided the “astonishing” news about Madame Mountford. President Woodruff’s nephew, Apostle Matthias F. Cowley, later told the Quorum of Twelve, “I believed President Woodruff married a wife the year before he died, of course, I don’t know, I can’t prove it,” and still later, Mormon Fundamentalists (who

²¹⁵ Wilford Woodruff, *Diary*, 7–8, 14 Feb., 5 March, 3–5, 8–9, 13, 16, 22, 24, 26–28 April, 8, 17 May, 14–16, 23, 30 June, 5, 13, 21, 25, 29 July, 1, 3–7, 11–12, 26 Aug., 3–5, 8–25 Sept., 12, 18, 21, 27, 29 Oct., 1, 8, 17, 29 Nov., 6, 17, 29–31 Dec. 1897, 3, 6, 9–11, 13–14, 17, 19–20, 26 Jan., 3, 8, 10, 16, 25 Feb., 8, 15, 21, 23 March., 13–14, 18, 25 April, 12, 17 May, 10, 13–14, 22 June, 7, 26 July, 1, 4, 13 Aug. 1898; L. John Nuttall, *Letterbook, 1895–1903*, p. 328, to Madam Lydia M. F. Mountford. There are no copies of President Woodruff’s letters to Madame Mountford in the First Presidency Letterbooks for 1897–98, in the First Presidency Letterbooks of L. John Nuttall for 1896–1905, and only the one letter cited in the personal Nuttall letterbook. Also, in 1984 the staff of the LDS Church Archives, which is processing the Wilford Woodruff papers, reported that there are no letters of Madame Mountford to him in the collection. Nuttall’s diary for this period is missing from his collection at BYU, but after 1 April 1897, Nuttall recorded the entries in Woodruff’s diary.

had no access to the Lund diary) stated that Madame Mountford was the plural wife Wilford Woodruff married after 1890.²¹⁶

In the last year of his life, Wilford Woodruff thus maintained a public stance that was at variance with his private activities regarding polygamy. When Protestant ministers charged the Church with allowing new plural marriages, President Woodruff wrote the editor of the Protestant newspaper that “no one has entered into plural marriage by my permission since the Manifesto was issued.”²¹⁷ Four days after that denial was published, President Woodruff held a special meeting with the married children born to his youngest wife and had L. John Nuttall read them the revelation he had received in 1880, which stated in part: “And I say again, wo unto that Nation or house or people who seek to hinder my People from obeying the Patriarchal Law of Abraham,” and concluded, “Therefore let mine Apostles keep my commandments and obey my laws and the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.”²¹⁸ One of Wilford Woodruff’s sons at this meeting was an apostle, took this reading to heart and married a plural wife three years later.²¹⁹ In August 1898, a student at Brigham Young Academy in Provo went with her prospective husband to request President Woodruff’s permission to marry polygamously: “He brushed them aside with a wave of his hand and said he would have nothing to do with the matter, but referred them to President George Q. Cannon. . . . Then they were given a letter by President George Q. Cannon to President Ivins, of the Juarez stake, and they went to Mexico” where Ivins performed the ceremony.²²⁰

The First Presidency’s office not only authorized these post-Manifesto plural marriages in Mexico as performed by the presiding authority there, but also was aware of and recorded the plural marriages that visiting apostles performed in Mexico. First Presidency clerk George Reynolds wrote to A. W. Ivins asking for the name of the officiator of four sealings that occurred in Mexico during March 1898 (two were polygamous) with the comment: “I imagine it was Bro. John W. Taylor,” and then he routinely recorded the ordinances in the record book of the then defunct Salt Lake Endowment House.²²¹ Until his

²¹⁶ For Wilford Woodruff’s marriage to Eudora Young Dunford, see transcriptions of shorthand entries for 10 and 21 March 1877, 25 Feb., 1 April, 25 Nov. 1878 in *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal: 1833–1898 Typescript*, and in *Salt Lake Herald*, 3 Feb. 1905. Temple Book B, Sealings Outside the Temple, LDS Church Archives; Matthias F. Cowley statement in Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve, 30 May 1911; Jesse B. Stone Letter of 14 Feb. 1931 in *The New Era*, No. 1 (May 1931); Charles F. Zitting, *A Discussion Between President Anthony W. Ivins and Charles F. Zitting* (Salt Lake City: N.p., n.d.), p. 4.

²¹⁷ *Utah Independent*, 3 March 1898, p. 1.

²¹⁸ Wilford Woodruff, *Diary*, 7 March 1898; text of revelation quoted here from his 1880–85 diary.

²¹⁹ Eliza Avery Clark Woodruff Lambert, *Autobiography*, pp. 32–34, LDS Church Archives.

²²⁰ Testimony of Walter M. Wolfe in Smoot Case 4: 11. He said that the marriage of his student Ovena Jorgensen and “Mr. Okey” occurred in 1897, whereas these events occurred in 1898 according to the William C. Ockey Family Group Sheets, and Anthony W. Ivins Marriage Record.

²²¹ George Reynolds to A. W. Ivins, 5 July 1898, First Presidency Letterbook, April–Sept. 1898, p. 216. Reynolds originally recorded these sealings on pages 113 of the Salt Lake

death in September 1898, Wilford Woodruff maintained a public image of opposition to, a private image of official aloofness from, and a personal involvement with post-Manifesto polygamy.

LORENZO SNOW (APOSTLE, 1849–1901, COUNSELOR, 1873–77,
PRESIDENT OF THE TWELVE, 1889–98,
CHURCH PRESIDENT, 1898–1901)

Lorenzo Snow was a bachelor until the age of thirty, when he married two wives on the same day at Nauvoo. He married the last of his ten plural wives, Minnie Jensen, in 1871. As each of his wives passed the time of fertility, by “mutual consent” they agreed to discontinue sexual cohabitation, so that by the passage of the Edmunds Act in 1882 Lorenzo Snow was cohabiting with only his last wife.²²² When he was sentenced to the penitentiary in 1886 for unlawful cohabitation, Lorenzo Snow protested his innocence, said that he had obeyed the Edmunds Act, and denied that God would give a new revelation to end plural marriage.²²³

Nevertheless, more openly than Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow expressed support for issuing a public renunciation of the practice of plural marriage in the United States. When the apostles voted to reject such a document in December 1888, Lorenzo Snow said that he “could not endorse our taking the proposed Course although he would really like to see the experiment tried,” and he added, “If this Church would put itself in harmony with the country I believe the Lord would approve of it, if it did not cost too much.”²²⁴ A month before the 1889 revelation, Lorenzo Snow also told the apostles and Presidency that he favored an official announcement of the policy to end plural marriages in the United States.²²⁵ Thus, President Woodruff knew he was inviting an ally for accommodation when he asked Lorenzo Snow (who was also his son-in-law) to give pre-publication approval to the Manifesto.

Even though Snow was unable to reach Salt Lake City before the Manifesto’s publication, he approved it and told the other apostles “that even had he not been able to approve of it that he should not have opposed it as he did not feel that he would be justified in setting up his opinions in opposition to the

Endowment House Sealings Book M, presently in GS, but those pages of post-Manifesto sealings were cut out (probably during the Smoot investigation), named “Temple Ordinance Book B, Out of Temple Sealings,” and placed in the Church Historian’s Office. In the original Endowment House Book M, an explanatory note was added on page 96: “A number of pages of this record, after page 96, were lost, when the book was rebound.”

²²² JD 26:365. Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1884), pp. 488–94 listed only the nine wives traditionally identified with him, but a lesser-known plural wife Hannah Maria Goddard married him on 19 January 1845, left him later that year, and married another Latter-day Saint. See Lorenzo Snow, *Diary, 1835–45*, p. 51, LDS Church Archives; Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary, 5 April 1894*.

²²³ *Deseret News Weekly*, 20 Jan. 1886, p. 12.

²²⁴ Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 20 Dec. 1888; First Presidency Office Journal, 20 Dec. 1888, copy in CR 1/48.

²²⁵ First Presidency Office Journal, 2 Oct. 1889, copy in CR 1/48.

Presidency.”²²⁶ As the second ranking apostle and president of the quorum, Lorenzo Snow made the official motion on 6 October 1890 for the general conference ratification of the Manifesto. When he and the First Presidency testified in court in October 1891, President Snow stated that the Manifesto included “all matters concerning plural marriage, embracing the present condition of those that had previously entered into marriage,” and affirmed that Church discipline should be imposed upon any Latter-day Saint “who should fail to follow the counsel given in the manifesto.”²²⁷ He told the apostles on two occasions in 1892 that he had not slept at all the night following his testimony.

Still as president of the Twelve he stated contrasting views about unlawful cohabitation. In January 1892, he said that he “did not intend to forsake his wives and had sworn that he would not and that the Lord would not require it.” Three months later in April, he told the apostles “that our having to give up living with our wives was a very great sacrifice, but the brethren would not lose their reward.” When the rest of the apostles said they had no intention of discontinuing polygamous cohabitation, he dropped the subject.²²⁸ He signed the amnesty plea later that year but by 1896 had retreated from his advocacy of polygamous celibacy. He told the quarterly meeting of the apostles in April 1896 that “it was his belief that the Lord would so arrange matters that those brethren who have wives can live with them and raise families by them.”²²⁹ By then Lorenzo Snow had a personal motivation for his changed views: his forty-year-old plural wife Minnie was two months pregnant. In September, he visited the Mormon settlements in Canada and listened to Apostle John W. Taylor give a spirited defense of polygamy in a public sermon. In November, Minnie bore his last polygamous child at Cardston.²³⁰

Although in April that year, Lorenzo Snow had assured the apostles that polygamy “will again be practiced by this people,”²³¹ he had misgivings by the time he became Church president in September 1898. Protestant ministers and the *Salt Lake Tribune* were publicly claiming that Mormons had entered into post-Manifesto polygamy, and he seemed initially opposed to allowing new plural marriages. When the apostles sustained him as President of the Church with his counselors George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith on 13 September 1898, “Prest. Lorenzo Snow then told the brethren that he had heard rumors

²²⁶ George Q. Cannon, *Diary*, 24–25 Sept. 1890, copy in CR 1/48; Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 30 Sept. 1890.

²²⁷ Testimony before the Master in Chancery, transcript, pp. 132, 135.

²²⁸ Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 12 Jan. 1892; Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 1–2 April 1892.

²²⁹ Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve, 1 April 1896, Fd. 19, Box 4, Anthon H. Lund Papers; identical wording in Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 1 April 1896.

²³⁰ Charles O. Card *Journal*, 6 Sept., 5 Nov. 1896, LDS Church Archives; Cardston Ward Minutes, 6 Sept. 1896, LDS Church Archives; Francis M. Gibbons, *Lorenzo Snow: Spiritual Giant, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982), p. 207.

²³¹ Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 1 April 1896, in Lund Papers; Heber J. Grant *Journal*, 1 April 1896.

of people thinking that plural marriages could be contracted. He wanted it understood that this can not be done"; and then as an indication of his awareness of the post-Manifesto marriages that his predecessor had authorized, President Snow added: "As to things which have happened in the past, I do not want to talk about them."²³² Two days later, President Snow told a reporter from a New York newspaper: "Polygamy, that is, marrying plural wives, ceased among the Latter-day Saints on the issuance of President Woodruff's Manifesto, October 6th, 1890, and his inhibition will not be changed by me."²³³

Anthony W. Ivins, on 29 October 1898, told the Juarez Stake High Council that during October conference George Q. Cannon had informed him that "Prest Snow had decided that Plural marriages must cease throughout the entire Church and that was absolute and affected Mexico as well as elsewhere."²³⁴ First Presidency secretary George F. Gibbs later said that President Snow had learned of United States citizens, married plurally in Mexico with First Presidency authorization, who returned to the United States instead of remaining in Mexico. President Snow therefore "withdrew all authority from Mexico to solemnize plural marriages there as it had been withdrawn in Utah."²³⁵ But Ivins and Gibbs portrayed this restriction by Lorenzo Snow as more absolute and inclusive than it was.

Lorenzo Snow stopped plural marriages in Mexico for United States residents who needed First Presidency recommends, but he simultaneously authorized an expansion of post-Manifesto polygamy that Wilford Woodruff never allowed: the performance of plural marriages by the Juarez Stake president for stake members who needed no First Presidency authorization. Since March 1898 Miles A. Romney of the Juarez Stake High Council had written three letters to Salt Lake City asking for such permission. It was not granted until October 1898 when Anthony W. Ivins began performing plural marriages for Romney and other residents of the stake.²³⁶ Moreover, before performing a plural marriage in Idaho in October 1898 for Joseph Morrell, Apostle Matthias F. Cowley asked permission of President Snow who "simply told me that he would not interfere with Brother Woodruff's and Cannon's work."²³⁷ It is doubtful that Lorenzo Snow realized that Cowley would continue throughout his presidency to perform these plural marriages within the

²³² Anthon H. Lund Diary, 13 Sept. 1898; *Journal History*, 13 Sept. 1898, p. 5; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 Sept. 1898.

²³³ *Journal History*, 15 Sept. 1898, pp. 2-4.

²³⁴ Juarez Stake High Council Minutes, 29 Oct. 1898, LDS Church Archives.

²³⁵ George F. Gibbs to Barnard Greensfelder, 8 Nov. 1915.

²³⁶ Miles A. Romney to John Henry Smith, 16 March, 14 May, 15 July 1898; Anthony W. Ivins Marriage Record, 23 Oct. 1898. Ivins also performed a plural marriage on 14 July 1898 for his counselor Helaman Pratt, but Pratt's plural wife Bertha Wilcken (Stewart) was an instructor in the LDS College in Salt Lake City until June 1898, and her membership record did not arrive in Dublan Ward until 18 Sept. 1898. She undoubtedly came to Mexico with the traditional letter from the First Presidency for nonresident polygamous marriages.

²³⁷ One of two references to this conversation in statement of Matthias F. Cowley in Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 10 May 1911.

United States or that George Q. Cannon would continue sending to Cowley any U.S. resident who asked for this privilege. What President Snow had done in October 1898 was stop plural marriages that required his personal knowledge and consent for specific individuals; what Ivins did in Mexico and Cowley did in the United States no longer required the Church President's personal knowledge.

In every other respect, Lorenzo Snow seemed to consistently oppose post-Manifesto polygamy. In November 1898 he declined to allow Apostle Abraham Owen Woodruff to seal even monogamous marriages in Arizona and wrote Stake President Charles O. Card in Canada that "I do not see my way clear to delegate the sealing power outside the Temple."²³⁸ In conversation with J. Golden Kimball the following month, President Snow said that he had no personal knowledge of any post-Manifesto plural marriages and added: "But I can assure you there will be no more until the Lord reveals it direct"; on 29 December 1898 the *Deseret Evening News* gave front page coverage to his statement to a New York newspaper: "Polygamous marriages in the Mormon Church have entirely ceased."²³⁹ After the *North American Review* published an article in April 1899 charging Utah Mormons with entering new plural marriages in Canada and Mexico, President Snow told the apostles that he refused to give permission for a Utah resident to marry a plural wife and move to Canada, and in May he told a public meeting in St. George, Utah: "I will say now before this people, that the principle of plural marriage is not practiced. I have never, in one single instance, allowed any person to have that ceremony performed, and there are no such marriages at the present time, nor has [sic] there been during the time of my presidency over this church."²⁴⁰ This was technically true: but Ivins and Cowley had, since the previous October, performed several plural marriages already in Mexico and the United States.

On 7 October 1899, an anti-Mormon filed a legal complaint against President Snow for unlawful cohabitation with Minnie J. Snow due to the birth of their polygamous child.²⁴¹ A few days later Benjamin Cluff, Jr., president of Brigham Young Academy at Provo, put Lorenzo Snow in the position of having to inquire about polygamous marriages in Mexico for Juarez Stake residents which he had authorized in principle to obviate the need to deal with them in specifics. Cluff wanted to marry plurally Florence Reynolds, who had just moved to Juarez Stake where she was teaching in the Church school. Cluff accompanied her to the colonies and asked Anthony W. Ivins to perform the ceremony, but Ivins refused because Cluff was not a resident of the stake and

²³⁸ Abraham Owen Woodruff to Lorenzo Snow, 19 Nov. 1898, Snow papers, LDS Church Archives; Journal History, 21 Nov. 1898, p. 3; Lorenzo Snow to Charles O. Card, 25 Nov. 1898, First Presidency Letterbook.

²³⁹ J. Golden Kimball, Diary, 27 Dec. 1898; *Deseret Evening News*, 29 Dec. 1898.

²⁴⁰ Eugene Young, "Revival of the Mormon Problem," *North American Review* 168 (April 1899): 484–85; Franklin D. Richards, Diary, 5 April 1899; *Deseret Evening News*, 3 June 1899, p. 10.

²⁴¹ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 Oct. 1899, p. 1; *Deseret Evening News*, 9 Oct. 1899.

did not have a letter from the First Presidency. When Ivins reported the matter to Apostle Francis M. Lyman during October conference, Lyman arranged a meeting attended by Presidents Snow and Smith, Apostles Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, and Anthon H. Lund, Church Superintendent of Schools Karl G. Maeser, Florence's father George Reynolds, Anthony W. Ivins, and Cluff. Lorenzo Snow told Cluff to cancel his marriage plans and also instructed Ivins to perform no more plural marriages for residents of the stake in Mexico, an absolute prohibition which Ivins strictly observed throughout the balance of Snow's presidency.²⁴² President Snow also "was very much put out" when he learned that Northern States Mission President Louis A. Kelsch was talking to others about having been married in polygamy this same month in Salt Lake City by Apostle Matthias F. Cowley. Cowley later claimed that President Snow gave him no instructions to stop performing plural marriages.²⁴³

As 1899 closed, more than seven million Americans signed a petition asking the U.S. House of Representatives to exclude B. H. Roberts from his elected seat because he was a polygamist. There were proposals to pass a Constitutional amendment prohibiting polygamy and polygamous cohabitation, and even talk of efforts to disfranchise all Mormons.²⁴⁴ In separate interviews with newspaper correspondents, President Snow denied that polygamous marriages "had been performed by the Church, or with its sanction, since he became its President" and decided, as a further concession, that polygamists should promise to obey the laws against unlawful cohabitation when brought to trial.²⁴⁵ When this decision was challenged in a meeting of the First Presidency with the apostles, the Presiding Bishop, and the senior president of the First Council of Seventy, President Snow asked, "Which was worse: the abrogation of polygamy or the counsel to abstain from having children?" The meeting adjourned without formal vote.²⁴⁶ A week later on 8 January 1900, President Snow issued a formal statement written for him by non-Mormon Judge George W. Bartch, which stated:

. . . the Church has positively abandoned the practice of polygamy, or the solemnization of plural marriages, in this and every other State; and . . . no member or officer

²⁴² John Henry Smith, Diary, 13 Oct. 1899; Journal History, 13 Oct. 1899, p. 2, 9 Aug. 1900, p. 2; Stanley S. Ivins, "Facts in regard to the post-Manifesto practice of polygamy as related by my father A. W. Ivins;" Diaz Ward Minutes, 17 Sept. 1899, LDS Church Archives. Benjamin Cluff's diary for October 1899 at BYU Special Collections makes no reference to this meeting in his weekly-summary entries, but he recorded being in the Mexican colonies in August and meeting with Ivins in Salt Lake City on 8 October 1899, when he apparently renewed his request and precipitated this meeting. I have inferred the instructions of President Snow to Ivins on the basis of these sources and the verified plural marriages performed by Ivins for Juarez Stake residents from October 1898 through July 1899, but not again until after Snow's death.

²⁴³ Statements of George Albert Smith and Matthias F. Cowley in Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 10 May 1911.

²⁴⁴ Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 6:335-36; Anthon H. Lund, Diary, 28-30 Dec. 1899.

²⁴⁵ Journal History, 3 Nov. 1899, p. 2; 22 Nov. 1899, p. 2; *Deseret Evening News*, 30 Dec. 1899, p. 16.

²⁴⁶ Anthon H. Lund, Diary, 30 Dec. 1899. See also under same date Rudger Clawson, Diary, Seymour B. Young, Diary, and unidentified and undated minutes, originally in Joseph F. Smith papers.

thereof has any authority whatever to perform such plural marriages or enter into such relations. Nor does the Church advise or encourage unlawful cohabitation on the part of any of its members.

If, therefore, any member disobeys the law, either as to polygamy or unlawful cohabitation, he must bear his own burden, or in other words be answerable to the tribunals of the land for his own action pertaining thereto.

In 1911, the First Presidency put this 1900 declaration on an equal footing with the two manifestoes sustained by general conferences in 1890 and 1904.²⁴⁷

At first glance, this statement by President Snow seems to echo his testimony and that of the First Presidency before the Master in Chancery in October 1891, but there is a crucial difference. His 1900 declaration omitted Church discipline as a possible punishment for infractions of this Church rule against new polygamy and cohabitation and specifically limited the consequences of such violations to civil jurisdiction. This omission may simply reflect Judge Bartch's secular and legalistic perspective, but it seems unlikely that President Snow overlooked this amending of his 1891 testimony.

While President Snow was expressing public and private denials of new polygamy in 1900, he also seemed to be giving private, retroactive approval to new plural marriages already performed. At the temple meeting of the First Presidency and apostles on 29 December 1899, Apostle Owen Woodruff reported that at Colonia Oaxaca he had sealed some couples who could not afford to travel to the nearest temple and "now asked for authority to perform sealings in that country." President Cannon and Apostle John Henry Smith recommended that President Snow reinstitute this authorization to perform sealings outside the temple, particularly in Mexico, and President Snow agreed. It is unclear whether he knew that the two sealings Woodruff had performed were plural marriages.²⁴⁸ Three days after his public declaration, President Snow told the apostles that "there were brethren who still seemed to have the idea that it was possible under his administration to obtain a plural wife and have her sealed to him. . . . He said emphatically that it could not be done."²⁴⁹ The day after this meeting, Loren H. Harmer was released as bishop of a Springville (Utah) ward because he was sentenced to the Utah penitentiary for cohabitation with the plural wife he had married in Mexico in 1897; George Gibbs, the First Presidency secretary, later reported that President Snow "had said that he rather admired that bishop for taking his medicine."²⁵⁰ In May 1900, David Eccles asked Gibbs to intercede on behalf of his post-Manifesto plural wife whose bishop threatened to excommunicate her for re-

²⁴⁷ *Deseret Evening News*, 8 Jan. 1900, p. 1; Statement of Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and John Henry Smith, 9 April 1911, in Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 3:226. For Judge Bartch's role in writing this announcement, see *Journal History*, 8 Jan. 1900, p. 2, and statement of First Presidency Secretary, George F. Gibbs, in *Deseret Evening News*, 2 July 1915, p. 2.

²⁴⁸ *Journal History*, 21 Dec. 1899, pp. 4–5.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 Jan. 1900, p. 7.

²⁵⁰ Utah Stake High Council Minutes, 12 Jan. 1900, LDS Church Archives; Loren Harmer Family Group Sheets, GS; court testimony of George F. Gibbs in *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 July 1915, p. 4. That portion of Gibbs's testimony was deleted in the *Deseret News*, 2 July 1915, pp. 1–2.

fusing to identify the father of her child. "President Snow said he admired the grit of the girl," said that he did not want to know the identity of the child's father, and told Gibbs to advise the man to move to Mexico with his plural wife. Presidents Snow and Cannon wrote a letter to the polygamous wife's bishop instructing him to accept the woman's admission that she had given birth to a child and to make no further requirement of her or take action against her.²⁵¹

Nevertheless, in private instructions until well into 1901, the last year of his life, Lorenzo Snow seemed resolute in his refusal to authorize the performance of new polygamous marriages. When Alexander F. Macdonald asked permission in August 1900 to perform a plural marriage for a bishop in the Mexican colonies, "President Snow then declared that no such sealings could be performed in Mexico any quicker than in the United States, with his consent, for such marriages had been forbidden."²⁵² Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., who wanted to marry a new plural wife, recorded their conversation on 13 March 1901:

He said there cannot be a plural marriage solemnized in this Church without my consent and I have never given consent for this to be done since president of the Church. God has removed this privilege from the people and until He restores it I shall not consent to any man taking a plural wife; it is just as fair for one as it is for all to go without . . . Has any one of the apostles a right to seal plural wives to men by reason of former concessions made to them by presidency? No sir, such right must come from me and no man shall be authorized by me to break the law of the land.²⁵³

It would be difficult to compose a more explicit, comprehensive denial of sanctioned polygamy; but the fact remains that during the presidency of Lorenzo Snow in 1901, four apostles (including Brigham Young, Jr.) married plural wives, and at least one other apostle attempted to do so. Abraham Owen Woodruff had been courting his prospective plural wife for months and, after several private meetings with Lorenzo Snow in January 1901, he married her.²⁵⁴ Apostle Matthias F. Cowley performed the plural marriage on 7 April 1901 for Apostle Marriner W. Merrill.²⁵⁵ Despite President Snow's firm refusal when Brigham Young, Jr., spoke with him about new polygamy in March, Young married a plural wife the following August. In view of Young's life-long compliance even with Church presidents with whom he ardently disagreed, it is virtually impossible to see this marriage as an act of deliberate insubordination.²⁵⁶ John W. Taylor claimed that he married two plural wives in

²⁵¹ George F. Gibbs statement, 1915, and First Presidency Office Journal, 16-17 May 1900, copy in "David Eccles" Fd., Box 2, CR 1/44; testimony of George F. Gibbs in *Deseret News*, 2 July 1915, pp. 1-2; Lorenzo Snow and George Q. Cannon to George W. Bramwell, 17 May 1900, First Presidency Letterbook.

²⁵² Journal History, 13 Aug. 1900, p. 1; John T. Whetten to A. F. Macdonald, 12 July 1900, Macdonald Papers.

²⁵³ Brigham Young, Jr., Diary, 13 March 1901, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

²⁵⁴ Abraham Owen Woodruff, Diary, 2, 14, and 17 Jan. 1901; LDS Church Archives.

²⁵⁵ See discussion of Merrill and Cowley to follow in connection with Joseph F. Smith.

²⁵⁶ As example see D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Church and the Spanish-American War: An End to Selective Pacifism," *DIALOGUE* 17 (Winter 1984): 26-28.

August 1901 with the permission of the Church president,²⁵⁷ but the clearest evidence that Lorenzo Snow gave permission individually to the apostles to marry plural wives in 1901 comes from Heber J. Grant, who later wrote: “Before I went to Japan [in July 1901] my President intimated that I had better take the action needed to increase my family,” and Grant’s notebook indicates that President Snow gave this permission on 26 May 1901: “Temple Fast mtg — 17 years since Gusta and I married — She willing to have me do my duty. & Pt Snow.”²⁵⁸ But to make the ambiguity complete, despite what Lorenzo Snow may have told these five apostles privately, he told the Quorum of the Twelve as a body at the temple meeting of 11 July 1901: “Some of the brethren are worrying about the matter, and feel that they ought to have other wives. Brethren do not worry; you will lose nothing. . . . Brethren, don’t worry about these things, and if you dont happen to secure the means you would like, dont feel disappointed.” In these remarks, President Snow referred specifically to Heber J. Grant who concluded that these instructions to the entire Quorum repealed the private authorization the Church president had given him in May; he “dropped the matter” and left within a few days for Japan.²⁵⁹ When Lorenzo Snow died in October 1901, he had been preceded six months earlier by his first counselor, George Q. Cannon, who had the widespread title of “the Mormon Premier” and the reputation of being “the power behind the throne.”²⁶⁰

GEORGE Q. CANNON (APOSTLE, 1860–1901, COUNSELOR, 1873–77,
1880–87, 1889–98, 1898–1901)

Before young George Q. Cannon ever learned of the 1843 revelation on plural marriage, God “manifested to me that that principle would be revealed to this Church and practiced by the Church.”²⁶¹ Nevertheless, following ordination as an elder and seventy at Nauvoo, he remained a bachelor until age twenty-seven and married his first plural wife when he was thirty-one and she was eighteen.²⁶² Eight years before he became a counselor to Brigham Young, George Q. Cannon was the one in the First Presidency’s office who gave “a certificate to the effect that I [John T. Gerber] had permission of Pres. B.

²⁵⁷ Statement of John W. Taylor in Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 1 March 1911. His plural wife Jenetta M. Woolley Taylor said that he obtained the permission for these 1901 marriages from the Church president but incorrectly identified the president as Joseph F. Smith rather than Lorenzo Snow. Nettie M. Taylor, Interview, July 1947, Taylor Papers, University of Utah. See discussion of Joseph F. Smith to follow.

²⁵⁸ Heber J. Grant to Joseph F. Smith, 5 Jan. 1906, Grant Papers, LDS Church Archives; Grant, May–June 1901 Notebook, 26 May 1901.

²⁵⁹ Rudger Clawson Diary, 11 July 1901; Heber J. Grant to James Duckworth, 17 Feb. 1916, gives a detailed account of President Snow’s remarks at this meeting; Heber J. Grant to his daughter Lucy Grant, 1 Jan. 1902, Grant Papers.

²⁶⁰ Cannon, “The Mormon Issue in Congress,” pp. 4, 217, 230.

²⁶¹ *Deseret Evening News*, 14 Nov. 1891, p. 4.

²⁶² Beatrice Cannon Evans and Janath Russell Cannon, eds., *Cannon Family Historical Treasury* (Salt Lake City: George Cannon Family Association, 1967), pp. 85–140 provide most of the family data.

Young to take a second wife.”²⁶³ In 1874, when his three plural wives had already borne him eight children, one plural wife was pregnant, and his legal wife was still living, George Q. Cannon sought to maintain his position as Utah’s delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives by testifying that he was not living or cohabiting with four wives or any wives in violation of the 1862 Morrill Act; and when again challenged in 1882 he reaffirmed that testimony: “I denied it then and I can deny it now. I never defiantly or willfully violated any law.” By 1882, his legal wife had died, but his three plural wives were still living by whom he had now fathered a total of fifteen polygamous children. He had also married two lesser-known wives, Sophia Ramsell and Emily Hoagland (Little). While he and President John Taylor told monogamist Church leaders to marry plural wives or resign their positions, Counselor Cannon violated the Edmunds Act by marrying his last plural wife in 1884, for which he served five months in the Utah penitentiary.²⁶⁴

In view of how consistently he resisted concessions by Presidents Taylor and Woodruff concerning the practice of plural marriage, it is not surprising that George Q. Cannon “was the first to conceive the idea that the Church could consistently countenance polygamy beyond the confines of the [United States] republic.”²⁶⁵ In the first weeks after the Manifesto, however, the men who successfully obtained permission to marry plural wives were the ones who contacted Wilford Woodruff rather than Cannon. Timothy Jones asked Cannon for a recommend during October 1890 conference, and “Brother C. thought it best to wait a while until things are quiet.” By the time Jones renewed his request for “the guide” at the end of October, President Woodruff had stopped signing recommends due to the prominent return of one of the post-Manifesto polygamists, and Cannon wrote the following note on an endorsement for Jones’s request: “No guides being sent.” When Joseph C. Bentley asked George Q. Cannon for permission in December 1890, the First Counselor recommended that Bentley release the woman from the polygamous engagement.²⁶⁶

By 1891, George Q. Cannon seemed to take the position publicly and privately that the Manifesto had a comprehensive application that must be strictly observed by all Latter-day Saints. In June, he and President Woodruff told the

²⁶³ John T. Gerber, *Diary*, 18 Nov. 1865, LDS Church Archives.

²⁶⁴ Evans and Cannon, *Cannon Family Historical Treasury*, pp. 127–40; Salt Lake Endowment House Sealing Records, 13 June 1875, 11 July 1881; *Speech of Hon. George Q. Cannon, of Utah, in the House of Representatives, Wednesday, April 19, 1882.* (Washington, D.C.: N.p., 1882), p. 13.

²⁶⁵ Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and John Henry Smith to Reed Smoot, 1 April 1911, Smoot Papers, BYU; also George F. Gibbs, “Inside history accounting for the animus of ex-Senator Frank J. Cannon towards President Joseph F. Smith, also exposing absolute falsehood and flagrant hypocrisy on his part in regard to cases of new polygamy,” which was presented to the temple meeting on 20 July 1911, undated copy in Joseph Fielding Smith Papers. See Charles W. Penrose, *Diary*, 20 July 1911, USHS.

²⁶⁶ Timothy Jones to Daniel H. Wells, 27 Oct. 1890; Daniel H. Wells to George Q. Cannon, 8 Nov. 1890, and George Q. Cannon notation of 17 Nov. 1890 on the outside of Wells’s letter, LDS Church Archives; Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 2 Nov. 1890; Bentley, *Life and Letters of Joseph C. Bentley*, pp. 80–81.

Salt Lake Times in an interview that post-Manifesto polygamists would be “wrong-doers” and that the Latter-day Saints were complying with the law regarding unlawful cohabitation. At a meeting in the Presidency’s office on 20 August, Counselor Cannon told President Woodruff that to obtain the return of the Church’s escheated properties and to progress toward statehood, the Church’s polygamists must not “attempt to hold to the right of living with our plural wives.” On the witness stand in October, George Q. Cannon testified that it would be displeasing to God and a violation of Church rules for anyone to enter into a polygamous marriage after the Manifesto, that he had no knowledge of and had never heard since the Manifesto that “any members of the Church have entered into or contracted any polygamous or plural marriage,” and denied that he had in any way approved of unlawful cohabitation since the Manifesto was published. On 21 October 1891, the day after the court testimony, Counselor Cannon told Wilford Woodruff that to convince the nation’s leaders of the good faith of the Church and end government harassment, “the people . . . should be given to understand that there was no other attitude for us to take than to conform to the law in all respects.” His signing the amnesty appeal to the U.S. President in December of that year seemed completely consistent with these public and private expressions.²⁶⁷

Nevertheless, during the same year George Q. Cannon seemed so consistently in favor of rigidly applying the Manifesto to both polygamy and unlawful cohabitation, he was promoting a contrary application. At the time he joined with the Church president in the *Times* interview, his youngest plural wife, age forty-one, had just conceived his last child. She was four months pregnant when he testified in court that he had not assented to unlawful cohabitation by anyone. A week after that testimony, he approved his son Abraham’s plan to build adjoining houses for all his plural wives, advising him “to exercise great care so as to avoid having the appearance at least of breaking the law.” Despite the testimony of all members of the First Presidency in October that the Manifesto prohibited plural marriages everywhere in the world, Counselor Cannon wrote an editorial on “Our Ideas of Marriage” in the *Juvenile Instructor* for November 1891 in which he stated, “Now that plural marriages have ceased in Utah. . . .”²⁶⁸ Plural marriages had ceased in Mexico as well, but Counselor Cannon was apparently keeping the option open.

In July 1892, George Q. Cannon established the system of written recommendations which enabled United States residents to go to Mexico for post-Manifesto plural marriage ceremonies. Without access to Cannon’s diaries, it is unclear to what extent discussions with President Woodruff preceded this

²⁶⁷ *Salt Lake Times*, 23 June 1891, p. 1, reprinted in *Deseret Evening News*, 24 June 1891, p. 5; *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 26 June 1891, p. 2; *Deseret Weekly News*, 4 July 1891, pp. 33–35; First Presidency Office Journal, 20 Aug., 21 Oct. 1891, copy in CR 1/48; transcript of testimony before the Master in Chancery, pp. 77, 78, 79–80, summarized and reprinted in *Deseret Evening News*, 20 Oct. 1891, p. 5; *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 23 Oct. 1891, pp. 4–5; *Deseret Weekly News*, 24 Oct. 1891, pp. 579–80; Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 3:230–31.

²⁶⁸ Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 29 Oct. 1891; George Q. Cannon, “Our Ideas of Marriage,” *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (15 Nov. 1891): 697.

action, but the official record verifies that he did not act on his own authority. In Wilford Woodruff's Presidency letterbook for 1892 — not his own correspondence — George Q. Cannon copied the following three letters to Apostle George Teasdale, President of the Mexican colonies.

The bearer intends to take up his abode in Mexico, and will probably need the services of a guide. It will be quite satisfactory *to all of us* for you to render him the services which he needs.

* * *

The bearer, Bro. Rasmus Larsen, is the person referred to in my letter of the 18th of July, which I forwarded to you by mail.

* * *

Since writing the enclosed letter I have given a letter of introduction to the party which he will deliver to you. I thought this better than to give him this letter himself to carry.²⁶⁹

It is not currently known to what extent this recommend system for post-Manifesto plural marriages in Mexico differed from or was the same as that for pre-Manifesto polygamous ceremonies performed there for U.S. residents. We know that prior to the Manifesto, some couples traveled to Mexico for this purpose in company with an apostle, which might have eliminated the necessity for the cryptic set of letters.²⁷⁰ As we have seen, in the days immediately after the publication of the Manifesto, it was President Woodruff, rather than George Q. Cannon, who signed the recommend and "letter of recognition" U.S. residents took with them to Mexico.

From 1892 until President Snow stopped sending U.S. residents to Mexico for polygamous ceremonies in 1898, George Q. Cannon signed most of these letters to George Teasdale, president of the Mormon colonies in Mexico from 1890 to 1895, and to his successor Anthony W. Ivins, president of the Juarez Stake, organized in 1895. The letters for Rasmus Larsen in 1892 are the first and last set of authorization documents for Mexican polygamy that Counselor Cannon copied into the regular letterbooks of the Church president, but he may have copied the instructions for subsequent plural marriages in a separate record. Although this 1892 authorization was for a man planning to remain in the Mexican colonies after the polygamous ceremony, in May 1893 John A. Bagley traveled to the Mexican colonies for such a ceremony, after which both he and his bride returned to the United States. The authorizing document was probably similar to a subsequent letter Cannon wrote that did not bind the couple to remain in Mexico: "He expects to visit your country to attend to some business there, and I think, stranger as he is, you can be of service to him. Whatever aid you can render will be appreciated." The biggest change that President Cannon made in his authorization letters to Mexico after 1892 was

²⁶⁹ George Q. Cannon letters to George Teasdale, 18 July 1892, in First Presidency Letterbook for Jan.–Sept. 1892, pp. 395–96; italics added.

²⁷⁰ Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 4–11 Jan. 1887; Brigham Young, Jr., Diary, 7 June 1890. See discussion connected with note 138.

in omitting the obvious polygamous reference of providing a “guide.”²⁷¹ Despite these elaborate arrangements, the First Presidency sent only Larsen and Bagley to Mexico and David W. Rainey to Canada for polygamous ceremonies during 1892–93, while eight other couples entered polygamy during the same period as residents of Mexico, by civil marriages in the United States, or by solemn covenant.

George Q. Cannon was responsible for increasing the number in 1894. At a meeting of the presidency and apostles in the Salt Lake Temple in April, he “spoke of the unfortunate condition of the people at present in regard to marriage,” including the situation where men had childless wives, and young Latter-day Saint women were faced with the necessity of marrying non-Mormons or remaining unmarried because of the Manifesto. Cannon also expressed his personal grief that “my son David died without seed, and his brothers cannot do a work for him, in rearing children to bear his name because of the Manifesto.” When President Woodruff concluded the meeting by affirming that the way for polygamy would soon open up, George Q. Cannon became more directly an advocate of new polygamous marriages.²⁷²

Sometime between this meeting and July 1894, he signed a temple recommend, “W.W. per G.Q.C.” for Hattie Merrill, daughter of Apostle Marriner W. Merrill, president of the Logan Temple. The stake presidency was the highest recommending authority necessary for temple ordinances; Cannon’s signature indicates clearly his knowledge that the marriage would be polygamous. Apostle Merrill performed the ceremony for his daughter and John W. Barnett on 16 July 1894 in the Logan Temple. Cannon’s act on behalf of President Woodruff would date the signing of the recommend on or after 25 May 1894, when Marriner W. Merrill recorded that he “found Prest. Woodruff alone and had some talk with Him on Temple & Other Matters.” This was the first of several unambiguously polygamous marriages Merrill performed after the Manifesto in the Logan Temple, and Counselor Cannon’s initialed endorsement was what he kept as evidence of First Presidency authorization.²⁷³

By the fall of 1894, George Q. Cannon was taking steps to procure children for his deceased son David. The only son who volunteered for this polyg-

²⁷¹ John A. Bagley Family Group Sheets; Mexican Mission Minutes, 27 May 1893, LDS Church Archives; George Q. Cannon to A. W. Ivins, 1 Feb. 1898, USHS; Charles Mostyn Owen to William Paden, 11 Oct. 1904, LDS Church Archives; Smoot Case 2:421.

²⁷² Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 5 April 1894; also Heber J. Grant, Journal, and Francis M. Lyman, Diary, for that date.

²⁷³ Hattie L. Merrill Temple Recommend, signed by her bishop on 29 March 1894, and by her stake president and George Q. Cannon at unspecified dates; entry for 16 July 1894 in Logan Temple Record of Polygamous Marriages (1887–95) LDS Church Archives; John W. Barnett Family Group Sheets, GS; Marriner W. Merrill, Diary, 25 May 1894; Joseph F. Merrill, comp., *Descendants of Marriner Wood Merrill* (Salt Lake City: By the author, 1938), p. 184. The recommends for Hattie Merrill and John W. Barnett were attached by Apostle Merrill to the marriage record, and Merrill’s diary shows that he was in Salt Lake City to meet with the Presidency and Apostles on 5 April, with Wilford Woodruff alone on 25 May, with George Q. Cannon alone on 9 June, and with the First Presidency on 12 July 1894.

amous duty as proxy husband was the worldly Frank J., whom his father could entrust with diplomatic missions on behalf of the Church but not with “the Principle.” George Q. asked twenty-four-year-old Hugh J. to undertake the responsibility; but his mother, Sarah Jenne Cannon, told her husband that the proxy husband should be David’s full brother, a son of Elizabeth Hoagland Cannon.²⁷⁴ On 19 October 1894, Abraham H. Cannon records that his father “spoke to me about taking some good girl and raising up seed by her for my brother David.” Within days, he had the hearty approval of the two other members of the First Presidency. This polygamous marriage did not occur for nearly two years because of his prolonged courtship of more than one woman for the proxy marriage.²⁷⁵

According to Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., by 1895 President Woodruff had delegated all authorizations for plural marriages to George Q. Cannon. After a private conversation with Cannon in April 1895, Apostle Young wrote: “Bro. George & I had a pleasant chat on doctrine of marriage etc. His views are peculiar, but I know the responsibility of this whole question rests upon him and how can he meet the demands in this nation? Rulers will have a heavy bill to settle when they reach the spirit world.” Two months after this talk, Apostle Young traveled down to the Mexican border with two prospective polygamists, and “I furnished a guide to both men, they had their wives with them.”²⁷⁶

George Q. Cannon next commissioned Anthony W. Ivins to perform plural marriages in the Juarez Stake. His sons Stanley and Grant Ivins mistakenly dated this event in October 1895 and more seriously misstated the facts by claiming that the First Presidency sent Anthony W. Ivins to preside over the Mexican colonies for the express purpose of performing polygamous marriages there.²⁷⁷ In fact, unlike George Teasdale, his predecessor, Ivins refused the requests of Mexican colonists to perform plural marriages. When Ivins was sustained as president of the new Juarez Stake in December 1895 he did not have the authority to perform a marriage of any kind there. On 21 February 1896, Ivins reported to the high council that “while in Utah he asked the Presidency of the Church in regard to the solemnization of plural marriages

²⁷⁴ George F. Gibbs, Affidavit, 10 Jan. 1912, and Gibbs, “Inside history,” pp. 13–14, both in Joseph Fielding Smith Papers, LDS Church Archives.

²⁷⁵ Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 19, and 24 Oct. 1894. The final arrangements for his plural marriage with Lillian Hamlin in June 1896 and his death a month after the ceremony were such sensitive topics to the First Presidency and to the Cannon family that the 1896 volume of George Q. Cannon’s detailed diaries was not included in the donation of the diaries by Sylvester Q. Cannon to the First Presidency in 1932. Heber J. Grant and A. W. Ivins statement and inventory, 31 Oct. 1932, CR 1/48.

²⁷⁶ Brigham Young, Jr., Diary, 18 April, 29 June 1895; Temple Book B, p. 108. In his diary, the words “in this nation” are written above the line between the words “demands” and “Rulers.” The interlinear phrase as quoted in this text fits more consistently with Young’s traveling to Mexico to perform the two plural marriages.

²⁷⁷ Stanley S. Ivins, “Facts in regard to the post-Manifesto practice of polygamy in Mexico,” USHS; Stanley S. Ivins to Juanita Brooks, 25 Feb. 1956, USHS; H. Grant Ivins, *Polygamy in Mexico as Practiced by the Mormon Church, 1895–1905* (Salt Lake City: Collier’s Publishing Co., 1981), p. 4.

in Mexico and was told emphatically that it could not be done," but they did give him authority to perform monogamous marriages (but not sealings); he officiated in the first on 21 February. Not until 7 April 1896 did President Woodruff authorize Ivins to seal monogamous marriages in Mexico for time and eternity outside the temple.²⁷⁸ But the pressures upon the First Presidency and apostles continued in March 1897 to consider "some urgent reasons for special cases of marriage."²⁷⁹ When Anthony Ivins visited Salt Lake City 10–19 June 1897, he met with the First Presidency:

After some other matters had been discussed Pres. Cannon took Father into another room where they were alone, to explain to him the status of polygamy in the Church. He said that while plural marriages in general had been stopped, there were some cases in which it might be desirable to make exception to the rule — cases in which promises of marriage had been made prior to the Manifesto. If permission should be granted for any such marriages it would be preferable to have them performed outside the boundaries of the U.S. and Father might be called upon. Anyone going to Mexico to have such a marriage performed would have with him a letter the contents of which Father would understand.

On 22 June 1897, Ivins met three U.S. residents in Ciudad Juarez and performed the first of dozens of plural marriages authorized by Cannon's letters. He later told the Quorum of the Twelve that he found this commission distasteful: "He was instructed to tell the Mex. Government he was not there to perform plural marriages and at the same time he was instructed to perform plural marriages."²⁸⁰

Aside from the 1892 letter to Teasdale, there are three presently available copies of George Q. Cannon's polygamy authorization letters to Anthony W. Ivins. Two of them, dated 27 December 1897 and 1 February 1898, do not identify the bearer and are as seemingly innocuous as the 1892 letter. The First Presidency letterbooks contain copies of similar letters asking Ivins to provide services to specific visitors (some of whom were non-Mormons). But the diary of Joseph H. Dean, former president of the Samoan Mission, recorded how George Q. Cannon authorized and assisted him to marry his plural wife after the Manifesto. Dean began courting his prospective plural wife in October 1897, explored the possibility with Cannon a few days later, and obtained Cannon's specific approval on 3 December. After a brief consultation with Joseph F. Smith, the second counselor in the First Presidency, Dean met again

²⁷⁸ Juarez Stake High Council Minutes, 21 Feb. 1896; letterhead stationery of the Mero Company, where Stanley S. Ivins recorded a list of selected marriages and noted that his father began performing marriage ceremonies on 21 Feb. 1896; *Journal History*, 7 April 1896, p. 5, Franklin D. Richards, *Diary*, 7 April 1896. Some Mexican colonists regarded the marriages Ivins performed from February to April 1896 as sealings "for time and eternity." See Nancy A. Clement Williams, *Diary*, pp. 68–69, 14 March 1896, LDS Church Archives.

²⁷⁹ Franklin D. Richards, *Diary*, 4 March 1897; also *Journal History*, 4 March 1897, p. 2.

²⁸⁰ Stanley S. Ivins, "Facts in regard to the post-Manifesto practice of polygamy in Mexico," USHS; Anthony W. Ivins, *Diary*, 10–22 June 1897; Anthony W. Ivins *Marriage Record*, 22 June 1897; statement of Anthony W. Ivins in Richard R. Lyman, *Diary*, 29 March 1921; Ivins, *Polygamy in Mexico*, p. 5. Stanley S. Ivins accurately identified the circumstances in the Mexican colonies that led to this 1897 commission despite his erroneously dating it as having occurred in 1895 before his father went to the colonies.

with Counselor Cannon on 23 April: "He approves of my going to Mexico, and thinks it would be a good thing for me to do. Consents to my taking Sister A. ma faaipoipo [Samoan translation: for a bride]. Says that when ever we are ready to call upon him and he will give us the necessary documents." On 3 May 1898, Dean obtained the following letter addressed to Anthony W. Ivins: "This will introduce you to Elder Jos. H. Dean and Sister Amanda W. Anderson who wish to look your country over with a view to settlement. Any favor you can show them will be appreciated by Your Brother Geo. Q. Cannon." The next day, Dean got an additional note from Cannon and bought round-trip tickets to Mexico. On 10 May 1898, Dean and his intended wife arrived in Colonia Juarez and showed their letter to Ivins who immediately performed the marriage and sealing for them.²⁸¹

George Q. Cannon, when he set apart Guy C. Wilson to be the principal of the Juarez Stake Academy in August 1897, blessed him that he would marry polygamously in Mexico and have the children his legal wife had never borne him.²⁸² This is an example of his actively encouraging someone to enter plural marriage after the Manifesto who had not initiated the request.

We do not need access to George Q. Cannon's diary to verify his role in the plural marriages performed by George Teasdale and Anthony W. Ivins in Mexico, but his diary would provide crucial understanding of the circumstances under which he commissioned Apostle Mathias F. Cowley to perform plural marriages in the United States for the upper echelons of Church leadership without special recommends. Elder Cowley later told the other apostles: "President Cannon told me personally to attend to these matters. There was no laying on of hands, but he gave the authority personally. The commision at this time was to marry Brother Rich, but later I was told by him that I could attend to suitable cases." Cowley performed the first of these marriages on 13 April 1898 in Salt Lake City for Ben E. Rich, president of the Southern States Mission, and later explained: "I was never instructed to go to a foreign land to perform these marriages, altho' in some cases I did so. . . . President Cannon told me to do these things or I would never have done it. . . . The most of them went to Brother Cannon and then came to me."²⁸³

²⁸¹ Joseph H. Dean, *Diary*, 24–25 Oct., 28 Oct., 3 Dec. 1897, 21 April, 23 April, 3–4 May, 10 May 1898. Dean did not record the text of the letter in his diary until the entry of 9 May 1930. Dean's plural marriage is among those performed by Anthony W. Ivins but not listed among the fifty-nine polygamous and monogamous marriages Stanley S. Ivins selected from all the 173 marriages his father performed and recorded. It is puzzling that Stanley S. Ivins, usually a meticulous researcher, did not copy his father's entire marriage record. He selected less than a third that "appear to have been plural marriages, although one or two of them might not have been." Stanley S. Ivins to Juanita Brooks, 25 Feb. 1956, Fd. 7, Box 7, Brooks Papers, USHS. This incomplete list has been the basis for the consequently inaccurate statistical calculations and interpretations of the previously cited studies by Grant Ivins, Hardy-Jorgensen, Kenneth Cannon, and others.

²⁸² Related by one of Wilson's plural wives, and by his daughter. See Agnes Melissa Stevens, *Memoirs*, "Prologue," p. 10, LDS Church Archives; and Florence Wilson Anderson, *Oral History*, interviewed by Marsha Martin, 1983, p. 1, LDS Polygamy Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, BYU.

²⁸³ Statement of Matthias F. Cowley in *Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve*, 10 May 1911; Matthias F. Cowley Marriage Record, 1898–1903; Ben E. Rich Family Group Sheets, GS.

Inevitably, word of these marriages and of the resulting children circulated among Latter-day Saints and was published by anti-Mormons. If quoted correctly, George Q. Cannon responded to these allegations with a mixture of understandable diplomacy and remarkable candor when interviewed by Brigham Young's grandson for the *New York Herald* in February 1899:

"I can assure you on my word — if that is of any value," he replied, "that there have been no marriages of that kind in Utah since the manifesto."

"Have there been any outside of Utah?" I asked.

"I do not know," he replied.

"There probably have been sporadic cases," he said after a pause, "but they have not had the sanction of the First Presidency."

I asked further about the so-called sporadic cases, and he said:

"Suppose a man has one wife and she is barren. He might have the love of offspring strong within him. If I were in such a position, with my strong love for offspring, I do not know what I would do. I might be strongly tempted and I do not know what I would do. A man might go to Canada and marry another wife. He would not be violating our laws, and would not be in danger of prosecution unless the first wife should follow him there from Utah and prefer a charge of bigamy against him. He might go to Mexico and have a religious ceremony uniting him to another. That would not violate our law."²⁸⁴

Despite his own strong advocacy of continued cohabitation, Counselor Cannon advised the apostles not to assert publicly their right to cohabitation in defiance of the law²⁸⁵ and seconded every pronouncement of Lorenzo Snow against new polygamy. When President Snow told the apostles on 11 January 1900 that it was impossible for a man to marry a plural wife now that he was president, "President Cannon moved that this be accepted as the mind and will of the Lord."²⁸⁶

Nevertheless, even after such a dramatic statement of loyalty, after a few months, George Q. Cannon "called" his son Hugh J. to marry a plural wife and sent both Hugh and a nephew, John M. Cannon, to Apostle Matthias F. Cowley for these plural ceremonies.

Until his death, Cannon continued sending prominent Church leaders to Cowley for polygamous marriages.²⁸⁷ The seventy-four-year-old counselor also brooded about the fact that his youngest child was already nine years old. During the temple meeting of 16 August 1900 he addressed Lorenzo Snow in the presence of the apostles: "President, I ask that I not be excommunicated if I

²⁸⁴ *New York Herald*, 5 Feb. 1899, reprinted in *Kinsman* 1 (March 1899): 140.

²⁸⁵ Unidentified and undated minutes, p. 202, in Joseph F. Smith Papers; Anthon H. Lund Diary, 29 Dec. 1899, gives the comparative basis for dating this document.

²⁸⁶ *Journal History*, 11 Jan. 1900, p. 7.

²⁸⁷ Hugh J. Cannon's daughter Constance Quayle Cannon Wilson told of this "call," in Agnes Melissa Stevens Wilson's memoir, "Looking Backward," inserted on the page after page 10, LDS Church Archives. In addition to Matthias F. Cowley's general statements that George Q. Cannon sent men to him for polygamous ceremonies, he specifically stated that President Cannon sent these following men to him for polygamous marriage ceremonies in 1900–01: Thomas Chamberlain (married on 6 Aug. 1900 in Salt Lake City) and Joseph E. Robinson (married 7 April 1901 in Salt Lake City). Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve, 10 May 1911, 17 June 1914; Thomas Chamberlain Family Group Sheets and Joseph E. Robinson Family Group Sheets, GS.

fall in love without your approval, if I have no children and take a woman and have one by her.” There is no present evidence that George Q. Cannon married a woman of childbearing age in 1900–01. According to his son Sylvester Q., however, George Q. Cannon entered into a relationship about this time with sixty-two-year old “Mrs. Emelia [Amelia] Madsen who made a contract with Father for eternity, which upon the death of either of them, would be attended to properly in the Temple.”²⁸⁸ On 12 April 1901, George Q. Cannon died in California, leaving the First Presidency with only Joseph F. Smith as counselor for the next six months.

JOSEPH F. SMITH (APOSTLE, 1866–1918, COUNSELOR, 1866–67, 1880–87, 1889–98, 1898–1901, CHURCH PRESIDENT, 1901–18)

Son of the martyred Hyrum Smith, Joseph F. Smith was twenty years old when he married his first wife and twenty-seven years old when he married the first of five plural wives, for which his legal wife divorced him in California on grounds of “adulterous intercourse” with his “concubines” Julina Lambson and Sarah Ellen Richards.²⁸⁹ Joseph F. Smith was capable of intense anger, particularly when he confronted opposition to the practice of polygamy. “If they call on you, my darling, to go before the Grand inquisition or court,” he wrote his wife Sarah in 1885, “I want you, and I mean it too, to tell the God damned fiends that you are my wife now and for ever, and they may help themselves.”²⁹⁰ When the apostles rejected the proposed manifesto in 1888, Joseph F. said that he never expected that God would require him to “acknowledge to the world that the laws of the land were superior to the laws of God,” and added that the apostles should on that occasion vow either never to yield another concession regarding plural marriage or they should publish a commitment that they “will not in the future carry out the commands of God because we are prevented by our enemies.”²⁹¹ Following the drafting of the final version of the Manifesto, Counselor Smith had dinner with Joseph H. Dean and told him that “there is a tacit understanding between the church and the Mexican government, that we may practice plural marriage but must outwardly appear to have but one wife.”²⁹² Responding to Heber J. Grant’s question in August 1891, if he regarded the Manifesto as a revelation, “President Smith answered emphatically no.” After explaining that he regarded the docu-

²⁸⁸ Translation of French entry in Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 16 Aug. 1900; Sylvester Q. Cannon, *Diary*, 13 Jan. 1903; Salt Lake County Death Register, 10 Jan. 1903 for Amelia Madsen. Cannon’s diary entry concerned his attendance at her funeral.

²⁸⁹ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith, Sixth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), pp. 230–31, 487–90; Smoot Case 1: 148; Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, pp. 34–35, 59–60; Levira A. Smith Affidavit, 17 Oct. 1868, in Smith vs. Smith, San Francisco County, copy in Smith papers, LDS Church Archives.

²⁹⁰ Joseph F. Smith to Sarah E. Richards Smith, 22 April 1885, Joseph Fielding Smith Family papers, University of Utah.

²⁹¹ Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 20 Dec. 1888.

²⁹² Joseph H. Dean, *Diary*, 24 Sept. 1890.

ment as inspired under the circumstances in which the U.S. government placed the Church, Joseph F. Smith added: “But he did not believe it to be an emphatic revelation from God abolishing plural marriage.”²⁹³

Joseph F. Smith’s conduct was in harmony with these private statements. In August 1891, his plural wife Sarah bore a child. In September 1891, he told a friend that he realized the federal courts regarded the Manifesto as prohibiting polygamous cohabitation, but he received a presidential pardon that same month on the basis of his promise to comply with federal law and the Manifesto.²⁹⁴ In a special meeting of the General Authorities with the stake presidencies and ward bishoprics at October conference in 1891, Counselor Smith instructed them to tell polygamists to maintain their covenants with their wives: “What, cohabit with them? I would advise them not to do it in the United States,” but he added that if they did it in the United States they must be individually responsible for the consequences.²⁹⁵ Two weeks later, when asked on the witness stand if the Manifesto applied to cohabitation for polygamists married before 1890, he testified that “I don’t see how the effect of it can be otherwise.”²⁹⁶ In December 1891, Joseph F. Smith defined the dilemma precisely in a letter to a polygamist: “The whole thing in a nut shell is this, you should keep your covenants with your family and you should also not violate the law. Now if you can comprehend it — you will grasp the situation.” He could not do both in the United States; and after 1890, President Smith’s wives bore him eleven children in Salt Lake City and two in Idaho.²⁹⁷

Abraham H. Cannon’s post-Manifesto plural marriage is the first specific evidence that Joseph F. Smith encouraged new polygamous ceremonies, although George Q. Cannon had implied the second counselor’s assent (“satisfactory to all of us”) in his 1892 letter on presidency stationery authorizing a polygamous marriage in Mexico for a U.S. resident. On 24 October 1894, Abraham H. Cannon recorded, “Presidents Woodruff and Smith both said they were willing for such a ceremony to occur, if done in Mexico.”²⁹⁸ All family accounts agree that Abraham H. Cannon’s plural marriage occurred in June 1896, but the family and public tradition is that Joseph F. Smith performed the ceremony on a steamer between San Pedro, California, and Catalina Island, a story that President Smith and the plural wife, Lillian Hamlin Cannon, consistently denied.²⁹⁹ Apostle Cannon’s 1896 diary is the only volume

²⁹³ First Presidency Office Journal, 20 Aug. 1891, copy in CR 1/48.

²⁹⁴ Joseph H. Dean, *Diary*, 20 Sept. 1891; Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 3 Oct. 1891; Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, p. 299.

²⁹⁵ Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 7 Oct. 1891; Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 7 Oct. 1891.

²⁹⁶ Transcript of testimony before the Master in Chancery, p. 120, Microfilm #695, LDS Church Archives; *Deseret Evening News*, 20 Oct. 1891, p. 5; *Deseret Weekly News*, 24 Oct. 1891, p. 580.

²⁹⁷ Joseph F. Smith to I. E. D. Zundell, 21 Dec. 1891, Smith Papers; Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, pp. 487–90.

²⁹⁸ George Q. Cannon to George Teasdale, 18 July 1892, First Presidency Letterbook; Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 24 Oct. 1894; also 19 Oct. 1894.

²⁹⁹ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 16 Feb. 1899, p. 4; Smoot Case 2:67–69, 141–44, 4:476.

missing of his many diaries, but Church records and personal diaries from the Mexican colonies confirm that he was not in Mexico in June. Joseph F. Smith's letter from Catalina Island in June 1896 and his later testimony verify that it was impossible for him to perform the plural marriage aboard ship, because the Cannons and Smiths took deck passage, which eliminated any privacy for such a ceremony.³⁰⁰

Joseph F. Smith's wife Edna, who accompanied her husband and the Cannon honeymooners on that trip, provided the cryptic key to the marriage when she told Apostle Reed Smoot that "Orson Smith performed the ceremony."³⁰¹ Orson Smith, a member of the Cache (Utah) Stake presidency and no relation, did not accompany the Cannons and Smiths on this trip, but reference to him as officiator would indicate that the ceremony occurred in Utah, rather than in California or on the Pacific. However, Orson Smith did not perform temple marriages even in Logan, and Lillian Hamlin did not enter the Logan Temple in 1896.³⁰² Significantly, Orson Smith had been second counselor in the Cache Stake presidency and later became stake president. His name was a code for Joseph F. Smith who was second counselor in the First Presidency in 1896 and became Church President in 1901.

Wilford Woodruff had approved Abraham H. Cannon's entry into a proxy polygamous marriage on behalf of his brother. When Lillian Hamlin was endowed in the Salt Lake Temple on 17 June 1896, she was sealed by proxy to the deceased David H. Cannon. Abraham H. Cannon was the proxy, and Joseph F. Smith performed the sealing. The next day, the Smiths and Cannons left Salt Lake City for California. Therefore, Joseph F. Smith actually performed his only post-Manifesto polygamous marriage as a proxy ceremony in the Salt Lake Temple for Abraham H. Cannon but could legally claim that he simply officiated in a sealing on behalf of the deceased brother.³⁰³

³⁰⁰ Joseph F. Smith to Julina Smith, 21 June 1896, Smith Papers; Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, 9 April 1904, in Joseph F. Smith Personal Letterbook, LDS Church Archives.

³⁰¹ Carl A. Badger, Diary, 9 Dec. 1905. This quote was preceded by "(L.C.," in the diary, law student Badger's reference *loco citato* back to Edna Smith whom he identified earlier as telling Smoot something. Cannon, "After the Manifesto," p. 35, note 37, mistakenly assumed the abbreviation referred to Lewis Cannon.

³⁰² Logan Temple Sealing Records, GS; Logan Temple Record Book of Recommends Received, LDS Church Archives; Andrew Jenson, *L.D.S. Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901-36) 1:407.

³⁰³ Salt Lake Temple Living Endowment Record, 17 June 1896, GS; Salt Lake Temple Deceased Sealing Book C, p. 19, 17 June 1896, GS; Wilford Woodruff, Diary, 18 June 1896. In the Nauvoo Temple record book of sealings for the dead of January-February 1846, one ceremony united the living woman for eternity to the deceased husband and for time to the proxy husband. As an assistant recorder for the Salt Lake Endowment House in earlier years, Joseph F. Smith recopied these Nauvoo sealings in which he had special interest because many of them involved his martyred father and uncle. He also copied early Utah proxy sealings and was thus conversant with the dual nature of this single ceremony. Even in early Utah, however, not every man who acted as proxy in a sealing with a living woman became her "proxy husband," and by 1896 it was no longer customary for a single proxy sealing to have the dual function it once had. Joseph F. Smith never had to answer a direct question about performing this polygamous marriage in the Salt Lake Temple because every time he was asked about the Cannon marriage, it was in the context of the claim that the ceremony

The only other activity of Joseph F. Smith in new polygamous marriages during the Woodruff administration was to give specific permission for men to enter into polygamy. The family of Bishop Loren Harmer of Springville claims that Joseph F. Smith encouraged him in entering plural marriage in 1897.³⁰⁴ While they both were at New York City in February 1898, Joseph W. Summerhays “talked some private business over with Pres Smith. . . . I told him some of the brethren were getting wives and I asked him if it would be alright if I took one. He said it would under certain conditions.”³⁰⁵ Joseph H. Dean talked with Counselor Smith, a close friend, in April 1898 about the arrangements for marrying a plural wife, but it was George Q. Cannon who gave final approval and prepared the necessary paperwork for the Mexico ceremony.³⁰⁶ Counselor Smith also knew that Counselor Cannon had authorized Apostle Cowley to perform plural marriages in the United States beginning that same month: “Brother Joseph F. Smith told me on two occasions that Brother Cannon had the authority and Brother Woodruff didn’t want to be known in it.”³⁰⁷ At the end of the summer of 1898, James Hood married a plural wife in Mexico and told his brother that Joseph F. Smith gave him verbal permission for the marriage that Ivins performed on the basis of a recommendation probably signed by George Q. Cannon. President Smith later denied this and told the brother’s bishop, “The man is not living, or the man is not dead that ever could say I ever gave my consent for any one to take a plural wife since the manifesto.”³⁰⁸

Joseph F. Smith seemed to acquiesce in Lorenzo Snow’s restrictions on polygamy until 1900. Then President Snow’s efforts to stop unlawful cohabitation with pre-Manifesto plural wives apparently were unacceptable. When President Snow proposed an end to all polygamous cohabitation in a temple meeting on 30 December 1899, Counselor Smith objected. Two of his plural wives were then pregnant. Apostle Young recorded that the decision of the

occurred aboard ship between San Pedro and Catalina Island. According to Cannon family tradition, Joseph F. Smith also performed a polygamous ceremony for George M. Cannon and Ellen C. Steffensen. See Cannon, “After the Manifesto,” p. 35, note 33. On the contrary, Matthias F. Cowley’s marriage record shows that Cowley performed the plural marriage for Cannon and Steffensen in Salt Lake City on 17 June 1901. Cowley also stated that he was the officiator of this Cannon marriage in Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve, 10 May 1911.

³⁰⁴ *A History of the Harmer Family* (Salt Lake City: The Harmer Family Genealogical Society, 1959), p. 98, says that this conversation occurred in Utah County in the “Spring of 1897,” Joseph F. Smith spoke in Provo at the Utah Stake conference on 19 April 1896 but not again between this date and Harmer’s marriage in Mexico in November 1897. Utah Stake Minutes, 1896–97, LDS Church Archives; Harmer Family Group Sheets, GS. George Q. Cannon spoke at Utah Stake conference on 17 April 1897; and since he began issuing recommends for plural marriages in Mexico in June 1897, it is possible that the family tradition mistakenly identified the wrong counselor in the First Presidency.

³⁰⁵ Joseph W. Summerhays, *Diary*, 25 Feb. 1898, LDS Church Archives; statement of Summerhays in Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 8 Oct. 1910.

³⁰⁶ Joseph H. Dean, *Diary*, 21 April, 23 April, 3 May, 10 May 1898.

³⁰⁷ Statement of Matthias F. Cowley in Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve, 10 May 1911.

³⁰⁸ Anthony W. Ivins *Marriage Record*, 10 Aug. 1898; James Hood Family Group Sheets; John M. Whitaker Edited Journal, 2:599, Oct. 1906, University of Utah.

meeting was "Brethren must not have children born to them by their wives in this state." Nevertheless, Joseph F. Smith's wives bore him three polygamous children in Salt Lake City after this decision.³⁰⁹

Although his reasons are not presently clear, in 1900 Joseph F. Smith arranged for new plural marriages to be performed without President Snow's knowledge and in direct opposition to his total prohibition of new plural marriages at the time. In the fall of 1899, Benjamin Cluff unsuccessfully tried to have Anthony W. Ivins perform his plural marriage in Mexico. Ivins had reported this attempt to Apostle Lyman during general conference in Salt Lake City. Joseph F. Smith strongly criticized Ivins in person for that action and more calmly explained in a letter of 6 February 1900 that Ivins should have reported the matter to President Snow rather than to an apostle, then indicated his dissatisfaction with the current polygamy restriction that had embarrassed Cluff:

I know nothing about his domestic arrangements nor do I want to, the less I know about some things the better for me at least and perhaps for others concerned. . . . my motto is and always has been to protect to the uttermost in my power the rights and the secrets, if secrets there may be, of my friends and the friends of the kingdom of God. I have no sympathy whatever with the prevailing feeling which seems to be leading some to the setting of stakes and fixing of meets and bounds to the purposes and policies of Providence in such a way as to establish almost insurmountable difficulties which may rise up to vex them and others in the future.

He then added that he believed in "all the revelations" of the Prophet Joseph Smith, a phrase that became a code for polygamy after the Manifesto.³¹⁰

New plural marriages had not only stopped in Mexico since Ivins complained about the Cluff matter in October 1899, but Apostle Matthias F. Cowley shortly thereafter stopped performing plural marriages in the United States. Counselor George Q. Cannon was hesitant to send more men to him due to President Snow's adamant refusal to allow plural marriages even in Mexico. Counselor Cannon, however, was anxious to allow his son Hugh the privilege of marrying plurally six years after the unsuccessful effort to make him a proxy husband for his dead half-brother David. At the same time, Counselor Smith became involved with the polygamous courtship of Margaret Peart (Cardall) and the first counselor's nephew, John M. Cannon. President Smith had authorized Joseph W. Summerhays to marry her early in 1898, but she had second thoughts about the marriage. John M. Cannon courted her during the last months of the Woodruff administration when permission for new polygamy was available. Now she wanted to marry John and appealed to Counselor Smith for assistance because she was a divorcée who had to work to support her children. According to family tradition, Joseph F. Smith "forced" John M. Cannon to marry her because of the previous courtship and her present economic circumstances. As a result of the cooperation between Counselors

³⁰⁹ Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 30 Dec. 1899; Brigham Young, Jr., *Diary*, 30 Dec. 1899; Seymour B. Young, *Diary*, 30 Dec. 1899, LDS Church Archives; Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, pp. 489-90.

³¹⁰ Joseph F. Smith to Anthony W. Ivins, 6 Feb. 1900, Joseph F. Smith Personal Letterbook; and Ivins Papers, USHS.

Cannon and Smith, Apostle Matthias F. Cowley performed the ceremonies for Hugh J. Cannon and John M. Cannon on 18 July 1900. These were the first plural marriages Cowley had performed in seven months, but now that he had the blessing of the two Presidency counselors Cowley performed several almost every month thereafter.³¹¹

Two weeks later, Joseph F. Smith was in the Mexican colonies with Seymour B. Young, senior president of the Council of Seventy, and decided to grant Benjamin Cluff the polygamous marriage in Mexico that President Snow had refused to authorize. Cluff later told his daughter, “Brother Joseph F. Smith told me that I could marry Aunt Florence,” and that the marriage was performed in her home.³¹² On 8 August 1900, Joseph F. Smith and Seymour B. Young spoke at Colonia Diaz, where Florence Reynolds had been living under the name of Cluff for nearly a year hoping to be allowed to marry Benjamin Cluff. Young recorded in his diary: “Last evening after meeting I was called to administer to and bless Sr Florence Reynolds Cluff in connection with her husband I gave her such a blessing as she will never forget. Neither will Bro Cluff forget.” She gave birth to their first child less than ten months later.³¹³ The next day at Colonia Dublan, Joseph I. Clawson (whose first wife was childless) asked Counselor Smith to make an exception to the ban on new plural marriages in Mexico, and Seymour B. Young recorded: “During this eve Pres Smith asked me if I would like to go with Bro Pratt [Juarez Stake Counselor Helaman Pratt, a post-Manifesto polygamist] and minister to a couple who needed my administration. I went & attend[ed] to this duty they were Jos. I [Clawson] & Celestia Durfee,” and then he recorded the words of the sealing ceremony for time and eternity.³¹⁴

³¹¹ Note 305; Hugh J. Cannon and John M. Cannon Family Group Sheets; compare references (including her birthdate) to the intended plural wife “Maggie C.” in Joseph W. Summerhays, *Diary*, 19–20 Feb., 1–2 March, 4 March, 8 March, 17 March 1898, 28 April 1899. Matthias F. Cowley, *Marriage Record, 1898–1903*; John Bennion Cannon, *Oral History*, interviewed by Leonard R. Grover, 1980, p. 3, LDS Polygamy Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, BYU; Mary Bennion Powell document, 29 Jan. 1952, p. 50, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³¹² Fern Cluff Ingram, *Oral History*, interviewed by Leonard R. Grover, 1980, pp. 5, 7, LDS Polygamy Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, BYU.

³¹³ Diaz Ward Minutes, 17 Sept. 1899, 8 Aug. 1900, LDS Church Archives; Benjamin Cluff, Jr., Family Group Sheets; editorial statement of Stanley S. Ivins in Anthony W. Ivins, *Typed Diary*, p. 128, 18 May 1900; Asa Kienke, *Diary*, 29 Aug. 1900, BYU; Seymour B. Young, *Diary*, 7–9 Aug. 1900. Young’s dating in the diary is a little confused at this time, but the ward minutes and the fact of her residence in Diaz clarify the chronological details. Cluff’s diaries at BYU end on 15 April 1900 and do not resume until 1903. The entries for August 1900 were in Cluff’s diary of the BYA South American expedition, and he lost those diaries before his return to the United States. Florence’s father, First Presidency secretary George Reynolds, testified that the marriage occurred sometime between December 1899 and 1901. Smoot Case 2:39.

³¹⁴ Seymour B. Young, *Diary*, 9 Aug. 1900; Joseph I. Clawson Family Group Sheet says, “Parents were sealed in Mexico by visiting Apostle Sealed when married in Colonia Dublan.” Verlan M. LeBaron, *The LeBaron Story* (Lubbock, Tex.: Keels & Co., 1981), pp. 39–40 gives the background to this marriage and adds, “It was very dark and Brother Clawson could not see who performed the ceremony. The voice, however, sounded exactly like President Smith’s.”

Joseph F. Smith distanced himself from these post-Manifesto polygamous ceremonies by instructing Seymour B. Young to perform them, but he did so against the absolute prohibition of President Snow. While Smith and Young were in Mexico, the Church president reminded the apostles on 9 August 1900 of his earlier refusal to grant Cluff's request and told Alexander F. Macdonald on the 13th that he could not perform a plural marriage for Bishop John T. Whetten in Mexico because plural marriages were "forbidden" there as well as in the United States. When Joseph F. Smith returned to the Presidency's office on 17 August, one can imagine the irony with which he listened to Lorenzo Snow say that because of Cluff's persistent attempts to marry polygamously "he was not the proper kind of man" to lead Brigham Young Academy's expedition to South America.³¹⁵

But President Snow's continued refusal to allow the performance of polygamous marriages in Mexico impelled his second counselor to establish a permanent avenue for those ordinances in the colonies independent of Juarez Stake President Anthony W. Ivins and without the knowledge or authorization of the Church president. After Alexander F. Macdonald failed in August to get permission to perform the Whetten marriage, Macdonald conferred with Joseph F. Smith during October 1900 conference and apparently obtained verbal permission. At any rate, Macdonald performed Whetten's plural marriage later that month in Colonia Garcia. Also in October 1900, Counselor Smith returned Whetten's written request in a letter advising Macdonald that he wanted to meet with him privately to discuss the matter when he and Apostle Owen Woodruff visited the Mexican colonies in November 1900. In that month, Macdonald began performing polygamous marriages for scores of Juarez Stake residents who requested that privilege. When Macdonald's son-in-law presented the records of these ceremonies to President Joseph F. Smith twelve years later, the Church president said, "Brother Brown, all of this work that Brother Macdonald performed was duly authorized by me"; and on the manila envelope in which he placed these polygamous marriage records, he wrote, "Rec'd Dec. 3d 1912. J.F.S. Records of Marriages. From O.P. Brown Records of A F Macdonald."³¹⁶

Joseph F. Smith took Apostle Owen Woodruff into his confidence about these arrangements. The younger General Authority not only referred Mormon colonists to Macdonald for plural marriages during this visit, but also

³¹⁵ Journal History, 9 Aug. 1900, p. 2; 13 Aug. 1900, p. 1; 17 Aug. 1900, p. 4. President Snow's comments about Cluff's attempted polygamy resulted from Heber J. Grant reporting at the 9 August meeting that Cluff was still attempting to enter polygamy. Statement by Reed Smoot in Carl A. Badger, *Diary*, 9 Dec. 1905.

³¹⁶ Joseph F. Smith to Alexander F. Macdonald, 26 Oct. 1900, Macdonald Papers; John T. Whetten to A. F. Macdonald, 12 July 1900; Orson P. Brown, *Autobiography*, p. 68, USHS; Alexander F. Macdonald, *Marriage Records, 1900-03*, in Joseph F. Smith papers, LDS Church Archives. John Echols entered plural marriage at this time in the Mexican colonies and named the first child "Joseph," which apparently honored Joseph F. Smith for authorizing the ceremony, just as Echols and his legal wife had previously named their first child "John Henry" in honor of Apostle John Henry Smith who sealed them following their civil marriage. John Echols Family Group Sheets, GS; Conejos County, Colorado, *Marriage Record*, 15 Feb. 1894; John Henry Smith, *Diary*, 13 Aug. 1894.

prophesied in the name of Jesus Christ in the Juarez Stake conference that no year would ever pass without children being born into polygamy. After making that prophecy, Woodruff turned toward Counselor Smith and said, "Now if I'm wrong, there sits the man that can set me right." Joseph F. Smith did not correct him.³¹⁷

However, the second counselor acted without the Church president's knowledge or permission in authorizing Macdonald to perform plural marriages for residents of Juarez Stake. In a temple meeting in April 1901 at which Counselor Smith presided in the absence of Presidents Snow and Cannon, an apostle asked whether it was possible for men to marry plural wives outside the United States: "Prest. Snow says no. Joseph F. Smith said he could not say otherwise."³¹⁸ When a counselor in the Juarez Stake presidency complained that Macdonald was performing plural marriages in Mexico, Lorenzo Snow told Apostle John Henry Smith later in April, "No man in this earth today is authorized to exercise the keys but myself, and if A.F. McDonald or any other man is doing it and you find out that fact, you are authorized to deal with him or have the church dignitaries of that section deal with him in his fellowship."³¹⁹ Apostle Smith communicated that warning to Macdonald who stopped performing the ceremonies.

It is uncertain whether Lorenzo Snow or Joseph F. Smith authorized the plural marriages of several apostles in 1901 (most of whom married after Counselor Cannon died). If Joseph F. Smith did not authorize Apostle Owen Woodruff's plural marriage in January 1901, he gave it after-the-fact sanction as Church president. John W. Taylor's plural wife claimed that when Taylor married two plural wives in August 1901 (while Joseph F. Smith was the only counselor in the First Presidency), he had requested permission in the Salt Lake Temple: "Smith replied in parables, gave consent, but patted him on the shoulder and said, 'Be careful, John.'"³²⁰ The next month, Counselor Smith apparently sent word through a visiting apostle to Alexander F. Macdonald not to worry about Lorenzo Snow's threat of excommunication and to continue performing plural marriages, which he did. Joseph F. Smith had read William Clayton's Nauvoo diary and undoubtedly remembered the Prophet's similar counsel in 1843 when official Church denials also concealed private Church

³¹⁷ Orson P. Brown, Interview, 2 March 1939, Kimball Young Papers. Wayne Earl Carroll, Oral History, interviewed by Marsha Martin, 1983, p. 26, LDS Polygamy Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, BYU, relates his father's account of the Woodruff prophecy and invitation for correction, and says that reference was to polygamous children born "in this Church." Joseph C. Bentley, Notebook of Juarez Stake, 18–19 Nov. 1900, relates only the prophecy without mentioning the invitation for correction but says that the reference was to polygamous children born "in this country in India or where it may be." The difference is crucial, but at present it is not clear what the exact wording was. This conference is not included in the typed minutes of Juarez Stake, LDS Church Archives.

³¹⁸ Anthon H. Lund, Diary, 18 April 1901.

³¹⁹ Testimony of John Henry Smith in Smoot Case 2:304–5; John Henry Smith, Diary, 22 April, 27 May 1901.

³²⁰ Abraham Owen Woodruff, Diary, 13 Jan. 1901; Avery Clark Woodruff Papers, LDS Church Archives; Nettie M. Taylor Interview, July 1947. The notes of the interview wrongly identify Smith as Church president at this time, rather than counselor.

practice of polygamy.³²¹ The difference in September 1901 was that it was a First Presidency counselor apparently telling a local patriarch not to worry about the intention of the Church president to have him excommunicated if he performed plural marriages the president had forbidden.

What is certain is that Counselor Smith had a strong disagreement with President Snow and Counselor Cannon in February 1901 over providing civil protection for those who were violating the cohabitation provisions of the law, of the First Presidency's 1891 court testimony and of Lorenzo Snow's 1900 official statement. The Church attorney had drafted what was known as the Evans Bill that would prohibit anyone from filing adultery or unlawful cohabitation charges against a married man except the legal wife or her close relatives: "The design of this measure is to curtail the power of our enemies who seek to bring trouble upon the Latter-day Saints by prosecuting polygamists for unlawful co-habitation," commented Apostle Rudger Clawson. When the First Presidency and Twelve met to discuss the merits of this bill and whether to lobby for its passage in the Utah legislature, only George Q. Cannon voted against it because he regarded it as unwise and Lorenzo Snow then expressed uncertainty about the measure.³²² At this point, Joseph F. Smith burst out with what apostles discreetly described as "some very warm words," "some warmth," "unpleasantness," and "feelings of an improper character." President Snow said Counselor Smith "was at fault" and had him apologize to the Quorum and to Counselor Cannon, who then asked the second counselor's forgiveness.³²³ Like other events, this incident demonstrated that the three members of the First Presidency during Lorenzo Snow's administration were not unified either in suppressing plural marriage or encouraging it, but instead were divided into shifting coalitions of two to one.

After George Q. Cannon's death in April 1901, Joseph F. Smith, as sole counselor, was one who sent prominent Mormons to Matthias F. Cowley for polygamous ceremonies; and upon Lorenzo Snow's death in October 1901, his successor Joseph F. Smith promoted and protected new polygamous marriages more actively than the two previous Church presidents. Cowley had performed a plural marriage during April 1901 conference for California Mission President Joseph E. Robinson in accordance with arrangements made by Cannon, and during October 1901 conference Cowley performed another ceremony for Robinson in Salt Lake City according to arrangements made by Joseph F. Smith. From then until 1918, President Smith provided Robinson with an additional

³²¹ Joseph F. Smith affidavits of 9 and 17 August 1869 that he had read William Clayton's diary for 1843 and had made exact copies of passages concerning polygamy, in Affidavit Book 1:67, 4:69-70, Smith papers; William Clayton, *Diary*, 19 Oct. 1843; discussion connected with note 54.

³²² John Henry Smith, *Diary*, 4 Feb., 7 Feb. 1901; Smoot Case 1:11 (text of bill); Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 26 Feb. 1901.

³²³ John Henry Smith, *Diary*, 26 Feb. 1901; Abraham Owen Woodruff, *Diary*, 26 and 28 Feb. 1901; Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 28 Feb. 1901. Anthon H. Lund found President Smith's outburst so disturbing that he departed from English to record half of this entry in Danish and half in shorthand.

allowance of \$1800 yearly for the support of his post-Manifesto plural wives.³²⁴ President Smith's first cousin once removed, John F. Burton, appealed to him for permission to marry a plural wife due to his first wife's childlessness; the president agreed and sent him to Apostle Cowley who performed the ceremony in Salt Lake City in November 1901.³²⁵

The assistant recorder in the Salt Lake Temple informed the Church president that the idea was becoming common that "when a man receives *one* wife, under the Covenant, he thereby complies with the Celestial Order of marriage, and that his exaltation and eternal progression are just as certain as if he had received a plurality of wives." President Smith, at the next testimony meeting in the Salt Lake Temple on 5 January 1902, preached that "a man can not obtain a fullness, only through obedience to that law. He emphasized the fact, that it means *must* not can or may, etc."³²⁶

Kanab's Patriarch Thomas Chamberlain married a plural wife in Salt Lake City in 1900 who established her residence there and gave birth to her first child in 1902. A few weeks later she had an operation due to birth complications and was nursed by "Aunt Julina" Smith, a wife of Joseph F. Smith, who also housed the woman and child in strict seclusion until 1904 in the back rooms of her own home on First North. Julina had already moved into the Beehive House with her husband. Another wife, Alice, knew that a widowed friend had become the plural wife in 1902 of Stake President William H. Smart; and for several years, Sister Smith hosted them both at a variety of social events, including evenings in President Smith's box at the Salt Lake Theatre. In February 1904, the entire Joseph F. Smith family celebrated Hyrum Smith's birthday at the Beehive House with a program that included a comic lament of the evils of the Manifesto and a musical rendition of one of the central arguments for post-1890 polygamy: "The Spinster's convention was a laughable fare 15 of the Smith sisters acted. 'Oh that manifesto' was sung with much gusto." This joke was particularly at the expense of one of the guests: Cousin Frederick M. Smith who would later become president of the anti-polygamous RLDS Church.³²⁷

³²⁴ Note 287; author's interview with Stephen E. Robinson at Provo, Utah, in 1966; Joseph E. Robinson Family Group Sheets, GS; Matthias F. Cowley Marriage Record; Heber J. Grant, Journal, 2 May 1919.

³²⁵ Cowley stated that "Burton, a relative of President Joseph F. Smith, came to me from him." Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve, 10 May 1911. Burton's first wife Musetta told J. Reuben Clark that President Smith encouraged the marriage. JRC Office Diary, 28 Nov. 1941, BYU. The biography of John Fielding Burton in *William W. Burton Family*, vol. 1 (N.p., n.d., various pagings), copy at LDS Church Archives stated: "After much consideration they decided that John should marry Etta's sister Florence. The matter was presented to President Joseph F. Smith, and after prayerful consideration received his approval and blessing." John F. Burton Family Group Sheets; Matthias F. Cowley, Marriage Record, 1898–1903.

³²⁶ Duncan M. McAllister to Joseph F. Smith, 19 Dec. 1901. Smith Papers. Joseph Christensen, Diary, 5 Jan. 1902, LDS Church Archives; italics in original.

³²⁷ "The Life of Mary E. W. Chamberlain," pp. 108, 110–13, BYU; William H. Smart, Diary, 6 and 8 April 1911; Anthon H. Lund, Diary, 9 Feb. 1904. Mary Woolley claimed that

Within six months after becoming Church president, Joseph F. Smith considered expanding the polygamous opportunities in Mexico. In March 1902 his counselor overheard President Smith in the First Presidency office tell a man who was unhappily married, "You can go to Mexico and marry a bride there."³²⁸ Nevertheless, the Church president was not yet ready to reestablish the recommend system for U.S. residents to visit Mexico for these ordinances; he knew Matthias F. Cowley was already taking care of those requests. But he instructed Anthony W. Ivins to resume performing polygamous marriages for Juarez Stake residents, the first of which occurred on 9 March 1902 after the two-and-a-half year suspension originally imposed upon Ivins by Lorenzo Snow.³²⁹

President Smith obviously worried about newspaper rumors of new polygamy, charges by Protestant ministers in Utah about Mormon violations of the Manifesto, and the judicial call for a grand jury in March 1903 to investigate new polygamy in Salt Lake County (the first grand jury since 1896). At the meeting with ward and stake leaders on 7 April 1903, President Smith said they ought to prefer death to betraying the Church, and he affirmed that he would sacrifice his own life "to protect your liberty." Three days later he reported to Apostle Reed Smoot that "my nerves have been sorely tried," especially about "questions affecting Mexico." And well he might, because the grand jury was scheduled to investigate the marital relations of Joseph A. Silver and Elizabeth Farnes whom Ivins had married in Mexico in 1898 on a recommend signed by George Q. Cannon. They returned to Salt Lake City where she had several polygamous children. President Smith was understandably cautious about sending U.S. residents to Mexico for polygamous ceremonies, but (for reasons that are presently unclear) he did not stop Cowley from performing polygamous marriages. He simply had him temporarily go to Idaho to perform them.³³⁰

Within two days after the grand jury was empaneled in late May, however, the anti-Mormon *Salt Lake Tribune* lamented that the grand jury seemed to be unable to uncover proof of new polygamous marriages and soon moved the story from page one to the back pages. The grand jury of four gentiles and three Mormons dismissed the charges of post-Manifesto polygamy as groundless rumors.³³¹

she married Thomas Chamberlain in Mexico, but the Matthias F. Cowley Marriage Record shows that the marriage occurred in Salt Lake City. Smart's diary for 23 April 1920 shows that at the funeral of his post-Manifesto plural wife, one of the speakers was President Smith's son, David A., a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

³²⁸ Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 11 March 1902. Lund wrote this part of the entry in Latin: "eo dicit: Potesne ire Mexico et ubi nubem nubere."

³²⁹ Anthony W. Ivins Marriage Record.

³³⁰ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 March 1903; Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 7 April 1903, Anthony W. Ivins, 7 April 1903; Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, 10 April 1903, Joseph F. Smith Personal Letterbook; *Deseret News*, 5 June 1903; Joseph A. Silver Family Group Sheets, GS; Anthony W. Ivins Marriage Record, 24 Jan. 1898; George Q. Cannon to Anthony W. Ivins, 27 Dec. 1897, Ivins Papers, USHS; Matthias F. Cowley, Marriage Record, 1898-1903.

³³¹ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 May 1903, p. 1, 25 May 1903, p. 8, 5 June 1903, p. 9, 8 July 1903, p. 5.

President Smith apparently now felt secure in reestablishing a system of sending U.S. citizens to Mexico for plural marriage ceremonies, and Ivins performed the first such marriage on 13 June 1903 for William A. Morton.³³² Before this, Byron H. Allred of Wyoming had written and later requested similar permission in an interview with President Smith, who sent him to see Apostle Matthias F. Cowley for arrangements to have the ceremony performed in Mexico on a written recommend. It is obvious that if Allred had simply gone to Cowley directly, Cowley would have performed the ceremony at his home in Idaho, as he did for several other couples in the April–June period, but because Allred had involved the Church president, he had to move to Mexico where the ordinance was performed by Ivins on 15 June 1903 for him and a brother-in-law who had joined Allred.³³³ At the end of July, President Smith met with his first cousin once removed, Central States Mission President James G. Duffin, whose post-Manifesto plural wife had just given birth, and authorized him “to use \$10.00 per month out of the tithes of the mission for a special purpose [supporting the polygamous child].”³³⁴

By the fall of 1903, Joseph F. Smith had decided to expand new polygamous marriages even further. During early September 1903, he was in the Mormon settlements of Canada to reorganize the Alberta Stake and organize the Taylor Stake. Up until this time, no polygamous marriages had been performed in Canada for local Mormons; but within a week Patriarch John A. Woolf performed the first such marriage for Franklin D. Leavitt. Later John W. Taylor, resident apostle in Canada, said he acted as intermediary in commissioning Woolf: “I simply delivered a message to him from some in authority.” Matthias F. Cowley, who was Woolf’s brother-in-law, answered a question about Woolf’s authority by saying: “All I know, I think a Brother Le[a]vitt went to President Smith and asked him if it would be alright and he referred him to Brother Taylor who had charge of all things in Canada.” Supporting evidence for President Smith’s authorization of these Canadian plural

³³² Anthony W. Ivins, Marriage Record. Ivins performed a plural marriage as early as 10 March 1903 for U.S. resident Daniel B. Jones, but Jones had been in Juarez Stake from November 1902 to March 1903 as a YMMIA missionary, and it is possible that he was able to persuade Ivins that he had the status of a resident and did not need a First Presidency recommend. That argument had not persuaded Ivins during the Snow presidency, but he knew that Smith was more relaxed. Jensen, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia* 2:106; Daniel B. Jones, Family Group Sheets.

³³³ Anthony W. Ivins, Marriage Record; Matthias F. Cowley, Marriage Record; B. Harvey Allred, *A Leaf in Review* (Caldwell, Ida.: Caxton Printers, 1933), pp. 200–201; Byron Harvey Allred, Jr., Journal, quoted in Rhea A. Kunz, *Voices of Women Approbating Celestial or Plural Marriage: My Sacred Heritage* (Draper, Utah: Review and Preview Publishers, 1978), p. 363; [Rulon C. Allred], “Priesthood Items,” *8 Truth* (Feb. 1943): 200; [Rulon C. Allred], “Biographical Sketch of the Life of Mary Evelyn Clark Allred,” *Star of Truth* 2 (Nov. 1954): 298, 300, 301; [Rulon C. Allred], unsigned statement in Fulton, *Most Holy Principle* 4:86. Of all these accounts of the Allred marriage and its prearrangements, those by Rulon C. Allred must be used with the greatest care because it can be demonstrated that he often altered facts even in his own family’s polygamous history to bolster his Fundamental claims for continued polygamy. See also Note 378.

³³⁴ James G. Duffin, *Diary*, 27 July 1903; Duffin Family Group Sheet; Matthias F. Cowley, Marriage Record.

marriages from 1903 onward is found in the fact that the records of these ordinances have been kept under First Presidency control.³³⁵

After leaving Canada, Joseph F. Smith and his party traveled to Wyoming. While in the Big Horn Stake, he listened to John W. Taylor defend polygamy in a public sermon on 14 September 1903, after which Matthias F. Cowley performed a polygamous marriage for Stake President Byron Sessions. When asked later about that marriage, Cowley said that he "had the idea that President Smith was not opposed to these marriages if it could be done without trouble with the government."³³⁶ President Smith had so thoroughly communicated his sentiment in favor of post-Manifesto polygamy to his secretary George F. Gibbs, that after Heber J. Grant was called to preside over the mission in Liverpool, England, in October 1903, "Your secty. gave me to understand that I was a fool, having no sons and with the great city of Liverpool in which to hide a wife, if I did not get one. I had just come home from a mission and took it for granted he knew what he was talking about." George F. Gibbs also proposed polygamous marriage to a woman in 1903. She responded by asking whether the Manifesto was "just a gesture," and the First Presidency secretary replied, "Marvelous that you can see so far."³³⁷ Heber J. Grant later wrote that Apostle Abraham Owen Woodruff performed plural marriages in Mexico in November 1903 because Woodruff "was under the impression that President Joseph F. Smith sanctioned those marriages"; and, on 31 January 1904, when Ivins performed the last plural marriage in Mexico for a visiting U.S. resident, it was for John A. Silver, a business associate of President Smith who likely gave him the necessary recommend.³³⁸

³³⁵ Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 30 Aug.–8 Sept. 1903; Alberta Stake Minutes, 30 Aug.–2 Sept. 1903; Taylor Stake Minutes, 31 Aug.–6 Sept. 1903. Franklin D. Leavitt Family Group Sheets, GS, indicate he married Jane S. Glenn on 11 September 1903 at Cardston and was sealed on 16 September 1904 at the Logan Temple, whereas *The Life of Thomas Rowell Leavitt and His Descendants* (Lethbridge, Alberta: The Herald Printers, 1975), p. 259 quotes Leavitt as saying, "On Sept. 16th, 1903, I married Jane Glen in the Logan Temple," and this published record gives his first wife's death as 1903 rather than the 1904 death date in the family group sheets. Statement of John W. Taylor and of Matthias F. Cowley in Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve, 22 Feb. and 10 May 1911. When David O. McKay pressed Taylor to name the man who directed him to instruct Woolf to perform the marriages, "J. W. Taylor: I would not wish to take issue with the President of the Church, or any one who is at the head of the Church. I went to President Smith's office the other day . . . and he said he had never authorized any one to perform a plural marriage. I am not saying that he is the one to whom reference was made, but I do not want to say any more on that point." (Ibid., 1 March 1911). Concerning the date of the polygamous marriage of Heber S. Allen for whom John A. Woolf officiated in Cardston on 19 September 1903, his family group sheet noted: "This date substantiated by a letter written by Henry E. Christiansen [of the Special Information Section of the LDS Genealogical Department] to Pres. Hugh B. Brown [of the First Presidency], dated 16 Nov 1966." Henry E. Christiansen subsequently told me during an interview in Salt Lake City that his section did not have the marriage records of John A. Woolf and that all such records were under the control of the First Presidency.

³³⁶ Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 14 Sept. 1903, 1 Dec. 1910; statement of Matthias F. Cowley in Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve, 10 May 1911; Byron Sessions Family Group Sheets.

³³⁷ Heber J. Grant to Joseph F. Smith, 5 Jan. 1906, copy in Grant Papers; notarized statement of Olea S. Hill, 13 Sept. 1944, Box 4 of Milton Shipp Musser Papers, USHS. She added in her affidavit that she did not accept the proposal.

³³⁸ Heber J. Grant to Linnie Keeler Naegle, 29 Oct. 1934, LDS Church Archives; Anthony W. Ivins, Marriage Record; Smith Business Papers, LDS Church Archives.

Joseph F. Smith continued the familiar pattern of denying publicly what was happening privately throughout these years. More significantly he was keeping his own counselors and half of the apostles in the dark about what he and the other half were doing to promote new polygamous marriages. At the temple meeting of 17 April 1902, Counselor Lund recorded, "Polygamy was referred to and Pres Smith said he must follow the example of Pres. Snow and not give any permission to such marriages." Apostle Clawson added the phrase, "within the United States" in his diary, but even if President Smith said those words, that solved only half of the problem of what he was actually allowing despite the denial.³³⁹ In 1902, when members of the BYU board of trustees complained that the institution's president Benjamin Cluff had actually succeeded in marrying a new plural wife, Joseph F. Smith (who had authorized the ceremony) "said that such a thing could not be, with the sanction of the church, and that if Cluff had done it he had done something he had no authority to do."³⁴⁰ At the Salt Lake Temple fast and testimony meeting of 25 May 1902, President Smith testified to the truth of plural marriage but added, "at the present time there was no opportunity for any person to practice this principle."³⁴¹ More comprehensively, at a meeting on 5 June 1902 of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve (half of whom had married new plural wives or had performed such marriages for others): "Pres. Smith denied that any plural marriages were taking place to his knowledge in the church either in U.S. or any other country. It is thoroughly understood and has been for years that no one is authorised to perform any such marriages."³⁴² On 19 February 1903, President Smith told the temple meeting that rumors expressed by Kanab Stake members that plural marriages were being solemnized under the sanction of the Presidency were "foundationless." At this time, the post-Manifesto plural wife of Kanab's stake counselor-patriarch Thomas Chamberlain was secluded in the house of President Smith's wife Julina, but the Church President told the Quorum of Twelve that he was sending two apostles to Orderville to "endeavor to correct any wrong impression in the minds of the people." The two he sent were Matthias F. Cowley (who had performed the Chamberlain plural marriage in Salt Lake City) and George Teasdale (whose own post-1890 polygamous marriage had been repeatedly described in the newspapers). When the Presidency and apostles discussed rumors of new polygamous marriages exactly nine months later, "President Smith told the brethren pointedly that he had not given his consent to anyone to solemnize plural marriages; that he did not know of any such cases, and if members of our Church have entered into such

³³⁹ Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 17 April 1902; Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 17 April 1902.

³⁴⁰ Testimony of Reed Smoot in Smoot Case 3: 198–99. Although the trustees investigated several charges against Cluff in 1902, no record of this statement appears in the abbreviated minutes of the Board of Trustees, BYU.

³⁴¹ Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 25 May 1902.

³⁴² Brigham Young, Jr., *Diary*, 5 June 1902.

alliances, they have done it upon their own responsibility and without his approval or sanction, and they must therefore abide the consequences.”³⁴³

More than any other Church president after the 1890 Manifesto, Joseph F. Smith divided the Church against itself and apostle against brother apostle over the question of new polygamous marriages. He did it with the best of intent — to preserve “the Principle” as well as to protect the institution of the Church by filling official minutes of quorum meetings with repudiations of what he was actually allowing individual Church officers to do with his authorization and blessing as Church president. This allowed plausible denial to the Church’s enemies, but the policy created double definitions of authority, sanction, permission, knowledge, validity, loyalty, and truth — a wind that would begin to reap the whirlwind in 1904.

Against the advice of all of the Twelve Apostles (except Reed Smoot) and of national Republican leaders,³⁴⁴ Joseph F. Smith, an ardent Republican, encouraged Apostle Smoot to run for the U.S. Senate, which resulted in his election and in a protest filed by the Salt Lake Ministerial Association with the U.S. Senate against Smoot’s eligibility. Among the charges were that an apostle should not be a senator because:

This body of officials, of whom Senator-elect Smoot is one, also practice or connive at and encourage the practice of polygamy and polygamous cohabitation. . . .

At least three of the apostles have entered new polygamous relations since the manifesto of Wilford Woodruff. . . . That other polygamous relationships have, since statehood, been consummated within the church is just as certain, and in a monogamous community could easily be proven.³⁴⁵

The Senate admitted Smoot but voted to conduct hearings to determine his eligibility to retain his position.

On 25 February, Joseph F. Smith received the legal summons to testify, and became the first witness before the U.S. Senate Committee on Elections on 2 March 1904. Accompanying him on the train from Utah to Washington were two post-Manifesto polygamists who had been subpoenaed to testify. One had been married in the Logan Temple and the other had been married in Mexico.³⁴⁶

Under oath before the Senate, Joseph F. Smith led future witnesses by example. He volunteered that he had cohabited with his wives and that they had borne him eleven children since the Manifesto, even though he said that

³⁴³ Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 19 Feb. 1903, carbon copy in Heber J. Grant Papers; *Journal History*, 19 Nov. 1903, p. 3; also Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, and John Henry Smith, *Diary*, for 19 Nov.

³⁴⁴ *Deseret Evening News*, 9 Jan. 1902, 12 Jan. 1903, p. 1; Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 15 Jan., 25 June 1902; Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 16 Jan. 1902; Mark Hanna to John Henry Smith, 18 Dec. 1902, University of Utah; Milton R. Merrill, “Reed Smoot, Apostle in Politics” (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1950).

³⁴⁵ Smoot Case 1:9–10.

³⁴⁶ Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 25 Feb. 1904; Andrew Jenson, *Diary*, 1–2 March 1904, LDS Church Archives. The two were Charles E. Merrill and Loren Harmer.

the Manifesto “was a revelation to me.” Upon this point the following exchange then occurred:

Senator OVERMAN. If that is a revelation [requiring an end to unlawful cohabitation], are you not violating the laws of God?

Mr. SMITH. I have admitted that, Mr. Senator, a great many times here.³⁴⁷

Concerning the Evans Bill of 1901, he testified that he told only the Church attorney, no one else, that he favored it, and that he took no further interest in it.³⁴⁸ Upon being questioned several times about whether there had been any plural marriages after the 1890 Manifesto, Joseph F. Smith testified: “I know of no marriages occurring after the final decision of the Supreme Court of the United States on that question. . . . and from that time till to-day there has never been, to my knowledge, a plural marriage performed in accordance with the understanding, instruction, connivance, counsel, or permission of the presiding authorities of the church, or of the church, in any shape or form,” and when asked if he had performed or knew of any post-Manifesto plural marriages:

Mr. SMITH. No, sir; I never have.

The CHAIRMAN. Either in Mexico or —

Mr. SMITH. Nowhere on earth, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you know of any such.

Mr. SMITH. No, sir; I do not.

He also testified that he had never heard an apostle publicly advocate or defend plural marriage since the Manifesto.³⁴⁹ Concerning the Abraham H. Cannon plural marriage in 1896, President Smith testified that he did not know when Cannon married Lillian Hamlin, that he did not marry them, that he did not know she was engaged to marry Cannon’s deceased brother, that he had never talked with George Q. Cannon about Abram’s marrying Lillian, and that none of the current apostles had married plural wives since the Manifesto.³⁵⁰

Testimony in the Smoot Case was fundamentally different from the First Presidency’s testimony before the Master in Chancery in 1891. The emphasis of the questions and their answers in 1891 was on intent and future policy. The Smoot investigation focused on specifics of past activities within the Church by its officers and members. It was one thing in 1891 to blur statements of intent under oath; it was quite another in 1904 to deny the past. To tell less or more than the “whole truth” before the Senate Committee invited a perjury conviction punishable with up to five years’ imprisonment.³⁵¹ To refuse to answer

³⁴⁷ Smoot Case 1:129–30, 108, 335. President Smith’s comment about the Manifesto and revelation was a tongue-in-cheek play on words. See discussion connected with note 293.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. 1:312. See discussion connected with notes 322–323.

³⁴⁹ Ibid. 1:104, 129, 177, 210–11. See discussion connected with notes 298–317.

³⁵⁰ Ibid. 1:110–12, 143, 479. See discussion connected with notes 301–03, 320, 324.

³⁵¹ U.S., *Statutes at large* (1825), 4:118, Ch. 65, Sec. 13. These provisions were applied to perjury before Congress and Congressional Committees in U.S., *Statutes at Large* (1862), 12:33, Ch. 11. These statutes were still in force as of 1904: see U.S., *Statutes at Large* (1909), 35:111.

questions invited a conviction for contempt of Congress, which could result in a year's imprisonment but which had not been imposed for ten years.³⁵² Yet to refuse to answer certain questions or to tell the truth in 1904 invited worse consequences for the LDS Church including Reed Smoot's expulsion from the U.S. Senate, a Constitutional amendment against polygamy, disincorporation of the Church, disfranchisement of all Mormons, and criminal indictments of half of the General Authorities and hundreds of Latter-day Saints for polygamy. Joseph F. Smith set a pattern for all other witnesses in the Smoot investigation by exposing himself to public ridicule and to criminal prosecution for unlawful cohabitation by telling the truth about his personal marital relations, but at the same time risking a perjury indictment by concealing any evidence detrimental to the Church as an institution or to any individual (including himself) who acted in his capacity as a Church official in promoting post-Manifesto polygamy. As President Smith told another prospective witness in the Smoot case, "We should consider the interests of the Church rather than our own."³⁵³

After President Smith returned to Utah, Senator Smoot wrote two of his political subordinates there that the national press and leaders were more shocked at President Smith's admission about unlawful cohabitation and his intention to continue it than they were at "the fact of a few cases of new polygamous marriages." He expressed the hope that at the approaching April conference President Smith would issue an official statement advising the Latter-day Saints to cease their polygamous cohabitation and his intentions to cease his own.³⁵⁴ Smoot expected his lieutenants to communicate with President Smith; but on 29 March, one reported that his letter "was rubbing the fur the wrong way" and that President Smith "sets forth that enough manifestoes have been already issued, and you cannot expect more at the present state of feeling."³⁵⁵ By 5 April, the Church president had changed his mind and called a meeting of the First Presidency and apostles to discuss "the wisdom of saying something to pacify the country," after which he told a meeting of stake and ward priesthood leaders to be "as wise as serpents but as harmless as doves."³⁵⁶

On 6 April 1904, Joseph F. Smith presented his official statement for the vote of the general conference. A polygamist confidant of both President Smith and Senator Smoot told the Senator's secretary that the "Second Manifesto" had a hidden meaning: "The new manifesto modifies that of 1890 by eliminat-

³⁵² Allen B. Moreland, "Congressional Investigations and Private Persons," *Southern California Law Review* 40 (Winter 1967): 204-06; Carl Beck, *Contempt of Congress* (New Orleans: The Hauser Press, 1959), p. 210.

³⁵³ Angus M. Cannon, Diary, 20 April 1904.

³⁵⁴ Reed Smoot to E. H. Callister (with copy to James Clove), 22 March 1904, Smoot 1903-04 Letterbook, pp. 813-17, Box 27, Smoot Papers, BYU. Smoot's secretary said that Smoot expressed this advice when he "wrote a letter to President Smith." Carl A. Badger, Diary, 26 March 1904.

³⁵⁵ James Clove to Reed Smoot, 29 March 1904, Fd. 8, Box 52, Smoot Papers, BYU.

³⁵⁶ Anthon H. Lund, Diary, 4-5 April 1904; Thomas A. Clawson, Diary, 5 April 1904, LDS Church Archives.

ing unlawful cohabitation. Unlawful cohabitation now has the sanction of the Church, though the people did not know what they were doing in adopting it.”³⁵⁷ Despite the Second Manifesto’s unqualified denial of post-Manifesto polygamy, the circumstances of its ratification by the general conference also sent another message to those who were already aware of what had been happening on and off for more than thirteen years.

Although President Smith wrote Reed Smoot that the conference action regarding the declaration was “spontaneous,” President of Seventy Seymour B. Young’s diary stated that those who seconded the motion to sustain the Second Manifesto did so “per arrangement.” Among these seconds were Seymour B. Young (who had performed two plural marriages in Mexico under Joseph F. Smith’s direction), Anthony W. Ivins (who had performed dozens of plural marriages in Mexico by First Presidency authorization), Angus M. Cannon (who had assented to the First Presidency’s suggestion in 1894 that his daughter marry polygamously Apostle Abraham H. Cannon, and who knew that his three sons married polygamously in Salt Lake City in 1900 and 1901), Jesse N. Smith (who had given his daughter permission to marry polygamously in Salt Lake City in 1904), and Moses W. Taylor (brother of post-1890 polygamists John W. Taylor and Frank Y. Taylor).³⁵⁸ By the way he orchestrated the sustaining of the Second Manifesto, Joseph F. Smith sent unspoken but public reassurance to those who had conscientiously entered plural marriage after the Manifesto. It is not surprising that some Latter-day Saints interpreted the covert message of 6 April 1904 as applying to future polygamous marriages, the reverse of the document’s overt statements, and therefore regarded the Second Manifesto as no more restrictive of new polygamy than the first. Even when he told Anthony W. Ivins that the 1904 declaration applied to Mexico, President Smith qualified it by saying “for the time being” and “for the present.”³⁵⁹

Having published the new manifesto with the ratifying vote of the April conference, Joseph F. Smith next had to respond to the continuous demands of U.S. senators, the Church attorney, and Reed Smoot for the Church president to assist in bringing “absentee apostles” to testify in the Smoot hearings at Washington relative to continued polygamous activities.³⁶⁰ During his own

³⁵⁷ James H. Anderson as quoted in Carl A. Badger, *Diary*, 22 Dec. 1904; Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* 4:84–85.

³⁵⁸ Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, 9 April 1904, Joseph F. Smith Letterbook; *Journal History*, 6 April 1904, p. 5; Seymour B. Young, *Diary*, 6 April 1904; *Salt Lake Herald*, 7 April 1904; Angus M. Cannon, *Diary*, 18 July 1900, 18 July 1901; testimony of Angus M. Cannon in Smoot Case 1:788; Oliver R. Smith and Dorothy H. Williams, eds., *The Family of Jesse Nathaniel Smith, 1834–1906* (Snowflake, Ariz.: Jesse N. Smith Family Association, 1978), pp. 146, 152; Matthias F. Cowley Marriage Record.

³⁵⁹ Statement of Anthony W. Ivins in Juarez Stake High Council Minutes, 1904–08 Book, p. 13, 30 April 1904.

³⁶⁰ Examples are in Reed Smoot to E. H. Callister, 22 March and 8 April 1904, and to F. S. Richards, 12 April 1904, Smoot Letterbook, Box 27, Smoot Papers, BYU; Waldemar VanCott to Reed Smoot, 28 March 1904, Fd. 10, Box 51, Smoot Papers; Carl A. Badger, *Diary*, 26 March, 2 April 1904; Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 13 and 15 April 1904.

testimony before the Senate Committee on 9 March 1904, he agreed to give Apostles Taylor, Teasdale, and Cowley "as much instruction" as he could "that we [the committee] want them as soon as we can get them."³⁶¹ President Smith complained in a letter to Reed Smoot on 20 March that his various letters and telegrams to the absent apostles had not been answered, and then on 9 April he wrote the same message to Senator Smoot, to Senate Committee Chairman Julius C. Burrows on 15 April, and to Church Attorney Franklin S. Richards on 16 April 1904: Apostles Merrill and Teasdale were too ill to travel to Washington, and Apostles Taylor and Cowley had written their absolute refusal to appear before the Senate Committee; President Smith explained to Burrows: "As this is a political matter, and not a religious duty devolving upon them or me, I am powerless to exert more than moral suasion in the premises."³⁶² Showing the same firmness with which he publicly issued the Second Manifesto, Joseph F. Smith throughout 1904 maintained that despite his best efforts, the subpoenaed apostles were either too ill or too recalcitrant to testify in the Smoot investigation.

It is far more probable, however, that the Church president did not want the Senate to question anyone who had married and fathered children by post-Manifesto plural wives. The *Deseret News* had reported at the end of February 1904 that the committee intended to subpoena Apostle Abraham Owen Woodruff. Although the Senate had not done so, President Smith told Apostle Woodruff midway through April conference, "You would not be a good witness," advised him to "stay in retirement" to avoid a subpoena in Utah, and to prepare immediately to preside over the LDS mission in Germany. He left Salt Lake City in the middle of general conference, and went to Colonia Juarez to be with his plural wife who was about to bear her first child. Five days after he presented the second Manifesto, Joseph F. Smith instructed California Mission President Joseph E. Robinson to move his two post-Manifesto plural wives and their children from Salt Lake City to Mexico to avoid a subpoena.³⁶³

A plural wife of John W. Taylor later provided the background to the letters her husband and Apostle Cowley sent to Joseph F. Smith about refusing to testify before the Senate Committee. "He received two contradictory letters in the mail, for him to sign and return. One said he would go to Washington, the other said he would *not* go to Washington. Nellie cried: 'John, you don't intend to place yourself in a trap by signing both those letters, do you?' He pointed at the signature of President Joseph F. Smith and said, 'I will do what

³⁶¹ Smoot Case 1:515.

³⁶² Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, 9 April 1904, Joseph F. Smith Personal Letterbook; Smoot Case 1:1057-58; Joseph F. Smith to Franklin S. Richards, 16 April 1904, Smith Personal Letterbook; Carl A. Badger, *Diary*, 18 April 1904. Most of these letters appear in Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, pp. 374-77.

³⁶³ *Deseret Evening News*, 25 Feb. 1904; author's interview with Wilford Owen Woodruff, 23 July 1971; Eliza Avery Clark Woodruff Lambert, *Autobiography*, pp. 50-51. Joseph E. Robinson, *Autobiography*, p. 29; Joseph E. Robinson, *Diary*, 20 Feb., 5 and 11 April 1904, LDS Church Archives.

my Prophet orders me to do.' ”³⁶⁴ President Smith used the letter for each man he felt the circumstances of April 1904 required.

Although Apostle Merrill may have been physically unable to travel to Washington, President Smith sent George Teasdale to Mexico to avoid testifying. The apostle chafed at this forced exile, and President Smith relented enough to have George F. Gibbs notify Teasdale in August 1904 that he and Apostle Cowley could leave Mexico and speak at three stake conferences in Arizona, provided that the local stake authorities did not publish any reference to their visit in the *Deseret News* or local papers and that they provide no information on their itinerary. This letter from the First Presidency’s office concluded: “And in fact it will be up to you to see to it that you get back to Juarez without offending the righteous sensibilities of the righteous people of this the greatest nation on the top of the earth.”³⁶⁵

Once he released the letters of Taylor and Cowley refusing to testify before the Senate Committee, President Smith spent the rest of 1904 resisting efforts to impose Church punishment upon the two apostles. This demand first appeared when he showed the letters of refusal to Franklin S. Richards, the Church attorney, on 15 April 1904: “Richards urged upon Pres. Smith to not present J. W. Taylor’s or Cowley’s name to Conference, to make any explanation he desired, and if they did not come and take the full responsibility of their conduct . . . to cut them off of the Quorum, and if necessary, to excommunicate them.”³⁶⁶ Richards felt that he was being asked to defend an impossible position, and his letter to Joseph F. Smith of 28 April 1904 stated his own frustration: “It seems almost impossible to make people understand how these things can take place among the apostles and you have no knowledge of them. We do the best we can to make the Senators and others appreciate the fact that your position is one of sincerity in the matter.”³⁶⁷ When he returned to Salt Lake City on 16 May 1904, Richards personally appealed to the First Presidency to discipline Taylor and Cowley and have Reed Smoot resign to stop the Senate investigation, but “this Pres. Smith feels should not be done unless the Church is put in jeopardy.”³⁶⁸

A week later, Smoot’s personal attorney, Waldemar VanCott, made a counter-proposal that John W. Taylor should at least “come forward and shoulder the responsibility of his own doings,” and in June, President Smith quoted that demand to a meeting of the apostles and Presidency.³⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Apostles Taylor and Cowley were sustained as usual at October 1904 general conference. By the meeting of the First Presidency with the Church attor-

³⁶⁴ Nellie Todd Taylor, Interview, 18 Jan. 1936, Samuel W. Taylor Papers, BYU. Italics in original.

³⁶⁵ George F. Gibbs to George Teasdale, 20 Aug. 1904, First Presidency Letterbook. Cowley was identified in this letter by his codename Westlake.

³⁶⁶ Related by Richards at Washington, D.C., in Carl A. Badger, *Diary*, 18 April 1904. Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, shows that this conversation occurred on 15 April 1904.

³⁶⁷ Franklin S. Richards to Joseph F. Smith, 28 April 1904, Smith Papers.

³⁶⁸ Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 16 May 1904.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 23 May, 2 June 1904.

ney on 6 December, they had all decided that “the brethren ought to give themselves up to the Marshal,” and Joseph F. Smith told Richards that “if there was anything in the Church which the Lord desired removed, he hoped he would remove it.”³⁷⁰ When Apostle John Henry Smith suggested punishment for the apostles or other post-Manifesto polygamists, “Joseph F. had shut him up saying: ‘I want you to understand that there is but one man on earth who holds these powers’; meaning that he was alone responsible for their control and use,” yet in the last First Presidency meeting of 1904, Smoot’s non-Mormon lawyer, A. S. Worthington, argued forcefully for Church action against all post-Manifesto polygamists.³⁷¹

Repeated demands for some kind of action against Taylor and Cowley ultimately pushed the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve into an agonizing series of meetings in October 1905 at which no official minutes were kept. At their conclusion, Taylor and Cowley signed resignations from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. They were not immediately made public, and everyone but Reed Smoot regarded them as contingencies of last resort.³⁷² When he pressured the president in December 1905 to publicly announce the resignations or at least allow Smoot to discuss them with Republican leaders, the First Presidency secretary wrote a pointed reply:

And I feel to say to you, at this early consideration of the subject, that if you will cast aside for ever all thought of making a sacrifice of zoanthropia [Taylor is written above] whimper [Cowley is written above] you will begin to see your way brighten, for such a thing cannot be done simply in hope of avoiding drastic legislation, nor for the purpose of convincing friends that ziamet [President is written above] is honest. . . . it will be up to us to do the sacrificing business or stand the consequences. But let me tell you, the sacrifice is already made, and I know it; and its your business now to look about you and find the ram; and I can promise you that if you will go to work in this spirit you will find the ram, and then victory will be yours.³⁷³

Gibbs’s reference to sacrifice meant the 1904 abandonment of new plural marriages. On 4 May 1904, President Smith allowed Francis M. Lyman, president of the Quorum of the Twelve, to send a letter on First Presidency stationery urging the apostles “in your private conversations and counsels” to avoid any “infractions of the law in regard to plural marriage.”³⁷⁴ But this instruction to the apostles was expressed in the “advice” phrasing of the 1890 Manifesto and did not specify that plural marriages were forbidden under any circumstance anywhere in the world. Several apostles in good conscience felt

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 6 Dec. 1904; report of Franklin S. Richards in Carl A. Badger, *Diary*, 21 Dec. 1904.

³⁷¹ James H. Anderson as quoted in Carl A. Badger, *Diary*, 22 Dec. 1904; Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 31 Dec. 1904.

³⁷² For published quotations from the resignations see Roberts, *Comprehensive History* 6:400, and Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, pp. 379–80. The complexities involved in these resignations and in other developments of 1905 involving Taylor and Cowley require separate discussion.

³⁷³ George F. Gibbs to Reed Smoot, 9 Dec. 1905, Fd. 6, Box 48, Smoot Papers, BYU.

³⁷⁴ Francis M. Lyman form letter to “Dear Brother,” 4 May 1904, First Presidency Letterbook.

that they had continued liberty to perform and enter into new polygamous marriages despite the 1904 declaration. When Apostle Lyman informed the temple meeting in June that a man had traveled to Mexico with the intent of marrying another wife despite the April statement, the entire First Presidency wrote Anthony W. Ivins at Colonia Juarez on 9 June 1904 “to put your foot on it, giving the parties to understand that President Woodruff’s Manifesto is in effect.”³⁷⁵ Not until 22 October 1904, did the First Presidency send a letter to John W. Taylor in Canada and to George Teasdale in Mexico informing them of the decision of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve on 26 September to withdraw the authority that “President Woodruff and President Snow, each in his time, authorized some of the Apostles, and perhaps others to perform sealings for time and eternity” in places other than the temples.³⁷⁶

This was the Abrahamic ram in the thicket of which the First Presidency secretary spoke; but like the decision of the First Presidency in June 1890 to end polygamy, it was impossible to impress non-Mormons with the unannounced sacrifice of something that the Presidency had always denied they were doing anyway. The hierarchy had taken a series of unpremeditated steps that external pressures allowed to end in only one outcome: the announcement of the resignations of Taylor and Cowley for being out of harmony regarding post-Manifesto polygamy and the appointment of their successors in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on 9 April 1906. When Anthony W. Ivins had learned about the resignations signed in October 1905 he wrote his cousin Heber J. Grant, “It might be all right if it were going to deceive anyone except ourselves. We will be the only ones fooled.”³⁷⁷ The published statements about post-Manifesto polygamy that began this paper demonstrate the general truth of this assessment by a man who was in a better position than most to understand the relationship of Church authority and new plural marriages from 1890 to 1904.

XI

If there is any comfort in the form of self-deception epitomized by dropping John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley from the Quorum of the Twelve, it is that, officially but privately, succeeding First Presidencies have been willing to acknowledge post-Manifesto plural marriages. In 1934, President Heber J. Grant wrote: “I have never felt to hold anything against any person who was married by Owen Woodruff or John W. Taylor prior to John W. having lost his standing in the Church.” And a year after his cousin-counselor Anthony Ivins died, President Grant reassured one inquirer, “I have not the slightest doubt that President Ivins performed the sealing uniting your husband’s father and mother in polygamy in Mexico before this pronouncement of President

³⁷⁵ Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund to Anthony W. Ivins, 9 June 1904, First Presidency Letterbook.

³⁷⁶ Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund to John W. Taylor, 22 Oct. 1904 (notation of a copy sent on 26 Oct. 1904 to George Teasdale), First Presidency Letterbook.

³⁷⁷ Anthony W. Ivins to Heber J. Grant, 29 Dec. 1905, Grant Papers.

Joseph F. Smith.”³⁷⁸ In March of 1944, the entire First Presidency (including David O. McKay, who replaced Matthias F. Cowley in the Quorum of Twelve) wrote Anthony W. Ivins’s son: “The attitude of the Church toward those men and women who, in accordance with the advice given them by some General Authorities then in ‘good standing’, entered into plural relationships in the interim between 1890 and 1904, is well known by both members and non-members of the Church.”³⁷⁹ When a woman questioned whether her parents were really sealed when they were married in polygamy in 1902 by Matthias F. Cowley, President McKay and his counselors replied in 1960, “It is our understanding, and we have so answered others, that these marriages performed under the circumstances in this sister’s letter to you were real sealings.”³⁸⁰ And perhaps the most candid of all was Church President Spencer W. Kimball’s statement about the post-Manifesto polygamous marriage of an aunt in the United States: “It was about 1902. I don’t know just when the Manifesto was made operative in all the world, including Canada and Mexico, but Aunt Fannie was married before the late President Joseph F. Smith ‘locked the gate.’”³⁸¹ That kind of candor must be a comfort to the 50,000 or more living descendants of the men who married polygamously with Church authority from 1890 through 1904.³⁸² Apostles Taylor and Cowley may have been scapegoats to satisfy anti-Mormons and to protect the Church, but the descendants of authorized post-Manifesto polygamists have suffered from the Church’s

³⁷⁸ Heber J. Grant to Linnie Keeler Naegle, 29 Oct. 1934; Heber J. Grant to Katherine H. (Mrs. Rulon C.) Allred, 15 Nov. 1935, in First Presidency Letterbook, 1935–36, p. 163. Rulon C. Allred accurately quoted that letter in *Truth* 8 (Feb. 1943): 199 and in *Most Holy Principle* 4: 88, but in talks to his Fundamentalist followers from 1966 to 1972, Rulon C. Allred claimed that Heber J. Grant wrote a letter to Allred’s wife in 1932 stating that Anthony W. Ivins performed the polygamous marriage in Mexico for his parents Byron Harvey Allred, Jr. and Mary Evelyn Clark on 15 July 1903 “with the perfect knowledge and consent of the First Presidency of the Church.” See, Gilbert A. Fulton, Jr., ed., *Gems*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: By the author, 1967), 1: 3, 6, and Rulon C. Allred, *Treasures of Knowledge: Selected Discourses and Excerpts from Talks by Rulon C. Allred*, 2 vols. (Hamilton, Montana: Bitterroot Publishing Co., 1982), 1: 9, 60–1, 91. Neither those words nor anything approximating them appear in the carbon copies of Heber J. Grant’s letters to Mrs. Rulon C. Allred of 15 November 1935 and 30 January 1936, the only letters to her from 1929 to 1940 in the First Presidency Letterbooks. Nor does such a statement appear in President Grant’s letters to B. Harvey Allred of 19 March and 8 April 1936, or to Owen A. Allred of 20 October 1937, the only other letters to members of the Allred family in the Presidency Letterbooks from 1929 to 1940. In addition, Heber J. Grant’s Personal Letterbooks from 1929 to 1940 contain no letters whatever to members of Allred’s family. Although the Joseph F. Smith presidency authorized Ivins to perform the Allred marriage in 1903, the evidence is conclusive that Rulon C. Allred fabricated the alleged statement of Heber J. Grant in Allred’s talks to his polygamist followers.

³⁷⁹ Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark, and David O. McKay to H. Grant Ivins, 21 March 1944; italics in original.

³⁸⁰ Quoted in Harold B. Lee to Maud L. Christensen, 1 Feb. 1960, Charles W. Lillywhite Family Group Sheet.

³⁸¹ Spencer W. Kimball, Oral History, interviewed by Gary L. Shumway, 1972, pp. 17–18, James H. Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives; George C. Parkinson and Fannie Woolley Family Group Sheets; Matthias F. Cowley Marriage Record, 1898–1903.

³⁸² This is a conservative estimate based on the fact that these men fathered more than 3,300 children, many of whom are still alive, as well as the fact that some of these post-Manifesto polygamists have sixth-generation descendants at present. A more detailed narrative and analysis of these post-1890 polygamists is the subject of a separate study.

effort to maintain consistency by branding these marriages as unauthorized.

For millions of the rest of us, believing Latter-day Saints who have no post-Manifesto polygamous heritage (or no polygamous ancestry at all), there is still an inescapable melancholy involved in confronting the polygamous heritage of our faith. Regardless of our personal views about polygamy itself, we are obliged to recognize that its practice at times required men we revere as prophets, seers, and revelators to say and do things that do not strictly conform to our definitions of veracity and consistency. The resulting situation caused significant segments of the Mormon Church to function in "cognitive dissonance" for prolonged periods of time.³⁸³ We can ignore that past; we can even deny it; but we cannot escape its intrusion upon our faithful history.

Having explored that past for many years as a historian, I maintain even more firmly the position of faith with which I began: Jesus the Christ restored the Church with *all* its authority, exalting doctrines, and ordinances to the earth through living prophets. These prophets, better men than I am, have faced more difficult challenges than I ever will and have struggled more unselfishly to do God's will than I ever have. Aside from my reverence for them as prophets and empathy for them as human beings, my perspective as a historian does not place me in a position to judge these prophets, seers, and revelators. It does place me under an obligation to try to understand them in their terms and circumstances, not mine. History is what we are able to discover of the past; historical fantasy is what we wish had occurred.

And history is on-going. The First Presidency and its activities do not tell the complete story of Church authority and 1890-1904 polygamy. The activities and experiences of other Church officials are crucial to understand how and why new polygamy continued to influence so many people after the Manifesto. From apostle to patriarch, their combined stories deserve as much attention as the First Presidency has received in this study.

Moreover, the saga of new plural marriages among the Mormons continued after 1904. It does not take a very close reading of the First Presidency letter of October 1904 to realize that it rescinded only authorizations given by Presidents Woodruff and Snow to seal marriages out of the temple and did not mention any similar authorizations given by Joseph F. Smith. And so the ambiguity persisted, enough to allow certain General Authorities in the next three years to make fewer than ten exceptions to what was now almost a universal ban on new polygamy. Still, within a few years after 1904, men like Judson Tolman, Samuel Eastman, John W. Woolley, and others would perform and enter into scores of new plural marriages without claiming authorization from the Church president. But that story remains to be told.

³⁸³ For relevant studies of these issues, see Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1957); Festinger, *Conflict, Decision and Dissonance* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964); O. Sydney Barr, *The Christian New Morality: A Biblical Study of Situation Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966). See discussion of relative ethics in Truman G. Madsen, "Joseph Smith and the Problems of Ethics," *Perspectives in Mormon Ethics*, ed. by Donald G. Hill, Jr. (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1983), pp. 32-34.