

**1. Background:** The LDS Church published an essay, [Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo](#), on October 22, 2014, discussing its polygamist past. The essay admitted the following, which will be discussed in further depth during the remainder of this section: (1) Joseph married girls as young as 14; (2) Joseph married women who were married to other men, including active LDS men; (3) Joseph lied about polygamy to Church members, including his wife, Emma; (4) Joseph had sex with at least some of his plural wives; (5) Joseph failed to practice polygamy in accordance with Doctrine and Covenants 132.

**2. Joseph Smith Practiced Polygamy:** Joseph Smith was married to at least 34 women during his lifetime (and the Church’s essay states he may have been married to as many as 40 women). LDS historian, [Todd Compton](#), has written an extensive biography on each of Joseph’s 34 documented wives in *In Sacred Loneliness: the Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*. Compton analyzed the lives of the women listed [here](#), and many of the women listed [here](#). Many of [Joseph’s wives can be verified](#) through FamilySearch.org. [Biographies](#) of each wife can be found [here](#).

Wife	Date	Age	Husband*
<a href="#">Emma Hale</a>	Jan 1827	22	-
<a href="#">Fanny Alger</a>	1833 — 1835	16-18	-
<a href="#">Lucinda Morgan Harris</a>	1838	37	George W. Harris
<a href="#">Louisa Beaman</a>	Apr 1841	26	-
<a href="#">Zina Huntington Jacobs</a>	Oct 1841	20	Henry Jacobs
<a href="#">Presendia Huntington Buell</a>	Dec 1841	31	Norman Buell
<a href="#">Agnes Coolbrith</a>	Jan 1842	33	-
<a href="#">Sylvia Sessions Lyon</a>	Feb 1842	23	Windsor Lyon
<a href="#">Mary Rollins Lightner</a>	Feb 1842	23	Adam Lightner
<a href="#">Patty Bartlett Sessions</a>	Mar 1842	47	David Sessions
<a href="#">Marinda Johnson Hyde</a>	Apr 1842	27	Orson Hyde
<a href="#">Elizabeth Davis Durfee</a>	Jun 1842	50	Jabez Durfee
<a href="#">Sarah Kingsley Cleveland</a>	Jun 1842	53	John Cleveland
<a href="#">Delcena Johnson</a>	Jul 1842	37	-
<a href="#">Eliza R. Snow</a>	Jun 1842	38	-
<a href="#">Sarah Ann Whitney</a>	Jul 1842	17	-
<a href="#">Martha McBride Knight</a>	Aug 1842	37	-
<a href="#">Ruth Vose Sayers</a>	Feb 1843	33	Edward Sayers
<a href="#">Flora Ann Woodworth</a>	Spring 1843	16	-
<a href="#">Emily Dow Partridge</a>	Mar 1843	19	-
<a href="#">Eliza Maria Partridge</a>	Mar 1843	22	-
<a href="#">Almera Johnson</a>	Apr 1843	30	-
<a href="#">Lucy Walker</a>	May 1843	17	-
<a href="#">Sarah Lawrence</a>	May 1843	17	-
<a href="#">Maria Lawrence</a>	May 1843	19	-
<a href="#">Helen Mar Kimball</a>	May 1843	14	-
<a href="#">Hanna Ells</a>	Mid 1843	29	-
<a href="#">Elvira Cowles Holmes</a>	Jun 1843	29	Jonathan Holmes
<a href="#">Rhoda Richards</a>	Jun 1843	58	-
<a href="#">Desdemona Fullmer</a>	Jul 1843	32	-
<a href="#">Olive Frost</a>	Mid 1843	27	-
<a href="#">Melissa Lott</a>	Sep 1843	19	-
<a href="#">Nancy Winchester</a>	1843	14	-
<a href="#">Fanny Young</a>	Nov 1843	56	-

\* Living Husband at the time of Marriage to Joseph Smith

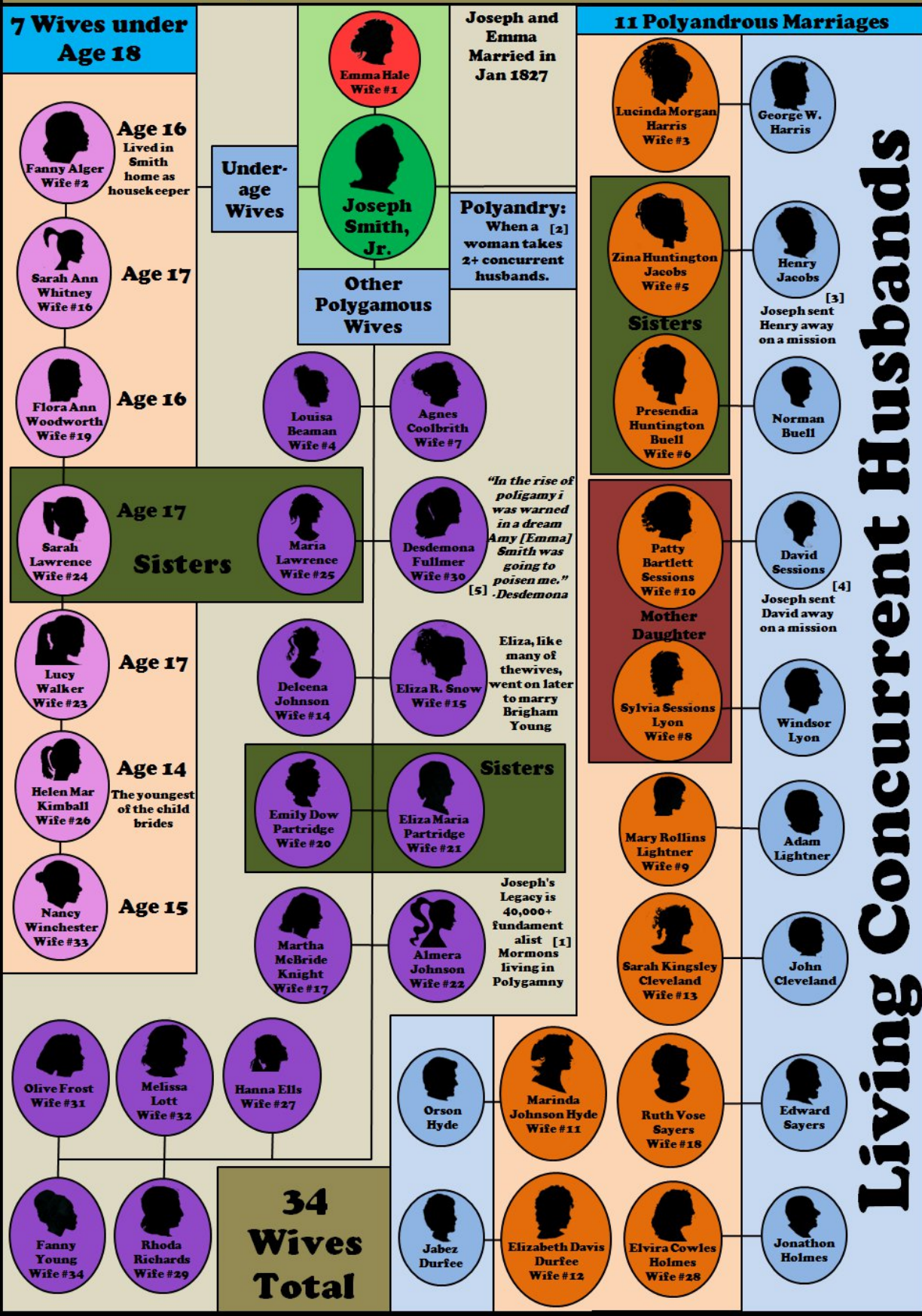
[References](#)

As demonstrated above, of Joseph’s 34 wives, seven of were teenage girls as young as 14-years-old. Joseph was 37-years-old when he married 14-year-old [Helen Mar Kimball](#), meaning she was 23-years younger than Joseph. Several of these women were Joseph’s foster daughters (Lawrence sisters, Partridge sisters, Fanny Alger, Lucy Walker).

**3. Polyandry:** The Church's polygamy essay acknowledges that "Joseph Smith was sealed to a number of women who were already married," estimating the number of these sealings at 12-14. Compton conservatively estimates that Joseph engaged in at least 11 polyandrous relationships. Thus, of Joseph Smith's 34 wives, at least 11 of were married to other living men at the time they married Joseph. Of those 11 married women, at least eight were married to active LDS men. On several occasions, Joseph called these men on missions shortly before or shortly after marrying their wives (sometimes in secret). For example, Joseph called Apostle Orson Hyde on a mission to dedicate Israel and, while Hyde was away, Joseph secretly married his wife, **Marinda Hyde**, without Orson's knowledge.

**4.** The following page contains another chart that categorizes each of Joseph's 34 documented wives:

# The Many Wives of Joseph Smith



## Living Concurrent Husbands

[1] "Utah Struggles With a Revival of Polygamy". NY Times, 8/23/1998, James Brooke  
 [2] Polyandry Definition: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyandry>  
 [3] "Zina and Her Men", FAIR LDS Conference, 2006  
 [4] David Sessions mission call, [wivesofjosephsmith.org](http://wivesofjosephsmith.org), Patty Bartlett Sessions Biography  
 [5] D. Fullmer quote, [wivesofjosephsmith.org](http://wivesofjosephsmith.org), D. Fullmer Bio Marriage Details from: [wivesofjosephsmith.org](http://wivesofjosephsmith.org)  
 Panel by: [mormoninfographics.com](http://mormoninfographics.com)

**5. Evidence of Joseph's Adultery:** There is substantial evidence that Joseph engaged in numerous adulterous relationships. In fact, Grant Palmer wrote a credible, well-sourced article on the [sexual allegations against Joseph Smith](#). However, the circumstances surrounding Joseph's first plural wife, Fanny Alger, is especially troublesome. Fanny was a servant in the Smith home and became very close to the Smiths (particularly Emma). Sometime after Fanny turned 16, rumors began circulating that Joseph was engaging in an affair with her. Warren Parrish, Joseph's secretary for a time, told Benjamin Johnson that he and Oliver Cowdery knew the report of an affair between Joseph and Fanny "to be true," for they "were spied upon and found together." (Letter from Benjamin Johnson to George Gibbs, 1903; Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet, pp. 103-104.)

William E. McLellin, who once served as an apostle, told Joseph Smith III: "Again, I told her [Emma] I heard that one night she missed Joseph and Fanny Alger. She went to the barn and saw him and Fanny in the barn together alone. She looked through a crack and saw the transaction! She told me this story too was true." (William E. McLellin to Joseph Smith III, 10 Jan. 1861; Library-Archives, Community of Christ.) Oliver Cowdery said he learned of this incident directly from Joseph and that Joseph had confided to him that "he had confessed to Emma" of the affair while seeking her forgiveness. (Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), 167.) When Emma found out that Joseph was having sex with Fanny, Emma threw her out of the house. Fanny and her family left Kirtland in September 1836 and moved to Dublin, Indiana, where she married non-Mormon Solomon Custer November 16, 1836.

Cowdery was probably the first to openly speak of the Alger affair. In November 1837, he "insinuate[d] that Joseph Smith Jr. was guilty of adultery" in a conversation with George W. Harris and again with Apostle David W. Patten. (Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 167.) In his correspondence with his brother, Warren Cowdery, Oliver was more direct. In a letter dated January 21, 1838, Oliver wrote: "When he [Joseph Smith] was there we had some conversation in which in every instance I did not fail to affirm that what I had said was strictly true. A dirty, nasty, filthy affair of his and Fanny Alger's was talked over in which I strictly declared that I had never deviated from the truth in the matter, and as I supposed was admitted by himself." (Letter written by Oliver Cowdery and recorded by his brother Warren Cowdery; see photograph in [The Mormon Kingdom](#), vol. 1, page 27.)

On April 12, 1838, Oliver was excommunicated, in part, for "seeking to destroy the character of President Joseph Smith Jr. by falsely insinuating that he was guilty of adultery." (Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 162-63.)

**6. Polygamy Practiced Long Before Alleged Revelation:** Long before the official recording of D&C 132, Joseph Smith had already married multiple wives. His first plural wife was Fanny Alger, whom he married during the time when the Church was in Kirtland. Some historians record the date of Joseph's first marriage as early as 1833, while others believe it was 1835. "Since Fanny moved out of the Smith home soon after the marriage, it evidently took place around 1835, the year when Fanny turned nineteen." (The Prophet Joseph Smith and His Plural Wives, Richard Lloyd Anderson & Scott H. Faulring, *FARMS*, 1998.) Only after Cowdery discovered Joseph's relationship with Fanny did Joseph first begin to secretly institute the "doctrine" of plural marriage. Nonetheless, there is no evidence that Joseph discussed plural marriage with a single individual until after his relationship with Fanny Alger was discovered. The fact that Joseph only began discussing plural marriage after his relationship with Fanny was exposed suggests that the subsequent "revelation" was an attempt to justify his adultery.

**7. Early Unions were Not Sanctioned under God's Laws:** Whether Joseph's marriage to Fanny Alger occurred in 1833 or 1835, it was illegal both under the laws of the land<sup>[21]</sup> and under any theory of divine authority. With respect to divine authority, plural marriages are rooted in the notion of "seal-



ing” for both time and eternity. The “sealing” power was not restored under LDS belief until April 1836 when Elijah appeared to Joseph and conferred the sealing keys upon him. There is no dispute among Latter-day Saints that, prior to 1836, the sealing power had not been on the earth since the time the Lord had removed it during the Great Apostasy. Thus, Joseph’s “marriage” to Fanny Alger could not have been performed by anyone with the “sealing power.” No one on earth had authority either under the laws of man or under the laws of God as understood and taught by the LDS Church to “marry” Joseph and Fanny. As a result, his marriage to her was a nullity from the beginning both in time and eternity, and any sexual relationship he may have had with her (and to which Cowdery attested) can only be described as adulterous.

**8. Polygamy Condemned by Revelation:** The first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (1835) included a section denying any practice of polygamy:

“Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in the case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.” ([History of the Church](#), Vol. 2, p. 247)

It is interesting to note that the foregoing provision was contained in every edition of the Doctrine and Covenants until 1876, when the Doctrine and Covenants was revised to include [Section 132](#), which authorizes plural marriage. Obviously, it would have been too contradictory to have one section condemning polygamy and another approving of it in the same book. Therefore, the section condemning polygamy was removed from the Doctrine and Covenants.

Significantly, Joseph Smith was already a polygamist at the time the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants was published (which specifically forbade polygamy). Moreover, Joseph publicly taught monogamy. Joseph, however, continued to secretly marry women as the above referenced revelation remained in force.

**9. Joseph Was Coercive in his Marriage Proposals:** Multiple women testified that Joseph’s marriage proposals included a promise that, if they agreed to marry Joseph, their entire family would receive exaltation. More disturbingly, Joseph told at least three women ([Zina Huntington](#), Almera Woodard Johnson, [Mary Lightner](#)) that he would be slain by an angel with a drawn sword if they did not agree to marry him.

**10. Helen Mar Kimball (Joseph Smith’s 14-Year-Old Wife):** Studying the actual practice of polygamy is perhaps even more disturbing when each marriage is specifically analyzed. For example, Joseph seemed to engage in coercive tactics in marrying at least some of his wives, including 14-year-old Helen Mar Kimball. The following is an excerpt from her journal:

“Without any preliminaries, my father asked me if I would believe him if he told me that it was right for married men to take other wives.

“The first impulse was anger... My sensibilities were painfully touched. I felt such a sense of personal injury and displeasure; for to mention such a thing to me I thought altogether unworthy of my father, and as quick he spoke, I replied to him, short and emphatically, NO I WOULDNT! This is the first time that I ever openly manifested anger towards him.

...

“Having a great desire to be connected with the Prophet, Joseph, he (my father) offered me to him; this I afterwards learned from the Prophet’s own mouth. My father had but one Ewe Lamb, but willingly laid her upon the altar: how cruel this seemed to my mother whose heartstrings were already stretched until they were ready to snap asunder, for she had already taken Sarah

Noon to wife [after Heber began practicing polygamy] and she thought she had made sufficient sacrifice but the Lord required more.”

Although Helen was initially repulsed by the thought of marrying Joseph Smith, a much older and married man, she reluctantly agreed when Joseph the prophet offered her and her entire family eternal salvation and exaltation if she would become one of his wives.

“[The next morning, Joseph Smith visited Helen and explained] the principle of Celestial marriage... After which he said to me, ‘If you will take this step, it will ensure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that of your father’s household & all of your kindred.[’] This promise was so great that I willingly gave myself to purchase so glorious a reward. None but God & his angels could see my mother’s bleeding heart-when Joseph asked her if she was willing... She had witnessed the sufferings of others, who were older & who better understood the step they were taking, & to see her child, who had scarcely seen her fifteenth summer, following in the same thorny path, in her mind she saw the misery which was as sure to come ... ; but it was all hidden from me.” (*Helen Mar Whitney Journal, Helen Mar Autobiography, Woman’s Exponent*, 1880 and recently reprinted in *A Woman’s View*).

After marrying Joseph Smith, Helen indicated that she was deceived as to what the polygamous relationship would entail. Helen confided to a close friend in Nauvoo: “I would never have been sealed to Joseph had I known it was anything more than ceremony. I was young, and they deceived me, by saying the salvation of our whole family depended on it.” (*Mormon Polygamy: A History* by LDS member [Richard S. Van Wagoner](#), p. 53.)

**11. Sex:** The Church’s polygamy essay acknowledges that Joseph likely had sex with his polygamist wives. In fact, the essay states that the primary purpose of plural marriage was “to raise up seed unto God,” which obviously requires sexual intercourse. Some church historians, like Richard Bushman, and FAIR, an LDS apologetic organization, admit that Joseph’s marriages included marital relations. Consider the following statements from Joseph’s polygamist wives and other Church leaders:

- **Sylvia Sessions (Lyon):** Sylvia Sessions (Lyon), on her deathbed, told her daughter, Josephine, that she (Josephine) was the daughter of Joseph Smith. Josephine testified: “She (Sylvia) then told me that I was the daughter of the Prophet Joseph Smith, she having been sealed to the Prophet at the time that her husband Mr. Lyon was out of fellowship with the Church.” (Affidavit to Church Historian Andrew Jenson, 24 Feb. 1915)
- **Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner:** In her testimony given at a BYU devotional, Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner (and wife of Joseph Smith) stated that she knew of children born to Smith’s plural wives: “I know he [Joseph Smith] had six wives and I have known some of them from childhood up. I know he had three children. They told me. I think two are living today but they are not known as his children as they go by other names.”
- **Prescindia D. Huntington:** Prescindia D. Huntington, who was Normal Buell’s wife and simultaneously a “plural wife” to Joseph Smith, said that she did not know whether her husband Norman “or the Prophet was the father of her son, Oliver.” (Mary Ettie V. Smith, *Fifteen Years Among the Mormons*, page 34.)
- **Melissa Lott:** Melissa Lott (Smith Willes) testified that she had been Joseph’s wife ‘in very deed.’ (Affidavit of Melissa Willes, 3 Aug. 1893, Temple Lot case, 98, 105; Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, p. 156.)
- **Louisa Beaman:** In a court affidavit, faithful Mormon Joseph Noble wrote that Joseph told him

he had spent the night with Louisa Beaman. (Temple Lot Case, p. 427)

- **Emily D. Partridge:** Emily D. Partridge (Smith Young) said she ‘roomed’ with Joseph the night following her marriage to him and said that she had ‘carnal intercourse’ with him. (Temple Lot case, (complete transcript), pp. 364, 367, 384; see Foster, ‘Religion and Sexuality,’ p. 15.)
- **Eliza Partridge:** William Clayton, Joseph Smith’s personal secretary, recorded that on May 22, 1843, Emma found Joseph and Eliza Partridge secluded in an upstairs bedroom at the Smith home. According to the account, Emma was devastated. (William Clayton’s journal entry May 23, 1843; see Smith, pp. 105–106.)
- **Almera Johnson:** William Clayton also recorded one of Joseph’s visits to Almera Johnson on May 16, 1843: “Prest. Joseph and I went to B[enjamin] F. Johnson’s to sleep.” Johnson himself later noted that on this visit Joseph stayed with Almera “as man and wife” and “occupied the same room and bed with my sister, that the previous month he had occupied with the daughter of the late Bishop Partridge as his wife.” Almera Johnson also confirmed her secret marriage to Joseph Smith: “I lived with the prophet Joseph as his wife and he visited me at the home of my brother Benjamin F.” (Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets*, p. 44; see also *The Origin of Plural Marriage*, Joseph F. Smith, Jr., Deseret News Press, pp. 70–71.)
- **Benjamin Winchester:** “It was a subject of common talk among many good people in Nauvoo that many of the elders were sent off on missions merely to get them out of the way, and that Joseph Smith, John C. Bennett and other prominent Church lights had illicit intercourse with the wives of a number of the missionaries, and that the revelation on spiritual marriage, *i.e.* polygamy, was gotten up to protect themselves from scandal.” (Benjamin Winchester, Stake President of the early church in the 1830s and 1840s.)
- **Potential Children:** LDS apologist Brian Hales, who is cited to in the footnotes of the Church’s polygamy essay, acknowledges that Joseph Smith fathered two to three children with his plural wives. He stated that it is highly probable that Josephine Lyon (b. Feb. 8, 1844) was Joseph Smith’s child with Sylvia Lyon, and that Joseph likely fathered a child with Olive Gray Frost.

**12. Joseph Repeatedly Lied About Polygamy:** The Church’s polygamy essay acknowledges that Joseph Smith and subsequent leaders lied about polygamy, both to Church members and to outsiders. Smith first began lying to his first wife, Emma. Church leaders reportedly believed that the lying was justified because they were “**lying for the Lord.**” There are scores of documents that support this – from interviews, Church newspaper articles, prophets’ letters, sermons, etc. For example:

- In 1844, Joseph preached a sermon and said, “I had not been married scarcely five minutes and made one proclamation of the gospel before it was reported that I had seven wives. What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery and having seven wives when I can only find one.” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church, Vol. 6, Chapter 19, p. 410–11.*) At the time he made this statement, Joseph had over 30 polygamous wives.
- In the July 1838 edition of the Elder’s Journal (“Edited by Joseph Smith”), which was published three-to-five years after he began practicing polygamy, Joseph answered questions including the following:  
“Question 7<sup>th</sup>: Do the Mormons believe in having more wives than one?  
“Answer: No, not at the same time....” (*Elders Journal, Vol 1, No. 3, p. 43; reprinted in History of the Church Vol 3, p. 38.*)
- On December 16, 1838, Joseph Smith wrote a letter to the Church from Liberty Jail, which stated: “We have heard that it is reported by some, that some of us should have said, that we not only dedicated our property, but our families also to the Lord; and Satan, taking advantage of

this, has perverted it into licentiousness, such as a community of wives, which is an abomination in the sight of God.” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 23.)

- On February 21, 1843, in a speech before the Ladies’ Relief Society – wherein many of his “plural wives” were in attendance – Joseph denounced the practice of polygamy.
- In an attempt to abate rumors of his secret polygamy, Joseph convinced 31 individuals to sign an affidavit published in the [October 1, 1842 Times and Seasons](#) stating that Joseph did *not* practice polygamy. These individuals claimed the following: “[W]e know of no other rule or system of marriage than the one published in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants” (which, at the time, forbade polygamy). The problem with this affidavit is that it was signed by several people who were secret polygamists and/or who knew that Joseph was a polygamist at the time they signed the affidavit. In fact, [Eliza R. Snow](#), one of the signers of this affidavit, was one of Joseph Smith’s plural wives. Joseph and Eliza were married three months earlier on June 29, 1842. Two Apostles and future prophets, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff, were aware of Joseph’s polygamy behind the scenes when they signed the affidavit. Another signer, Bishop Whitney, had personally married his daughter [Sarah Ann Whitney](#) to Joseph as a plural wife a few months earlier on July 27, 1842; Whitney’s wife and Sarah’s mother Elizabeth (also a signer) witnessed the ceremony.

What does it say about Joseph Smith and his character that he convinced a plural wife and numerous friends (who knew about his secret polygamy/polyandry) to lie and perjure themselves in a sworn public affidavit?

The secrecy of the marriages and Joseph’s private and public denials are not congruent with honest behavior. Emma was unaware of most of these marriages. Most church members did not know what was going on behind the scenes as polygamy did not become common knowledge until 1852 when Brigham Young revealed it in Utah. Joseph Smith did everything he could to keep the practice in the dark. In fact, Joseph’s desire to keep this part of his life a secret is what ultimately contributed to his death when he ordered the destruction of the printing press ([Nauvoo Expositor](#)) that exposed his behavior in June 1844. This event initiated a chain of events that led to Carthage.

**13. Joseph Married Many Women without Emma’s Knowledge:** [D&C 132: 61](#) (the revelation on polygamy) states that men engaging in polygamy should obtain the consent of their first wife. Joseph Smith, however, did not follow the rules of his own revelation, as he took plural wives without seeking consent. Emily Dow Partridge, for instance, testified that she and her sister were married to Joseph without Emma’s consent:

“[T]he Prophet Joseph and his wife Emma offered us a home in their family, ... We had been there about a year when the principle of plural marriage was made known to us, and I was married to Joseph Smith on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1843, Elder Heber C. Kimball performing the ceremony. My sister Eliza was also married to Joseph a few days later. This was done without the knowledge of Emma Smith. Two months afterward she consented to give her husband two wives, providing he would give her the privilege of choosing them. She accordingly chose my sister Eliza and myself, and to save family trouble Brother Joseph thought it best to have another ceremony performed. Accordingly on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, 1843, we were sealed to Joseph Smith a second time, in Emma’s presence, ... From that very hour, however, Emma was our bitter enemy. We remained in the family several months after this, but things went from bad to worse until we were obligated to leave the house and find another home.” (*Historical Record*, vol. 6, page 240)

Notice how Joseph sought to cover up the fact that he was already married to Eliza and Emily Partridge. Joseph had a second, sham marriage performed to the Partridge sisters after his first wife, Em-



ma, agreed that he could marry two women if she got to pick them (and she happened to pick two women that were already married to Joseph).

**14. Bogus Justifications:** One common justification that many Church members offer for polygamy was that there was a shortage of men at the time polygamy was practiced, and the women needed husbands in the harsh West to survive. Economic pressures on women, however, did not drive polygamy. Population statistics for Utah show that there were actually more men than women.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
1850	6,020	5,310
1860	20,178	19,947
1870	43,451	42,503
1880	73,477	68,946
1890	108,943	96,982
1900	138,923	133,542

LDS Apostle John A. Widstoe denied that polygamy had anything to do with a “shortage of men.”

“The implied assumption in this theory, that there have been more female than male members in the Church is not supported by existing evidence. On the contrary, there seems always to have been more males than females in the Church... The United States census records from 1850 to 1940, and all available Church records, uniformly show a preponderance of males in Utah... This theory is not defensible since there was no surplus of women.” (Evidences and Reconciliations, 1960, pages 390-392.)

The Church’s 2014 polygamy essay states that the primary purpose of plural marriage was “to raise up seed unto God.” This seems to be a strange, if not indefensible, explanation. A woman can presumably have far more children (to say nothing of emotional support) if she is married to one husband rather than sharing her husband with many women. Brigham Young, for example, had at least 55 children by 29 wives; had those wives not all shared Brigham Young as a husband they likely would have produced far more than 55 children. The only conceivable way polygamy could produce more children than through a traditional marriage would be if there was a shortage of men. However, census records show that there were always more men than women in both Kirtland and Utah during the relevant time periods.

Additionally, the Church’s 2014 essay suggests that plural marriage was commanded by God in Old Testament times and that Joseph’s introduction of polygamy was a “restoration of the biblical practice.” The only scriptural reference provided in the essay in support of this assertion is Genesis 16: 1-3. The cited passage, however, never states or even implies that God commanded Abraham (or anyone else for that matter) to practice polygamy. Rather, the scripture states that because Sarah could not bear children, Sarah told Abraham to take her handmaiden, Hagar, so that Hagar would bear him children. Simply stated, there is no biblical evidence suggesting that God has ever commanded or sanctioned polygamist unions.

**15. Joseph Violated Revealed Rules Governing Polygamy:** [Doctrine & Covenants 132](#) sets forth a number of rules and details governing the practice of polygamy. For example, the D&C 132 only allows polygamy under the following circumstances: plural wives must be virgins at the time of the union and the man must give his first wife the opportunity to consent to the union. If the first wife does not consent, she will be “destroyed.” Also, the new wife (who must be a virgin) must be completely monogamous after the marriage or she will be destroyed (D&C 132: 41 & 63). Joseph did not follow these rules, as evidenced by the following summary:

- Joseph married 11 women who were already married to other men. Clearly, they were not virgins as required by the Doctrine and Covenants. [D&C 132:63](#) clearly states that the only pur-

pose of polygamy is to “multiply and replenish the earth” and “bear the souls of men.” Why did Joseph marry women who were already married? These women were obviously not virgins, which violated D&C 132. Zina Huntington had been married seven-and-a-half months and was six months pregnant with her first husband’s baby at the time she married Joseph; clearly she didn’t need any more help to “bear the souls of men.”

- Joseph’s polygamist wives continued to live as husband and wife with their prior husband after marrying Joseph, demonstrating they were not monogamous with Joseph. However, [D&C 132:63](#) states that if the new wives are with another man after the polygamous marriage, they will be destroyed. Eleven of Joseph’s wives lived with their prior husbands after marrying Joseph Smith. Why weren’t they “destroyed”?
- Joseph did not ask for Emma’s consent prior to taking most of his plural wives as required by Doctrine and Covenants.

In summary, Joseph’s polygamy included:

- Unions with teenagers as young as 14
- Unions without Emma’s knowledge or consent;
- Unions without the knowledge or consent of the husband (in cases of polyandry);
- A union with Apostle Orson Hyde’s wife while he was on a mission (Marinda Hyde);
- A union with a newlywed and pregnant woman (Zina Huntington);
- Promises of salvation for the woman’s entire family;
- Threats that Joseph would be slain by an angel with a drawn sword if the woman did not marry him (Zina Huntington, Almera Woodard Johnson, Mary Lightner);
- Threats of loss of salvation if the woman did not agree to marry him;
- Dishonesty in public sermons, denials by Joseph that he was a polygamist, Joseph’s destruction of the [Nauvoo Expositor](#) that exposed his polygamy;
- Marriages to young women living in Joseph’s home as foster daughters (Lawrence sisters, Partridge sisters, Fanny Alger, Lucy Walker);
- Joseph’s marriage to [Fanny Alger](#) was described by his cousin, Oliver Cowdery, as a “dirty, nasty, filthy affair” (Richard Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, p.323);
- Joseph practiced polygamy before the sealing authority was given. LDS historian, Richard Bushman, said “There is evidence that Joseph was a polygamist by 1835.” (*Rough Stone Rolling*, p.323.)

**16. Evidence of Joseph’s Immoral Proposal to Jane Law:** Grant Palmer published an essay in 2012 detailing the reasons William and Jane Law left the Church in 1844. At the time of their defection, William Law was second counselor in the First Presidency. The following is a modified and revised excerpt of the article, which depicts a corroborated account of at least one of Joseph Smith’s immoral proposals. Here is a link to the [unmodified, fully-sourced article](#).

**Excerpt:** It is well documented that Joseph Smith took at least 33 plural wives. By 1843, Emma Smith was not happy in her marriage with Joseph. William Clayton, Smith’s personal secretary, recorded a conversation in his journal on this date that Joseph Smith had with his wife: “[Joseph Smith] knew [Emma] was disposed to be revenged on him for some things. She thought that if he would indulge himself she would too.” Joseph Jackson supported William Clayton’s account.

Jackson said that Joseph told him: “Emma wanted [William] Law for a spiritual husband, and she urged as a reason that as he had so many spiritual wives, she thought it but fair that she should at least have one man ... and that she wanted Law, because he was such a ‘sweet little man.’ ”

Between June 23 and July 11, 1843, Joseph Smith received a ... revelation: “A commandment I give unto my handmaiden, Emma Smith ... which I commanded you [Joseph] to offer unto her” (D&C 132: 51). William Law, Smith’s counselor in the first presidency, described the content of this “offer”-revelation that Smith used to appease Emma. Law wrote: “Joseph offered to furnish his wife, Emma, with a substitute for him, by way of compensation for his neglect of her, on condition that she would forever stop her opposition to polygamy and permit him to enjoy his young wives in peace and keep some of them in her [mansion] house and to be well treated, etc.”

While Joseph and Emma Smith agreed to this sexual offer, William and Jane Law did not. Jackson, continuing with his narrative said that “He [Joseph] and Emma had both tried to persuade her [Jane Law] of the correctness of the doctrine, but that she would not believe it to be of God.” With the Laws having rejected the offer, Joseph Smith received D&C 132, on July 12, 1843. Verses 51-52, 54, now instruct Emma:

That she stay herself and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her; for I did it, saith the Lord, to prove you all, as I did Abraham .... Let my handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph .... I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment, she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her.

William Law recorded Joseph and Emma’s comments on these verses: “[Joseph] thought the revelation would cause [Emma] to submit peacefully, as it threatened her removal if she did not.” Emma confided to Law that the revelation, which she did not believe, was a “threat against her life,” if she did not comply. Law said that Emma, “Spoke repeatedly about that pretended revelation ... [and] says[,] ‘I must submit or be destroyed. Well, I guess I have to submit.’ ” Emma submitted to Joseph’s instruction, but Joseph continued his proposals to single and married women until December of 1843, including Jane Law.

Several months later, probably during November-December, Joseph made a play for the “attractive” 30-year-old Jane Law. William wrote in his diary on May 13, 1844, that, “He [Smith] had lately endeavored to seduce my wife, and had found her a virtuous woman.” Alexander Neibaur, a close friend of Joseph Smith, recorded: “When Mr[.] Law came home [one evening,] he Inquired who had been in his Absence. She said no one but Br Joseph. He then demanded what had pass[ed.] Mrs[.] L[aw] then told [him] that Joseph wanted her to be Married to him.”

Joseph Jackson said much the same when he wrote: “Shortly after the ... (15<sup>th</sup> of Jan, 1844) that Jo[s]e[ph] informed me in conversation, that he had been endeavoring for some two months, to get Mrs. William Law for a spiritual [polygamist] wife. He said that he had used every argument in his power to convince her of the correctness of his doctrine, but could not succeed.” Smith shared this information, according to Jackson, because Smith wanted Law “removed.” Jackson said that shortly after January 15<sup>th</sup>:

One Sunday morning, Jo[s]e[ph] and I had a long talk concerning Law, in which he avowed, not for the first time, however, his determination to put Law out of the way, for he had become dangerous to the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and that it was the will of God that he should be removed. He, however, wished to proceed in such a manner that he would be able to get Law’s wife.

By January 1, 1844, it is clear from William's diary that the Laws have rejected Smith's proposal. On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Law is dropped as a counselor in the First Presidency and on April 18<sup>th</sup>, the Laws were excommunicated from the church.

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2. **All Polygamist Unions were Illegal:** Polygamy was illegal in the United States at all times when the Church engaged in the practice. The Illinois anti-bigamy law, enacted February 12, 1833, clearly stated that polygamy was illegal. Polygamy was also illegal in Ohio and Missouri when Joseph took some of his plural wives. Polygamy was also illegal in Utah during the period at issue. Finally, polygamy was illegal under federal law. Believing that the revelations of God took precedence over the laws of men, Mormons ignored federal and state laws. These men including First Presidency counselor, George Q. Cannon, were imprisoned for practicing polygamy. In fact, the federal government published and disseminated wanted posters and offered an \$800 reward to anyone who would arrest the President of the Church, John Taylor, and his first counselor, George Q. Cannon. ↑