

How Common the Principle? Women as Plural Wives in 1860

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THIS ESSAY EXAMINES HOW COMMON the practice of polygamy was in the Salt Lake Valley in 1860. We use census data, Ancestral File information, and data from family histories and biographies to estimate the number of women who were plural wives and the typical living arrangements for these women. We also ask if any differences existed based on ward characteristics. Three LDS wards are examined, the Thirteenth Ward (a well-to-do ward whose members formed the elite of Mormonism), the Twentieth Ward (a moderate income ward whose members were almost all immigrants), and the Mill Creek Ward¹ (which covered the rural area of the valley and where members lived in farming households).

Estimates of the number of women and men who actually practiced polygamy in nineteenth-century Utah are plentiful.² But most available research is based on non-random samples or data from the 1880s, a period of great turmoil for Latter-day Saints and at least three decades after polygamy was openly practiced in the west.³

Our interest in estimating the number of women in plural marriages in 1860 is primarily sociological. Contemporary scholars have wondered why women participated in a practice so apparently contrary to their own best interests. Certainly religious doctrine and devotion to "building the Kingdom" encouraged devout Mormon women to enter into "the principle." But

1. Mill Creek Ward was the appropriate name and spelling for many years. However, by the time the history of the ward was published in pamphlet form, the spelling had changed to Millcreek Ward.

2. See Stanley S. Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *Western Humanities Review* 10 (1956): 229-39; Jessie L. Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987); and Lowell Bennion, "The Incident of Mormon Polygamy in 1880: 'Dixie' versus Davis Stake," *Journal of Mormon History* 11 (1984).

3. See Embry.

we suspect that one reason a woman could decide to become a plural wife was simply that it was a common practice. The principle had been introduced and practiced among the elite leaders of the church, and as the practice became more open, participation provided a measure of status and prestige within the religious community.

Religious groups exert pressure on individuals to conform to normative expectations in many ways. For example, negative sanctions discourage deviance. But individuals are also encouraged to adhere to the normative expectations of the group in positive ways. For example, devout members provide a model of appropriate behaviors for true believers. Thus the degree of conformity to religious expectations by elite group members encourages both newcomers and those striving to be "good" followers to meet the same expectations.

Social pressures to carry out religious expectations can be powerful despite a low level of observance in the general population. The contemporary LDS church setting provides some useful examples. The church encourages all young men to serve as missionaries, but in reality many do not. Typically only one in three young men actually serves as a missionary.⁴ In addition, couples are strongly encouraged to marry in the temple. But the number of temple-married households in the U.S. is relatively small—less than one in three of all households, and only 45 percent of married-couple households.⁵ Despite low levels of observance, these normative expectations define not only the boundaries of the religious group (e.g., membership) but also distinguish the core adherents from those on the periphery (e.g., active versus inactive). Furthermore, adherence to religious principles not only assures salvation but offers an individual a certain degree of status and prestige within the religious group.

Both Vicky Burgess-Olson⁶ and Jessie Embry have examined the reasons why women entered plural marriage. Burgess-Olson noted that (1) dedication to the principle, (2) pressure from a third party, and (3) economic forces were prevalent reasons. She also reported that status was a significant motivation to marry, particularly for young women who became the third or fourth wife of a prominent local leader. Embry examined common folk justifications for the practice of plural marriage and reported a common perception that there was an insufficient number of men. Some informants said the men had been killed in the Black Hawk War or the Spanish-Ameri-

4. Darwin L. Thomas, "Letter to the Editor—'Afterwords,'" *Brigham Young University Studies* 24 (1986): 99-103.

5. Kristen L. Goodman and Tim B. Heaton, "LDS Church Members in the U.S. and Canada: A Demographic Profile," *AMCAP Journal* 12 (1986): 88-107.

6. Vicky Burgess-Olson, "Family Structure and Dynamics in Early Utah Mormon Families—1847-1885," Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1975.

can War. This is historically inaccurate since there were few Mormons killed in either war. Others said there simply were not enough "good" men for all the "good" women. An imbalance in the male-female ratio has not been substantiated by census data. On the contrary, some have argued that there was a shortage of women.

To anyone living in a society where monogamy is *the* acceptable form of marriage, the choice to enter into a plural marriage seems particularly strange. However, making such a choice becomes more understandable when one considers how common the practice may have been—as common as missionary service or temple marriage in the contemporary LDS church.

POLYGAMY AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

In August 1852, Apostle Orson Pratt spoke boldly to all members of the church at general conference about the importance of living under the new marriage covenant that many leaders of the church had been practicing for ten or more years. Pratt warned the congregation that those who did not take hold of the practice would face dire consequences: "Now, let us enquire, what will become of those who have this law taught unto them in plainness, if they reject it? [A voice in the stand, "they will be damned."] I will tell you: they will be damned, saith the Lord God Almighty, in the revelation He has given."⁷

The development of Mormon covenant making through the Nauvoo, Illinois, period is described fully by anthropologist Rex Cooper.⁸ The patriarchal order established by the end of the Nauvoo period emphasized the importance of creating family kingdoms presided over by male priesthood holders. The form of these family kingdoms changed over time, but by 1860 plural marriage was a principle which *committed* Mormons were expected to live.⁹ Two significant events occurred in the mid-1850s that encouraged the spread of polygamy among those who had gathered in the Salt Lake Valley. First, the Endowment House was completed in 1855. The ceremonies in which polygamous marriages were created and other religious rituals were performed in the Endowment House, a temporary substitute until a temple could be built. While such marriage ceremonies took place even before the Endowment House was built, the existence of a building

7. Orson Pratt, "Celestial Marriage," in *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool: F. D. and S. W. Richards, 1854), 1:54, 56.

8. Rex E. Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990).

9. See Embry, 7-9.

specifically for such purposes helped to institutionalize, legitimize, and encourage the practice.¹⁰

Second, a vigorous reformation occurred within the church during 1856-57. Members were encouraged to purify and to rededicate themselves to living all the principles of the gospel, including polygamy. Stanley Ivins documents that there were "sixty-five percent more [polygamous] marriages during 1856 and 1857 than in any other two years . . ." ¹¹ This dramatic increase was likely a function of the increased emphasis on plural marriage.

Despite available scholarship, folk traditions live on in contemporary society which dictate specific images of polygamy. One view (encouraged by the non-Mormon media at the turn of the century) emphasized that Mormon men married many wives who were treated only a little better than cattle, lived in constant strife with the other wives, were subject to their husband's every whim, and were generally impoverished.¹² The other view (held by many Mormons and influenced by official church reports and statements) claimed that each man had only a few wives, that only the well educated and elite Mormon leadership participated in polygamy, and that Mormon women and men were highly virtuous.

Various estimates of participation in plural marriage exist. An 1885 statement from John Taylor and George Q. Cannon reported, "As to the male members of our Church who practice plural marriage are estimated as not exceeding but little, if any, two per cent, of the entire membership of the Church . . ." ¹³ Another report stated that "It has been estimated that out of a community of about 200,000 people, more or less, from 10,000 to 12,000 are identified with polygamy."¹⁴

William E. Berrett concluded that "plural marriage was never at any time a general law for the entire church, and was never at any time practiced by over two percent of the adult male population."¹⁵ Ivins quoted an official statement by the Mormon church that "The practice of plural marriage has never been general in the Church and at no time have more than three percent of families in the Church been polygamous." But his own estimate is higher. Using the biographies of prominent Utahns and the history of

10. Danel Bachman and Ronald K. Esplin, "Plural Marriage," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992), 3:1094.

11. Ivins, 231.

12. Davis Bitton and Gary L. Bunker, "Double Jeopardy: Visual Images of Mormon Women to 1914," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (1978): 184-202.

13. James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833-1964* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 3:11.

14. *Ibid.*, 31.

15. William Edwin Berrett, *The Restored Church: A Brief History of the Growth and Doctrines for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Desert Book Co., 1953), 250-51.

Sanpete and Emery counties, he estimated between 15 and 20 percent of families were polygamous and approximately 13 percent of men.¹⁶ Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton also estimated female involvement:

Based on the best information now available, we estimate that no more than 5 percent of married Mormon men had more than one wife; and since the great majority of these had only two wives, it is reasonable to suppose that about 12 percent of Mormon married women were involved in the principle. . . . These are generally figures for the period from about 1850 to 1890.¹⁷

We find two problems with these estimates. First, the impact of polygamy on nineteenth-century Mormonism has been generally trivialized. For example, James Allen and Glen Leonard claimed that plural marriage "played a relatively small role in the total life of most Mormon communities. Most Saints accepted the principle but did not practice it. It was not only a complicated social problem, but also a heavy economic burden, especially in times of persecution. . . . 'the principle,' as it was called, was something many avoided."¹⁸ They also underestimated the prevalence of polygamy: "Exactly how many people married into plural marriages is impossible to determine, but probably between 10 and 15 percent of the families in pioneer Utah were involved."¹⁹

Second, the various attempts to estimate the numbers involved in polygamy use a different statistical base. John Taylor's "2 percent" is based on the *entire membership of the church*, which includes not only women and children, but church members not living in the Utah territories. Berrett uses the 2 percent but interprets it as 2 percent of *adult males*. Ivins quotes 3 percent, but it is 3 percent of *families*, rather than 3 percent of the membership. Other estimates use the entire membership of the church as the base but include anyone "identified" with polygamy—adult men and women as well as children in polygamous households.

This same ambiguity exists in the more recent research on polygamy rates. Lowell Bennion estimated the polygamy rate for different Utah communities and concludes that "at least one-fifth of all Mormons lived in plural homes in 1880."²⁰ Larry Logue offered a more precise measurement of polygamous status as a percent of "eligible person years," estimating that 31

16. Ivins, 230.

17. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (Boston: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1979), 199.

18. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 278, 279.

19. *Ibid.*, 278.

20. Bennion, 38.

percent of husband person years, 62 percent of wife person years, and 57 percent of the children person years in St. George between 1861-80 were polygamous.²¹ Another estimate is provided by Bean et. al. who recently examined the fertility patterns of nineteenth-century Utah women and estimates the rate of polygamy as well. Using data amassed as part of the LDS church's family-group sheet program, Bean et. al. created a marriage classification for all women who were born between 1800 and 1899 and lived in Utah. Records for about 86,000 women reveal an overall rate of only 9 percent married to a polygamous husband. However, the data indicate that between 27 and 31 percent of women born 1830 through 1844 were married to a polygamous husband during their lifetime. These women would have been of marriageable age between 1848 and 1862, the time period when women in the 1860 census would have been entering into plural marriage.²²

Our own examination of polygamy presents a different statistical approach. First, along with Bean et. al., we focus on women and their experience with polygamy. Examining the percent of men who enter into plural marriage provides useful information but underestimates the impact of the practice on the total population—especially for women and children. Furthermore, having identified the numbers of women in plural marriage we can then examine how many lived by themselves as head of house, lived with another wife, or with many wives. Second, we take a snapshot in time. We look at how many women were married at the time of the 1860 census and how many of those were in plural marriages *at that time*. We also estimate how many eventually became plural wives.

By 1860 polygamy had been openly practiced and encouraged for almost a decade. Laws prohibiting plural marriage in U.S. territories had not yet been passed. By selecting the 1860 census, we not only capture polygamy at an early date but also at its highest peak (as suggested by the Bean et. al. data). We also are able to limit the amount of record matching required since the population of Salt Lake City in 1860 is relatively small. There were 8,191 people living in 1,496 households in Salt Lake City. Perhaps one reason the 1860 census has never been used to estimate the number living in polygamy is that marital status is not specified. Therefore, in order to estimate the numbers living in polygamy, we must pay careful attention to which individuals exist in the household and then match that information with marriage records from other sources.

By 1860 church members had been divided into twenty geographically

21. Larry M. Logue, *A Sermon in the Desert: Belief and Behavior in Early St. George, Utah* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

22. Lee L. Bean, Geraldine P. Mineau, and Douglas L. Anderson, *Fertility Change on the American Frontier: Adaptation and Innovation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

defined wards. These wards represented different ethnic and economic configurations of the population. By selecting different geographic areas of the city for record selection and matching, we are able to identify (1) whether the practice of plural marriage was higher in wards containing the "elite" families of Mormondom, (2) whether the practice was lower in wards with a high percentage of immigrants, (3) whether the practice was higher in rural areas of the valley, and (4) whether economic factors seemed to have an influence on the extent of plural marriage in a ward.

METHODOLOGY

We selected three wards from the Salt Lake Valley—two within the city and one just outside the city. Ward selection was based on three criteria: urban versus rural, immigrant versus American-born, and the socioeconomic status of the members. Selection was based in part on data provided in Larry Draper's demographic analysis of the twenty Salt Lake wards existing between 1850 and 1870.²³

The Thirteenth Ward was a well established ward bounded on the east by Third East and on the west by State Street, and on the north and south by South Temple and by Third South. Some of the most prominent families of the LDS church resided in the Thirteenth Ward, including the Erastus Snow, Phinias Young, George Goddard, and Daniel H. Wells households.²⁴ According to Draper, the Thirteenth Ward was the second largest in 1860, comprising 142 households and accounting for 9.5 percent of the total population of Salt Lake City. Draper also notes that there were only 35.2 percent foreign-born members in this ward. He ranked it second in terms of wealth, with the average head of household owning \$1,672 of real wealth.

By comparison, the Twentieth Ward was a relatively new, medium-sized ward. It comprised 58 households and represented 3.9 percent of the 1860 population. It was not organized until 1857 and was located on Plat D, which is now "the Avenues" of Salt Lake City. Referred to as "the dry bench" because it lacked water, residents were of average income (the ward ranked eleventh out of twenty in terms of wealth); the average head of house owned \$958 of real wealth. This ward had the highest number of

23. Larry Wayne Draper, "A Demographic Examination of Household Heads in Salt Lake City, Utah, 1850-1870," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1988.

24. Ronald W. Walker, "'Going to Meeting' in Salt Lake City's Thirteenth Ward, 1849-1881: A Microanalysis," in *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard Arrington*, eds. Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press), 138-61.

foreign-born (94.8 percent). By 1870, the Twentieth Ward was not only the wealthiest in the valley, but also the largest ward.²⁵

We also selected the Mill Creek Ward—the only ward organized outside of Salt Lake City in 1849.²⁶ The original ward boundaries stretched from 2100 South to Cottonwood Creek and what is now 4800 South. On the west and east, its boundaries were the Jordan River and the Wasatch mountains. Two-thirds of Mill Creek Ward residents were foreign born. We have no comparable wealth figures for this ward.

Data were first obtained from the census records. In order to be as comprehensive as possible, all adults ages eighteen and above living within the ward boundaries were identified, whether or not they appeared on the official rolls of the church. Initially, we also noted the names of young women under the age of eighteen in case they might have already married. However, we found none of these women to be wives and therefore have restricted the sample to eighteen and above.

Having collected the data from the 1860 census, we supplemented the material primarily with Ancestral File information. We also accessed biographies and family histories which provided additional information where needed. In order to tabulate polygamy rates, we created the following three marital status categories:

1. *Women in polygamous marriages.* All women who were clearly in a polygamous marriage in 1860 were included in this group. For the majority of these women, we have concrete data from the LDS Ancestral File showing the birth, death, and marriage dates. For a small number of women, we found data suggesting their husbands had more than one wife, but because of inadequate marriage and/or death dates we were unable to verify if there had been an overlap in the marriages. If we could find no evidence indicating the marriages had been sequential rather than concurrent, we classified the woman as a plural wife. We also include women in this category if the census reported more than one woman in the same household with the same surname and available information on the husband's family indicated that the women were not related in some other way (e.g., sister or sister-in-law). Given our experience in matching records, we believe these women were most likely plural wives.

2. *Women in monogamous marriages.* All women whose Ancestral File information indicated they were the only wife of their husband in 1860 were included in this category. Also included were all women who appeared monogamous according to the census—there was only one man and one

25. Twentieth Ward History, 1856-1979, comp. Ruth J. Martin, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

26. Earl E. Wright, *Millcreek Ward, 1849-1956* (Salt Lake City: Millcreek First Ward, 1956).

woman in the household. We assumed this was the only marriage at the time since we could find no evidence of other wives. However, it is likely that for some of these women there were other plural wives living in other households in other wards.

3. *Apparently unmarried or widowed women.* Women who were either never married or widowed, or women for whom we could find no information, were included in this category. These women were listed as either head of house or were living in a household with others but did not share the surname of the male head of house. When the woman shared the same surname of the male head of house but was at least twenty years his senior, we categorized the woman as a widow.

We believe this classification system produces a conservative estimate of the number of women living as plural wives.

FINDINGS

Using data from the census, we find significant differences among the wards on a variety of variables (see Table 1). Men in the Twentieth Ward were predominantly craftsmen or skilled laborers. Men in the Mill Creek Ward were predominantly farmers or farm laborers, while men in the Thirteenth Ward were primarily businessmen, merchants, and skilled laborers.

TABLE 1.
WARD COMPARISONS, 1860

	13th	20th	Mill Creek
<i>Occupation</i>	7 %	7 %	0 %
Professional	26	11	0
Business/merchant	28	54	12
Craftsman/skilled laborer	20	28	34
Unskilled laborer	19	0	55
Farmer	(N=188)	(N=54)	(N=191)
<i>Foreign-born</i>	44 %	94 %	67 %
Male	39	94	64
Female	49	91	70
	(N=473)	(N=132)	(N=410)
<i>Male-to-female ratio</i>			
Males	49 % (231)	41 % (54)	49 % (197)
Females	51 % (242)	59 % (78)	51 % (213)

	(N=473)	(N=132)	(N=410)
<i>Average age (in years)</i>			
Male	35	38	36
Female	34	32	35

The male/female ratio among adults was fairly even in the Thirteenth and Mill Creek wards; however, in the Twentieth Ward only 41 percent of the adult population were men. We also found that the ages of men and women were more balanced in the Thirteenth and Mill Creek wards (about 35 years of age), while men were somewhat older than women (38 years old compared to 32 years old) in the Twentieth Ward.

TABLE 2.
MARITAL STATUS FOR WOMEN IN 1860 CENSUS BY WARD

	<i>13th</i>		<i>20th</i>		<i>Mill Creek</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Polygamous Marriage	103	43	28	35	106	50	237	44
Monogamous Marriage	81	33	35	44	75	35	191	36
Not married	57	24	16	20	33	15	106	20
Total	241	100	79	100	214	100	534	100

Table 2 presents data on marital status for women living in the three wards. Overall, we found the greatest number of women were in a polygamous marriage, more than four in ten. A little more than one-third of women were in a monogamous marriage, and 20 percent of women were not currently married. Women living in the Mill Creek Ward were most likely to be in polygamous marriages (50 percent) and least likely to be unmarried (only 15 percent). As shown in Table 3, the majority of unmarried women in Mill Creek were over 50 years of age (55 percent). By comparison, women in the Twentieth Ward were least likely to be in a polygamous marriage (35 percent), and if unmarried (20 percent) they were mostly under thirty years of age (56 percent). More than one in four women in the Thirteenth Ward were in a polygamous marriage. There were slightly more unmarried women (about one in four) in this ward, and unmarried women were also comparatively younger (42 percent under the age of 30). These women may have been temporary guests or perhaps unidentified domestics. We found no information suggesting they were married at the time or eventually married the head of house.

TABLE 3.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF UNMARRIED WOMEN IN 1860 CENSUS BY WARD

	13th		20th		Mill Creek		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
< 30	24	42	9	56	10	30	43	41
30-49	19	33	3	20	5	15	27	25
50+	14	25	4	25	18	55	36	34
Total	57	100	16	100	33	15	106	100

The above data suggest that unattached women in the rural area of the valley were most likely older (probably widows), while the unmarried women in the urban areas were younger. Urban centers may have been more inviting for the young unmarried woman even in 1860.

TABLE 4.

MARITAL STATUS OF MARRIED WOMEN IN 1860 CENSUS BY WARD

	13th		20th		Mill Creek		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Polygamous	103	56	28	44	106	59	237	56
Monogamous	76	41	25	40	67	37	168	39
Eventually	5	3	10	16	8	4	23	5
Total	184	100	63	100	181	100	428	100

As seen in Table 4, the highest rate of polygamy among *married* women is in the farming community of Mill Creek where we found 59 percent of women in a polygamous marriage. The lowest rate of plural marriage for married women in our sample is in the Twentieth Ward (44 percent), the urban ward with the most foreign born and a lower average wealth. However, note also that married women in the Twentieth Ward were more likely to become a plural wife than women in the other wards. Their immigrant status and relatively young age may account for the lower rate of polygamy. In sum, at least three out of five of the married women in these three wards eventually became plural wives. This suggests a much higher rate of plural marriage than estimated in other studies.

We also examined the living arrangements of women in plural marriages. Folk images picture men married to dozens of women, and plural wives living and maintaining their own households. Ivins's early study estimated "Of 1,784 polygamists, 66.3 per cent married only one extra wife.

Another 21.2 per cent were three-wife men, and 6.7 percent went as far as to take four wives. This left a small group of less than six per cent who married five or more women." More recently Arrington and Bitton estimate "that no more than 5 percent of married Mormon men had more than one wife; and . . . the great majority of these had only two wives . . ."²⁷

TABLE 5.
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOR WOMEN IN POLYGAMOUS MARRIAGES, 1860

	13th		20th		Mill Creek		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Woman head of house (husband not present)	4	4	0	0	12	11	16	7
Only wife in household	22	21	6	21	36	34	64	27
2 wives present	46	45	18	65	33	31	97	41
3 wives present	18	17	0	0	17	16	35	15
4+ wives present	13	13	4	14	8	8	25	10
Total	103		28		106		237	

As reported in Table 5, the most common arrangement for plural wives was to live with their husband and one other wife (about four in ten). This arrangement was, however, most common in the Twentieth Ward where more than three out of five women lived with their husband and one other wife. We found that three in ten plural married women in the Thirteenth Ward and one in four of plural married women in the Mill Creek Ward lived in households with two or more other wives.

We found few plural wives who were heads of house—only 4 percent in the Thirteenth Ward and none in the Twentieth. However, 11 percent of polygamous wives in the Mill Creek Ward were the head of their own household. One reason for this higher number was the many households of Archibald Gardner, a wealthy landowner and mill operator. Gardner had eleven wives, of whom seven lived in the Mill Creek Ward boundaries. One of his wives, Jane Park, age twenty-six, was head of her own household and reported a single twenty-two-year-old male farm laborer living in her home. Two other wives, living in separate dwellings, were mother and daughter. But this arrangement was rare in 1860. We found little support for the image of plural wives living in separate households, visited regularly (or irregularly) by the husband—the living arrangement of Emmeline

27. Arrington and Bitton, 199.

B. Wells, for example. At most 7 percent of plural married women were living singly in 1860, and it was most likely to occur in the farming community of Mill Creek, and only then in wealthy farm households.

TABLE 6.
MEAN NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL PLURAL WIVES FOR WOMEN
IN POLYGAMOUS MARRIAGES, 1860

	13th		20th		Mill Creek		Total	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Total number of additional wives in same household	99	1.27	28	1.21	102	.81	229	1.06
Total number of additional wives at census	68	2.62	19	1.11	75	2.44	162	2.36
Total number of additional wives in husband's lifetime	91	3.91	23	2.74	98	3.03	212	3.38

Data in Table 6 demonstrate additional significant differences by ward. We calculated the total number of additional plural wives for each woman married to a polygamous husband. Since missing data are a problem, these numbers may not be as accurate as the rest of our estimates. We feel more confident about the accuracy of identifying which women were married to polygamous husbands than the accuracy of counting how many other wives. However, we did find that women in the Twentieth Ward had the fewest wives in the same household in 1860 (1.21 compared to 1.81 for the Mill Creek Ward and 1.27 for the Thirteenth Ward). However, women in both the Thirteenth and Mill Creek wards were more likely to have other plural wives in other households (2.62 and 2.44 respectively). Over time ward differences decreased. The total number of other plural wives during the husband's lifetime was 3.91 for the women in the Thirteenth Ward, compared to 3.03 for Mill Creek and 2.74 for the Twentieth Ward. Clearly women in the Thirteenth Ward had the most other women married to their husbands.

These statistics are based on data about all people living in ward boundaries in 1860. No attempt has been made to make comparisons with actual church membership records. The Thirteenth Ward covered a commercial and highly urban area of the city, and there were likely many non-Mormons living within the boundaries. There were at least two hotels within the boundary limits. Given the likelihood of non-Mormon residents, the polygamy rate among Mormons in the Thirteenth Ward is probably

actually higher than we have estimated. Taken together, it appears that the polygamy rate is highest in agricultural/farming areas, almost or equally high in well-to-do urban areas, and lower in less well-to-do urban areas populated with recent immigrants. However, we do find that the number of plural wives in the Twentieth Ward increased after 1860, probably as the economic stability of the households increased and the new immigrants had time to settle into Mormon society.

We found few unmarried women under thirty in the three wards: only 8 percent of the population overall, and only 5 percent in Mill Creek. We also found little evidence that men married widows as plural wives. Rather, these women were more likely to be living with adult sons and daughters.

We found a number of young men who either were not married or were not living with a spouse. These young men were most prevalent in the Thirteenth Ward where they lived in boarding houses, and in the Mill Creek Ward where they were farm laborers. Remember, the male/female ratio in these two wards was almost equal, and yet there was a high rate of polygamy. In some cases, we found an apparently unmarried man living and working as part of a polygamous household along side a young polygamous wife of similar age. For example, in the household of Caroline C. Green, age twenty-one, there was a twenty-three year old farm laborer named Richard Ingraham. But Caroline was a plural wife of Cornelius Green, age forty. Young men such as Richard owned no property, had few skills (their occupation was typically listed as unskilled laborer), and were perhaps not able to support a family.

CONCLUSION

These data suggest that the practice of polygamy played a significant role in shaping social relationships and culture in early Utah. Two out of five women and three out of five married women living in these three wards were in polygamous marriages. Data on the number of contemporary LDS women who are temple married is not available, but it is likely that the statistics are similar. The sheer numbers of women who were willing to enter into marriage with a polygamous husband probably encouraged other women to follow in their footsteps. The fact that plural marriage was initially introduced among the leadership of the church helped create an atmosphere of greater acceptability. Perhaps such unions provided a certain amount of status for both husband and wife which served to mitigate the stresses and strains of actually living under "the principle."

Economic factors also played a significant role. Housing more than one wife, whether in separate residences or in the same residence, must have required a certain level of economic well-being. The fact that we find more plural wives in the same household in the elite wealthy urban ward or the

wealthy landed household of Mill Creek than in less well-to-do areas like the Twentieth Ward suggests an economic factor. Women likely examined the costs and benefits of a polygamous marriage. On the other hand, we must not ignore the economic advantage additional wives provided polygamous households, both in urban and rural areas. Each additional person contributed to household production and therefore to the economic stability of the household. Even so, there must have been obvious benefits to considering marriage to a well-established, financially stable, prominent man rather than to a young man with little to offer economically.

The almost equal sex ratio in the two wards with high polygamy rates suggests that there must have been a number of marriageable young men who had difficulty competing in the marriage market. We found a great disparity between the real estate and personal property values of the male heads of house and the unskilled laborers living in the boarding houses of the Thirteenth Ward or the farm laborers living in households in Mill Creek.

We can draw only tentative conclusions from these data. More analysis must follow. However, the data seem to suggest that the practice of plural marriage was higher in wards containing the "elite" and wealthy families of Mormondom. The practice of plural marriage was initially lower in the Twentieth Ward where incomes were more moderate and where almost all members were immigrants. However, the total number of women who either were a plural wife or eventually became a plural wife was about equal for all three wards. We found a high rate of plural marriage in the rural area of the valley as well, but the rate was not much greater than in the more wealthy Thirteenth Ward.

In short, we find a high rate of plural marriage and conclude that such a common practice would encourage more women to enter into plural marriage during the next two decades. We also find, however, that about four in ten married women in these three wards never became a plural wife. We suggest that more attention be given to the differences between women who entered plural marriage and those who did not and what conflicts may have arisen among the women as they made different choices about their role in "the Kingdom." What factors encouraged women to enter plural marriage has been addressed previously. A survey of factors which discouraged women from entering into plural marriage might be even more enlightening.