

Prisoner of Ideals

Prisoner for Polygamy: The Memoirs and Letters of Ruder Clawson at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, 1884-87. Edited by Stan Larson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

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PRISONER FOR POLYGAMY IS NOT SIMPLY another volume in the vast collection of diaries, histories, auto-biographies, and biographies of Mormon polygamists. Rather it is a slice of life, a document describing the immediate consequences of living the principle.

From its inception, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints boasted they would give up property, family, and life for the restored gospel, including polygamy. The 935 men incarcerated for living the principle between 1884 and 1895 made good on this claim. *Prisoner for Polygamy: The Memoirs and Letters of Ruder Clawson at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, 1884-1887*, is the story of one of these men, the story of his ideals and integrity. Ruder Clawson's memoir is based on the journals he kept while an inmate in the Utah penitentiary.

Stan Larson's volume includes Clawson's memoir; love letters to his plural wife, Lydia; appendices containing Clawson's 1884 prison journal; and lists of Mormon polygamists imprisoned in the Utah penitentiary and of Clawson's family. It also includes a bib-

liography of various diaries, journals, and autobiographies of Mormon polygamists held in the Utah prison.

Ruder Clawson was the son of polygamist Hiram B. Clawson and his second wife Margaret Jay Judd. He was a prominent member of the LDS church serving as missionary, stake president, mission president, apostle, president of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, and counselor in the First Presidency. Clawson married Florence Ann Dinwoody in August 1882. Seven months later, he married Lydia Spencer at the Salt Lake Endowment House. By early 1884 polygamists were being prosecuted under the Edmunds Act.

On 24 April 1884 a grand jury indicted Clawson for polygamy and unlawful cohabitation. When Clawson came to trial in October 1884, the jury could not agree on a verdict and Judge Charles S. Zane declared a mistrial. Later that night federal deputies located Lydia Clawson and served her with a subpoena. Lydia refused to testify at Clawson's retrial and was put in custody for contempt of court. Clawson begged Lydia to testify so she would not have to remain in prison.

After Lydia's testimony the jury found Clawson guilty. Clawson was sentenced to three and one-half years and a fine of \$500 for polygamy and six months and \$300 for unlawful cohabitation to be served consecutively. Clawson was the first Mormon convicted and imprisoned for violation of the Edmunds Act.