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EDITORIAL

David M. Morris

Editor

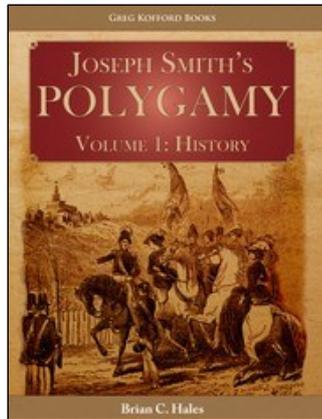
Since 2007, we have published one volume a year filled with scholarly articles, as well as book reviews. We will of course continue to do this, however, we will begin to publish book reviews directly, to the website and make a selection for each volume. This is to respond to the now numerous books and publications that are coming out.

In this issue, we are excited to publish a lengthy consideration of Mormon identity by Wilfried Decoo, as well as Armand Mauss' article 'From Galatia to Ghana'. Following which, we are able to publish, 'Sacred Secrecy and the Latter-day Saints' by Douglas J. Davies as well as articles by Alan Goff and Kirk Caudle. A number of book reviews also appear, all of which are available on <http://www.ijmsonline.org>. A special appreciation is extended to the contributors for their kindness in making available their submissions.

We, as always, extend our appreciation to those who took time to blind peer-review articles and review books fairly and as formatively as possible. As an editorial board we hope you will enjoy the contents of this issue.

If you wish to make a comment or suggestions on its improvement, please feel free to email us at editorial@ijmsonline.org

**BOOK REVIEW: JOSEPH SMITH'S POLYGAMY, VOLUME 1 & 2:
HISTORY – DAVID M. MORRIS**



Title: Joseph Smith's Polygamy: Volumes 1&2: History
Author: Brian C. Hales; Contributor: Don Bradley
Publisher: Greg Kofford Books
Year: 2013
Pages: (vol. 1) 623 & (vol. 2) 594
Binding: Hardback
ISBN-13: 978-15895818904
List Price: \$36.95

Regardless of the reader's religious or societal views, what Brian C. Hales has achieved, should be recognized as an audacious study. Perhaps it is too soon to declare it a definitive work, maybe what Richard Bushman's 'Rough Stone Rolling' did for the biography of Joseph Smith, so 'Joseph Smith's Polygamy' will do for Mormon polygamy. One of the endearing features of these volumes is how Hales, assisted by Don Bradley, has seemingly sought to find every reference, mention, or instance of polygamy and Joseph Smith. This is true to his goal of maintaining 'a firm commitment not to categorically reject any source of information. Antagonistic, apologetic, and neutral documents have all been given equal consideration and scrutiny.' (1:xi)

Brian C. Hales, is a board certified anaesthesiologist in Layton, Utah and this volume represents his seventh book, primarily on polygamy. His interest was roused by a close family member temporarily joining the Allred polygamous group in 1989, and has since spent years researching polygamy. Hales works from the premise that modern polygamous groups do not have genuine authority to practice plural marriage, and contends that the history points to Joseph Smith as the one with such a genuine authority. (1:ix).

That said, it is a very frank and empirical based study and is rarely devotional or confessional in tone. On the few occasions where the register does change, the author can be clearly identified as a believer in Mormonism. For example, early in Volume 1, Hales cites Daniel Bachman as to the early familiarity of the plural marriage doctrine, even as early as 1831, but precedes the statement with ‘the Prophet learned of the correctness of plural marriage’ (1:85, 91). The assumption of course that there is a correctness of plural marriage. However, this does not detract from the main thrust of these volumes. Already, it is a significant reference for primary and published sources, and with that in mind maybe Greg Kofford Books should also be credited for producing a three-volume set (two on history and one on theology) that perhaps other publishers might not have undertaken.

The first two volumes focus on the historicity and the dynamic and controversial relationships of Joseph Smith, et al. The first volume consists of 22 chapters (no index/bibliography) and volume 2 is the continuation with chapters 23 through to 33. Following these chapters are an extensive appendices and index for both volumes. It would have been preferable to include at least an index in the first volume as well, nevertheless, when combined with the second it is an excellent source of references and cataloguing of issues and narratives surrounding polygamy.

The early chapters engage with matters including the contextual morality of the time, 1820s to 1835, as well as first charges of immoral conduct between 1836 and 1842. Particularly in Chapter 3 Hales contends mainly over Fawn Brodie’s assertions of Clarissa Reed Hancock as a plural wife of Joseph Smith (1:76) and calls on Andrew Jensen, D. Michael Quinn, H. Michael Marquardt, Todd Compton and George D. Smith for rebuttal. (1:77). On this matter the majority is agreed, but throughout the volumes, there is a great array of thought which makes for useful reading and assessment of the current theme.

Chapters 4-6 primarily examines Fanny Alger’s relationship with Joseph Smith, perhaps this is the most familiar or earliest of Joseph’s relationships but as Hales advises it ‘can be interpreted differently as either a plural marriage, a friendship, or an adulterous union’. (1:124) Jeff Johnson, an LDS historian, who is described as having a middle-of-the-road perspective, contends that no historical evidence provides proof that ‘Joseph Smith had any kind of relationship with Fanny Alger.’ (1:124 fn66).

The evidence that Hales uses to support the notion of a relationship can be found in Volume 2, Appendix D. This is the pattern, an empirical approach with the expert weaving of commentary followed by opposing views in order to attempt an objective approach.

Maybe the genius of this new work is the re-evaluation of age-old assumptions of what some might consider a most difficult period of Mormonism. On occasion there are errors in dates or places, for example, the later marriage of Fanny Alger to Solomon Custer (a non-Mormon) in 1836 against Benjamin Johnson's recollection that it was sometime after 1837-1838. (1:123). There is also a family tradition that Brigham Young (post-1844), with Fanny Alger's brother, came to her to ask for her hand in marriage, prior to her marriage with Solomon Custer. Hales does not resolve that anomaly but merely makes note of it. (1:123 fn59, fn60). Whether it was earlier or later matters little, but it does demonstrate that Mormon history is often is complicated by inaccurate record keeping, the confusion /certainty of family traditions, lore, and hearsay.

Follow on from the post Alger affair, Chapters 6-10 considers the reactions of Oliver Cowdery, one of Joseph Smith's closest confidants and Book of Mormon scribe. Hales considers argument that Cowdery was an early polygamist by Danel Bachman and Glen M. Leonard (1:127) and opposing views such as Richard van Wagoner contending it was impossible (1:129). Yet, prominent 19th century Mormons, Joseph F. Smith, alleged Cowdery was taking liberties without license' (1878) (1:129) and George Q Cannon, makes the charge of adultery. (1885) (1:129). It must be noted, however, that Cannon was not a first-hand witness to these event as he joined Mormonism in 1840. Interestingly, Hales makes it clear that Joseph Smith was only accused of adultery briefly but never accused of polygamy prior to 1841 (1:144-145). Moreover, it appears that no one publicly knew, neither Smith's religious or political critics, press nor local writers that such things were being practiced. (1:146-149).

Chapter 11 deals with sexuality within Joseph Smith's plural marriages. In fact, Hales ascertains that he has found no credible evidence or reliable documentation regarding some of the more salacious allegations of sexual relations, for example, sexual relations with two separate teenagers, non-married females and those who were experiencing conjugal relationships with their own legal husbands. (1:284-285). What is clear from reading these two volumes is that much that has been said

or alleged and generally is without proof, the more scandalous, the less evidence exists.

The thorny issue over polyandry is dealt with in depth throughout Chapters 12 to 16. Hales does not deny that polyandry existed, but argues against earlier writers such as Fawn Brodie (1:305) and D. Michael Quinn (1:307) that Joseph Smith practiced sexual polyandry (that is sexual relations while married to two men). Throughout these chapters, Hales again challenges former interpretations or assumptions. Clearly, he walks a very thin line while extracting as much of an angle as possible to prove his point, while at the same time curtailing nuances of bias supporting the opposing case.

Chapter 15 explores some of the ideas of marriage or unions/sealings that were for ‘time only’, ‘time and eternity’, and for ‘eternity only’. Those of ‘eternity only’, were not physically consummated but were for promised friendships in the hereafter. Those for ‘time only’ might be considered as traditional marital relationships. (1:413–415). The difficulties and complexities of marital and sexual union were more acute among those who were married for ‘time and eternity’. It is perhaps this group that most is written.

Chapters 18 through 22 provides quite a detailed portrayal of John C. Bennett, a contemporary and confidant of Joseph Smith, as one who was described as being completely involved in his own licentiousness (1:550) and was drawn to Joseph Smith’s plural marriage teachings to satisfy his own urges, while others argue he was following the revealed word on plural marriage. Hales argues, ‘authors seldom account for the fact that Bennett had been accused of sexual impropriety before arriving in Nauvoo...’including previous marital infidelity.’ (1:550–551). Robert Flanders argues therein that ‘Bennett, a promiscuous and lascivious man had stumbled across the developing religious principle’ and was attracted and distorted it (1:548). Conversely, Hales draws on a number of equally respected scholars, including Todd Compton (1:547–548), Gary Bergera (1:517, 549), Richard S. Van Wagoner (1:548), that locates Bennett as one of the closest confidants and friends of the Prophet, and that his awareness of plural marriage came from that source.

The remaining chapters 23–33 (volume 2) deal with the reaction of Emma Smith, Joseph’s legal wife as well as the fallout and the martyrdom of Joseph Smith at Carthage, Illinois in 1844. Culminating in Chapter 33 is a review of Joseph Smith’s wives. Often the thoughts and

feelings of Emma Smith are overshadowed by all of the other characters involved in polygamy. Her accounts of bitterness and the early casting out of her home of Fanny Alger, and the report (probably fictional) of throwing Eliza Partridge down the stairs, but did send her away (2:109) highlights the plight she had. It is clear from these later chapters that by May 1843 she had come to terms with polygamy, and while the term 'accepted' is used (2:47, 2:113), perhaps 'tolerated' is closer. She participated in at least giving a further four wives to her husband. (2:47). To the credit of the character of Emma Smith, 'multiple evidences indicate that Emma tried to believe and obey' for many years. (2:128). Unfortunately Emma's part in the Utah Mormon narrative fades quite quickly after Nauvoo, where she chose to stay when the church moved westwards. Maybe Emma is the one wife that is overlooked most.

The following appendices, A-H consume nearly 150 pages, offering evidence of dates, places, chronology, as well databases dealing with polygamy at Nauvoo, Illinois. Combined with the bibliography the latter half of the second volume is a welcome resource for the empirical researcher.

In conclusion, there are some criticisms, that even with three volumes overflowing with references, that some of the nitty-gritty detail remains missing due to 'no contemporary evidence exists' (1:91), 'no contemporaneous evidence exists' (1:101), 'Little or no evidence exists (1:277), clearly demonstrating that an intimate understanding still eludes even the hardest of researchers. Hales does not claim this to be the complete finished work, but hopes that perhaps smaller studies might pick up where he has left off. And no doubt there will be some. This is a very well researched and presented volume, and should be considered as a serious piece of scholarship that enlightens neglected areas of Mormon past.