

Polygamy and Mormon Church Leaders
Erastus Snow
November 9, 1818 – May 27, 1888

Journal of Discourses 5:291; “Do you uphold your husband before God as your lord? “What!—my husband to be my lord?” I ask, Can you get into the celestial kingdom without him? Have any of you been there? You will remember that you never got into the celestial kingdom without the aid of your husband. If you did, it was because your husband was away, and someone had to act proxy for him. No woman will get into the celestial kingdom, except her husband receives her, if she is worthy to have a husband; and if not, somebody will receive her as a servant.” – Erastus Snow, Salt Lake City, October 4, 1857

Erastus Snow was a busy guy. Not only was he an apostle of the early LDS Church, but he was also instrumental in colonizing the western states of Utah, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. The town of Snowflake, Arizona was named after him and another Mormon William J. Flake.

In addition to all that he baptized the first Danish Mormon converts, helped translate the Book of Mormon into Danish and Snow College was named after him and Lorenzo Snow. There wasn't much going on in Mormonism where he didn't play an active part.

How it all began...

Through the preaching of Orson Pratt and Luke Johnson the Church had already converted two of the Snow brothers so when it came time for Erastus to join, his older brother William baptized 14 year old Erastus in 1833 (Erastus was the 8th of 11 kids). The ice at the local lake was frozen over from the cold Vermont winter so they had to chop through it to have enough room for Erastus to be dunked. At the time of their conversions their mother was a member of the Wesleyan-Methodist church.

Because of Snow's great zeal for teaching and missionary work in spreading the Mormon gospel he was installed as an apostle just sixteen years after his conversion and filled that role for another forty years.

According to Geni.com Snow “yielded obedience to the principle of plural marriage”, aka he became a polygamist in 1846. In all he had sixteen wives and fathered thirty-seven children. He followed in the footsteps of many other Mormon polygamists by marrying teenage girls who were young enough to be his daughters and marrying sisters along with their mother.

Erastus was in the first Mormon pioneer company to cross the plains into Utah, the other was Orson Pratt. He was revered like many other early leaders and looked upon as “suffering” for the gospel when he had to go underground because of polygamy.

While serving on a mission in Denmark he baptized the first fifteen members of the Church there in 1850. When he began preaching to them they were already members of the Reformed

Baptist Church and all members of the same congregation. He ended up marrying at least one of those converts when they got back to the states.

The majority of the early LDS Church’s converts came about from invitations of pastors to preach at Christian churches on the work Jesus was doing in America. Unbeknownst to many pastors they had opened the door to the wolves who quickly led their flock away and even worse still at times the pastor would join and lead the flock into Mormonism. Today the LDS Church gets the majority of their converts in America from the Baptist church.

In Mormon historical books Snow was often referred to as a great orator and one of the best missionaries the Church has ever had. His daughter Elizabeth was the mother of LDS apostle Antoine Ivins.

The story of his many wives has to be one of the most confusing I’ve researched thus far. Most of the genealogy family sites list a handful of women as his wives by stating their name and no other identifying markers. It reminds me of Heber Kimball when he mentioned that he thought no more of taking another wife than he did buying a cow. These women were property and for whatever reasons each wife had, she allowed herself to be treated that way and take part in spreading the lies.

Erastus Snow is also known as Erastus Fairbanks Snow or Erastus Snow Fairbanks, but this was not his given birth name. He adopted the name “Fairbanks” while on the run from feds for polygamy. In many of the letters that he wrote to his wives while on the lam He’d sign his name “Erastus Fairbanks” to divert attention of the government in case they intercepted his letters.

		Wife/Age @ marriage (Snow’s age)	Marriage Date	Kids	Other info	Wife’s marital status
1		Artemsia Beman (Beman) - 19 (20)	1/23/1846 Or 12/13/1838	12	Born 3/1819 Died 12/1882 Vital part of settling southern Utah. Earlylds.com	Single

					reports she married Snow in 1838 & was sealed in Nauvoo in '46. Sister of Louisa Beaman the wife of Joseph Smith & Brigham Young.	
2		Minerva White – 22 (25)	4/2/ 1844	9	Born 3/1822 Died 4/1896 in Manti, Utah Daughter of Achsah Wing wife #3.	Single
3		Achasch Wing – 58 (27)	1/30/ 1846	0	Born 3/1788 Died 9/1868 Married Alden Thomas White in 1809 – he died 8/1830. They had 6 kids. She was sealed to Snow the same day as her sister Louisa (wife #4). Her other daughter Minerva was wife #2.	Widow

4		<p>Louisa Wing – (27)</p> <p>Also listed as Louisa Achsah Wing</p>	<p>1/30/1846</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>Born 4/1807 In Northbridge, MA</p> <p>Died 7/1892 in Mt. Pleasant, Utah.</p> <p>Married Snow in Nauvoo. Sister Achsah & niece Minerva also married to Snow.</p> <p>There are other reports Louisa was a daughter of Achsah with a birth date of 1818.</p>	<p>???</p>
5		<p>Elizabeth Rebecca Ashby – 16 (29)</p>	<p>12/19/1847</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Born 5/1831</p> <p>Died 6/1915</p> <p>Married Snow while living in Winter Quarters with her mother and ten siblings. They moved to Mexico in 1884 to establish a colony there. Mother of apostle Antoine Ivins. See family</p>	<p>Single</p>

					photo here.	
6		Julia Josephine Spencer – 19 (37)	4/11/ 1856	6	Born 4/1837 Died 10/1909 in St. George, UT Sealed to Snow in Endowment House.	Single
7		Mary Jane Farley – 46 (47)	4/14/ 1866	0	Born 4/26/1812 in Amherst, NH Married Snow in SLC & sealed to him in Endowment House. Conflicting data on date of birth. Nauvoo Polygamy records her birth ca 1820 & Snow family genealogy records birth in 1812.	???
8		Ann McMenemy Mousley – 47 (48)	10/15/ 1867	0	Born 2//11/1799 in Maryland Died 6/1882 Married Titus	Widow

					<p>Mousley in 1817. He died in 1865 – they had 12 kids.</p> <p>Married Snow in Endowment House, SLC</p>	
9		<p>Ann Hansen – 50 (51)</p>	<p>5/9/1870</p>	0	<p>Born c. 1820</p> <p>There’s an Anna Hansen married to Andreas Hansen mentioned in Utah Genealogical & Historical Magazine, pg 107 who were part of the first converts in Denmark.</p>	???
10		<p>Anna Beckstrom (Baeckstrom) 45 (52)</p>	<p>After 1870</p>	0	<p>Born 4/1825 in Sweden</p> <p>Died 10/1911 in Salt Lake City, Utah.</p> <p>One of the first 15 baptized into church</p>	???

					in Denmark.	
11		Margaret Earl – 57 (58)	3/28/ 1877	0	Born c. 1820 Ancestry.com lists her as wife w/ very limited other info.	???
12		Rebecca Abigail Farley – 60 (61)	6/18/ 1880	0	Born 3/28/1828 in Amherst, NH Sealed to Snow in St. George, Utah	???
13		Francis “Fanny” Porter McLean – 67 (60)	2/1/ 1882	0	Born 6/1814 in England Died 5/1887 Spanish Fork, Utah. Fanny & husband Francis McLean emigrated to US in '50. They had 3 girls – he died in 1853. She joined church in '55, moved to Payson, UT in '58.	Widow

14		<p>Matilda Wells Streeper – 62 (64)</p>	<p>11/16 1882</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>Born 2/1815 Died 10/1892 in Springville, Utah Married Streeper 7/1834 & had 7 kids w/ him.</p>	<p>???</p>
15		<p>Inger Jacobsen Nielson – 57 (65)</p>	<p>7/16/ 1884</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>Born 4/1827 in Denmark. Died 4/1909 in Box Elder, Utah. Daughter of Niels Jacobsen. Married & endowed to Snow in Logan, Utah. Ancestry.com gives 1818 as birth year. According to her written testimony in Women of Mormondom, pg 464, her name is Anna Nilson, born in Sweden and one</p>	<p>???</p>

					<p>of the 1st converts of Erastus when she lived in Denmark. She states she was born 4/1/1825, daughter of Hans and Caroline Nilson & migrated to US 12/1852. Overland Pioneer gives date of emigration 1856.</p>	
16		<p>Susannah Olmstead (Umpstead)- 70? (72)</p>	<p>11/14/ 1890</p>	0	<p>Born In Norway IGI states she married & was sealed to Snow in Manti after his death. Ourgenealogy.com states she married Snow in 1850 and died in 1880. She was the mother of Sophia Margaret Lyon who was the wife of Orson Hyde. Lyon's gravestone says she was born</p>	???

in Denmark in
1847, but death
certificate says
Norway. Her father
was Jens Martin
Lyon. Lyon &
Olmstead had 1
daughter.
This makes Snow
the step-father of
Sophia and
Mormon
apostle Orson
Hyde who was 13
yrs older than
Snow.