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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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Dorothy Geneve Young Willey
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ABSTRACT

Childhood Experiences in Mormon Polygamous Families
At the Turn of the Century

by

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Utah State University, 1983

Major Professor: Jay D. Schvaneveldt, Ph.D.
Department: Family and Human Development

The primary purpose of this research was to gain insight into what childhood was like in turn-of-the-century Mormon polygamous families. This purpose was executed through two main avenues: basic empirical data and descriptive accounts. This type of research was crucial inasmuch as previous research and commentaries dealt with adult relations but little was known about children in this complex Mormon family structure.

In order to gain an understanding of childhood in Mormon polygamous families during this era, forty elderly individuals who were reared in plural marriages were interviewed in depth. A field type design was employed using a historical-cultural; in short, retrospective history taking. Questions focused on the general family life style, respondent-sibling interaction, respondent-parent interaction, and respondent-father's other families interaction. Children in Mormon polygamous families encountered the events of Western rural America, as would any children at the turn-of-the-century, including hard physical work, large families, home based entertainment, and traditional values.
Looking back in time, respondents in this study saw their families as supportive, nurturant, and for the most part as "normal" within the cultural context of Mormon community. Stress, however, was manifest primarily in the avenues of degree of contact with their father's other families, the complexity of multiple households, and the self-imposed questions that generally existed in the society during a time of persecution as well as internal change of the Mormon church.

(133 pages)
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Most contemporary family research is governed by the assumption that an individual's personality and social adjustment is influenced by familial experiences. It is, therefore, not only beneficial to study conventional, normal family styles, but also to examine unconventional family forms. Such research is inherently interesting and introduces students to various cultures and subcultures. Additionally, comparative methodology is profitable for the understanding of family relations and the development of family theories.

Many of the investigations on alternative lifestyles concentrate primarily on dyadic relations and the effects on the spousal participants. By contrast, minimal work has dealt with the children in unique family structures. For example, turn-of-the-century Mormon polygamy is a famous and infamous phenomenon and has long been a focus for much attention. Notwithstanding the interest, studies on this subject are negligent in their empirical quality and have virtually ignored the potential impact of this family system on children.

The purpose of this research was to explore the effects growing up in turn-of-the-century Mormon polygamous families had on an individual. Specifically, how did the plural marriage family system influence the daily activities of children? This work was important to complete so as to increase scientific understanding of this unique family form in a
conservative Victorian era and especially in regard to the impact on children reared in this variant family form. Secondly, research as proposed here must be done now in order to interview the few remaining elderly children who still survive this family form.

In order to discuss children in Mormon polygamy effectively, it is advantageous and crucial to view the phenomenon in its own context. One must be familiar with the general life style and society of nineteenth century Utah. To increase the reader's acquaintance with the setting and events, the following sections provide an overview of turn-of-the-century Utah and Mormon polygamy. The coverage in this section is not intended to be thorough or exhaustive; rather, it seeks to provide a general orientation and background. For a more in depth discussion of Utah during this era, the reader is directed to Lowry Nelson's *Mormon Village*, (Provo, Utah, n. d.); Leonard Arrington's *Great Basin Kingdom*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1958); Wallace Turner's *The Mormon Establishment*, (Boston, Mass., 1966); or George Ellsworth's *Utah's Heritage* (Salt Lake, 1972). Nineteenth century Mormon polygamy is discussed in Kimball Young's *Isn't One Wife Enough?* (New York, 1954); Stanley Ivin's "Notes on Mormon Polygamy" (*Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Fall, 1962, pp. 229-239); and Nels Anderson's *Desert Saints*, (Chicago, 1942).

**Definition of Terms**

Additionally, it is important that the reader understands the use of several terms in this study.

*Polygamy*: Although technically polygamy means multiple wives or husbands and polygyny means one husband with multiple wives, writers of
the period used the term polygamy to refer to the Mormon's practice of multiple wives and consequently it will be used in this research. Aunt: The term used by offspring to refer to their father's wife other than their own mother.

Church, Mormon Church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Structural and functional: These terms are used to aid in the organization of the findings in this research. They do not necessarily relate to the traditional sociological concepts of structural-functional theory. In this research, "structural" refers to the more stable, organized aspects of the life style. "Functional" refers to the processes or activities in the life style.
Mormon pioneers contributed impressively to Utah's unique history. When they first arrived in the area in 1847 it was outside the boundaries of the United States and was Mexican Territory. It was raw frontier and a great deal of effort was directed to exploring new regions and developing communities. These settlers were ambitious, and within a month they were farming, building up businesses, and trading with the Indians. By 1850, within four summers of their arrival, the Mormons had effectively established the fundamental elements of civilization. Basic industries developed rapidly; people were successfully engaged in agricultural and mechanical production and continuing to expand the borders of their settlements (Ellsworth, 1972).

Virtually all aspects of life in Utah during the second half of the nineteenth century were influenced by Mormon philosophy and organizational patterns. In his writings on Utah history, Ellsworth explained that life styles were modeled to conform to the Church ideal. "Mormonism concerned itself with religious, social, economic, and political matters" (Ellsworth, 1972, p. 291). For example, the physical structure of a community was ordered around a church assembly building, and most towns established centrally located facilities for educational pursuits and entertainment purposes (theatre and dancing were most popular). Frequently one building was used for all of these. Government and communication systems were based on the Church
organization. Moreover, it was the trend for Mormon immigrants into this area to settle in communities rather than on scattered farmsteads. The plan was for central residential areas for communal unity and to locate the barns and farms outside the residential limits (Ellsworth, 1972). Perhaps another reason for this living arrangement was that Mormon settlers were not typical frontiersmen. They were of New England stock and provincial orientation. Also, they were tradesmen and craftsmen rather than farmers or cattle people. Because of this, they were accustomed to town dwelling, not homesteading, and the farmers usually lived within the residential boundaries and commuted out to the land each day (Kephart, 1976). A third reason for the residential arrangement was protection. The leaders of the Church were unsure about the safety and wisdom of having the settlers dispersed and subject to Indians and other hostile people. Consequently, they encouraged the settlers to remain in the confines of the established communities (Wasatch Front Regional Council, 1976).

The people were psychologically and socially also organized and directed by the Mormon Church, specifically by major and minor ecclesiastical leaders. Members of the Church were encouraged to follow certain commandments and to be patient in their hardships with the hope of a better life in the future, even if that future was after death. Furthermore, the participants thought that one could attain these rewards or comfort not only through personal dedication but also through shared group effort, that is, being benevolent and helpful to one's neighbor, over-looking other's faults, and cultivating tolerance. Closely related, the people perceived their villages as miniature forerunners for the Kingdom of God. The major purpose of the Church was
to convert and improve the world for the second coming of Christ. Despite the sense of an ephemeral existence, the people constructed the communities for permanence and stability and had an attitude of cooperation. Ellsworth (1972) noted that families were expected to support themselves as well as assist others. When public projects were instigated, it was customary for individuals to willingly forego their personal or family interests for the benefit of the community. Ellsworth continued that "this unity of purpose made it possible for them to achieve much more than the usual frontiersmen achieved" (P. 158).

In addition to the dominance of the Mormon Church, Utah society was influenced by an environment that was diverse and in transition. Agriculture was the economic base, and in 1850 fully half of the work force was engaged in farming. The other half were in trades and business. The agricultural sector encompassed the basic characteristics of a farm lifestyle: strenuous labor, division of duties between males and females, self-sufficiency, and a work force of family members. On the other hand, the conditions were not entirely rural. The society was quickly becoming urbanized and industrialized. The population was young—three-fourths of the people were under thirty years old, and half of them were under twenty. There was a relatively even ratio of males and females (Ellsworth, 1972).

**Mormon Polygamy**

A distinct and noteworthy characteristic of Utah history is that some Mormons practiced polygamy there for over fifty years. Almost any type of alternative life style is sure to influence the economic,
social, and physical development of newly inhabited territory, and polygamy among the Mormons was no exception.

Plural marriage was publically announced to the members of the Mormon Church by its president, Brigham Young, in a group assembly in 1852 (Millenial Star, 1853). The authorities of the Church claimed that the notice was a message from God, that it was to be incorporated into the doctrine of the Church, and that eternal salvation was contingent on participation. It is said that prior to this public declaration, polygamy was privately announced and secretly practiced in Illinois, beginning in 1841 (Young, 1954). It was a novel idea to the majority of the Church, not to mention an outstanding aberration whose reverberations would be felt throughout society. According to Kephart (1976), in 1847 the Mormons abandoned their communities in the East and Midwest and fled en masse to the seclusion of the Rocky Mountains. There they felt reasonably safe to live the principles of their religion. When, after several years of residing in the area, they were introduced to the obligation of polygamy, they assumed that they could proceed with minimal interference. Indeed, for some forty years this form of marriage was successfully practiced in the local Utah culture, though it was never condoned nationally.

Following this vigorous campaign of participating in and teaching polygamy in Utah, fifteen years of conflict and dissonance, both in Utah and the country, passed until the practice of plural marriage was officially discontinued in 1890. Besides the social and psychological strain that may have existed in living in a nonconventional life style, the legal contention and burden was disconcerting and disabling. In 1862 Congress established the Morrill Act prohibiting bigamy, and 1882 the
Edmund-Tucker Bill, which was even more restrictive and seemingly anti-Mormon, was enacted. For instance, it permitted confiscation of certain Church properties and disenfranchisement of convicted polygamists (Ivins, 1962; Anderson, 1942).

Most of the social repulsion was undoubtedly based on inaccurate or exaggerated conceptions of typical Mormon polygamists. The stereotype of a participant consisted of a lecherous patriarch whisking innocent young women away to wedding ceremonies in "whole sale lots" (Kephart, 1976, p. 207). Furthermore, it was believed that they all resided in the same enormous house and produced countless children.

In reality, the typical individual involved in plural marriage was a contradiction of this stereotype. Rather than viewing multiple wives as a privilege or an indulgence, most men were satisfied with monogamy (Kephart, 1976). Members of the Church perceived it as another challenging obligation and duty; it usually required persistent encouragement from authority figures to activate the members in this practice (Ivins, 1962).

Furthermore, according to Young's (1954) research, of the 1,784 polygamists studied, most married men in polygamy (66.3 percent) only married one extra wife. Twenty-one (21.2) percent had three wives, 6.7 married four, and a mere six percent had five or more women. In addition, the majority of the participants were not elderly men; indeed, the average age for taking one's last wife was forty years old. Finally, regarding the number of offspring per wife, Ivins (1962) stated that polygamous wives bore an average of 5.9 children in contrast to monogamous wives who had an average of eight children.
Family Life in Polygamy

Research in this area concurs that families who participated in plural marriage were primarily from middle and upper levels of socio-economic strata. In addition to their favorable economic standing, polygamists enjoyed prestigious positions in the organization of the Church as well as high regard and status among the members (Young, 1954). Notwithstanding the unique influence of religion and its regulations, many aspects of a Utah Mormon polygamist's life were similar to that of other residents of rural communities.

Typical Characteristics

A prevalent element of the nineteenth century society in general and Mormonism and polygamy in particular was the idea of male dominance and authority. The husband's role was to lead and motivate; the wife's to support and oblige. This notion was proorted regardless of rural or urban context (Hulett, 1943).

Considering rural Utah, descriptions of the farming life style vary, but they all agree that life was home and family centered (Ellsworth, 1972). Whether people lived in communities or in isolated farmsteads, the chief source of social interaction was one's own family. For instance, forms of recreation and entertainment frequently consisted of members of the family performing with musical instruments for one another or having group sing-alongs. When people attended public social events, they usually went as a family unit (Taylor, 1951).

Closely related to this family orientation was the ambition as well as the need to be self-sufficient. The idea of being self reliant and productive was appealing and motivating, not only because of the
financial implications but also because of the insecurity of living in a
society in transition and the Mormon based idea that families will exist
and belong with each other after death. Several references have
intimated that a prerequisite, or at least a significant advantage, of
successful polygamous living was achieving independence. Indeed, there
are descriptions of efforts of establishing family businesses in which
several wives and many children were all contributing (Taylor, 1951).

Typical of most farming ventures was the practice of division of
labor. In essence this concerns men and women performing what was
designated or assumed as gender appropriate work. Customarily men
concentrated on heavy labor outside the house and women focused on
domestic duties. Furthermore, children born into farming families were
considered economic assets, as additional members of a work force
available to devote their resources to the common cause. Consequently,
at an early age a child participated in strenuous labor, responsibility,
and realism (Tanner, 1976; Taylor, 1951). In sum, as Bushman (1976)
stated, most life styles were based on one word: practicality. This
notion, of course, applied to most rural life styles, not exclusively
Mormons or polygamous families.

Atypical Characteristics

Notwithstanding definite conventional attributes of a polygamous
life style, this type of marriage often resulted in unusual
circumstances and relationships.
One of the most obvious points of interest is the various residential
patterns. There was a diversity of living arrangements among polygamous
families. While some wives all stayed in one home with the husband,
larger families ordinarily were housed in separate dwellings. These individual quarters could be located all on the same street, in close proximity, or in distant towns (Kephart, 1976; Young, 1954).

Accordingly, there were repercussions of these living arrangements throughout family interaction. For one thing, the male was required to show no favoritism towards any wife or family and to expend his resources equally and impartially. This involved distributing time, affection, and energy as well as money and physical possessions between his wives and children. To accomplish this effectively the male often had to resort to a routine or schedule of weekly or monthly visits (Kephart, 1976; Hulett, 1943).

In addition to the strain these schedules and arrangements created in the male, the lives and attitudes of the females and their children were also affected. Some literature describing this situation compared it to widowhood. From weeks and months of having an absent father and husband, many of the families developed resentment, self-reliance, and hope for the future. Wives frequently became financially and emotionally independent from their husbands. On the other hand, many suffered poverty and homelessness. Both of these reactions were enhanced and promoted during the last fifteen years of polygamy when, because of intense social and legal pressure, the participants had to live "underground" in secrecy, isolation, and loneliness (Young, 1954; Bushman, 1976). Despite these discomforts, most accounts of the situation state the wives and children seldom really felt detached from the male, and upon his return their resolution and commitment were renewed (Tanner, 1976; Taylor, 1951).
Finally, this alternative life style stimulated social attention and negative evaluation. The Mormons had long had an unfavorable reputation and had experienced disharmony and ostracism from society in general, so this phenomenon was not unusual. However, psychological dissonance undoubtedly arose or increased through the varying statuses that a participant experienced in his own community. In a course of years an individual who was a spouse or child in a polygamous family could be envied and admired, pitied, tolerated, or shunned (Tanner, 1976; Bushman, 1976). Moreover, since plural marriage was a novel life style to these people, they were not familiar with effective techniques for living in the unusual circumstances. As Young (1954, p. 209) noted, "The real problem was that the difficulties could not be easily settled because the culture did not provide any standardized ways for handling conflicts." The participants attempted to apply monogamous ideals and practices to polygamous living and discovered discrepancies. Hulet (1943) discussed the mental and emotional strain wives and husbands and mothers and fathers experienced in striving to adopt or adapt appropriate roles for polygamous living. Foster (1982) noted that one technique was to avoid public display of conflict and attempt to portray congeniality between participants.

Children and Siblings in Polygamy

Insight and information about childhood in polygamous settings are gleaned from peripheral or indirect comments or implications in personal journals and texts on this type of family structure. Research becomes a task of inferring and synthesizing to compose a description of children's roles in plural marriages and families. The primary
conclusion is that many activities and attitudes coincided with large rural family life styles in general, while other features were remarkably dissimilar.

Typical Characteristics

As in most agricultural families, division of labor and duties was common. In addition to the husband and wife performing a multitude of tasks, all available children were required to contribute effort. In his book, *Family Kingdom*, Taylor described the elaborate routine of each child doing chores and rotating each week to avoid monotony while accomplishing the work. Implicit in this component is the fact that children were expected to labor diligently and to commit to the family business (Taylor, 1951). Bushman (1976) says that it was quite practical and advantageous for some wives to live together as each woman had her favorite job and specialty that she performed throughout the years.

Another common feature was the practice of fathers playing the authority role and the initiators of discipline patterns and standards for behavior. Accordingly, mothers were to integrate or apply the punishment techniques and to promote the ideals of conduct. Moreover, the children and their mothers frequently shared a deep relationship and rapport. Fathers were perceived with awe and respect (Taylor, 1951; Cairncross, 1974; Hulett, 1943).

Atypical Characteristics

Many qualities that could be labeled atypical are actually typical qualities that are more intense and extreme.

For instance, because of the life style, children experienced an
accelerated introduction into wearisome toil. This was especially applicable to the sons who frequently were forced to assume responsibilities, roles, and to perform male appropriate labor at an early age (Tanner, 1976; Taylor, 1951). Of course, it must be considered that simply living in frontier environment and in a setting where the inhabitants were striving to build up communities required everyone, adults and children, to participate in the communal operations.

Closely related is the fact that discipline techniques had to be modified. Fathers establishing rules and mothers reinforcing them was still the routine; in polygamous life styles this philosophy was even more pronounced. Undoubtedly discrepancies and discord resulted when father proposed definite expectations and achievements for his children, then left for several days or months, requesting the mother to guide or control the children toward these ideals. According to Hulett (1943), the father's main goal was to promote cooperation and harmony in the family, to maintain congeniality among all these people of various ages, sexes, and personalities. He employed a variety of methods, the most common were using his patriarchal authority and religious principles.

Finally, the relationship between mothers and children was deepened. Cairncross (1974, p. 190) stated that

there was a tendency for the children's attachment to the mother to increase and for the mother's affection to be concentrated on the children when her feelings for the husband had vanished or declined. A woman in polygamy was often compelled by her lone position to make a confidant of her children.

Other authors on polygamous families note the remarkably close bond, the pattern of children serving as confidants and companions for mothers (Tanner, 1976). On the other hand, it must also be emphasized that some
literature states that the esteem, affection, and devotion that wives and children had for the father almost always remained strong and animated (Taylor, 1951).

Although there were numerous similarities between monogamous and polygamous families, the alternative life style stimulated a myriad of quite unusual circumstances. It is also critical to note that many, though not all, young children who were involved rarely realized that their life style was particularly nonconventional. Ways of coping with the predicament varied from family to family: some children were protected from and unaware of the undercurrents of hostility or discontentment among families and the anxiety from legal issues that existed. Conversely, in some families the children were cognizant of the threat of raids and legal difficulties. Tanner (1976) explained that in her childhood, the children accepted the situation, assuming that it was their fate or role in life to live in these conditions. Most of these childrens' associates were also participants, and there was minimal exposure of the children to external social judgment and norms (Taylor, 1951; Bushman, 1976).

The most obvious anomaly was the presence of other families whose influences were sensed whether they resided in the same house, next door, or in a separate community. One adjustment to this structure was sharing father with other family members. This involved dividing and distributing resources, both physical and affectional, to various sons and daughters, not to mention wives, in the most diplomatic manner. Participants who wrote about these events described clever and complex means of sending gifts, building new homes, and expressing affection to maintain harmony (Taylor, 1951; Hulett, 1943).
Samuel Taylor (1951) explained that children sometimes became distressed and resentful while observing their father display fondness and attention to a woman (and we assume children) other than their mother. For legal protection, children were not informed about the principle of polygamy until they were mature enough to understand the importance of discretion. Consequently, it resulted in confusion. Taylor continued that his father did not have time while visiting in the home to attend to each child, to cuddle or play with the children on an individual basis.

Regarding children's relations with their aunts and half siblings, the sparse literature indicates that they were basically positive. The boys and girls were usually permitted and encouraged to visit their siblings and could enter the various homes freely. Indeed, it would be logical that some of these children became close friends and confidants (Tanner, 1976). Tanner (1976) explained that in her childhood there was a group of individuals, including friends, siblings, and half siblings, who played and attended socials together.

In addition, the interaction between children and aunts was usually harmonious; children were intrafamilially tended and loved; aunts were considered second mothers or caregivers (Cairncross, 1974; Bushman, 1976). Conversely, Taylor (1951) described differential treatment in his family. It seems that squabbles were resolved differently, depending on who was involved. Taylor recalled how an "aunt" would harshly interrogate a step-child and be lenient with her own child, although both boys were guilty. "She would not ask that of her own son. Yet I was his brother, wasn't I? I was his brother, but there was a difference" (p. 265). One last aspect of family interaction was that in
some cases older children were requested to live with one of their father's other families to help with farming during a crucial season. This undoubtedly influenced familial relations (Tanner, 1976).

Another singular feature of a polygamist lifestyle was that as a result of legal and social pressure, many families were forced to live "underground." Any family other than the initial one had no legal status, and furthermore was potential proof that the father was a polygamist—a criminal. Consequently, wives either masqueraded as widows or lived in isolation to prevent legal disturbance. When the father dared visit his family, he traveled incognito. Taylor (1951) declared that it created excitement and anxiety for the children to call their father "Uncle Mose" or to see him clothed in a disguise. Closely related to this predicament is the fact that many houses were equipped with trap doors and hiding places in which a father would stay to avoid or escape the hunt of the marshals (Bushman, 1976).

Accompanying the underground lifestyle was the necessity to relocate frequently, to no more than settle into a home than to have to pack up again. Many women experienced great distress in not owning a stable home of their own where they could peacefully raise their children and become acquainted with and be accepted in the community (Taylor, 1951).

In sum, the literature describing family relations in polygamous lifestyle offers a diversity of interpretations, from feuds and poverty to "heaven on earth" and "never a cross word spoken." Undoubtedly the truth lay somewhere between these two extremes. Based on his research, Young (1954) rated 175 polygamous families according to their success or failure. He established five categories: highly successful, reasonably
successful, moderately successful, considerable conflict, and severe conflict. Of these approximately half qualified for the first two successful classifications, one-fourth were moderately successful, and one-fourth were in the two conflict groups.

Synthesis of Literature

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Utah was a recently inhabited frontier, and while it had an agricultural economy, it was quickly becoming industrialized and urbanized. Indeed, shortly after the pioneers arrived they transformed it into a relatively productive and civilized area. It would appear to be both logical and accurate to conclude that an individual's childhood in turn-of-the-century Utah was influenced by several factors. Children in this environment were introduced to hard work at an early age, and grew up in a family oriented setting. Another factor that affected a child's activity and personality was the dominance of the Mormon Church and its principles. It determined to a great extent where one lived, with whom one associated, and how one spent leisure time, if any. Accompanying membership in the Church at this time was the influence of the practice of polygamy. Polygamy created exceptional characteristics in both structural and process issues in a family system. Participants experienced concern for residential arrangements, sharing and distributing resources (the male, finances, affection, time, just to name a few), and establishing or maintaining harmony in the households. More specifically, a typical child had to learn to deal with an often absent father, his own mother and siblings, and also his aunts and half siblings. Additionally, he had to resolve the social and psychological
issues of living in an aberrant life style. All combined, these multiple elements created an extraordinary family life.
Empirical research focusing on children growing up in Mormon polygamous families at the turn-of-the-century is minimal and scientifically inadequate. The literature consists primarily of colloquial novels, limited personal diaries, and non-systematic observations. While these records are useful to some extent, they are undoubtedly somewhat biased, subjective, limited, and usually inadequate for generalization. Because research on family life in plural marriages is sparse, it is critical that additional work be completed while children from such families are still available for study. Moreover, it is not only beneficial to examine events as they occur, but also essential and insightful to study phenomena retrospectively. This permits one to discover how conditions were, or rather, individuals' perceptions and recollections of those circumstances.

In sum, the problem for this study had three components. First and most important, it was critical to obtain more understanding of a unique alternate family form that flourished to a degree in the midst of much persecution and regional stress. Second, focusing on the children of plural marriages of that period was central to a more complete understanding of marriage and family during that period. This study sought to add significant additional understanding about children and their perceptions. The third component of this problem for research had to do with the pragmatic reality of interviewing a few remaining elderly
offspring of plural marriages. This had to be done in order to capture a view, memory, and history of what it was like to be a participant in a much discussed but little documented segment of family life.

**Statement of Purpose**

The main goal of this investigation, therefore, was to obtain a more complete understanding of what turn-of-the-century Mormon family life was like in plural marriage households. More specifically, the focus was on the lives of children growing up in polygamous families. How did children perceive and cope with this marital form and family arrangement? What were their interpretations of sibling relations and how did they view the processes involved in maintaining this variant family form? What were the experiences and life perceptions of children in polygamy as compared to those of children of monogamy?

**Objectives**

While much has been written on the Mormon polygamous household, most of this literature has been nonempirical in nature. Furthermore, the extant research has tended to focus more on the husband-wife interaction in plural marriages; consequently, there is minimal information on the offspring's perceptions of family life at that time. It was important to study the children's interpretation of family life for scientific reasons, for heuristic vantage points, and for the pragmatic fact that most of those individuals who grew up in such households have now passed away. A primary objective of this research was to conduct intensive interviews with respondents who were raised as children in polygamous life styles during the waning years of this
unique nineteenth and early twentieth century practice.

No specific hypotheses were proposed; the existing records are not sufficiently rich or complete to permit the formation of hypotheses. As stated previously, the purpose was to gain a general understanding and perspective of sibling relations. There were several common and guiding themes that were examined in this study. These included the respondents' perceptions of their families as normal or deviant; the respondents' feelings about their family size; impressions of their relations with various family members; and their opinions on the distribution and use of resources in the households.

Design

This study utilized aspects of several types of designs. It was field research with an historical-cultural orientation in that no variables were manipulated and the events have already occurred. Survey techniques were used to obtain responses to numerous specific questions, and yet the interviews were sufficiently in depth to be of case study type. Hill (1964) called this type of research retrospective history taking in that rather than examining already available records, live respondents are requested to discuss recollections of their lives in the past. Specifically, individuals who were reared in Mormon polygamous families at the turn-of-the-century were interviewed about their childhood.

Sample

Forty respondents from the Cache, Salt Lake, and Utah counties of Utah were selected for this research. These individuals were located
via three sources. First, papers on polygamy written by students in Family Relations classes at Utah State University were made available to this researcher. Though performed independent from this study, the papers were based on very brief interviews of children of plural marriage families and, though many of the participants were anonymous, it was possible to retrace some of the names and locations of these people. Second, membership rosters kept by ecclesiastical leaders were reviewed, and the leaders were requested to designate people in their congregations who would qualify as participants in this research. Third, the snow ball sampling method was used extensively, taking advantage of significant individuals in the community. This sample strategy was possible because these respondents were elderly people who had lived in the northern and central Utah areas for many years; thus, there were circles of people who were acquainted with each other.

The sample was not random for numerous reasons: a) as a result of attrition, actual population and sample was limited; thus, it was not feasible to identify a population and assign or select a sample; b) some respondents were omitted because of health, lack of cooperation, etc.; c) randomness was not crucial at this point, for generalizing was minimal; d) while this area of northern Utah was not representative of all polygamous families, it was sufficient and useful for this study. There was, however, an attempt to obtain an appropriate proportion of male and female respondents.

**Procedures**

Following the collection of the names and addresses of the respondents, a letter was sent to each participant describing the study
and requesting permission for an interview. A telephone call followed
in order to realize an interview appointment or a rejection. If a
respondent declined a meeting, the researcher used the next name on the
list or attempted to find a replacement.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews in the homes of
the respondents and the same instrument was employed with each. It was
assumed that using a uniform format and the same interviewer would
result in a more valid research effort.

**Instruments**

A basic questionnaire to gather demographic information was
administered. Items required data on the following: age, sex, marital
position of mother, sibling constellation, residential arrangement,
occupation of father, number of wives, and number of children.

The Family Pride scale developed by Davis (1981) was given.

The questions for the interview were composed by the researcher and
pretested to determine internal validity. The questions focused on
issues of respondent-sibling interactions, respondent-mother and
respondent-father relations, respondent-father's other families
relations, and so forth. The interviews were tape recorded.

**Data Reduction and Analysis**

The information on cassette tapes was transcribed via the
typewriter, then a content analysis was completed to discover general
trends and tendencies throughout the responses. Statistical analysis
was primarily descriptive, based on data from the demographic
questionnaire. The Family Pride measurement was assessed to determine
the level of family pride these respondents had in their turn-of-the-century Mormon polygamous families.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The primary purpose of this research was to gain insight into what childhood was like in turn-of-the-century Mormon polygamous families. This purpose was executed through two main avenues: basic empirical data and descriptive accounts. Most of the demographic material applies to the nature of the respondents—birth place and year—whereas the descriptive profile pertains to the activities in the respondents' childhood. The information is categorized and presented here in basically the same order that it was collected from the sample. These include general family life, childhood, relationship with parents, relationship with siblings, and relationship with father's other families. Before reviewing their childhoods, however, it is essential to become acquainted with the characteristics of the sample.

Sample

Twenty-four females and sixteen males constituted the sample of forty respondents. The mean age for the males was 78.5 years with a range of 53-100. For the females the mean age was 79.1 with a range of 66-94. All respondents resided in Northern Utah when the interviews were conducted.

Most of the sample were born in the Rocky Mountain States (Wyoming, Utah, Idaho), although several were born in the Mormon colonies in Mexico. Specifically, 70% (17) of the females and 56% (9) of the males were born in the Rocky Mountain states whereas 29% (7) of the females and 43% (7) of the males were born in the Mexican communities.
Similarly, most males (56%, 9) and females (79%, 19) spent their first twenty years in the Rocky Mountain region. A substantial proportion (31%, 5 males, 12%, 3 females) lived in both areas, often moving back and forth for school and work opportunities.

Surveying the data on family size in the study, it is clear that the respondents came from large families. Eighty-three percent (20) of the females and 68% (11) of the males were raised in a family with nine to fourteen children. Sixteen percent (4) of the females and 31% (5) of the males were reared in a family with one to six children. Considering birth order in the sample, there is a preponderance of youngest and middle children. Of the females, five were the youngest member of the family, eighteen were middle, and one was the oldest member. One female was an only child. Of the males, five were youngest, ten were middle, and one was the oldest. It should be noted that the accuracy of this data may be somewhat limited because it is based solely on the memory of the respondents. Several respondents freely admitted that they were ignorant of the number of sibling deaths that occurred prior to their own birth. Obviously this alters the information on family size and birth order.

**General Family Life**

Before delving into the specifics of childhood and perceptions, it is helpful to have a familiarity with general family life in Mormon polygamous households at the turn-of-the-century. No questions directly asked the respondents their views of the life style. Instead, the questions focused on such topics as residential arrangements, holidays, and typical daily activities. Consequently, this section is organized
by the questions addressed to the sample. The information is presented in terms of structural and functional aspects in order to depict a thorough overview of family life.

**Structural Aspects**

**Residential Arrangement**

The types of houses in which the respondents grew up varied to a great extent. They varied by material: log, adobe, brick, or frame; and design: one or two story; a small number had basements and root cellars. Principle differences were in the size of the homes. On one end of the scale, a few homes were one or two-room log or adobe buildings. Medium sized homes had three or four bedrooms, with either one or two stories, and large homes had up to seven bedrooms and two stories. Most houses had the other customary rooms: kitchen, living room; and larger houses had various combinations of parlors, offices, summer kitchens, and enclosed porches. One facet that determined the size of the home was the number of people in the family inhabiting it. For example, one respondent explained that her family had a spacious home with five bedrooms and several rooms because they had a large family and entertained guests visiting the community. But her aunt, having no children, lived in a smaller residence, often in an apartment.

A second factor that influenced the type or size of the house was the prospering and transitory nature of the communities. Families moved or remodeled to accommodate growing families and to adjust to father's occupation, so a child could conceivably live in several houses in a number of years, or grow up in a different home than the one in which his/her older siblings resided. Moreover, as families acquired more
resources, they often built larger, nicer homes. A comment from a female respondent effectively illustrates this evolution:

"I remember very little about Mexico. In El Paso we lived in a lumber yard for a day or two. We'd stay in different places for a week or two while we were refugees. In Pima, when I was eight, it was just a two room house when we first moved. All of my mother's children were born, but not all of my aunt's. For a while my aunt lived in a one-room tent, then very soon after they added on a frame house with a breeze-way connecting it with my house. Eventually mother ended up with five bedrooms and Aunt ___ with five bedrooms."

The majority of the respondents conceded that their father's other families had similar homes, depending, of course, on the size of the family. They added that providing the families with similar accommodations and resources aided in maintaining harmony and peace.

Continuing the discussion on the residential arrangements, over half (26) of the fathers supported two houses simultaneously. There were several cases in which, although he had more than two wives, at least one of the wives was deceased so the father still had responsibility for at least two homes. Other arrangements included families living in the same or adjoining houses and all contributing resources for the family's welfare, or families being essentially self-sufficient. This finding supports Taylor's (1951) view that families from this era strived to be self reliant and independently productive. According to one respondent, the societal or legal view of polygamy influenced the situation. "Before the manifesto, father provided for one home, after the manifesto he supported two." Gender
composition of the family also affected the degree of support from father. If sons were available, they would contribute substantially to the production and function of the family.

Functional Aspects

Daily Activities

Not only can a lifestyle be discussed in terms of structural or organizational aspects, it can also be discussed by its process or functional aspects. The process of a family entails the routines and activities of its members as well as its civic and religious disposition. Thus, the members of the sample reviewed a "typical day" for each parent and their family's involvement in church and community projects.

Mother's influence. "A typical day for mother was to get up early, work hard all day, and collapse." This response could have been shared by virtually any respondent in the sample who remembered his or her mother. All but one male, who could not remember his mother, exclaimed that their mothers were busy with household duties and were strenuous, tireless workers. One female stated, "I remember how she would wipe the sweat from her brow."

The common types of activities mentioned, in addition to the rather general term "housework" were tending children, gardening, washing, ironing, cleaning, and producing homemade dairy products such as blocks of butter or cheese. For many families, there were few appliances and no shopping facilities available, and consequently they produced their own goods. In other words, they were highly self sufficient. Stating it succinctly, one respondent said, "she did everything that needed to be
done." A few respondents explained that their mothers had a work schedule. For instance,

"She got up every day by five a.m. Mondays were wash days, and it had to be out on the line before she started breakfast. My brother and I would get up at 2:00 to light the fire to heat water for her. Tuesdays were for ironing. Saturdays were for baking."

A few males and females added that their mothers had some non-domestic interests—that they dabbled in art, music, and reading. Along these lines, the majority of the mothers were involved in church activities. They were either in leadership positions or diligent participants, devoting countless hours preparing for or fulfilling their obligations (reading, studying, delivering "goodies" to the neighbors).

One last factor that affected the extent of a mother's work was the region in which she lived. The respondents who had resided in Mexico explained that their families had Mexican labor assist in the housework, as well as the fields. For instance, once a week a Mexican woman would be hired to take care of the laundry.

Family routines were also influenced by whether or not the respondents' mothers worked for pay outside their homes after they were married. Half of the females and a third of the males replied that their mothers were not employed. They continued that their mothers offered a great deal of service without renumeration. To illustrate,

"She delivered everyone's babies on the reservation for twenty years but never took a cent. She took care of the babies and mothers until they were strong."

For those mothers who were employed, it was initiated after the
father had died or was unable to work because of age or physical
disabilities. These jobs included cooking and clerking at stores or
other businesses. Several mothers earned money at home: these
undertakings included sewing, netting, and quilting; selling eggs and
dairy products; housing boarders, and cooking.

**Father's influence.** A father's occupation determined to a great
extent his activities in a typical day. The most common forms of
employment were farmer, rancher, storekeeper (merchant), and
bookkeeper. The majority of the respondents' fathers had a combination
of these jobs; a few were described as "jacks-of-all-trades" with
numerous pursuits. This is consistent with Ellsworth's (1972) report
that the work force was primarily in agriculture, with trading and
business also prevalent.

The respondents remembered their fathers as being extremely busy
and often away from home. "He was always up and gone; I don't think he
slept more than three hours a night because he had so much to do. So
busy!"

Three main reasons were given for father's absence. First, he was
working, either in the fields all day long, or actually away from the
homestead. For example,

"He was employed by the government and out on duty most of the
time. He spent 90% of his time away from home on those calls."

"He was on the road all the time with his business. He took his
office to the people rather than the people coming to him. He
took a buggy with dentistry tools and traveled around on a
circuit. He'd tell the bishops he was coming and they'd tell
the members of the ward when he was in town. He'd stay a few
days until the people were taken care of."

Second, he was involved in church activities. "He was bishop and that was like being mayor." He spent time in meetings, counseling with or managing the town citizens, and consulting with visiting guests from other communities.

Third, he was with his other families. Several versions of father's visiting routines were explained. Some fathers spent one night at each home, some spent one week with each, and some spent three nights with each. There were also those fathers who were in and out of the house throughout the day, and those who were very seldom at home. They were occupied with their working endeavors most of the day. One male shared this detailed account of his father's day, which seems to include typical activities and be quite representative of the lifestyle:

"He got up early and rousted the boys out of bed to go out and do the chores. We had family prayer together as a family, breakfast together, and we went off to school. Then father would get on his horse and go off to the store to work. Usually he took his lunch with him. We'd come home at night, have family prayer together, eat dinner, chores were always needing to be done—night and morning. The routine in our family was always family prayer together, kids studying or running off to Mutual or whatever they had to do. It was almost a ceremony that we all lined up to kiss papa goodnight. He always listened to the 10:30 KSL news on the wind charger radio."

Health and Sickness

Both males and females in the sample agreed that on the whole their
families were basically healthy. Many did note that they were sufferers of common childhood communicable diseases such as measles, influenza, and whooping cough. Typhoid fever and diptheria also threatened the respondents' families and were related to the deaths of several siblings. Although the respondents focused on the children's illnesses when answering this question, throughout the interviews a small number of respondents mentioned that they had ill or disabled parents.

There were very few doctors available, especially in rural areas, so the task of nursing was thrust upon the mothers. Home remedies were used extensively; examples included vaseline on toast, ointments of manure or mustard, and raw table beets. Another widely used treatment for ailments was administration and application of consecrated oil. Although this was commonly and conventionally performed by Priesthood holders (usually the father or ward teachers), there were also some cases of women anointing each other or their children. There were numerous instances of cures from this religious practice; only the more outstanding ones can be included.

"My mother's faith was so strong. I can remember when my oldest brother got hurt. He was farming and fell and some equipment gouged into his face. They kept it a secret from my father—he was blind. Mother went in the bedroom and prayed, then came out and ordered some strange concoction from the store to put on his face. The doctor lived next door, but he was never consulted, and everything was fine."

"One night one of the boys was picking at the fire with an iron rod. It got red hot, then he flipped it, and it went across his eye. He yelped, and mother got right up from her bed; father
wasn't home. She poured the consecrated oil right in his eye. Then the family knelt down and prayed. The next morning the scar was gone and my brother could see."

Because of the severe diseases that did exist and the lack of sophisticated medical care, the mortality rate was high. Only five respondents who answered this question answered that all of their siblings lived through childhood. Seven respondents did not reply, leaving 29, or 82% who had at least one brother or sister die before reaching adulthood. The chief of death causes were influenza, diptheria, and typhoid fever, and the most deaths recalled in one family was six. One family had five or six babies who were stillborn or died in infancy. Two interesting examples:

"We had a little boy die, then we had two girls who were about seven and nine die together. Then two boys died together. All this happened within a matter of days, all from diptheria. Finally they decided that the bacteria must be in the log cabin, so they vacated it for a while and fumigated it. When these boys died there was a lady who came and stayed with mother because we were quarantined. My father was quarantined out. When the boys died, they brought caskets there and shoved them through the window. Mother and this lady prepared them, then pushed them back through the window again. They were just taken to the cemetery; there was no funeral."

"One incident happened when Mother had a new baby and quite a young child. A neighbor lady came by to see the baby, bringing her own baby along. The visiting child was coming down with the measles, and within a couple of weeks all the babies were dead."
Mother's husband was on a mission to England, so mother had to deal with it alone. I had another brother who died of typhoid at eight."

Celebrations

According to most members of the sample, birthdays were not sufficiently significant or uncommon to warrant much celebration. Some families apparently did not acknowledge birthdays at all, primarily because there were so many children that it would have required constant festivities and a strain on the limited finances. Other families did recognize children's birthdays but did not exchange gifts. One family who celebrated birthdays solved the dilemma of numerous children by having one party per month. A few families honored the birthday daughter by assigning her "queen for the day" and allowing her to be exempt from her usual work load for that day.

All families celebrated holidays to varying degrees and in different fashions. The main difference was the arrangement of mutual or individual activities. Some families had one large party with all the aunts and children assembling together. One female described it thus: "Christmas was a very special time and always together. We celebrated in the big room together. We had a piano and sang together. Father was king on that day." The families apparently took turns, alternating each holiday and host-house, or they chose the more spacious home that could accommodate the people.

On the other hand, many families held separate parties in individual houses. Some of the respondents from these families often did not recollect their father's routine of participation, but they
assumed that he went back and forth during the day. Apparently it was a sufficiently orderly process that the respondents did not direct any attention to it. As one female put it, "We had separate parties, but I don't recall father's routine. It was all so easy and smooth." Several reasons for separate festivities were suggested. First, none of the wives' houses were spacious enough to accommodate the numerous members of the families. Second, in some cases the distance between family dwellings was too great for everyone to assemble. Third, the age differences between children was often substantial. One group of offspring could conceivably be adults with families of their own while another group of off-spring were still young children. A final comment made by three respondents about separate parties concerned the fact that their father, for no apparent reason, did not attend their family activities. In one case, he participated for a few years, then discontinued, and the respondent could not recall any explanation.

Regarding the types of activities, many respondents mentioned an abundance of "good food," especially homemade ice cream or candy, cakes, and popped corn. Music was a common element. Moreover, limited finances, and therefore meager frivolities, were common. The respondents who lived in Mexico explained that they enjoyed their life style because they celebrated both American and Mexican holidays. Many of these holidays involved community activities -- group sports and competition.

Religious Disposition

Ellsworth (1972) noted that virtually all aspects of life were influenced by Mormon philosophy and organization, that life styles were modeled to conform to the religious ideal. Because of this dominance of
the Church, the members of the sample were asked if they had had any religious or spiritual experiences particularly because their families were polygamous. All respondents but one stated that their religious feelings were not associated with polygamy. The one exception was reported by a male raised in the Mormon Mexican colonies, and he said, "I was aware that some families were not polygamous and it seemed that they were just a little less orthodox. Not being orthodox and not being polygamous: it was easy to associate the two together. Incidentally, there was certain status in being the bishop's son."

To reiterate, virtually all of the respondents asserted that their religious experiences did not stem from the phenomenon of plural wives. Rather, they were the products of their families' spirituality in general and the fact that they lived their lives according to church standards and practices. In the words of one female, "I had religious feelings, but I don't think they were from the polygamous family. We had lots of religious training in the home: prayer (together and individually), home evenings, and so forth."

Elaborating on their families' religiosity, respondents suggested that their spiritual feelings resulted from being the bishop's children or their family's admirable status in the Church and community: "My family was an outstanding family in the Church." They also felt "a little blessed" because they could witness the rewards from obedience. One female stated the concept succinctly, "We were just a normal family and the Lord will bless those who seek to do those things that are right, and we tried. Others would have had the same blessings if they tried, too."
Extent of Activity in Church and Community

In addition to their psychological involvement, the members of the sample were invited to discuss their activity in church and community projects. All respondents stated that their families were busy in church duties. One female declared that "if the two families didn’t go to the church there wouldn’t be any church because there was so many of us." Many parents often participated in ecclesiastical leadership positions, fathers as bishops, high councilmen, and mothers as Relief Society and Primary presidents. The children were also encouraged to accept church assignments as they became capable. Regular attendance at meetings was sometimes affected by location of the family and the church building; at least one respondent's family did not attend church meetings weekly because of the distances in rural areas and the inclement Utah weather.

Families were also greatly involved in community projects. The few respondents who claimed inactivity stated that the town was not big enough to require group projects. For instance, one female declared, "I don't think that you realize what a small town Spring City really was. All we did was go to church and school." Others explained that "the ward was the community," that "the community and church were inseparable," implying that activity in one was synonymous with activity in the other. Closely related to this, several respondents added that if a father was bishop, he was also considered a community leader. Finally, two males in the sample said that their fathers were mayors.

Socio-Emotional Aspects

Status

Membership in a polygamous lifestyle apparently did not evoke an
unusual amount of hostility or rejection by one's associates, according to the sample. In most of the communities, the majority of the residents were Mormon, and in several of the towns the majority of the people were polygamous, so it was customary and taken for granted. On the whole, the polygamists were accepted and treated the same as monogamists; as far as the respondents could recall, there were no negative reactions or discrimination.

When polygamists were the target of differential opinion, the reactions varied from very positive to very negative. Some respondents felt that they were respected more than other families and considered "superior". This was especially the case if their father was the bishop. On the other hand, there were associates who had disparaging attitudes about the polygamists. Examples of both types of reactions include:

"There weren't too many non-Mormons. 'Course there were always one or two families who thought that if they could make trouble for the polygamists, they were always ready to give the word to the officials. Father used to hide the family around in different places for several months to keep out of the way of the marshals."

"I never ran into much criticism, though I heard talk that people said my father married these women for lust. But I always thought, 'well, at least he married them and took care of them.'"

"I think some people were jealous of polygamous families because we seemed to prosper more than the others. There was perhaps a little irritation that we could get ahead like we did."
"They had an okay opinion. We were never ostracized; everyone was Mormon and used to it. But you didn't go around advertising your background. Out of Utah, Mormons had a poor reputation, and you made sure you were well acquainted with people before you told them about yourself."

Childhood

It is a truism that children live in their own subculture within a community. In short, they are often not cognizant of, or concerned about, the sociological or economic ramifications of their family's life style. This point becomes especially evident in the following sections in which replies such as "I don't know; It never occurred to me; that's just the way things were" appear frequently. Consequently, although it was essential and advantageous to include a discussion of the general life style and households at the turn-of-the-century, it is equally crucial to provide a description of the setting for childhood experiences. For organization and clarity, the setting will be divided into functional and socio-emotional aspects.

Functional Aspects

Daily Activities

What was a typical day like for children at age nine years? Not surprisingly, gender was a significant variable in the responses. Moreover, for males the season was an important variable: the males in the sample often made a distinction between seasonal activities, whereas the females did not. Specifically, the males recalled that in the summer they played and worked; wintertime brought playing, working, and
attending school.

Boys' activities. Work obligations for boys usually involved the farm or related areas. For instance, many male respondents mentioned tending animals: milking and herding cows, feeding chickens and pigs. Farmwork included hoeing gardens, tending crops, or picking fruit trees. Although boys at that time rarely labored inside the house, they would on occasion help with major undertakings like canning fruit. Another type of domestic task which may or may not be representative of a typical child's day, but adds a quaint flavor was reported by a male respondent. His mother used to quilt late into the evening and he would hold the lamp by the material so that she could see the stitches. A small proportion of the males added that they worked for payment. These marketable duties included tending sugar beet crops, stacking hay, gardening—selling the produce, and assembling farming equipment.

A typical day, therefore, was quite full of activities involving family needs and maintenance. This is best illustrated by the following account which seems to reflect a typical day for most young boys:

"Up in the morning, milking cows, doing chores around the house and farm. Changing clothes and washing up for breakfast, then rushing off to school. Coming home at noon to feed the cows, having lunch, then rushing off to school again. After school, a little frolicking. If it were summer I'd do work around the house instead of go to school. I always had obligations and duties, even at that tender age. If it were school time, there would be studying at the kitchen table with a coal lamp. Then it was prayer and going to bed."

Girls' activities. In their description of a typical day, females
listed the same activities as males, though with some major dissimilarities. First, reviewing their work habits, females frequently mentioned participating in outside duties: tending animals, crops, and gardens. According to one female, in her family the "girls were expected to be out in the fields just the same as the boys. The older girls stayed in and cooked." Second, several females claimed that they were "tom-boys," finding great pleasure in outside ventures. No males suggested that they preferred inside activities. Third, females more frequently remarked that they played quite a bit and had leisure time: they played with dolls, games, or outside with siblings, or they "watched the tadpoles or swallows making nests." In fact, two respondents admitted that they worked quickly and diligently in order to be done in time to play with their brothers or to have story time with their mothers. Fourth, whereas the males did not offer any positive ideas about their "typical day," several females expressed satisfaction. They exclaimed: "It was just idealic!" "It was a perfectly normal, happy childhood." "I have delightful memories of my childhood."

Comparing a typical day of a brother or sister, the majority of the members of the sample stated that all the children did similar activities. The primary determinants of differences were gender and age. Boys did outside work, girls did inside work, and the type or difficulty of the task varied with age and ability.

The repeated comments by both males and females regarding their work routines and contributions to the family's welfare are consistent with previous research. At the turn-of-the-century, children were considered assets to the labor force and expected to cooperate in family undertakings (Tanner, 1976; Taylor, 1951).
Number of Children

The functional aspects of an individual's childhood could also be influenced by the number, or perceived number, of children. It may be assumed that because of plural marriage and the pronatalistic attitude of the society in that era there would be numerous children. The data for this sample are most clearly indicated in Table 1 which compares monogamous and polygamous wives and the average number of children for each.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Marital Position of Wife</th>
<th>Number of Wives in a Marital Position</th>
<th>Average Number of Children</th>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Monogamous wives (Ivins, 1962)

Average Number of Children

5.9
Obviously, because the families were polygamous, all forty of the respondents reported that their father had first and second wives, and the number of the children that they had was 9.75 and 6.87, respectively. Sixteen respondents stated that their fathers had three wives, and ten had four wives, with 3.85 and 10.5 children respectively. One respondent's father had five wives and one had eight wives. In contrast, Ivins (1962) research shows that monogamous wives had an average of 5.9 children.

One should keep in mind the very high mortality rate; although a woman could commonly bear twelve children, a number of them could be expected to die at birth or in infancy.

Respondents were asked if it seemed that there were a great many children around and what their opinion was about the number of children. The responses clearly varied by gender. Surveying the females, 66% (16) said "no," 25% (6) said "yes," and 8% (2) did not provide a definite answer. In contrast, 43% (7) of the males said "no," 37% (6) said "yes," and 18% (3) either did not answer, or did not remember. One male shared this sentiment regarding the number of children:

"It didn't seem that there were so many as I was growing up, but it seemed to be a continual thing. As I remember, you know how slowly years go by as you are growing up, I used to think, 'this is never going to cease! How many half brothers and sisters am I going to have??!!' I didn't resent it, but I was kind of curious about it. I thought maybe it was never going to change."

Recreation

Leisure time activities play a significant part in most childrens'
lives, and the members of the sample seemed to recall their recreational activities quite readily and enjoyed reminiscing. The topic can be analyzed by characteristics and types or examples.

**Characteristics.** The most apparent feature of recreation at this time was that everything was homemade. There was very little commercial entertainment. Closely related to this is the fact that they had few toys or playthings, and again, what they did have were homemade toys such as stick horses or dolls constructed from hollyhocks. The third characteristic was that there were many outdoor, active games. In all seasons the respondents participated in outdoor activities. Finally, the recreation was often school and especially church sponsored. These two respondents described their circumstances succinctly and reflect the attitudes of most of the member's of the sample.

"It seems that children then had more fun than they do now because they had to make their own fun. We didn't have things to entertain us so we made our own."

"This was the most Mormonish of Mormon towns so we were quick to follow the Church program of Saturday half-holidays."**

**Types.** It follows logically that the types of recreation in this era were influenced and in accordance with the facilities that were available and the interests of the participants. For instance, because there seemed to be abundant yard space and open area in the developing communities, when the respondents were children they enjoyed playing games that involved running, jumping, and throwing balls or sticks.

**A program in which the community stops working on Saturday afternoon and participates in group games and recreation.**
Prisoner's base, run-sheep-run, kick-the-can, and hide-and-seek were mentioned frequently. The respondents who grew up in rural areas more frequently mentioned active, outdoor games, whereas those who were reared in non-rural areas noted more commercial recreation such as movie theatres and resorts or amusement parks. Also, those respondents living in rural areas seemed to rely on their siblings for playmates more than did non-rural residents, who often mentioned cavorting with neighborhood children. Additionally, the activities usually varied by season: in the summer the specialty was swimming in the canal and in the winter it was sledding and ice skating. Another, perhaps more subdued treat, was having bon fires in which they roasted food.

Reviewing the kinds of recreation provided by the Church, it was mainly Primary for the children and Mutual for adolescents. The respondents described the activities of their adolescence, listing drama, dances, and recitations. Music played a prominent part in everyone's life. This finding is consistent with Taylor's (1951) information about the prominence of church and music in family life at this time in Utah. One female illustrated the central roles that church and dramatic play had in her childhood. She explained that "we used to pretend to preach from these imaginary pulpits on the hill." School experiences offered these same activities as well as sports, especially baseball. Non-rural areas seemed to offer more church and school sponsored activities than did rural areas.

In considering the recreational aspects of their childhood, many of the respondents had positive, pleasant memories. Only one male clearly stated that he did not have much recreation. His comment is quoted first.
"I had a stick horse. I didn't have too much time for recreation for there was so much work to do. I couldn't get involved in sports, though they kept after me to play because of my height. But right after school I had to go right home and work."

"We were all happy."

"They were happy times for us because we didn't realize there was anything else."

"We had fun, more fun than they do now days."

Treatment by Associates

One question in the interview focused on how the members of the sample were treated by their associates in childhood. The responses to "were you ever teased because of your family?" were a unanimous "no."

However, in answers to other questions, two respondents mentioned off-handedly that at times some children teased them, but that the adults were never negative toward them. The majority (33) of the respondents believed that they were treated the same as their peers by teachers and other adults. Their explanation for this was that there were so many other polygamous families in the community that belonging to one did not warrant differential treatment. They were accepted seemingly without hesitation. Four respondents remarked that they experienced preferential treatment, either because their father was bishop or because they excelled in school and pleased their teachers. One female described the situation thus, "Not because we were polygamous, heavens no. Because my father was bishop, we were looked up to. I've never had that reference (being polygamous) made at any place
or time in my life."

A small number of respondents shared their experiences in telling new acquaintances about their family structure. After some initial confusion, or curiosity, the acquaintances accepted the respondents and did not dwell on the issue, though they did not always completely comprehend the arrangement. One female shared this account:

"I remember discussing it with a girlfriend in high school. We were walking along...and for some reason talking about half brothers and it came out: I said that my father had two wives. She said, 'So did mine.' We walked along, and I said, 'My father had three wives.' She said, 'So did mine.' We were being a little careful in divulging—we wanted to break in easy."

Another female remembered this incident from childhood:

"At six years my (half) brother and I were in school. The teacher was getting information about us. 'Were we brother and sister?' 'Yes, we were.' 'And you're both six?' 'Yes.' 'So you're twins?' 'No, I was born in October and he was born in December. We have the same father and different mothers.' To this day I don't think the teacher knew what was going on with us. She thought that we had wild imaginations."

Disciplinary Aspects

Continuing the discussion of the functional aspects of an individual's childhood, methods of discipline make an interesting contribution to understanding childhood. Discipline entails both rules and punishments, and interview questions addressed both of these issues.

One question was aimed at determining who was perceived as the
authority figure in the family. Both males and females, though not all respondents, asserted that their father had ultimate authority. He was treated with respect and almost deference. Frequently mother made the daily rules and enforced them, but father established the overriding expected conduct of behavior. This finding on the roles of mother and father in discipline strategies is consistent with the previous research by Taylor (1951), Cairncross (1974), and Hulett (1943). These two comments effectively illustrate how many respondents viewed their fathers;

"Dad made them (rules). He was boss and when he said jump, you jumped. We always did what he said."

"My father was the patriarch of the family and we respected his word."

Evidently this obedience varied with age, and there were always those characters who did not maintain this reverence for their father. For example:

"I remember one night when I was seventeen or eighteen, I made a mistake and he was going to give me a licking. I said to him, 'now listen here, old man, you may find out that your son can handle you too. You start it and I'll pound the hell out of you!' And he didn't hit me."

It was also quite common for the respondents to answer that both parents determined the rules, together in mutual decision, or individually by whomever was available when a rule was needed. Two male respondents added that their aunts participated in rule making. Finally, there were several respondents who suggested that they actually did not have rules in their families or that they could not recall any
rules or who developed them. Many more females than males (5 to 1) stated that they had no or few rules.

In addition to regulations in their families, the respondents were asked about the punishments. There were some interesting gender differences in the reports. The same percentage of male and female respondents (37%) recalled that their mothers performed the punishment. However, the percentages of those who believed that there was little to no punishment were discrepant: females: 20% (5), males 37% (6). Furthermore, differences between males and females regarding their father as punisher were significantly different: 33% (8) for females, and only 13% (2) for males. Males recalled fewer punishments in general and did not think, or remember, that their fathers were responsible for the punishments. On the other hand, about the same percentage of males and females stated that both parents were involved or that the chastising was done by whomever was available—"whoever caught us."

Although it was not an aspect of the question, some respondents offered information concerning the types of punishments used. In addition to both spanking and verbal reprimands, another technique was particularly effective. It seems that because of their affection and attachment, these respondents were anxious to avoid offending or disappointing their mothers. As one male described it, "Because she and I were so close, if a tear came, it killed me. I'd sooner have a licking than hurt her feelings."

Finally, when comparing themselves to non-polygamous families, virtually all of the respondents stated that their peers had about the same types and amounts of rules and punishments, or that they did not
know about other families' life styles. A few males believed that their polygamous family was more strict, either because they had to learn to associate harmoniously in a larger family, or because their parents wanted to ensure that they were not engaged in any mischief.

"Dad always tried to have work for the boys to do. And I think it was a good thing because we didn't get into the mischief that some of the other kids in town did. I think that polygamous families tried to keep their boys very busy, not running around doing tom-foolery."

Plural Marriage Power Structure

Through the discussion of rules and punishments and the influence of father's other families, an unusual power structure was revealed. There were no questions dealing with this issue specifically so the research does not include all the respondents' insights. These accounts were merely a few respondents' experiences which may be representative of typical childhood in a polygamous family.

The presence of an aunt had an impact on at least a few respondents. On the one hand, her input made discipline more strict. The child not only had his/her own mother ruling him/her, s/he also had an aunt who could either tattle to the parents or subject the child to punishment herself. For instance,

"Father would be gone most of the time, but when he'd return he'd inquire into how I'd been doing when he was gone. He had both wives there to collaborate to see if I was telling the truth or not. He wouldn't take my word on it. I needed some backing."
"When I did something wrong, I was reported. One Thanksgiving I went out to play and my sister stayed and did the dishes. Aunt ___ thought that was terrible and quickly told my father. She didn't seem to think it was wrong that her children were out playing and not helping my sister. But she wanted to make sure that I was chastised."

On the other hand, two respondents remarked that their punishment was more relaxed because of their aunts. In these cases, the mothers were deceased so the aunts were raising the respondents in their own families. The respondents received differential treatment as detected in these accounts:

"My sister (other family) was a year and a half older and quite mischievous and she'd pull me into it too. Her mother would always give her a spat, but she wouldn't me. She'd say, 'you need one too.' But she wouldn't give me one. She made me kind of feel that she favored me. I think maybe it was because she felt sorry that I didn't have my real mother--that she'd died."

"I would go over and visit auntie and her grandchildren would tease me. Auntie would come out with a switch and switch their legs and give me all the goodies, take me by the hand, and lead me home."

The power structure was also unique because the age span between family members was often substantial and resulted in superior/subordinate roles. At least one male, whose experience is cited below, exercised power over his younger siblings in the other families:

"They were quite a bit younger--and father authorized me to tell them what to do in the fields, etc. He told the children that
they had better obey me or get a spanking."

Fears

Presented with the request, "tell me about your main fears as a child, and do you think they were similar to other children's fears," the respondents shared a variety of answers. A great many of them remarked either that they did not have any, or that they could not recall their fears. Of those who admitted experiencing fears, several categories can be established.

First, many respondents, both male and female, declared that they were afraid of animals, especially wild animals. However, the males believed that their peers probably also had these fears whereas the females did not. One female explained that she learned her dread of snakes from her mother. Another female stated that she was distressed by cows because she lived in town and was unfamiliar with them, whereas her peers lived on farms and were comfortable around animals. This account also illustrates a relationship between the area in which one resided and one's fears. Examples of fears include:

"Wild animals! Bears and wild cats used to come into town."
"I was born in Bear Lake County. Why was Bear Lake named bear? Bears, bears, bears! They'd swoop down and kill a whole pen of pigs."

Closely related, a few respondents expressed distress over domestic animals, specifically tending them in the fields. The comments regarding other children's fears revealed a correlation between fears and gender and area of residence. The respondents believed that their cohorts may not have had similar fears because "not all girls had to
herd cattle," and because "many of them lived in town."

Third, several members of the sample had anxiety about people: Mexicans, "red flaggers," and hobos. These types of people were related to the area of residence--Mormon Mexican colonies or Rocky Mountain states. Examples include:

"This was during the revolutionary times and we didn't always know what we were to do. The officers would come and search our home for guns and saddles."

"Some of the Mexicans would threaten me and I was afraid of them."

"When I was about 15-16 we used to go out and camp while working in the fields. It was rather close to the railroad tracks, and the hobos used to wander around them. When I had to stay there by myself, I was nervous about the hobos."

"The Indians were as thick as ants and they killed a lot of people."

One male shared this account that depicts how the area of residence and concommitant hazards influenced his family's life style.

"We often slept with our clothes on because the renegades--red-flaggers--would come along and barge right into the house. Mother developed the practice of keeping apples and cakes by the door to offer to them. If they were satisfied with that, they'd leave. So we'd sleep with our clothes on to help mother with this duty."

Finally, the status of their families was a source of concern for a few respondents. These qualms did not change with diverse variables, and were directly related to the nature of polygamous families.
"I think that perhaps there always was a little concern that people might make trouble for my father because he was living in polygamy."

"I worried about the association between the two families and why there was such tension. And why our family was so really downtrodden."

"I was kind of sensitive about polygamy. I didn't have any fear about it, but I wasn't too anxious to tell people about it."

**Socio-Emotional Aspects**

Not only are there functional elements of an individual's childhood, there are also socio-emotional factors. Functional aspects entail notions such as the activities of a "typical day," recreation, and discipline. In contrast, socio-emotional aspects involve attitudes, interpretations of behavior, and analysis of one's life.

**Attitudes and Status**

A principle interest of this research was whether or not the members of the sample believed that they were different from or had different experiences from their peers in non-polygamous families. The majority (30; 75%) of the respondents stated that they felt no different from any of their associates because of their family background. A few explained that this was because there were other polygamists in the community, or that their father's other families were not in close proximity or constant contact. For those who said they felt unlike their peers, their comments included: a) they thought that people looked down on them; b) they missed their father when he was absent; c) they felt a little ashamed of it (polygamy, especially in adolescence);
d) they became aware that their peers had both parents at home and they did not. This last point is illustrated particularly well by two males' experiences:

"After we got out of Mexico, we found that it was entirely different here because all of our friends were no longer polygamous. The kids, not the adults, would throw that up to me, saying 'Oh your dad's a polygamist.' We were definite underdogs when we moved to town. These kid's grandfathers were polygamists, but not their parents."

"Polygamy had stopped very shortly after my mother and father had married. There were some individuals who came into the colonies in Mexico and started to practice polygamy and were excommunicated from the Church. That became quite a controversial issue: how come Bishop ____ is a polygamist, sitting there with two families and over there is the ____ family and they're polygamists and they were excommunicated? The Church at one time took drastic steps to try to stamp out the practice of polygamy. They were almost exorcising those who were entering into polygamy later. So much that you couldn't go to their birthday parties. There were times when that was a conflict."

One female respondent, born in her father's first family, had some insight into the societal ramifications of polygamy. She shared her thoughts:

"I think that it would be different for the children of the first wife and the second wife. My father thought that the wives should be treated equally so there wasn't that problem."
But politically, the first wife's children were legitimate and the second wife's were not, in the eyes of the law. So I'm sure they would have a little feeling about it because of that."

There were several respondents who had quite a positive attitude about their family's status in the community. Examples of these favorable opinions include:

"We felt that belonging to a polygamous family was kind of a choice thing."

"I felt special because of the versatility of our family group. We had enough people to do the work and pursue other interests."

"We had an excellent image of ourselves. Father instilled a pride and confidence and unity in the family."

Gender Comparisons

Along these same lines, members of the sample were requested to express if they thought growing up in a polygamous family was different for boys than it was for girls. Over half (29; 70% females, 75% males) of the respondents claimed that their experiences would be the same, or that they could not give an opinion on the opposite sex's experiences. Indicative of how individual perceptions vary, two males offered opposing views of the work arrangement. When reviewing the distribution of chores, it was a consensus that boys worked outside and girls worked (primarily) inside. However, in response to this question, one claimed that the work in most families was different: boys outside, girls inside. In contrast, another male claimed that the work in most families was virtually the same.

Ideas of how childhood in plural marriage may vary by gender were
offered by a few respondents. One female suggested that boys were advantaged through the priesthood. She said "the boys probably had an edge because they held the priesthood. They were considered superior, valuable, and were treated better than girls, who were not worth much." Male respondents thought that boys were advantaged because they had more opportunities to labor for money and few social (courtship) concerns. One quaint ritual showing the dissimilar treatment between males and females occurred at mealtime. In this family, the dinner table seating arrangement required all the men to sit on one side and the women on the other, ready to jump up and serve the men. In addition to this, the seating was in chronological birth order.

Constancy of Attitudes

A final question was aimed at discovering how constant the respondents' attitudes were concerning their family's life style. Eighty-one percent of the males (13) and 83% (20) of the females stated that their attitudes about their family background remained the same. Twelve percent (2) of the males and 16% (4) of the females noted that their opinions had changed throughout their life time. Two points of interest: first, the change in feelings usually occurred during the teens or early adulthood, and second, these changes usually were a result of becoming aware of their mother's predicament or misfortune. The respondents explained that in childhood they did not think about the situation, but with age came sensitivity and insight.

Consequences

An initial premise of this research was that an individual's personality and social adjustment is influenced by familial experiences.
With this in mind, the members of the sample were requested to discuss the ways they believed that they were better and worse off because they were raised in a polygamous family. Not surprisingly, a variety of ideas were expressed. On the one hand, a small proportion of the sample believed that they did not profit in any way from their family circumstances. On the other hand, many of them suggested that there were advantages.

The primary benefit mentioned was that it provided an opportunity to learn many enriching lessons. First, they learned to be "tolerant" and to interact harmoniously with a number of people and personalities. Second, they learned to share, to sacrifice, and to be unselfish. Third, they learned to extend service and be concerned for other's welfare. Fourth, they learned to sympathize with their mother's responsibilities and to be sensitive to her feelings. Fifth, they learned to be "obedient to get the blessings from heaven" One female put it this way, "It learned me three things: to be economical, to control my temper, and to love my mother more than anything else."

Several other advantages were listed by the respondents. One asserted that "it was a source of status for it was the orthodox thing to do in Mexico." Several others noted that it was pleasant and uplifting to associate with so many worthwhile and admirable individuals or be the youngest in a fine family. Last, they explained that they had opportunities to work and keep out of mischief or to obtain blessings. Not surprisingly, several respondents stated such ideas as, "I never thought about it in that way, I just took it for granted."

Almost twice as many respondents replied that they were not "worse off" because of their family structure. Their most common complaint,
and one that was given most frequently by females, was that they were perhaps not as comfortable financially compared to the monogamous families. Closely related, several respondents said that they did not have clothing that was as nice as some of the other families. Again, these respondents were female; males did not mention any interest in clothing. One female shared this account that perhaps gives the flavor of the predicament.

"I sometimes felt that I didn't have as nice clothes as some of the girls had, and I'd worry about that. I know that when the boys went to college it was hard. I had a brother in law school at Harvard, and I remember father would say, 'well, I've got to sell another cow and send him the money.' It was hard for us. I'd feel I'd like a new dress for something special at school, and father would say, 'daughter, there's nothing I'd rather do than give you a new dress, but I just haven't got the money.'"

One last disadvantage expressed by a few respondents was that they missed a frequent or intimate association with their parents because their fathers, and sometimes mothers, were away from the home working. For instance, one female stated that she recalled coming home from school and wishing her mother could be there. One male said he missed receiving attention from his father.

Pursuing this idea of "better or worse off" one step further, the respondents were requested to select an age at which it was most stressful and most pleasant to be a member of a polygamous family.

Twenty-one of the forty respondents stated that it was not stressful at any age. For those who recalled that it was stressful,
there was no specific age, but it was when they reached a level of maturity and awareness. Most said that they became dissatisfied in their teen years or early adulthood. They explained that during these times they were concerned with their social activities, with dating and courting, with peer opinions in general, and with their expanded circle of friends and the concomitant likelihood of having negative comments from new acquaintances. Furthermore, during adolescence they became increasingly cognizant of their mother's hardships and challenges. Female respondents, more than male, mentioned their mother's welfare, and typical responses include:

"I don't know what age, but it was when I realized how hard it was for my mother."

"I can't say what age; I was probably a teenager when I was realizing more."

Considering at what age the family life style was most pleasant, slightly more respondents (28) stated that there was no age of benefit. Those who decided that there was an age of enjoyment explained that it was during their early childhood. Their main reason was that it was fun to be in a large family with many available children with whom to play. One female stated that she preferred adulthood because she could be proud of her heritage. As usual, many respondents declared that they never thought about it in terms of better or worse; it was just a natural, comfortable way of life.

**Relationship with Parents**

An integral and influential component of virtually any person's childhood is the relationship with his or her mother and father. It is
a safe assumption that this relationship would be no less significant in children from polygamous families, though there may be interesting differences in their association. This section reports results from questions dealing with children and parents.

Interaction with Mother

Degree

Interaction with mother can be divided into degree and type. Over half (24) of the respondents stated that they had a very close and loving relationship with their mothers. They continued that they felt warm and constant affection in their transactions. Six remarked that they felt close to their mothers, but the daily routine was so full and hectic that they could not afford to spend much time together. On the other hand, four respondents suggested that they had had minimal association with their mothers because their mothers had died when the respondents were quite young. Two variables that influenced interaction were gender and birth order. Youngest females spent considerable time with their mothers because they both were involved in homemaking activities and usually their mother had more time to devote to later born off-spring. For instance,

"I think I had more time with mother than any of them because I was the youngest and she had more time to spend with me. With the others, she was always expecting another baby, and they just sort of grew up on their own. She used to sit and read to me by the hours."

The degree of interaction the respondents experienced with their mothers is illustrated in Table 2.
Table 2
Relationship with Mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>very close</th>
<th>close but busy</th>
<th>average</th>
<th>indefinite answer</th>
<th>minimal</th>
<th>none</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type

The types of mutual activities mothers and children participated in were primarily home oriented. The activities mentioned were quite diverse; however, some common trends can be noted. Having mother read to them or tell them stories, especially in the evening, were very popular. Music, particularly singing together, was enjoyed by many male and female respondents. A third avenue of interaction was mothers and children working together, in household duties, gardening, and artistic hobbies. These cooperative projects provided time for conversation. According to Tanner (1976), children often served as confidants and companions for their mothers. The respondents' answers did not support this idea. Over half of the members of the sample stated that they did not attend socials with their mothers. The types of activities respondents mentioned included:

"We'd talk and do dishes and all kinds of work together. And we
were gabbing all the time until bedtime, I guess."
"I recall some very choice occasions when we'd sit around the
old stove and she'd read to us."
"I loved to work with her in the house, to sing while working.
Both father and mother had good singing voices. Mother was very
small and I used to lift her up onto the table and she'd sing
and we kids would listen."

The following accounts illustrate the mutual support shared by
children and mothers, support particularly welcomed when alone in an
unfamiliar or rural setting.

"Mother was scared of the screech owls in one of the new areas
where we lived and she stayed with us a lot. We used to sit and
look off at the city lights in the distance and listen to the
train."

"We used to sit together in the darkness and look at the
pinetrees on the mountains and think that they were Indians
watching us."

Another factor that affects an individual's childhood and
relationship with his or her mother is his or her perception or
evaluation of his or her mother. All the respondents who remembered
their mothers viewed them with love, respect, and admiration. One male
declared, "Mother was a little angel." They also expressed great
concern for their mother's feelings. Several respondents explained that
they realized that the life style was challenging for their mothers and
they tried to be sensitive and "do anything to avoid hurting her."

Interaction with Father
Father's routine. A logical and frequent assumption is that a father in polygamy would have unique interaction patterns because of the increased demands for time, attention, and resources. Consequently, the members of the sample were asked if it "seemed that their father was gone a lot." The most interesting finding was the varying interpretations of the same or similar situations. For instance, one woman answered, "Yes, every other night." In contrast, another woman stated, 'No, he spent a night with each family." It has been quite common to obtain a variety of answers, but this was an intriguing example of opposite evaluations.

The female respondents had a greater variety of perceptions of their father's absence than did the males. There was no trend in one direction; their answers could be placed on a continuum. Males more consistently claimed that their fathers spent a great deal of time away from their homes. In fact, several males declared, "it not only seemed, it was!" To illustrate the contrasts:

"Father was never there."
"He was away most of the time."
"He was home half of the time."
"I can't remember him being away."

The perceptions of members of this sample in regard to their access to father are presented in Table 3. It is clear that perceptions of male and female respondents varied considerably and that females provided more specific records.
Table 3
Access To Father: Perceptions and Frequencies of Respondences for Males and Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always home</td>
<td>Not gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gone quite a bit, or never home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females</th>
<th>always not every &quot;1/2 home, no definite every &quot;for or &quot;gone&quot; home&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gone other 1/2 gone&quot; answer 3 days other weeks&quot; &quot;never week home&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 2 3 2 2 1 1 1 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For explanations of why their father was gone, the respondents mentioned three: his other families, his work and related undertakings, and his many church duties. They almost always knew where he was and understood why he was not at home. Surveying the respondents' attitudes about their father's absence, it was to an extent a consensus that they accepted it as a way of life. It was taken for granted and considered part of the family routine. Consequently, it did not seem to be traumatic; the responses ranged from neutral; the family members were accustomed to it, to positive: they liked it when he left. For example:

"We used to be tickled when he left. He would go to Salt Lake to conference and be gone three to four days. When the cat's away, the mice begin to play, and we really had a good time. Mother let us do a lot of things that father didn't."

"It was romantic for me in that sometimes I was with him and shared experiences."
"Yes, he was gone, but it was only next door. He would always come over in the morning and greet us."

**Degree.** Interaction with father can also be divided into degree and type. The categories of degree are parallel to those in the relationship with mother: one group had a close and loving association with their fathers; another group felt affection and concern, but everyone was occupied with working and had little time for individual attention. Still another group stated that they had little or no interaction with their fathers. The noteworthy point here was the discrepancy in reasons for a lack of interaction. The reason the respondent did not spend time with their mothers was that the mothers were deceased. In contrast, the reasons respondents had minimal to no interaction with their fathers was that their fathers were either deceased or that the fathers had more intense affiliation with the other families. To illustrate the differences:

"He always played with me, took me places. He spent lots of time with me."

"I don't recall talking to him unless I had to. I never knew my dad my whole life."

"I don't recall him saying hello to me."

Table 4 illustrates the degree of interaction the male and female respondents perceived they had with their fathers.
Other activities related to father were playing games, trips—especially fishing trips—and musical pursuits.

Quality. In addition to the extent and type of interaction the respondents had with their fathers, some also remarked on the inconsistancy of the association. It seems that when these respondents were young they did not share a closeness with their fathers, perhaps from a lack of understanding for his absence or from insufficient affiliation. But in late adolescence or early adulthood they established a warmth and rapport with their fathers. Some reasons given by the respondents for this change were that their fathers were older and had more time; that the children were older and required less caretaking; or that the children had greater sensitivity to fathers' obligations.

Taylor (1951) explained that children sometimes became disturbed when observing their father expressing affection to his other wives and families. However, only one member of the sample openly mentioned any resentment in sharing her father's attention. She stated that it annoyed her when her older siblings returned home for visits because for a few days she lost her father's complete attention.

Furthermore, Taylor (1951) commented that the social climate forced some people to live on the "underground," a situation which undoubtedly affected family relations. Only two respondents said that their fathers were involved in this type of activity. Specifically, one father went "underground" and one "spent time in jail." Both respondents added that this occurred before they were born or old enough to recall it, so they believed that it did not have a direct impact on their relationship with their fathers.
Table 4
Relationship with Father: Frequency of Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<td>Females</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Type. Reviewing the types of activities common for fathers and their children, two were mentioned frequently, and these were related to the gender of the respondents. Females often explained that their fathers would read to or tell them stories or anecdotes and experiences about their missions. Males repeatedly mentioned working with their fathers, either toiling side by side or having father supervise them.
Finally, the respondents reviewed the time they spent with their parents compared to time children spent with parents in monogamous families. The responses were almost equally divided between "we spent the same," "I don't know," and "more." Some felt they had more time with their mothers and less time with their fathers. On the other hand, others insisted that they had a closer relationship with their fathers than did monogamous children. The primary reason given was that their fathers were considerably older and at home a great deal while they were growing up.

Relationship with Siblings

In addition to the relationship with one's parents, the relationship with one's siblings has an impact on an individual's childhood. Because it is an assumption that polygamous families may have unique transaction patterns, perhaps as a result of a greater number of children (full and half siblings) and distinct parents-brothers-sisters alliances, one section of this research is devoted to the association between siblings. It examines variations in terms of structural, functional, and socio-emotional aspects.

Structural

Housing

Because relationships are influenced by structural or physical elements of housing, the members of the sample were requested to describe the bedroom arrangements for their brothers and sisters and themselves. With two exceptions, the entire sample stated that they
shared a bedroom with at least one brother or sister. Of those who did not, the female was an only child, and the male was the only boy in the family and did not share a room with his sister. All but three members of the sample shared a bed with their siblings. In addition to those who did not share a bedroom at all, there was one female who was the youngest member of her family and thus had her own bed—the siblings had moved away from home. Not only was it common to share a bedroom and a bed, a few respondents had multiple siblings, always the same sex, in the same bed. Two to four people would sleep together, and though most respondents did not express an opinion, one female declared that "they could keep warmer in double beds."

The boys and girls in the respondents' families were segregated, except in those cases in which the entire family was in the same room. Related to this, the density of people in a room varied. It ranged from two siblings to at least five siblings, to the entire family (or mother but not father) in one room. Again, though most respondents did not state any opinions on the arrangements, one female explained, "when we didn't have too much room, we sisters had three beds straight across this one room. And I had lots of fun jumping from one bed to another."

One comment concerning room arrangements that was made frequently and may be characteristic of childhood implied a type of evolution. A certain amount of remodeling houses or reorganizing bedroom arrangements occurred to accommodate the number of children. Not surprisingly, there was an increase in space and a decrease in sharing rooms as older siblings left home. Cases that illustrate this concept include:

"At first they had bunk beds. Much later on there was a separate room and bed for each child. It went in stages."
"For a while there was just one room for the children and one for the parents, so we shared a bed. Later the porch was covered with canvas and the two oldest girls slept there."

"There was one mammoth bedroom where we had two beds for four boys to sleep. The rest of us had a double bed. "Course by the time I was born some of my brothers were married so we had plenty of room."

Functional Aspects

Sharing

Responses regarding sharing practices revealed that almost all members of the sample shared something with their siblings. The exceptions resulted from being the youngest or only child, or from being the only boy or girl in the family and consequently having no one with whom to share or no common interests. A frequent answer was that the respondents shared everything that they had, but that they actually had very little to share. Toys, books, and games were not abundant, and what was available was mutual property. "Hand-me-down" clothing, especially between families, was somewhat customary. The majority of the sample claimed that they and their siblings possessed very few things that they did not share—that were for private use only. Again, children had so few possessions and resources that what was available was shared. Other reasons for a lack of sharing between siblings were age differences, gender differences, interest (hobby) differences, and sentiment for the item—if it were a special gift. Although "hand-me-down" clothing between families was used, several respondents stated that they definitely did not share their clothing with their
siblings. When discussing sharing practices, many respondents explained that they had private drawers or boxes and their siblings had sufficient respect, or caution, not to remove items without permission. Comparing their practices to the practices of children in non-polygamous families, most respondents thought that they were the same or did not know.

Two respondents commented on the services that their older sisters offered to them. This perhaps could be considered as the sharing of time or personal resources. The male respondent offered this account of his sister assisting him when he was ailing.

"I was thrown off a horse when I was five years old. I was riding with my dad and got a little ways behind and so he said to hit him (the horse) with a stick. I did, and the last thing I remember I was sailing through the air. This happened at about one o'clock and it was after sun down before I came to. It was six months before I could walk; it hurt my back. I remember my sister dragging me around on a coaster."

This description was told by a female respondent: "The tucking into bed routine was usually done by my oldest sister. Our parents just said it was time for bed, then she would see to it that we were settled."

Working

Responses regarding working practices revealed that almost all members of the sample's families had no established or definite work program. There were few specifically assigned tasks; apparently it was customary to toil together on whatever project required attention. Two primary divisions were reported. First, as noted in the discussion of
general childhood, boys worked outside, often with father, and girls worked inside, often with mother. Additionally, girls frequently labored outside but boys rarely worked inside the house. Second, the activities were assigned by age and ability. Elders had increased responsibility whereas younsters often had tasks merely to keep them occupied. Nonetheless, within these two categories—gender and age—there usually were no assigned chores. Characteristic examples include:

"We did things together; didn't have assigned jobs. We helped each other: if I were working at something, they'd help me finish, then I'd go help them finish. If they were planning a pony ride and someone wasn't finished, they'd help him get done so he could go, too."

"Just did whatever we were told. Girls did inside work and some outside, but boys did exclusively outside work."

"We just lived. If anything needed to be done, we just did it."

"We had jobs according to our age. When we were tiny we'd have tiny jobs. As we grew older we'd have more important things to do."

In contrast, an assigned work schedule was the routine for a few respondents. It was also determined by age, gender, and mother's discretion. Two or three families had a "Saturday list" on which the mother would designate who was responsible for what duties. Descriptions of the orchestration include:

"It was usually by assignment. If we were weeding the garden, we had designated rows. If it was milking cows, we had assigned cows. My older brother would milk seven and I'd milk six, but because I
only had six, I had to feed the calves."

"We had assigned jobs to do. Someone was responsible to get the chips to start the fire, someone else to get the wood, clean the chicken coop, etc. The boys had regular assignments of milking cows, doing farm chores. Girls had turns doing dishes, etc."

"On Saturday she (mother) had a list of things for us to do and depending on our age and the difficulty of the job, we could have up to ten jobs."

The majority of the sample agreed that their older brothers assumed responsibility for work when their father was away from home. One female mentioned that this was because of their family's attitude about Priesthood holders. Several continued that the boys did much of the work regardless of father's absence or presence. Work and responsibility required of the boys seemed to vary through the years because of their age and ability. The following case, though not necessarily representative of this sample, should not be excluded, for it was a condition related to plural marriage families:

"My father went on the underground and sent money home for support. My brother had to take over the farm when he was a teenager because dad was in hiding."

Comparing the amount of work that they did with that of their siblings, half of the respondents stated that it was equal. Differences in experience were related to birth order and gender. Several respondents believed that they had less work because they were the youngest, and of those who said they had less, more were females. No females thought that they had more work, but a few of the males did. The males' reasons for this differential distribution were: they were
the oldest in the family, they volunteered more, or they were the only boy left at home. One male explained his predicament like this:

"Polygamy didn't have anything to do with it. In my family I felt that I had a lot of work to do because I was the only boy. That had nothing to do with polygamy; down there you had to raise or make everything you needed."

Socio-Emotional Aspects

Through the structured interaction of brothers and sisters an emotional bond usually evolves. This section reviews the questions and results aimed at uncovering the socio-emotional aspects associated with the interaction between siblings.

Regard for Siblings

The respondents were asked if they "looked up to their older brothers and sister?" The answers were an overwhelming "yes" they did, though they did so with varying degrees of enthusiasm or interest. Two exceptions were those who were only children or who had no older siblings. One female respondent noted that "everyone did pretty much the same things anyway," implying that it was not particularly necessary to copy one another consciously. Gender seemed to be an influential variable; females, rather than males, seemed to be more praising and enthusiastic about their older siblings' influence. At any rate, the pattern for both males and females ranged from looking up to siblings a great deal to scarcely at all, but no one mentioned complete rejection or disrespect. The variety is best illustrated by the following:

"...I kind of idolized them."

"I thought they were perfect, respected them, and tried to copy
them."

"My older brother was my idol and role maker."

"Sometimes, when necessary, but not often."

"I resented him because he wanted to boss me and I didn't want to be bossed. But I looked up to him and admired him."

Reliance on Siblings

Closely related, half of the members of the sample stated that they did seek their older brother's advice or help when their fathers were not at home. However, their first choice for most types of assistance would be their "mother," followed by "whoever was available or close by." The reasons mentioned for not using older brothers in this capacity were that they were too close to respondents' age, or that the respondents did not ask anyone for advice. On the other hand, a few respondents did take advantage of their brothers. For example,

"Yes, unless I got it without asking. My brother was my only guide. He took the place of my father."

"Yes sometimes I'd rather ask my brothers, 'cause then I'd get someplace!"

Comparing their reliance on older siblings to children in monogamous families, the majority of the sample said it was "the same." Males were more definite: 75% (12) specifically stated that it was equal, whereas 54% (13) of the females claimed that there was no difference, and many did not know. No one suggested that they relied on their siblings less, but one male said he "did not rely on his sister."

There were some respondents who relied on their brothers and sisters more, and provided four reasons that can be seen in these quotes:

"father was more spread out," "we were a closer family than most
families; we were taught to take care of each other," "I thought my sister was a real smart cookie," and "I was influenced by my brothers and sisters much more than outside sources." Finally, analyzing other variables besides gender, females born before 1903 expressed a greater tendency to rely on their older siblings, and males from large (9-14 children) families relied on their brothers more.

Conflict

When considering interaction between siblings, one often thinks of rivalry or dissonance, and thus the members of the sample were requested to discuss the conflict in their family. Over half (67%) insisted that they did not quarrel with their brothers and sisters. The apparent reasons: they were just naturally harmonious, their parents did not permit it, and they did not have siblings at home with whom to contend. Of those who admitted that they did have squabbles, most were males who explained that it was "just normal teasing" and boisterous play, nothing serious or meaningful. One example of conflict was an incident shared by a male respondent:

"One time my older brother--two years older--was teasing me and I was bawling and carrying on. So one of my brothers who was even older took him out and beat him up."

According to most members of the sample (79%, 12 males, 75%, 19 females) there was no "ganging up on each other" or choosing sides. Furthermore, the arguing was seldom sufficient to warrant any parental reactions. When intervention was necessary, various techniques were used, including verbal reprimands, spanking, separation, or discussions to settle the disagreement. For example,
"It depended on how intense the argument was, but it was often social isolation—separation."

"We had a 'grand council' situation where we discussed it."

"They declared, 'That comes from the devil and we do not permit it.'"

"That's enough of that. If you can't be still you can go in the bathroom."

"If he ever heard us arguing, he'd say 'okay, let's have a song!' So we'd have to sing a song together and that's the way we settled our quarrels."

Treatement

"How do you feel that you were treated compared to your brothers and sisters?" Thirty-one of the forty respondents stated that they were treated "the same," that is, fairly and lovingly. Five respondents, mostly females, commented that they were treated better; they were the youngest children and therefore were babied or pampered. In contrast, one female explained that she assumed more responsibility and obligations compared to siblings. Two examples of differential treatment were related to conflict between siblings. One male declared that, when arguing, "I always got the blame because I was the boy." A female stated that "I used to think that my sister just older than I got away with a lot more than I did. She'd sometimes lie out of it, and I'd take the punishment. We'd be in it together, but she could look so sweet and innocent and I'd get the blame."

Sentiment Constancy

Finally, the respondents were requested to contemplate the
relationship with their brothers and sisters through the years. All respondents, except one female who was an only child, stated that they have enjoyed a close and loving association with their siblings throughout their lives. The feelings were consistently more intimate with full siblings than half siblings. They continued that the interaction varied in degree because of the influence of age and geographic location. Those relatives who were closer in age and lived in areas in which it was convenient to get together, had more intense affection. These comments indicate the common attitude:

"I have fond memories of love and companionship."

"It was essentially an ideal relationship."

"Always close. I’ve been closest to the ones who lived near by."

**Relationship with Father’s Other Families**

This area of analysis is initiated on the assumption that if one’s father had plural wives and families, the families will influence each other, directly or indirectly, consciously or subconsciously. The extent of the influence is colored by several factors, both structural and functional.

**Structural**

**Proximity**

One factor that greatly affected the degree of influence was the proximity of the families. According to the results in this study, proximity could be placed on a continuum. Some families lived in the
same house; it was often similar to a duplex with identical sides and a  
breeze-way between the two halves. It was common to reside next door or  
aver across the street or to be in the same town but several blocks away.  
Still others dwelt in different towns or different states.

The great diversity of residential arrangements is illustrated in  
Table 5.

Table 5
Proximity of Families (no gender difference)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>same house</th>
<th>next door</th>
<th>across street</th>
<th>few blocks</th>
<th>varied through years</th>
<th>several blocks</th>
<th>different towns</th>
<th>different states</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

Functional Interaction

Degree. In addition to location, the extent of influence was  
affected by the interaction patterns of the families, and these patterns  
can also be discussed in terms of a continuum. On one end of the scale  
were those who lived in the same house. According to one male, "they  
were absolutely interchangeable. We children hardly ever knew which  
side we were in." Many children who did not live together still had  
frequent interaction, working and playing together daily. "Back and  
forth all day," "we were inseparable", were common responses. In the  
middle of the scale are placed those children who had somewhat less  
intense or frequent interaction. The children associated during the  
day, but had meals and spent the evenings in their own mothers' homes.  
Finally, families who lived in different communities or states had quite  
infrequent meetings, perhaps a reunion every few months or once a year.
Unique incidents not relevant to the scale resulted when members of one family lived with one of the other families. This occurred because of at least three reasons: a) to make school attendance more convenient; b) to take advantage of available work; c) to keep each other company. "Mother would go up to the ranch so my (half) sister would come over to spend the night." Siblings of one family mentioned that they sometimes lived together with half siblings during their college experiences.

**Types.** Several respondents elaborated on the types of activities in which siblings and half siblings engaged in addition to working or playing together. These activities usually entailed an older sibling from one family benefiting, either directly or indirectly, a younger sibling in another family. For instance, one male explained that

"when the older brothers--they'd be in the thirties and forties--of the other families would come by, they'd pay a lot of attention to me. My own brother was only eight years older than me and he didn't have much time for me. But I remember those older boys were kind."

Furthermore, a female respondent had pleasant experiences with her half sister.

"The (step) daughter that my mother raised was just like a mother to me--took me to get baptized and taught me things. I always felt that she was more of my mother than my real mother was because my mother had four or five little children to care for. She didn't have time to spend with me so she let do things for me. I used to want to be just like her."

On the other hand, apparently there were incidents in which a
younger sibling could help an older sibling. This episode was told by a male:

"My brother ___, two years older in the other family, probably thought me a nuisance at times. But I helped him out. I went to his girlfriend's house and got back some dishes he had given her without permission."

Intimacy. Closely related to interaction is the degree of intimacy (here defined as feelings of fondness, affection, or friendship) perceived by the brothers and sisters in the families. The members of the sample provided examples of two extremes. Some of them were very close, with a relationship similar to the one they shared with their full siblings. This notion is illustrated by comments such "they were just like my own brothers and sisters," and "there was no difference between siblings. Even when we lived in separate towns, we were very close." Others were close, but not as intensely as they were to full siblings; they were "good friends, but less than with my own brothers and sisters." Towards the other extreme were those who were acquainted but not intimate because of age differences or distances between homes. One female respondent described it as follows:

"I would compare it with being involved with cousins, aunts, and uncles. We thought a lot of each other, loved to visit, corresponded a little, and loved to get together and sing, but we lived far enough away that it didn't happen very often."

Finally, there were those families who experienced minimal intimacy: "I wasn't involved with them at all because when I grew up the other family was gone," "the others were older and off doing their own activities in life," "hardly at all, perhaps a once a year meeting" were typical.
examples.

Table 6 illustrates the perceived intimacy between respondents and their half-siblings. Females shared a greater variety and more specific definition of the relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Constancy of Sentiment**

Many comments from the respondents indicated that the intimacy between families through the life span varied. Often those who were
minimally acquainted in childhood increased their affection in adulthood. Examples of this include, "I didn't know the other families at all until I got married and went to visit," "we had nothing (relationship), except when they'd come to visit. I corresponded with some of them during the later years and we got to know each other that way. I got to know a couple of them after they were all married." One female respondent shared this incident:

"My husband and I were traveling to Canada and on the way home we decided to drop in on my half sister whom I had never met. We were greeted at the door politely—'what can I do for you?' I said, 'well, you don't know me, but we are sisters.' It was a beautiful reception and reunion. We had dinner together and spent several hours filling in the lost years. We both thought that it was a shame that we had never known each other even though we had the same father."

Emotional Response

Another question was aimed at discovering how the respondents felt when in the company of half siblings and how they felt that they were treated compared to their half siblings. The majority of the respondents agreed that they felt "fine," "comfortable," and had no sense of rivalry or competition. They continued that the treatment was "the same" and "equitable" or "fair." However, there was some indication that until they became accustomed to their relatives, they felt awkward and uneasy. To illustrate, "When I was first around them I didn't know them and I was just a little shy, until I got better acquainted with them" "I got to the point where I had sense enough to
treat them nice." On the other hand, there were those respondents who never developed a rapport with their father's other families: "I wasn't as free around them as I was my own," "uncomfortable, always." Regarding treatment, although most thought that everything was equal, there were those who suspected that the other families, especially the first wife's family, had more advantages. At least one first family was reported to have acted superior and demanded more resources. In accordance with this idea, one respondent said that the second wife attempted to do more for her family to compensate for being the second family.

Relationship with Wives

Structured Interaction

The respondents were also requested to discuss their interaction with their father's plural wives. Each member of the sample had met the aunts, as they were called, at least once, and not surprisingly, the extent of interaction varied. Logically, many of the same factors that influenced interaction with half siblings influenced interaction with aunts, namely, proximity and accessibility. Whether the families lived together, in the same neighborhood, town, or state determined the association. Two points of interest: a few respondents' aunts had died before they were born, so they knew the children, but not the children's mother. Second, two respondents explained that their aunts performed a maternal role in their childhood because their own mothers had died when the respondents were quite young. One consequence of this predicament was shared by a female respondent. Her mother had died and the family was being raised by an aunt. The respondent was old enough to remember her mother and realize that her caretaker was her "aunt." However, her
sister was only eighteen months old when her mother had died so she considered her "aunt" as her mother.

Sentiments

Pursuing the topic one step further, the members of the sample were requested to describe the feelings they had while in their aunt's company. The responses ranged from comfortable and loving to discomfort and hatred. Moreover, female respondents expressed more negative impressions. Respondent's comments included:

"She's the one that I loved, that was so good to me."
"I loved them like mothers; they were so good to me."
"I liked them. I liked to go see them and had nothing against them. They were good to me."
"I don't know what you mean; she was a member of the family and was there all the time"
"Not too comfortable. I never did have a conversation with her."
"There wasn't a close or loving feeling."
"I lived right by her and I almost hated her."

Perception of Father's Plural Wives

"Did you consider your father's other wives as aunts, second mothers, neighbor ladies, or something else?" Males and females differed in their responses to this question. Fifty-eight percent (14) of the females viewed their fathers' wives as aunts whereas only 25% (4) of the males chose this term. Males preferred "second mother," with 31% (5). In contrast, 12% (3) of the females selected the label "second mother." Twelve percent (2) of the males and 4% (1) of the females
chose a "neighbor lady." Examples of the responses include:

"As a second mother; she wasn't equal to my mother as far as admiration, but she was more than just a neighbor across the street."

"Like a second mother; obeyed her without question."

"I was only in her company not more than a half dozen times so more like a neighborhood lady."

"I called her auntie, though she was just about like a mother."

"I called her aunt. I just loved her; she was good to me as an aunt would be."

"I called them aunts; they were so dear to me--like second mothers."

There were several cases in which the wives were sisters so the role and title of aunt came readily. Moreover, several respondents noted that they called the wives aunts and therefore treated them as such.

A few respondents claimed that none of the terms were appropriate. They had distinct definitions for these women in their family:

"She was ___'s and ___'s (half siblings) mother."

"Like Aunt ___. Not like a mother and not like an aunt. She was different; she was Aunt ___.

"Actually, she was the first mother and we called her the first mother. My mother was called the second mother."

"I treated her like a special supplement to my mother's care."

"She was not a second mother or an aunt. She was something different; she was father's wife."
The differences in perceptions and titles of father's other wives are illustrated in Table 7. Male and female respondents varied greatly in their views.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd supplement mother</th>
<th>aunt</th>
<th>like</th>
<th>&quot;father's wife&quot;</th>
<th>½ sib's mother</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</table>

Perception

| 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

Like | fine | sympathetic | don't recall | uncomfortable | hated her |

| F 7 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| M 4 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 |   |

Treatment

The members of the sample were asked if they thought their aunts treated them differently from their own children. The two most common answers were that all the children were treated equally and affectionately, and that any mother would naturally favor her own offspring. They were kind, but had a normal preference in their children's direction. On the other hand, several respondents remarked that they did not experience sufficient interaction with their aunts to establish a pattern of treatment. Finally, one woman expressed hostility concerning the familial relationship. In this array of responses, her comment is cited first:

"Much different. We weren't even considered fit to associate with her or let her kids play with us."

"She was fond of some of my family and loved them as much as her own."
"She never spent time with me; she wasn't around enough."

"We never stopped to think who belonged to who."

Two respondents suggested that perhaps they were treated better to some extent. The female respondent reasoned that "maybe she (aunt) felt sorry for me because my real mother had died." The explanation offered by the male respondent was that maybe she showed more love because she wanted him to get her some coal or pump some water. "When she'd want little jobs done, I'd have to do as many for her as I did for my own mother."

Understanding of Plural Marriage

From questions dealing with the respondent's understanding of their family's involvement in polygamy, two themes were prominent. First, it seems that children who were reared in polygamous families did not realize that, based on some standards, their life style was unconventional. Consequently, many of them did not regard the situation as worthy of explanation. It was normal for them and did not stimulate introspection or analysis. Second, the respondents reported that they were socialized with the idea that the life style was a result of religious commitment. It was another principle of their church. Third, there were numerous other plural marriage families in the communities. Characteristic comments include:

"As a child I knew that he had another wife and family, but other kids in the neighborhood had the same thing so I didn't care."

"It never dawned on me that there should be a reason. It was just that way."
"I didn't think about it. I just thought we were supposed to do it."

"It was the law of the Lord."

"The Church advocated plural marriage at that time."

In contrast, a few respondents seemed to have a reasonably clear comprehension of the events that led to their family becoming polygamous. These versions mention the influence of Church leaders and obligation.

"They wanted father to take on another position in the Church but they didn't think he was worthy unless he had another wife."

"The leaders of the Church came to my dad...and asked him—told him the Lord wanted him to take a plural wife and that he had to have the opinion of the first wife."

Furthermore, a large number (36) of the respondents did not recall a particular time when they discovered that their family was polygamous. They lived in the midst of polygamy, with the knowledge that their father had plural wives, and did not contemplate their life style. The general trend in the responses was that the daily routines were established and sufficiently order that the respondents did not have reason to question the circumstances. For example, one female stated that "I can't tell when that day came. I knew that there was Aunt ___ and my brothers and sisters and that father spent part of the time over there and part of it with us. It was just as natural as could be." A variation of this attitude was expressed by a few females. They had realized that their families were different, but they did not dwell on or talk about it.

On the other hand, there was a small group of respondents who could
recollect the episode when they realized their family was polygamous—and perhaps the ramifications. The majority of these were males who were born before 1905. Their stories:

"I was about four years old and I remember I said to my mother, 'why the devil does that man who lives over there across the street keep coming over here and sticking around?' She said, 'Well, that's your father.' And then she told me all about it."

"I was eight years old. One of my uncles and my mother took me to Logan to the temple to get baptized, and I couldn't see why my uncle had to take me instead of my father. When I was twelve I could see more clearly."

"I thought all families were (polygamous) until we moved from Mexico, at about nine years."

"I just remember that in my prayers I used to say 'bless mama, papa, and Aunt ___.' When I found out that not everybody had an Aunt ___, I thought, 'gee, they're really missing out. I have something they don't have.'"

Comparisons

Another avenue available for creating a picture of the general lifestyle in polygamous families was comparisons. The respondents were requested to note major similarities or dissimilarities between their own families and their father's other families. Although there was not a plethora of these types of questions, those included provide interesting insight. The questions can be categorized by those dealing with the differences in adult (mother, aunt, father) and their interaction, and the differences in the children.
Contrasts in Adults

Of those who were aware of their life style, most respondents assumed that their aunts had the same "typical day" experiences. The women in this era spent a significant proportion of their time tending children, keeping house, and participating in church duties. As one male put it "She (aunt) had nine children, and a typical day for her was to find out which one was where." This is consistent with Bushman's (1976) account of family activities. In contrast, a small number of respondents opined that, compared to their mothers, their aunts had dissimilar endeavors. The primary differences mentioned were that their aunts enjoyed artistic or literary pursuits, that they were less oriented to homemaking and more to employment, and that they were more socially active. For example,

"She spent most of her time working in the store and post office and didn't have time to nurse people as mother did."

"She was not the domestic type, not the home type. She loved to make hair flowers--she was a fiddle-de-deer."

A frequently mentioned variable that seemed to be related to differences between mothers and aunts was the number and age range of the children. For instance,

My aunt didn't have quite as much to do, of course, and she found life a little boring. (She had no children.) She had a hard time keeping busy because she didn't enjoy cooking and so forth."

"About the same as my mother's, but she had little kids."

Reviewing the interaction between their father and his wives, the general consensus of the members of the sample was that the process was untroubled and orderly, with a few exceptions, of course. Most fathers
were equitable in their attention to each wife, and elaborate effort was extended to supply similar homes, provisions, and gifts. Others treated their wives differently according to each woman's unique personality and disposition. The respondents believed that this was a wise technique. This information confirms the descriptions of Kephart (1976) and Hulett (1943) who also noted that husbands were encouraged to show no favoritism towards any wife. In contrast, a few respondents told of the partiality they had noticed. They reasoned that these inequalities were related to which wife was raising young children, which wife was father's first or true love, and which wife was more demanding or independent.

The members of the sample perceived the association between their mother and aunts as basically harmonious. There were, however, several versions or interpretations of why this harmony prevailed. First, the women had compatible personalities or similar interests so enjoyed one another's company. Second, the women were too busy with their daily tasks and did not interact frequently. As one respondent described it, "They ran their own little unit. The children ran back and forth, but she lived in her home and mother lived in her home." Third, if conflicts did arise, the women did not pursue or discuss them. "On the surface, they were fine, but you could feel the conflict," said another respondent. Finally, there were two cases of the wives resenting each other.

Contrasts in Children

Three questions in the interview focused on the children in each family and perceived differences. In reference to work schedules, most
male and female respondents believed that they had the same proportion of work. Many were unaware of the other family's work routine. The principle reason for any difference in work habits was age disparity; the tasks that young, less capable children were required to perform were unlike those that older, more responsible children were required to do. Regarding the rules and punishments in the families, most respondents recalled that the treatment was consistent. Any variations were related to age or number of children in the family. To clarify this idea, one male reported the circumstances like this, "I think the other family was harder for father to discipline, not because of the children as such, but because there were so many more of them with a greater variety of problems."

**Family Pride Scale**

The members of the sample completed a Family Pride scale (Davis, 1981). All of the respondents, regardless of the gender, age, and other variables, stated that they had a high level of family pride.

**Circumplex-type Model**

The circumplex-type model in Table 8 illustrates the complexity of childhood in plural marriage households. The model provides a visual summary of the vast array of influential variables and the reciprocity of these variables as presented in this chapter.
Table 8
Circumplex-type Model of Children in Plural-Marriage Households

Relationship
with Parents

-attitudes on childhood status
-constancy of attitudes
marriage child status
interaction with father
interaction with father's wives
perception of father's wives

Father's Other Families

-geography/proximity
-intimacy/constancy of sentiment
-housing
-treatment by associates
-consequences of polygamy
-understanding polygamy

Characteristics
of Life at
Turn-of-Century

Childhood in
Plural Marriage Families

-interaction with Mother
-recreation
-religious disposition
-discipline

Relationship
with Siblings

-conflict
-work patterns
-sharing patterns
-regard for siblings
-health/sickness
-daily activities
-celebrations
Summary of Findings

Life Style

1. Regarding residential arrangements, there was a quality of evolution. The consequence was that older and younger siblings often grew up in different houses.

2. No "typical polygamous" house or organization was established. There were several variations resulting from numerous variables.

3. Fathers were absent from the homestead for three main reasons: affiliation with multiple families, work obligations, and Church responsibilities.

4. In addition to limitless housework and familial duties, mothers were actively involved in church, in leadership and instructional positions.

5. Because of the high mortality and severe illness, children growing up in this time period were exposed to sibling death, often multiple deaths in one family.

6. The respondents did not perceive a direct relationship between religious experiences and being in a polygamous family.

7. Children did not perceive the circumstances of a plural marriage system as unusual or deserving of analysis. They viewed it as the norm and as a calling from their church leaders, and therefore, God.

Childhood

1. The majority of the sample did not experience differential treatment in their childhood because of their family
2. Discipline strategies were modified in some polygamous families. Some aunts participated in rule making and punishments. The age span between children in each family sometimes resulted in older siblings managing younger siblings in different families.

3. Plural marriages were not, for the most part, related to children feeling different from their peers in monogamous families.

4. Respondents' attitudes about their polygamous families remained constant throughout life for the most part. For those whose attitudes were inconsistent, the modification occurred in adolescence.

5. Many respondents stated that there were advantages, not disadvantages, because of the plural marriages, or that they could not perceive any positive or negative effects.

6. Children in polygamy in general did not interpret their childhood as stressful. For those who did, the unfavorable sentiments were developed in adolescence. On the other hand, most respondents did not perceive their background as being pleasant. For those who did, they favored early childhood.

Relationship With Parents

1. The relationship with one's parents in polygamy should be viewed as a continuum of wide diversity, with several influential variables and striking contrasts.

2. Mother was in general the favored parent; she was available and
her children were concerned for her welfare. She seemed to be the parent who felt the burdens of polygamy, whereas the father's main handicap was that he was busy.

3. Relationships between children and their mothers were generally more consistent; relationships with fathers varied through the life span.

4. Comparing themselves to monogamous families and time spent with parents, respondents stated that they: a) spent the same amount; b) spent more; c) could not make comparisons.

**Relationship with Siblings**

1. The majority of the sample shared a bedroom and bed with at least one sibling.

2. The majority of the sample shared their belongings with their siblings. Most families had communal play things and book collections for the children. Unique to polygamy was exchanging clothing between families.

3. There was a minimum of work schedules. Brothers and sisters all contributed and shared the work. Most believed that they had equal proportions of work.

4. Older boys in a family assumed responsibility when father was not home. They often did this whether or not he was present.

5. In general there was a great deal of admiration between siblings.

6. The relationship between siblings was closer and more constant than that with half siblings.
Relationship with Father's Other Families

1. No "typically polygamous" residential arrangement was established. Instead, there were numerous variations that could be illustrated by a continuum ranging from living in the same house to in different states.
   a) This influenced the extent of interaction between families which varied from constant to once a year.
   b) Proximity of families affected the degree of intimacy with siblings, which ranged from "as close as siblings" to "scarcely acquainted."

2. The sentiments of affection and bonding between siblings from different families in polygamy were inconsistent through the life span. The affection intensified or was initiated in adulthood.

3. Most respondents believed that the treatment and distribution of resources between families was equitable.

4. Interaction with and fondness for aunts was diverse as seen on a continuum showing love and security to discomfort and hate.

5. Most of the respondents could not recall discovering that their family was polygamous, and therefore nonconventional.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Turn-of-the-century Mormon polygamy is a famous and infamous phenomenon that has long been a focus for much attention. Notwithstanding the interest, studies on this subject are negligent in their empirical quality and have virtually ignored the potential impact of this family system on children. Many of the previous investigations have concentrated primarily on dyadic relations and the effects on the spousal participants. Consequently, because research on family life in plural marriages is sparse and limited, it was critical that additional work be completed while children from such families were still available for study.

The problem for this research had three components. First, and most important, it was crucial to gain more understanding of a unique alternate family form that flourished to a degree in the midst of persecution and regional stress. Second, focusing on the children of plural marriages of that period was central to a more complete understanding of marriage and family. The third component had to do with the pragmatic reality of interviewing some of the few remaining elderly offspring of plural marriages.

The aim of this research, therefore, was to obtain and enhance understanding of the nature of childhood in Mormon polygamous families at the turn of the century. This task was achieved by conducting semi-structured interviews with a sample of elderly individuals who grew up in polygamous families during the late Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century.
The sample consisted of forty respondents, twenty-four females and sixteen males, all residing in Cache, Utah, and Salt Lake counties of Utah. They were located via three primary sources. First, ecclesiastical leaders were requested to identify people in their congregations who would qualify as participants in this research. Second, participants from previous research were relocated. Third, and most effective, the snow-ball sampling method was used, taking advantage not only of significant individuals in the community but also of the respondent's familiarity with their cohort.

The interviews consisted of survey type questions to acquire demographic information such as age, sex, number position of mother, residential arrangement, number of wives, and number of children. They also included open-ended questions dealing with respondent-sibling interactions, respondent-parent interaction, and respondent-father's other families interaction. These dimensions made the interviews sufficiently in depth to be of case study type. Finally, the Family Pride scale (Davis, 1981) was administered.

The data gathered in the sessions were tape recorded, except for a small number of respondents who had major objections. The data were then transcribed via a typewriter, and a content analysis was completed to discover general trends and similarities as well as dissimilarities in responses.

Nature of Sample

Findings in this investigation were undoubtedly influenced not only by countless variables in polygamous family life but also by the very nature—the unique and individual characteristics—of the sample.
Individual Differences

The first quality of the sample that attracts attention is its heterogeneity. One may be inclined to conclude that the participants in the study had little to nothing in common save the fact that their fathers had multiple wives. Noting all of the dissimilarities would entail providing a case study of each respondent and obviously is not feasible. Instead, the following profile briefly illustrates the vast assortment of respondents.

a) Substantial age range: there is nearly fifty years between the oldest and youngest respondent.

b) Residential history: respondents lived in the southern states or Mormon colonies in Mexico or in the Rocky Mountain states. Moreover, those living in Mexico seemed more inclined to move: they moved from Mexico to Arizona or Texas, then to Utah. Those living in Utah, especially northern Utah, tended to remain in the area, occasionally the same house.

c) Regional/economic background: Those respondents who grew up in a city such as Salt Lake City and whose family's had more resources were exposed to a more urban lifestyle and had more commercial resources available than those who resided in very rural conditions.

d) Educational background: Respondents had a variety of levels of education, ranging from those who were not graduated from high school to those who were university professors. This was also reflected in the respondent's vocabulary and manner of speaking (sentence structure, fluency) and influenced their ability to express their ideas. For example, respondents had discrepant
interpretations of the terminology in the interview. Although the word "different" was chosen for the interview because of its neutral quality, implying neither a positive or negative direction, many respondents replied, "No, we didn't feel different, we perhaps felt a little better than the others."

However, those with considerable formal education were more analytical, and their views stood apart from respondents who were not practiced in appraisals.

e) Familial background: There were no "typical" family profiles: the variety of the respondents' perceptions readily created continuums of diverse answers. Every aspect from "time spent with your father" to the number of children "in your family" had vast differences.

f) Present attitudes: Enthusiasm about polygamy and the Mormon Church varied between respondents.

Repercussions in Methodology

The second characteristic of the sample that attracts attention is what seems initially to be their lack of insight. Answers of "I don't know," "I don't recall," "I never thought about it" were abundant. This type of reply reveals significant information about the nature of the sample and the effects it has on studying a sample such as this one. Individuals in this age range, especially the most elderly people, are not accustomed to or rehearsed in introspection or inspection (Young L., 1973). They were not in the habit of analyzing their lives, of evaluating their personal well-being or "actualization," or of comparing their activities to others' activities and considering options. One
reason for this quality may be that during their life time living conditions were such that people were occupied and preoccupied with surviving--with keeping their farms productive and their children alive.

Another idiosyncracy in this sample that affected their answers is somewhat related to physical qualities. Because of their age factor, many of them had very dim memories of their childhood. Indeed, it required many of them to recall incidents that occurred seventy to eighty years ago, and hence their declaration, "I can't remember!"

Related to the problem of recall is the notion of halo effect. Many people have a tendency to recall and describe situations from a positive point of view, to dismiss or discount the negative aspects and focus on favorable features. This may be particularly true when discussing one's childhood. Furthermore, this tendency may be magnified in a sample such as this who may believe that they should justify or amplify their experiences. The halo effect is illustrated by a comment shared by a female respondent (though somewhat facetiously), "'course people then just lived and didn't have all these psychological problems people do now." Finally, several of the respondents, especially those in northern Utah, had wearied from and become perturbed by researchers examining, and requesting them to examine, their lives. One female expressed her sentiments succinctly: "I hate these questions. I hate this whole interview because it reveals all my life! I couldn't help all of this stuff."

Considering the nature of the sample, both its unique members and its affects on methodology, the data gathered in this research is imbued with fascinating dimensions. On the one hand, with the multitude of variables involved, it should not be surprising to find an enormous
amount of disparity in responses. Contradictory reports as well as
descriptions found on various points on a continuum should not be
completely unexpected nor should they weaken the significance or
contribution of the data. On the other hand, with the multitude of
variables involved, it is surprising to find an enormous amount of
congruity in responses. In fact, many commonalities existed. It seems
that notwithstanding countless and various factors in their lives,
children who grew up in plural marriage families had parallel or similar
experiences. Polygamy not only had an impact on their lives, it had a
consistent impact on most individuals. To reiterate, although there
does not seem to be a "typical" child from polygamy or that polygamy had
overwhelmingly influential characteristics that determined a child's
future, there were familial traits that resulted in corresponding
experiences.

Family Pride Scale

Another instrument used in this research that was affected by the
nature of the sample was Davis' (1981) Likert scale of Family Pride.
Every respondent in the sample indicated that he or she had a high level
of pride in his or her family. One reason for this result became
evident through the interview and recording the manner in which
respondents approached the questions. Once again, the findings were
related to the unique attributes of the sample; namely, that they were
unaccustomed to self analysis and unacquainted with scientific
measures. Specifically, many respondents had difficulty understanding
the statements—-they found the sentence structures with double negatives
confusing—and they did not seem to recognize varying degrees of
"agreement" or "disagreement." On the other hand, not all respondents selected extremes of "agree completely" or "disagree completely" as a result of their naivete. Several males and females were familiar with Likert scales and how to use them because of their occupational background. For instance, several were school teachers and university professors. Notwithstanding their increased understanding of the concept, they also indicated that their level of family pride was high.

General Family Life

The members of the sample were not requested to share their opinions or recollections on the life style at the turn of the century. This request would undoubtedly have been too vague, obscure, and overwhelming for the sample to approach. Instead, they were asked to describe specific elements of their life style such as celebrations, housing arrangements, and a "typical day" for members of their families. These topics are definite and limited enough to allow the respondents to direct their thoughts. They are also effective for obtaining precise examples ended for this research.

The most prominent finding in this category is actually a confirmation of previous research regarding life in the era. Virtually all activities were home and family centered. Whether people lived in communities or in isolated farmsteads, the chief source of recreation, health care, and celebrations was the home. In addition to this, there is an implication that religious training was also by the parents at home for several respondents mentioned family and individual prayer, "family nights," and discussions on scriptural issues.

Notwithstanding their orientation to home life and maintenance,
mothers and father were not limited to domestic endeavors. This is the second interesting finding. The respondents noted three reasons for their father's absence from home; one of these was work. Fathers were gone all day laboring on the farm or in a business, or gone for days or weeks when their trade required extensive time or travel. This is not a surprising finding; fathers have historically been the primary bread winner and thus away from the homestead. On the other hand, mothers also had interests outside the home. Although their principle duties were focused in the home--housework, tending children, laundering, and producing needed essentials for the family, not all were home bound, physically or mentally; they also engaged in non-domestic pursuits. A large number of mothers offered services outside their homes for no payment, worked outside their homes for payment, or produced goods inside their homes for payment. Many were also involved in art, music, literature, and especially church positions.

The third and fourth findings are also consistent with previous research. Families were oriented to being self-sufficient and productive. Furthermore, family life for these respondents was influenced to a great extent by the Mormon Church. This caused parents, and especially fathers who were often in leadership positions, to be remarkably busy with their responsibilities. Respondents all agreed that they had religious experiences as children in their families, but a majority stated that they did not believe these experiences were related to the polygamous nature of their families.

The overall conclusion from the data gleaned from questions dealing with general family life is that the respondents did not perceive any direct relationship between plural marriage and their daily activities.
Repeatedly the respondents stated a condition of their routine or childhood, then added that it was not a result of plural marriages.

**Childhood**

Similar to the approach used in "family life," the respondents were requested to discuss specific elements of their childhood such as recreation, discipline, and association with peers.

Without doubt the most striking finding is related to the respondents' sentiments about polygamy and the consistency of these attitudes throughout the life span. Although there was a variety of opinions on whether or not being reared in a polygamous family was beneficial, stressful or pleasant, most respondents stated that they could not perceive any effects, positive or negative. Furthermore, a great number of them remarked that their sentiments were consistent all of their lives. On the other hand, for those who said that membership in a polygamous family was stressful, the disturbance originated during adolescence. Moreover, for those who noted that their attitudes had changed, the change also occurred during adolescence.

The second major finding is that the respondents did not experience differential treatment in their childhood because of their family structure. In addition to this, on the whole they did not consider themselves different from their peers because of their background.

Third, discipline strategies were unique in some cases because of polygamy. Aunts as well as older and younger half siblings all had an impact on rules and punishments. Father was perceived as the ultimate authority; this confirms previous research (Taylor, 1951; Cairncross, 1974; Hulett, 1943).
Finally, recreation was mainly home centered and home made. There was much outdoor frolicking and many Church sponsored activities. Recreation was influenced to an extent by such variables as gender, residential location (rural, non-rural) and region (Mexico, Rocky Mountain).

The general conclusion in this section is that on the whole the respondents did not perceive themselves as different from their peers because of polygamy and did not have consistent or overwhelming opinions on if or how they were affected by polygamy. Discipline is the sole area in which they noticed the other families' influence.

**Relationship with Parents**

Through this question in this section it was found that the relationship between the respondents and their mothers was generally more consistent, whereas relationships with father varied through the years. Mothers in general were the favored parent, preferred because of their more constant attention, more consistent interaction, or more visible burdens. The respondents were concerned for her welfare; they seem to perceive her as the parent who suffered the challenges of the life style. Father's primary handicap was that he was extremely busy. It seems that to an extent the respondents considered polygamy as a positive experience for their fathers, but as a negative experience for their mothers.

The types of activities engaged in with parents usually involved work. With father, it was laboring outside, with mother, it was helping her inside the home. This also varied by gender of respondent. Story telling and music were major components in interaction.
The relationship with one's parents can best be described on a continuum, with several variables affecting the circumstances, and both extremes of "very close" to "none" supported. Considering the amount of time spent with their parents, the respondents compared themselves to monogamous families. They shared a variety of answers, including that they spent the same amount of time, more time, or that they could not make comparisons. It is interesting to note that the "more" was not related to one parent. Some believed that they spent more time with their mothers while others stated that they spent more time with their fathers.

In sum, the relationship with a parent varied to a great extent, influenced by an assortment of variables.

**Relationship with Siblings**

Several items in this category focused on the structural-functional aspects of sibling interaction. The majority of the sample shared a bedroom as well as a bed with at least one same-sexed sibling, and they shared whatever possessions they had with their siblings. There were in general very positive sentiments regarding their siblings, as indicated by their admiration and reliance. The fondness and attachment between siblings was closer and more constant than that with half siblings.

Briefly, the respondents did not recall polygamy impacting the relationship or interaction patterns between them and their brothers and sisters. Once again, there were several comments addressing the idea that it was not polygamy but some other factor that was the determinant.
Relationship with Father's Other Families

One principle finding regarding the respondent's relationship with their father's other families is that a substantial diversity of circumstances existed, and that these variations can be depicted on a continuum. The geographic proximity, interaction patterns, and degree of intimacy for both half siblings and aunts were all related, and all resulted in varied experiences for the respondents.

Another significant discovery is that the intimacy between half siblings was often inconsistent, fluctuating through the life span. Moreover, it was common for half siblings to initiate or intensify their relationship in adulthood.

A third finding targets the treatment of siblings by their parents. The respondents explained that treatment and distribution of resources was equitable and that differences in treatment were related to age of children and differences in distribution to the disposition of the aunts.

The fourth finding, similar to findings in previous categories, is that the respondents did not perceive their parents' marriage structure as unusual or demanding their attention. They viewed it as both a normal existence and as part of their religious practices. This corresponds with the fact that very few of the respondents recalled a particular occasion in their childhood when they realized that their families were polygamous and that not all families had the same arrangement.
CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

"A lot of people would think that just because we were from a polygamous family maybe our friends would tease, but it was just understood and it was common. There were many polygamous families in Lewiston. We just grew up like ordinary children; we weren't freaks. We didn't give it a thought and our friends didn't give it a thought. It was just a normal life."

This report, offered by a female respondent, effectively epitomizes the attitudes of the members of the sample and illustrates the most prevalent finding in this research project. These individuals who grew up in turn-of-the-century Mormon polygamous families did not consider their family structure unusual or noteworthy. Those who did recognize dissimilar arrangements did not view any arrangement as deviant or worrisome. Closely related to this is the idea that this group of people seldom engaged in self analysis or introspection. This is related to the nature of the sample and their lack of practice in critiquing themselves and their life styles. Furthermore, the quote indicates that the respondents did not believe that being reared in polygamous families had substantial effects on their lives. There are several explanations, or rather dimensions of explanations, for these attitudes.

According to Foster (1982),

in the practice of polygamy, great stress was placed on unity and consensus, on the avoidance of public expressions of hostility. This emphasis may well account for the impressive degree of external order and social harmony... (p. 284).
In essence, Foster stated that polygamists were in many ways performers, putting on a show for society. The present investigator agrees, but hastens to add that these performances were not necessarily insincere or shams, but nevertheless they were performances just as each individual plays roles in the social system. However, polygamists were assuming atypical and novel roles and consequently often had to improvise and perform quite persuasively and impressively in order to be accepted. This notion is consistent with Young's (1954) statement that the "culture did not provide any standardized ways for handling conflict" (p. 209). Indeed, the culture did not provide standardized roles in general for polygamists and thus they were forced to create their own, if only through modifying their previous roles to accommodate new circumstances. According to Foster, there was an impression of "unity" and "harmony;" (p. 284) so evidently the polygamists were successful and convincing in their portrayals. Hansen (1969) would perhaps agree with the idea that polygamous Mormons were striving to be socially accepted. He argued that Mormons in general have tried to minimize their distinguishing characteristics in order to be tolerated if not accepted as conventional citizens. He stated that "Mormons have become eminently adept at imitating American middle-class values" (p. 102).

Furthermore, it is a truism that children live in their own subculture within a community. They are often not cognizant of, or concerned with, sociological or economic ramifications of their family's life style. This is particularly evident through the repeated comments from respondents, when discussing various elements of their families' activities, such as, "I don't recall" and "I never noticed."

Consequently, it could be said that, as their own subculture, children
in polygamous families constituted another audience for their parents. Some performances that children witnessed were directed towards them, whereas others perhaps were spill-overs from performances for the community. In addition to this, the parts that parents enacted varied as the ages of the children varied and as the broader social climate changed regarding polygamy.

A major component of a performance is creating a different impression of reality. This was employed to a great extent with children in polygamous families, especially in the early years of its practice. Both past literature and the respondents in this research verify this idea. Many children from polygamous families were unaware of their predicament because the parents did not wish to expose them to the anxiety of participating in a nonconventional lifestyle. Parents strove to shelter the children from the hostility among families and the stress from legal and social issues. The members of the sample recalled minimal differential treatment or negative reactions from their associates. Instead, in general they were either enthusiastically accepted or not regarded as unusual. This was undoubtedly a result not only of a perhaps less hostile social climate in later years of polygamy, but also of effective acting by the parents.

Another comment frequently shared by the respondents was that they believed their lives were normal and never directed much thought to their family structure. This again was probably to some extent a product of parental efforts to depict a favorable image and an image absent of any innuendoes of disorder or friction. For instance, when referring to their fathers' routines of interaction with each family, several respondents remarked that it was so "smooth and orderly" that
they did not notice. They continued that they recognized, especially as they matured, that their mothers suffered in the life style and that there was conflict between the adults, but the dissonance was kept quiet. These efforts by the parents to create a congenial, pleasant environment could serve as some explanation of the respondents' evaluations of high family pride in the Family Pride scale (Davis, 1981). At this point it is difficult to determine if the performance was directed to the Utah society, as Foster (1982) suggested, and to the children or if what the children perceived in their homes was just a carry over from outside performances. The notion does, however, reveal two additional elements in the program.

First, a number of respondents noted that it was during adolescence that their stress concerning polygamy occurred and when their positive feelings about their family structure were modified. On the other hand, it was during childhood that they enjoyed their life style. This reflects the rather egocentric nature of young childhood, when individuals practice less empathy, in contrast to the more sensitive, conscientious nature of adolescence when individuals are concerned with social interaction and behavior. It is easier to convince children through stories or excuses than it is teenagers.

Second, not only were mothers the favored parent for most of the sample, they were also the parent considered most disadvantaged or burdened because of the plural marriages. Fathers were handicapped because of their hectic, busy schedules. This idea is obviously consistent with the concept of mothers playing the expressive role and fathers filling the instrumental role (Parsons and Bales, 1955). Moreover, in regard to performing for their children, perhaps fathers
were able to maintain the appearance of psychological and social harmony and peace because they were away from the homestead for often a substantial amount of time and they could "keep up the act" for the periods of time that they were home. The "interaction with father," "relationship with father," "extent of fathers' absence," and "type of interaction" all varied in the reports of the respondents, and all contributed to the effectiveness of his performance.

On the other hand, mothers served as a more constant, home based actor. It would undoubtedly be challenging to maintain the mode, the example of satisfaction and fulfillment in the home which had a more relaxed setting and was the center of family activity. Several respondents stated that during their adolescence they began to notice how their mothers smiled and continued working, although it was evident that the mothers were distressed. This concept is consistent with Goffman's (1959) ideas of performances in front and backstage settings.

Another prevalent response from the sample was the attitude that the characteristics of their lives were not related to polygamy. They believed that other factors were more influential. They did not understand that it was polygamy and the concomitant need for performance that had countless repercussions in their lives.

One example was church involvement, which had two dimensions of acting. On a structural level, both past literature and data gathered from this research indicate that involvement in polygamy and involvement in a leadership capacity in the Church were positively related. There were several accounts shared by the respondents demonstrating the connection. Specifically, the leaders of the Church organization wished to assign the fathers to leadership positions, but insisted that the
fathers were polygamists. Apparently it was assumed that the fathers could perform their roles more efficiently if they had plural wives. For example, bishops and their families are often perceived as examples and models for the congregation, so it would be worthwhile and logical to require them to accept and obey all obligations of the Church. This concept, of course, does not diminish other contributing factors in the selection or efficiency of the fathers as bishops.

On a functional level, the process occurred both outside and inside of the home. Considering the effect on behavior outside of the home, a few respondents remarked that being "the bishop's son or daughter" entailed a responsibility and burden. They were frequently reminded that portraying the proper example was essential since they were the bishop's children and people were observing them. Of course, training and rehearsing to be proper examples was required, and these took place inside the home through prayer, family meetings, and religious discussions, as well as outside the home through committed attendance at Church meetings.

Third, the performance process took place on a psychological level. The participants strived to convince themselves emotionally that it was another facet of obedience and devotion to church obligations. According to Richards, as quoted in the Bancroft manuscripts,

They (the Latter-day Saints) considered it wholly as a religious duty and schooled themselves to bear its discomforts...it was a matter of pride to make everyone believe they lived happily and to persuade themselves and others that it was not a trial (Ellsworth, 1954, p. 210).

Closely related is the fact that several respondents stated that their mothers taught them that polygamy was both a normal and honorable duty for stalwart church members. The implication here is that perhaps the
mothers and children used this rationale as a pacifier for their hardships and a justifier for their activities. For instance, these female respondents explained that:

"I think that my mother gave us the attitude that it was just fine and it was great, and as it should be. But we didn't go around shouting it (our involvement in polygamy) from the roof-tops. We all knew that it (the marriage) was done by proper authority during the proper time period."

"Mother had such a strong testimony, that's why she entered into it (polygamy). I used to be a little ashamed of it. My mother always used to say, 'If you can't say any good about it, just don't say anything.' I didn't know anything for it, since I grew up in it, and I wasn't permitted to say anything against it, so I kept quiet a lot."

Many of the elements such as polygamist bishops and attendance at Church were related to creating a positive picture for society and for the children. However, the notions of acting like an example and learning the part thoroughly that was required for the children were aspects of the performance or expected behavior. Hence, the children were simultaneously audience and actors, and in transition from audience to actors. This may be why children perceived their polygamous family background as normal and unrelated to religious experiences. They undoubtedly, especially at a young age, did not notice the connection between the elements of family prayer, example, bishop, and polygamy.
A flow chart demonstrates this concept effectively.

![Flow Chart]

Figure 1. Flow chart of performance process.

Another example of the sample not perceiving a relationship between polygamy and their circumstances was daily family activities. A frequent comment stated that, "such and such happened, but it had nothing to do with polygamy." The respondents believed that their families' routines or circumstances were products of the era, or the living conditions and society of the time. Indeed they were; in many ways the nuclear family style prevailed, and the general characteristics of the Utah society (developing and diverse environment, survival orientation, church orientation) were determinants. However, there were variations and intensifications in their families related to their involvement in polygamy. For instance, one specific consequence was that polygamous families were to an extent single parent families, and yet these sub units were tethered to each other by a mutual father. Furthermore, perhaps the concept of performing for society pertains here, too.

The respondents provided effective examples of the association between being a member of a polygamous family and striving to portray a positive image. Regarding disciplinary aspects in their families, it was mentioned that polygamous fathers wanted to keep their children busy and carefully managed in order to keep them from mischief. Several male
respondents noted that they and their brothers had the reputation for generous assistance in the community. In Utah Mormon culture, families were expected to support themselves as well as assist others. It was also customary for individuals to willingly forego their own personal interests for the benefit of the community (Ellsworth, 1972). The reports from the respondents are consistent with this concept and indicate that perhaps polygamous families were more inclined to be service oriented and to benefit the community. Children were encouraged to perform well in school, help the neighbors, and behave admirably in order to be socially accepted, not only as examples, but also to limit potential criticisms. The interest in service to others is illustrated by the comments by the respondents regarding their relationships with their half-siblings. They repeatedly stated that the motivation for interaction, especially interaction during adolescence and adulthood, was working together or helping each other. This practice may have been promoted by the parents because of the idea that an effective way to increase affection towards someone is to serve that individual. To reiterate, the children from polygamous families perhaps assisted each other because of the work orientation of the society and church, because it would modify hostilities, and because of the need to convince their audience that the families were indeed congenial. Children were performers, and yet they were socialized as such from birth so interpreted it as natural. Considering parental roles, numerous respondents stated that their mothers, and especially their fathers in leadership positions, were actively involved in helping the community. Polygamists were committed to community involvement because of societal expectations of everyone, leadership positions and accompanying
responsibilities, and to foster their acceptance by society.

If one were to review the sequence of impact of polygamy on the people regarding cognitive awareness, there may be three major components. First are the marital dyads who not only must modify their interpersonal behavior but also fulfill an acceptable performance for society. Second are the nonparticipants who are witnessing the polygamists portray their nonconventional life style. The last affected are the children who grow up in these households. On the one hand, they are a secondary audience, but easier to convince because of their egocentrism and the nature of their subculture. On the other hand, they are also actors, but are socialized as such so do not acknowledge their roles and believe it is a customary element of life.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Ethical Aspects

The design and purpose of this research was such that any ethical issues were either minimal or nonexistent. There was no manipulation of variables or experimental treatment of the respondents. The respondents were merely requested to discuss recollections of their childhood and allow the responses to be recorded on the tape recorder. Because the session was in the home of the respondents and the interview was semi-structured, the atmosphere was comfortable and the respondents were encouraged but not pressured to provide specific answers. Furthermore, the respondents were assured that their answers and information would be completely confidential.
Appendix B

Instruments

Family Pride Scale

(+) 1. We are a pretty competent group of people in my family.
(-) 2. At times I wish I were part of a different family.
(-) 3. All things considered, there is much that needs to be improved in my family, since we are not doing very well now.
(+) 4. Each member of my family has something to be proud of.
(-) 5. Sometimes I feel that my family talks too much about how bad we all are.
(-) 6. When I think of my family, I sometimes feel they are a losing team.
(+ ) 7. I am fortunate to belong to my own particular family, instead of to another family.
(+ ) 8. People in my family usually do well (in most of the things that people do).
(-) 9. Sometimes I wish I could be prouder of my family.
(+ ) 10. On the whole, I am satisfied with my family.

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Questionnaire

Sex ______

First of all I'd like to know about you and your family's background. These questions are basically about you.

What year were you born in?

Where were you born?
At home or in town somewhere?
Do you know if there was a midwife or doctor to help?

Do you have any brothers and sisters?
   a. How many girls did your mother have?
      How many of them were older and younger than you?
   b. How many boys did she have?
      How many of them were older and younger than you.

Did you grow up with all these brothers and sisters or did some of them die during childhood?

Can you tell me the towns you lived in until you were twenty years old?

The rest of the questions are about your family.

How old were your father and mother when they got married?

How old were your parents when you were born?

How many wives did your father have besides your mother?

Was your mother your father's first wife? Second? Third?

How many children did each wife have?

Do you know the ages of your father and his other wives when they got married?

Where were your mother and father married? (Church, Endowment House, Temple?)

How much schooling did your parents have? Father____ Mother____

What type of work did your father do?

Did your mother work outside her house or for pay? (Did she do cleaning, washing, tending children for other people.)

How many homes did your father support? In other words, supply food, money, etc.

Tell me about the house you grew up in.
Was the house that you lived in very close to the houses of your father's other families?
   a. Did you spend much time with these other families? Explain.
   b. How many older brothers and sisters in these families were living close by? Tell me about them.

Did you see the houses of your father's other families? Describe them.

Now I'd like you to think back to your childhood, to your neighborhood, and your family.

Tell me about a typical day or week in the life of your father, mother, "aunt", you, brothers, sisters.

What did children do for recreation when you were growing up?

Tell me about some of your main fears as a child. Do you believe that your fears were similar to other children? Explain.

Do you think growing up in a polygamous family was different for boys than it was for girls? How?

Tell me about the health and sickness in your family. Was there more or less sickness or health in polygamous families? How did your family deal with sickness? What happened if your father was not at home when a child got sick or hurt?

Did your family celebrate holidays and birthdays? How?
Did all the families get together or have separate parties? What did your father do?

Did you feel that you had more or less work to do in your family than the children you knew in families who were not polygamous?

Did you feel you had more or less work to do than your brothers and sisters or was it rather even? What about the boys and girls in the other families?

How did you and your brothers and sisters share the work around the house and grounds?

As you were growing up do you recall feeling like your family was especially different because it was polygamous? Explain

How do you think your neighbors and the townspeople felt about your family being polygamous? What about non-Mormons?

Did you ever have any special religious or spiritual feelings about being a child in a plural marriage situation? Explain.

In what ways do you believe you were better off as a child because of your type of family? In what ways do you believe you were worse off because of it?
Tell me about the first time you understood that your family was polygamous and that not all families were? (Age, why, when?) How did you feel right after you found out?

At what age was it most stressful to be a child in a plural marriage family? At what age was it most beneficial to be in one?

Did your feelings about your situation change throughout the years or did they stay the same?

What about school and church—were you teased, envied? Tell me how people treated you.

How active or busy was your family in church? How involved were they in community projects?

Now I'd like you to think about your family and especially how you got along with your mother and father.

Do you recall spending very much time with your mother—having long conversations, sharing secrets and your feelings with each other?

What about the time spent with your father? What types of things did you do with him?

Did your father spend a lot of time with you playing games, telling stories, or kissing you goodnight?

What about the time your mother spent doing these types of things.

Do you think children in non-polygamous families spent more or less time with their parents?

Did you ever go to social activities with your mother because your father was not there to go with her? Do you think this happened more or less in your family than in families who did not have plural marriages?

When you were a child, did it seem that your father was gone from home a lot of the time?

a. What was it like to have him gone so much?
   b. Did you know where he was and why?

Who made the rules in your family?

Who did the punishing?

Did your father's other families have the same rules?

Were the children punished the same in each family?

Do you think the ways and reasons that your families were punished were different than those families who were not polygamous?
Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your parents or your family life because of the plural marriages?

We have been talking about your relationship with your mother and father. Now I'd like you to think about your brothers and sisters.

When you were growing up, how much did you look at your own older brothers and sisters to learn how to act in certain situations?

Did you ask your older brothers for advice when your father was not at home?

Do you think that you relied on your older brothers and sisters for information more or less than children in non-polygamous families?

Do you remember fighting or quarreling with your brothers and sisters very much?

When you did disagree, were there certain children who always chose sides; that is, would the children form separate groups against each other?

When the children argued, what did the parents do? Did the mothers treat the children differently? What did your father do? Do you think this was different in non-polygamous families?

Did your mother and father disagree very often? When they did, what did the children do? Did they usually support or agree with the mother or take sides with the father?

What was the bedroom arrangement with you and your brothers and sisters? What did you share? What did you not share?

How was this different from children from families who were not polygamous? Did you have more or less to share? Explain.

How involved were you in the lives of your half-brothers and sisters? Were you good friends or merely acquainted?

Did it seem like there was a great many children around because of your polygamous family?

a. What was it like to have so many children around?

How did you feel around these children? Explain. Were you comfortable or competitive?

How do you feel that you were treated compared to how your brothers and sisters were treated?

When your father was not at home, did your older brothers do some of the work or chores that he usually did?

Tell me about your relationship with your brothers and sisters throughout the years. Who have you been the closest to? Why?
Now let's talk about the wives and families that your father had.

Do you remember understanding the reasons that your father had more than one wife? How did you feel about it?

Did you ever meet his wives?
   a. How did you feel around them?

How did your mother get along with the other wives and families?

Did your father act any differently toward his wives? Do you think any were favored?

Did the various wives of your father treat you differently than their own children?

Did you treat your father's wives like second mothers or "Aunts" or like a lady-friend of your parents or something else? Did you need to be polite and mind your manners?