

Polygamy and Mormon Church Leaders 11
William Clayton
July 17, 1814 – December 4, 1879

If it hadn't been for the tireless work of [William Clayton](#) it's hard to say how much of LDS history we'd know about today. When Joseph Smith asked him to be his private secretary in February 1842, Clayton secured himself a place in Mormon history.

William was born in Penwortham, England in 1814 and was married to Ruth Moon when he became a reluctant listener of the Mormon gospel. Even with his wife being a recent convert, he had to be wooed a little longer than Ruth before he'd accept this gospel that was being preached by none other than Heber C. Kimball. Finally he succumbed and "was ordained a Priest December 25, 1837, and a High Priest, April 1, 1838, at which time he was appointed with Willard Richards, Counselor to Joseph Fielding who presided over the Church in Europe." [Heritage Gateways, Historical Pioneer Biographies](#)

In late 1840 he was settling into his new country and hobnobbing with no less than the leaders of the new Mormon Church. By the time he'd become Smith's personal secretary he was also the trusted treasurer for Nauvoo as well as Smith's keeper of secrets.



Clayton began multiplying wives to himself not long after recording the famous revelation of Smith's in D&C 132. In all he had ten wives who bore him forty-seven kids with five of those marriages being performed in Utah. While the Church gives the official number of 47 kids it also lists the names of all his children and the total number of names adds up to 54. So they're good at listing names, but not so much in counting...








While camping out with the other Mormons in Winter Quarters (Nebraska) he penned the beloved LDS hymn "Come, Come Ye Saints" and afterwards wrote "The Resurrection Day" as well.

After arriving in Utah he became the auditor for the Utah Territory, secretary for the ZCMI, and auditor for Deseret Telegraph Company. He's most well known for compiling and meticulously keeping the diaries and history of Joseph Smith.

His first plural wife was his sister-in-law Margaret Moon (Ruth's sister) and thereafter the majority of his wives were teenage girls. By that time he was in his 30's and even in his 50's.

While the Church may have a love-hate attitude towards him for keeping Smith's books, it seems their concern is a bit misdirected. They should be more concerned about his bedroom behavior than his record keeping talents.

		Wife/ Age @ marriage (Clayton's age)	Marriage Date	Kids	Other Info	Wife's Marital Status
1		<u>Ruth Moon</u> – 19 (22)	10/9/1836	14	Sister of Margaret	Single

2		<u>Margaret Moon</u> - 23 (29)	4/27/1843	2	Sister of Ruth	Single
3		<u>Alice Hardman</u> - 28 (30)	9/13/1844	4	Sister of Jane	Single
4		<u>Jane Hardman</u> - 39 (30)	11/20/1844	0	Sister of Alice. Also married to Thomas Richardson & <u>Wm Bradford Brown</u> . Had 3 kids w/ Brown - all born in 1830's. She died in 1868.	???
5		<u>Diantha Farr</u> - 16 (30)	1/9/1845	3	<u>Diantha</u> died in SLC in 1850.	Single
6		<u>Augusta Braddock</u> - 16 (36)	10/5/1850	8	<u>Died in Oakland, CA 1923</u>	Single
7		<u>Sarah Ann Walters</u> - 18 (42)	11/30/1856	11	<u>Died in SLC 1915</u>	Single
8		<u>Maria Louisa Lyman</u> - 17 (52)	10/3/1856	1	Married <u>John Smith Stredder, Sr</u> 6/6/1873 - they Had 2 girls	Single
9		<u>Elizabeth Ainsworth</u> - 45 (55)	12/19/1869	0	Died in SLC 9/1877	???
10		<u>Anna Elizabeth Higgs</u> - 17 (56)	12/28/1870	11	2 sources giving conflicting info. <u>Find-a-grave</u> & ancestry.com. She was also married to <u>Michael Jensen</u> . Ancestry.com says she died in Mayfield, Utah 1946	Single