

Parley Parker Pratt
April 12, 1807 – May 13, 1857

A Book of Mormons, pg 221; “At the time Belinda accompanied Pratt on a mission to New York, not even his wife, Mary Ann, was aware of the marriage. When Belinda gave birth to a son (1846), Mary Ann asked Belinda if the child were illegitimate. Told the truth, Mary Ann immediately severed her marital relationship with Pratt, though she did not divorce him until 1853, after coming to Utah.”

Sometimes referred to as “the Apostle Paul of Mormonism” in Mormon circles, Pratt served his church as a missionary in Great Britain from 1839-1841 promoting Mormonism and proselytizing mainly to the “Gentiles”. He was also one of the first apostles for Mormonism, being called to the position in 1835 after leaving the Reformed Baptists a few years earlier.

Somewhere along the line while visiting a Baptist deacon who owned a copy of the Book of Mormon, he became convinced of its truth he travelled to Palmyra to meet Joseph Smith, but finding he wasn't there sat and visited with his brother Hyrum. He was baptized on September 1, 1830 by Oliver Cowdery and subsequently introduced his own brother Orson to the faith in later that month.

In addition to converting his brother, Pratt was also instrumental in bringing several other well known Mormons into the fold. While visiting Sidney Rigdon after his baptism he shared the news with him and so Rigdon along with the 130 members of the congregation he pastored joined Mormonism. Afterwards Parley converted Frederick Williams, John and Lenora Taylor, Isaac Morley and Joseph Fielding with his sisters Mary and Mercy.

Pratt was a prolific writer – he authored and edited the LDS publication Millennial Star in addition to writing numerous books, hymns, poems and pamphlets declaring the new gospel Joseph Smith introduced to the world. He also didn't have any qualms about fulfilling all the commandments of the Mormon god.

In all Pratt had twelve wives, however, his last one cost him his very life.

While Pratt was serving a mission in California to help with the influx of people coming into the States, he went about preaching the Mormon gospel and converted Eleanor McComb McLean. This caused great problems in her marriage, right to the literal breaking point. While she fully embraced Mormonism hook, line and sinker, her husband Hector wasn't buying it – at all.

Convinced she'd flee to Utah with the kids, Hector sent their three children to live with her parents in New Orleans. She ended up moving to Utah and married Parley on November 14, 1855 and while there she received word Hector had moved the kids east. She eventually moved there as well, but only temporarily. One report stats that she lasted three months in New Orleans before she tricked her father into believing she'd give up Mormonism and then left for Houston with Parley Pratt and the kids in tow.

Hector pressed charges against Parley for assisting in the kidnapping of his kids, but evaded the charges until he was arrested in Oklahoma. At the time there were no laws against parents kidnapping their own children so charges were dropped. The judge did allow Pratt to leave without anyone knowing and some reports indicate he even supplied him with a horse, giving him a head start to get away.

As it turned out the ruse didn't work and Hector caught up with Parley near Alma, Arkansas. For every report or story you read there's a different account of how he killed Mr. Pratt. Everything from stabbing him to death to shooting him point blank in the neck or a combination thereof fills the pages of what transpired that fateful day. Whatever method McLean used to cause his demise took place on September 11, 1856.

If you read LDS reports on Pratt you'll find glowing stories of how he was shot in the back or stabbed in the back while serving a mission to the southern states. The story of him being arrested or running from a jilted husband wanting to exact revenge somehow doesn't make it into the annals of most LDS memory banks.

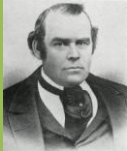





That date is significant because as the Mormon story goes, Eleanor high-tailed it back to Utah and reported to Brigham Young that she had become a widow in Arkansas. One year to the day a group of 120 Christians (the Baker-Fancher Party) were slaughtered in Utah at the command of Brigham Young as




they were traveling from Arkansas to California. The Mountain Meadows Massacre ended up being a black eye for the Mormon history books.

And because no two stories are ever the same when it comes to this type of story in Mormonism you'll also find a differing date for Mr. Pratt's death – May 13, 1857.

The significance of his death can't be overstated in the eyes of Mormonism. This man was as well beloved as the Smith brothers and his death is still viewed as martyrdom. In addition to all the conversions and writings he produced for the Church he was also instrumental in bringing about the Deseret alphabet, was a member of the Council of the Fifty and even led one of the handcart wagon trains for those who moved to Utah from Nauvoo.

A chart of his wives is provided below.

		Wife/Age @ marriage (Pratt's age)	Marriage date	Kids	Other info	Wife's marital status
1		Thankful Halsey – 30 (20)	9/9/1827	1	She died 3/25/1837. Geni.com lists 1 son, Parley Parker Pratt, Jr, born on the day she died.	single
2		Mary Ann Frost – 29 (30)	5/9/1837	4	Widowed in 1833 – had 1 daughter w/ Stearns. Son Nathan, daughter Susan died in childhood. Also see note below. Left Pratt in 1853.	widowed
3		Elizabeth Brotherton– 26 (36)	6/24/1843	1	Geni.com reports no kids, Nauvoo Polygamy reports 1. Pratt family genealogy reports 1 son adopted, name Abish. She died from effects of a fall breaking her thigh.	single
4		Mary Wood – 26 (37)	9/9/1844	4	Born in Scotland, died in SLC March 1898	single
5		Hannahette Snively– 32 (37)	11/2/1844	3	Married by Brigham Young. She died @ home in SLC in 1898.	single

6		Belinda Marden – 23 (37)	11/20/1844	6	Married Benjamin Abbott Hilton, 1839 in NH, divorced. Secretly married Pratt which caused wife #2 to leave him. Married Thomas Box 7/10/1858. (See notes below on Belinda)	divorced
7		Sarah Huston – 23 (38)	10/15/1845	4	After death of Pratt Sarah became the 3 rd wife of A. Lewis Taussig and had 3 kids w/ him.	single
8		Phoebe E. Soper – 22 (38)	10/15/1845	3	Married W.S. Holdaway after Pratt's death 9/11/1872. They had 7 kids.	single
9		Ann Agatha Walker – 23 (40)	4/28/1847	6	Married Joseph Harris Ridges 3 yrs after Pratt's death. Ridges then married Agatha Pratt (Ann & Parley's daughter) on 1/20/1866. Ann & Joseph Ridges had 3 kids. Left him when he married her daughter. She died in Ogden, UT 6/25/1908	single
10		Martha Monks – 22 (40)	4/28/1847	1	After the death of her only child Ether, she left Pratt & moved to California.	single
11		Keziah Downs – 41 (46)	12/27/1853	0	Died of TB 1/11/1877	Single
12		Eleanor Jane McComb McLean – 38 (48)	11/14/1855	0	Died in SLC 10/24/1874	married

Mary Ann Frost –

“CR 1838-44; DD Aug. 24, 1891. Also married Joseph Smith in 1843 and was sealed to him with Pratt listed as proxy husband on Feb. 6, 1846. LDS archives record Mary Ann Frost's four children in connection to both of her spouses, Pratt and Smith. Fawn Brodie suggests that the fourth child, Moroni Llewellyn Pratt, born Dec. 7, 1844, might have been Smith's son (Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* [New York: Knopf, 1945], 461).” – Nauvoo Geographical Report

Belinda Marden –

“[p.221]Orson was referring to Parley's relations with Belinda Marden, to whom he had been secretly sealed on November 20, 1844. At the time Belinda accompanied Pratt on a mission to New York, not even

his wife, Mary Ann, was aware of the marriage. When Belinda gave birth to a son (1846), Mary Ann asked Belinda if the child were illegitimate. Told the truth, Mary Ann immediately severed her marital relationship with Pratt, though she did not divorce him until 1853, after coming to Utah.” – A Book of Mormons”, Richard S. Van Wagoner & Steven C. Walker