

Polygamy and Mormon Church Leaders
Amasa Mason Lyman
March 30, 1813 – February 4, 1877

Bishop Edward Partridge – A History of the First Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;

“Note: Amasa Mason Lyman was excommunicated from the Church; his wives, Caroline Ely and Lydia were then sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Some years after Amasa’s death he was restored to his former status in the Church. On the 12th of January 1909, in the Salt Lake Temple, this was recorded:

“Francis Marion Lyman – Proxy for baptism of Amasa Mason Lyman – dead - relationship to dead – son. Baptizer: John Henry Smith; Confirmer: President Joseph F. Smith; Witnesses: John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund. Former blessings reconfirmed, President Joseph F. Smith, mouth, assisted by John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund. This included the restoration of his wives.”

Events that took place in Amasa’s family reflected the same problem many people faced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Death was always knocking at the door looking for its next victim before the invention of antibiotics and good sanitary and health habits kicked in.

His father Roswell Lyman died when Amasa was about 8 years old which prompted his mother, Martha Mason, to get remarried to Isaiah Emerson in May 1822. His father had left the family for unknown reasons six years prior to his death.

Amasa was raised by his maternal grandfather when his mother remarried and lived with him until he was eleven years old. At that time he was sent to live with another family member, Parley Mason, until he was eighteen. He had two younger siblings, a brother and sister. Records show that while living with Parley Mason he met Lyman Johnson and Orson Pratt who were out peddling Mormonism and in 1832 he was baptized into the Church.

While some records give more info than others it seems his conversion caused dissension in the family so he left and moved out “west” where he met up w/ Joseph Smith. In August of 1832 Smith called Lyman and Zerubbabel Snow to the office of elders and sent them out on their first mission.

Lyman was a pretty successful missionary with about 200 converts joining the ranks of Mormonism when he was ordained into the high priesthood at the end of 1833. In June 1835 he met and married his first wife Louisa Maria Tanner whose father was a member of the Church.

Amasa spent his life as a missionary and just like other devoted Mormons he moved to numerous cities whenever the beloved prophet ordered his followers to pack up and go. Of course they claim they had to move because of being persecuted, alas, facts from reputable history books tell a different story.

I personally can’t imagine that kind of life. My husband Kirk was in the Air Force for 23 years and in the first nine years of our marriage he received three PCS orders (Permanent Change of Station). While it was a lot of work it paled in comparison to what they were doing. We had moving companies come in and hand wrap every single thing we owned (including light bulbs) and when we arrived at our new residence a semi-truck full of our worldly belongings would be waiting to unpack the truck. It’s no wonder these women died from exhaustion!

Amasa Lyman was ordained to the apostleship in August 1842 and continued to move his family to different homes in and around Nauvoo until they eventually left for Utah. From 1835 to 1844 he moved his family at least five times.

In 1844 after having a heart to heart with Joseph Smith in which he strongly encouraged Amasa to enter into the “new and everlasting covenant” (D&C 132), he married Donitia Walker and Caroline Partridge, the first of three Partridge sisters he’d eventually marry.

In 1846 he married four more wives including one of those Partridge sisters (Eliza Maria) who was one of the many widows of Joseph Smith. Eventually in 1851 he married Lydia Partridge, his ninth wife and the third Partridge sister.

Out of the nine wives he married, five were teenagers.

After settling in Utah in 1848 Amasa was sent to California during the gold rush era and became the first mayor of San Bernardino in 1851.

In 1860 he was sent to Liverpool, England on a mission and in 1862 while traveling through Great Britain he delivered a sermon in Dundee, Scotland that got him into a boatload of trouble. He denied the atonement of Jesus. Yikes.

The speech was overlooked for years until 1867 when he was reprimanded for his false doctrine and stripped of his apostleship. He signed a document apologizing for the error in judgment, but that was short lived. Not long after that he was hauled in again for preaching the same type of thing and they finally axed him in 1870.

Lyman died in 1877 at his home in Fillmore, Utah at the age of 64.

True to form as we noted at the beginning of this article, the Church restored him to full fellowship in 1909. You'll notice in our resources listed below this happened to one of his grandkids as well.

We're already aware of how marrying multiple wives can cause problems of every kind and a quick glance over this family's history serves as a classic example.

After the daddy of all those Partridge girls died their mother married a man by the name of William Huntington, Jr. Mr. Huntington had his own set of daughters who married Joe Smith as well. So with a few of the Partridge girls marrying Smith and a few of the Huntington girls marrying Smith you can just imagine the menagerie of issues going on in the lives of these people; spiritually, emotionally, mentally and not to mention the inbreeding.

Their family tree reminds me of my own. I'm actually related to myself. My parents are cousins so part of my family tree resembles a telephone pole. Disturbing...

	Wife/Age @ marriage (Lyman's age)		Marriage date	Kids	Other info	Wife's marital status
1	Maria Louisa Tanner – 16 (22)		6/10/1835	8	Born 11/28/1818 NY Died 5/3/1906 UT Baptized by Orson	Single

Pratt in 1832.

According to
ancestorsfiles.
blogspot Maria's
name was actually

Louisa Maria

Tanner. The
confusion comes
from her being
called and known
by Maria.

She was the 9th
of 21 kids born
to John Tanner.

Remarkably, her
father was not a
polygamist although
he was LDS.

Earlylds.com lists
her name as Mariah
Loisa Tanner w/
4 kids.

Their son Francis
Marion Lyman &

grandson Richard R. Lyman were both apostles.

Journal of Mormon History reports

Richard was ex-communicated in 1944 for having an affair – 11 yrs later he was allowed to become a member again but temple endowments & privileges weren't restored until 1970, 7 yrs after his death.

Spencer W Kimball was his secretary when he was ex-communicated & in later years he (Kimball) authored Miracle of Forgiveness

				which is based on transgressions of Lyman.		
2	Dionitia Or Diontha Walker – 27 (30)		7/1843 or 1844	0	Born 3/10/1816 OH Died 7/11/1894 UT Geni.com gives details of marriage to Jeremiah Plumb, death of their son Hyrum @ 5 yrs in Nauvoo from smallpox. Jeremiah signed petition in 1840 for redress from US Congress when Mormons were kicked out of MO. Church records show her living	Div.

w/ her sister's

family from

1841-1845.

Census in 1850

shows Plumb

serving time for

horse thievery.

They were

obviously divorced

before 1845

when she married

Amasa.

She was a nurse

and moved to

UT in 1848.

From there moved

to San Bernardino,

CA to help Amasa

settle area when

given orders by the

Church to serve

there.

home.utah.edu tells

story of her sister
 named Eveline who
 married James H.
 Rollins who tried to
 get Amasa to come
 back to the church.
 Geni.com reports
 her marriage to
 Jeremiah Plumb
 by Brigham
 Young on the same
 day her sister
 Evaline married
 James Rollins.

3 Caroline
 Ely
 Partridge - 17
 (31)



9/6/
 1844

5

Born
 1/8/1827
 OH
 Died
 5/5/1908
 UT
 Findagrave reports
 she was Lyman's
 1st plural wife.

Single

Sister to wives

#4 & 9.

Divorced Lyman

when youngest

child was a year

old.

Elected as RS

president in 1874

in Oak Creek.

Geni.com reports

she married him

@ 24 years of age.

Earlylds & Nauvoo

Demographic Report

states her name as

Caroline Eliza not

Caroline Ely.

Earlylds.com doesn't

list any kids for her.

Her great-grandson

is James E Faust –

LDS apostle.

4

Eliza
Maria
Partridge
(Smith) – 25
(32)



1/13/
1846

5

Born

Widow

4/20/1820

OH

Died

3/2/1886

UT

Wife #28 & widow

of Joseph Smith.

Older sister of

wives #3 & 9.

After death

of her father Edward

she & sister Emily

were sent to live w/

Joseph and Emma

Smith.

While living there

as hired help

for Emma,

Smith married

both sisters in

1843.

She gave birth

to 1st child in
 a wagon while
 on the way to
 Winter's Quarters,
 NE. After a lengthy
 illness from that
 birth they settled
 into their new
 home & her son
 died in Dec 1846.
 She & the other
 wives stayed in
 Utah when Amasa
 took wife #2
 to San Bernardino
 to help settle
 that area.
 Eliza had five
 kids in all.

5

Pauline or
 Paulina
 Eliza
 Phelps - 18
 (32)



1/16/
 1846

7

Born
 3/20/1827
 IL
 Died
 10/11/1912
 UT

Single

Her mother died when she was a teen. Married Lyman at age 18. Lymanites.org & Geni.com reports that in the late 50's she studied under Dr. Shipps and became a skilled obstetrician and surgeon. Two of her kids died young. Helped bring over 500 babies into the world. She was known as Dr. Pliny. There are several historical markers of her around UT.

6

Priscilla
Rebecca
Turley - 16

(32)



1/17/
1846

6

Born
Single

6/1/1829

Ontario, Canada

Died

9/21/1904

CA

Born in Canada &

her parents were

early converts. She

married Lyman @

16 - went to SLC w/

Saints in 1848. After

settling in UT she &

the kids moved to

San Bernardino w/

Lyman.

Moved back to UT

in 1858 & had 4

more kids but 2

died early in infancy.

When her oldest son's

wife died she took in

the 3 kids & moved

back to CA.

She served as a

				midwife. Known by many as Mother Priscillie.	
7	<p>Caroline or Cornelia Eliza Leavitt - 21 (32)</p>		<p>1/13/ 1846</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Born 1/5/1825 OH Died 7/14/1864 UT Gave birth to 1st Mormon child in San Bernardino, CA. Because she died at such a young age her 2 youngest kids were raised by other wives of Lyman. Earlylds.com shows baptism for her in SL Temple in 1978 & sealing to parents in 1979.</p>	<p>Single</p>

8

Laura
Lucinda
Reed – 16

(32)



1/13/ 0
1846

Born
5/22/1829 or 1828
Single

OH
Died
11/22/1903
UT

Ancestry.com &

Nauvoo Polygamy

Report are 2 of the

very few resources

listing her as

Lyman's wife.

Findagrave reports

she had 15 kids,

Geni.com says 14.

Findagrave tells

story of her sitting

at feet of Joseph

Smith to play...

Marriage to Lyman

Short lived as she

married Thomas

Steed Dec. 1846 –

they moved to

Utah in 1850.

9

Lydia
Partridge - 22

(39)



2/7/

1853

4

Born
5/8/1830

OH

Died

1/16/1875

UT

Youngest sister of

Partridge girls.

She was one of
the sisters sealed
to Joseph Smith

after Lyman's ex-
communication.

One of the Partridge
sisters was Emily

Dow Young, wife

of Brigham Young

& Joseph Smith.

Single