

Brigham Henry (BH) Roberts
March 13, 1857 – September 27, 1933

Studies of the Book of Mormon, by B.H. Roberts, p. 251; “If from all that has gone before in Part 1, the view be taken that the Book of Mormon is merely of human origin... if it be assumed that he is the author of it, then it could be said there is much internal evidence in the book itself to sustain such a view.

“In the first place there is a certain lack of perspective in the things the book relates as history that points quite clearly to an underdeveloped mind as their origin. The narrative proceeds in characteristic disregard of conditions necessary to its reasonableness, as if it were a tale told by a child, with utter disregard for consistency.” – BH Roberts

If ever there was a picture of ambiguity, Brigham Henry (BH) Roberts was, and still is, the overachieving poster child of that definition.

BH was a prolific author, and arguably, the most beloved of all LDS Church historians. He painstakingly compiled the seven volume series, History of the Church, along with 23 other comprehensive works on Mormonism. He was also the thorn in the Church’s side when he wouldn’t stop practicing polygamy, but when threatened with being cut off, he finally acquiesced; sort of.

Roberts was a Brit, born to an admitted alcoholic, and an ever doting mother in 1857. His parents joined the Church shortly before his birth prompting a short reprieve of his father’s drinking habit. Unfortunately for the family, sobriety for his father was short lived. Not long after joining the Saints, Benjamin Roberts went back to drinking and subsequently left his family altogether.

Finding herself destitute, **Ann Reed Everington Roberts** left four of her six children with friends, and borrowed money through the Church’s Perpetual Emigration Fund to build a new life in America. After her arrival in 1862, the other children followed and began their trek west to meet up with their mother. Nine year old BH, and an older sister walked barefoot from Nebraska to Utah to meet up with their mother who’d already made it to ‘Zion’. One of Ann’s sons died on the plains along the way.

Over the next several years BH followed in his father’s footsteps, drinking himself from one paycheck to the next as a miner until a local bishop took him aside and provided him with a stern, if not prophetic, warning of his future.

Roberts took heed and soon learned how to read and write, and became an avid student with a ‘voracious appetite’ for anything that had to do with history. Eventually, he attended Deseret University (precursor for University of Utah), and graduated first in his class.

He married his first wife, Sarah Louisa Smith, in 1878 and had seven kids with her. By the time 1884 rolled around, he found the time and energy to marry Celia Dibble, with whom he had nine kids.

During these years Roberts landed a job with the Church, and was sent on multiple missions. While serving in Tennessee a mob murdered two missionaries, so Roberts decided to disguise himself as a ‘tramp’ to retrieve their bodies and transport them back to Utah. While back home in 1886, he married his second wife Celia, but it wasn’t long before the law came after him for unlawful cohabitation. He decided to leave his job as associate editor of the Salt Lake Herald, and on the night before he was to appear in court, Roberts fled the country to serve another mission in his old stomping grounds of England.

In England, the Church kept him busy as an editor for the LDS publication, Millennial Star. He returned to Salt Lake two years later (1888) to pick up where he left off, and became the editor for another Mormon publication, 'The Contributor'. In the meantime Celia had fled to Colorado which was serving as a safe haven of sorts for people evading the law in Utah.

Getting sick of being on the run, Roberts turned himself in to authorities in 1889 and served five months in the state pen. Upon his release, he moved to Colorado and wasted no time in marrying wife #3, Margaret Shipps, a single mother of two. Margaret was an obstetrician and as it turned out, Roberts spent more time with her than the other two wives he already had.

Be that as it may, records indicate while he spent less time with the others than he did with Margaret, he still managed to find time to father more kids with them after the Church published their final manifesto in 1904.

When he lost a bid to keep his seat in the Utah congress he became a bitter man, blaming his loss on other Utah Mormon democrats.

The governor of Utah appointed him as chaplain for the Utah National Guard when WW1 broke out, ignoring the age limit of 40. At the age of 60 Roberts was assigned to the 145th Field Artillery and arrived in France in September 1918. He saw no action during the remaining two months of service before the Armistice was signed in November 1918.

Roberts went above and beyond in his life's quest for the Mormon god, and was never shy of lambasting others for not obeying biblical principles. Ironically, he ignored the fact he was guilty of many things God had forbidden man from doing. While practicing polygamy, which was against God's law, and the US law as well, he had no problem evading arrest to pay for his nefarious deeds. Stranger still was his disregard for obeying the Church's edicts.

The 12th Article of Faith proclaims they're subject to the laws of the land, yet he broke the law by practicing polygamy, and broke it yet again by evading arrest.

The chart below contains vitals for all three wives. Unless noted otherwise, references were obtained from [Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy: A Preliminary Demographic Report by George D. Smith](#).

		Wife/Age @ marriage (Roberts' age)	Marriage Date	Kids	Other info	Wife's marital status
1		Sarah Louisa Smith – 23 (21)	1/1878	7-9	Born 6/10/1854 UT Died 5/17/1923 UT Married BH in his last year of school. Sarah was one of 8 kids born to William Reed & Emmeline Leavitt. Geneanet.org gives a variant death date for Sarah of 1946. Aside from this and findagrave.com, little to no info was found on Sarah other than a brief mention she was married to Roberts. The findagrave site for daughter Luna listed all nine of Sarah's kids, but Sarah's findagrave site only listed Luna.	Single

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Celia 10/2/
Ann 1884
Dibble – 19
(27)

9

Born
 8/3/1864
 UT
 Died
 3/21/1936
 UT

Single

Celia, like Sarah, has no distinguishing sites listing her personal accomplishments, talents, etc.

Brief mention of her marriage to Roberts is included in many sites, although no extraneous info outside of this is available w/out serious research.

Usgennet reports she had five sons & four daughters & went into hiding in CO to distract feds from catching on that Roberts was practicing polygamy.

3



Margaret 4/1/
Curtis 1900
Shipp – 50
(43)

0

Born
 12/17/1849
 MO
 Died
 3/13/1926
 NY

Div.

Margaret was either the first, or one of the first female doctors in Utah and practiced obstetrics.

She had 2 kids with her 1st husband, **Walter Shipp**s.

Apparently she
& Roberts got
along well together
& he spent
more time w/
her than the
other two wives.