

Polygamy and Mormon Church Leaders
Joseph Fielding
March 27, 1797 – December 19, 1863

A few short highlights of this man's life provides any student of Mormonism a clear understanding of the importance of this man even though he's not one of the LDS leaders who receives a lot of attention.

2nd president of the British Mission 1838-1840
Brother of Mary Fielding (2nd wife of Hyrum Smith)
Uncle of Joseph F. Smith, 6th prophet

Joseph Fielding was one of ten children born to parents in England who denounced the Church of England. In so doing the family walked the four mile journey to attend a Methodist church every week with many of their kids in tow. Remarkably as their children grew into adulthood many of them would all belong to different denominations of Christianity with the exception of Joseph and two of his sisters; Mary and Mercy.

In 1832 their son Joseph immigrated to Canada with his sister Mercy Rachel and began farming near Toronto; they were soon joined by another sister, Mary. It was there while complaining about their church, along with John and Lenora Taylor; they became known as the "dissenters" and soon thereafter were baptized into the Mormon Church in 1836 by Parley Pratt.

He moved himself and his family to Kirtland, Ohio in 1837 where his sister Mercy met and married Robert Blashel Thompson who was the associate editor of the Times and Seasons. In 1837 Mercy Fielding married widower Hyrum Smith, Joseph's older brother. She became the step-mother of six kids and later gave birth to her own set of children, one of which was Joseph F. Smith who became the 6th prophet of the Church.

Joseph F. Smith had a son named Joseph Fielding Smith who became the 10th prophet of the Church and another grandson Hyrum Mack Smith became an apostle in 1901. One of Joseph F. Smith's great grandsons today is none other than M. Russell Ballard.

To say the Church's early success was due in part by the diligent work of Joseph Fielding would be an understatement. After settling his sisters in Kirtland, he was called to serve in the mission field back in England. So off he went with Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde and four others.

While there he took full advantage of family ties and asked his brother James if he could preach the true and restored gospel to his congregation from his brother's pulpit. The Reverend Fielding obliged his brother's request.

In their second trip to his brother's church and looking for more converts, they again approached the Reverend James Fielding to seek his permission to preach from his pulpit. The request was denied and the night before they had intended to do so, James went to [Kimball](#) asking him to stay away.

The request fell on deaf ears and nine members of the Christian flock were baptized into Mormonism in July 1837, Heber Kimball later referred to him as an "object of pity"; most likely because James referred to his brother Joseph as a "sheep stealer".

Joseph left England with his wife Hannah Greenwood and their two children in September 1841 and headed back to the states. After arriving in Nauvoo, Illinois trouble began for the

young couple when Hannah realized the truth about Joseph Smith's teachings on spiritual wives. On December 9, 1843 Fielding married his second wife, Mary Ann Peake Greenhalgh according to the writings of Wilford Woodruff who recorded that William Wines Phelps, Levi Richards, Lot Smith and Cornelius P. Lott also received their endowments in the office over Joseph Smith's store.

Hannah had just given birth to their fourth child, Heber. Apparently it had become an issue in the marriage as Joseph acknowledged it in his [diary](#) sometime in 1843 -1844;

“I tell my wife I mean to hold on to the truth at any cost and the greatest cost would be to lose her, but her unbelief shall not stop us. I feel as though I can in spite of this bear her along. Our children are healthy and in every way promising, and we hope they will be in glory in a future day.”

In spite of her doubts she accepted the “principle” based on the entries made by Fielding. He acknowledged that on January 23, 1846 he and Mary Ann received endowments in the temple by Heber Kimball. Near the end of 1846 Fielding packed up his family and headed west. Not long afterwards the locals burned down the newly constructed temple and what was left standing was destroyed by a tornado.

Joseph lived in Mill Creek, Utah along with his wives and kids who all lived next door to his sister Mary.

The last time I wrote about a polygamous leader I mentioned it was the most confusing thing I had ever researched, now I have to say that again so in light of that I won't be using that phrase anymore!

Mr. Joseph Fielding had at least two wives.

According to [Earlylds.com](#) he had four; however, they only provide full information for two. They and [Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy](#) are the only two resources listing wives #3 and #4.

[FamilySearch](#) reports he had three wives. Two of those women have the same first and last names and the marriage date of the 2nd wife matches the marriage date of some reports for the 3rd wife.

A Mary Ann Bullock is listed in the 1850 Census as living with the Fielding family with a birth date of 1803. This would almost match the [FamilySearch](#) reports that list Mary Ann Fielding with a birth date of 1802 – no other viable information is provided for her.

In the book “[Audacious Women](#)”, Rebecca Bartholomew wrote two months after meeting his first wife Hannah, they tied the knot. Apparently she had “a tongue like a rattlesnake” and tricked Joseph into believing she was nearing the age of 30 when in fact she was only 19 years old; Joseph was 41. The book also mentions that Mary Ann Peake (wife #2) was married to Fielding “three days after” being sealed to Hannah in the Nauvoo temple which took place in 1846.

If those reports are correct then it means this was wife #3 because Woodruff wrote Fielding's 2nd marriage took place in 1843.

Whatever the truth is the fact remains they were practicing polygamy. How many women there were is up for grabs. The trouble in genealogy work can be profound with missing documents, incomplete registers and if the people involved choose not to tell the truth.

	Wife/Age @ marriage (Fielding's age)		Marriage date	Kids	Other info	Wife's marital status
1	Hannah Greenwood – 19 (41)		6/11/1838	7	<p>Born 9/1818 in England</p> <p>Died 9/1877 in Utah.</p> <p>Son Hyrum born & died in Winter's Quarter.</p> <p>According to Ancestry.com they had 7 children.</p>	Single
2	Mary Ann Peake Greenhalch Fielding – 44		1/23/1846 or 1843	3	<p>Born 10/1802 in England</p> <p>Died 1/1885</p>	???

	(49)				<p>Salt Lake City</p> <p>Married Fielding in Nauvoo, some reports list 1843. This is probably a true date as their 1st child was born 3/1846.</p> <p>Last sealing 8Feb1991.</p> <p>FamilySearch lists a marriage to Mr. Greenhalch abt 1823 in England.</p> <p>No further info available.</p>	
3	Mary Duff -				<p>Born</p> <p>1/1782</p>	???
4	Mary Farras -					???