Marriage is considered by many as an institution governed by the Church between one man and one woman, not one man and 2 to 20 women. Marriage and the concept of polygamy are not two concepts that are openly associated with each other in American societies. But the fact is that polygamy is not only practiced by groups that have separated from the Mormon Church but also by many non-Mormon groups in America, these groups also participate in the creations of plural families. Families members and non-polygamist individuals looking at this practice may view it as a sin but the polygamist and the individuals who openly accept and subscribe to the concept believes that they are living out God’s mandate for creation.

Core Concepts/Keywords:
polygamy, Mormon Church, Utah, polygyny, marital practices, plural marriage, plural families, Fundamentalist polygamy groups

Primary Source:

Citation:

Annotation:
Garza interviews Irene Spencer, a woman who was in a polygamist marriage to a much older man. She thought at the age of 16 that she was being a religious girl by marrying a polygamist man. After 25 years of being ignored and having 13 children, and she eventually was one of ten wives before she left with eight of her children. She wrote a book, "Shattered Dreams: My Life as a Polygamist’s wife", where she talks about her 25 years of marriage being a Polygamist’s wife. She talks about her journey through poverty, physical hardships, jealousy among her husband’s nine other wives and death threats from a rival polygamous group.

Print Reference Source:

Citation:

Annotation:
An encyclopedia of established religions that are considered to be cults. In this list of “cults”, there are such established religions as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Worldwide Church of God, Church of Scientology, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or Mormonism and the Polygamy-practicing groups that follow the Mormon Doctrine. This encyclopedia gives the history of Mormonism beginning with Smith an ending the two chapters with discussing the Fundamental Polygamy groups.

Electronic Reference Source:

Citation:

Annotation:
The encyclopedia entry defines the word and then explains the concept of the practice. It then goes on to give the reasons why this lifestyle may appeal to the people who participate in it, from a male’s perspective and a female perspective.
Web Sites:

Citation:

Annotation:
This website explains the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints formally known as the Mormon Church and their view on polygamy. They include discussions of the original prophet and his reason for polygamy. Also the website answers any questions or misconception about Mormons that follow the new Church and Fundamentalist who follow the old Church.

Citation:
Mormon Fundamentalism. Mormonfundamentalism.21 April 2008

Annotation:
This website is devoted to the understanding and history of the beginning of the Fundamental groups that branched off from the modern Church of Latter-day Saints and still practice polygamy. On this website there is a comprehensive diagram containing the names of all polygamous group prophets’ names, sect names and affiliate groups.

Books:

Citation:

Annotation:
This book is a case study of multiple Mormon and Christian polygamous families. The case studies include 20 families that have 1 male spouse and 2 or more female spouses in the same married family unit. It documents the different lifestyles, aspects, religious practice and beliefs of a person in the polygamous lifestyle. Altman and Ginat studies child rearing and martial relationships between the multiple spouses as well.

Citation:

Annotation:
This novel is a biography of sorts based on the life of the first wife of the Mormon’s first polygamist prophet Joseph Smith. It tells of her life and existence as “Sister Emma” the wife of the founding prophet of Mormons.

Citation:

Annotation:
This novel centers on Krakauer’s exploring human behavior when it comes to one’s religious beliefs, he does it by examines how far a human will go in the quest to everlasting life. He researches and discusses interviews and cases of polygamists who have committed criminal acts in order to fulfill their religious beliefs. The list of crimes include child abduction, child rape, child endangerment and murder, these crimes are usually committed in Mormon communities. He explores the Elizabeth Smart abduction case as well as murder from the late 1970’s to the current cases of 2004.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles:

Citation:
Oman, Nathan B. The story of a forgotten battle: Reviewing The Mormon Question: Polygamy and

Annotation:
Oman discusses the law aspect of the Mormon Church and Polygamy. While reviewing a document he pulls points from an argument that Mormonism is not a religion and Polygamy is not a legal practice under the Constitution. He highlights the original documents and shows the basis for both sides of the argument.

Citation:

Annotation:
Sullivan discusses how polygamy is used as an argument against same sex marriages. He talks about the paper being based on a Congress session where both sides debate the issue of polygamy. He further correlates the author’s stance of law makers being afraid of the option of if polygamy is accepted then so will same sex marriages.

Newspaper Article:

Citation:

Annotation:
Moon interviews author E. Keith Howick who is a Mormon who wrote a book about polygamy in the Mormon Church. He discusses the practice from the restored doctrine in circa 1830’s to the end of the practice in the Mormon religion in the 1890’s. This book explores the plural marriage from different aspects from the outcast sectors to the contradiction of the practice of polygamy still being in the Church’s doctrine.

Additional Sources:

Citation:

Annotation:
The author discusses the concept of polygamy and polyamory. She interviews a family that practices both polygamy and polyamory, while she ponders the question “what if” it were a legal and morally accepted practice among society how would it work. The group of couples explain why the polygamy and polyamory lifestyle is the one that works for them and why they choice to live it.

Citation:

Annotation:
Williams writes about a polygamist couple, The Firestones. They live a conventional life in everyway, but there is a Mormon husband and two sisters who are his wives. The author ponders on her parents’ multiple monogamous marriages, divorces, affairs and relationships and asks the question “Is Polygamy a better choice?” She then goes into the interview with the married unit and asks them why did they do it. The sisters explain their reasons out of needs of wanting to have children and needing help with existing children, it just seemed like a good fit for them. The author also comes to terms with the ideal that having multiple ex-stepmother, ex-girlfriends with half-siblings and her mother being the first ex-wife that it is in its’ own way a form of polygamy.

Citation:
Annotation:
This article written by White and White breaks down the complicated and entangled history of polygamy and the Mormon identity and church. Both gentlemen start the discussion at the time where the Church renames themselves the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Church and different sects of Mormons such as Fundamentalist Church of Latter-Day Saints that still practices polygamy. The article gives the reasons behind the early Mormon Church to discontinue the practice in order to assimilate into American culture, but still allowing the belief in the Church’s doctrine to this day. The fundamental groups are then discussed, where White and White recall abuse cases from the different fundamental groups out there now.

Citation:

Annotation:
This website is adapted from a series of books that break down thing for easier understanding. This website is just for Mormonism and polygamy in the Church’s history, it breaks down the practice and the reasons behind why the Church adapted it and then disallowed it, as well as breaks a few common myths about the practice and culture.