

BR: D5

Recall some of the ways that the Mormons were unique from other Americans. What were some of the things that led them all to not get along?

Utah Studies

Ch. 7 Settling the Great Basin

Ch. 7.3 Living in Utah

Leading the Saints

In the early years of Utah's settlements, the religious leaders were also the political leaders. People were divided into **wards** (a religious congregation) led by a **bishop**, and also **stakes** (a number of wards organized together, like a diocese) led by a **stake president**.

Ultimately the **prophet** (aka the **President** of the Church, who was Brigham Young at the time) was in charge of all LDS members. Land was given according to needs, as were other goods. A **Bishop's Storehouse** would house extra goods to help poorer members of the church.

Tasks and jobs were assigned to all, and no one was allowed to be idle. **Work ethic** was an important part of early Mormons' lives.



The first pioneers in Utah faced several challenges:

- They were in an unfamiliar environment. The land was fertile but very dry. Any trees or crops had to be planted and watered. In other places rain had watered the crops.
- They were **isolated** from the rest of the world, with no fast communication to the East.
- They were living on land inhabited by American Indians. Indians saw them as intruders. This caused problems for both groups.
- Every year thousands of new immigrants of different cultures and languages arrived with no money, homes, or jobs. Everyone had to work together to build a community.

What do you think?

- How hard would it be to provide everything you needed in an isolated community?
- What problems might occur?
- Could positive aspects balance out the negative?

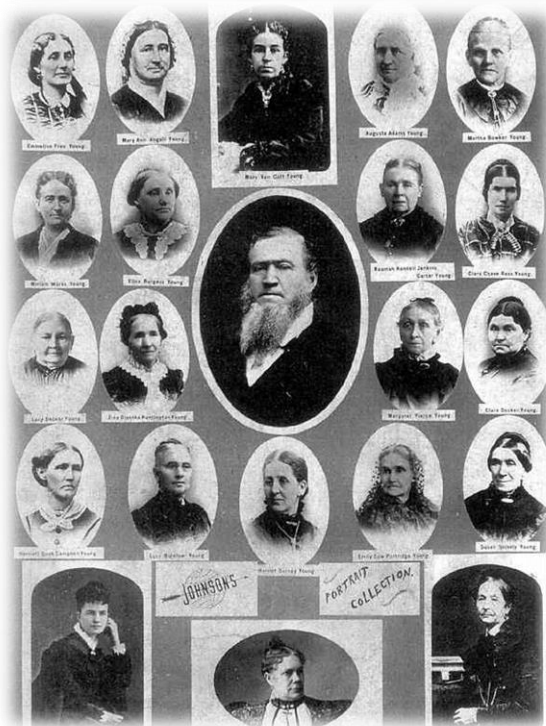
Plural Marriage / Polygamy



Polygamy was another odd thing that Mormons did. They saw it as a **commandment** of God, for one man to have multiple wives. The rest of the country saw it as an **abomination**, or sinful, and it caused conflict between Mormons and other Americans.

It was actually not all that common, with the majority of **polygamists** being church leaders. Brigham Young for example had many wives, and had over 50 kids with at least 16 of those wives.

Most who did engage in polygamy had two, or possibly three wives. The husbands were expected to **provide** all things for all these families, so it wasn't cheap, which helps explain why it was rare to see. Estimates range from **5-25% of Mormons engaging in the practice.**



“ At the time of my birth in Farmington in 1864, my father and his first wife already had a large family of eleven children. On a mission for the Mormon Church in England, Father met my mother, whom he married the year she emigrated to Utah. I was the second of ten children. We lived across the street from Aunt Mary’s family. [Children often called their father’s other wives “aunt.”] As a child, I went freely from one home to the other. ”

—Annie Clark Tanner

Living in Utah

Living in Utah was no easy task. For **food**, they ate things like bread, meat, corn, cheese, milk, squash, beans, potatoes, cabbage, peas, dandelion greens, beets, etc.

Some of the **fruit** they ate included apricots, cherries, plums, peaches, currants, gooseberries, and raspberries.

However, the first 20 or so years most people went **hungry** much of the time, due to **cricket infestations**, etc. The weather would be severe, sometimes too hot or cold, and freeze or fry their crops.

Clothing was worn much longer than we would wear it (becoming completely worn, or too small) because they had to **make** it themselves, **weaving** their own **cloth**. Many young girls learned to sew to help provide for the family.



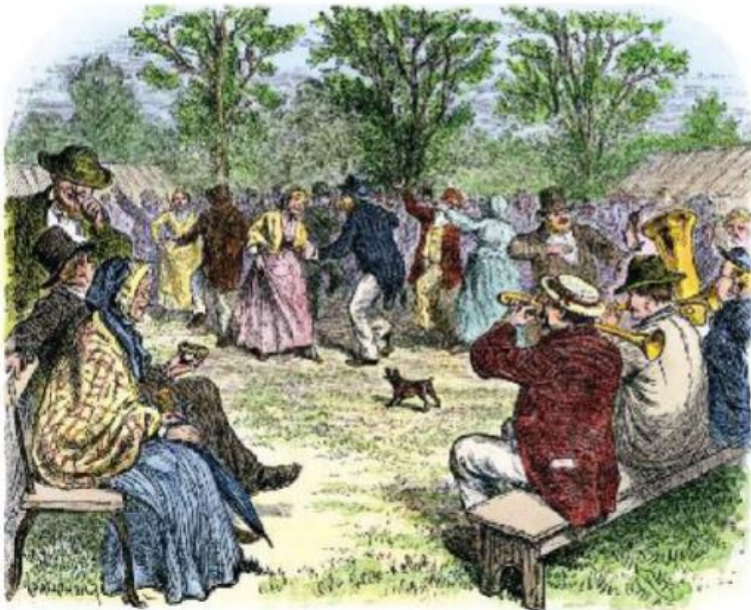
When I was seven years old, I needed a new dress badly. One day while I was playing in the yard I found an old bacon sack and took it to my mother. She made some lye water by soaking wood ashes and in this she soaked the sack to remove the grease. Then she got some weeds and made dye in which she dyed the sack brown. From this she made the waist (top of a dress) and from a piece of blue denim the skirt, and I had a new dress.

—Melissa Jane Lambson, 1854

Trying to Enjoy Life!

When Brigham Young and his apostles and party arrived, the streets of our little village [Mt. Pleasant] were lined with children to welcome them. Everyone loved Brigham Young and as they came along in their wagons we all waved our handkerchiefs. . . . We were all dressed up in our best to greet our leader.

—Alma Elizabeth Mineer



After being in Utah for 10 years, there were **dozens** of new settlements in the area (we'll look at some of them in a bit); Utahns, just like other Americans, liked to break up the monotony of work with **birthdays, weddings, holidays, and other celebrations.**

When **important people** arrived (like the prophet), it was a time of celebration! Parades, speeches, and band concerts were held.

Mormons liked their music and dancing too! Most towns had a band and choir, and dances were held often.

Check out the **New Settlements HOs**

Reminder:

HW: find a smaller, local town in Utah that seems to follow all of these different characteristics. The lists of early Mormon settlements might give you some ideas, if you are still unsure.

Be prepared to present your slideshow / website telling us more about it!