

THE SAINTLY SCOUNDREL: UNPACKING THE JOHN C. BENNETT SCANDAL



John C. Bennett, a powerful insider in Joseph Smith's inner circle (mayor, general, university chancellor), was excommunicated in 1842. He immediately published an expose, making shocking claims about secret polygamy and illicit activities, creating a firestorm of controversy.

THE SPIRITUAL WIFE DOCTRINE

“If you do not do it... I will make catfish bait of you.”

– Bennett's dramatic claim of how Joseph Smith threatened him to ensure his silence.

Bennett claimed Joseph Smith taught secret polygamy.

He later retracted this, but alleged he was forced to sign a false affidavit at gunpoint.

BENNETT'S INSIDER PROOF: CONFIRMED PLURAL WIVES

BENNETT'S INITIAL	CONFIRMED PLURAL WIFE
Mrs. A--- S-----	Agnes Smith
Miss L-- B-----	Louisa Beaman
Mrs. P----- B-----	Presendia Buell
Mrs. D-----	Elizabeth Durfee

THE ABORTION ALLEGATIONS



The first public accusation of abortion came from Joseph Smith's own brother, Hyrum.

In an 1842 affidavit, Hyrum Smith claimed Bennett offered women “medicine to produce abortions.”

“A little job for Joseph. One of his women is in trouble.”

~ Sarah Pratt's later testimony, claiming Bennett showed her surgical tools for this purpose.



HISTORIAN FAWN BRODIE CONCLUDED:

“There can be no doubt that Bennett was an abortionist.”

While his connection to Joseph is debated, his practice of abortion is widely accepted by historians.

Bennett proved his insider status by naming Joseph's secret wives. He accurately identified at least six women who are now confirmed as plural wives.