

AN OFFICIAL HISTORY **DEBUNKED:** Fact-Checking the Church's Top Historian

A critical analysis of the Mormon Stories Podcast's critique of Dr. Keith Erekson's "fireside" talk, contrasting official LDS Church narratives on controversial history with historical counterpoints.

ON JOSEPH SMITH'S POLYGAMY

CLAIM:
Joseph Smith's public denials of polygamy were "carefully worded" to reject only a specific, unsanctioned type of "spiritual wifery".



REBUTTAL:
Smith issued absolute denials, such as claiming, "I can only find one [wife]."



CLAIM:
There is no evidence of sexual relations between Joseph Smith and the 12 women he married who were already married to other men.



REBUTTAL:
Podcast cites evidence for sexual relations, including polyandrous wife Sylvis Sessions believing her child was Joseph's.



CLAIM:
The idea that polygamy will be required for exaltation in the afterlife is just a "folktale".



REBUTTAL:
Past prophets taught it was essential for exaltation, and current top leaders are sealed to multiple women.



ON THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

CLAIM:
We don't know how many papyrus scrolls Joseph Smith had, suggesting the true source text for the Book of Abraham is missing.



REBUTTAL:
Historical witnesses, including Smith himself, explicitly described two main scrolls, which are largely accounted for.



CLAIM:
The papyri were merely a "catalyst" for revelation, not a literal translation.



REBUTTAL:
The "Grammer and Alphabet" document shows Smith attempted a direct, character-by-character translation from the scrolls.



CLAIM:
Critics are wrong to point out the scrolls are "funerary texts," as the church has known this since 1835.



REBUTTAL:
The problem is not that they are funerary texts, but that Smith's "translation" has nothing to do with their actual content.

